

When lawyers plied their subtle minds,  
To shew the reason why  
A writ should not be in the *per*,  
But in the *per* and *cui*;  
Then pleading was a real art,  
And built up reputations,  
And characters were won and lost  
In drawing replications.  
The plaintiff's simple, homely plaint  
Took various shapes and courses;  
And driv'n about by subtle pleas  
Got tangled in the process,  
Until, at last, the issues were  
Impossible to funder,  
Like nothing else upon the earth,  
Or in the waters under.  
Demurrers, too, and special pleas  
Embarrassed and delayed it;  
And perhaps the venue never should  
Have been where he had laid it.  
The spirit of the law was rendered  
Subject to the letter;  
The point was whether pleas were good,  
Or other pleadings better.  
The disappointed suitor oft  
Was paralyzed with terror,  
When told the place to right his wrong  
Was in a Court of Error.  
What wonder, then, that in the days  
Which we have left behind,  
Justice was represented as  
A woman who was blind!  
Then, too, *scintilla juris* shed  
Its soft effulgent ray,  
Illuminating uses, springing,  
Shifting, on their way.  
The owner, ousted from his land,  
Quite regularly came  
Just once a year, without his gate,  
And made continual claim.  
But, if disseisor's death occurred  
While he did wrongly hold,  
His heir, by law, was owner, and  
The right of entry tolled.  
The vagrant's death thus put the owner  
In a different plight;  
His right of entry barred, resort  
Was had to writ of right.  
And many more astounding things  
Would shock you if I told them;