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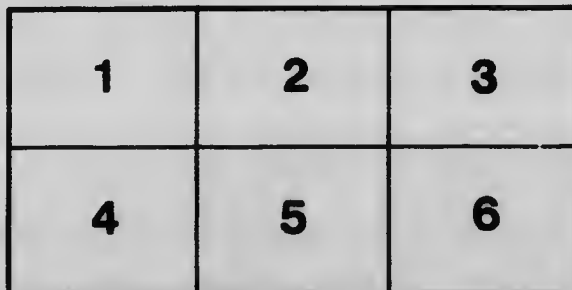
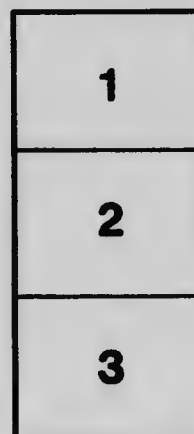
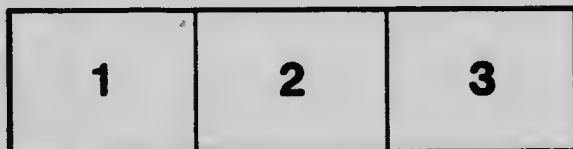
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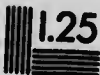
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A TREATISE
ON
THE SYSTEM OF EVIDENCE IN TRIALS
AT COMMON LAW

VOLUME IV.

A
TREATISE
ON THE SYSTEM OF
EVIDENCE
IN
TRIALS AT COMMON LAW
INCLUDING
THE STATUTES AND JUDICIAL DECISIONS OF
ALL JURISDICTIONS OF THE
UNITED STATES,
ENGLAND, AND CANADA

BY
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CONTENTS

VOLUME IV.

List of Latest Statutes and Reports Consulted xi

TOPIC B. — PRIVILEGED COMMUNICATIONS.

CHAPTER LXXIX.

SUB-TOPIC I. — CONFIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS IN GENERAL.

- | | |
|---|---|
| § 2285. General Principle of Privileged Communications. | § 2286. Sundry Confidential Communications not privileged; Clerks, Trustees, etc. |
| | § 2287. Same: Telegrams. |

CHAPTER LXXX.

SUB-TOPIC II. — COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN ATTORNEY AND CLIENT.

- | | |
|--|--|
| § 2290. History. | § 2312. Communications to Opponent or his Attorney, or in Opponent's Presence; Joint Attorney. |
| § 2291. Policy. | § 2313. Identity of Client or Purpose of Suit. |
| § 2292. General Principle; Statutory Definitions. | § 2314. Execution of a Will or Deed. |
| 1. "Where legal advice of any kind is sought," | § 2315. Same: Attorney as Attesting Witness. |
| § 2294. Privilege is irrespective of Litigation begun or contemplated; History of the doctrine. | 5. "By the client," |
| § 2295. Same: General Principle and Policy. | § 2317. Privilege not applicable to Knowledge acquired from Other Persons, unless as Agents of the Client; Who are Agents. |
| § 2296. Same: Advice for Non-Legal Purposes. | § 2318. Documents of the Client existing before Communication; General Liability to Discovery, distinguished. |
| § 2297. Same: Advice in Conveyancing or Drafting. | § 2319. Same: Conflict of the foregoing Principles illustrated. |
| § 2298. Same: Advice in a Criminal or Fraudulent Transaction. | § 2320. Communications by the Attorney to the Client. |
| 2. "From a professional legal adviser in his capacity as such," | 6. "Are at the client's instance permanently protected," |
| § 2300. Persons having Legal Knowledge, but not Admitted to Practice. | § 2321. Privilege is the Client's, not the Attorney's, nor the Party's; Who may claim. |
| § 2301. Attorneys' Clerks and other Agents. | § 2322. Inference from Claim of Privilege; Judge to determine Privilege. |
| § 2302. Client's Belief in the Attorney's Status. | § 2323. Protection continues, though Relation of Client and Attorney be ended. |
| § 2303. Consultation in Attorney's Capacity. | 7. "From disclosure by himself or by the Legal Adviser," |
| § 2304. Time of Consultation; Rejection of Retainer by Attorney. | § 2324. Testimony by the Client or by the Attorney. |
| 3. "The communications relevant to that purpose," | § 2325. Indirect Disclosure by the Attorney. |
| § 2306. Communications, distinguished from Acts; Client's Conduct and Appearance. | § 2326. Third Persons overhearing. |
| § 2307. Same: Production of the Client's Documents. | 8. "Except the client waive the protection," |
| § 2308. Same: Testimony to Contents of Documents. | § 2327. Waiver, in general; Voluntary Testimony as a Waiver. |
| § 2309. Same: Testimony to Possession, Existence, and Execution of Documents. | § 2328. Waiver by Joint Clients, Agents, Assignees. |
| § 2310. Relevancy or Necessity of the Communication. | § 2329. Waiver by a Deceased Client's Representative. |
| 4. "Made in Confidence," | |
| § 2311. Communications must be Confidential; Presence of a Third Person; Sundry Applications of the Principle. | |

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER LXXXI.

SUB-TOPIC III. — COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN HUSBAND AND WIFE.

1. In general.

- § 2332. Policy.
- § 2333. History.
- § 2334. Marital Disqualification and Anti-Marital Privilege, distinguished; Statutory Enactments.

2. Scope of the Testimony Privileged.

- § 2335. Knowledge obtained in Confidence, Express or Implied.
- § 2337. Communications, not Acts.

- § 2336. Exceptions and Distinctions.

3. Persons Prohibited and Entitled.

- § 2339. Third Persons overhearing; Documents obtained by Third Persons.
- § 2340. Who may Claim the Privilege; Waiver.

4. Cessation of the Privilege.

- § 2341. Death; Divorce; Separation; Invalid Marriage.

CHAPTER LXXXII.

SUB-TOPIC IV. — COMMUNICATIONS BY AND TO JURORS.

- § 2345. General Principles involved.

A. PETIT JURY.

1. Privileged Communications Rule.

- § 2346. Scope of the Principle.

2. Parol Evidence Rule.

- § 2348. General Principle.
- § 2349. (a) Jurors' Motives, Beliefs, Misunderstandings, Intentions, and the like, immaterial.
- § 2350. Same: Examining the Jury before Discharge, to ascertain the Grounds of Verdict.
- § 2351. (b) Issues of the Trial, as Material.
- § 2352. (c) Irregularities and Misconduct, as Material; Jurors impeaching their Verdict; History of the Rule.
- § 2353. Same: Policy of the Rule.
- § 2354. Same: State of the Law in Various Jurisdictions; Qualifications of the Rule.

- § 2355. (d) Mistake in Recording or Delivering the Verdict.

- § 2356. Same: Explaining the Verdict's Meaning; Mistake as to its Legal Effect; Retiring to Reconsider.

3. Arbitrators' Awards.

- § 2355. Forgoing Principles applied to Arbitrators' Awards.

B. GRAND JURY.

1. Privileged Communications Rule.

- § 2360. History and General Principle.
- § 2361. (a) Privilege of Grand Jurors; Secrecy of Vote and Opinion.
- § 2362. (b) Privilege of Witnesses before Grand Jury; General Principle.
- § 2363. Same: Instances of Cessation of Privilege.

2. Parol Evidence Rule.

- § 2364. Grounds for Indictment; Illegal Evidence; Required Number of Votes, etc.

CHAPTER LXXXIII.

SUB-TOPIC V. — STATE SECRETS AND OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS.

- § 2367. Several Principles discriminated.
- § 2368. (a) Tortious Liability of the Executive.
- § 2369. (b) Constitutional Subjection of the Executive to Judicial Process.
- § 2370. (c) Testimonial Privilege of the Executive not to be a Witness.
- § 2371. (d) Testimonial Privilege of the Executive not to Attend Court.

- § 2372. Same: Ambassadors, Consuls, Judges.
- § 2373. (e) Irremovability of Official Records.
- § 2374. (f) Privilege for Communications by Informer to Government.
- § 2375. (g) Privilege for Secrets of State and Official Communications.
- § 2376. Same: Who determines the Necessity for Secrecy.

CHAPTER LXXXIV.

SUB-TOPIC VI. — COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN PHYSICIAN AND PATIENT.

- § 2380. History and Policy; Statutes.
- § 2381. (a) Confidentiality of Communications; (1) Implied Confidence; Burden of Proof; Third Persons' Testimony.
- § 2382. Same: (2) Professional Character of the Consultation.
- § 2383. (b) Communications Necessary for Prescription.
- § 2384. (c) Information, Active and Passive.
- § 2385. (d) Criminal Cases.

- § 2386. (e) Whose is the Privilege; Claim of Privilege; Inference from Claim.
- § 2387. (f) Termination of the Privilege; Death.
- § 2388. Same: Waiver, in general; Express and Implied Waiver.
- § 2389. Same: Waiver by Bringing Suit; by Testifying; by Former Waiver.
- § 2390. Same: Waiver by Calling the Physician; by using "Proofs of Death."
- § 2391. Same: Waiver by Deceased Patient's Representative.

CONTENTS.

SUB-TOPIC VII. — COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN PRIEST AND PENITENT.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>§ 2394. History; No Privilege at Common Law.</p> <p>§ 2395. Statutes recognizing the Privilege.</p> | <p>§ 2396. Policy of the Privilege.</p> |
|--|---|

CHAPTER LXXXV.

PART IV. — PAROL EVIDENCE RULE (CONSTITUTION OF LEGAL ACTS).

INTRODUCTION.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>§ 2400. Parol Evidence Rule, not a Rule of Evidence.</p> <p>§ 2401. Parol Evidence Rule, a group of Rules defining the Constitution of Legal Acts; Four Subdivisions of the Subject.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">A. CREATION OF LEGAL ACTS.</p> <p>§ 2404. General Principle; Intent and Expression; Subject, Tenor, and Delivery.</p> <p>§ 2405. History of the Principle.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1. Subject, Tenor, Delivery, in General.</p> <p>§ 2406. (a) Subject must concern Legal Relations; Transactions of Jest, Friendship, Charity, and Pretence.</p> <p>§ 2407. (b) Terms must be Definite; Terms Implied from Conduct; Document Void for Uncertainty.</p> <p>§ 2408. (c) Act must be Final; (1) Delivery, as applied to Deeds; Conditions Precedent; Escrows.</p> <p>§ 2409. Same: (2) Delivery, as applied to Negotiable Instruments.</p> <p>§ 2410. Same: (3) Delivery, as Applied to Contracts in general; Conditions Precedent and Subsequent; Assent of Third Persons; Blanks; Dates.</p> <p>§ 2411. Same: (4) Publication as applied to Wills.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2. Intent and Mistake, as Affecting Subject, Tenor, and Delivery.</p> <p>§ 2412. Intention and Mistake in General; Modern Test of Reasonable Consequences, applied to Expressed Intent.</p> <p>§ 2414. (A) Intent not to be Bound at all.</p> <p>§ 2415. (B) Terms of an Act; (a) Signing a Completed Document; (1) Individual Mistake, not known to or induced by the Second Party.</p> <p>§ 2416. Same: (2) Individual Mistake known to or induced by the Second Party.</p> <p>§ 2417. Same: (3) Mutual Mistake; General Principle.</p> <p>§ 2418. Same: Mutual Mistake as affecting Bona Fide Holders for Value.</p> <p>§ 2419. Same: (b) Signing a Document having Blanks or Capable of Alteration; Writing one's Name not as a Signature.</p> <p>§ 2420. (C) Delivery of a Document; Escrow; Deeds or Negotiable Instruments delivered to Bona Fide Holders, contrary to Intent of Maker.</p> <p>§ 2421. Unilateral Acts; Foregoing Principles applied to Wills and Ballots.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">3. Voidable Acts.</p> <p>§ 2423. Motive as making an act Voidable; Mistake, Fraud, Duress, Infancy, and Insanity.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">B. INTEGRATION OF LEGAL ACTS (VARYING THE TERMS OF AN INSTRUMENT).</p> <p>§ 2425. General Theory of the Rule against Varying the Terms of an Instrument.</p> <p>§ 2426. History of the Rule.</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">1. Integration of Unilateral Acts.</p> <p>§ 2427. Official Documents (Surveys, Appointments, Assessments, etc.).</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2. Integration of Bilateral Acts.</p> <p>§ 2429. No Integration at all; Casual Memoranda.</p> <p>§ 2430. Partial Integration; General Test for Applying the Rules; "Collateral Agreements."</p> <p>§ 2431. Same: Incorrect Tests; (a) "Varying the Terms of the Writing;" (b) "The Writing is the Sole Criterion;" (c) Fraud, in Pennsylvania.</p> <p>§ 2432. Receipts and Releases; Bills of Lading.</p> <p>§ 2433. Recital of Consideration in a Deed.</p> <p>§ 2434. Warranty in a Sale; Insurance Warranties.</p> <p>§ 2435. Agreements not to Sue, or not to Enforce, or to hold Conditional only.</p> <p>§ 2436. Agreements of Counterclaim, Set-off, Renewal, or Mode of Payment.</p> <p>§ 2437. Agreement to hold a Deed Absolute as Conditional only; Agreement to hold in Trust.</p> <p>§ 2438. Agreement to hold as Agent or Surety only.</p> <p>§ 2439. Fraud.</p> <p>§ 2440. Trade Usage and Custom.</p> <p>§ 2441. Novation, Alteration, and Waiver; Subsequent Agreements.</p> <p>§ 2442. Miscellaneous Applications of the Rule to admit or exclude "Collateral" Agreements.</p> <p>§ 2443. Rule applied to Negotiable Instruments; General Principle.</p> <p>§ 2444. Same: (a) Agreements affecting the Express Terms of the Document.</p> <p>§ 2445. Same: (b) Agreements affecting the Implied Terms.</p> <p>§ 2446. Rule binding upon the Parties to the Document only.</p> <p>§ 2447. Burden of Proof; Who must Produce the Document.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">3. Integration Required by Law.</p> <p>§ 2450. At Common Law: (1) Judicial Records.</p> <p>§ 2451. Same: (2) Corporate Acts and Records; (3) Negotiable Instruments.</p> <p>§ 2452. Under Statutes; (1) Wills; (2) Ballots; (3) Insurance Policies.</p> <p>§ 2453. Conclusive Certificates, distinguished.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">C. SOLEMNIZATION OF LEGAL ACTS.</p> <p>§ 2454. Writing as a Formality; Statute of Frauds.</p> <p>§ 2455. Same: Discharge and Alteration of Specialties, etc.</p> <p>§ 2456. Other Formalities than Writing; Signature, Seal, Attestation, Registration, Stamp.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">D. INTERPRETATION OF LEGAL ACTS.</p> <p>§ 2458. General Nature of Interpretation; Standard and Sources of Interpretation.</p> |
|---|---|

CONTENTS.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>§ 2459. Same: "Intention" and "Meaning," distinguished.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">1. Standard of Interpretation.</p> <p>§ 2461. General Principle; Four Standards, — Popular, Local, Mutual, Individual.</p> <p>§ 2462. Rule against "Disturbing a Plain Meaning," or, Forbidding Explanation except of Ambiguities; History and General Principle.</p> <p>§ 2463. Same: Application of the Rule to Wills, Deeds, etc.</p> <p>§ 2464. Usage of Trade or Locality, when to apply.</p> <p>§ 2465. Parties' Mutual Understanding; Identifying a Description.</p> <p>§ 2466. Individual Party's Meaning: (1) Deeds and Contracts.</p> | <p>§ 2467. Same: (2) Wills.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">2. Sources of Interpretation.</p> <p>§ 2470. General Principle: All Extrinsic Circumstances may be Considered.</p> <p>§ 2471. Exceptions for Declarations of Intention.</p> <p>§ 2472. Same: (1) Exception for Equivocation or Latent Ambiguity.</p> <p>§ 2473. Same: Blanks and Patent Ambiguities.</p> <p>§ 2474. Same: (2) Exception for Erroneous Description.</p> <p>§ 2475. Same: (3) Exception for Rebutting an Equity (Legacies and Advancements).</p> <p>§ 2476. <i>Falsa Demonstratio non Nocet</i>; General Principle.</p> <p>§ 2477. Same: Application to Deeds and Wills.</p> <p>§ 2478. Sundry Rules; Interpretation of Statutes.</p> |
|---|--|

CHAPTER LXXXVI.

BOOK II. — BY WHOM EVIDENCE MUST BE PRESENTED (BURDEN OF PROOF; PRESUMPTIONS).

TITLE I. — GENERAL THEORY.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>§ 2483. Production of Evidence by the Parties.</p> <p>§ 2484. Evidence sought by the Judge <i>ex mero motu</i>; Questions to Witnesses by the Judge.</p> <p>§ 2485. Burden of Proof; (1) First Meaning: Risk of Non-persuasion.</p> <p>§ 2486. Same: Test for this Burden; Negative and Affirmative Allegations; Facts peculiarly within a Party's Knowledge.</p> <p>§ 2487. Burden of Proof; (2) Second Meaning: Duty of Producing Evidence.</p> <p>§ 2488. Same: Test for this Burden.</p> <p>§ 2489. Shifting the Burden of Proof.</p> <p>§ 2490. Presumptions; Legal Effect of a Presumption.</p> <p>§ 2491. Same: Presumptions of Law and Presumptions of Fact.</p> | <p>§ 2492. Same: Conclusive Presumptions; Rebuttable Presumptions.</p> <p>§ 2493. Same: Conflicting Presumptions; Counter Presumptions.</p> <p>§ 2494. Same: <i>Prima facie</i> Evidence; Sufficient Evidence for the Jury; <i>Scintilla</i> of Evidence.</p> <p>§ 2495. Same: Direction of a Verdict, Motion for a Nonsuit, and Demurrer to Evidence, distinguished.</p> <p>§ 2496. Same: Waiver of Motion by subsequent Introduction of Evidence.</p> <p>§ 2497. Measure of Persuasion; (1) Proof beyond a Reasonable Doubt; Rule for Criminal Cases.</p> <p>§ 2498. Same: (2) Proof by Preponderance of Evidence; Rule for Civil Cases.</p> |
|---|--|

CHAPTER LXXXVII.

TITLE II. — BURDENS AND PRESUMPTIONS IN SPECIFIC ISSUES.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>§ 2500. Sanity: (1) Testamentary and other Civil Causes; Suicide.</p> <p>§ 2501. Same: (2) Criminal Causes.</p> <p>§ 2502. Undue Influence and Fraud: (1) Testamentary Causes.</p> <p>§ 2503. Same: (2) Confidential Relations of Grantee or Beneficiary.</p> <p>§ 2504. Same: (3) Fraudulent Conveyances against Creditors.</p> <p>§ 2505. Marriage: (1) Consent, from Cohabitation or Ceremony.</p> <p>§ 2506. Same: (2) Capacity, as affected by Intervening Death, Divorce, or Marriage.</p> <p>§ 2507. Negligence and Accident: (1) Contributory Negligence.</p> <p>§ 2508. Same: (2) Loss by Bailee.</p> <p>§ 2509. Same: (3) Defective Machines, Vehicles, and Apparatus.</p> <p>§ 2510. Same: (4) Death by Violence.</p> <p>§ 2511. Crimes: (1) Innocence, Malice, Guilt, etc.</p> <p>§ 2512. Same: (2) Self-Defence, Alibi.</p> <p>§ 2513. Same: (3) Possession of Stolen Goods.</p> <p>§ 2514. Same: (4) Capacity (Infancy, Intoxication, Coverture).</p> <p>§ 2515. Ownership: (1) Possession of Land and Personality.</p> <p>§ 2516. Same: (2) Possession of Negotiable Instrument.</p> <p>§ 2517. Payment: (1) Lapse of Time.</p> | <p>§ 2518. Same: (2) Possession of Instrument.</p> <p>§ 2519. Execution and Contents of Document: (1) Letters and Telegrams.</p> <p>§ 2520. Same: (2) Execution of Deeds (Delivery, Date, Seal).</p> <p>§ 2521. Same: (3) Ancient Documents.</p> <p>§ 2522. Same: (4) Lost Grant or other Document.</p> <p>§ 2523. Same: (5) Lost Will (Contents and Revocation).</p> <p>§ 2524. Same: (6) Spoliation of Documents.</p> <p>§ 2525. Same: (7) Alteration of Documents.</p> <p>§ 2526. Gifts (Wife's Separate Estate, Child's Advancement).</p> <p>§ 2527. Legitimacy.</p> <p>§ 2528. Chastity; Child-bearing.</p> <p>§ 2529. Identity of Person (from Name, etc.).</p> <p>§ 2530. Continuity; (1) in general.</p> <p>§ 2531. Same: Life and Death.</p> <p>§ 2532. Same: Survivorship.</p> <p>§ 2533. Seaworthiness.</p> <p>§ 2534. Regularity; (1) Performance of Official Duty and Regularity of Proceedings.</p> <p>§ 2535. Same: (2) Appointment and Authority of Officers.</p> <p>§ 2536. Similarity of Foreign Law.</p> <p>§ 2537. Contracts.</p> <p>§ 2538. Statute of Limitations.</p> <p>§ 2539. Malicious Prosecution.</p> |
|---|--|

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER LXXXVIII.

BOOK III.—TO WHOM EVIDENCE MUST BE PRESENTED
(LAW AND FACT; JUDGE AND JURY).

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| § 2550. Admissibility of Evidence. | § 2556. Construction of Documents. |
| § 2551. Sufficiency of Evidence. | § 2557. Criminal Intent. |
| § 2552. Negligence. | § 2558. Foreign Law. |
| § 2553. Reasonableness. | § 2559. Local Law. |
| § 2554. Same: Malicious Prosecution. | |

CHAPTER LXXXIX.

BOOK IV.—OF WHAT PROPOSITIONS NO EVIDENCE NEED
BE PRESENTED.

TITLE I.—JUDICIAL NOTICE.

1. General Principles.

- | | |
|--|--|
| § 2565. Theory of Judicial Notice. | § 2574. Political Facts: (1) International Affairs;
Seals of State. |
| § 2566. Anomalous Meanings. | § 2575. Same: (2) Domestic Political Organiza-
tion; Boundaries, Capitals, etc. |
| § 2567. Effect of Judicial Notice; (1) not Con-
clusive. | § 2576. Same: (3) Domestic Officials, their Identi-
tity and Authority; Genuineness of Offi-
cial Documents. |
| § 2568. Same: (2) Notice must be requested;
Pleading a Statute. | § 2577. Same: (4) Elections, etc. |
| § 2569. Same: (3) Judge may investigate. | § 2578. Judicial Proceedings: (1) Officers and
Rules of Court. |
| § 2570. Judicial Notice by the Jury's own
Knowledge. | § 2579. Same: (2) Records of Proceedings. |
| | § 2580. Notorious Miscellaneous Facts: (1) Com-
merce and Industry. |
| | § 2581. Same: (2) Geography and Natural
Science. |
| | § 2582. Same: (3) Sundries. |

2. Specific Facts Noticed.

- § 2572. Laws: (1) Domestic Statutes and Ord-
nances.
- § 2573. Same: (2) Foreign Law.

CHAPTER XC.

TITLE II.—JUDICIAL ADMISSIONS.

- | | |
|---|--|
| § 2583. Theory of Judicial Admissions. | § 2593. Same: (4) Effect on Subsequent Trials. |
| § 2589. Distinction between Judicial Admissions,
Pleadings, and Estoppels. | § 2594. Form and Tenor of the Admission; Who
is authorized. |
| § 2590. Effect of Judicial Admissions: (1) Con-
clusive upon the Party making. | § 2595. Sundry Classes of Admissions: (1) Gen-
uineness of a Document. |
| § 2591. Same: (2) Exclusive of Evidence by the
Party benefiting. | § 2596. Same: (2) Testimony of an Absent
Witness, admitted to avoid a Continu-
ance. |
| § 2592. Same: (3) Validity as a Waiver of Un-
constitutionality or other Illegality. | |

TABLE OF STATUTES CITED	
TABLE OF CASES	3633
INDEX	3671
	3845

LIST OF STATUTORY COMPILATIONS AND LATEST REPORTS AND STATUTES CONSULTED.

I. STATUTES.

The titles and dates of the compilations of statutes referred to in this work, and the years of the latest session laws consulted in its preparation, are shown in the table below. In a few jurisdictions new official revised compilations have been made since the material was originally collected for this work, but the usual (and culpable) lack of a table of cross-references in the new revision to the former numbering has made it impracticable in this work to insert the new numbering in every instance; for Massachusetts, however (where a perfect table is published), and for South Carolina, the citations to the revisions of 1902 have been added. The large number of statutory citations (some nine thousand in all) made any further collation of the new numbering impracticable; and the examination of the session laws, to date of printing, make it reasonably certain that the legislative changes would all be represented, under one or other form of citation:

Jurisdiction.	Title and Date of Compilation Used.	Date of Latest Session Laws Examined.
ENGLAND		1903
CANADA :		
<i>Dominion</i>	Revised Statutes 1886	1902
<i>British Columbia</i>	Revised Statutes 1897	1903
<i>Manitoba</i>	Revised Statutes 1902	1903
<i>New Brunswick</i>	Consolidated Statutes 1877	1903
<i>Newfoundland</i>	Consolidated Statutes 1892	1903
<i>Northwest Territories</i>	Consolidated Ordinances 1898	1903
<i>Nova Scotia</i>	Revised Statutes 1900	1903
<i>Ontario</i>	Revised Statutes 1897	1903
<i>Prince Edward Island</i>	¹	1902
UNITED STATES: ²		
<i>Alabama</i>	Code 1897	1901
<i>Alaska</i>	Carter's Laws of Alaska 1900 (U. S. St. 1900, March 3 and June 6)	1903
<i>Arizona</i>	Revised Statutes 1887; Penal Code 1887	1903
<i>Arkansas</i>	Sandels and Hill's Digest of Statutes 1894	1903
<i>California</i>	Codes 1872; Deering's Supplements 1889, Pomeroy's edition of 1901 ³	1902
<i>Colorado</i>	Mills' Annotated Statutes 1891, Supplement 1896, and Code of Civil Procedure 1896	1902
<i>Columbia (District)</i>	Abert and Lovejoy's Compiled Statutes 1894; Code 1901 (U. S. St. 1901, c. 854)	1903
<i>Connecticut</i>	General Statutes 1887	1903
<i>Delaware</i>	Revised Statutes 1893	1903

¹ There being no compilation here, and the Evidence Act of 1889 having codified most of the rules, no complete search was made for statutes prior to 1889, except that those of 1873 and 1887, dealing with evidence, were collated with that of 1889.

² The Legislatures in most States meet biennially, so that the laws of 1902 were in such cases sometimes the latest. In Alabama the laws of 1903 had not come to hand in January, 1904.

³ A note on the validity of the Commission's amendments of 1901 will be found in § 488.

LIST OF COMPILATIONS CONSULTED.

Jurisdiction.	Title and Date of Compilation Used.	Date of Latest Session Laws Examined.
UNITED STATES:		
<i>Florida</i>	Revised Statutes 1892	
<i>Georgia</i>	Code 1895; Van Epps' Supplement 1900	1903
<i>Hawaii</i>	Penal Laws 1897; Revised Civil Laws 1897	1903
<i>Idaho</i>	Revised Statutes 1887; Constitution 1899	1901
<i>Illinois</i>	Revised Statutes 1874, Hurd's edition of 1898	1903
<i>Indiana</i>	Tbornton's Revised Statutes 1897	1903
<i>Indian Territory,¹</i>		
<i>Iowa</i>	Ebersole's Annotated Code 1897	1903
<i>Kansas</i>	Webb's General Statutes 1897	1903
<i>Kentucky</i>	Carroll's Statutes 1899, and Codes of Civil and Criminal Procedure 1895, edition of 1900	1903
<i>Louisiana</i>	Saunders' Revised Civil Code 1888; Garland's Revised Code of Practice 1894 and Supplement 1900; Wolf's Revised Laws 1897; Constitution 1898	1902
<i>Maine</i>	Public Statutes 1883, Supplement 1895	1902
<i>Maryland</i>	Poe's Public General Laws 1888; Supplement 1900	1903
<i>Massachusetts</i>	Public Statutes 1882; Revised Laws 1902	1902
<i>Michigan</i>	Miller's Compiled Laws 1897	1903
<i>Minnesota</i>	Wenzell, Lane, and Tiffany's General Statutes 1894	1903
<i>Mississippi</i>	Thompson, Dillard, and Campbell's Annotated Code 1892	1903
<i>Missouri</i>	Revised Statutes 1899	1902
<i>Montana</i>	Saunders' Codes and Statutes 1895	1903
<i>Nebraska</i>	Brown and Wheeler's Compiled Statutes 1899	1903
<i>Nevada</i>	Baily and Hammond's General Statutes 1885	1903
<i>New Hampshire</i>	Public Statutes 1891	1903
<i>New Jersey</i>	General Statutes 1896	1903
<i>New Mexico</i>	Compiled Laws 1897	1903
<i>New York</i>	Birdseye's Revised Statutes 1896	1903
<i>North Carolina</i>	Code 1883; Long and Lawrence's Amendments 1897	1903
<i>North Dakota</i>	Revised Codes 1895	1903
<i>Ohio</i>	Bates' Annotated Revised Statutes 1898	1903
<i>Oklahoma</i>	Statutes 1893	1902
<i>Oregon</i>	Hill's Codes and General Laws 1892	1903
<i>Pennsylvania</i>	Pepper and Lewis' Digest 1896	1903
<i>Philippine Islands,²</i>		
<i>Porto Rico,²</i>		
<i>Rhode Island</i>	General Laws 1896	
<i>South Carolina</i>	Revised Statutes 1893; Code 1902	1903
<i>South Dakota</i>	Grantham's Statutes 1899	1903
<i>Tennessee</i>	Shannon's Annotated Code 1896	1903
<i>Texas</i>	Revised Civil Statutes 1895; Penal Code 1895; Code of Criminal Procedure 1895	1903
<i>United States</i>	Revised Statutes 1878, Supplements 1891, 1895	1903
<i>Utah</i>	Revised Statutes 1898	1903
<i>Vermont</i>	Statutes 1894	1903
<i>Virginia</i>	Code 1897, Supplement 1898	1902
<i>Washington</i>	Ballinger's Annotated Codes and Statutes 1897	1903
<i>West Virginia</i>	Code 1891, third edition	1903
<i>Wisconsin</i>	Sanborn and Berryman's Statutes 1898	1903
<i>Wyoming</i>	Revised Statutes 1887	1903

¹ Governed by Federal and Arkansas statutes, and by Indian law, not here considered.
² These laws are not here considered, being chiefly of Spanish origin.

LIST OF LATEST REPORTS CONSULTED.

II. REPORTS.

Most of the citations of decisions rendered since 1893 have been taken from the reports published in the National Reporter System, as they appeared in weekly numbers. For all decisions reported since the beginning of that System, the duplicate citation has been added, to include both the Official Report and the National Reporter, — most of these duplicate citations being furnished through the courtesy of the West Publishing Company, the remainder added by the author from the Blue Books. As the printing progressed, the duplicate citations of the Official Reports appearing from time to time were obtained from the Third Labels and inserted in the proof. Thus it happens that in the earlier parts of the book most of the citations of decisions of 1903 are to the National Reporters only.

The printing of these present volumes began in January, 1904, and occupied a full year; it was therefore desirable to set a definite point of time for the ending of citations (instead of inserting current late cases in the latter portions of the book only), in order that those who use the book may know where to begin in bringing the later citations down to the date of their consultation. The point taken was therefore that volume of the different National Reporters which ended nearest to January, 1904; this ranged (dating by the weekly issues) between November, 1903, and March, 1904. Substantially, then, the citations come down to the beginning of 1904. The latest volumes of Reporters consulted were as follows:

Atlantic Reporter, vol. 55.
Federal Reporter, vol. 125.
Northeastern Reporter, vol. 68.
Northwestern Reporter, vol. 96.
Pacific Reporter, vol. 73.

Southern Reporter, vol. 35.
Southeastern Reporter, vol. 45.
Southwestern Reporter, vol. 76.
Supreme Court Reporter, vol. 23.

and of Official Reports not covered by the National Reporter System:

District of Columbia Appeals, vol. 21.

Hawaii, vol. 13.

The latest volumes of English and Canadian Reports consulted were as follows:

England, Law Reports 1903.
Canada (Dominion), vol. 32.
British Columbia, vol. 10, pt. 1.
Manitoba, vol. 12.
New Brunswick, vol. 34.

Newfoundland, vol. 5.
Northwest Territories, vol. 5, pts. 1, 2.
Nova Scotia, vol. 35.
Ontario, Law Reports, vol. 5.
Prince Edward Island, vol. 2.

The reports of the Appellate (intermediate) Courts in Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, New York (Supreme Court), and Texas, have not been cited, except on interesting matters for which there is scanty authority; partly because their rulings are not final, and partly because in some jurisdictions they are expressly made not binding as precedents. The trial rulings of Federal District Courts since the creation of the Circuit Court of Appeals have also been left unnoticed to a similar extent.

III. CITATION OF THIS TREATISE.

Citations of other parts of this treatise are made herein by number of section (§) and number of note. The notes are numbered continuously within each section.

Between the chapters, and between main subdivisions of each chapter, there are from one to five (occasionally more) numbers omitted; so that the series of numbers does not read consecutively at those points. This is not an inadvertence, nor a sign of materials omitted; but merely a mechanical expedient which became indispensable in working upon a bulky manuscript. In the course of inserting the cross-references (some ten thousand), a great number of the references obviously had to be made, during the progress of the work, to portions of the text yet unwritten; and it therefore became necessary to give to these topics reference-numbers beforehand. In order to allow for occasional additions of topics in the course of the work, these blanks were left in the series. A reference to the California Codes will show that this expedient is not without precedent.

EVIDENCE

IN

TRIALS AT COMMON LAW.

PART III: RULES OF EXTRINSIC POLICY.

TITLE II, SUB-TITLE III (*continued*): TESTIMONIAL PRIVILEGE.

TOPIC B: PRIVILEGED COMMUNICATIONS.

SUB-TOPIC I: CONFIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS IN GENERAL.

CHAPTER LXXIX.

§ 2285. General Principle of Privileged Com- | not Privileged: Clerks, Trustees, Bankers, News-
munications. | papers, etc.
§ 2286. Sundry Confidential Communications | § 2287. Same: Telegrams.

