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CHANGE OF JUDICIAL SYSTEM.

Expedition is popularly associated with superior ability, and it is true no doubt that work rapidly done is often excellently done. But Sir Watkin Williams, in a recent address referring to the changes in the judicial system of England, held up the other side of the shield. In the "good old days," as they were called, of Lord Ellenborough and Lord Abinger, it was the boast of the judges that they could despatch thirty-five causes in a day; "they, in fact, crushed through a cause list like an elephant through a rice plantation. Law was dissociated from justice and right, and became a common by-word for absurdity and wrong." "Unintelligible technicalities," he added, "were now being rapidly swept away; causes were thoroughly tried on their merits; but in place of hours they occupied days; they were more open to popular criticism on their merits, and appeals were multiplied. One thing, at least, was certain,—that there was now a more thorough attempt to do real justice as well as to administer mere law."

Another change that will probably soon be demanded is the reduction of solicitors' costs. Litigation in England is doubtless greatly restricted by the enormous charges which attorneys pile up, to the ruin of the unsuccessful litigant at least, if not both parties. "There are certain well-known firms of solicitors," says one English journal, "who can never be got to render a statement. They are perpetually applying for cheques on account, and generally have the faculty of asking for these at some critical time in the procedure, when they know that the litigant cannot help paying, in order that his case may go on. Other solicitors punish the inquisitiveness of any who may wish for a detailed bill of costs, by making it out to an extent vastly in excess of the round sum originally demanded."

The attorneys, however, have always presented an unbroken front to any assault upon their cherished privileges. Some of our readers may remember Brougham's outburst when the attorneys assailed him on account of his bill for the establishment of local jurisdiction: "Let them not lay the flattering unction to their souls," he exclaimed, "that I can be prevented by a combination of all the attorneys in Christendom, or any apprehensions of injury to myself, from endeavoring to make justice pure and cheap. These gentlemen are much mistaken if they think I will die without defending myself. The question may be whether barristers or attorneys shall prevail; and I see no reason why barristers should not open their doors to clients without the intervention of attorneys and their long bills of costs. If I discover that there is a combination against me, I will decidedly throw myself upon my clients—upon the country gentlemen, the merchants and manufacturers—and if I do not with the help of this House beat those leagued against me, I shall be more surprised at it than at any misadventure of my life."

FINDING LOST GOODS.

A singular case between loser and finder, *Felton* v. *Gregory*, was recently disposed of by the Supreme Judicial Court at Boston. (The judgment appears in the *Massachusetts Law Reporter*, Feb. 9, 1881.) The plaintiff found a pocket-book containing $850, which had been lost by the defendant. Four days afterwards, the loser advertised a reward of $200 for the return of the pocket-book, and the plaintiff, on production of the article, received the reward. It appeared that the loser's name was written in the book, and he could easily have been found. After paying the money, the loser of the book brought a criminal complaint against the finder (under Gen. Sts., c. 79, § 1), for not returning the lost property immediately, without waiting for the reward; whereupon the finder, alarmed at the prospect of imprisonment, paid back the reward, but subsequently instituted an action to recover the money, on the ground that he had paid it under duress. The Court decided that there was no duress, the only coercion influencing the mind of the finder in this case being the fear of the consequences of his own criminal act.

STOPPING THE SUPPLIES.

A curious provision has been introduced into the Constitution of the State of California. It reads as follows: "No judge of a Superior