

At any rate, I shall not try—  
     There isn't space to hold them.  
 In modern practice pleading is  
     Not either art or science;  
 And even rules of practice don't  
     Require strict compliance.  
 The plaintiff says a thing is so;  
     Defendant then denies it;  
 The Judge hears anything that's said;  
     And that's the way he tries it.  
 And Counsel's opening address  
     The Judge can do without;  
 He merely says:—"Well, gentlemen,  
     What is it all about?  
 First witness Mr. A.—How long  
     D'you think the case will run?  
 And Mr. B. can tell me his  
     Defence when you are done."  
 Attempts to rule out evidence,  
     Or ask for its rejection,  
 Are met with, "I'll admit it now,  
     But subject to objection."  
 The form and letter of the law  
     Give way to its intendment;  
 And any error made is now  
     Corrected by amendment.  
*Scintilla juris* now yields to  
     Original momentum;  
 And uses spring and shift, because  
     There's nothing to prevent 'em.  
 For friends were made and friendships lost  
     In arguing about it,  
 Until at last, a Statute said  
     We must do without it.  
 The trespasser can rest in the  
     Possession of his plunder,  
 Unless a writ is issued in  
     Ten years— or something under.  
 To John Doe and Richard Roe  
     We long since bade farewell;  
 They had their work to do, and after  
     All they did it well.  
 Of all the ancient learning thus  
     Of which we've been bereft,  
 The Rule in Shelley's case is now  
     The only one that's left.  
 And many other things my pen  
     Might tell if I applied it;  
 But then one never knows what's what  
     Until the Court has tried it.