§ 2285. **General Principle of Privileged Communications.** Looking back at the principle of Privilege, as an exception to the general liability of every person to give testimony to all facts inquired of in a court of justice, and having in view that preponderance of extrinsic policy which alone can justify the recognition of any such exception (*ante*, §§ 2192, 2197), four fundamental conditions may be predicated as necessary to the establishment of a privilege against the disclosure of communications between persons standing in a given relation. (1) The communications must originate in a *confidence* that they will not be disclosed; (2) This element of *confidentiality must be essential* to the full and satisfactory maintenance of the relation between the parties; (3) The *relation* must be one which in the opinion of the community ought to be sedulously *fostered*; and (4) The *injury* that would inure to the relation by the disclosure of the communications must be *greater than the benefit* thereby gained for the correct disposal of litigation.¹

These four conditions being present, a privilege should be recognized; and not otherwise. That they are present in most of the recognized privileges is plain enough; and the absence of one or more of them serves to explain

¹ 1851, *Wigram, V. C.*, in *Russell v. Jackson*, 9 Hare 387, 391 ("The rule does not rest simply upon the confidence reposed; . . . it seems to rest, not upon the confidence itself, but upon the necessity of carrying it out").

why certain privileges have failed to obtain the recognition sometimes demanded for them. In the privilege for communications between Attorney and Client, for example, all four are present; and the doubt which Bentham has raised as to the policy of that privilege fixes upon the only condition therein open to dispute, namely, the fourth. In the privilege for communications between Husband and Wife, all four conditions are again present; and the chief variance of judicial opinion in defining the privilege (*i. e.* in holding, as some do, that the protection extends to all communications, or, as others do, to confidential communications only) is due to a question as to the fulfilment of the first condition. In the privileges for communications between Jurors and between Informer and Government, the four conditions are clearly present. In the privilege (denied at common law) for communications between Physician and Patient, the fallacy of recognizing it lies in the incorrect assumption that the second condition is generally present. In the privilege (also denied at common law) for communications between Priest and Penitent, the objection to its recognition has probably lain in a tacit denial of the third condition. In the privilege (sometimes urged) for communications sent by telegraph, the reluctance to recognize it has apparently been due to a perception that no one of the four conditions is thoroughly fulfilled. These four conditions must serve as the foundation of policy for determining all such privileges, whether claimed or established.

§ 2286. **Sundry Confidential Communications not privileged; Clerks, Trustees, etc.** In general, then, the *mere fact that a communication was made in express confidence*, or in the implied confidence of a *confidential relation*, does not create a privilege. This rule is not questioned to-day.¹ No pledge of privacy, nor oath of secrecy,² can avail against demand for the truth in a court of justice:

1833, *Parnell Commission's Proceedings*, 103d day, *Times' Rep.* pt. 28, pp. 19 ff.; Mr. John O'Connor, M. P., once an active Fenian, was under examination as to his transactions in 1879 with various persons concerned in the Fenian brotherhood; in refusing to speak upon those matters, he said in explanation: "I may as well tell you that I do not intend to admit to you who were associated with me in these transactions. I was bound to these people by an obligation that they accepted in good faith, and I am not going to betray them." . . . *Counsel*. "Did you see Devoy at the end of 1878 or the beginning of 1879?" *Witness*: "I must decline to answer"; *Counsel*: "I submit, my lord, that I have a right to press this question"; *President Hannen*: "I have explained several

¹ With the following cases should be compared those cited *ante*, §§ 2211-2215, involving disclosures of secret topics, irrespective of communications: 1811, *Berkeley Peerage Trial*, *Sherwood's Abstract*, 41 (general principle); 1838, *Greenlaw v. King*, 1 *Beav.* 137, 145 ("persons in the most closely confidential relation are bound to disclose communications made to them"); 1867, *Hopkinson v. Burghley*, L. R. 2 Ch. App. 447 (letter to defendant, with confidential communication from a third person, held not privileged); 1881, *Jessel, M. R.*, in *Wheeler v. Le Marchant*, L. R. 17 Ch. D. 675, 681 (general

principle); 1897, *Cox v. Montague*, 24 C. C. A. 364, 78 *Fed.* 845 (general principle).

² 1834, *R. v. Shaw*, 6 C. & P. 373 (communication under oath of secrecy to a fellow-prisoner in jail); 1836, *R. v. Thomas*, 7 *id.* 346 (confession under a promise of secrecy); 1898, *Owens v. Frank*, 7 *Wyo.* 457, 53 *Pac.* 282 (communication made in confidence between members of the Masonic order) The rule that a confession obtained by fraud is nevertheless admissible (*ante*, § 841) also illustrates the principle.

times that these excuses which are made for not giving evidence are not for a moment tenable in a court of justice. That a man has bound himself by an illegal oath in connection with an illegal association cannot of course be recognized as an excuse. But we have a delicate task to perform, and I do not propose at present to take the measures which are in my power." After a subsequent refusal to answer other questions, *Counsel*: "What is your objection?" *Witness*: "It is an objection to break my oath. It is a regard for an obligation that I respect, even though others may not respect it"; *President Hannen*: "Are you a Protestant or a Roman Catholic?" *Witness*: "A Roman Catholic"; *President Hannen*: "Do you mean to assert that your Church justifies a refusal to give evidence on the ground that you have taken the illegal oath of an illegal society?" *Witness*: "I have not studied the theology of the matter"; *President Hannen*: "Nor the morality?" *Witness*: "I know what my code of honor is, my lord, and I intend to adhere to it."

Accordingly, a confidential communication to a clerk,³ to a trustee,⁴ to a commercial agency,⁵ to a banker,⁶ to a journalist,⁷ or to any other person not holding one of the specific relations hereafter considered, is not privileged from disclosure.⁸

But this was not always so. In the trials of the 1600s, the obligations of honor among gentlemen (and the English bench and bar were peculiarly

³ 1824, *Webb v. Smith*, 1 C. & P. 337 (an articulated clerk, held compellable to disclose a matter learned in the employer's business, but not "specially entrusted as a matter of secrecy"); 1809, *Corps v. Robinson*, 2 Wash. C. C. 388 (the head clerk of the defendant, compelled to testify to confidential matters; "it has never been considered an objection which the witness can make"). *Contra*: Ia. Code 1897, § 4608 (privilege established for a "stenographer or confidential clerk of any person, who obtains such information by reason of his employment"; the amendment, which practically abolishes this, is quoted post, § 2292). Compare the privilege for trade secrets, *i. e.* for the facts of the business, as distinguished from communications (*ante*, § 2212).

⁴ *Jones v. Manchester*, quoted *infra*. Compare *Mr. J. Buller's* two statements, quoted *infra*. But a trustee, so far as identified with a party, was privileged from discovery, before modern legislation: *ante*, § 2218.

⁵ 1894, *Sbaner v. Alterton*, 151 U. S. 607, 617, 14 Snp. 442.

⁶ 1826, *Loyd v. Freshfield*, 2 C. & P. 325, 329 (clerk of a banker compelled to state the figures of a depositor's balance); 1897, *Hannum v. McRae*, 17 Ont. Pr. 567, 18 Id. 185 (bank manager must attend with the bank's books on subpoena; even the English statute allowing a party to prove them by copy—quoted *ante*, § 1223—does not create a privilege not to disclose the accounts of customers; though that statute is not in force in Ontario; good opinion by *MacLennan, J.*).

⁷ 1888, *Parnell Commission's Proceedings*, 52d day, *Times' Rep.* pt. 14, p. 18 (ruled that a newspaper had no privilege to withhold the name of a contributor); 1895, *U. S. v. Edwards, U. S. v. Shriver, D. C.*, reported, with Senator *Edmonds'* brief, in *Smith's Digest of Precedents of Privilege of Congress*, 1894, pp. 828, 848, 856 ("Such a rule [of privilege] would be in viola-

tion of a sound public policy"); 1897, *People v. Durrant*, 116 Cal. 179, 48 Pac. 75 ("Considering that Miss C. was a newspaper reporter, . . . the claim scarcely merits comment"); 1897, *Ex parte Lawrence*, ib. 298, 48 Pac. 124 (reporter's refusal to disclose information to a legislative committee, held improper).

The following enactment, as detestable in substance as it is crude in form, will probably remain unique: *Md. St.* 1896, c. 249 ("No person engaged in, connected with, or employed on a newspaper or journal shall be compelled to disclose in any legal proceeding or trial, or before any committee of the Legislature or elsewhere, the source of any news or information procured or obtained by him for or published in the newspaper on and in which he is engaged, connected with or employed").

⁸ The following statutes are anomalous: *Mich. Comp. L.* 1897, §§ 8612, 8615 (where an unmarried woman is with child or has "lived with a man and has been considered as his wife," "or for other good reason . . . deemed to be sufficient by the judge of probate, desires to keep the exact date of the marriage a secret, to protect the good name of herself and the reputation of her family," the probate judge may issue "without publicity a marriage license," and "all knowledge of any facts" about it coming to the judge, officials, physicians, and witnesses "shall be deemed to be privileged communications"); *Can. Rev. St.* 1886, c. 93, § 17 (bridge company's return of bridge-casualties, to be privileged communications); *N. Sc. Rev. St.* 1900, c. 99, § 307 (railway company's returns of casualties, expenditures, etc., to be "privileged communications, and shall not be evidence in any court whatsoever"). For a taxpayer's return of property to the assessor, see post, § 2374, under the head of communications to Government, with which perhaps the above Canadian statutes might be classed.

dominated by that standard) were often put forward as a sufficient ground for maintaining silence.⁹ By the middle of the 1700s it seemed as though this notion would prevail, at any rate in certain worthy cases.¹⁰ The same point of view is also plain at that time in the treatment of the privilege for attorney and client, which was then supposed to rest upon the honorable obligations of the attorney, rather than upon objective considerations of policy (*post*, § 2290). But a stricter view of justice finally dominated, and in the notorious Duchess of Kingston's Case the older point of view was definitely abandoned and the new one thoroughly promulgated:

1776, *Duchess of Kingston's Case*, 20 How. St. Tr. 586; bigamy; trial by the House of Lords; to prove the first and disputed marriage, the question was asked of Lord Barrington, an old friend of the accused: "Did you ever hear from the lady at the bar that she was married to Mr. Hervey?" Lord Barrington: "If anything has been confided to my honor, or confidentially told me, I do hold, with humble submission to your lordships, that as a man of honor, as a man regardful of the laws of society, I cannot reveal it." Then the Duchess released Lord Barrington from every obligation of honor; and the Solicitor-General, not to be outdone, declared that he would ask no more questions; but several lords insisted on their right to continue the questioning; Lord Camden: "I hope that your lordships, sitting in judgment on criminal cases — the highest and most important that may affect the lives, liberties, and properties of your lordships — that you shall not think it befitting the dignity of this high Court of justice to be debating the etiquette of honor at the same time when we are trying lives and liberties. My lords, the laws of this land — I speak it boldly in this grave assembly — are to receive another answer from those who are called to depose at your bar, than to be told that in point of honor and of conscience they do not think that they acquit themselves like persons of that description

⁹ 1613, Countess of Shrewsbury's Case, 12 Rep. 94 (before a council, including the Chancellor, Chief Justices, and Chief Baron; the Countess, being "required to declare her knowledge" concerning the escape of Lady Arabella Stuart, refused, for one reason, because "she had made a rash vow that she would not declare anything in particular touching the said points"; but she was adjudged in contempt, since "rash and illegal vows make not an excuse"; and the subject's very oath of allegiance hinds her "without being demanded, to reveal to the king what she knows concerning the premises, upon which great mischief may happen to the king and the realm"; possibly in a civil case the conclusion might have been different); 1673, *Jones v. Countess of Manchester*, 1 Ventr. 197 (the Earl of Manchester, brother to the plaintiff, had the key of a box, held by a stranger, and containing her deeds; the box was in court, but the earl refused to surrender the key, being a trustee for his sister, claiming that "it would be a breach of the trust reposed in him, which he held sacred and inviolable"; but Lord Hale told him, though they could not compel him there to do it, yet the law required it; "for though it is against the duty of a counsellor or solicitor, etc., to discover the evidence which he who retains him acquaints him with, yet a trustee may and ought to produce writings, etc."); Lord Kenyon's allusion (in *Wilson v. Rastall*, 4 T. R. 753, 758) to the testimony of Lord Howard against Lord Russell, in 1683 (9 How. St. Tr. 611), as an example of compelling

the revelation of confidences, seems not to be founded on anything in the report of the trial.

¹⁰ 1676, *Bulstrode v. Letchmere*, Freem. Ch. 5 ("the Lord Chancellor made it a doubt if a thing were revealed under the condition of secrecy to one that was not a barrister, whether or no he would oblige him to answer"); 1682, *Lord Grey's Trial*, 9 How. St. Tr. 127, 175 (information against several persons for carrying off and debauching Lady Henrietta Berkeley; Lady Henrietta testified for the defendant that she left her parents' house voluntarily; on being asked who was with her, she answered, "I shall not give any account of that, for I will not betray anybody for their kindness to me; . . . I will not break my vow to them"; Mr. J. Doiben: "If they ask you of anybody in the information, . . . you must tell if it were any of them, but you are not bound to tell if it were any one else"; L. Henrietta: "No, it was none of them"); 1722, *Layser's Trial*, 16 id. 93, 245 (Lord North and Grey: "It is a little hard for a man of honour to betray conversation, what passed over a bottle of wine in discourse; but since your lordship requires it, I must submit"); 1767, *Buller, Trials at Nisi Prius*, 284 (a naked trust does not disqualify the trustee as interested; "however, a trustee shall not be a witness to betray the trust"; citing a ruling of L. C. J. Holt's that a broker of offices should not be received to testify to the occasion of giving a bond, "because it appeared he was privately entrusted to make the bargain by both parties, and to keep it secret").

when they declare what they know"; Duke of Richmond: "I do not look on a witness at the bar to be the witness of the counsel or of the prisoner, but the witness of the House"; Lord Barrington still refusing, the Lords adjourned to discuss the point of law, and it was announced to him that "it is the judgment of this House that you are bound by law to answer all such questions as shall be put to you."

1777, *Hotham, B.*, in *Hill's Trial*, 20 How. St. Tr. 1362 (to the jury, commenting on the testimony of an informer who disclosed the defendant's secrets): "The defendant certainly thought him his friend, and he [the defendant] therefore did disclose all this to him. Gentlemen, one has only to say further, that if this point of honor was to be so sacred as that a man who comes by knowledge of this sort from an offender was not to be at liberty to disclose it, the most atrocious criminals would every day escape punishment; and therefore it is that the wisdom of the law knows nothing of that point of honor. If the man is a legal witness, you are bound to receive his testimony, giving it, however, that weight only which you think it deserves."

The "point of honor" thus disappeared forever as a motive for recognizing a privilege. But its expiry was undoubtedly viewed with reluctance by many;¹¹ and traces of its later survival across the water were to be noticed for some time thereafter.¹²

§ 2287. *Same: Telegrams.* That the relation between the telegram-transmitter and the telegram-sender, and the confidence of the communication as between them, are sufficient to establish a privilege against the operator's disclosure has been supported by a few distinguished judicial names:

1874, *Bramwell, B.*, in the *Stroud Election Case*, 3 O'M. & H. 107, 112: "I really think that for the public good there ought to be no power of compelling the production of these documents. It is the necessary consequence that persons who correspond by telegram are obliged to repose confidence in the Crown, and I believe it will be for the public good if it is found that that is a confidence that the Crown cannot be compelled to violate. Inconvenience might arise in many cases. It might arise in the case of a confidential communication between attorney and client, or husband and wife; therefore we must look to the general principle."

1890, *Cooley, J.*, *Constitutional Limitations*, 6th ed., p. 371, note: "The telegraph is used as a means of correspondence, and as a valuable and in many cases an indispensable substitute for the postal facilities; and the communication is made, not because the party desires to put the operator in possession of facts, but because transmission without it is impossible. It is not voluntary in any other sense than this, that the party makes it rather than deprive himself of the benefits of this great invention and improvement. The reasons of a public nature for maintaining the secrecy of telegraphic communication are the same with those which protect correspondence by mail; and though the operator is not a public officer, that circumstance appears to us immaterial. He fulfils an important public function; and the propriety of his preserving inviolable secrecy in regard to communications is so obvious that it is common to provide statutory penalties for disclosure. If on grounds of public policy the operator should not voluntarily disclose, why do not the same considerations forbid the Courts compelling him to do so?"¹

¹¹ 1792, *Wilson v. Rastall*, 4 T. R. 753, 759 (Buller, J.): "The privilege is confined to the cases of counsel, solicitor, and attorney; . . . it is indeed hard in many cases to compel a friend to disclose a confidential conversation; and I should be glad if by law such evidence could be excluded."

¹² 1782, *Morris v. Vanderen*, 1 Dall. 64 (testimony of a clerk, who acted as scrivener of deeds for his employer, offered, but withdrawn

on objection made); 1792, *Mills v. Griswold*, 1 Root 383 ("what the defendant had told him in confidence," held subject to disclosure; the distinction being between "communications which are voluntary" and those which are "necessary in the course of business, as of a client to his attorney"); 1796, *Calkins v. Lee*, 2 id. 363 (similar).

¹ See also the learned jurist's more elaborate exposition in his article (1879) on Inviolability

These arguments have been adequately met in the following passages :

1860, *Dublin Election Case*, 1 O'M. & H. 270, 271 : " Mr. Sanger, the telegraph-officer, when called as a witness to produce the telegrams, said, ' My lord, before I produce these telegrams, I must object to their production. We have always looked upon a telegram as sacred, and we think that this decision of your lordship will shake the confidence of the public in the telegraph.' Mr. Justice Keogh said that the opinion of the telegraph company as to this could make no difference. The telegrams were produced. . . . Mr. Justice Keogh in his judgment said further as to this : ' Telegrams are nothing but electric letters, written by the candidates or their agents to electors. If such letters were in the pockets of the electors, or if copies of them were in desks of the candidates, the petitioners of course would have a right to insist upon their production ; and there is no reason why, because they are transmitted along a wire instead of being written on paper with pen and ink, they should have any greater protection.' "

' 851, *King, P. J.*, in *Henislaw v. Freedman*, 2 Pars. Eq. Cas. 274 : " If we adopt this [alleged] construction of the law, the telegraph may be used with the most absolute security for purposes destructive to the well-being of society, — a state of things rendering its absolute usefulness at least questionable. The correspondence of the traitor, the murderer, the robber, and the swindler, by means of which their crimes and frauds could be the more readily accomplished and their detection and punishment avoided, would become things so sacred that they never could be accessible to the public justice, however deep might be the public interest involved in their production. For the result of the principle contended for is that the seal of secrecy is placed on all telegraphic communications, as well in courts of justice as elsewhere, and that they are to be classed with privileged communications, such as those between husband and wife, counsel and client. . . . The law is jealous of extending the circle of persons excused or interdicted from giving testimony. Parents are required to testify against children, children against parents, brothers against brothers, friends against friends. Communications by letter, made under the deepest obligations of friendship, affection or honor, still must be produced, if deemed necessary to the ascertainment of the truth and the administration of justice by the public tribunals. To this great end of social organization, all secondary causes are required to give way." "

1870, *Mr. Henry Hitchcock*, in *The Inviolability of Telegrams*, 5 South. L. Rev. n. s. 473, 491 : " The offence which this section [of the postal statutes] proscribes is not the disclosure of the contents, nor even primarily the opening or reading of private letters. It consists in taking out of the mail, before its delivery to the person to whom directed, any letter, postal-card, or packet. . . . It is evident, therefore, that the intent and policy of the postal statutes is to protect and assure, not so much the secrecy of private correspondence, as the due fulfilment of a trust voluntarily undertaken by the government in respect of its safe and prompt delivery. It has undertaken this mode of serving the public, and invites the public confidence in such service ; therefore it will punish any violation of the confidence so invited, any interference with its execution of that trust, not sanctioned by law. But, in respect of telegrams transmitted by private companies, the United States have undertaken no trust or duty, nor invited any confidence whatever. The postal statutes, therefore, not only do not protect the secrecy of telegrams, directly or by intendment, but they are founded on reasons which, so far as the government is concerned, furnish no argument, even by analogy, for their protection. . . . The argument from the confidential character of telegrams as between the parties to them, and the expressed or implied pledge of secrecy by the telegraph companies, is still less satisfactory. It assumes that the law respects as privileged, without regard to their contents or relevancy to the pending issues, all communications which the parties to them intend

of Telegraphic Correspondence, 18 Amer. Law C. J., in *State v. Litchfield*, 58 Me. 267, 270 Reg. n. s. 65. (1870).

Similar reasoning is used by Appleton,

shall be secret or confidential. It must amount to this, or to nothing. But it is perfectly well settled that no communication, however confidential, or growing out of personal, social, or business relations however intimate, is for that reason protected from disclosure on the witness-stand, unless it fall within one of the special and limited classes which the law itself makes privileged for reasons of public policy. In truth, all these arguments amount simply to the claim that private telegraphic messages, *as such*, without reference to their contents, constitute a new class of privileged communications. . . . How can it be said that if A, wishing to communicate with B, chooses to transmit his thoughts by electric telegraph instead of by oral or written message, he thereby creates or enters into a relation with B which it is the paramount interest of society itself to protect, by making privileged and inviolable every communication transmitted in that manner, without reference to its contents, even at the expense of the regular administration of justice? Such a rule, if prescribed at all, must be uniform; every communication sent by telegraph must be privileged, as is every communication between attorney and client, or husband and wife. But why should a given message, which, if orally communicated or delivered through the mail, would be subject to compulsory disclosure, become a privileged communication if sent by telegraph? This would be discriminating, not in the interest of the parties concerned, or of society at large, but of the business of the telegraph companies. Public policy, in respect of what communications shall be privileged, has nothing to do with the mode of their transmission, nor with the motive of its selection, nor with the desire of either or both parties for secrecy, but solely with the consequences to society at large of permitting or prohibiting their disclosure in aid of justice. In order, therefore, to support the claim that telegraphic messages, *as such*, should be held privileged communications, it must be shown that unless they are, the electric telegraph cannot be generally made available as a medium of communication, and also that this consequence would be more injurious to society than the denial to the Courts of this means of attaining the truth. But the former proposition is untrue, as experience demonstrates; and as to the latter, the unquestionable danger of abuse is to be met by applying, not by perverting, sound legal principles. On the other hand, the immensely increased facilities for crime, and the grave obstructions to public justice which would result from placing telegraphic messages, *as such*, on the list of privileged communications, are forcibly stated by the Court in the cases already cited, of the *State v. Litchfield* and *Henislaw v. Freedman*."

A sufficient answer, when all is said, to those who advocate this privilege. . . . that the very first condition of a privilege (*ante*, § 2285) is lacking, namely, the intention to keep the message secret in the hands of the transmitter. It is given to him for the sole purpose of being delivered to some one else; and that some one else is not only compellable to disclose it in court, but (for aught that appears) may freely and honorably publish it to others at any time. In short, there is no ultimate and absolute confidentiality in a telegram, but only a mediate and relative secrecy. Since the law need not respect its privacy in its ultimate state, there is no reason for respecting the intermediate stage. Were the telegram addressed to an attorney, in whose hands it would become privileged, the situation would be different; but there the doctrine of agency, as applied to the client's privilege, suffices to protect,³ without creating a new privilege.

In *England*, the privilege for telegrams was at first repudiated,⁴ but after

³ *Post*, § 2301.

⁴ 1869, *Coventry Case*, 1 O'M. & H. 97, 104 (privilege denied for telegrams sent by a pri-

vate company); *Bridgewater Case*, *ib.* 112, 114; *Dublin Election Case*, *ib.* 270, 271 (same; quoted *supra*).

the Government's assumption of telegraphic service in 1868,⁵ it was for a while conceded.⁶ Subsequently, this attitude was abandoned, and now no privilege appears to be recognized.⁷ In *Canada* and the *United States*, no Court has yet given any recognition to the privilege.⁸

It may be added that precisely the same considerations apply to the transmission of messages by *letter-post*. But the Governmental conduct of that service has seemed to complicate that question, and it can better be considered in connection with the privilege for other communications to the Government (*post*, § 2375).

⁵ 1868, St. 31 & 32 Vict. c. 110, § 20 (forbids disclosure of telegrams by officials); 1869, St. 32 & 33 Vict. c. 73, § 23 (provides that nothing shall relieve an officer of the post from any liability which before existed for telegraph company to produce communications in a court of law when duly required).

⁶ 1874, *Taunton Case*, 2 id. 16, 72; *Strond Case*, ib. 107, 110 (production not required, partly because of lack of power, because the documents "are in the custody of her Majesty," and partly because of policy; quoted *supra*); *Bolton Case*, ib. 138, 140 (here required only because the contents had been otherwise disclosed).

⁷ 1880, *Harwich Case*, 3 O'M. & H. 61, 62, 44 L. T. n. s. 187 (Lush, J., treated the *Bolton* case as overruling the prior two, and thought that when the Legislature "transferred the telegraphs to the Post-Office, they intended that the public should be just as well off as they were before"); 1881, *Re Smith*, L. R. Ir. 7 Ch. D. 286 (order for production of telegrams by the Post-Office authorities, granted).

⁸ *Can.*: 1861, *Re New York, Newf. & L. Tel. Co.*, 2 *Morris Newf.* 575 (telegraphic messages in the hands of the operator are not privileged, in spite of his oath under the statute forbidding disclosure); 1862, *Waddell's Case*, 8 Jur. n. s. 181 (Newfoundland; telegraph operator, not privileged from disclosing dispatches, even under a statute forbidding their wilful disclosure); 1888, *Re Dwight v. Macklam*, 15 Ont. 148, 154 (careful opinion by Boyd, C.); 1870, *Leslie v. Hervey*, 15 *Low. Can. Jnr.* 9 (a telegraph company is not privileged to withhold dispatches received, in spite of a statute forbidding disclosure; "the right of this third party to compel the disclosure of all facts bearing on the subject-matter of the suit takes pre-

cedence, for the time, of the general right, subject to the law's limitations, which belongs to every man to prevent his private affairs being enquired into by others"); *U. S.*: 1880, *Woods v. Miller*, 55 Ia. 168, 7 N. W. 484 (a statute prohibiting the disclosure of telegraphic messages does not prevent their production as evidence under an order of court); 1870, *State v. Litchfield*, 58 Me. 267 (a telegraph company is not privileged to withhold dispatches received); 1880, *Ex parte Brown*, 72 Mo. 83, 91 (telegrams in possession of a telegraph company, not privileged); 1851, *Henislaw v. Freedman*, 2 *Pars. Eq. Cas.* 274, *Pa. Com. Pl.* (a telegraph company held not privileged to withhold messages received by it, even under a statute expressly forbidding its operators to disclose dispatches without the consent of sender or receiver; quoted *supra*); 1876, *Keheo's Trial* (Molly Maguire), *Pa.*, *West's Rep.* 128 (statute construed not to privilege telegrams); 1876, Dec. 20, *Louisiana Elections*, *Congressional Record*, 44th Cong. 2d sess. vol. 5, pt. 2, pp. 325-330 (the House adopted the following resolution: "That there is nothing in the law rendering a communication transmitted by telegraph any more privileged than a communication made orally or in any other manner whatever"); 1877, *Barnes' Case*, ih. pp. 452-455, 602-608, 678, 694 (rule applied to enforce production of telegrams in the hands of a telegraph operator at New Orleans); 1882, *U. S. v. Hunter*, 15 Fed. 712 (relevant telegrams must be produced); 1874, *National Bank v. National Bank*, 7 *Va.* 544, 546 (telegraph company not privileged to withhold telegrams from defendant; the whole privilege repudiated).

A statute forbidding disclosure unless "lawfully directed" (*e. g.* *Can. Rev. St.* 1886, c. 134, § 3) obviously does not create a privilege.

TOPIC B (continued): PRIVILEGED COMMUNICATIONS.

SUB-TOPIC II: COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN ATTORNEY AND CLIENT.

CHAPTER LXXX

- § 2290. History of the Privilege.
- § 2291. Policy of the Privilege.
- § 2292. General Principle; Statutory Definitions.

1. "Where legal advice of any kind is sought"

- § 2294. Privilege is irrespective of Litigation begun or contemplated; History of the Doctrine.
- § 2295. Same: General Principle and Policy.
- § 2296. Same: Application to Advice sought for Sundry Non-Legal Purposes; Consultation with Prosecuting Attorneys.
- § 2297. Same: Application to Advice in Conveyancing.
- § 2298. Same: Application to Advice in a Criminal or Fraudulent Transaction.

2. "From a professional legal adviser in his capacity as such,"

- § 2300. Persons having Legal Knowledge, but not admitted to Practice.
- § 2301. Attorney's Clerks and other Agents.
- § 2302. Client's Belief in the Attorney's Status.
- § 2303. Consultation in Attorney's Capacity.
- § 2304. Time of Consultation; Rejection of Retainer by Attorney.

3. "The communications relevant to that purpose,"

- § 2306. Communications, distinguished from Acts; Client's Conduct, Appearance, Abode, etc.
- § 2307. Same: Production of the Client's Documents.
- § 2308. Same: Testimony to Contents of Documents.
- § 2309. Same: Testimony to Possession, Existence, and Execution of Documents.
- § 2310. Relevancy or Necessity of the Communication.

4. "Made in confidence"

- § 2311. Communications must be Confidential; Confidentiality not presumed; Presence of a Third Person; Sundry Applications of the Principle.

- § 2312. Communications to the Opponent or his Attorney, or in Opponent's Presence; Joint Attorney.
- § 2313. Identity of Client or Purpose of Suit.
- § 2314. Execution of a Will or Deed; Temporary Confidentiality.
- § 2315. Same: Attorney as Attesting Witness.

5. "By the client,"

- § 2317. Privilege not applicable to Knowledge acquired by the Attorney from Third Persons, unless as Agents of the Client; Who are Agents.
- § 2318. Documents of the Client existing before Communication; General Liability to Production by Discovery, distinguished.
- § 2319. Same: Conflict of the foregoing Principles, illustrated.
- § 2320. Communications by the Attorney to the Client.

6. "Are at his instance permanently protected"

- § 2321. Privilege is the Client's, not the Attorney's, nor the Party's; Who may Claim.
- § 2322. Inference from Claim of Privilege; Judge to determine Privilege.
- § 2323. Protection continues, though Relation of Client and Attorney be ended.

7. "From disclosure by himself or by the legal adviser,"

- § 2324. Testimony by the Client or by the Attorney.
- § 2325. Indirect Disclosure by the Attorney.
- § 2326. Third Persons overhearing.

8. "Except the client waive the protection."

- § 2327. Waiver in general; Voluntary Testimony as a Waiver.
- § 2328. Waiver by Joint Clients, Agents, Assignees.
- § 2329. Waiver by a Deceased Client's Representative.

§ 2290. **History of the Privilege.** The history of this privilege goes back to the reign of Elizabeth, where it already appears as unquestioned;¹ and it

¹ 1577, *Berd v. Lovciace*, Cory 88 (solicitor exempted from examination touching the cause); 1580, *Dennis v. Codrington*, ib. 143 (on a motion to examine one Oldsworth, "touching a

is therefore the oldest of the privileges for confidential communications. Inasmuch as the testimony of witnesses (in the modern sense) did not come to be a common source of proof in jury trials till the early 1500s (*ante*, § 1364), and as testimonial compulsion does not appear to have been generally authorized until the early part of Elizabeth's reign (*ante*, § 2190), it would seem that the privilege could hardly have come much earlier into existence; for there could have been but little material for its application. It thus appears to have commended itself, at the very outset, as a natural exception to the then novel right of testimonial compulsion.

But the theory of its exclusion, in those days, was very different from that of modern times. It was an objective, not a subjective one,—a consideration for the oath and the honor of the attorney, rather than for the apprehensions of his client. How significant the "point of honor" was, until the end of the 1700s, in almost securing other exemptions from testimonial disclosure, has been already seen (*ante*, § 2286). Clearly the attorney and the barrister are under a solemn pledge of secrecy, not less binding because it is implied and seldom expressed. "The first duty of an attorney," it has been said, "is to keep the secrets of his clients."² If the "point of honor" was to be recognized at all as a ground for exemption, then surely the attorney fell within this exemption. And no doubt this was, in the beginning, and so long as any countenance was given to that general doctrine, the theory of the attorney's exemption.

That doctrine, however, finally lost ground, and by the last quarter of the 1700s, as already noticed (*ante*, § 2286), was entirely repudiated. The judicial search for truth could not endure to be obstructed by a voluntary pledge of secrecy; nor was there any moral delinquency or public odium in breaking one's pledge under force of the law. Doubtless the attorney's exemption would have fallen at the same time with the others of like origin, had not a new theory, ample to sustain and even to enlarge it, by that time come to be recognized. That new theory looked to the necessity of providing subjectively for the client's freedom of apprehension in consulting his legal adviser (*post*, § 2291), and proposed to assure this by removing the risk of disclosure by the attorney even at the hands of the law. The new theory begins to appear

matter in variance, wherein he hath been of counsel, it is ordered he shall not be compelled by subpoena or otherwise to be examined upon any matter concerning the same, wherein he the said Mr. Oldsworth was of counsel, either by the indifferent choice of both parties or with either of them by reason of any annuity or fee"; 1580, *Kelway v. Kelway*, ih. 127 (solicitor of plaintiff to be examined for defendant, "upon any interrogatory which shall not be touching the secrecy of the title or of any other matter which he knoweth as solicitor only"); 1642, *Onhie's Case*, March pl. 136 ("a lawyer who was of counsel may be examined upon oath as to the matter of agreement, not to the validity of an assurance, or to matter of counsel"; 1654, *Roll, C. J.*, in *Waldron v. Ward*, Style 449 ("He is not bound

to make answer for things which may disclose the secrets of his client's cause"); 1664, *Sparke v. Middleton*, 1 Keb. 505 (counsel required in testifying to tell only "such things as he either knew before he was of counsel or that came to his knowledge since by other persons"); 1673, *Legard v. Foot*, Rep. temp. Finch 82 (attorney privileged); 1693, *Anon.*, *Skinner* 404 (counsel privileged).

A few other rulings of the 1600s will be found in the ensuing sections.

² 1836, *Gaselee, J.*, in *Taylor v. Blacklow*, 3 Bing. N. C. 249. This conservative character is said to have been the original of Dickens' judicial fossil, Mr. Justice Stareleigh, who presided in *Bardell v. Pickwick*.

in the early 1700s, coexists with the older one for half a century,³ and then, upon the latter's disappearance, begins for the first time to be much dwelt upon and thoroughly developed. One consequence of this tardy origin was that the detailed rules of this privilege (oldest though it really was) were still in the formative stage in the first half of the 1800s. Another and most unfortunate one was that, by reason of the inconsistency of the two theories, in some of their practical applications, the older notion, so far as represented in precedents, struggled along for some time by the side of the newer one, like two powerful streams debouching into the same channel; and until the domination of the newer one was finally established throughout its boundaries, a turbid and confused volume of rulings abounded. Probably in no rule of evidence having so early an origin were so many points still unsettled until the middle of the 1800s.

The history of the changes of detailed rule that were made necessary by the supervention of the newer theory can better be followed under their separate heads. But it is worth while to sum up here the chief marks of difference. (1) In the first place, under the original theory, the privilege did not at all exempt the *client himself*. The pledge of secrecy had not been taken by him, and therefore the "point of honor" was not his to make.⁴ This, to be sure, was a consequence of little practical moment, except in answering a bill of discovery in chancery; for all through that period the party was privileged in common-law courts from testifying in the trial of civil cases (*ante*, § 2217). As the newer theory developed, the client began to be exempted from making discovery of communications relating to the very case at bar; but in this stage the matter still stood as late as the first quarter of the 1800s.⁵ Even up to that period it had to be insisted from the bar that "the privilege is that of the client and not of the attorney." The earliest judicial pronouncement in this form appears to have been made before 1700;⁶ but it passed unheeded. Mr. Justice Buller, about 1767, repeats that "it is the privilege of the client and not of the counsel or attorney," but complains that "it is mistaking it for the privilege of the witness that has sometimes led judges into the suffering of such a witness to be examined."⁷ Then, when Lord Eldon, in 1801, declares it to be "the privilege of the client and the public,"⁸ the new theory begins to bear fruit.⁹

³ The following passage shows the mingling of the two: *Ante* 1726, Gilbert, Evidence, 136: "After the retainer, they are considered as the same person with their clients, and are trusted with their secrets, which without a breach of confidence cannot be revealed, and without such sort of confidence there could be no trust or dependence on any man, nor any transacting of affairs by the ministry or mediation of another; and therefore the law in this case maintains such sort of confidence inviolable."

