

*EXPERTS IN HANDWRITING.*

*Regina v. Silverlock*, already referred to with respect to the form of an indictment for false pretences, raised another point of more interest. To prove the handwriting of the accused were called a police officer, who produced a letter and envelope written by the accused in his presence, and the solicitor for the prosecution, who had given considerable attention and study to handwriting, and had on several occasions professionally compared handwriting for purposes of evidence. The solicitor's right to speak as an expert was challenged, but his testimony was admitted, subject to reservation of a case on the point. For the defence it was argued that the solicitor was not an expert but a mere amateur, and an attempt was made to suggest that a man cannot be called as a witness to handwriting, who has not made a profession of studying handwriting, which led the Lord Chief Justice to observe that there were two classes of experts, those who made a thorough study of handwriting and those who made a business of testifying in the witness box as to their expertness; and in the end the Court had no difficulty in coming to the conclusion that a witness on a matter of opinion must be skilled in the subject on which he is called to give an opinion, but need not be in a particular business or profession, nor have passed any examination in the subject; or, to adopt the words of Mr. Justice Williams, 'it is necessary to show that the witness, either by his profession or by his habits and studies, is more competent than others to give his opinion.' The weight of testimony given as to opinion is a very different thing from the question of its admissibility. A man may know enough about the subject to assist the jury somewhat, but not enough to be of much assistance to them.—*Law Journal*.

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*DUELLING AT THE IRISH BAR.*

The late Mr. John Edward Walsh, who was Attorney-General for Ireland in 1866, and subsequently Master of the Rolls in Ireland till his death in 1869, wrote and published in 1840 a little book entitled "Ireland Sixty Years Ago," in which he directs attention to the practice of duelling at the Irish Bar towards the close of the last century.

Many men at the Bar, Mr. Walsh says, practising fifty (one