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MEDIÆVAL LAW SUITS.

The writer of an article entitled "Daily Life in a Mediæval Monastery," which appeared in *Nineteenth Century*, furnishes an interesting account of the occupations and amusements which filled up the daily round of monks in the olden time. Among these diversions litigation played an important part. We condense a portion of the article:

"In the natural course of events, as a monastery grew in wealth and importance, there was one element of interest which added great zest to the conventual life, in the *quarrels* that were sure to arise.

"First and foremost, the most desirable person to quarrel with was a bishop. In its original idea, a monastery was not necessarily an ecclesiastical institution. It was not necessary that an abbot should be an ecclesiastic, and not essentially necessary that any one of his monks should be in holy orders. Long before the thirteenth century, however, a monk was almost invariably ordained, and being an ordained person, and having his local habitation in a bishop's diocese, it was only natural that the bishop should claim jurisdiction over him and over the church in which he and the fraternity ministered; but to allow a power of visitation to any one outside the close corporation of the convent was fraught with infinite peril to the community. To have a querulous or inquisitive or even hostile bishop coming and intruding into their secrets, blurting them out to the world and actually pronouncing sentence upon them, seemed to the monks an absolutely intolerable condition of things. Hence it seemed supremely desirable to a convent to get for itself the exemption of their house from episcopal visitation or control. Such attempts were stoutly resisted by the bishops, and, of course, bishop and abbey went to law. Going to law in this case meant usually, first, a certain amount of preliminary litigation before the Archbishop of Canterbury; but sooner or later it was sure to end in an appeal to the Pope's court, or, as the phrase was, an appeal to Rome. * * *

"When there was no appeal case going on—and they were too expensive an amusement to be indulged in often—there was always a good deal of exciting litigation to keep up the interest of the convent, and to give them something to think about and gossip about nearer home. We have the best authority—the authority of the great Pope Innocent III.—for believing that Englishmen in the thirteenth century were extremely fond of beer; but there was something else that they were even fonder of, and that was law. Monastic history is almost made up of the stories of this everlasting litigation. Nothing was too trifling to be made into an occasion for a lawsuit. Some neighbouring landowner had committed a trespass or withheld a tithe pig. Some audacious townsman had claimed the right of catching eels in a pond. Some brawling knight pretended that he was in some sense *patron* of a cell, and demanded a trumpery allowance of bread and ale, or an equivalent. As we read about these things we exclaim, 'why in the world did they make such a fuss about a trifle.' Not so, thought the monks. They knew well enough what the thin end of the wedge meant; and, being in a far better position than we are to judge of the significance and importance of many a *casus belli* which now seems but trivial, they never dreamed of giving an inch for the other side to take an ell. So they went to law, and enjoyed it amazingly."

FIGURES FROM THE CENSUS.

The census statistics of Canada, which have just appeared, give the number of advocates in 1881 at 2,717, against 2,212 in 1871. It appears, therefore, that there is one advocate for every 1,584 of population. This proportion is not nearly so considerable as in the case of the other learned professions, the number of physicians being 3,507 in the year 1881 against 2,792 in 1871; while of clergymen there were 6,329 in 1881 against only 4,436 in 1871. This is exclusive of 491 Christian Brothers who have more than doubled in the decade, there