⁴ *Post*, § 2321.

⁵ *Post*, § 2294. The much-cited opinion in *Greenough v. Gaskell*, in 1833, which to-day seems to declare nothing but commonplaces,

was in that generation a leading case because of its bearing on this stage of development.

⁶ L. C. J. North, in *Lea v. Wheatley*, 1679, cited in 20 How. St. Tr. 574, note.

⁷ *Trials at Nisi Prius*, 284.

⁸ *Wright v. Mayer*, 6 Ves. Jr. 281.

⁹ The persistence of the older notion is seen as late as 1826; Alexander, C. B., in *Preston v. Carr*, 1 Y. & J. 175, 178: "I cannot accede to the proposition which has been contended for, that the privilege of an attorney is the privilege of the client, to the extent that the client himself may avail himself of that privilege to avoid discovering communications which have passed between him and his solicitor."

(2) In the next place, the attorney's exemption was by the original theory limited to communications received since the beginning of the *litigation at bar* and for its purposes only. The point of honor would protect him thus far; but it was gradually falling into disfavor as the 1700s progressed (*ante*, § 2286), and it would not be recognized further than could be helped. "When the cause is ended," says Chief Baron Bowes in 1743, "he is then only to be considered, with respect to his former employer, as one man to another; and then the breach of trust does not fall within the jurisdiction of this Court; for the Court can't determine what is honor, but what is law."¹⁰ Under the influence of the newer theory, an extension of the attorney's exemption of course took place, to include communications made, first, during any other litigation,¹¹ next, in contemplation of litigation, next, during a controversy but not yet looking to litigation, and, lastly, in any consultation for legal advice, wholly irrespective of litigation or even of controversy. But this gradual extension occupied (in England, at least) nearly a hundred years of judicial annals; and the shackles of the earlier precedents were not finally thrown off until the decade of 1870.¹² (3) It followed also, under the original theory, that the privilege could be *waived by the attorney*. Since only the attorney's honor is involved, the Court would not always attempt to judge its standards or to enforce them, if the attorney himself was willing to risk his conscience and his reputation. "The Court can't determine what is honor," said Chief Baron Bowes, in 1743.¹³ Sir John Strange, Master of the Rolls, a decade later,¹⁴ when pressed to exclude an attorney's deposition, "who ought not to betray the secrets of their clients," left it to the attorney to do as he pleased; "it is a very right rule; but as he himself has not objected to it, the Court has nothing to do with it." Such liberty, no doubt, was seldom exercised by attorneys; but they clearly had it, under the older theory; and this also took some time in disappearing.

It is plain, then, that the newer theory met the older one at several points of conflict; and it is no wonder that the development of the new and the ousting of the old came to be a process of many decades, and brought a residuum of trouble and confusion into the precedents of the 1800s.

§ 2291. **Policy of the Privilege.** The policy of the privilege has been plainly grounded, since the latter part of the 1700s, on subjective considerations. In order to promote freedom of consultation of legal advisers by clients, the apprehension of compelled disclosure by the legal advisers must be removed; and hence the law must prohibit such disclosure except on the client's consent. Such is the modern theory. In short, all four of the ele-

¹⁰ *Annesley v. Anglessea*, 17 How. St. Tr.

¹¹ The cases of *DuBarré v. Livette*, Peake N. P. 77 (1791) and *Wilson v. Rastall*, 4 T. R. 753 (1792) seem to have been the first to recognize this. *Wilson v. Rastall* is another of the cases which meant a great deal to their generation, but are now landmarks of forgotten struggles.

¹² In 1873, in *Minet v. Morgan*, L. R. 8 Ch. 361, 368, L. C. Selborne said, in commenting on counsel's citation of the earlier rulings, "The law has now attained to a footing which made me a little surprised to hear the matter reopened now."

¹³ Quoted *supra*.

¹⁴ *Winchester v. Fournier*, 2 Ves. Sr. 445, 447.

ments already noted (*ante*, § 2285) as essential to such a privilege are here deemed to exist. The policy has been expounded and defended from all points of view in the following passages:

1713, *Annesley v. Earl of Anglesea*, 17 How. St. Tr. 1235; Mr. Recorder (arguing for the privilege): "My lord, formerly persons appeared in court themselves; but as business multiplied and became more intricate and titles more perplexed, both the distance of places and the multiplicity of business made it absolutely necessary that there should be a set of people who should stand in the place of suitors, and these persons are called attornies. Since this has been thought necessary, all people and all courts have looked upon that confidence between the party and attorney to be so great that it would be destructive to all business if attornies were to disclose the business of their clients. In many cases men hold their estates without titles; in others, by such titles, that if their deeds could be got out of their hands, they must lose their fortunes. When persons become purchasers for valuable considerations, and get a deed that makes against them, they are not obliged to disclose whether they have that deed. Now, if an attorney was to be examined in every case, what man would trust an attorney with the secret of his estate, if he should be permitted to offer himself as a witness? If an attorney had it in his option to be examined, there would be an entire stop to business; nobody would trust an attorney with the state of his affairs. The reason why attornies are not to be examined to anything relating to their clients or their affairs is because they would destroy the confidence that is necessary to be preserved between them. This confidence between the employer and the person employed, is so sacred a thing, that if they were at liberty, when the present cause was over that they were employed in, to give testimony in favour of any other person, it would not answer the end for which it was instituted. The end is, that persons with safety may substitute others in their room; and therefore if you cannot ask me, you cannot ask that man; for everything said to him, is as if I had said it to myself, and he is not to answer it." *Mounteney, B.*; "Mr. Recorder hath very properly mentioned the foundation. . . . that an increase of legal business, and the inabilities of parties to transact that business themselves, made it necessary for them to employ (and as the law properly expresses it, *ponere in loco suo*) other persons who might transact that business for them; that this necessity introduced with it the necessity of what the law hath very justly established, an inviolable secrecy to be observed by attornies, in order to render it safe for clients to communicate to their attornies all proper instructions for the carrying on those causes which they found themselves under a necessity of intrusting to their care."

1833, *L. C. Brougham, in Greenough v. Gaskell*, 1 Myl. & K. 98, 103: "The foundation of this rule is not difficult to discover. It is not (as has sometimes been said) on account of any particular importance which the law attributes to the business of legal professors, or any particular disposition to afford them protection (though certainly it may not be very easy to discover why a like privilege has been refused to others, and especially to medical advisers). But it is out of regard to the interests of justice, which cannot be upheld, and to the administration of justice, which cannot go on without the aid of men skilled in jurisprudence, in the practice of the courts, and in those matters affecting rights and obligations which form the subject of all judicial proceedings. If the privilege did not exist at all, every one would be thrown upon his own legal resources. Deprived of all professional assistance, a man would not venture to consult any skillful person, or would only dare to tell his counsellor half his case."

1876, *Jessel, M. R., in Anderson v. Bank*, L. R. 2 Ch. D. 644, 649: "The object and meaning of the rule is this: That as, by reason of the complexity and difficulty of our law, litigation can only be properly conducted by professional men, it is absolutely necessary that a man, in order to prosecute his rights or to defend himself from an improper claim, should have recourse to the assistance of professional lawyers, and it being so absolutely necessary, it is equally necessary, to use a vulgar phrase, that he should be able to make a clean breast of it to the gentleman whom he consults with a view to the prosecution of

his claim, or the substantiating his defence against the claim of others; that he should be able to place unrestricted and unbounded confidence in the professional agent, and that the communications . . . so makes to him should be kept secret, unless with his consent (for it is his privilege, and not the privilege of the confidential agent), that he should be enabled properly to conduct his litigation. That is the meaning of the rule."

1833, *Shaw, C. J.*, in *Hatton v. Robinson*, 14 Pick. 416, 422: "This principle we take to be this; that so numerous and complex are the laws by which the rights and duties of citizens are governed, so important is it that they should be permitted to avail themselves of the superior skill and learning of those who are sanctioned by the law as its ministers and exponents, both in ascertaining their rights in the country, and maintaining them most safely in courts, without publishing those facts, which they have a right to keep secret, but which must be disclosed to a legal adviser and advocate, to enable him successfully to perform the duties of his office, that the law has considered it the wisest policy to encourage and sanction this confidence, by requiring that on such facts the mouth of the attorney shall be forever sealed."

1895, *Emery, J.*, in *Wade v. Ridley*, 87 Me. 368, 32 Atl. 975: "An order of men, honorable, enlightened, learned in the law, and skilled in legal procedure, is essential to the beneficent administration of justice. The aid of such men is now practically indispensable to the orderly, accurate, and equitable determination and adjustment of legal rights and duties. While the right of every person to conduct his own litigation should be scrupulously respected, he should not be discouraged, but rather encouraged, in early seeking the assistance or advice of a good lawyer upon any question of legal right. In order that the lawyer may properly perform his important function, he should be fully informed of all facts possibly bearing upon the question. The person consulting a lawyer should be encouraged to communicate all such facts without fear that his statements may be possibly used against him."

1837, *Anon. ("C.")*, in *The Law Magazine*, XVII, 68, *Production of Cases prepared for the Opinion of Counsel*: "[1] One great object of our legal system is that the rights of all persons shall be submitted with equal force to our courts of justice. . . . Let the person be who he may, strong or weak, learned or unlearned, wise or foolish, a man of influence and invested with authority, or destitute of means and utterly helpless, his claims are equally to be laid before the judge with all the power of advocacy of which they are susceptible. To accomplish this object, the first indispensable requisite is, that the client shall state to his legal advisers all the facts of his case. Very few clients can perceive wherein their strength lies. They must state the whole to the legal adviser, and leave him to form his own judgment. By this means the balance is adjusted. The weakness of the client finds a compensation in his lawyer's strength: the looseness of thought, carelessness and inaccuracy of the one, in the precision and subtlety and judgment of the other; and thus every man's case is brought with nearly equal ability and chance of success under the consideration of the judge. But how will a client venture to lay before his counsel a statement of all the facts of his case, if that very statement may hereafter be evidenced against him? There will be an end to equality, if one person has an advantage over another, because he is sufficiently cunning in the law to know what may, and what may not, be safely revealed to counsel. Such equality never can exist, unless client and counsel are completely identified, and their communications held to be as impervious to judicial investigation, as if they never had been uttered. [2] It is a received axiom, that every man knows the law. The axiom works but little injustice, because every man can ascertain the law by consulting a lawyer. But then the condition, upon which this power of ascertaining the law will rest, is, that he may make the inquiry without incurring any danger. The communication must be privileged to the utmost extent, or it will not be made. Thus it will be one consequence of the rule, that the law will be in no way open to the community at large; to them it will be a sealed book; and this axiom, from which every decision, in a greater or less degree, derives its justification in point of morality, will work very grievous injury. . . . [3] We would ask whether the advocates of this rule

have seriously considered the fearful relation which it will create between a lawyer and his client. We are not so utopian as to suppose that, in the long lists of our profession, names will not be found of lawyers treacherous to their clients, of men who '*scire volunt secreta domus atque inde timere.*' Such lawyers, if this rule is to prevail, will have their clients at their mercy, and may at any moment contrive their ruin. . . . Many of our readers will recollect the passage in Mr. Bentham's work upon 'Judicial Evidence,' in which he maintains the propriety of compelling lawyers to disclose the secrets of their clients. In the note upon this passage in Mr. Dumont's very pertinent remark: 'Admit this opinion of Mr. Bentham, it is said, and the accused have no longer counsel; they are surrounded by agents of justice and the police, against whom they ought to be so much the more upon their guard, as no man of a noble or elevated mind would stoop to such an employment. They are so many spies and informers placed round the accused. This is to suppress the defence entirely, . . . [4] Our limits confine us to only one more argument bearing upon the subject before us. Mr. Preston once said, that out of thirty questions submitted for his consideration, not more than one found its way into a court of justice. Indeed, the adjustment of disputes by the opinion of counsel takes place so far more frequently than by a suit or trial, that it may be said to form in this country the practical administration of civil justice. . . . 'The greatest trust,' says Lord Bacon, 'between men and men, is the trust of giving counsel. For in other confidences men commit the parts of life; their lands, their goods, their children, their credit, some particular affair; but to such as they make their counsellors they commit the whole, by how much the more they are obliged to all faith and integrity.' The condition upon which alone this counsel can be given requires particular attention. The lawyer must have the *whole* of his client's case, or he cannot pretend to give any useful advice. Upon a partial statement of facts he may judge correctly, and yet give his opinion in favour of a claim, which, if he had known all the circumstances, he would have perceived to be unjust, and which a court of justice upon full investigation at once overthrows. That the whole will not be told to counsel unless the privilege is confidential, is perfectly clear. A man who seeks advice, seeks it because he believes that he may do so safely; he will rarely make disclosures which may be used against him; rather than create an adverse witness in his lawyer, he will refuse all private arbitration, and take the chance of a trial. We submit, that any rule which tends to prevent the settlement of quarrels by such arbitration will work an enormous evil. Our judges ought to pause before they sanction the received rule upon the production of cases, which, as it interferes with the communication between client and counsel, renders it dangerous to adopt this course, so easy and so safe, so free from vexation, and satisfactory to all honourable minds."¹

Can these plausible reasonings be questioned? Is there lacking no one of those four essential elements (*ante*, § 2285) for a privilege against disclosing communications? Rarely indeed has any question been made of the soundness of this privilege. Nevertheless, how much there is to be said in answer can hardly be appreciated until we have heard the incisive arguments of Bentham, who stands out, with Lord Langdale and Chief Justice Appletton, as the only eminent names enrolled in our annals in radical opposition to the privilege:

1827, Mr. *Jeremy Bentham*, *Rationale of Judicial Evidence*, h. IX, pt. IV, c. 5 (Bowring's ed., vol. VII, pp. 474 ff.): "When, in consulting with a law adviser, attorney or advocate, a man has confessed his delinquency, or disclosed some fact which, if stated in court,

¹ The reasons in favor of the privilege have also been set forth, impartially but forcefully, by Edward Livingston (*circa* 1823), in his Introductory Report to the Code of Evidence

(Works, ed. 1872, I, 459-467), in a passage which, next to the one last quoted, is perhaps the best of all treatments of the subject.

might tend to operate in proof of it, such law adviser is not to be suffered to be examined as to any such point. The law adviser is neither to be compelled, nor so much as suffered, to betray the trust thus reposed in him. Not suffered? Why not? [1] Oh, because 'to betray a trust is treachery; and an act of treachery is an immoral act.' . . . If the law adviser, of his own motion, the law neither commanding nor forbidding him, were to offer his testimony for the purpose of promoting the conviction of his client, the imputation of treachery would have, if not a good ground, at any rate a better, a more plausible ground. But the question is not, whether the lawyer shall thus offer his testimony; but, whether the law shall command it, or authorize him, nay force him, to refuse it. . . . [2] But if such confidence, when reposed, is permitted to be violated, and if this be known (which, if such be the law, it will be,) the consequence will be, that no such confidence will be reposed. Not reposed? Well; and if it be not, wherein will consist the mischief? The man by the supposition is guilty; if not, by the supposition there is nothing to betray: let the law adviser say everything he has heard, everything he can have heard from his client, the client cannot have anything to fear from it. That it will often happen that in the case supposed no such confidence will be reposed, is natural enough: the first thing the advocate or attorney will say to his client, will be, 'Remember that, whatever you say to me, I shall be obliged to tell, if asked about it.' What, then, will be the consequence? That a guilty person will not in general be able to derive quite so much assistance from his law adviser, in the way of concerting a false defence, as he may do at present. . . . [3] 'A counsel, solicitor, or attorney, cannot conduct the cause of his client, (it has been observed) 'if he is not fully instructed in the circumstances attending it; but the client' (it is added) 'could not give the instructions *with safety*, if the facts confided to his advocate were to be disclosed.' Not with safety? So much the better. To what object is the whole system of penal law directed, if it be not that no man shall have it in his power to flatter himself with the hope of safety, in the event of his engaging in the commission of an act which the law, on account of its supposed mischievousness, has thought fit to prohibit? The argument employed as a reason against the compelling such disclosure, is the very argument that pleads in favour of it. . . . [4. It has been argued² by a defender of this privilege that the guilty are entitled to be protected to a certain extent; that supposed policy has been thus phrased:] 'Even in the few instances where the accused has intrusted his defender with a full confession of his crime, we hold it to be clear that he may still be lawfully defended. The guilt of which he may be conscious, and which he may have so disclosed, he has still a right to see distinctly proved upon him by legal evidence. . . . Human beings are never to be run down like beasts of prey, without respect to the laws of the chase. If society must make a sacrifice of any one of its members, let it proceed according to general rules, upon known principles, and with clear proof of necessity; "let us carve him as a feast fit for the gods, not hew him as a carcase for the hounds." . . . In reading the above declaration, one is at a loss to discover what it is which the writer is aiming at. Does he really think that, all other things being the same, a system of procedure is the better, for affording to criminals a chance of escape? If this be his serious opinion, there is no more to be said; since it must be freely admitted that, reasoning upon this principle, there is no fault to be found with the rule. If it be your object not to find the prisoner guilty, there cannot be a better way than refusing to hear the person who is most likely to know of his guilt, if it exist. The rule is perfectly well adapted to its end; but is that end the true end of procedure? This question surely requires no answer. But if the safety of the innocent, and not that of the guilty, be the object of the reviewer's solicitude, — had he shown how an innocent man could be endangered by his lawyer's telling all he has to tell, he would have delivered something more to the purpose than any illustration which the subject of carcasses and

² By Mr. (later L. C. J.) Denman, in the Edinburgh Review, March, 1824, reviewing the original French edition of Mr. Bentham's treatise. The answering argument, following the above

quotation, is by Mr. J. S. Mill, who edited his master's treatise, but is conceived in the best Benthamic spirit and is worthy of the context.

hounds could yield. If he can be content for one moment to view the question with other than fox-hunting eyes, even he must perceive that, to the man who, having no guilt to disclose, has disclosed none to his lawyer, nothing could be of greater advantage than that this should appear; as it naturally would if the lawyer were subjected to examination. . . . The denunciation which follows against hunting down human beings without respect for the laws of the chase, is one of those proofs which meet us every day, how little, as yet, even instructed Englishmen are accustomed to look upon judicature as a means to an end, and that end the execution of the law. They speak and act, every now and then, as if they regarded a criminal trial as a sort of game, partly of chance, partly of skill, in which the proper end to be aimed at is, not that the truth may be discovered, but that both parties may have fair play: in a word, that whether a guilty person shall be acquitted or punished, may be, as nearly as possible, an even chance. . . . Whence all this dread of the truth? Whence comes it that anyone loves darkness better than light, except it be that his deeds are evil? Whence but from a confirmed habit of viewing the law as the enemy of innocence — as scattering its punishments with so ill-directed and so unsparring a hand, that the most virtuous of mankind, were all his actions known, could no more hope to escape from them, than the most abandoned of malefactors? Whether the law be really in this state, I will not take upon myself to say; sure I am, that if it be, it is high time it should be amended. But if it be not, where is the cause of alarm? In men's consciousness of their own improbity. . . . [5] Thus much in vindication of the proposed rule [abolishing the privilege]. As for its advantages, they are to be sought for not so much in its direct, as in its indirect, operation. The party himself having been, as he ought to be, previously subjected to interrogation, his lawyer's evidence, which, though good of its kind, is no better than hearsay evidence, would not often add any new facts to those which had already been extracted from the lips of the client. The benefit which would arise from the abolition of the exclusionary rule, would consist rather in the higher tone of morality which would be introduced into the profession itself. A rule of law which, in the case of the lawyer, gives an express licence to that wilful concealment of the criminal's guilt, which would have constituted any other person an accessory in the crime, plainly declares that the practice of knowingly engaging one's self as the hired advocate of an unjust cause, is, in the eye of the law, or (to speak intelligibly) in that of the law-makers, an innocent, if not a virtuous practice. But for this implied declaration, the man who in this way hires himself out to do injustice or frustrate justice with his tongue, would be viewed in exactly the same light as he who frustrates justice or does injustice with any other instrument. We should not then hear an advocate boasting of the artifices by which he had trepanned a deluded jury into a verdict in direct opposition to the strongest evidence; or of the effrontery with which he had, by repeated insults, thrown the faculties of a *bonâ fide* witness into a state of confusion, which had caused him to be taken for a perjurer, and as such disbelieved. Nor would an Old Bailey counsel any longer plume himself upon the number of pickpockets whom, in the course of a long career, he had succeeded in rescuing from the arm of the law. The professional lawyer would be a minister of justice, not an abettor of crime."*

1844, Lord Langdale, in *Flight v. Robinson*, 8 Beav. 22, 36: "I own that it is difficult for me to comprehend how it is possible to apply to such cases the rules which are applied to cases totally different. An innocent man, falsely accused of fraud, will scarcely be desirous of concealing the facts, which he may have stated to his legal adviser for the purpose of obtaining legal protection to which he is justly entitled. A man engaged in a scheme of fraud will be very unwilling to disclose the statement of facts, which he may have made to his legal adviser for the purpose of better enabling him to conceal or to secure and enjoy the fruits of his fraud; and it is a question, which I would willingly submit to the consideration of those who have to decide upon cases of this kind, whether the interests of society and of justice, or the honour and utility of the legal profession, which are

* Mr. Bentham's arguments will be found Chief Justice Appleton of Maine, *Evidence*, c. X, paralleled in the treatise (1860) of his disciple, p. 161.

so closely bound up with those interests, are more or less likely to be promoted, by the author of the fraud being compelled to disclose, or permitted to conceal, the fact of his own admissions contained in such a statement of facts."

At first sight the Benthamic argument seems irresistible. It always comes back to this, that the deterring of a guilty man from seeking legal advice is no harm to justice, while the innocent man has nothing to fear and therefore will not be deterred. In answer to this, nevertheless, three suggestions are to be made, the least weighty of which may be first noticed:

(1) There is in civil cases often *no hard-and-fast line between guilt and innocence*, which will justify us as stigmatizing one or the other party and banning him from our sympathy. In land-titles, for example, the one claimant has perhaps bought in good faith a title resting on a chain of conveyances reaching back to a Government grant, which itself involves a Mexican alcalde's authority; while the other claimant has bought from an occupier who has apparently gained title by adverse possession. The decision of the contested right will depend on some abstract rule of law which produces its effect far back in the tangle of documents, and is wholly irrespective of the personal merits of the claimant's conduct. There is no moral right or wrong, in a concrete sense, for either of them. Such was, and still is to some extent, the status of all land-litigation in England, where registration of deeds was practically not observed. We are therefore not necessarily abetting crime or other moral delinquency when we permit the concealment of the party's admissions to his attorney.

(2) Even assuming that the party against whom the law would decide is, by virtue of the illegality (technical or otherwise) of his cause, not to be considered as worthy of aid or encouragement, nevertheless, in a great part of civil litigation, it does not happen that *all the acts and facts on one side have been wholly right and lawful* and all of those on the other wholly wrong and unlawful. There is more commonly a mixture of these qualities, in infinitely varying proportions. Hence we cannot assume that the operation of the supposed deterrent influences upon the client's mind will be as simple as is supposed in Bentham's abstract argument. In other words, it does not commonly happen that A, by reason of the state of his case, will have no fear at all of disclosure, while B, by the same reason, will have all the fear. In a large proportion of cases, each will have something to fear. The consequence would be (if the quantity of unfavorable data in his case be large enough to exercise an influence) that a person who has a partly good cause would often be deterred from consultation by virtue of the bad part or of the part that might possibly (to his notion) be bad. Now the abstinence from seeking legal advice in a good cause is by hypothesis an evil which is fatal to the administration of justice; and even Bentham does not go so far as to question this hypothesis. It should be added that the client's attitude in criminal cases (where we may assume that, if guilty, he is wholly and indivisibly guilty) need not be taken as justifying Bentham's argument in that class of cases; because the communications will there be in effect self-

criminating admissions; and, if they could be obtained from the attorney, the same evils would follow which, as has been seen (*ante*, § 2251), constitute the chief reason for forbidding compulsory self-crimination, — namely, the tendency of the prosecution to degenerate into a reliance upon that mode of proof to the neglect of others. Moreover, it seems more likely that, if the privilege were abolished, guilty persons would no less than before seek legal aid, but would merely refrain from self-criminating confidences; so that the prosecution would not gain at all thereby, while the defendant's adviser would lose the opportunity of exercising that discretion which he sometimes has.

(3) Even assuming, for civil cases, the negative of the foregoing argument — i. e. assuming that in any cause one party's case is wholly right and the other's wholly wrong — still, so far as the wrongdoer is consequently deterred from seeking legal advice, that result is not, as Bentham would have it, an unmixed good; for it does not follow that "a guilty person would not in general derive quite so much assistance from his law adviser, in the way of concerting a false defence, as he may do at present." This does not follow except on the assumption that every legal adviser invariably proceeds, on request, to assist, by litigation or otherwise, the unjust causes that may be laid before him by his clients. How far this assumption is true varies no doubt with the individual and the locality. But there are at least many fraternities of the bar among whom are many practitioners who do not pursue such a course. Either they decline the cause utterly, in heinous cases (and even the privilege as it exists would not protect them if they consented to concert with the client a fraud or a crime), or they persuade the client that the cause is hopeless to support, or they secure a settlement with the opponent in which the client's interests are satisfied to the extent that there is any moral justice in them. To guarantee for clients of unjust causes a freedom of consultation with legal advisers cannot be deemed an evil except to the extent that the bar is unprincipled; and in that condition more radical remedies are needed.

(4) The consideration of "treachery," so inviting an argument for Bentham's sarcasms, is after all not to be dismissed with a sneer. It is impalpable and somewhat speculative; but it has a validity nevertheless. It is well emphasized by M. Dumont.⁴ If the counsellor were compellable to disclose, "no man," says that very disciple of Bentham, "of a noble or elevated mind would stoop to such an employment."⁵ Certainly the position of the legal adviser would be a delicate and disagreeable one; for it must be repugnant to any honorable man to feel that the confidences which his relation naturally invites are liable at the opponent's behest to be laid open through his own testimony. He cannot but feel the disagreeable inconsistency of being at the

⁴ In the passage above quoted.

⁵ V. C. Knight-Bruce, in *Pearse v. Pearse*, 1 DeG. & Sm. 25: "And surely the meanness and the mischief of prying into a man's confidential consultations with his legal adviser, the general evil of infusing reserve and dissimulation,

uneasiness and suspicion and fear, into those communications which must take place, and which, unless in a condition of perfect security, must take place necessarily or worse, are too great a prize to pay for truth itself."

same time the solicitor and the revealer of the secrets of the cause. This double-minded attitude would create an unhealthy moral state in the practitioner. Its concrete impropriety could not be overbalanced by the recollection of its abstract desirability. If only for the sake of the peace of mind of the counsellor, it is better that the privilege should exist.

After all, the loss to truth is comparatively small, in modern times. It was much greater in the period when the civil party's own privilege of silence was still in force; for then his admissions to his attorney would have constituted a distinct and substantial addition to the available sources of proof. But now that he can be freely interrogated and called to the stand by the opponent and made to disclose on oath all that he knows, it is evident that the disclosure of his admissions made to his attorney would add little to the proof, except so far as the client is a person capable of perjuring himself when interrogated in court.

Nevertheless, the privilege remains an anomaly. Its benefits are all indirect and speculative; its obstruction is plain and concrete. Even the answers to Bentham's argument concede that it is accurate and well-founded in its application to a certain proportion of cases. It is worth preserving for the sake of a general policy; but it is none the less an obstacle to the investigation of the truth. It ought to be strictly confined within the narrowest possible limits consistent with the logic of its principle.⁶

§ 2292. **General Principle; Statutory Definitions.** The phrasing of the general principle, so as to represent all its essentials, but only essentials, and to group them in natural sequence, is a matter of some difficulty. The following form seems to accomplish this: (1) *Where legal advice of any kind is sought* (2) *from a professional legal adviser in his capacity as such,* (3) *the communications relevant to that purpose,* (4) *made in confidence* (5) *by the client,* (6) *are at his instance permanently protected* (7) *from disclosure by himself or by the legal adviser,* (8) *except the client waives the protection.* These various parts will be taken up in the above order.

It may here be noted that the privilege has in many jurisdictions been embodied in statutes.¹ These have seldom helped to settle any mooted point;

⁶ 1828, Best, C. J., in *Broad v. Pitt*, 1 M. & M. 233, 3 C. & P. 518 ("The privilege is an anomaly, and ought not to be extended"); 1831, Shaw, C. J., in *Foster v. Hall*, 12 Pick. 89, 97 ("This rule of privilege, having a tendency to prevent the full disclosure of the truth, ought to be construed strictly").

¹ *Eng.*: for a discussion of the attorney's privilege as affected by the Bankruptcy Act of 1883, see Mr. G. W. Edwards' article in 33 *Law Journ.* 489 (1898); *Alaska C. C. P.* 1960, § 1036 (like *Or. Annot. C.* 1892, § 712, par. 2); *Aris. Rev. St.* 1887, § 2039 (like *Cal. C. C. P.* § 1881); *Ark. Stats.* 1894, § 2916 (5) ("an attorney, concerning any communication made to him by his client in that relation, or his advice thereon, without the client's consent," is incompetent); *Cal. C. C. P.* 1872, § 1881 ("There are particular relations in which it is the policy of the law

to encourage confidence and to preserve it inviolate; therefore a person cannot be examined as a witness in the following cases: . . . 2. An attorney cannot, without the consent of his client, be examined as to any communication made by the client to him, or his advice given thereon in the course of professional employment"; amended by the Commissioners in 1901 by adding: "nor can an attorney's secretary, stenographer, or clerk, be examined, without the consent of his employer, concerning any fact the knowledge of which has been acquired in such capacity; but no communication is privileged under this subdivision when the same was made with the intention that it should be communicated to any person having an interest adverse to the client, or when the same was made in furtherance of a crime or fraud then being perpetrated or in contemplation"); § 1882, added by amend-

but on the other hand they have seldom chanced to disfigure the common-law rule or to unsettle its logical development. Their phraseology is commonly

ment of the Commissioners in 1901 ("Consent to the giving of such testimony as is mentioned in section 1881 is conclusively implied in the following cases: 1, When the person who made any communication mentioned in that section testifies, without objection on his part, as to such communication or any part thereof, the person to whom such communication was made may be examined fully, in the same action or proceeding, as to such communication; 2, When a person employs an attorney to prepare his will, the attorney may, in any proceeding for the probate or revocation of probate of such will, testify, as to the contents of such will if lost or destroyed, and as to all information and instructions received by him from the testator, in the course of the preparation or execution of such will, and relating thereto; 3, When a husband or wife has become incompetent or is dead, the other spouse may, in an action or proceeding to which the guardian or personal representative of such incompetent or deceased person is a party, and with the consent of such guardian or personal representative, testify as to communications made by such incompetent or deceased person, but must not be compelled to so testify; 4, In an action brought by the beneficiary to recover on a policy of life insurance, taken out by the person whose life was insured, a physician or surgeon may, with the consent of the beneficiary, testify as to any information acquired by him in attending the deceased, but must not be compelled to so testify. Nothing in this section contained affects the right of the Court to admit any of the testimony mentioned in section 1881, when no objection is seasonably interposed thereto, or when the Court finds, as an inference from proper evidence, that the consent mentioned in that section has been given or implied"); for the validity of these amendments, see *ante*, § 488; *Ohio*, Annot. Stats. 1891, § 4824 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881); § 4825 (waiver by consent, allowed, quoted *ante*, § 488); *Ga.* Code 1895, § 5198, par. 3 (communications "between attorney or counsel and client" are excluded); § 5199 ("communications to any attorney, or his clerk, to be transmitted to the attorney pending his employment, or in anticipation thereof," are inadmissible; "so the attorney cannot disclose the advice or counsel he may give to his client, nor produce or deliver up title-deeds or other papers, except evidences of debt left in his possession by his client; this rule does not exclude the attorney as a witness to any facts which may transpire in connection with his employment"); § 5271, Cr. C. § 1011, par. 5 ("No attorney shall be competent or compellable to testify in any court in this State, for or against his client, to any matter or thing, knowledge of which he may have acquired from his client, by virtue of his relations as attorney, or by reason of the anticipated employment of him as attorney, but shall be both competent and compellable to testify, for or against his client, as to any matter or thing, knowledge of

which he may have acquired in any other manner"; as to an attorney's testimony in general, under this statute, see the cases cited *ante*, § 1911); §§ 2947, 2288 (a witness need not disclose "the advice of his professional adviser, nor his consultation with them"); *Ida.* Rev. St. 1887, § 2963 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881); *Ind.* Rev. St. 1897, § 507 ("Attorneys, as to confidential communications made to them in the course of their professional business, and as to advice given in such cases, shall not be competent"); *Ida.* Code 1897, § 4608 ("No practicing attorney, counselor, physician, surgeon, or the stenographer or confidential clerk of any person, who obtains such information by reason of his employment, minister of the gospel or priest of any denomination, shall be allowed, in giving testimony, to disclose any confidential communication properly intrusted to him in his professional capacity, and necessary and proper to enable him to discharge the functions of his office according to the usual course of practice or discipline. Such prohibition shall not apply to cases where the party in whose favor the same is made waives the rights conferred"); amended by St. 1900, 28th Gen. Ass. c. 125, § 1 (by inserting the word "such" before "person"); *Ky.* C. C. P. 1895, § 606, par. 5 ("No attorney shall testify concerning a communication made to him, in his professional character, by his client, or his advice thereon, without the client's consent"); *La.* Rev. Civ. C. 1888, § 2283 ("No attorney or counselor at law shall give evidence of anything that has been confided to him by his client, without the consent of such client"); *Minn.* Gen. St. 1894, § 5602 ("There are particular relations [etc., as in Cal. Code] . . . : Second, An attorney cannot, without the consent of his client, be examined as to any communication made by the client to him, or his advice given thereon, in the course of professional duty"); amended by St. 1895, c. 31 (by adding "nor can any employee of such attorney be examined without the consent of such client as to any such communication or advice"); *Mo.* Rev. St. 1889, § 8925 ("The following persons shall be incompetent to testify: . . . third, an attorney, concerning any communication made to him by his client in that relation, or his advice thereon, without the consent of such client"); *Mont.* C. C. P. 1895, § 3163 (2) (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881); *Nebr.* Comp. St. 1899, § 5902 ("The following persons shall be incompetent to testify: . . . fourth, an attorney, concerning any communication made to him by his client during that relation or his advice thereon, without the client's consent in open court or in writing produced in court"); § 5907 ("No practicing attorney, counselor, physician, surgeon, minister of the gospel, or priest of any denomination, shall be allowed, in giving testimony, to disclose any confidential communication, properly intrusted to him in his professional capacity, and necessary and proper to enable him to discharge the functions of his

ignored by the Courts, as being merely an attempt to name and to embody the common-law privilege.

