

the Brehon was settled upon he proceeded to arrange the disputes; generally this was done by simply awarding damage for the wrong committed; but various reprisals and acts of violence might have occurred before the reference to arbitration, or the defendant might have some old complaint against the plaintiff; then the Brehon had to take a regular account between them, every injury on both sides had to be duly credited and debited at a fixed amount, and the balance struck represented the sum upon payment of which all complaints between the parties were satisfied. The skill of the lawyer Brehon lay in discerning the proper items to be introduced into this account, and the scale according to which they were to be assessed. The greater part of the Book of Aicill consists of statements of the mode in which wrongs of all imaginable kinds are to be charged, the items to be introduced in such contests, and leading cases of accounts so taken, given as precedents to be followed.

Generally the Brehon added his fee to the amount awarded. The judgment being settled the successful party had to execute it himself, as there was no sheriff nor bailiff. According to Mr. Ginnell, he seldom had any trouble in doing this, "for he was assisted by the inherent equity of the particular judgment itself, by the force of an immemorial law universally obeyed, by public opinion informed by the generally prevalent love of justice, by the defendants' knowledge that delay, evasion or resistance would be futile, would disgrace him and increase the penalty, and above all, by that self-adjusting network of duties and obligations involved in and enforced by the clan system." (The Irishman of to-day may with truth remark "O tempora! O mores!" "Nous avons change tout cela.")

As an example let us take the case of injuries done by busy little bees; four pages are devoted to them. The amount of the fines for injuries to persons is as follows: For a person stung to death two hives (coin was scarce, and when the fine was small it was usually a quantity of property of the kind involved); for a person blinded by a sting, one hive; for the drawing of blood, a full meal of honey; for an