

spreads, friends and sightseers collect; the men, we opine, in surprise at the idea of a number of women sitting dumb; the women, in sympathy with their fellows who are so tried. The crowd, by its presence, oftentimes induces the poor debtor to pay on the first day; if not, the female bailiffs reassemble on the second evening. The company of spectators again appears, anxious to see the end. If this second citation does not cause payment, on the third night sterner measures are adopted; the men, enraged that their wives should be thus compelled to neglect their household duties, come together, set fire to the obstinate debtor's house, seize his pig, smash his canoe, and destroy everything they can lay their hands upon; so the last state of that debtor is worse than the first (*Ten Years in Melanesia*, by Rev. A. Penny).

On this side of the Atlantic and the Pacific, in the days of Cortes and Pizarro, the Muyscas were a tribe of Indians residing in the northern part of South America. Even here default was sometimes made in payment; when that happened the creditor hied him to the owner of a young tiger, or other wild beast bred up as a collecting agent, and bargained with him for his services; the keeper then took the animal and tied it to the door of the recalcitrant debtor, and that unfortunate individual had then to maintain the quadruped and his keeper until the creditor was satisfied (*Helps' Spanish Conquest*, vol. iv., p. 394).

In the good old days in Ireland, according to the Senchus Mor, or The Great Book of the Ancient Law (a book of great antiquity, compiled in, or perhaps slightly before, the eleventh century, as Sir Henry Maine thinks, but said by some to be that very code which was prepared under the influence of Saint Patrick on the introduction of Christianity into Ireland), the chief way of collecting debts or obtaining one's rights against another was by distress. This is the way, we are told, that they did it before the hated Saxon landed upon the Green Isle to vex the natives with his laws: The plaintiff, or creditor, having first given the proper notice, proceeded—if the defendant, or debtor, was a person of chieftain rank—"to fast upon him." The fasting upon him consisted in going to his residence and waiting there for a certain time without food. If the creditor did not within that period receive satisfaction for his claim, or a pledge or security therefor, he forthwith—accompanied by a law agent, witnesses, and others—seized his distress (*Early History of Institutions*, p. 280). But what if there was nothing to distrain, and the debtor simply allowed the creditor to fast on till he starved? Then, according to Sir H. Maine, the debtor had to settle for his conduct in the next world. The Druids believed in the immortality and transmigration of the soul, and so may well have taught that penal consequences in another state of being would follow the creditor's death through the debtor's misconduct, and this doctrine the Christian priest was likely still further to accentuate. One readily sees that this Irish system must have been somewhat difficult to carry into practice if one had a large number of debtors to look after.

The old Brehon way of collecting is identical with a practice diffused over the whole of the East, and which the Hindoos call "sitting dharna." In Persia, when a man intends to enforce payment of a demand by fasting, he begins by sowing some barley at his debtor's door and sitting down in the midst of the