1. "Where legal advice of any kind is sought"

§ 2294. *Privilege is irrespective of litigation begun or contemplated; History of the Doctrine.* Under the original theory of the privilege (*ante*, § 2290) the confidences of the client were respected only when given for the purpose of securing aid in litigation, and in the very litigation in which they were

office according to the usual course of practice or discipline"; § 5908 (preceding prohibition not to apply "to cases where the party in whose favor the respective prohibitions are enacted waives the rights thereby conferred"); *Nev. Gen. St.* 1885, § 3404 (substantially like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881); *N. Y. C. C. P.* 1877, § 835, as amended by Laws 1896, c. 564 ("an attorney or counselor-at-law shall not be allowed to disclose a communication made by his client to him, or his advice given thereon, in the course of his professional employment; [L. 1896] nor shall any clerk, stenographer, or other person employed by such attorney or counselor be allowed to disclose any such communication or advice given thereon"); § 836, as amended by L. 1877, c. 418, L. 1891, c. 381, L. 1892, c. 514, L. 1893, c. 295, L. 1899, c. 53 ("The last three sections apply to any examination of a person as witness unless the provisions thereof are expressly waived upon the trial or examination by the . . . client; . . . But nothing herein contained shall be construed to disqualify an attorney in the probate of a will heretofore executed or offered for probate or hereafter to be executed or offered for probate from becoming a witness as to its preparation and execution in case such attorney is one of the subscribing witnesses thereto. . . . The waivers herein provided for must be made in open court on the trial of the action or proceeding and a paper executed by a party prior to the trial providing for such waiver shall be insufficient as such a waiver. But the attorneys for the respective parties may prior to the trial stipulate for such waiver and the same shall be sufficient therefor"); *N. C. Code* 1883, § 1349 (on a charge of "fraud upon the State," no answer shall be refused "because he came into the possession of such evidence or information by his position as counsel or attorney before the consummation of such fraud"); *N. D. Rev. C.* 1895, § 5703 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881); § 5704 ("If a person offers himself as a witness," it is a consent to his attorney's examination "on the same subject"); *Oh. Annot. Rev. St.* 1898, § 5241 ("The following persons shall not testify in certain respects: 1. An attorney, concerning a communication made to him by his client in that relation, or his advice to his client; or a physician, concerning a communication made to him by his patient in that relation, or his advice to his patient; but the attorney or physician may testify by express consent of the client or patient; and if the client or patient voluntarily testify, the attorney or physician may be compelled to testify on the same sub-ject"); *Okl. Stats.* 1893, § 335 ("The following persons shall be incompetent to testify: . . . Fourth, an attorney, concerning any communication made to him by his client in that relation, or his advice thereon, without the client's consent; . . . provided that, if a person offer himself as a witness, that is to be deemed a consent to the examination; also, if [of!] an attorney, clergyman or priest, physician or surgeon, on the same subject, within the meaning of the last three subdivisions of this section"); *Pa. St.* 1887, Pub. L. 158, § 2, P. & L. Dig., Witnesses § 5 ("Nor shall counsel be competent or permitted to testify to confidential communications made to him by his client, or the client be compelled to disclose the same, unless in either case the privilege be waived upon the trial by the client"); *S. D. Stats.* 1899, § 6544 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881); § 6545 (like N. D. Rev. C. § 5704); *Tenn. Code* 1896, § 5785 ("No attorney or counsel shall be permitted, in giving testimony against a client or person who consulted him professionally, to disclose any communication made to him as attorney by such person, during the pendency of the suit, before or afterwards, to his injury"); *Tex. Pen. C.* 1895, § 773 ("[All other persons are competent.] . . . except that an attorney at law shall not disclose a communication made to him by his client during the existence of that relationship, nor disclose any other fact which came to the knowledge of such attorney by reason of such relationship"); *Utah Rev. St.* 1898, § 3414 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881; adding "nor can an attorney's secretary, stenographer, or clerk be examined, without the consent of his employer, concerning any fact the knowledge of which had been acquired in such capacity"); *Vt. St.* 1894, § 5273 (officer of prison is not to testify to a communication between prisoners and counsel concerning preparation for trial); *Wash. C. & Stats.* 1897, § 5994 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881, inserting "or counselor"); *Wis. Stats.* 1898, § 4078 (like N. Y. C. C. P. § 835); *Wyo. Rev. St.* 1887, § 2589 ("The following persons shall not testify in certain respects: First, an attorney, concerning a communication made to him by his client in that relation, or his advice to his client; or a physician, concerning a communication made to him by his patient in that relation, or his advice to his patient; but the attorney or physician may testify by express consent of the client or patient; and if the client or patient voluntarily testify, the attorney or physician may be compelled to testify on the same subject").

given. It is obvious, however, that this limitation would be wholly inconsistent with the modern theory of the privilege (*ante*, § 2291). That theory, however, was slow in making its logic felt. Even after it had become the acknowledged basis of the privilege, the abolition of the earlier limitations was not attained (in England, at least) until after nearly a century of rulings, in the course of which the expansion was gradually taking place.

(1) The first stage of expansion consisted in extending the privilege to the *attorney's testimony* concerning confidences made in *some other litigation*, now ended and not at bar. Up to the end of the 1700s these had generally been regarded as without the privilege,¹ although the broader view had begun to make headway.² It was next seen that the principle applied equally to communications made *in contemplation of a suit*,³ or even *after dispute arisen* though not directly with a view to litigation.⁴ Meantime, and while this was still the extreme limit of the orthodox view, it had been ruled that communications made in seeking *legal advice for any purpose* were within the principle of the privilege.⁵ Within a short time after Lord Tenterden's death this final step was judicially accepted, and has never since been doubted to be the law.⁶

(2) But this expansion had thus far affected only the compulsion of the attorney. The rule for the *client himself* was passing more tardily through an independent though parallel development. Originally, as already noticed (*ante*, § 2290), the privilege did not protect the client himself from the usual

¹ See the remarks of Bowes, C. B., in 1743, in *Annesley v. Anglesea*, quoted *supra*, § 2290. In the cases of the 1800s, there quoted, the plain inference is the same. In 1792, L. C. J. Kenyon, in *Duffin v. Smith*, Peake N. P. 108, referred to the privilege as covering only communications "for the purpose of his defence." In 1799, the same judge, in *Sloman v. Herne*, 2 Esp. 696, refused to compel an attorney to disclose a communication from clients in another cause, "the parties were virtually the same" being his ground of decision.

² It had been advanced in 1743 by Dawson, B., in *Annesley v. Anglesea*, *supra*. The first rulings seem to be the following: 1791, *Du Barré v. Livette*, Peake N. P. 77 (communications excluded, though the suit had ended); 1792, *Wilson v. Rastall*, 4 T. R. 753, 759 (Buller, J.: "In such a case it is not sufficient to say that the cause is at an end; the month of such a person is closed forever").

³ 1809, *Gainsford v. Grammar*, 2 Camp. 9 (communications before suit begun, privileged); 1819, *Wadsworth v. Hamshaw*, 2 B. & B. 5, note, Abbott, C. J. (communications as to a dissolution of partnership, not privileged, but only those "related to a cause existing at the time of the communication or then about to be commenced"); 1824, *Williams v. Mudie*, 1 C. & P. 153, Ry. & Mo. 34 (Abbott, C. J., held that "whatever is communicated for the purpose of bringing or defending an action is privileged, but not otherwise; . . . I have considered the subject a great deal, and my mind is made up upon it"); 1828, *Broad v. Pitt*, 3 C. & P. 518, 1 M. & M. 233, Best, C. J. (communications not

"made for the purpose of a suit or proceeding intended or apprehended," not privileged; here, the time of a deed's execution).

⁴ 1830, *Clark v. Clark*, 1 Mo. & Rob. 3 (L. C. J. Tenterden (Abbott) further expounded his view by recognizing the privilege for consultations "with respect to a matter then in dispute and controversy, although no cause was in existence with respect to it").

⁵ 1820, *Cromack v. Heathcote*, 2 B. & B. 4, Dallas, C. J. (communications as to drawing a deed, privileged; "I know of no such distinction as that arising from the attorney being employed or not employed in the cause").

⁶ 1833, *Greenough v. Gaskell*, 1 Myl. & K. 88, 101 (L. C. Brougham declared that, for attorneys, "it does not appear that the protection is qualified by any reference to proceedings pending or in contemplation"); 1833, *Moore v. Terrell*, 4 B. & Ad. 870, 876 (Parke, J., declared that Tindal, C. J., Lyndhurst, L. C. B., and himself, were consulted by Brougham, L. C., in deciding *Greenough v. Gaskell*, and approved of it); 1833, *Doe v. Harris*, 5 C. & P. 592 (Parke, J., declared the limitation of *Williams v. Mudie* to have been recently repudiated by the Chancellor, consulting with the Chief Justices and Chief Baron; meaning the case of *Greenough v. Gaskell*); 1846, *Pearse v. Pearse*, 1 DeG. & Sm. 12, 25, 11 Jur. 52 (V. C. Knight-Bruce: "I suppose *Cromack v. Heathcote* to be now universally acceded to; . . . as far as any discovery by the solicitor or counsel is concerned, the question of the existence of any suit, claim, or dispute, is immaterial").

methods of discovery in equity. As the 1700s drew to a close, it came first to be conceded that "the privilege was that of the client." By this time, a recognition began to be given to the logical consequence that he could not be interrogated as to communications made *for the purpose of the litigation at bar*; yet the tradition was apparently still to the contrary.⁷ The case of *Preston v. Carr*, in 1826, was the last effort to preserve this tradition.⁸ It was thereafter immediately settled, by a series of nearly simultaneous rulings, that communications relative to the cause at bar, or even in contemplation of it, were protected from discovery by the client himself.⁹ The question then came to be whether communications made for *other litigations* were also to be privileged. At first even Lord Brougham hesitated to take this step;¹⁰ but Lord Abinger,¹¹ and then Lord Lyndhurst and his Vice-Chancellor,¹² made the advance. The further extension of the privilege to communications made in *contemplation* of any litigation was then speedily conceded.¹³ Here, however,

⁷ The early case of *Radcliffe v. Fursman*, in the House of Lords, in 1730 (2 Bro. P. C. 514), much relied upon for the narrower view, is obscurely reported as having compelled the client's discovery of admissions "stated in some case for the opinion of some counsel"; but it was apparently treated by Lord Eldon as practically ignoring the privilege for the client: 1801, *Wright v. Mayer*, 6 Ves. Jr. 280 (L. C. Eldon refused to compel the attorney to produce cases and opinions placed confidentially with him by the client, but intimated that by a motion for production on a bill of discovery against the client himself they could be produced, being "in her power, if in the custody of her attorney"); 1812, *Richards v. Jackson*, 18 id. 472 (L. C. Eldon on a bill of discovery compelled the client to produce his case stated, though not the counsel's opinion, following *Radcliffe v. Fursman* reluctantly; and said that in his experience that had been the practice).

⁸ 1826, *Preston v. Carr*, 1 Y. & J. 175 (Alexander, C. B.; the Exchequer compelled the production of two cases stated, apparently for the very litigation in hand).

⁹ 1827, *Hughes v. Biddulph*, 4 Russ. 190, L. C. Lyndhurst (letters passed between solicitor and client "in the progress of this cause, and with reference to this cause previously to its being instituted," held privileged); 1827, *Vent v. Pacey*, 11. 193, same judge (letter to a solicitor "with a view to taking the opinion of counsel upon the matter in question and which matter afterwards became the subject of the suit," privileged); 1830, *Garland v. Scott*, 3 Sim. 396 (privilege held to cover communications "passed in the progress of this cause, or with reference to this cause previously to its being instituted"); 1833, *Bolton v. Liverpool*, 1 Myl. & K. 95, 98, L. C. Brougham (a case protected when "laid before counsel in reference to or in contemplation of or pending the suit or action for the purpose of which the production is sought"; preceding cases examined, *Hughes v. Biddulph* approved); 1833, *Whitbread v. Gurney*, 1 Younge 541 (L. C. B. Lyndhurst applied the rule in *Bolton v. Liverpool*); 1837, *Nias v. R.*

Co., 3 Myl. & Cr. 355 (L. C. Cottenham; case and opinion concerning the very litigation, but made before bill filed, held privileged).

¹⁰ 1833, *Greenough v. Gaskell*, 1 Myl. & K. 88, 101, L. C. Brougham ("the authorities are that he [the client] must disclose the cases he has laid before counsel for their opinion, unconnected with the suit itself"; while as regards attorneys, "it does not appear that the protection is qualified by any reference to proceedings pending or in contemplation"; though the distinction "seems inconsistent"); 1836, *Meath v. Winchester*, 10 Bligh, N. S. 375 (Lord Brougham, referring to his ruling in *Greenough v. Gaskell*, spoke of the practice theretofore obtaining as "the inveterate and not now to be changed practice in courts of equity," and said that only the case of *Radcliffe v. Fursman*, a ruling of the House of Lords, prevented the overthrow of an illogical limitation now felt by all the judges to be utterly repugnant).

¹¹ 1836, *Knight v. Waterford*, 2 Y. & C. Ch. 22, 31, 41 (L. C. B. Abinger disapproved of the ruling in *Bolton v. Liverpool* in so far as it refused the privilege for cases stated in litigation prior to or other than the pending one; here intimating that the privilege extended to a brief filed in a suit in 1833).

¹² 1842, *Herring v. Cloberry*, 1 Phil. Ch. 91 (L. C. Lyndhurst's principle, quoted *infra*, § 2295, went this far); 1842, *Combe v. London*, 1 Y. & C. Ch. C. 631, 650, *Shadwell v. C.* (cases prepared and opinions taken for litigations with other parties were protected, the issues being the same or related); 1843, *Hughes v. Garnous*, 6 Beav. 352 (correspondence in another suit, indirectly involved, held privileged); 1844, *Holmes v. Baddeley*, 1 Phil. Ch. 476, L. C. Lyndhurst (cases and opinions given for another suit with another party concerning the same property, and possibly raising a similar issue, held privileged; overruling Lord Langdale's decision below in 6 Beav. 521).

¹³ 1842, *Herring v. Cloberry*, *supra*; 1842, *Clagett v. Phillips*, 2 Y. & C. Ch. C. 82, *Knight-Bruce v. C.* (communication privileged, if a dispute had arisen which "might terminate in

a stand was made by Lord Langdale, Master of the Rolls, the determined opponent of the privilege; he, with Vice-Chancellor Wigram, succeeded for a short space in restricting it at most to communications made *after dispute arisen*, though irrespective of litigation contemplated.¹⁴ But Lord Chancellor Lyndhurst was already on record, in *Herring v. Clobery*, as favoring the final and broadest expansion to communications seeking *any legal advice* under all circumstances.¹⁵ For another twenty years this final step remained arguable.¹⁶ But logic prevailed; and after *Minet v. Morgan* there was no pretext for doubt as to the law in England.¹⁷ Thereafter, for the client and for the attorney the broad boundaries of the privilege were the same.

In the United States this lengthy controversy seems never to have found echoes. With the exception of one or two early rulings observing some of the original English limitations,¹⁸ the Courts seemed to gravitate naturally to the largest interpretation of the privilege.¹⁹ Mr. Justice Selden, of New

a suit"); 1844, *Flight v. Robinson*, 8 Beav. 22, 38, Lord Langdale, M. R. (cited *infra*). The supposed authority of *Radcliffe v. Fursman*, and the limitation, hitherto obtaining up to the 1830s, in tradition and practice, to consultations concerning the litigation in hand, was carefully discussed and strongly deprecated in 1837 and 1843, in two articles in the *London Law Magazine* (vol. 17, p. 51, and vol. 30, p. 107) which must have had much influence on professional opinion.

¹⁴ 1843, *Walsingham v. Goodricke*, 3 Hare 122, 125 (Wigram, V. C., after noting that prior decisions recognized the privilege for those communications only which were had after dispute arising, though not in contemplation of litigation, apparently declined to recognize it for those had "before any dispute arose"); 1843, *Woods v. Woods*, 4 id. 83 (Wigram, V. C., repeated his views as expressed in the prior case); 1844, *Flight v. Robinson*, 8 Beav. 22, 38 (Lord Langdale, M. R., restricted the privilege to communications taking place "either in the progress of the suit, or with reference to the suit previously to its commencement"); 1845, *Carpmael v. Powis*, 9 Beav. 16, 20 (Lord Langdale, as to his former denial of the privilege where "no litigation was contemplated," conceded that "this doctrine has been overruled"); 1845, *Reece v. Trye*, lb. 316 (Lord Langdale conceded that the protection was not confined to communications in contemplation of litigation; reluctantly acknowledging that his own view "has not been approved"); 1848, *Penraddock v. Hammond*, 11 id. 59 (similar to *Reece v. Trye*).

¹⁵ 1842, *Herring v. Clobery*, 1 Phil. Ch. 91 (quoted *infra*, § 2295). This view had been advanced many years before, in a ruling little noticed: 1821, *Walker v. Wildman*, 6 Madd. 47 (Leach, V. C.; privilege held to apply not merely to "communications pending an action," but to every communication "for professional assistance").

¹⁶ 1846, *Pearse v. Pearse*, 1 DeG. & Sm. 12, 25, 11 Jur. 50 (V. C. Knight-Bruce declared that it was "not a disputable point" that "the

question of the existence or non-existence of any suit, claim, or dispute, is immaterial"; *Herring v. Clobery* declared to state the rule correctly); 1855, *Manser v. Dix*, 1 K. & J. 451, 453 (Page-Wood, V. C., was perplexed by the prior rulings, and was inclined to draw the line at communications made with reference to a dispute, including possible as well as actual disputes, and therefore held as privileged a communication made regarding a supposed defect on the title, as being a consultation "against all possible claimants who may hereafter dispute the title"); 1859, *Lawrence v. Campbell*, 4 Drew. 485 (Kindersley, V. C., declared that "it is not now necessary, as it formerly was, . . . that the communications should be made either during or relating to an actual or even to an expected litigation"); 1866, *Jenkyns v. Bushby*, L. R. 2 Eq. 547 (case and opinion, prepared for defendant's predecessor for litigation as to the same property, held privileged).

¹⁷ 1873, *Minet v. Morgan*, L. R. 8 Ch. 361, 366 (L. C. Selborne reviewed the cases, and approved the broad principle of *Pearse v. Pearse*; "the law has now attained to a footing which made me a little surprised to hear the matter reopened now"); 1889, *Lowden v. Blakey*, L. R. 23 Q. B. D. 332 (*Minet v. Morgan* approved); 1891, *O'Shea v. Wood*, Proh. 287 (modern doctrine approved).

In Canada, the doubt in English practice was reflected in a contemporary ruling: 1865, *Macdonald v. Putman*, 11 Grant Ch. 258, 264 (communications from the client, held not privileged if not made pending or anticipating litigation; otherwise of the attorney; here the then English cases and their uncertainty were considered); 1874, *Hamelyn v. White*, 6 Ont. Pr. 143 (*Minet v. Morgan* followed; *Macdonald v. Putman* practically repudiated).

¹⁸ 1829, *Dixon v. Parmelee*, 2 Vt. 185, 188; 1845, *March v. Lindum*, 3 Sandf. Ch. 35, 49 (Sandford, V. C., recognizes the privilege as applying "where there is a dispute," though no litigation actual or contemplated).

¹⁹ Besides the following rulings, the doctrine is of course now assumed in almost every opinion

York, alone raised his voice in opposition.²⁰ The reasons for this contrast, and for the easy acceptance of the broader rule with us, may be guessed without much risk of error. In the first place, there was not the same strong body of direct tradition to be overcome. The profession of the attorneys was in many of our colonies for a long time unrecognized; and there can hardly have been any inheritance of the old principle to stand in the way of the logic of the newer theory. But, more than this, the functions of counsel and attorney not having been with us maintained in separation, the chief occasion for the long-drawn-out English controversy was lacking, — namely, the existence of a complete written statement of facts by the party himself, available against him as an admission, in the form of a "case made for counsel," customarily presented to the latter by the attorney for an opinion before venturing on litigation. This it was which, in English practice, formed the objective eagerly sought after by bills of discovery, and was only protected from disclosure by the bulwark of the present privilege. Most of the rulings in the long list already examined were concerned with demands for the production by the client of this key to his case; and under the rules of discovery (*ante*, §§ 1846, 1857, 2219) most of its parts must have been demandable except as they might fall within the present privilege.²¹ It is no wonder that the loss of such an advantage was so stubbornly contested by inquisitive opponents. In the United States, however, no "case" needed to be stated in this written form; for counsel and attorney were one. The client's admissions to his adviser were likely to be made orally; and the chance of extracting from him a repetition of the same admissions by answers to interrogatories was of little value, compared to the opportunity of inspecting the unchangeable writing which he was obliged, in English practice, to commit to the counsel's hands. All that was to be obtained by discovery, under the other practice, was the preëxisting documents of title or obligation, and these were not to be protected by the attorney-privilege.²¹ There was thus no appreciable motive for raising the distinctions which marked the successive stages of development in England, nor for struggling so long at each successive outpost in the extension of the privilege. The progress of its logic was unimpeded.

discussing the privilege at large: 1845, *State v. Marshall*, 8 Ala. 302, 306; 1860, *Bobo v. Bryson*, 21 Ark. 397; 1899, *Brown v. Bntler*, 71 Conn. 576, 42 Atl. 654 (instructions as to drawing a bill of sale, excluded); 1856, *Johnson v. Sullivan*, 23 Mo. 474, 479; 1831, *Foster v. Hall*, 12 Pick. 89, 97 (see quotation *infra*, § 2295); 1833, *Hatton v. Robinson*, 14 id. 416, 421; 1848, *Bank of Utica v. Mersereau*, 3 Barb. Ch. 528, 592, *Walworth, C.*; 1859, *Williams v. Fitch*, 18 N. Y. 546, 551 (conversation relating to an affidavit for reducing an assessment, held privileged; as to the supposed limitation to judicial proceedings, "it appears to be now settled otherwise, and we think with great propriety"); 1871, *Britton v. Lorenz*, 45 id. 51, 57 (rule confirmed); 1874, *Yates v. Olmsted*, 56 id. 632 (same); 1881, *Root v. Wright*, 84 id. 72, 76

(the rule "extends to communications in reference to all matters which are the proper subject of professional employment"); 1834, *Beltzhoover v. Blackstock*, 3 Watts 20, 27 ("It is sufficient if the witness were consulted professionally and acted or advised as counsel"); 1891, *Alexander v. U. S.*, 138 U. S. 353, 359, 11 Sup. 350; 1832, *Durkee v. Leland*, 4 Vt. 612; 1856, *Coon v. Swan*, 30 id. 6, *semble*; 1873, *Earle v. Groat*, 46 id. 113, 125, *semble*; 1814, *Parker v. Carter*, 4 Munf. 273, 287.

²⁰ Quoted *post*, § 2295.

²¹ So far as the documents in such a "case" were not created for the purpose of communicating with the attorney, the limits of privilege still are important; they are examined *post*, § 2318.

§ 2295. **Same: General Principle and Policy.** It has been hitherto assumed that the logic of the modern theory of the privilege (*ante*, § 2290) leads inevitably to the broad scope of rule just noticed. But is this its inevitable result? Does the policy of securing subjective freedom of consultation for the client require us to guarantee that freedom as well for non-litigious as for litigious consultation? To argue that every right and obligation is potentially the subject of litigation is natural; but this, though abstractly true and sufficient, is hardly tangible enough to support so broad a claim of expansion. The case against expansion, from this point of view, has been made the most of in the following passage:

1864, *Selden, J., in Whiting v. Barney*, 30 N. Y. 330, 332: "As law-suits multiplied, and the modes of judicial proceeding became more complex and formal, it became necessary to have these suits conducted by persons skilled in the laws and in the practice of the courts. This necessity gave rise, at an early day, to the class of attorneys; to facilitate the business of the courts, it was important that these men should be employed. But as parties were not then obliged to testify in their own cases, and could not be compelled to disclose facts known only to themselves, they would hesitate to employ professional men, and make the necessary disclosures to them, if the facts thus communicated were thus within the reach of their opponent. To encourage the employment of attorneys, therefore, it became indispensable to extend to them the immunity enjoyed by the party. . . . If this was the true foundation of the rule, it would follow, that the protection is confined to communications made with a view to the conduct of a suit, or some judicial proceeding, and it goes most forcibly to confirm and strengthen the direct authority to which I have referred, that in the earlier cases, and while the origin of the rule was most likely to be kept in view, the doctrine would seem to have had this application. . . . But, unfortunately, there is another class of cases, still more numerous, which indicate a different doctrine, viz., that the privilege has no special relation to suits in court or judicial proceedings of any kind, but extends to every case where a member of the legal profession is consulted or employed *professionally*. . . . It seems to me, that enough has been adduced, to make it clear that the privilege in question is not founded upon any idea of the sacredness of confidential communications, whether made to an attorney or to any other person; nor upon any particular policy of the law which distinguishes the *general* business of an attorney from that of any other class in the community; but it was the result of that rule of the common law, which excused parties from testifying in their own cases, and of the necessity, for the convenience of the public, as well as the benefit of suitors, of having the business of the courts conducted by professional men. Whether, therefore, the recent legislation in this State, compelling parties to testify as witnesses in their own suits, shall be deemed to have removed the whole foundation of the rule, and terminated all necessity for its continuance or not, which may admit of some doubt, it follows, from the views here expressed, if correct, that the protection should only be held to extend to such communications as have relation to some suit or other judicial proceeding, either existing or contemplated."

The true answer to Mr. Justice Selden's argument is found by recurring to the basis of all privileges for communications (*ante*, § 2285). Their object is to protect the perfect working of a special relation, wherever confidence is a necessary feature of that perfect working. Now it cannot be denied that professional legal advice is as often needed for avoiding litigation as for carrying it on; still less can it be denied that the avowed ideal of the law, and the prudent custom of the profession, is to diminish litigation by so ordering

the affairs of clients that litigation is not needed to correct their plight. It is a truism that much of litigation is due to the very failure of clients to seek legal advice until a resort to the courts cannot be avoided. Thus the relation of client and legal adviser, and the freedom of entering into it, are of at least equal importance for matters that are still in the non-litigious stage; and the promotion of the relation in that stage tends to prevent its necessity in the further and less desirable stage. The best judicial opinion, therefore, when not opposed (as Lord Langdale was) to the privilege as a whole, has not hesitated to accept the reasoning which leads to the broad rule now universally accepted :

1833, *L. C. Brougham*, in *Greenough v. Gaskell*, 1 Myl. & K. 98, 102: "If the protection were confined to proceedings begun or in contemplation, then every communication would be unprotected which a party makes with a view to his general defense against attacks which he apprehends, although at the time no one may have resolved to assail him. But, were it allowed to extend over such communications, the protection would be insufficient if it only included communications more or less connected with judicial proceedings; for a person oftentimes requires the aid of professional advice upon the subject of his rights and liabilities with no reference to any particular litigation, and without any other reference to litigation generally than all human affairs have in so far as every transaction may by possibility become the subject of judicial inquiry."

1831, *Shaw, C. J.*, in *Foster v. Hall*, 12 Pick. 89, 98: "We are of opinion that although this rule of privilege, having a tendency to prevent the full disclosure of the truth, ought to be construed strictly; yet still, whether we consider the principle of public policy upon which the rule is founded, or the weight of authority by which its extent and limits are fixed, the rule is not strictly confined to communications made for the purpose of enabling an attorney to conduct a cause in court, but does extend so as to include communications made by one to his legal adviser, whilst engaged and employed in that character, and when the object is to get his legal advice and opinion as to legal rights and obligations, although the purpose be to correct a defect of title by obtaining a release, to avoid litigation by compromise, to ascertain what acts are necessary to constitute a legal compliance with an obligation, and thus avoid a forfeiture or claim for damages, or for other legal and proper purposes not connected with a suit in court."

§ 2296. **Same: Application to Advice sought for Sundry Non-Legal Purposes; Consultation with Prosecuting Attorneys.** Men do not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles; yet they may enter one and the same field and find diverse fruits. A lawyer is sometimes employed without reference to his knowledge and discretion in the law, — as where he is charged with finding a profitable investment for trust funds. So, too, one not a lawyer is sometimes asked for legal advice, — as where a policeman or a clerk of court is consulted. It is not easy to frame a definite test for distinguishing legal from non-legal advice. Where the general purpose concerns legal rights and obligations, a particular incidental transaction would receive protection, though in itself it were merely commercial in nature,¹ — as where the financial condition of a shareholder is discussed, in the course of a proceeding to enforce a claim against a corporation. But apart from such cases, the most that can

¹ 1855, *Maas v. Bloch*, 7 Ind. 202 (one part of a conversation being privileged, the rest not, the whole was held protected).

be said, by way of generalization, is that a matter committed to a professional legal adviser is *prima facie* so committed for the sake of the legal advice which may be more or less desirable for some aspect of the matter, and is therefore within the privilege, unless it clearly appears to be lacking in aspects requiring legal advice. Obviously, much depends upon the circumstances of individual transactions.²

The difficulty of drawing the line is noticeable in the case of complaints made to *prosecuting attorneys*. Under our system of criminal prosecution, the injured person does not usually, as in England at common law, employ the counsel, nor become liable for the costs; he may be obliged to make oath to the complaint, but he is in the criminal procedure no more than an informer and a witness. There is, therefore, nominally, for him no cause at issue and no need for legal advice. On the other hand, he may become liable for malicious prosecution, and may therefore desire legal advice before incurring any risk. His application to the prosecuting attorney will therefore usually not involve a request for legal advice in his own interest; yet conceivably it may:

1846, *Lockwood, J.*, in *Granger v. Warrington*, 8 Ill. 299, 308 (malicious prosecution, the defendant, being plaintiff in a suit for the taking of a horse, had gone to the prosecuting attorney of the county and made complaint preparatory to appearing before the grand jury; the attorney advised him that no indictment would lie): "The relation of client and attorney must exist. The party must consult the attorney in a matter in which his private interest is concerned, and make his statements to him with a view to enable the attorney correctly to understand his cause, so that he may manage it with greater

² Various instances are as follows: *England*: 1821, *Walker v. Wildman*, 6 Madd. 47 (Lesch, V. C.; privilege held not applicable to employment "in matters not professional, as in a treaty for the purchase of an estate"); 1824, *Bramwell v. Lucas*, 2 B. & C. 745 ("a question for information as to a matter of fact, as to a communication the attorney has made to others, where the communication might have been made by any other person as well as an attorney and where the character or office of attorney has not been called into action," is not privileged; here, a question by a bankrupt whether the state of things was such that he could attend his creditors' meeting without the prospect of arrest); 1836, *Tarquand v. Knight*, 2 M. & W. 98 (consultation of an attorney for procuring a loan, held privileged); 1837, *Doe v. Watkins*, 3 Bing. N. C. 421 (communications by a person desiring to obtain a loan and seeking an attorney C., acting for a lender, held privileged; "C. was to assist professionally in raising the money for the applicant"); 1842, *Jones v. Pugh*, 1 Phil. Ch. 96 (bill by a judgment creditor against P and his mortgages, a solicitor; the solicitor, having taken mortgages for his clients in his own name, as an "ordinary part of a solicitor's duty to lay out money for his clients," was not compelled to disclose the names of his *cestuis que trustent*); *United States*: 1899, *Turner's Appeal*, 72 Conn. 305, 44 Atl. 310 (conversations in regard to the amount receivable from an estate, etc., not privileged); 1895, *Freeman v. Brewster*, 93 Ga. 648, 21 S. E. 165 (the contents of an insurance policy, the collection of the money, etc., as attorney, held privileged); 1904, *State v. Gosey*, 111 La. —, 35 So. 786 (consultation during trial, between a co-indictee, not on trial, and his counsel, as to the former's consenting to take the stand, held privileged); 1823, *Wilson v. Troup*, 2 Cow. 195, 205, 242 (privilege held applicable to an attorney, acting as a general business agent, so far as the communications concerned professional legal services; here, the foreclosure of a mortgage); 1862, *Flack v. Neill*, 26 Tex. 273, 276 (a "voluntary narrative of the circumstances attending a past transaction," held not privileged on the facts); 1800, *Heister v. Davis*, 3 Yeates 4 (privilege held not to cover the vendor's delivery of a bond to the attorney of the vendee and the latter's statement that he was satisfied with the security); 1849, *Moore v. Bray*, 10 Pa. St. 519, 523 (conversation in regard to a confession of judgment to cover liabilities, and a dispute arising therefrom, held privileged); 1898, *Mutual Life Ins. Co. v. Selby*, 19 C. C. A. 331, 72 Fed. 980 (consultation with an attorney in applying for a pension, excluded); 1900, *Burraston v. Bank*, 22 Utah 328, 62 Pac. 425 (attorney employed to "straighten out an account" by a man who could not read; statements not privileged).

skill; or if legal advice only is wanted, to enable the attorney the better to counsel him as to his legal rights. Did, then, Granger employ Curtiss as an attorney, either to investigate a question of law, in which his private interests were concerned, or to commence or to defend a suit in which he was a party? He clearly had no such object. He had no personal interest in the result at which Curtiss should arrive, and he did not expect to compensate him for his advice. Consequently the relation of client and attorney did not arise; and consequently the conversation was not privileged from being disclosed by Curtiss as a witness. Granger can be considered in no other light than a witness on the part of the people, communicating to the law officer of the government, his knowledge in relation to the commission of a supposed crime, and inquiring of that officer whether the facts thus communicated amounted to an offense. We think that no considerations of public policy require that the conversations between Granger and the State's attorney should be regarded as confidential and privileged."*

§ 2297. **Same: Application to Advice in Conveyancing.** A deed or other conveyance is drafted sometimes by the parties, sometimes by a real-estate broker, sometimes (as on the Continent, and formerly in England) by a notary or scrivener, and sometimes by an attorney-at-law. Though it necessarily affects rights and obligations, there is not necessarily a contribution of legal advice in its preparation. It is conceivable, therefore, that an attorney may be asked to draft a deed of a certain tenor, without any express reference to his knowledge of the law. On the other hand, he will undoubtedly use that knowledge, and his employer impliedly requests him to use it, in phrasing the instrument. The question thus arises whether the communications then made by his employer, although they may not in terms concern legal aspects of the transaction, are to be regarded as communications made in the course of an employment for legal advice.

