

SHORT METHODS OF EXPEDITING JUDICIAL BUSINESS IN OLDEN TIMES.

The reference by Sir Rufus Isaacs at the close of the sittings to the fact that the King's Bench had overtaken its work was made with just pride inasmuch as it was a successful effort to economise public time without hardship to the parties to actions, the witnesses, the Bar, and the general public. Other efforts to expedite the business of the courts have not been so successful or so popular. When Lord Brougham committed the enormity of hearing causes on Good Friday, Mr. Gladstone repeated with deep complacency a saying of Wetherell, that Brougham was the first judge who had done such a thing since Pontius Pilate. Irish legal history, however, records instances of the adoption of methods for the discharge of judicial business which must seem to us incredible if they were not authenticated by irrefragable proof. The Right Hon. Marcus Patterson was Chief Justice of the Irish Court of Common Pleas from 1768 till 1787. In going circuit during one especially hot season, he employed the following expedient for securing rapidity in the dispatch of business. The Chief Justice asked to see the list of cases to be tried in an assize town, and found to his dismay that it was a very voluminous one. "Mr. Registrar," he said, "call out these cases, beginning at the end." "Eh, my Lord," replied that functionary with a look of astonishment. "Begin at the end, sir," repeated the Chief Justice. "O'Regan against Rearden," the registrar called out; "O'Regan against Rearden," echoed the crier, and so on until they had called over four cases on the list. "No appearance," said the Chief Justice; "cross out those cases." The registrar bowed, and proceeded to call seven or eight others which, according to the calculation of parties interested, could not possibly have come on for hearing for a fortnight. "No appearance yet," said the Chief Justice, and another batch of cases were obliterated from the record. At last the registrar reached the first case in the list, when a response was made by the solicitor for the plaintiff. The case having been heard, Chief Justice Patterson thanked the jury for their attendance, and,