

stances of the community and directed their attention to the subject, whereupon a committee was appointed to investigate the matter and alleviate the grievances complained of. The committee appointed to examine into these abuses began with three of them, one of which was for licensing all houses, a second for the inspection of inns and hostelries, and the third for the manufacture of gold and silver thread.

The result of this investigation brought to light a scene of fraud and corruption seldom to be met with, even under the most cruel and tyrannical governments. These three monopolies were set aside as being national grievances, and the patentees, Sir Giles Monyresson and Sir Francis Mitchell, were denounced as criminals, and from that time this matter became the subject of legislative enactments, and the "statute of monopolies" was passed, whereby the Crown gave up its right, or rather the right it claimed to grant monopolies, and in lieu thereof ascertained and fixed a limit to be observed in the consideration of all such matters, reserving to itself certain powers, and which exist and are exerted in the present time, extended as they have been by certain statutes passed in the reigns of the late and the present Sovereigns, to meet the exigencies of particular cases, and to render impartial justice between man and man.

The act referred to declared that all monopolies, grants and Letters Patent for the sole buying, selling, making, working or using of anything within the realm were contrary to law and void; but it made an exception of new inventions, still allowing the common right to take effect if the grants even for new inventions were not properly made. By this statute the Crown was deprived of its right to grant patents detrimental to the interests of trade.

Though suited to the age in which it was passed, this enactment was found, however, to restrict too much the enjoyment of patent privileges, and in consequence its signification has been modified by the decisions of the English courts of law and equity.

Nearly one whole century elapsed without any further change, and it was only in the reign of Queen Anne that the next alteration was made in the Patent law, by which the inventor was obliged to file within a limited time a written description of his invention, setting it forth in a fully comprehensive manner, otherwise the Letters Patent should become void. This instrument is the specification.

No further legislative enactments were made on this subject until within our own time, when in 1835 a bill, known as Lord Brougham's Act, was successfully carried through Parliament, where it was permitted to the patentee to file a disclaimer or renunciation of what was claimed by him as his

invention, if such extra claim was made through error, as well as amendments, where doubts existed, and thereby the patentee was protected against the effect of errors which had been overlooked at the time the patent was applied for, errors which might otherwise vitiate the patent. This statute also allowed an extension of patents beyond the original term of 14 years, with consent of the Privy Council.

The most important changes in the Patent Laws of England were only effected, however, by an act passed on the first of July, 1852, containing provisions of a most liberal and beneficial nature, whereby one patent is granted for the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland instead of three as heretofore. The average cost of each of these patents was £100, sterling, making £300 for a patent for the whole kingdom. The system of caveats was done away with as being fraught with injustice, and a system of protection provided for, which affords the inventor time to fully complete his invention without fear of piracy, and to ascertain the value of his invention after having worked out his ideas, before incurring the expense of a patent. A caveat is an instrument by which notice is requested to be given to any person having conceived, but not thoroughly completed an invention, whenever another person shall apply for a patent for such an invention. By this act British patents were restricted to the United Kingdom and to such colonies as had not enacted laws on this subject for themselves. It not only simplified proceedings, but introduced a more moderate scale of fees and a more convenient and equitable distribution of the periods for the payment of them. The patent office is placed under the control of commissioners, and is located in London, there being but one patent office for the United Kingdom. In connection with this office there is a free library which is daily open to the public for reference, and in a portion of the museum at South Kensington which was assigned to the commissioners by the Board of Trade, are daily exhibited, gratuitously to the public, a collection of very valuable and interesting models of patented machines and implements as also portraits of inventors. There are also in Edinburgh and Dublin places of deposit of copies of patents, specifications, disclaimers and other documents connected with patents for public inspection.

The Patent Laws of England, as they now exist, adapted to the decisions of the Courts of Law and Equity, are in my opinion the best in force in any country, for they not only acknowledge the rights of the inventor, no matter to what potentate he pays his allegiance, but they offer encouragement to perseverance and application, and invite the inventor to renewed exertion, fully partaking of that spirit of justice and liberality which has rendered the