This question has naturally received conflicting answers.¹ The tendency at first in England was to make a sharp distinction between services as a con-

* The following rulings deal with this situation: 1846, *Granger v. Warrington*, 8 Ill. 299, 306 (injured party's consultation of a prosecuting attorney, with a view to complaint and indictment, held not privileged; quoted *supra*); 1873, *Oliver v. Pate*, 43 Ind. 132, 139 (consultation with a county prosecuting attorney, for instituting a prosecution, held privileged; the Court's reasoning, however, is substantially upon the principle applicable between informers and government officers, *post*, § 2374); 1877, *State v. Van Buskirk*, 59 Ind. 384, 388 (witness' testimony before a grand jury, in the prosecuting attorney's presence, held not a privileged communication to the latter); 1811, *Pierson v. Steertz*, 1 Morris Ia. 136 (consultation with an "acting magistrate," who "frequently gave advice and counsel" and "usually did the business of the defendant," held not privileged; here it concerned an alleged theft of timber); 1898, *Cole v. Andrews*, 74 Minn. 93, 76 N. W. 962 (consulting a county attorney as public prosecutor to institute a prosecution; not privileged); 1884, *Vogel v. Gruaz*, 110 U. S. 311, 314, 4 Sup. 12 (an injured person's consultation with a State's attorney with reference to securing an indictment, held privileged, but partly on

the ground of an informer's privilege, *post*, § 2374). Compare the privilege for communications between government and informer (*post*, § 2374), which is often here applicable, and the privilege for communications between witness and grand jury (*post*, § 2362).

¹ The early cases dealing with "scriveners" are hardly of any significance, inasmuch as the general principle of privilege tended at that time to include all confidential communications (*ante*, § 2286), and as the occupation of "scrivener," as distinguished from attorney-at-law, was then more common: 16—, *Morris and Clayton's Case*, cited *Freem. Ch. 5* ("that they, being but scriveners, should not have that privilege"); 1675, *Harvey v. Clayton*, 2 Swanst. 221, note (discovery of a mortgage; plea, that defendant "is a scrivener and trusted with men's estates," allowed, "for it may be a ruin to the defendant in his trade to discover it, for no man hereafter will employ him"); 1693, *Anon.*, *Skinner* 404 (*L. C. J. Holt*: "It seems to be the same law of a scrivener, . . . for he is a counsel to a man, with whom he will advise, if he be intrusted and educated in such way of practice; otherwise of a gentleman, parson, etc.").

veyancer and services as an attorney-at-law.³ But this was probably due in part to the original limitation of the privilege to communications for the purpose of litigation (*ante*, § 2294); and since this limitation disappeared, the inclination has been to take the larger view of the privilege in the present respect also.⁵ In the United States, the drafting of a *will* has almost always been assumed (and naturally) to bring the testator's communications within the privilege.⁴ But for *deeds* and other instruments the privilege has been strictly construed, and where no legal problem has been expressly brought forward by the client, his communications concerning the mere drafting of the instrument have commonly been admitted.⁵ The circumstances of each

³ 1730 (1), *South Sea Co. v. Dollife*, cited in 2 Atk. 524; *L. C. King* (attorney examined concerning the alteration before execution of a covenant drawn by him; demurrer overruled, "for that what he knew was as the conveyancer only"); 1743, *Vaillant v. Dodemead*, 2 Atk. 524, *L. C. Hardwicke* (attorney compelled to answer "concerning the proving of the deed of assignment"); 1792, *Duffin v. Smith*, *Peaka N. P.* 108 (attorney compelled to testify to the consideration of a bond and mortgage, since it "does not come to his knowledge in the character of an attorney").

⁴ 1820, *Re Aitkin*, 4 B. & Ald. 47 (*Abbott, C. J.*: "Inasmuch as a conveyance requires knowledge of law, the trust is reposed by the client [in employing him for a conveyance] in the party in respect of his being an attorney"); 1828, *Broad v. Pitt*, 3 C. & P. 518 (*Best, C. J.*: "A man is not acting as an attorney when he is consulted about a deed"); 1833, *Doe v. Harris*, 5 Id. 592, 594 (*Parke, J.*, held that "an application to draw a deed" was a professional consultation); 1846, *Carpnael v. Powis*, 1 Phil. Ch. 687, 692 (*L. C. Lyndhurst*; communications in regard to preparing a conveyance, fixing bids, etc., held privileged; "It is impossible to split the duties in that manner without getting into inextricable confusion; I consider them all parts of one transaction, the sale of an estate, and that a transaction in which solicitors are ordinarily employed by their clients"); 1889, *Lowden v. Blakey*, L. R. 23 Q. B. D. 332 (communication in regard to the drafting of an advertisement stating the result of a lawsuit, held privileged).

⁵ The cases are more conveniently examined *post*, § 2314, under another aspect of the principle.

⁶ *Ala.*: 1845, *State v. Marshall*, 8 Ala. 302, 306 (application by a negro to an attorney to draw up a petition to the Legislature for freedom, held to be "such as did not require legal skill in its execution," and therefore not privileged); *Colo.*: 1873, *Machette v. Wanless*, 2 Colo. 169, 179 (conversation with an attorney "simply asked to prepare a mortgage," held not privileged); 1887, *Caldwell v. Davis*, 10 Id. 481, 492, 15 Pac. 696 ("the only employment of L. by D. was to draw the release and deed"; conversation held not privileged); *Ill.*: 1861, *De-Wolf v. Strader*, 26 Ill. 225, 230 (an attorney "acting as scrivener, merely to draw a deed,"

and not "consulted as counsel or asked for a legal opinion on a state of facts," held not privileged); 1883, *Smith v. Long*, 106 Id. 485, 488 (similar); 1886, *Hollenback v. Todd*, 119 Id. 543, 546, 8 N. E. 829 (an attorney who drew the client's assignment and was asked and gave his opinion thereon, held privileged); *Ind.*: 1860, *Borum v. Fouts*, 15 Ind. 50, 53 (consultation of an attorney as scrivener, to draw notes and a bond and to reckon interest, held not privileged); 1887, *Hanlon v. Doherty*, 109 Id. 37, 44, 9 N. E. 782 (preceding case approved); *Kan.*: 1893, *Sparks v. Sparks*, 51 Kan. 195, 201, 32 Pac. 892 (a mere scrivener of documents, though professionally an attorney, not privileged); 1903, *Grimshaw v. Kent*, 67 Id. 463, 73 Pac. 92 (a lawyer drafting a contract; privilege not applied); *Ky.*: 1892, *Carter v. West*, 93 Ky. 211, 19 S. W. 592 ("In this instance the attorney . . . was the legal adviser of the party, and not a mere scrivener; she was relying on him to see that she got a good title," and the privilege was applied); *Md.*: 1882, *Crane v. Barkdoll*, 59 Md. 534, 538 (here the client "employed the attorney to draw the deed and sought his professional advice in reference to it"; held privileged); *Mass.*: 1833, *Hatton v. Robinson*, 14 Pick. 416, 423 (an attorney drawing a conveyance, held not privileged; quoted *supra*); *Mo.*: 1856, *Johnson v. Sullivan*, 23 Mo. 474, 479 (communications to one "employed in his professional capacity to draft a deed," and to one employed "to prepare insolvent papers," held privileged); *Mont.*: 1899, *Smith v. Caldwell*, 22 Mont. 331, 56 Pac. 590 (a person was attorney, justice of the peace, and notary; a communication by one securing his services in drawing a deed, and not consulting him for legal advice, held admissible); *N. Y.*: 1881, *Root v. Wright*, 84 N. Y. 74, 76 (privilege held applicable to the drawing of a contract where the attorney's advice was sought as to its terms); *Pa.*: 1888, *Goodwin G. S. & M. Co.'s Appeal*, 117 Pa. 514, 523, 537, 12 Atl. 736 ("a legal scrivener does not become the repository of confidences within the rule of the law," and is not privileged); *Tex.*: 1891, *Stallings v. Hnilum*, 79 Tex. 421, 15 S. W. 677 (communications as to a deed's consideration, made to an attorney employed solely as an abstracter of title, held not privileged); *U. S.*: 1839, *Linthicum v. Remington*, 5 Cr. C. C. 546 (facts stated to the attorney at the time of drawing

case must affect the result; but in general a strict construction is the proper one, especially in those cases where attorneys combine the occupation of real estate and insurance brokers or act also as executive officers of a corporate business. The following opinion is typical of the judicial attitude:

1833, *Shaw, C. J.*, in *Hatton v. Robinson*, 14 Pick. 116, 422: "There are many cases, in which an attorney is employed in transacting business, not properly professional, and where the same might have been transacted by another agent. In such case the fact that the agent sustains the character of an attorney, does not render the communications attending it, privileged; and they may be testified to by him, as by any other agent. . . . We cannot perceive that the communications were made to [the attorney, Mr. Ames,] by Winch with the purpose of instructing him in any cause, or engaging him in the conduct of any professional business, or of obtaining any legal advice or opinion. If the disclosure of his views and purposes, in the conveyance of property proposed to be drawn, was not, as stated in some of the books, a mere *gratis dictum*, the only purpose seems to have been to satisfy Mr. Ames' mind, and remove any scruple that he might entertain, as to the character of the transaction, and to convince him, that whatever might be the legal character of the act, it was not intended with moral turpitude. It did satisfy him that he was not to be engaged in a conspiracy to cheat, and induced him to consent to draw the deed. Here was no legal advice asked, no opinion requested as to the effect and operation of such a conveyance in point of law, and none given. We are therefore necessarily brought to the conclusion, that either these disclosures were made without any particular motive, or if there was a purpose, connected with the proposed draft, it was to satisfy Mr. Ames' mind, upon a point of fact, not for the information of his own in point of law, and in either event they are not to be deemed privileged communications, which the witness was prohibited from disclosing."

Assuming that legal advice is in fact being expressly sought, as it commonly is, in connection with the drafting, and that the client's communications are therefore within the privilege, the question then arises whether the contents and the execution of the instrument, thus coming to the attorney's knowledge by his own vision, are privileged from disclosure. This question depends upon another aspect of the principle (*post*, §§ 2308, 2309).

§ 2298. **Same: Application to Advice in a Criminal or Fraudulent Transaction.** It has been agreed from the beginning that the privilege cannot avail to protect the client in concerting with the attorney a crime or other evil enterprise; and for the logically sufficient reason that no such enterprise falls within the just scope of the relation between legal adviser and client. But the difficulty has been to define the boundaries of this limitation. It has not always been kept in mind that the privilege, in its very fundamentals, presupposes what Bentham so drastically censured, — the furnishing of legal advice to the culpable client, as well as to the worthy one, *i. e.* to a client who, if the law were duly enforced, would lose in the litigation.

a deed as "attorney, counsellor, and conveyancer," held privileged); *Pa.*: 1811, *Clay v. Williams*, 2 Munf. 105, 113, 121, per Roane, J. (privilege held applicable to an attorney drafting a bond and advising as to its legal effect); 1814, *Parker v. Carter*, 4 Id. 273, 275, 280, 285 (communications made to an attorney employed to draw such a deed as would settle slaves on his daughter to be exempt from creditors, held

privileged); *Wis.*: 1877, *Getzlaff v. Sellger*, 43 Wis. 299, 302 (an attorney giving legal advice in the drafting of a mortgage, held subject to the privilege, though he claimed that he was "acting as a notary and not as attorney").

The cases dealing with the mere *fact of execution* of the instrument, apart from conversations at the time, are examined *post*, § 2309.

How, then, can the privilege continue to exist at all, if any exception is to be made by which the confidences of the guilty are to be disclosed? It is possible, of course, to take merely the practical point of view, and to declare that the privilege must at least cease to be a cloak for criminal conspiracy, regardless of its logic, and to contrive an arbitrary limit for this exception. But it seems hardly necessary thus to do violence to the theory of the privilege. Looking at the reasons of policy upon which it rests (*ante*, § 2291), they appear by their natural limits to end with the same conclusion. They predicate the need of confidence on the part not only of injured persons, but also of those who, being already wrongdoers in part or all of their cause, are seeking legal advice suitable for their plight. The confidences of such persons may legitimately be protected, wrongdoers though they have been, because, as already noticed (*ante*, § 2291), the element of wrong is not always found separated from an element of right; because, even when it is, a legal adviser may properly be employed to obtain the best available or lawful terms of making redress; and because the legal adviser cannot habitually be placed in the position of an informer. But these reasons all cease to operate at a certain point, namely, where the desired advice refers *not to prior wrongdoing*, but to *future wrongdoing*. From that point onwards, no protection is called for by any of these considerations.

Upon this much there has been a fair consensus among all who have declared themselves upon the subject. But certain minor points of detail still remain, if a practical rule for disclosure is to be settled upon. (1) Must not the advice be sought for a *knowingly* unlawful end? (2) Must not that unlawfulness be either a *crime* or a civil wrong involving *moral turpitude*? (3) Must not the attorney have so far abandoned his professional attitude as to have become, by *assent* to the design, a partaker in the client's intended wrong? The judicial attitudes on these questions may be gathered from the following passages:

1743, *Annesley v. Earl of Anglesea*, 17 How. St. Tr. 1229; ¹ Serjeant *Tisdall* (arguing): "If he is employed as an attorney in any unlawful or wicked act, his duty to the public obliges him to disclose it; no private obligations can dispense with that universal one, which lies on every member of the society, to discover every design which may be formed, contrary to the laws of the society, to destroy the public welfare. For this reason I apprehend, that if a secret, which is contrary to the public good, such as a design to commit treason, murder, or perjury, comes to the knowledge of an attorney, even in a cause wherein he is concerned, the obligation to the public must dispense with the private obligation to the client." Mr. *Harward* (arguing): "I take the distinction to be, that where an attorney comes to the knowledge of a thing that is *malum in se*, against the common rules of morality and honesty, though from his client, and necessary to procure success in the cause, yet it is no breach of trust in him to disclose it, as it can't be presumed an honest man would engage in a trust that by law prevented him from discharging that moral duty all are bound to, nor can private obligation cancel the justice owing by us to the public." *Mounteney*, B.: "For God's sake then let us consider, what will be the consequence of the doctrine now laid down [by the defendant] and so earnestly contended for, that such a declaration made by any person to his attorney ought not by that

¹ The facts of this celebrated case will be found stated *post*, § 2310.

attorney to be proved? A man (without any natural call to it) promotes a prosecution against another for a capital offence; he is desirous and determined, at all events, to get him hanged; he retains an attorney to carry on the prosecution, and makes such a declaration to him as I have before mentioned (the meaning and intention of which, if the attorney hath common understanding about him, it is impossible he should mistake); he happens to be too honest a man to engage in such an affair; he declines the prosecution; but he must never discover this declaration, because he was retained as attorney. This prosecutor applies in the same manner to a second, a third, and so on, who still refuse, but are still to keep this inviolably secret. At last, he finds an attorney wicked enough to carry this iniquitous scheme into execution. And after all, none of these persons are to be admitted to prove this, in order either to bring the guilty party to condign punishment, or to prevent the evil consequences of his crime with regard to civil property. Is this law? Is this reason? I think it is absolutely contrary to both. . . . The declaration now offered to be proved is of that nature, and so highly criminal, that, in my opinion, mankind is interested in the discovery; and whoever it was made to, attorney or not attorney, lies under an obligation to society in general, prior and superior to any obligation he can lie under to a particular individual, to make it known."

1841, *Bronson, J., in Coreney v. Tannahill*, 1 Hill N. Y. 33, 35, 41: "It is the privilege of one who is charged with a wrong, either public or private, to speak unreservedly with his counsel in preparing for his defence; but he should not be allowed to stop the mouth of one who was present when the wrong was done, upon the allegation that he was retained as counsel to see, or aid in the transaction. Indeed, I think there can be no such relation as that of attorney and client, either in the commission of a crime, or the doing of a wrong by force or fraud to an individual. The privileged relation of attorney and client can only exist for lawful and honest purposes. . . . Now, if the plaintiff consulted counsel beforehand as to the means, the expediency, or consequences of committing such a fraud, his communications may, perhaps, be privileged; and they are clearly so, as to what he may have said to counsel since the wrong was done. But the attorney may, I think, be required to disclose whatever act was done in his presence towards the perpetration of the fraud. One who is charged with having done an injury to another, either in his person, his fame, or his property, may freely communicate with his counsel, without the danger of having his confidence betrayed through any legal agency. But when he is not disclosing what has already happened, but is actually engaged in committing the wrong, he can have no privileged witness."

1891, *Green v. C., in Matthews v. Hoagland*, 48 N. J. Eq. 455, 469, 21 Atl. 1054: "In order that the rule may apply, there must be both professional confidence and professional employment; but if the client has a criminal object in view in his communications with his solicitor, one of these elements must necessarily be absent. The client must either conspire with his solicitor or deceive him. If his criminal object is avowed, the client does not consult his adviser professionally, because it cannot be the solicitor's business to further any criminal object. If the client does not avow his object he reposes no confidence, for the state of facts, which is the foundation of the supposed confidence, does not exist. The solicitor's advice is obtained by a fraud. As I understand the case, the rule, in its different phases and the reasons, may be thus stated: If the client consults the lawyer with reference to the perpetration of a crime, and they cooperate in effecting it, there is no privilege, for it is no part of an attorney's duty to assist in crime; he ceases to be counsel and becomes a criminal. If he refuses to be a party to the act, still there is no privilege, because he cannot properly be consulted professionally for advice to aid in the perpetration of a crime. In the case of a fraud, if it is effected by the cooperation of the attorney, it falls within the rule as to crime, for their consultation to carry it out is a conspiracy, which, on its accomplishment by the commission of the overt act, becomes criminal and an indictable offence."

Looking at the reasons for the privilege, and construing it as strictly as

possible, the first of the above three questions should be answered in the affirmative, but the second and the third in the negative. The decisions apparently reach this general result, except in the second respect, where there is an inclination to mark the line at crime and civil fraud.² Yet it is diffi-

² *England*: 1673, *Rothwell v. King*, 2 Swanst. 221, note (bill charging the suppression of a will; discovery compelled, "for the trust of counsels does not extend to the suppression of deeds or wills"); 1699, *R. v. Warden of the Fleet*, 12 Mod. 337, 341 (an obscure passage, concerning the limits of the privilege for criminal secrets); 1833, *Doe v. Harris*, 5 C. & P. 592, 594 (conveyance in fraud of creditors; the question being proposed, as preliminary to the attainment of the privilege, whether the insolvent had "asked his advice for a lawful or an unlawful purpose," Parke, J., would not allow the question; unsound); 1838, *R. v. Avery*, 8 id. 506 (consultation for the purpose of raising money on a forged will; the privilege was denied, but not on this ground); 1846, *R. v. Hayward*, 2 C. & K. 234, 3 Cox Cr. 23, s. v. *R. v. Jones*, 1 Den. Cr. 166 (documents sent to an attorney for advice, including a forged will, with the intent that the attorney should see it and act on it; on a prosecution for forgery, production was compelled); 1846, *R. v. Farley*, 2 C. & K. 313, 2 Cox Cr. 82, 1 Den. Cr. 197 (forgery of a will; the defendant's wife had taken another forged will to a solicitor to obtain an advance of money; this was compelled to be produced); 1846, *Reynell v. Sprye*, 10 Beav. 51, 56, 11 Beav. 618 (a letter procured by defendant to be written by his solicitor to show to plaintiff, held not privileged, as being a part of a plan to deceive; the solicitor "acting as *particeps criminis*, and not in the true relationship of solicitor and client"); 1848, *R. v. Tynley*, 1 Den. Cr. 319 (forgery of a will; the document had been placed by the defendant in a solicitor's hands to "enforce her rights under it"; production was required, the question being reserved but never decided); 1850, *Follett v. Jefferys*, 1 Sim. n. s. 3, 17 (Lord Cranworth, V. C.; communications respecting an attempt to dispose of property in evasion of creditors, held privileged; "such an act *per se* is no fraud, if the disposition is one which the law allows"); 1851, *Russell v. Jackson*, 9 Hare 387, 391 (Wigram, V. C., referring to a testamentary purpose forbidden by law: "The contriving of a fraud is no part of his duty as solicitor, and I think it can as little be said that it is part of the duty of a solicitor to advise his client as to the means of evading the law"); 1863, *Charlton v. Coombs*, 32 L. J. Ch. n. e. 284 (the attorney must be privy to the fraud, in order that the privilege should cease; unsound); 1873, *R. v. Castro*, and *Tichborne v. Lushington*, Report of Case, III, 9, 2381, 5211, quoted in L. R. 14 Q. B. D. 162 (general principle affirmed); 1884, *R. v. Cox and Railton*, L. R. 14 Q. B. D. 153, 164 (conspiracy to defraud creditors; communication preparatory to the conspiracy, the solicitor acting in good faith and without knowledge of the fraud, held not privileged); 1887, *Pestlethwaite*

v. Rickman, L. R. 35 Ch. D. 722, 724 (general principle applied to certain frauds by trustees); 1895, *Williams v. Quebrada R. L. & C. Co.*, 2 Ch. 751 (fraud by a corporation upon its bondholders; corporate minutes and legal opinions in reference to the plan, held not privileged; there is no distinction between crime and civil fraud); 1900, *R. v. Bullivant*, 2 Q. B. 163 (testator's instructions as to a conveyance to be made with intent to evade succession taxes, held not privileged).

Canada: 1864, *Mackenzie v. Mackenzie*, 9 Low. Can. Jur. 37 (testimony as to the client's money or goods in the attorney's hands, held not privileged, where the issue was whether they had been there placed to evade the law); 1879, *Ethier v. Homier*, 18 id. 83 (the privilege does not apply where the advocate is "not only adviser, but also party to the transaction"; here an attorney was compelled to testify whether he wrote a libellous letter at the client's instance).

United States: 1884, *State v. Barrows*, 52 Conn. 323, 325 (the client's statement that she intended to testify differently from what she had already said, held not a confession of intended perjury, and therefore without the rule; general principle expressly reserved from decision); 1902, *Supplee v. Hall*, — id. —, 52 Atl. 407 (validity of a mortgage as against creditors; questions to the mortgagee's attorney as to information acquired in consultations contemplating "some conduct which might render him liable to a civil action by reason of actual or constructive fraud," held privileged); 1898, *State v. Kidd*, 89 Ia. 54, 56 N. W. 26⁷ (sending a false copy of a jury's findings to the attorney, with intent to deceive himself and the Court, held not privileged); 1851, *McLellan v. Longfellow*, 32 Me. 494 (conversations while seeking advice for the drafting of a bill of sale, held privileged); 1870, *Higbee v. Dresser*, 103 Mass. 523, 526 ("a mere suggestion of fraud, in general terms," is not sufficient); 1903, *State v. Faulkner*, — Mo. —, 75 S. W. 116 (communication after the crime was complete; "to assist one criminal in requiring or inducing his confederate in crime to disgorge the price of his crime," held not privileged); 1891, *Matthews v. Hoagland*, 48 N. J. Eq. 455, 465, 21 Atl. 1054 (quoted *supra*; privilege held applicable to a contemplated fraud, as well as a crime, for which the attorney's advice is sought; "it falls within the rule as to crime"; Bank v. Mersereau, N. Y., declared to be founded on unsatisfactory authority; *R. v. Cox and Railton*, Eng., approved); 1848, *Bank of Utica v. Mersereau*, 3 Barb. Ch. 528, 598, *Walworth, C.* (privilege held applicable to communications concerning a proposed fraud upon creditors; the exception extending only to "a felony or other crime which was *malum in se*"; but "I admit I should have

cult to see how any moral line can properly be drawn at that crude boundary, or how the law can protect a deliberate plan to defy the law and oust another person of his rights, whatever the precise nature of those rights may be. The law, in its endeavor to maintain abstract fundamentals, is already sufficiently callous to concrete failures of justice, and needs rather to cultivate greater sensitiveness in such matters.

2. "From a professional legal adviser in his capacity as such"

§ 2300. **Persons having Legal Knowledge, but not Admitted to Practice.** There is no ground for encouraging the relation of client and legal adviser except when it is formed with one who has been formally admitted to the office of attorney or counsellor as duly qualified to give legal advice. That the person consulted is in fact practising, without formal sanction of the Court, is certainly not sufficient.¹ On the other hand, where a distinct sanction is required for the several grades of Courts within the same sovereignty, a practitioner admitted for a lower Court only is clearly within the privilege for the purpose of litigation before that Court. So, too, a duly admitted practitioner, while acting for a client belonging to his jurisdiction, is within the privilege in whatever other jurisdiction it may be invoked.² In the few jurisdictions still maintaining the self-stultifying rule that every citizen, even though not possessing any specific qualifications, is entitled to practise at the bar, it may be supposed that a *de facto* professional practice suffices.³ Finally, a mere student of law, aspiring to future entrance to the profession, is without the privilege, however much legal skill he may possess in comparison with some of those who are within it.⁴

been much better satisfied if I had found this question an open one"); 1841, *Coveney v. Tannahill*, 1 Hill N. Y. 33, 35, 41 (privilege held not to cover the execution of an instrument in fraud of creditors; quoted *supra*); 1858, *M'Mannus v. State*, 2 Head 213, 216 (question as to "a contemplated crime," held not privileged); 1891, *Alexander v. U. S.*, 138 U. S. 353, 357, 11 Snp. 850 (communication with regard to a crime or fraud, held privileged otherwise than in the trial "for the crime in furtherance of which the communication was made"; this distinction is groundless, upon either principle or precedent, and seems to have been due to a confusion of the old controversy (*ante*, § 2294) as to communications for other litigation); 1875, *People v. Mahon*, 1 Utah 205, 208 (communications relating to a contemplated forgery, held not privileged); 1854, *Dudley v. Beck*, 3 Wis. 274, 283 (fraud; question reserved, whether the mere disclosure of a fraud and the request for aid therein is privileged; but here a fraudulent agreement between client and attorney to act together was held not privileged).

¹ 1880, *Slade v. Tucker*, L. R. 14 Ch. D. 824, 827 (communications to a pursuivant of the Herald's College, assisting in a pedigree protest, held not privileged); 1859, *Sample v. Frost*, 10 Ia. 266 (consultation with one who

"was receiving business to transact as an attorney and expecting to be admitted and was admitted at the next term," held not privileged); 1879, *Scales v. Kelley*, 2 Lea 706 (licensed practitioner before justices of the peace and the county court, held within the privilege); 1854, *Brayton v. Chase*, 3 Wis. 456 (privilege held not applicable to one not licensed as an attorney, though practising before a justice of the peace). *Contra*: 1887, *Benedict v. State*, 44 Oh. St. 679, 688, 11 N. E. 125 (consultation with one who practised before justices of the peace, but was not admitted to the bar, held privileged; but the Court's remark that nothing was lacking "except the mere form of the admission of the adviser to practice in courts of record" shows a singular notion of the guarantees implied in the professional status).

² 1859, *Lawrence v. Campbell*, 4 Drew. 485 (the privilege applies to a Scotch solicitor, residing in London, and acting for a Scotch client resident in Scotland).

³ 1829, *Bean v. Quimby*, 5 N. H. 94, 97 (communication to one not an admitted attorney, but acting as attorney and legal adviser, held privileged, under a statute permitting any citizen to appear as attorney).

⁴ 1851, *Barnes v. Harris*, 7 Cnah. 576 (student in an office, not being the attorney's agent or clerk, not privileged); 1890, *Schubkagel v.*

§ 2301. **Attorney's Clerks and other Agents.** It has never been questioned that the privilege protects communications to the attorney's clerks and his other agents for rendering his services.¹ The assistance of these agents being indispensable to his work, and the communications of the client being often necessarily committed to him by the attorney or by the client himself, the privilege must include all the persons who act as the attorney's agents.²

§ 2302. **Client's Belief in the Attorney's Status.** The theory of the privilege (*ante*, § 2291) clearly requires that the client's *bona fide* belief in the status of his adviser as an admitted attorney should entitle him to the privilege. No doubt an intention to employ only such a person is necessary, as well as a respectable degree of precaution in seeking one; but from that point onwards he is entitled to peace of mind, and need not take the risk of a deception, or of a defective professional title.¹

§ 2303. **Consultation in Attorney's Capacity.** An attorney may often be brought into a discussion upon the law, without any purpose of treating his expression of opinion as a service rendered professionally. Such a conversation is not privileged, because the reason of the privilege designs to secure only the freedom of resort to attorneys where some appreciable interest of the client is to be protected and the advice is sought and given with a view to its protection. On the other hand, an attorney may render his services without charge, if he pleases, and hence the mere circumstance that the advice is given gratuitously does not nullify the privilege.¹ In view of the frequency with which some persons seek to obtain informally and gratui-

Dierstein, 131 Pa. 46, 54, 18 Atl. 1059 ("A law student is in this respect on no higher plane than a blacksmith retained in a like service"); 1816, *Andrews v. Solomon*, 1 Pet. C. C. 337, 359 (Washington, J.); "Not one of these reasons [for the privilege] apply to the student"; 1850, *Holman v. Klmball*, 22 Vt. 555 (a law student having an office of his own, but not yet admitted to the bar; privilege denied).

¹ 1825, *Taylor v. Forster*, 2 C. & P. 195; 1831, *Bowman v. Norton*, 5 id. 177; 1829, *Eicke v. Nokes*, 1 M. & M. 303, *semble*; 1881, *Lyell v. Kennedy*, L. R. 27 Ch. D. 1, 19 ("such agents as every solicitor's clerk may be said to be" are privileged); 1855, *Landsberger v. Gorham*, 5 Cal. 450 (the privilege held applicable to "a person acting in the capacity of an attorney," and apparently an attorney's clerk); 1857, *Sibley v. Waffle*, 16 N. Y. 180, 183, per Bowen, J. Compare the rule as to mere students of law (*ante*, § 2300).

The amendments to certain of the statutes (*ante*, § 2292), extending the privilege to the attorney's "clerk, stenographer, or other person employed," were therefore unnecessary. The irresponsible presumption of some who undertake to instruct the profession is shown in a certain editorial remark, when pointing out one of these amendments, that it made "a notable change in the law."

² For the case of communications to third

persons in the attorney's presence, see *post*, §§ 2311, 2312. For the distinction between clerks and witnesses or other volunteers, see *post*, § 2317.

¹ Besides the following cases, compare the doctrine as to the client's belief in the relevancy of his communication (*post*, § 2310), and as to the admissibility of a confession procured by trick (*ante*, § 841): *Admitted*: 1807, *Fonntain v. Young*, 6 Esp. 113 (here the person was in fact only a clerk in Newgate); 1890, *Hawes v. State*, 88 Ala. 38, 7 So. 302 (said *obiter*); 1859, *Sample v. Frost*, 10 Ia. 266 (one who was just about to be admitted to the bar); 1851, *Barnes v. Harris*, 7 Cush. 576 (student in a law office). *Excluded*: 1836, *People v. Barker*, 60 Mich. 277, 297, 307, 27 N. W. 539 (confession made to a detective, fraudulently pretending to be an attorney, held privileged); 1892, *State v. Russell*, 85 Wis. 330, 53 N. W. 441 (communication by a woman in prison to the district attorney and his agent, pretending to be her counsel, held privileged); 1856, *Coon v. Swan*, 30 Vt. 6, *semble*.

The following ruling seems peculiar: 1890, *Hawes v. State*, 88 Ala. 38, 7 So. 302 (communications made "to an attorney in ignorance of his professional character," excluded).

² 1878, *Andrews v. Stimms*, 53 Ark. 771, 773; 1860, *Reed v. Smith*, 2 Ind. 160; 1897, *Davis v. Morgan*, 19 Mont. 141, 47 Pac. 793.

tously valuable legal advice, and the lamentable frequency with which attorneys weakly submit to such an imposition, especially in rural communities, it is often difficult to determine whether the consultation is a professional one, within the privilege. The local habits of life, and the circumstances of the case, must largely determine the ruling.³ The case of a consultation of the *opponent's attorney* seems rather to fall under another head (*post*, § 2312), as also the case of a consultation by one person not on his own behalf but as *the agent of another* (*post*, § 2317).

§ 2304. **Time of Consultation; Rejection of Retainer by Attorney.** It follows that a communication to an attorney, not in his capacity as such, is without the privilege if made *before* the relation was entered into or *after* it was ended.¹ An interesting question, however, arises when the communication is made *pending negotiations for the retainer*. Here it would seem plain, by the reason of the privilege, that, since the would-be client cannot certainly predict the attorney's acceptance of the employment, the former must be protected in his preliminary statements when making the overtures, even if the overture is refused. It would further be immaterial that the refusal was due

³ Various instances are as follows: *Eng.*: 1792, *Wilson v. Rastall*, 4 T. R. 753, 758 (letters handed to an attorney, but not in his character as a professional adviser, held not privileged); 1838, *Greenlaw v. King*, 1 Beav. 137, 145, *Lord Langdale, M. R.* (correspondence with a solicitor, but only as "agent and confidential friend," not privileged); *Can.*: 1889, *Rudd v. Frank*, 17 Ont. 755, 764 (communications as to a friend, held not privileged); *U. S.*: 1893, *Patten v. Glover*, 1 D. C. App. 466, 476 (consultation as a friend, not privileged); 1387, *Brown v. Matthews*, 79 Ga. 1, 4 S. E. 13 (consultation held not privileged, where the attorney was "raided," not retained"; it must be "the offspring of the relation, present or prospective, not of taking or expecting to take the fruits of such a relation without forming it"); 1898, *O'Brien v. Spalding*, 102 id. 490, 31 S. E. 100 (consultation as a friend, not privileged); 1902, *Harkless v. Smith*, 115 id. 350, 41 S. E. 634 (one who prepared a deed without compensation and in his own interest, held not the legal adviser of the parties); 1852, *Goltra v. Wolcott*, 14 Ill. 89 (consultation as a friend, not privileged); 1895, *McDonald v. McDonald*, 142 Ind. 55, 41 N. E. 343 (attorney consulted as a friend by a widow about her husband's affairs, held not privileged); 1896, *State v. Swafford*, 98 Ia. 362, 67 N. W. 294 (a friendly consultation between the defendant and the then prosecutrix's attorney, to contrive means for helping her to get occupation, held not privileged); 1895, *Wade v. Ridley*, 87 Me. 368, 372, 82 Atl. 975 (consultation held professional, on the facts); 1903, *People v. Pratt*, — Mich. —, 94 N. W. 752 (communication to a judge, before examination by the grand jury, with the object of consulting "some one that I have confidence in," held privileged; *Grant and Hooker, J.J., diss.*); 1886, *Romberg v. Hughes*, 18 Nebr. 579, 26

N. W. 351 (consultation as a friend, not privileged); 1895, *Baye v. State*, 45 id. 261, 63 N. W. 811 (consultation held not professional, on the facts); 1848, *Beeson v. Beeson*, 9 Pa. St. 279, 301 (consultation as a friend, not privileged); 1903, *Sargent v. Johns*, 206 id. 336, 55 Atl. 1051 (similar); 1858, *M'Mannus v. State*, 2 Head 213 (questions as to "abstract legal opinions," without reference to "some act past, or right or interest in existence," held not privileged); 1856, *Thompson v. Kilborne*, 28 Vt. 750, 757 (friendly consultation, held, upon the facts and the local custom, not to be a professional consultation; Chief Justice Redfield rebukes the local profession for their lax habits in conversing without formal retainer upon legal subjects); 1856, *Coon v. Swan*, 80 id. 6 (legal advice given merely "as a neighbor," held not protected); 1873, *Earle v. Grout*, 46 id. 113, 125 (similar); 1861, *Dunn v. Amos*, 14 Wis. 106, 109, 114 (legal advice held not a professional consultation on the facts); 1873, *Orton v. McCord*, 33 id. 205, 211 (legal advice held professional, on the facts); 1900, *Bruley v. Garvin*, 105 Wis. 625, 81 N. W. 1038 (communication at a casual consultation on a railway train, excluded on the facts).

