

## CORRESPONDENCE.

I have written several letters to your valuable journal as also for the *Mail* under the signature of "A Wingham Solicitor"—setting forth at large the great injury we receive in the country from "unlicensed conveyancers." A perusal amongst others of a long letter of mine appearing in your journal last January (*ante* p. 50), will fully explain this.

Let me say that I am practising in a county which is the stronghold of a legion of "conveyancers." These men do nearly all the conveyancing, nearly all the Division Court business, nearly all the Surrogate Court business, nearly all the notarial business, and even conduct nearly all the sales under mortgage in their vicinity.

I can send you if you wish full particulars of a dozen sales so conducted by unlicensed conveyancers in this neighbourhood, they styling themselves of course "vendor's agents," and not "vendor's solicitors."

These men give advice, collect debts, and act generally as attorneys (the only difference being that they don't pay any fees), having in a great many instances the words "law office" painted on their windows and otherwise advertised. These "pettifoggers" not only do the law business themselves, but "run down" and deprecate professional men in their vicinity, telling their customers not to go to solicitors—they will rob them—charge them exorbitantly, &c.—whilst they (good, honest men!) will do the work as well, and almost for nothing.

I am trying to get a little business out of the hands of these men, and say that I have a right to it *all*, and that they have no right whatever—that as long as I take out my certificate I have the right to do the *whole* of the law business, and not share with them. As it is, they have so lowered prices that to do any work at all one has to do it at their figures, if not below them.

When I say that my advertisement was purposely so worded as to let the farmers know that rather than that these unlicensed men should do the law business of my neighbourhood, I would do it for little or nothing, I think that no solicitor practising in the country, and considering the end I had in view, will be harsh in his criticism.

I again repeat that in the strict eye of discipline it was a breach of ethics.

But, then, why does not the Law Society protect lawyers practising in the country towns and villages?

When you take away from a country solicitor his conveyancing, his surrogate business, his sales under mortgage, his notarial business and nearly all his Division Court business, what is there left to him?

And, allow me to say, since County Judges have put so ultra-liberal a construction on the word "agent" in the Division Court Acts—unlicensed men do the bulk of the Division Court work in the country districts, and several instances have I known in which counsel fees were taxed to those unlicensed men, when the Judge so taxing the fee personally knew that the "agent" was neither attorney or counsel. If wondering city practitioners should ask how those men not being licensed come to be able to take the business from men who are licensed, the answer simply is:—These men are all men of great local influence and connection—(*apropos* I may say, that both our members, *Farrow, M.P.*, and *Gibson, M.P.P.*, are "conveyancers," the one in Bluevale and the other in Wroxeter);—and are, with very few exceptions, *magistrates*, nearly all are *notaries*, and they are all *commissioners for taking affidavits*; a great many are private bankers and money lenders.

They resided in the county long before solicitors came into it—they have grown up with the country, and have the confidence of the old settlers—they in fact got the business before any lawyers came here, and they mean to hang on to it and keep it in spite of the Law Society, or, as Mr. Scott (a "prominent" conveyancer here, who keeps several clerks writing for him) told me when I came here, "We have a vested interest in the conveyancing!"

Then these men hold themselves out to be, and are popularly considered to be, "lawyers," and they would do work for nothing rather than that a certificated lawyer should get it to do; they misrepresent solicitors practising in their vicinity; they use all the influence they can bring to bear to hurt their business, and frighten the ignorant farmer from going to a lawyer. And these men will do the work till they are stopped by legislative enactment, and they openly say so.

In conclusion, I would like distinctly to say through the medium of your journal, that my advertisement was not intended to help me in taking work out of the hands of *my fellow*