

edifices in this city, had spared the Patent Office, and yet accident in a few hours, destroyed the labours of many men for many years, which even that modern barbarian feared to touch.

This sketch of the legislation of Congress on the subject of patents, familiar as it is to the professional man, may give to the general reader an idea of the early and continuous importance attached by the law-makers to this important branch of the government. Growing out of, and forming as it were an integral portion of, the patent system is what may be termed the patent law branch of our jurisprudence. The minds of the most eminent of our jurists, both on the bench and at the bar, have been taxed to the utmost by the intricacy and subtlety of the investigation of many cases which have arisen and been adjudicated upon under these laws. A legal writer justly terms the patent law branch of our jurisprudence "the metaphysics of the law." And so it must continue to be and to increase because of the increasing spirit of improvement in agriculture and manufactures, and machinery, both here and in Europe. The Patent Office is essentially and necessarily a national institution in every sense of the word, and will always remain so, inasmuch as it would be impracticable for the States separately, to make provision for the effectual protection of the rights secured to inventors under the patent laws.

All parties concerned in patents, whether as inventors or users of the machines for which they are granted, are fully aware of the importance of the faithful execution and enforcement of the patent laws; and there is no class of cases tried in our courts in which the community generally take more interest.

In all countries, and in all ages, inventors or discoverers of any new agent or implement, useful to man in his varied pursuits, have been considered as among the most valuable citizens of the State, and deserving of its encouragement and protection. Of late years this appreciation of such men seems greatly to have increased, both in the United States and in Europe. We trust that it will ever be so, and that worth and merit, in whatever walk of life it may develop itself, may always meet with recompense and reward.

BRITISH SHILLINGS.—There is a great and well-grounded outcry against the currency of the British shilling, and there are numerous plans to get rid of the nuisance. But there can be only one effectual one—the adoption generally by business men of the plan taken at Toronto—the steady refusal on all hands accept them for more than they are worth. Government cannot call them in, for, to say nothing of the loss, they would be immediately put again into circulation, so long as there was a profit on the operation. Nor can their importation be prevented by law. We are not going to hang people for bringing British shillings into the country, and the hanging of several people every year, under the old laws, made before the laws of trade were understood, did not prevent the prohibited trades in coin. The British shilling is not a legal tender for twenty-five cents, and, there