¹ *Eng.*: 1664, *Sparke v. Middleton*, 1 Keb. 505 (cited *ante*, § 2290); 1678, *Cnts v. Pickering*, 1 Ventr. 197; *U. S.*: 1868, *Chillicothe F. R. & B. Co. v. Jameson*, 48 Ill. 281, 283; 1870, *People v. Barker*, 56 id. 299; 1895, *Jennings v. Sturdevant*, 140 Ind. 641, 40 N. E. 61; 1895, *Harless v. Harless*, 144 id. 196, 41 N. E. 592; 1901, *State v. Herbert*, 63 Kan. 516, 66 Pac. 235; 1894, *Brady v. State*, 39 Nebr. 529, 532, 58 N. W. 161 (even though the same as one made during the relation); 1896, *Home Ins. Co. v. Berg*, 46 id. 600, 65 N. W. 780; 1816, *Yordan v. Hess*, 13 John. 492, 494; 1895, *Turner's Estate*, 167 Pa. 609, 31 Atl. 867; 1901, *State v. Snowden*, 23 Utah 818, 65 Pac. 479.

to a disagreement as to fees and to the client's own withdrawal by reason of the fee demanded; for upon none of these matters could he predict the result until his preliminary statement had been made. Obviously, too, if the retainer is accepted, the privilege covers the preliminary statement. On the other hand, if the client continues his communication after the attorney's refusal to act for him, or if the client knowingly attempts to retain one who is already retained by the opponent, he does not need or deserve the protection of the privilege.³

3. "The communications relevant to that purpose."

§ 2306. *Communications, distinguished from Acts; Client's Conduct, Appearance, Abode, etc.* Does the privilege cover only that knowledge of the attorney which is obtained from hearing the client's *utterances*, or also that which comes from seeing the client's *acts*? This question has given rise to a difference of opinion more apparent than real. It is sometimes discussed as if the word "communications" were synonymous with "utterances of words." That is, those who favor its largest answer repudiate the limits of the word "communications," as if it included no more than "utterances"; and yet it is of course conceivable that an act or a bodily condition may be voluntarily disclosed and wittingly made known to the attorney by the client without any utterance of words. The problem is also sometimes discussed, from the point of view of the attorney, as involving the inquiry whether the privileged knowledge of the attorney is restricted to that which he obtains by the sense of hearing only, or includes also that which he learns by seeing; and this mode of statement corresponds more closely to the distinction be-

³ The rulings are not entirely harmonious, but the above applications of the principle are fairly borne out: 1894, *Denver T. Co. v. Owens*, 20 Colo. 107, 125, 36 Pac. 848 (preliminary statement of the case with a view to employing, privileged); 1872, *McLean v. Clark*, 47 Ga. 24, 45, 69 (S. made a proposition to the plaintiff's attorney, declaring that, if it was accepted, S. would employ the attorney; held, that the latter was not S.'s attorney so as to create a privilege in S.'s favor); 1893, *Peek v. Boone*, 90 id. 769, 17 S. E. 66 (consultation with a view to the attorney's employment, whether or not the attorney is ultimately retained, held privileged; here the attorney had declined the employment); 1877, *Thorp v. Goewey*, 85 Ill. 611, 615 (consultation for litigation, the attorney finally not being employed because of a disagreement as to his fee, held privileged); 1891, *Theisen v. Dayton*, 82 Ia. 74, 47 N. W. 891 (statements to an attorney to secure his employment to "keep a mortgage alive," the attorney declining the employment, held not privileged); 1854, *Sargent v. Hampden*, 38 Me. 581, 584 (conversations with a view to a retainer, even though it be afterwards declined, said to be privileged); 1857, *Alderman v. People*, 4 Mich. 414, 422 (privilege applies to communications to "an attor-

ney in fact by a party under an impression that such attorney had consented or agreed to act," "although the attorney himself may not have so understood the agreement"); 1848, *Crisler v. Garland*, 11 Sm. & M. 136 (communications while seeking to retain the attorney, who declined employment, held privileged); 1872, *Cross v. Riggins*, 50 Mo. 385 (communication to an attorney, seeking advice, the attorney declining to give an opinion, held privileged); 1897, *Farley v. Peebles*, 50 Nebr. 723, 70 N. W. 231 (excluded, where the attorney had already refused to accept the employment); 1849, *Heaton v. Findlay*, 12 Pa. St. 304, 310 (communications "preliminary to his engagement as counsel," made in satisfying the counsel of the propriety of his retainer, held not privileged); 1875, *Strong v. Dodds*, 47 Vt. 348, 353 (communication seeking to retain an attorney, who then declines to bring suit, held privileged); 1886, *Tucker v. Finch*, 66 Wis. 17, 21, 27 N. W. 817 (communications seeking to retain an attorney, who declined because of a prior retainer on the other side, held not privileged); 1887, *Plano Mfg. Co. v. Frawley*, 68 id. 577, 584, 32 N. W. 768 (communications after an attorney has given notice that he is retained on the other side, held not privileged).

tween utterances and acts of the client. In the following passages the various judicial attitudes are represented:

Ante 1767, Buller, J., Trials at Nisi Prius, 284: "[The privilege does not cover] a fact of his own knowledge, and of which he might have had knowledge without being counsel or attorney in the cause; as, suppose him witness to a deed produced in the cause, he shall be examined to the true time of execution;¹ so, if the question were about a razure in a deed or a will, he might be examined to the question whether he had ever seen such deed or will in other plight, for that is a fact of his own knowledge; but he ought not to be permitted to discover any confessions his client may have made to him on such head."

1803, *Ellenborough, L. C. J., in Robson v. Kemp, 5 Esp. 52, 55:* "The act [of destroying a power of attorney] cannot be stripped of the confidence and communication as an attorney, the witness being then acting in that character. One sense is as privileged as another. He cannot be said to be privileged as to what he hears, but not to what he sees, where the knowledge acquired as to both has been derived from his situation as an attorney."

1833, *L. C. Brougham, in Greenough v. Gaskell, 1 Myl. & K. 98, 104:* "[The privilege does not exist] where there could not be said, in any correctness of speech, to be a communication at all,—as where, for instance, a fact, something that was done, became known to him from his having been brought to a certain place by the circumstance of his being attorney, but of which fact any other man if there would have been equally cognizant."

1857, *Brown v. Foster, 1 H. & N. 736; Pollock, C. B.:* "A legal adviser may give evidence of a fact which is patent to his senses"; *Martin, B.:* "With respect to matters which the counsel sees with his eyes, he cannot refuse to answer."

1841, *Bronson, J., in Coveny v. Tannahill, 1 Hill N. Y. 33, 35:* "This privilege of a client does not extend to every fact which the attorney may learn in the course of his employment. There is a difference in principle between communications made by the client and acts done by him in the presence of the attorney; . . . I will not undertake to say how far the distinction between the communications and the acts of the client may extend"; apparently holding that the execution of a document is an act.

1861, *Woodward, J., in Daniel v. Daniel, 39 Pa. 191, 210* (permitting the question, to an attorney, why he could not have had with the testator, his client, any conversation worth repeating): "Communications made to a counsel are privileged; but if a client is too imbecile to make any communications, I never before heard that that fact was incompetent testimony on account of the professional relation,—no more than the shape of the client's head, which is the subject of the next bill. If a lawyer learns from professional visits that he has a fool for a client, whether he acquires the knowledge by the want of intelligent answers, or by study of phrenological developments, the fact is competent evidence in a proper case, and no rule of law forbids the lawyer from delivering it."

The marked contrast is between the statement of Lord Ellenborough, in *Robson v. Kemp*, and that of Baron Martin, in *Brown v. Foster*. Can they be reconciled? And is either of them consistent with Mr. Justice Bronson's distinction between a communication and an act? The truth is that each is right, under some circumstances, and all are harmonious, when the proper allowance is made. Looking back at the reason of the privilege, it is seen to secure the client's freedom of mind in committing his affairs to the attorney's knowledge. It is designed to influence him when he may be hesitating

¹ This statement is clearly correct on the ground that the request to attest makes the act non-confidential (*post*, § 2315); but its association with the ensuing statements has sometimes given rise to misunderstanding. Buller's notions of the principle were apparently not quite clear.

between the positive action of disclosure and the inaction of secrecy. There is, therefore, by hypothesis, always some voluntary act of disclosure, — some removal of that secrecy which would otherwise have existed as between the client and the attorney. In short, there must be some deliberate communication. On the one hand, then, those data which would have come to the attorney's notice in any event, by mere observation, without any action on the client's part — such as the color of his hat or the pattern of his shoes —, and those data which become known by such acts as the client would ordinarily have done in any event, without any purpose of communicating them to the attorney as his adviser — such as the style of his handwriting or the amount of money in the roll of bills from which he pays his retainer —, these are not any part of the communications of the client; in the language of Lord Chancellor Brougham and Mr. Justice Buller, they are "facts of which any other man if there would have been equally cognisant." On the other hand, almost any act, done by the client in the sight of the attorney and during the consultation, may conceivably be done by the client as the subject of a communication, and the only question will be whether, in the circumstances of the case, it was intended to be done as such. The client, supposedly, may make a specimen of his handwriting for the attorney's information, or may exhibit an identifying scar, or may show a secret token. If any of these acts are done as part of a communication to the attorney, and if further the communication is intended to be confidential (*post*, § 2311), the privilege comes into play.

Ordinarily, then, it is true, as Chief Baron Pollock said, that "a legal adviser may give evidence of a fact which is patent in its senses"; that is, of anything which he either sees or even hears, so far as it is otherwise patent, — in other words, is not the subject of a voluntary communication. Yet, in a given case, any of these things *may* be committed to the attorney in such a way as to be within the privilege. It is to be noted, however, that many such acts, which thus become the subject of a communication, may still not be confidentially committed to the attorney, and thus be not privileged (*post*, §§ 2311-2314); and some of the rulings now to be noticed in the ensuing sections can perhaps be attributed to that consideration. Obviously no fixed form of rule can be stated for the present application of the principle. In the ordinary case, it is only the expressed communications of the client that will be privileged.²

² Sundry examples are as follows: *Eng.*: 1790, *Hooper v. Harcourt*, 1 H. Bl. 534 (after judgment, an attorney was held not compellable to disclose his client's abode for the purpose of his being taken on execution; the application "came too late after verdict"); 1817, *Parkins v. Hawkshaw*, 2 Stark. 289 (to prove the identity of defendant with the obligor of a bond, the defendant's attorney was not allowed to testify to "communications which he had had with the defendant"); *U. S.*: 1898, *Wicks v. Dean*, 103 Ky. 60, 44 W. 397 (attorney may speak of the client's mental condition as learned at the time

of a consultation); 1868, *White v. Bird*, 20 La. An. 188 (attorney held compellable as garnishee to disclose whether he has assets belonging to the client, unless he cannot do so without disclosing matters confided to him by the client); 1861, *Daniel v. Daniel*, 39 Pa. 191, 211 (attorney's opinion of his client's sanity, held not privileged; quoted *supra*); 1894, *Turner v. Warren*, 160 id. 336, 343, 26 Atl. 781 (fact of delivery of papers, date, person, and condition, held not privileged); 1896, *State v. Fitzgerald*, 68 Vt. 125, 34 Atl. 429 (whether the client was intoxicated when seen in the jail with B., admis-

§ 2307. *Same: Production of the Client's Documents.* The application of the foregoing principle to the case of documents delivered or shown to the attorney is not without difficulty. But, before examining it, a superficially related question, dependent upon other principles, must be disposed of. Is the attorney compellable to *produce in court*, by subpoena or bill of discovery, the documents placed in his possession by the client? This is not a question of compelling the disclosure of the attorney's knowledge; he may know nothing of the contents of the document, nor is he asked to testify about them. Whether the package contains a diamond or a deed is immaterial. But must he produce it?

(1) The answer depends upon the other privileges of the client *irrespective of the present privilege*. The attorney is but the agent of the client to hold the deed; if the client is compellable to give up possession, then the attorney is; if the client is not, then the attorney is not. It is merely a question of possession, and the attorney is in this respect like any other agent. There is, to be sure, the added consideration of policy, namely, that if the attorney were not compellable when the client was, then the client's obligation to produce could always be evaded in very simple fashion by placing the deed with the attorney; and such a quibble could not be tolerated by any practical system of law. But, apart from this, the doctrine of agency is ample to justify the result. The extent of the client's obligation to produce must therefore be taken as determining the present question; and that obligation has undergone radical change in the history of our law. In the first place, at common law, the client who was a *party opponent* in the suit was not obliged to produce, either at or before the trial, except so far as the rule of profert and oyer extended; but in equity he was obliged to produce any document (except that before trial he could not be obliged to discover the documents affecting his own case alone); and under modern statutes the equitable rule has been made available by motion or subpoena to produce in common-law proceedings (*ante*, §§ 1857-1859, 2219). In the next place, the client who was a *third person* was at common law bound to produce upon subpoena, except when the document was a deed supporting some title of his own (*ante*, §§ 2193, 2211). In the third place, the client was and is in any instance not bound to produce a self-incriminating document (*ante*, § 2264).

It follows, then, that *when the client himself would be privileged* from production of the document, either as a party at common law, or as a third person claiming title, or as exempt from self-crimination, the attorney having possession of the document is not bound to produce; and such has invari-

sible, since the attorney saw "nothing that was not observable by B. and by all other persons who saw him during the time of his alleged intoxication"; 1882, *State v. Douglas*, 20 W. Va. 70, 779 (testimony that a pistol produced had been received from the defendant's counsel, held admissible; but the counsel's statement, at the time of delivering it, that he had obtained it in consequence of a communication from the defend-

ant, and the counsel's testimony that he had so obtained it, held not admissible; careful opinion by Green, J.).

For rulings as to disclosing the *identity* of the client, see *post*, § 2313.

For rulings as to the disclosure by an attorney *drafting a will* as to the *testator's* *vanity* or *undue influence*, see *post*, §§ 2314-2316.

ably been the ruling.¹ On the other hand, if the *client would be compellable* to produce, either by motion or by subpoena or by bill of discovery, then the attorney is equally compellable, if the document is in his custody, to produce under the appropriate procedure.²

¹ *England*: 1765, *R. v. Dixon*, 3 Burr. 1687 (attorney not required to produce vouchers of his client before the grand jury on a charge of forgery); 1797, *Bothomy v. Osborne*, Peaka Add. Cas. 99, 101 (attorney not compellable to produce the client's documents nor to prove their contents, when the client is privileged as a party to the cause); 1821, *Laing v. Barclay*, 3 Stark. 38, 42 (attorney of defendant not required to produce bankruptcy proceedings confidentially deposited with him); 1822, *Harris v. Hill*, ib. 140 (attorney in possession of a privileged third person's document, not compellable to produce); 1831, *Nixon v. Mayoh*, 1 Mo. & Rob. 76 (attorney not compelled to produce the party-opponent's document); 1834, *Mills v. Oddy*, 6 C. & P. 728, 731 ("the attorney is not to produce his client's title-deeds nor to disclose their contents"; here the client was not a party); 1834, *Bate v. Kinsey*, 1 Cr. M. & R. 38 (attorney in possession of documents of the plaintiff, held not compellable to produce them or to disclose their contents); 1834, *Doe v. Seaton*, 2 A. & E. 171, 181 (attorney holding a deed for both vendor and vendee; deed held privileged as to the vendee, although the vendor consented to production); 1840, *Doe v. Ross*, 7 M. & W. 102, 122, *semble* (attorney possessing the title-deed of a third person is not compellable to produce; otherwise, if his client is called and waives the privilege); 1849, *R. v. Hankins*, 2 C. & K. 823, 3 Cox Cr. 434 (perjury in swearing to the signature of an account; the account being in the possession of the attorney, who had a lien thereon, *Coltman, J.*, declined to compel production); 1850, *Newton v. Chaplin*, 10 C. B. 356 (production of a corporate minute-book, placed in the attorney's hands for legal advice by W. C., not a party to the cause, held not compellable, W. C. refusing under his privilege to allow production; *Maule, J.*: "The privilege of W. C. as to the book was the same in the hands of F., [the attorney,] as if he had kept the book in his own hands"); *United States*: 1807, *Lynde v. Judd*, 3 Day 499 (attorney not compellable to produce the client's document); 1817, *Jackson v. Burtis*, 14 John. 391, 399 (documents left with the attorney by the client's agent, held not demandable on subpoena); 1830, *Jackson v. Denison*, 4 Wend. 558 (counsel held not bound to produce a client's deed); 1831, *McPherson v. Ratbone*, 7 id. 216 (paper delivered by the client to the attorney, held not demandable from the attorney by subpoena); 1841, *Bronson, J.*, in *Coveny v. Tannahill*, 1 Hill N. Y. 33, 35 (quoted *post*, § 2308); 1801, *State v. Squires*, Tyler 147 (attorney held not amenable to compulsory process for the delivery of notes, alleged to be forged by his client, which were deposited with him as attorney; "in contemplation of law they are in the possession of the client"); 1832, *Durkee v. Leland*, 4 Vt.

612, 615, *semble* (see citation *infra*); 1889, *Selden v. State*, 74 Wis. 271, 275, 42 N. W. 218 (letters of husband to wife, deposited by her with her attorney for divorce, not producible). For the question *who is to determine* whether the document is privileged as claimed, see *post*, § 2322.

² *England*: 1803, *Pearson v. Fletcher*, 5 Esp. 90 (L. C. J. Ellenborough, on facts similar to those in *Bateson v. Hartsink*, *infra*, compelled the solicitor to produce the proceedings); 1815, *Copeland v. Watts*, 1 Stark. 95 (like *Cohen v. Templar*, *infra*); 1816, *Corsen v. Dubois*, Holt 289 (attorney compelled to produce a bankruptcy commission which was not privileged for his clients the assignees); 1817, *Cohen v. Templar*, 2 Stark. 290 (attorney compellable to produce the document of a third person having no privilege); 1822, *Lowe v. Firkins*, 11 Price 455, 461, 464 (steward of plaintiff, held bound to answer as to documents of his master in his possession; and also bound to produce them on a bill of discovery, though not on a subpoena *d. t.* inasmuch as his custody was the plaintiff's); 1824, *Hawkins v. Howard*, Ry. & Mo. 64 (books of assignees, not parties, held producible by their attorney); 1829, *Doe v. Thomas*, 9 B. & C. 238, 293 (lease placed with the attorney by the party; the attorney held bound to produce on subpoena); 1848, *Doe v. Langdon*, 12 Q. B. 711, 719 (like *Cohen v. Templar*, *supra*); 1853, *Volant v. Soyer*, 13 C. B. 231 (attorney held not bound to produce a title-deed of his client; *Jervia, C. J.*, doubted whether the rule of professional confidence covered documents of the client in general, since the statutory sanction for motions to compel a party's production of documents; *Maule, J.*, placed the ruling on the ground of professional confidence; this ruling was made just after the statutory reform, and illustrates both aspects of the rule); *Canada*: 1863, *Livingstone v. Gartshore*, 23 U. C. Q. B. 166, *semble* (like *Cohen v. Templar*, *supra*); *United States*: 1800, *Allen v. Ins. Co.*, 72 Conn. 693, 45 Atl. 955 (production required, where the answer of the client admitted its possession); 1860, *Andrewa v. R. Co.*, 14 Ind. 169, 174 ("the party himself might have been compelled under the statute to produce the receipts on the trial; he could not defeat that production by passing it into the hands of his attorney," and the attorney was held compellable to testify to contents); 1842, *Travis v. Jannary*, 3 Rob. La. 227, 230 ("the attorney may be as properly called on to produce the papers and documents necessary to establish the rights of the adversary . . . as his client himself could be under our laws"); 1861, *Mitchell's Case*, 12 Abb. Fr. 249, 262 (attorney must have no privilege; good opinion by *Daly, J.*); 1902, *Jones v. Reilly*, 174 N. Y. 97, 66 N. E. 649 ("The privilege was that of the client, not

(2) So much as precedes is the rule for documents *independently pre-existing*. But where the document is itself the client's written communication, *coming into existence merely as a communication to the attorney*, the situation is obviously different. This communication itself is not to be disclosed, whether it was made by the client by word of mouth or by writing. Where the document already had an independent existence, the communication consists in bringing its contents to the attorney's knowledge, and that knowledge is not to be disclosed by his testimony, as will be seen (*post*, § 2308); but the physical possession of the document is distinct from that knowledge, and to compel production of the document is not to compel the disclosure of the communication (*supra*, par. 1). But since a document which is itself a communication is within the privilege, the test is whether the document first came into existence as a part of a communication to the attorney. For example, a client obtains his foreman's report as to an injury in the factory, together with the card of instructions furnished to the injured employee when he first came into the service, and sends these to the attorney, with a letter of his own stating the circumstances of the injury as ascertained by him. Of these, the second is clearly without the privilege, the third is clearly within it, while the first may or may not be.

The application of this distinction is sometimes difficult enough in a particular case. But the situation is often further complicated by two other considerations. In the first place, a communication to the solicitor by an *agent of the client* or by an *agent* of the solicitor is protected by the present privilege, while a communication by a mere stranger is not (*post*, § 2317). Thus the application of the above doctrine, as to documents coming into existence for the purpose of communication to the attorney, becomes particularly difficult when the actual maker of the document is some person other than the client himself, and can only be solved by a reference to the rule as to agents. For this reason the precedents may better be considered in connection with the latter subject (*post*, § 2319). In the second place, the party is not obliged to disclose, by discovery before trial, the testimony of his prospective witnesses (*ante*, §§ 1856, 1857, 1859); and hence, on grounds wholly independent of the present privilege, it may become necessary to distinguish between the written information given beforehand by a witness as such and that furnished by the party's employee as his agent. These various principles so

of the counsel; and when, by change in the law, the client could be compelled by subpoena to produce documents in his possession, the rule that the attorney could not be forced to produce them when in his possession necessarily fell"; 1827, *Rhoades v. Sellin*, 4 Wash. C. C. 715, 718 (attorney compellable to produce papers which the client himself was compellable to produce).

Contra, but unsonnd: 1801, *Bateson v. Hart-sink*, 4 Esp. 43 (L. C. J. Kenyon; the solicitor of third persons, the assignees in bankruptcy of the present defendant, was held not compellable to produce the proceedings of the assignees; here

they were otherwise obtainable by motion against the assignees; this ruling was virtually repudiated in the later English ones); 1877, *Dover v. Harrell*, 58 Ga. 572 (ejectment; deed placed in the attorney's possession by the defendant for preparing his defence; the attorney held not compellable to produce; this is expressly sanctioned by the local Code, quoted *ante*, § 2292); 1889, *Stokoe v. R. Co.*, 40 Minn. 545, 42 N. W. 482 (attorney is not compellable to produce his client's documents); 1897, *Davis v. R. Co.*, 70 Id. 37, 72 N. W. 823 (documents "intrusted" to the attorney by the client, held privileged).

intermingle in their application that an examination of the precedents can better be made elsewhere (*post*, § 2318).

§ 2308. **Same: Testimony to Contents of Documents.** The client's disclosure of the contents of a preëxisting document will almost always be an act of communication (*ante*, § 2306), i. e. a part of the matters voluntarily committed to the notice of the attorney. It is impossible, in the language of Mr. Justice Bronson,¹ to perceive "any solid distinction between the oral statement of a fact to counsel and a communication of the same fact by delivering to him a deed or other written instrument." Unless, therefore, a particular communication of this sort is not confidential (*post*, § 2311), it is within the privilege, and the testimony of the attorney on the stand cannot be required.² Nor does it here make any difference that the client would have been compellable

¹ *Coveney v. Tenuahill*, N. Y., *infra*.

² Sundry examples are as follows: *England*: 1676, *Bulstrode v. Letchmere*, *Freem. Ch. 5* ("the defendant being a counsellor at law shall not be bound to answer concerning any writings which he hath seen, nor for anything which he knoweth in the cause as counsellor"); 1693, *Anon.*, *Skinner* 404 (attorney who had "drawn an indenture of agreement," not compellable "to discover the matter of it"); 1797, *Bothomy v. Uborne*, *Peake Add. Cas.* 99, 101 (cited *ante*, § 2307); 1826, *R. v. Upper Boddington*, 8 *Dowd. & R.* 726 (the attorney held mortgage deeds of H., not a party, who claimed his privilege; the attorney was therefore forbidden to testify to their contents, "because the whole of those contents were a confidential communication between a client and his attorney"); 1834, *Bate v. Kinsey*, 1 *Cr. M. & R.* 30 (cited *ante*, § 2307); 1834, *Marston v. Downes*, 6 *C. & P.* 381, 1 *A. & E.* 31 (attorney of a third person cannot prove the contents of the client's title-deeds); 1836, *Wheatley v. Williams*, 1 *M. & W.* 533 (attorney not allowed to testify whether a paper shown in consultation bore a stamp; "all that appears on the face of such document is a part of the confidential communication"; the passage in *Buller's Nisi Prius*, *ante*, § 2306, interpreted); 1837, *Doe v. Watkins*, 3 *Bing. N. C.* 421 (like *Marston v. Downes*, *supra*); 1842, *Herling v. Clobery*, 1 *Phil. Ch.* 91, *L. C. Lyndhurst* (testimony as to the client's suggestions of alterations and her execution of the deed with knowledge of its contents, held privileged); 1848, *Hibberd v. Knight*, 2 *Exch.* 11 (*Marston v. Downes*, *supra*, approved); 1842, *Davies v. Waters*, 9 *M. & W.* 608, 412 (attorney held privileged from testifying to a deed read by him at a consultation with counsel; to do otherwise "would be in fact seeking to have in evidence what occurs at a consultation between the parties"); *Canada*: 1857, *Lynch v. O'Hara*, 6 *U. C. C. P.* 269, 265 (he must disclose possession and identity, but not contents); *United States*: 1834, *Crawford v. McKissack*, 1 *Port.* 433 (an indorsement on the bond in action had been obliterated; the plaintiff's attorney held not compellable to state its tenor); 1867, *Donald v. Mitchell*, 43 *Ill.* 40, 45 (whether a promissory note, when handed to the attorney for bringing suit, was indorsed, held privileged); 1811, *Anon.*, 8 *Mass.* 370 (the Court refused to compel the attorney to disclose a document handed to him by the client for use in litigation; "it is in the keeping of his client as much as if it were in his own pocket"); 1869, *Gray v. Fox*, 43 *Mo.* 570 (testimony of the attorney as to the condition of notes when placed in his hands for litigation, held privileged); 1833, *Brown v. Payson*, 6 *N. H.* 443, 448 ("the situation and contents of a paper, delivered to an attorney for inspection in the course of employment as attorney," held privileged); 1891, *Matthews v. Hoagland*, 48 *N. J. Eq.* 455, 464, 21 *Atl.* 1054 (whether a certificate, obtained from the client, was indorsed when the attorney saw it, held privileged); 1841, *Coveney v. Tenuahill*, 1 *Hill N. Y.* 33, 35 (quoted *ante*, § 2306); 1832, *Durkee v. Leland*, 4 *Vt.* 612, 615 (a statute made parties compellable to produce, but no notice had been given; held, that the attorney of the party was not compellable to produce, nor, *semble*, to testify about it); 1892, *Arbuckle v. Templeton*, 65 *id.* 205, 208, 25 *Atl.* 1095 (action on a note; the defendant had shown the note to the attorney for advice about it; whether the note then bore an indorsement, privileged). *Contra*: 1767, *Buller, Trials at Nisi Prius*, 284, *semble* (quoted *supra*, § 2306); 1857, *Brown v. Foster*, 1 *H. & N.* 736 (an account-book was produced in court, and counsel and magistrate examined it; the counsel held not privileged for testimony to an item therein; quoted *supra*, § 2306); 1834, *John v. John*, *Wright* 584, 586 (action on a note; the note was in defendant's possession, but no notice to produce had been given; by statute a party could notify the opponent to produce documents and the Court could compel production or give judgment by default; the attorney had the notes in court, but refused to produce, whereon the Court obliged him to testify to their contents; here the ruling was wrong, in that it treated his disclosure as not a violation of the privilege; but the result was right, because notice in court was sufficient, where the documents were already there (*ante*, § 1204), and hence production was compellable).

to produce the deed, in chancery or otherwise; for he is also compellable to tell what he knows on other subjects, and yet his communications about them, made to the attorney, are privileged. The communication of the document is distinct from the document itself. It is, however, worth noting that if the communication were made as a part of an expedient to avoid production (as, if the client should show the document to the attorney and then destroy it), the privilege ought not to be conceded.

§ 2309. *Same*: **Testimony to Possession, Existence, and Execution of Documents.** The existence, the execution, or the place of custody of a document, may be a part of a communication to the attorney, in the sense already noted (*ante*, § 2306), and may also be a confidential one (*post*, § 2312). But ordinarily it will be neither. The signing, for example, of a release or a note in the attorney's presence is not usually intended as an act of disclosure to him, or, if it is, as a confidential one. For lack of both of these elements, then, the Courts have usually declared the attorney's testimony to these acts not to be within the privilege.¹ Upon which ground these rulings have been intended

¹ Additional cases, concerning the execution of wills, are for convenience sake collected *post*, § 2314: *England*: 1712, Lord Say & Seal's Case, 10 Mod. 40 (attorney compelled to testify to a deed's ante-dating; "the time of executing a deed could not be called the secret of his client; it was a thing he might come to the knowledge of without his client's acquainting him"); 1776, Duchess of Kingston's Trial, 20 How. St. Tr. 613 (Lord Mansfield: "Even if he swears to an answer in Chancery, he cannot protect himself from swearing whether that is his client's hand or not, or to his having sworn it, or the execution of a deed; it does not come within the objection to an attorney revealing the secrets of his client"); 1793, Sanford v. Remington, 2 Ves. Jr. 189 (L. C. Loughborough, compelled an attorney "to disclose all that did pass in his presence at the execution of the deed, as a witness; so, his having been sent by his client with orders to put the judgment into execution; that is an act; but he is not to disclose the private conversation as to the deed with regard to what was communicated as to the reasons for making it, etc."); 1803, Robson v. Kemp, 5 Esp. 52, 55 (circumstances of destruction of a deed, privileged, if known to the witness as attorney; *quoted ante*, § 2306); 1804, Brard v. Ackerman, *ib.* 119 (existence and description of a certain bill in the attorney's possession by professional confidence, held privileged); 1824, Hurd v. Moring, 1 C. & P. 372 (attorney compelled to testify to the handwriting of a bill, though his knowledge rested solely on seeing the defendant sign the bail-bond, while engaged in the cause); 1826, Bevan v. Waters, M. & M. 235 (like Dwyer v. Collins, *infra*); 1834, Bate v. Kinsey, 1 Cr. M. & R. 38 (attorney need not disclose whether he has a document in his possession); 1852, Dwyer v. Collins, 7 Exch. 639 (action on a bill of exchange; the defendant wished the bill in proving his plea, and in order to lay a foundation for a copy, asked the plaintiff's counsel if

he had the bill with him; the objection of "breach of professional confidence," as an excuse for not answering, was overruled); *Canada*: 1846, James v. Mills, 4 U. C. Q. B. 366 (whether the attorney has the document in court; not decided); 1857, Lynch v. O'Hara, 6 U. C. C. P. 259, 265 (*quoted ante*, § 2308); *United States*: 1868, Chapman v. Peebles, 84 Ala. 283, 4 So. 273 (that the attorney wrote a note in the client's presence, that the latter signed it, and that money was then paid, held not privileged, being "acts, not communications in professional confidence"); 1878, Cole v. Cheevanda, 4 Colo. 17, 21 (like Dwyer v. Collins, *supra*); 1877, Raefle v. Moore, 58 Ga. 94, 100, 104 (the date of signing certain notes, made on the attorney's advice, held privileged); 1842, Travis v. January, 3 Rob. La. 227, 230 (attorney may be compelled to state whether he has documents of the client and what he has done with them); 1876, Brown v. Jewett, 120 Mass. 215 (counsel compelled to testify to the signature of client on a note, so long as he did not disclose confidential communications nor base his testimony thereon); 1889, Stokoe v. R. Co., 40 Minn. 545, 42 N. W. 482 (attorney must state whether he possesses the client's document, when the foundation for using a copy is to be laid); 1820, Brandt v. Klein, 17 John. 335, 339 (in showing notice to produce a will, it became necessary to prove that the will was at the place of trial; the opponent's attorney was held compellable to testify whether it was in his possession; this not being a fact "communicated as a secret" nor involving "any confidential communication between them"); 1820, Jackson v. M'Vey, 18 id. 330 (*same*); 1841, Coveny v. Tannahill, 1 Hill N. Y. 33, 35 ("The attorney may be called to prove the existence of a paper and that it is in his possession, for the purpose of enabling the other party to give parol evidence of its contents"); 1878, Rundle v. Foster, 3 Tenn. Ch. 658 (disclosure of the date of a bill

to stand is not always clear; and the circumstances of each case must be considered. But the principle is not doubtful. It should be noted, however, that where the attorney is an *attesting witness* to the document, the transaction is not a confidential one, and therefore, in another aspect of the principle (*post*, § 2315), he may be called to testify.²

§ 2310. *Relevancy or Necessity of the Communication.* The Courts have not always used consistent language in answering the question whether the privilege is limited in some way to communications necessary or material or relevant to some purpose of the consultation. In the following passages, the two typical attitudes are represented:

1743, *Annesley v. Earl of Anglesea*, 17 How. St. Tr. 1229; it was proposed to show that the defendant, by supporting a criminal prosecution for murder against the plaintiff, who claimed the defendant's estate and peerage, had tried to put the plaintiff out of the way, and had expressed such plans in an interview with Mr. Giffard, a solicitor; this solicitor had often been employed by the defendant, but for six months had had no affairs of his in hand, and did not expect to be employed again; on May 1 the plaintiff had killed a person, — by accident, as he claimed; on May 2, the defendant, hearing of it, sent for Mr. Giffard and told him to go and conduct the prosecution, not disclosing the defendant's name, and incidentally made certain remarks, now offered in evidence, as to being easy in his title and willing to give £10,000 if the plaintiff could be hanged for the murder; Mr. Prime Sergeant Malons (for the defendant): "The mutual confidence between client and attorney requires the preservation of secrecy; and as the client cannot be supposed to be qualified to distinguish what is, or is not necessary to his cause, if he should be mistaken, and entrust his attorney with what the attorney should be of opinion was unnecessary, yet surely his attorney ought not to reveal it. As clients are not versed in law affairs, they must be informed by their attorney, for which purpose they must tell them their whole case, and this necessity creates a confidence between them. . . . There seems to be no difference whether the conversation relates to the principal cause in which the attorney is concerned, or to a collateral action, in which he is not; it is in either case grounded on the confidence that arises from the attorney's being employed, and therefore ought not to be disclosed." *Bowes*, L. C. B.: "Now, admitting the policy of the law in protecting secrets disclosed by the client to his attorney, to be, as has been said, in favour of the client, and principally for his service, and that the attorney is *in loco* of the client, and therefore his trustee, does it follow from thence, that everything said by a client to his attorney falls under the same reason? I own, I think not; because there is not the same necessity upon the client to trust him in one case as in the other; and of this the

of sale drawn for the client by the attorney, held compellable, as being not a communication (but an act); 1832, *Durkee v. Leland*, 4 Vt. 612, 615 (attorney must disclose whether the document exists and where he last saw it); 1897, *Stanhilber v. Graves*, 97 Wis. 515, 73 N. W. 48, *semble* (date of execution of a mortgage in his presence, held not privileged).

Compare the cases *ante*, § 2297, where the consultation of an attorney as a *conveyancer* is sometimes held not to be within the privilege; under such rulings, not even the express communications of the party are privileged; but under the rulings in the present section it is assumed that the privilege applies to express communications, and the only question is as to the act of execution or the like.

² The cases of wills are placed *post*, § 2315;

the following are cases of deeds: 1793, *Sandford v. Remington*, 2 Vec. Jr. 189, quoted *supra*; 1803, *Robson v. Kemp*, 5 Esp. 52, quoted *post*, § 2315; 1841, *Mackenzie v. Yeo*, 2 Curt. Eccl. 866, 868.

In *Robson v. Kemp*, *supra*, as again reported in 4 Esp. 233, 236, Lord Ellenborough is made to say that an attorney "from his situation is bound to prove the execution of a deed"; but this is inconsistent with other statements of his in the report in 5 Esp. 52, as quoted *ante*, § 2306. The two reports appear to represent the same trial; but in any event the document was the same, and was attested by the attorney; so that the remark reported in 4 Esp. was plainly made of that "situation," and was in that application correct.

Court may judge, from the particulars of the conversation. Nor do I see any impropriety in supposing the same person to be trusted in one case as an attorney or agent, and in another as a common acquaintance. . . . But where the client talks to him at large as a friend, and not in the way of his profession, I think the Court is not under the same obligations to guard such secrets, though in the breast of an attorney"; *Mountney, B.*: "If this original principle be kept constantly in view, I think it cannot be difficult to determine either the present question or any other which may arise upon this head; for upon this principle, whatever either is, or by the party concerned can naturally be supposed, necessary to be communicated to the attorney in order to the carrying on any suit or prosecution in which he is retained, — that the attorney shall inviolably keep secret. On the other hand, whatever is not, nor can possibly by any man living be supposed to be, necessary for that purpose, that the attorney is at liberty, and in many cases — as particularly, I think, in the present case — the attorney ought to disclose." *Dawson, B.*: "Nothing that came properly to the knowledge of the attorney in defence of his client's cause ought to be revealed. I will suppose an unknowing man to have twenty deeds by him, and he delivers them all to his attorney to see which were relative to the suit; he looks them over, and finds not half of them to be relative thereto. I apprehend the attorney is not compellable to disclose the contents of any one of those deeds; neither do I think it necessary; . . . and I think the Court must in this case be satisfied, first, that what came to this man's knowledge was not necessary to his client's affairs; and in the next place, that the client could not think it necessary. . . . The motive for carrying on the prosecution against the plaintiff is said to be, because he has a right to the estate the defendant was in possession of. Can any man think that this was necessary to tell the attorney, or that the defendant could have thought it so? What was necessary, or what a man might have thought necessary, ought not to be disclosed. But if the defendant in this case has gone anything further, he has trusted him, not as an attorney, but as an acquaintance."

1840, *Bell, J.*, in *Moore v. Bray*, 10 Pa. St. 519, 521: "It seems, however, to have been thought [by counsel here] that, because the facts disclosed, in reference to the consideration of the assignment of the mortgage, were unnecessary to the conduct of the suit, and the communications regarded by the counsel in the light of casual conversations, they are not entitled to protection. But this is a mistake. It is true, the rule does not embrace the disclosure of collateral facts, made during accidental conversations, held irrespective of the professional character of the recipient. But the circle of protection is not so narrow as to exclude communications a professional person may deem unimportant to the controversy, or the briefest and lightest talk the client may choose to indulge with his legal adviser, provided he regards him as such, at the moment. To found a distinction on such a ground, would be to measure the safety of the confiding party by the extent of his intelligence and knowledge, and to expose to betrayal those very anxieties which prompt those in difficulty to seek the ear of him in whom they trust, in season and out of season."

It should be clear, on the one hand, that the actual necessity of making a particular statement, or the materiality to the cause of a particular fact, cannot determine the answer; for the client cannot know what is necessary or material, and the object of the privilege (*ante*, §§ 2291, 2302) is that he should be unhampered in his quest for advice. On the other hand, when he knowingly departs from that purpose and interjects other matters not relevant to it, he is in that respect not seeking legal advice and the privilege does not design to protect him (*ante*, § 2296). The test is, therefore, not whether the fact or the statement is actually necessary or material or relevant to the subject of the consultation, but whether the statement is made as a part of the

purpose of the client to obtain advice on that subject. Some such rule would seem to have been in the minds of all the judges, in spite of the occasional apparent inconsistency of their utterances.¹

4. "Made in confidence"

§ 2311. Communications must be Confidential; Confidentiality not presumed; Presence of a Third Person; Sundry Applications of the Principle. The privilege assumes, of course, that the communications are made with the intention of confidentiality. The reason for prohibiting disclosure (*ante*, § 2291) ceases when the client does not appear to have been desirous of secrecy. "The moment confidence ceases," said Lord Eldon, "privilege ceases."¹ This much is universally conceded.² No express request for secrecy, to be sure, is necessary;³ but the circumstances are to indicate whether by implication the communication was of a sort intended to be confidential; and the mere relation of attorney and client does not raise a presumption of confidentiality.⁴

¹ The rulings are as follows: *England*: 1748, *Annesley v. Angless*, 17 How. St. Tr. 1220 (quoted *supra*); 1791, *Cobden v. Kenrick*, 4 T. R. 491 (after the attorney had secured a settlement, though before it was paid, the client said to him that "he was glad it was settled, for he had only given £10 in cash, etc."); this was held not privileged; the difference is "whether the communications were made by the client to his attorney in confidence as instructions for conducting his cause, or a mere *gratis dictum*"; 1840, *Gillard v. Bates*, 6 M. & W. 547 ("The test is, whether the communication is necessary for the purpose of carrying on the proceeding in which the attorney is employed"); *United States*: 1877, *State v. Mewhorter*, 46 Ia. 88, 93 (consultation with an attorney respecting a suit with H.; threats against H.'s life, made during the consultation, held not privileged, since they "in no manner pertained to the business of the professional consultation"); 1847, *Aiken v. Kilburne*, 27 Me. 252, 262 (the privilege "does not depend upon the importance or materiality of the communications in the defence of that suit"); 1833, *Snow v. Gould*, 74 id. 540, 543 ("The privilege does not concern extraneous or impertinent communications"); 1901, *National Bank v. Delano*, 177 Mass. 362, 58 N. E. 1079 (privilege applies to statements made to the attorney as such, even as to facts not expressly made the subject of the request for advice); 1892, *Liggett v. Glenn*, 2 C. C. A. 286, 51 Fed. 381, 4 U. S. App. 438, 474 (questions as to a fee-contract with the attorney, excluded; if the relation of legal adviser exists, the communications need not concern precisely the topic of advice); 1849, *Moore v. Bray*, 10 Pa. St. 519, 524 (incidental or unnecessary parts of a consultation are equally privileged; quoted *supra*).

Whether the privileged and the unprivileged parts of a conversation can be separated, for the purpose of proving the latter alone, must depend upon the circumstances of each case:

vol. iv.—4

1895, *McDonell v. McDonell*, 142 Ind. 55, 41 N. E. 343 (where the last part of a conversation was held separable).

² 1819, *Parkhurst v. Lowten*, 2 Swanst. 194, 216.

³ 1833, *Greenough v. Gaskell*, 1 Myl. & K. 98, 104 (not privileged "where the matter communicated was not in its nature private, and could in no sense be termed the subject of a confidential disclosure"); 1865, *Hager v. Shindler*, 29 Cal. 47, 63; 1884, *Johnson v. Patterson*, 13 Lea 626, 649 (principle enforced, even under a statute not expressly using the word "confidential"). This is apparently accepted even under those statutes (*ante*, § 2292) which, like the California Code, describe the privilege without using the word "confidential."

⁴ 1839, *Wheeler v. Hill*, 16 Me. 829, 333 (it is not necessary that there should have been "any particular circumstances or injunctions of secrecy").

⁵ *Eng.*: 1878, *Gardner v. Irvin*, L. R. 4 Exch. D. 49, 53 ("It is not sufficient for the affidavits to say that the letters are a correspondence between a client and his solicitor; the letters must be professional communications of a confidential character for the purpose of getting legal advice"); 1891, *O'Shea v. Wood*, Prob. 237, 286 (foregoing passage approved; "letters are not necessarily privileged because they pass between solicitor and client; in order to be privileged, there must be a professional element in the correspondence"); *Can.*: 1874, *Hamelyn v. White*, 6 Ont. Pr. 143 (that it is a communication between solicitor and client, held sufficient); 1897, *Hoffman v. Crerar*, 17 id. 404 (preceding case followed, with hesitation); 1901, *Clergue v. McKay*, 3 Ont. L. R. 478 (*Hoffman v. Crerar* repudiated; the communication must also be stated to be "confidential and of a professional character"; modern English cases reviewed).

Add the following, which seem reasonable: 1870, *People v. Atkinson*, 40 Cal. 284 (the privilege is presumed, if the attorney fails to

These circumstances will of course vary in individual cases, and the ruling must therefore depend much on the case in hand.⁵ One of the circumstances, by which it is commonly apparent that the communication is not confidential, is the *presence of a third person*, not being the agent of either client or attorney.⁶ Here, even if we might predicate a desire for confidence by the client, the policy of the privilege would still not protect him, because it goes no further than is necessary to secure the client's subjective freedom of consultation (*ante*, § 2291), and the presence of a third person (other than the agent of either) is obviously unnecessary for communications to the attorney as such, — however useful it may be for communications in negotiation with

recollect whether the specific communication was during confidential relations); 1881, *Carroll v. Sprague*, 59 id. 655, 660 (same; provided it is shown that the confidential relation actually existed for the transaction in question).

⁵ *England*: 1797, *Bothomly v. Usborne*, Peake Add. Cas. 99, 101 ("the preparation of the agreement was not an act of confidence"; and the drafting attorney was allowed to prove the contents); 1829, *Eicke v. Nokes*, 1 M. & M. 303 (receipt of a copy of a bill, held not privileged); 1849, *Doe v. Hertford*, 13 Jur. 632 (map given by the owner to an attorney employed to effect a sale, held not privileged; "he is authorized to show the map to all the world"); *United States*: 1865, *Hager v. Shindler*, 29 Cal. 47, 62 (the attorney being by arrangement a grantee for the purpose of raising money for the client, the latter's communications for this independent purpose were held not privileged, as being "foreign to the object for which the attorney was retained"); 1896, *Rniz v. Dow*, 113 id. 490, 45 Pac. 867 (instructions regarding the delivery of a deed, admitted); 1886, *Todd v. Munson*, 53 Conn. 579, 4 Atl. 99 (an instruction to an attorney to prepare a deed expressing a trust, held not privileged; otherwise, of a parol declaration of trust); 1874, *Burnside v. Terry*, 51 Ga. 186, 191 (instructions to an attorney, intended for communication to the opponent as the basis of a contract, and by the latter accepted as such, held not privileged); 1873, *Burnham v. Roberts*, 70 Ill. 19, 21 (bill in chancery, sworn but never filed, excluded, as a communication by the client; unsound); 1886, *Scott v. Harris*, 113 id. 447, 455 (communications directing the attorney to make certain statements to legatees interested, held not privileged); 1863, *Mulford v. Mueller*, 3 Abb. App. Dec. 330 (that S. acted under C.'s direction in collecting a judgment, and that C. directed him to pay to X. and not to M., held not privileged); 1892, *Rousseau v. Bleau*, 131 N. Y. 177, 183, 30 N. E. 52 (delivery of a deed by the client to the attorney, for the purpose of the latter's delivery to another person, held not privileged); 1849, *Heaton v. Findlay*, 12 Pa. St. 304, 310 (communication of facts to be embodied in a letter sent to the sheriff, held not privileged); 1884, *Henderson v. Terry*, 62 Tex. 281, 285 (communication to a third person, made through the attorney, held

not privileged); 1892, *Aultman v. Ritter*, 81 Wis. 395, 398, 21 N. W. 569 (receipt of a check from the client, with which to pay certain charges, held not privileged); 1893, *State v. Kidd*, 89 Ia. 54, 56 N. W. 263 (copy of special findings of a jury, and letter of request to return, sent to the attorney, held not confidential); 1894, *Toms v. Beebe*, 90 id. 612, 58 N. W. 925 (conversation held not privileged, under the Code wording); 1895, *Caldwell v. Meltvedt*, 93 id. 730, 61 N. W. 1090 (collection of a note and execution of deed to reconvey mortgaged property, held not privileged); 1882, *Lange v. Perley*, 47 Mich. 353, 357, 11 N. W. 193 (communications with a county attorney, one of a committee of three to obtain a settlement with a defaulting official's sureties, held not privileged on the facts); 1900, *Lorimer v. Lorimer*, 124 id. 631, 83 N. W. 609 (consultation as to a provision for a woman now claiming as wife, held privileged); 1851, *Fraser v. Sutherland*, 2 Gr. Ch. 442, 446 (communications to the solicitor, intended to be laid before creditors, held not privileged).

⁶ 1889, *Sharon v. Sharon*, 79 Cal. 633, 677, 22 Pac. 26, 131 (communication "on a public street and in the presence of and mostly with a third party," held not privileged); 1859, *Godard v. Gardner*, 28 Conn. 172 (consultation in the presence of the attorney's son, who was in no way assisting in the cause; the son held compellable); 1880, *Pulford's Appeal*, 48 Id. 247, 249 (principle approved); 1877, *Hartford F. Ins. Co. v. Reynolds*, 36 Mich. 502, 504 (presence of a third person, held to destroy the privilege); 1886, *House v. House*, 61 Mich. 69, 27 N. W. 858, *semble* (similar); 1895, *People v. Buchanan*, 145 N. Y. 1, 39 N. E. 846 (similar); 1876, *Bowers v. State*, 29 Oh. St. 542, 546 (presence of the mother of the prosecutrix in a rape case, during the consultation, held not to destroy the privilege); 1897, *Hummel v. Kistner*, 182 Pa. 216, 37 Atl. 815 (by a client to the attorney during the drawing of a deed and in the grantee's presence, held not privileged). *Contra*: 1899, *Butler v. Fayerweather*, 83 C. C. A. 625, 91 Fed. 458 (that others were present at the execution of a will does not take away the privilege of the drafting attorney as to the contents and execution then communicated to him; unsound).

the third person.⁷ It follows, of course, *a priori*, that communications to the third person in the presence of the attorney are not within the privilege.⁸

§ 2312. **Communications to Opponent or his Attorney or in Opponent's Presence; Joint Attorney.** There may be a relative, not an absolute, confidence. The chief instance occurs when the *same attorney acts for two parties* having a common interest, and each party communicates with him. Here the communications are clearly privileged from disclosure at the instance of a third person.¹ Yet they are not privileged in a controversy between the two original parties, inasmuch as the common interest and employment forbade concealment by either from the other. On the other hand, a communication to the *opposing party's* attorney, as such, is clearly without the privilege, since no confidence is reposed, nor, if reposed, could be accepted.² But between these two extremes occur a number of situations, shading into each other. It is necessary to examine these situations separately, with their respective solutions:³

⁷ The distinction, sometimes taken, that in such cases the attorney alone is still bound to secrecy is unsound: 1892, *Blount v. Kimpton*, 155 Mass. 373, 29 N. E. 590 (here the plaintiff and defendant were present with the attorney, and the attorney was prevented from testifying to the former's communications; "as between the client and attorney, they are still confidential, though made in the presence or hearing of a third party"); 1899, *Hartness v. Brown*, 21 Wash. 655, 59 Pac. 491 (the presence of a third person does not render the attorney compellable to disclose).

⁸ 1863, *Gallagher v. Williamson*, 23 Cal. 331 (communications between the client and other persons present, held not privileged; otherwise, of confidential communications directly to the attorney at the same meeting); 1892, *Hanson v. Bean*, 51 Minn. 546, 53 N. W. 871 (communication to a third person in the attorney's presence, held not privileged); 1841, *Coveney v. Tannahill*, 1 Hill N. Y. 33, 37 ("What was done and said between the plaintiff and Tannahill in the way of business cannot be turned into a confidential communication between attorney and client merely because the plaintiff had an attorney present to hear and see what took place. No secret was confided to him"). For the compellability of a *third person overhearing* the communication to disclose it, see post, § 2326.

¹ This is universally conceded: 1803, *Robson v. Kemp*, 5 Esp. 233, 235 (an attorney who had prepared a deed from father to son, acting for both, was not compelled to disclose, for the assignees in bankruptcy of the father, adversary to the son); 1837, *Doe v. Watkins*, 3 Bing. N. C. 421 (attorney for borrower and lender); 1881, *Root v. Wright*, 84 N. Y. 72, 76; 1886, *Kant v. Kessler*, 114 Pa. 603, 610, 7 Atl. 586; 1889, *Harris v. Dangherty*, 74 Tex. 1, 11 S. W. 921 (conversations with a joint attorney, declared privileged as against third persons; but here the attorney was held to be acting for one party only).

² *Offers of compromise* may of course be ex-

cluded, but not by reason of any privilege: ante, § 1061.

³ The rulings, however, cannot well be arranged under the appropriate heads, inasmuch as their reasoning is often loosely or obscurely stated; they are as follows: *England*: 1778, *Captain Baillie's Trial*, 21 How. St. Tr. 1, 359, 385 (Mr. Murphy declined to relate a confidential conversation had by him, as counsel for the defendant, with the opposite party; but the opposite party waived objection, and the witness was ordered to testify; in fact, Mr. Murphy's motives for refusing seem not to have been above suspicion); 1806, *Spenceley v. Schulenhurgh*, 7 East 357 (the defendant's attorney, held compellable to testify to the contents of a notice served on him by the plaintiff; "in the disclosure of this there could be no breach of confidence"); 1833, *Griffith v. Davies*, 5 B. & Ad. 502 (conversation between the plaintiff and the defendant, at which the defendant's attorney was present, held not privileged); 1833, *Ripon v. Davies*, 2 Nev. & M. 310 (conversation between the defendant and his attorney, and the plaintiff, after action begun, held not privileged); 1834, *Marston v. Downes*, 6 C. & P. 381, 382 (the mortgagor's conversation with the mortgagee's attorney, the former having his own attorney for the raising of the money, held not privileged); 1838, *R. v. Avery*, 8 id. 596, 598 (forgery of a will, with intent to defraud W.; the defendant having applied to S., a solicitor for W., to act as solicitor in raising the money. *Patteson, J.*, with some doubt, compelled S. to disclose the communication); 1838, *Desborough v. Rawlins*, 3 Myl. & Cr. 515 (communication by an agent representing an adverse interest to the solicitor and his client, held not privileged); 1843, *Shore v. Bedford*, 5 M. & Gr. 271 (defendant's communication in the plaintiff's presence to the plaintiff's attorney, held not privileged); 1846, *Reynall v. Sprye*, 10 Beav. 51, 55 (case and opinion procured by the defendant for the defendant and the plaintiff, both being interested in an estate, admitted); 1847,

(1) First, then, a communication by A to X as the common attorney of A and B, who afterwards become party opponents, is not privileged, as

Tugwell v. Hooper, ib. 348 ("This gentleman, who had become a trustee for two parties, could not act separately as the solicitor for one against the other having an opposite interest" and then acquire information in the trust matters and conceal it from one *cestui* on the pretext of being solicitor for the other); 1847, *Weeks v. Argent*, 16 M. & W. 817 (attorney for the payee, held compellable to disclose the consideration for a note signed by the maker in the presence of the payee and their two attorneys); 1848, *Chant v. Brown*, 7 Hare 79, 88 (a solicitor having afterwards become devisee and thus a party to the suit, the privilege did not cease as to prior communications made to him as solicitor, and discovery of them could not be obtained from him as a party; apparently unsound); 1851, *Gore v. Bowser*, 5 DeG. & Sm. 30, 34 (communication by a solicitor with the opposite party, not privileged); 1852, *Cleave v. Jones*, 7 Exch. 421, 426 (action for money advanced by the attorney; the client's account, rendered to the attorney, held privileged against the latter; unsound); 1865, *Talbot v. Marshfield*, 2 Dr. & Sm. 549 (certain cases and opinions taken by trustees under a will, held in part privileged, in part not, as against the residuary legatees); 1869, *Roas v. Gibbs*, L. R. 8 Eq. 522, 524 (communications between mortgagor and mortgagee and an attorney acting on their joint behalf, held not privileged for the latter against the former, if made before litigation was begun by the former); 1883, *Mason v. Cattley*, L. R. 22 Ch. D. 609 (action by *cestuis* against trustees; the latter's communications before action brought, held not privileged); 1900, *Ainsworth v. Wilding*, 2 Ch. 315, 320 ("a mere record of what takes place in chambers, in the course of a hostile action, in the presence of parties on both sides, is not privileged").

United States: Ala.: 1846, *Brazier v. Fortune*, 10 Ala. 516 (incidental remark, made during a consultation in the presence of the opposing attorney also, held privileged, by a majority; unsound); 1856, *Parish v. Gates*, 29 id. 254, 260 ("by selecting the same attorney, and making their communications in the presence of each other, each party waived" the confidence); *Cal.*: 1889, *Bauer's Estate*, 79 Cal. 304, 312, 21 Pac. 759 ("When two persons address a lawyer as their common agent," the privilege ceases as between them); 1896, *Murphy v. Waterhouse*, 113 id. 467, 45 Pac. 866 (conversations between the parties where a lawyer is present as the adviser of one or of both, not privileged as between them); 1902, *Harris v. Harris*, 136 id. 379, 69 Pac. 23 (communications with the opponent, not privileged); *D. C.*: 1894, *Olmstead v. Webb*, 5 D. C. App. 38, 51, 55 ("The object of the rule ceases . . . when the client or his representatives charge him [the attorney], either directly or indirectly, with fraud or other improper or unprofessional conduct"); *Ga.*: 1858, *Corbett v. Gilbert*, 24 Ga. 454, 459 (conversation between the plaintiff and the defendant in an attorney's presence, admitted); *Ill.*: 1873, *Barnham v. Roberts*, 70 Ill. 19, 21, *semble* (bill in chancery made by the attorney for a while also attorney for B, excluded); 1886, *Lynn v. Lyerle*, 113 id. 128, 134 (communications when "both parties were present and what each said was communicated to the other as well as to the attorney," held not privileged); 1888, *Tyler v. Tyler*, 126 id. 525, 541, 21 N. E. 616 (similar); 1888, *Griffin v. Griffin*, 125 id. 430, 17 N. E. 782 (similar); 1900, *Funk v. Mohr*, 185 id. 395, 57 N. E. 2 (an attorney allowed to testify to the construction put by him on a contract made by him for one party with the other); *Ind.*: 1859, *Mave v. Baird*, 12 Ind. 318 (privilege not applicable where the attorney is sued by the client for negligent management and disobedience of instructions); 1863, *Bowers v. Briggs*, 20 id. 139 (privilege held applicable where C and D, as sureties on a note by B, consulted the attorney of A, who had begun suit on the note, to inquire as to confessing judgment; the consultation being independent of A and yet with a view to advise in the interest of C and D); 1875, *Scranton v. Stewart*, 52 id. 68, 79 (the wife's consultation of the husband's attorney regarding personalty purchased by the proceeds of her realty, held to make him her attorney); 1887, *Hanlon v. Doherty*, 109 id. 37, 44, 9 N. E. 782 (conversation with a joint attorney, both parties being present, held not privileged); 1888, *Coit v. McConnell*, 116 id. 256, 19 N. E. 106 ("When both parties are present," there is no privilege); *Ia.*: 1895, *Wyland v. Griffith*, 96 Ia. 24, 64 N. W. 673 (an agreement between plaintiff and defendant, made in the presence of the latter's attorney, not privileged); *Kan.*: 1893, *Sparks v. Sparks*, 51 Kan. 195, 201, 32 Pac. 892 (an attorney drafting a deed for both parties and in the presence of both; not privileged); *Ky.*: 1901, *Taylor v. Ronlstone*, — Ky. —, 61 S. W. 354 (joint attorney; communications not privileged as between the parties); 1902, *Smick v. Beswick*, — id. —, 68 S. W. 439 (statements by the clients of a joint attorney, in each other's presence, in a controversy between them, held admissible); *Mass.*: 1902, *Thompson v. Cashman*, 181 Mass. 36, 62 N. E. 976 (communication: to a joint attorney, not privileged, as between the parties); *Mich.*: 1886, *Cady v. Walker*, 2 Mich. 157, 28 N. W. 805 (communication with a joint attorney in each other's presence, held not privileged); *Minn.*: 1901, *Shove v. Martine*, 85 Minn. 29, 88 N. W. 254 (communications to a joint attorney, not privileged as between the parties); *Mo.*: 1858, *Hull v. Lyon*, 27 Mo. 570, 576 (consultation by M., under whom the defendant claimed, with the common attorney of M. and plaintiff, both parties being present, held privileged as against the plaintiff; no precedent cited); *Nebr.*: 1886, *Clay v. Tyson*, 19 Nebr. 530, 26 N. W. 240 (communication to an attorney already employed in adverse interests, and nevertheless knowingly employed by the plaintiff, held not privileged);

between A and B; since there was no secrecy between them at the time of communication. (2) A communication by A to X as A's attorney, X afterwards becoming A's party-opponent (as, in a suit for fees or for negligence) is not privileged; since there was no secrecy as between them at the time of communication.⁴ (3) A communication by A to X as A's attorney, X being then also the attorney of B, now become the party-opponent, is ordinarily privileged, because of the relation of X towards A. Nor does the fact of A's knowledge that X is already B's attorney, nor the fact of B's being already adversely interested, destroy the privilege; for, although X ought not to undertake to act for both in any matter where there is a possibility of adverse interests, none the less is A protected by reason of the relation. In practice, difficulty often will arise here in distinguishing this situation from that of (1) *supra* and that of (5) *infra*, in either of which the privilege exists. For example, when a *cestui* employs the attorney for the trustee to report upon the investments, does the case fall under (1) or (3)?⁵ Again, a mortgagor communicates with the mortgagee's attorney, who has threatened to foreclose, in regard to obtaining a second mortgage; does the case fall within (3) or (5)?⁶ (4) In the foregoing case, if A consults X as his attorney, with B, the communication would clearly cease to be privileged; for, by a former part of the principle (*ante*, § 2298), the privilege cannot cover communications designed to achieve a fraud. (5) X being the attorney of B, the party-opponent, A consults X as B's attorney (as, when B is suing A upon a note, and A comes to ask for delay); here, the privilege clearly does not exist, for there is no relation of legal adviser on X's part to A. (6) In the same situa-

tion here the employment was merely to close up accounts, and not for litigation); 1891, *Nelson v. Becker*, 32 id. 99, 48 N. W. 962 (communication to one already employed, unknown to the client, by the opponent, held privileged); 1898, *David Adler & S. C. Co. v. Hellman*, 55 id. 266, 75 N. W. 877 (communications with both parties present, not privileged); 1903, *Jahnke v. State*, — id. —, 94 N. W. 158 (communication by one of two joint defendants under arrest, to their joint attorney, held privileged); *Nev.*: 1895, *Livingston v. Wagner*, 23 Nev. 53, 42 Pac. 290 (communications to attorney of both parties, not privileged); *N. J.*: 1884, *Gulick v. Gulick*, 38 N. J. Eq. 402, 39 id. 516 (communication to an attorney who was the joint adviser of both parties, held not privileged); 1896, *Roper v. State*, 58 N. J. L. 420, 33 Atl. 989 (an interview between the plaintiff and the defendant, the former's counsel being present, held not privileged for the defendant); *N. Y.*: 1864, *Whiting v. Barney*, 30 N. Y. 330, 343 ("Both parties being present, there was nothing confidential in the communication"; three judges dissenting on various grounds); 1871, *Britton v. Lorenz*, 45 id. 51, 57 ("Where the communications are made in the presence of all parties to the controversy, they are not privileged . . . as to either of these parties"); 1877, *Hehbard v. Haughian*, 70 id. 54, 61, *semble* (an attorney not

privileged as to directions given him at a transaction with both parties); 1891, *Hurlburt v. Hurlburt*, 128 id. 420, 424, 28 N. E. 651 (like *Britton v. Lorenz*); 1901, *Doheny v. Lacy*, 168 id. 213, 61 N. E. 259 (communications to a joint attorney, not privileged as between the parties); *N. C.*: 1888, *Michael v. Foil*, 100 N. C. 178, 6 S. E. 264 ("a communication made to counsel by two defendants is not privileged from disclosure in a subsequent suit between the two"); *Pa.*: 1888, *Goodwin G. S. & M. Co.'s Appeal*, 117 Pa. 514, 522, 537, 12 Atl. 736 (conversations with a joint attorney, in each other's presence, held not privileged); 1898, *Kremer v. Kist*, — id. —, 40 Atl. 1008 (an agreement between parties and counsel at a former trial regarding the verdict, held not privileged); *Tex.*: 1873, *Allen v. Root*, 39 Tex. 589, 593, 597 (a communication from the opponent in the suit, held not privileged); *Va.*: 1888, *Hall v. Rixey*, 84 Va. 790, 6 S. E. 215 (a conversation with the opponent held not privileged).

⁴ *Chant v. Brown*, *Cleave v. Jones*, *Eng., Nave v. Baird*, *Ind.*, *supra*.
⁵ *Tugwell v. Hooper*, *Mason v. Cattley*, *R. v. Avery*, *Eng.*, *Scranton v. Stewart*, *Ind.*, *supra*.
⁶ *Marston v. Downes*, *Roas v. Gibbs*, *Eng.*, *Bowers v. Briggs*, *Ind.*, *Clay v. Tyson*, *Nehr.*, *supra*.

tion, B is also present; this is also not within the privilege, for the additional reason of lack of confidentiality (*ante*, § 2311). So, too, if A's attorney Y be also present, the case is no different. (7) X being the attorney of A, and the opponent B being also present, A's communication to X is not privileged, for the reasons already noted (*ante*, § 2311).

Of these various situations, those of (6) and (7) are the commonest subject of rulings. Upon these there can be no doubt or practical difficulty, for the principle of confidentiality (*ante*, § 2311) disposes of them.

§ 2313. *Identity of Client or Purpose of Suit.* The identity of the attorney's client, or the name of the real party in interest, will seldom be a matter communicated in confidence; for the procedure of litigation ordinarily presupposes a disclosure of these facts. Furthermore, so far as a client may in fact desire secrecy and may be able to secure action without appearing as a party to the proceedings, it would be improper to sanction such a wish. Every litigant is in justice entitled to know the identity of his opponents. He cannot be obliged to struggle in the dark against unknown forces. He has by anticipation the right, in later proceedings, if desired, to enforce the legal responsibility of those who may have maliciously sued or prosecuted him or fraudulently evaded his claim. He has as much right to ask the attorney "Who pays your fees?" as to ask the witness (*ante*, § 966), "Who maintains you during this trial?" Upon the analogy of the principle already examined (*ante*, § 2298), the privilege cannot be used to evade a client's responsibility for the use of legal process; and if it is necessary for that purpose to make a plain exception to the rule of confidence, then it must be made.

On the other hand, the litigant is not entitled to ask any more than serves to fix the client's identity. A communication as to the nature of the title claimed, or the capacity in which suit was brought, or the ultimate motive of the litigation, is equally protected with others, so far as any policy of the privilege is concerned. Here, however, as always, there may have been in the nature of the communication nothing confidential, — as where the claim put forward in former litigation is inquired of; and in such cases the privilege falls away. Such seems to be the correct distinction for this much-mooted class of cases. There is not entire harmony in the rulings; but no doubt much ought to depend upon the circumstances of each case.¹

¹ *England*: 1721, *Gynn v. Kirhy*, 1 Stra. 402 (the attorney for the plaintiff was summoned to produce his client, where the defendant claimed that the client was fictitious); 1740, *R. v. Watkinson*, 2 id. 1122 (a solicitor not compelled to speak to the identity of a client signing an answer in chancery; but the reporter adds, "*quære*, for this was to a fact in his own knowledge and no matter of secrecy committed to him by his client"); 1776, *Duchess of Kingston's Trial*, 20 How. St. Tr. 613 (*contra* to the preceding case; cited *ante*, § 2309); 1823, *Studdy v. Sanders*, 2 Dowl. & R. 347 (testimony to the identity of parties in two causes, not privileged, "because it was

a fact easily cognizable to the witness and to many other persons, without any confidence on the subject being reposed in him"); 1824, *Foote v. Hayne*, 1 C. & P. 545, 546 (in proving the defendant's conduct, the fact that he had on a certain day applied to counsel to retain him was held privileged); 1829, *Levy v. Pope*, 1 M. & M. 410 (who was the party employing him, held not privileged); 1834, *Beckwith v. Benner*, 6 C. & P. 681, 682 (an attorney allowed to be asked whether the defendants, charged as executors, had employed him in that character); 1841, *Jones v. Jones*, 9 M. & W. 75, *Parke, B.* (an attorney may disclose the client's name for

§ 2314. **Execution of a Will or Deed; Temporary Confidentiality.** It has already been noticed (*ante*, § 2309) that the fact of *execution* of a deed has commonly been declared to be without the privilege, partly because it was not a subject of communication at all, and partly because, if a communication, it was not impliedly a confidential one. On the other hand, the contents of the deed are generally within the privilege (*ante*, § 2308). No further examination of the principle as applied to deeds is here necessary.

But for *wills* a special consideration comes into play. Here it can hardly be doubted that the execution and especially the contents are impliedly desired by the client to be kept secret during his lifetime, and are accordingly a part of his confidential communication. It must be assumed that during that period the attorney ought not to be called upon to disclose even the fact of a will's execution, much less its tenor. But, on the other hand, this confidence is intended to be temporary only. That there may be such a qualification to the privilege is plain.¹ That it appropriately explains the client's

identification); 1855, *Forshaw v. Lewis*, 1 Jur. n. c. 263 (letters merely showing "the existence of the relation of attorney and client," held not privileged); *Canada*, 1848, *Beamer v. Darling*, 4 U. C. Q. B. 249 (trespass for causing an arrest under a writ; the attorney compelled to testify who employed him to sue out the writ); Ont. Rules of Court 1897, § 143 (a solicitor must on demand disclose the name and abode of the plaintiff); Man. Rev. St. 1902, c. 40, Rule 178 (every solicitor of record for a claimant shall on demand disclose "the profession or occupation and the place of abode" of the plaintiff); *United States*: 1880, *Mohile & M. R. Co. v. Yeates*, 67 Ala. 164, 168 (whether suits were defunded on instructions from M., held not privileged); 1869, *Satterlee v. Bliss*, 36 Cal. 489, 507 (disclosure of "the character in which the client employed him," held compellable; doubting *Chirac v. Reinicker*, U. S., *infra*); 1857, *Martin v. Anderson*, 21 Ga. 301, 308 (an attorney held compellable to answer whether A. was his client in the cause, or had given him instructions to sue, or was dead, or was a fictitious person); 1867, *Stephens v. Mattox*, 37 id. 289, 291 (ejectment; the plaintiff's attorney held compellable to state whether the plaintiff had employed him, but not to state whether the employment was to sue for the plaintiff individually or as administrator); 1898, *Alger v. Turner*, 105 id. 178, 31 S. E. 423 (whether he had authority from A. as client to begin a suit, not privileged); 1828, *Cornier v. Richard*, 7 Mart. n. s. La. 177 (that the attorney was employed to resist a claim on a certain ground, held "not a secret confided to the attorney, since he was to spread the opposition on the record"); 1860, *Shanghnessy v. Fogg*, 15 La. An. 330 ("the attorney may be interrogated as to who is his client; he may also be asked through whose agency or in what manner and at what time he was retained"); 1839, *Wheeler v. Hill*, 16 Me. 329, 333 (disclosure by the attorney "that B. employed him," held compellable, but nothing as to the purpose of instituting the suit); 1841, *Gower v. Emery*,

18 id. 79, 83 (disclosure compelled of the fact of employment by B. and S.); 1882, *Alden v. Goddard*, 73 id. 345, 348 (the privilege does not forbid testimony to the client's signing a bill in equity, in which he stated his place of residence); 1833, *Brown v. Payson*, 6 N. H. 443, 448 ("there is no right in any one to employ an attorney in court and say that the attorney is privileged from disclosing who sent him there"); 1878, *Harriman v. Jones*, 58 id. 328 (similar); 1846, *Lavers v. Van Buskirk*, 4 Pa. St. 309, 316 (privilege held not applicable to the attorney's testimony that the same title was in question in a former trial); 1848, *Beeson v. Beeson*, 9 id. 279, 281, 301 (an attorney held compellable to testify who as the real party in interest employed him); 1853, *Miller v. Weeks*, 22 id. 89, 92 (an attorney held not compellable to testify that the plaintiff was a mere trustee for W. & Co. who were the real bringers of the suit; no precedent cited); 1826, *Chirac v. Reinicker*, 11 Wheat. 280, 294 (trespass for mesne profits; to prove the real party in interest in the prior ejectment suit, a question as to the defendant's retainer, as landlord of the premises, of certain counsel, was held privileged, as involving "a disclosure of the title and claim set up"; though a question merely as to the fact of retainer was intimated to be without the privilege); 1901, *U. S. v. Lee*, 107 Fed. 702 (an attorney compelled to disclose the name and residence of one who had retained him for the defence, but not that person's interest in the defence); 1852, *Wetherbee v. Ezekiel*, 25 Vt. 47 (information as to two actions being "commenced for the same cause of action," held privileged); 1901, *Williams v. Blumenthal*, 27 Wash. 24, 67 Pac. 398 (the authorization of the attorney to settle a claim, held not privileged); 1851, *Moats v. Rymer*, 18 W. Va. 642, 645 (the fee agreed to be received by the attorney, being material to affect his credit as a witness for his client, held not privileged).

¹ 1883, *Snow v. Gould*, 74 Me. 540, 543 ("That which may be private at a time may

relation with an attorney *drafting a will* seems almost equally clear. It follows, therefore, that after the *testator's death* the attorney is at liberty to disclose all that affects the execution and tenor of the will.² The only question could be as to communications tending to show the invalidity of the will, *i. e.* from which a circumstantial inference could be drawn that the testator was insane or was unduly influenced. It may be conceded that the testator would not wish the attorney to assist in any way the overthrow of the will. But the answer is that such utterances were obviously not confidentially made with reference to the secrecy of the fact of insanity or undue influence, for the testator of course did not believe those facts to exist and therefore could not possibly be said to have communicated them.³ As to the tenor and execution of the will, it seems hardly open to dispute that they are the very facts which the testator expected and intended to be disclosed after his death; and, with this general intention covering the whole transaction, it is impossible to select a circumstance here or there (such as the absence

not be private at an after-time"; holding that a client's letter to an attorney instructing divorce proceedings was not privileged, after divorce obtained, in a controversy between the attorney and the client concerning compensation).

² 1851, *Russell v. Jackson*, 9 Hare 387, 392 (Wigram, V. C., held that "in the cases of testamentary dispositions, the very foundation on which the rule proceeds seems to be wanting"; here allowing disclosure of a secret trust in devisees); 1901, *Nelson's Estate*, 132 Cal. 182, 64 Pac. 294 (the attorney drawing a will, admitted to testify to his instructions; testator's employment of him operating as a waiver); 1894, *Olmstead v. Wehh*, 5 D. C. App. 38, 50 (the attorney drafting a will, allowed to testify that he conformed to the testator's instructions; *Russell v. Jackson* followed); 1898, *O'Brien v. Spalding*, 102 Ga. 490, 31 S. E. 100 (probate of a will; the attorney drawing it may after the testator's death testify to "what passed between her when he read over to her" the will; the statute of 1887, Code § 5271, does not change this); 1892, *Doherty v. O'Callaghan*, 157 Mass. 90, 31 N. E. 726 (the testator's instructions to the attorney for drawing the will, held not privileged, since after the testator's death "the case does not fall within the reason of the rule"); 1836, *Graham v. O'Fallon*, 4 Mo. 338 (the attorney drawing a will, allowed to testify to the drafting, the reading over, and the contents; no principle stated); 1861, *Daniel v. Daniel*, 39 Pa. 191, 211 (quoted *ante*, § 2306); 1865, *Blackburn v. Crawfords*, 3 Wall. 175, 184, 192 (legitimacy and inheritance; a testator's statements to his attorney, in the preparation of a will, concerning the children's legitimacy, the will describing them as natural children, held not privileged, partly because the protection of the client under the privilege was not affected by corroboration of the will, and partly because the assertions in the will indicated that the statements were not confidentially intended; *Clifford, J. diss.*); 1898, *Fayerweather v. Ritch*, C. C., 90 Fed. 13, *semble* (an attorney prepar-

ing a will may testify to its contents as executed, because otherwise perhaps "the whole object of a testator's action would be destroyed"); s. c. on appeal, 1899, *Butler v. Fayerweather*, 33 C. C. A. 625, 91 Fed. 458 (an attorney compellable at common law, *semble*, to disclose the contents of a lost will and the fact of due execution, where he drew but did not attest it); 1903, *Downing's Will*, 118 Wis. 581, 95 N. W. 876 (attorney drafting a will, held not privileged as to the facts of execution). *Contra*: 1893, *Gunley v. Park*, 135 Ind. 440, 442, 35 N. E. 279 (testimony to sanity, by the attorney drawing the will, privileged); 1888, *Loder v. Whelpley*, 111 N. Y. 239, 248, 18 N. E. 874 (the attorney drafting a will under instructions from the testator, held privileged as to conversations bearing on the issue of undue influence, etc.; "he acts in that capacity, although, asking no questions and without advising, he does nothing more than to reduce those directions to writing"); 1898, *Fayerweather v. Ritch*, C. C., 90 Fed. 13 (under N. Y. St. 1893, c. 295, which amended the Code, quoted *ante*, § 2292, in consequence of the ruling in *Coleman's Will*, cited *post*, § 2315, the privilege still does not apply to the testimony of the drafting attorney to the execution and contents of a will, even where he is not an attesting witness, because the document "ceased to be confidential when it was executed"; overruled on appeal); s. c. on appeal: 1899, *Butler v. Fayerweather*, 33 C. C. A. 625, 91 Fed. 458 (an attorney not attesting the will, but drawing it, held not compellable under the N. Y. Code as amended, to disclose the contents or execution of a lost will).

Still other rulings reach the conclusion stated above, in the text, on the ground that either executor or heir has the *right of waiver* on behalf of the deceased: *post*, § 2329. Some of the rulings above cited meant perhaps to proceed on that principle.

³ This is pointed out in *Daniel v. Daniel*, Pa., quoted *ante*, § 2306.

of one witness in another room) and argue that the testator would have wanted it kept secret if he had known that it would tend to defeat his intended act. The confidence is not apportionable by a reference to what the testator might have intended had he known or reflected on certain facts which now bear against the will.

§ 2315. **Same: Attorney as Attesting Witness.** When the attorney is made a witness to attest the execution of a document (and not merely to draft it), there is no confidence contemplated, and therefore no privilege for the occasion when the attorney is called upon to fulfil the function thereby assumed. He cannot be an attesting witness and yet not attest:

1803, *Ellenborough*, L. C. J., in *Robson v. Kemp*, 5 Esp. 52, 54: "If an attorney puts his name to an instrument as a witness, he makes himself thereby a public man, and no longer clothed with the character of an attorney."

1838, *Ruger*, C. J., in *Coleman's Will*, 111 N. Y. 220, 226, 19 N. E. 71: "An examination of the will itself, as well as the evidence of all of the witnesses present on the occasion of the execution, concur in establishing the fact that the testator requested both Hughes and Northrup to sign the attestation clause of his first as well as of his second will, as witnesses thereto. That request implies not only information as to the necessity of such signatures to the validity of the instrument executed, but also knowledge of the obligations which they assumed in respect to the proof thereof after his death. He must have been aware that his object in making a will might prove to be ineffectual unless these witnesses could be called to testify to the circumstances attending its execution, including the condition of his mental faculties at that time. . . . It cannot be doubted that, if a client in his lifetime should call his attorney as a witness in a legal proceeding, to testify to transactions taking place between himself and his attorney, while occupying the relation of attorney and client, such an act would be held to constitute an express waiver of the seal of secrecy imposed by the statute, and can it be any less so when the client has left written and oral evidence of his desire that his attorney should testify to facts, learned through their professional relations, upon a judicial proceeding to take place after his death? We think not."

Accordingly, it has always been held that an attorney who signs in attestation of a deed is compellable to testify.¹ The same consequence ensues for a will.²

¹ *Eng.*: 1778, *Doe v. Andrews*, Cowp. 845 ("by attesting an instrument, a man pledges himself to give evidence of it, whenever he is called upon"); 1793, *Sandford v. Remington*, 2 Ves. Jr. 189 (deed; cited *ante*, § 2309); 1803, *Robson v. Kemp*, 5 Esp. 52 (destroyed power of attorney; the attorney's attestation requires disclosure of "all that passed at the time respecting the execution of the instrument; but not what took place in the concoction and preparation of the deed"); 1830, *Grindall v. Grindall*, K. B., *Butterworth's Rep.* 63, *Lord Tenterden, C. J.*; 1833, *Greenough v. Gaskell*, 1 Myl. & K. 98, 104 (not privileged "where the attorney made himself a subscribing witness and thereby assumed another character for the occasion, and adopting the duties which it imposes became bound to give evidence of all that a subscribing witness can be required to prove"); 1841, *Mackenzie v. Yeo*, 2 Curt. Eccl. 866, 868 ("the witnessing the execution of a deed being no part of the duty of a solicitor," he is

not privileged for what he knows as witness); *U. S.*: 1848, *Bank of Utica v. Mersereau*, 3 Barb. Ch. 528, 596 (an attorney attesting a power of attorney, held compellable to testify to matters connected with the execution of the instrument, but not to conversations as to the purpose of the judgment to be confessed by the power).

² 1895, *Wax's Estate*, 106 Cal. 343, 347, 39 Pac. 624; 1895, *Mullin's Estate*, 110 id. 252, 42 Pac. 645; 1898, *O'Brien v. Spalding*, 102 Ga. 490, 31 S. E. 100 (repudiating the theory of waiver, Code § 5271 prohibiting a waiver); 1894, *Taylor v. Pegram*, 151 Ill. 106, 114, 37 N. E. 837 (an attorney also drawing the will; allowed to speak as to undue influence); 1893, *Pence v. Wagh*, 135 Ind. 143, 153, 34 N. E. 860 (an attorney also drawing the will; not privileged as to proof of the will, including sanity); 1900, *Kern v. Kern*, 154 id. 29, 55 N. E. 1004 (contents of a lost will, in an issue between heirs and devisees, the attorney being

not only as to the tenor and the act of execution, but also as to the circumstances affecting sanity and influence; for, since the intention at large negatives confidence, no discrimination can be made, as already noticed (*ante*, § 2314), for particular facts which now turn out to invalidate the will. It may be added that this generally accepted result can hardly be reached through predicating a waiver by the testator,³ for there cannot be a waiver of that which never came into existence; the true explanation is that no confidence was intended to be instituted. On the other hand, if it could be assumed that there had been a confidence and therefore a privilege, it could then still be maintained, in testamentary contests, that both executor and heir have the right of waiver (*post*, § 2329).

5. "By the client"

§ 2317. **Privilege not applicable to Knowledge acquired by the Attorney from Third Persons, unless as Agents of the Client; Who are Agents.** 1. The privilege is designed to secure subjective freedom of mind for the client in seeking legal advice (*ante*, § 2291). It has no concern with other persons' freedom of mind, nor with the attorney's own desire for secrecy in his conduct of a client's case. It is therefore not sufficient for the attorney, in invoking the privilege, to state that the information came somehow to him while acting for the client, nor that it came from some particular *third person* for the benefit of the client.¹

a subscribing witness, held not privileged; distinguishing *Gurley v. Park*, *ante*, § 2314); 1894, *Denning v. Butcher*, 91 Ia. 425, 434, 59 N. W. 59 (attorney also drawing the will; not privileged as to "all facts and circumstances attending its execution," including sanity); 1901, *Coates v. Semper*, 82 Minn. 460, 85 N. W. 217 (attorney drafting and witnessing a will, allowed to be asked whether he made the contents known to testatrix); 1888, *Coleman's Will*, 111 N. Y. 220, 226, 19 N. E. 71 (an attorney attesting a will, held not privileged as to the testator's conduct and conversation at the time of execution, on the theory of waiver; quoted *supra*); 1889, *Alberti v. R. Co.*, 118 Id. 77, 85, 23 N. E. 35 (preceding case approved); 1893, *McMaster v. Scriven*, 85 Wis. 162, 167, 55 N. W. 149 (the attorney who had also drawn the will, allowed to speak of "any matter in relation to the will and its execution," including the maker's mental condition).

³ As suggested in *Mullin's Estate*, Cal., *Coleman's Will*, N. Y., *infra*.

¹ *England*: 1806, *Spenceley v. Schnlenburgh*, 7 East 357 (L. C. J. Ellenborough said that the privilege extended only "to confidential communications from his client, and not to communications from collateral quarters"); 1835, *Sawyer v. Birchmore*, 3 Myl. & K. 572 (Peppys, M. R.; letters communicated to the solicitor "from collateral quarters," held not privileged); 1860, *Marsh v. Keith*, 1 Dr. & Sm. 342, 348, 6 Jur. N. s. 1182 (*Kindersley*, V. C.; plea that

the knowledge had been acquired "by virtue of the solicitor's employment as solicitor," held insufficient, since it might have been obtained "without any communication from or consultation with the client"); 1863, *Ford v. Tennant*, 32 Beav. 162, 168 (*Romilly*, M. R., held the privilege to cover communications with "all other persons with whom the solicitor must communicate in order to conduct the cause," but not to "information derived from third parties, from strangers, or from the opponents of the client"; repudiating the *obiter dictum* in *Greenough v. Gaskell* covering all communications "either from a client or on his account or for his benefit"); *United States*: 1854, *Patten v. Moor*, 29 N. H. 163, 166 (an attorney present at the execution of a mortgage by M. and C. to the client P., the latter not being present, held compellable to testify to the execution, since the facts were "not communicated or confided to him by his client, although he became acquainted with them while engaged in his professional duty as the attorney or counsel of his client"); 1808, *Baker v. Arnold*, 1 *Caines* 258, 266, *semble*; 1891, *Johnson v. Davenport*, 19 John. 135 (an attorney held compellable to testify to his client's signature, if he "became acquainted with it in any other way [than by the client's communication], though it was subsequent to his retainer"); 1834, *Bogert v. Bogert*, 2 Edw. Ch. 399, 403; 1844, *Crosby v. Berger*, 11 Paige 377, *Walworth*, C. ("information derived from other persons or other sources, although such

2. On the other hand, the client's freedom of communication requires a liberty of employing other means than his own personal action. The privilege of confidence would be a vain one unless its exercise could be thus delegated. A communication, then, by *any form of agency* employed or set in motion by the client is within the privilege. This of course includes communications through an *interpreter*,² and also communications *through a messenger* or any other *agent of transmission*,³ as well as communications *originating with the client's agent* and made to the attorney.⁴ It follows, too, that the communications of the *attorney's agent* to the attorney are within the privilege, because the attorney's agent is also the client's sub-agent and is acting as such for the client.⁵

§ 2318. Documents of the Client existing before Communication; General Liability to Production by Discovery, distinguished. At this point it is necessary to recall certain principles of discovery, otherwise established, which complicate the application of the foregoing principle as to agents'

information is derived or obtained while acting as attorney or counsel, is not privileged"); 1832, *Rogers v. Dare*, *Wright* 136. *Contra*: 1894, *Freeman v. Brewster*, 83 Ga. 649, 21 S. E. 165 (the privilege held to cover not only all statements by the client, but also "all facts knowledge of which he obtained concerning his client's case pending his employment"; Code § 5271 seems not literally to justify this).

The question *who is the client* arises here, but is usually a question of fact: 1851, *Ward v. Ward*, 15 Jnr. 758; 1859, *Shean v. Phillips*, 1 F. & F. 449; 1858, *Allen v. Harrison*, 30 Vt. 219 (information given by one who was a nominal party only, held not a professional consultation on the facts). Compare the cases cited *ante*, § 2312.

² 1791, *Du Barré v. Livette*, *Peake* N. P. 77 (conversation had through an interpreter with the attorney, the client being a Frenchman and the attorney not understanding French, held privileged; the interpreter was here the prohibited witness); 1792, *Wilson v. Rastall*, 4 T. R. 753, 756 (L. C. J. Kenyon said, "In *Madam Du Barré's* case, I said at the trial that the interpreter was the organ of the attorney"); 1814, *Parker v. Carter*, 4 Munf. 273, 287.

³ 1821, *Walker v. Wildman*, 6 Madd. 47 (the privilege held applicable to communications "through the intervention of a third person"); 1834, *E. v. Brewer*, 6 C. & P. 363, 365 (*Park, J.*; a letter by an accused in jail, requesting a friend to consult a solicitor, held not privileged); 1839, *Bunbury v. Bunbury*, 2 Beav. 173 ("The necessity which arises of transmitting such communications through another party renders it privileged"; but here the communication was held not "professional or confidential"); 1849, *Reid v. Langlois*, 1 McN. & G. 627, 638 (letters by the defendant to his agent for communication to the legal adviser, held privileged, irrespective of the necessity of employing an agent); 1851, *Glyn v. Canfield*, 3 Id. 463, 473 (preceding case approved); 1862, *Hooper v. Gumm*, 2

J. & Hem. 602, 606 (similar); 1876, *Anderson v. Bank*, L. R. 2 Ch. D. 644, 649 (*Jessel, M. R.*: "He may employ a third person to write the letter, or he may send the letter through a messenger, or he may give a verbal message to a messenger").

⁴ 1845, *Carpmael v. Powis*, 9 Beav. 16, 20, on appeal in 1 Phil. Ch. 687 (communication "from the brother of the client as representing her," and as the medium of communication, held privileged; nor, so far as the solicitor is concerned, is it essential that an agent was a necessity under the circumstances); 1851, *Russell v. Jackson*, 9 Hare 387, 391 (the privilege is the same for the agent's communications "as if had with the principal"); 1862, *Hooper v. Gumm*, 2 J. & Hem. 602, 606 (agent's letters to the solicitor, protected); 1887, *Fire Ass'n v. Fleming*, 78 Ga. 753, 3 S. E. 420 (client's agent's correspondence, protected); 1855, *Moss v. Bloch*, 7 Ind. 202 (client's agent's conversation with the attorney, held privileged); 1891, *Bingham v. Walk*, 128 Ind. 164, 27 N. E. 483 (husband as the agent of the wife to consult; privilege recognized); 1895, *Frank v. Morley's Estate*, 106 Mich. 635, 64 N. W. 577 (where M. employed the attorney on F.'s behalf to draw a petition for F., a communication by M. in F.'s presence was held not privileged); 1879, *Scales v. Kelley*, 2 Lea 706 (communications by the client's wife and daughter seeking to engage counsel for the client, held privileged).

⁵ 1844, *Steele v. Stewart*, 1 Phil. Ch. 471, 475 (communications by the solicitor's agent to the client, and also to the solicitor, held privileged; here there was a necessity, the witnesses being in India and an agent being sent to collect evidence); 1850, *Goodall v. Little*, 1 Sim. N. S. 155, 163 (letters between the solicitor and an attorney, in a local jurisdiction, employed by the solicitor, held privileged); 1863, *Ford v. Tennant*, 32 Beav. 162, 168 (cited *supra*); 1876, *Jessel, M. R.*, in *Anderson v. Bank*, L. R. 2 Ch. D. 644, 649.

communications. The principles of discovery are those already considered in detail (*ante*, §§ 1856-1859, 2219).

(a) In the first place, a document of the client existing before it was communicated to the attorney is not within the present privilege so as to be exempt from production (*ante*, § 2307). But a document which has come into existence as a communication to the attorney, being itself a communication, is within the present privilege (*ante*, § 2307). Documents of the latter sort are therefore exempt from production under a bill of discovery;¹ while documents of the former sort are not exempt from production under a bill of discovery or the modern statutory motion to produce,² although at common law the party as such would not have been compellable to produce. That is to say, at common law, he was protected in the first instance as party and in the second instance as client; while in chancery and under statutes he has ceased to be protected as party but is still protected as client. Only those documents, therefore, which he has created as a communicating client are now privileged. The application of this distinction would in any case lead obviously to certain fine discriminations; but when the principle of agent's communications (*ante*, § 2317) additionally comes into play, it will be seen that the various documents which may be made by agents on behalf of clients present infinitely varied openings for the doubt whether or not they came into existence in the ordinary course of the client's affairs or only with the intention of furnishing information to the attorney. Of this difficulty, the cases of reports of accidents by railway officers are a typical instance.³

(b) Secondly, the ordinary rule of discovery, by which a party, by answers to interrogatories, must disclose all facts on a bill of discovery, is subject to one limitation, namely, that the party need not before trial discover the names of his witnesses, nor the tenor of their testimony proving the facts of his own case (*ante*, § 1856). A prospective witness' communication may therefore be exempt from discovery before trial on this ground,⁴ while it would not be exempt merely as a communication to the attorney.⁵ The application of this distinction also may lead in particular cases to some doubt.

§ 2319. Same: Conflict of the foregoing Principles, illustrated. The result, in England, of the combined application of the foregoing principles (*ante*, §§ 2317, 2318) has led often to confusion of judicial language, in the following ways:¹

¹ 1852, *Cleave v. Jones*, 7 Exch. 421, 426 (an account made out by the client for the attorney's use in preparing a case for counsel, held privileged); 1878, *Southwark & V. W. Co. v. Quick*, L. R. 3 Q. B. D. 315, 318, 323 ("If a document comes into existence for the purpose of being communicated to the solicitor with the object of obtaining his advice or of enabling him either to prosecute or defend an action, it is privileged, because it is something done for the purpose of serving as a communication between the client and the solicitor," even though the latter did not suggest its preparation, and even though he did not ultimately receive it; here applied to

exclude certain notes of interviews with expected witnesses, experts, etc.).

² 1886, *Chadwick v. Bowman*, L. R. 16 Q. B. D. 561 (copies, procured by a solicitor from third persons, of letters written by the client, held not privileged, the originals not having "come into existence for the purposes of the action").

³ *E. g.* *Woolley v. R. Co.*, *post*, § 2319; *Lyell v. Kennedy*, *ib.*, is the great modern case.

⁴ 1826, *Preston v. Carr*, 1 Y. & J. 175 (letters from witnesses, not compelled to be discovered).

⁵ Cases cited *ante*, § 2317.

¹ The rulings are as follows: *England*: 1831, *Whitbread v. Gurney*, 1 Yonng 541, Exch.

(1) In applying the privilege for communications of clients and their agents or their attorneys' agents, the more clearly the communicator is a stranger

(L. C. B. Lyndhurst; letters between the parties themselves, with reference to their defence, held not privileged); 1833, *Oreenough v. Gaskell*, 1 Myl. & K. 98, 102 (excluding book-entries, letters, and papers, made and received as solicitor acting for a client); 1835, *Curling v. Perring*, 2 id. 380 (Pepys, M. R., held that letters by a solicitor of the defendant to a person not a party but a material witness were privileged); 1836, *Storey v. Lord Lennox*, 1 Myl. & Cr. 525, 537 (documents obtained by the party himself in correspondence with third persons preparatory to litigation; L. C. Cottonham declined to express an opinion); 1840, *Dartmouth v. Holdsworth*, 10 Sim. 476 (solicitor's letters to a witness, held not privileged, unless shown to have been confidential); 1841, *Smith v. Feil*, 2 Curt. Eccl. 667, 670 (conversations by B. with F.'s solicitor, in F.'s presence and at F.'s request, relating to B.'s information on the matter for which the solicitor was employed, held privileged); 1841, *Mackenzie v. Yeo*, 2 Curt. Eccl. 866, 870 (memorandum of a communication by a subscribing witness to the solicitor, had before litigation begun but after legal advice sought, held not privileged; "there is no confidence between him and his client in this matter"; but letters from another attorney to the same solicitor, both being employed about the same cause, were held privileged); 1844, *Maden v. Veivers*, 7 Beav. 489 (documents made "in contemplation of litigation," but not for or by a legal adviser, not privileged); 1850, *Balgay v. Broadhurst*, 1 Sim. N. S. 111 (documents procured by the solicitor for the purpose of defence, held not privileged on that ground merely); 1850, *Goodall v. Little*, ib. 155, 161 (Lord Crewworth, V. C.; letters written by one co-defendant to another, with a view to enable the addressee to consult the solicitor upon them, held not privileged); 1851, *Glenn v. Couiffield*, 3 McN. & O. 463, 473 (L. C. Truro; letters written after suit begun, by and to the defendants, shareholders in a company, to and by other shareholders and directors, for the purpose of being communicated to legal advisers, held not privileged; *Goodall v. Little* approved); 1853, *Wright v. Vernon*, 1 Drew. 344, 350 (Kindersley, V. C.; extracts from a parish register "obtained by the defendants to enable them to conduct their defence," not privileged; but a statement of the apposed pedigree, made for instruction of counsel, held privileged); 1857, *Lafone v. Falkland Islands Co.*, 4 K. & J. 34 (Page-Wood, V. C.; report of an agent of the defendant, made in consequence of the solicitor's instructions to procure evidence, held privileged, as "procured for the purpose of being communicated to the solicitor" and to be used as evidence); 1857, *Betts v. Menzies*, 3 Jur. N. S. 885 (Page-Wood, V. C.; correspondence between co-defendants, held not privileged); 1858, *Coiman v. Trueman*, 3 H. & N. 871 (breach of contract of sale; correspondence between the vendors, their broker, and their consignors, after the

alleged breach, held not privileged; yet, per Pollock, C. B., "it would be monstrous if an attorney could not write to a stranger for information respecting the suit, without being liable to have his correspondence called for"); 1859, *London Gaslight Co. v. Chelsea*, 6 C. B. N. S. 411, 424 (dispute as to gas supply; the defendants' officers' reports and records of consumption, etc., held not privileged, as not being "mere proofs collected by the defendants' attorney for the purpose of establishing their defence"); 1862, *Jenkyns v. Bushby*, L. R. 3 Eq. 547 (Kindersley, V. C.; letter by one defendant to another, with directions to send it on to their solicitor, held privileged); 1863, *Walsham v. Stainton*, 2 Hen. & M. 1, 4 (Page-Wood, V. C.: "Where the solicitor, in order to enable himself to advise on the matter, calls in some other person to assist and give his opinion," the privilege applies; here applied to schedules made by an accountant); 1863, *Ford v. Tounant*, 32 Beav. 162 (cited *ante*, § 2317); 1863, *Chartered Bank v. Rich*, 4 H. & S. 73 (letters between the plaintiff and its agents abroad, after dispute arisen, referring to the evidence and other information affecting proceedings against the defendant, held privileged, as "matters which would have been done by an attorney but for the distance of the place occasioning the necessity of employing an agent"); 1865, *Nicholl v. Jones*, 2 Ham. & M. 588, 596 (shorthand notes, taken by the defendant, in prior litigation between the defendant and other persons, held not privileged; except as to "observations and notes made thereon"); 1867, *Baker v. R. Co.*, L. R. 3 Q. B. 91 (reports by a medical agent and another, after visiting the injured person at the defendant's request, but apparently before claim filed, held not privileged); 1869, *Ross v. Gibbs*, L. R. 8 Eq. 522 (Stuart, V. C.; reports from an agent of defendant, sent to collect evidence for the suit, held privileged, though the agent was not a legal adviser); 1869, *Woolley v. R. Co.*, L. R. 4 C. P. 602, 608 (reports as to an accident, made by the defendant's inspector in the course of his duty, held privileged, irrespective of litigation begun or anticipated; otherwise of reports from scientific men consulted as to the causes of the accident "with a direct view to litigation"; on the first point this ruling is unsond); 1870, *Cossey v. R. Co.*, 5 id. 146 (a medical officer's report, made to the defendant after claim filed by an injured person, and in consequence thereof, held privileged, as made "with a view to litigation or impending litigation"); 1872, *Feiner v. R. Co.*, L. R. 7 Q. B. 767 (reports made by a freight manager of the defendant, after claim for injury filed, and in consequence thereof, held not privileged); 1872, *McFarlan v. Rolt*, L. R. 14 Eq. 580 (documents passing between the defendant's solicitor and D., a person said to be "acting on behalf" of the defendant, before dispute arising, held privileged); 1874, *Skinner v. R. Co.*, L. R. 9 Exch. 298 (a medical officer's

to the parties, the more plainly he falls without the privilege; while the more markedly the relation of agent appears, the clearer the privilege is. On the

report, made to the defendant after claim by an injured person and in consequence thereof, held privileged; otherwise for a report made in the ordinary course of duty, "whether before or after action brought"; approving (*Casey v. R. Co.*); 1875, *Hutchinson v. Glover*, L. R. 1 Q. B. D. 141 (letters between the defendant and a third person, relating to information as to claims against the defendant, and written in consequence of letters of complaint from the plaintiff's attorney, held not privileged); 1876, *Bustros v. White*, lb. 425 (letters between the plaintiffs and their agents, relative to the plaintiffs' claim, held not privileged); 1876, *M'Corquodale v. Bell*, L. R. 1 C. P. D. 471 (communication by the representative of a third person to the plaintiff's solicitor, held privileged, on the ground that "documents obtained by a party or his solicitor with a view to and in contemplation of litigation either pending or anticipated, are protected"); 1876, *Pacey v. R. Co.*, L. R. 2 Exch. D. 440 (report of the defendant's medical officer, made after claim filed but before action brought, and based on an inspection consented to, held privileged); 1876, *Anderson v. Bank*, L. R. 2 Ch. D. 644, 647 (*Jessel, M. R.*; report by the defendant's agent, to the defendant, at the latter's request, without any suggestion to the former that it was for submission to a legal adviser, held not privileged; approved on appeal; *Ross v. Gibbs* repudiated; *L. J. James* declared that all that had been written as to the reason for the privilege would be "puerile nonsense if there had been that law . . . that any communication made by a person with a view to litigation, whoever the person is, must be protected"; *L. J. Mellish* discriminated between information from the defendant's own agent, as here, and information from indifferent persons as prospective witnesses); 1877, *Friend v. R. Co.*, L. R. 2 Exch. D. 437 (report of a medical man, examining an injured plaintiff under an order of Court obtained by the defendant, held privileged, as being made for the information of their solicitor); 1878, *The Theodora Körner*, L. R. 3 P. D. 162 (reports of surveyors of shipping, made to the plaintiff in order to prepare for making a claim against the ship for an injury to goods, held privileged); 1878, *Southwick & V. W. Co. v. Quick*, L. R. 3 Q. B. D. 315 (cited *ante*, § 2318); 1881, *Wheeler v. Le-Merchant*, L. R. 17 Ch. D. 675, 681 (documents by third persons are protected "where they have come into existence after litigation commenced or in contemplation and when they have been made with a view to such litigation, either for the purpose of obtaining advice as to such litigation or of obtaining evidence to be used in such litigation or of obtaining information which might lead to the obtaining of such evidence"; but not, as here, a report from a surveyor as to the state of property, asked by the solicitor as preliminary to legal advice, but not with reference to litigation or actual dispute; in short, that "communications between a solicitor and

a third person in the course of his advising his client" are not as such privileged); 1882, *Norndon v. Defrica*, L. R. 8 Q. B. D. 508 (shorthand notes, taken by the defendant in another action between the same parties touching the same subject, and in part for the purpose of informing counsel in subsequent litigation, held privileged; approving *M'Corquodale v. Bell*); 1883, *The Palermo*, L. R. 9 P. D. 6 (copies of depositions of the crew of the plaintiff's ship, taken at the instance of the solicitor for the purpose of litigation, held privileged); 1883, *Kennedy v. Lyell*, L. R. 23 Ch. D. 397, 402, 407, 37 id. 1, 26; s. c. on appeal, *Lyell v. Kennedy*, L. R. 9 App. Cas. 51, 57, 93 (the party's knowledge or belief, derived from reading a brief of facts or other report of facts ascertained by the solicitor and furnished to the party, held privileged; "as soon as you say that the particular premises are privileged and protected, it follows that the mere opinion and belief of the party from those premises should be privileged and protected also"; "a man ought not to be called upon to state what his belief is, founded upon information, which information is privileged"; furthermore, documents obtained by a defendant, "at the instigation of a solicitor," "for the purpose of defending himself against various claimants," and placed in his solicitor's hands, are privileged; "a collection of records may be the result of professional knowledge research and skill; . . . it is the solicitor's mind, if that be so, which has selected the materials; . . . you cannot have disclosure of them without asking for the key to the labor which the solicitor has bestowed in obtaining them"; here, copies of burial certificates and other records, of inscriptions on tombstones, and photographs of houses, were held privileged); 1885, *Pearce v. Foster*, L. R. 15 Q. B. D. 114, 118 (documents "brought into existence for the purposes or in the course of communications between solicitor and client" held privileged); 1884, *Bristol v. Cox*, L. R. 26 Ch. D. 678, 682 (reports by committees of the corporation, made in contemplation of and reference to the litigation in hand, held privileged; "this corporation cannot in its corporate capacity either think or write or act except by certain machinery which is so to speak extraneous of itself"); 1885, *Rawstone v. Preston Co.* 30 id. 116 (shorthand notes of evidence and speeches at a prior arbitration on another matter between the same parties, held not privileged); 1886, *Chedwick v. Bowman*, L. R. 16 Q. B. D. 561 (cited *ante*, § 2318); 1887, *Robson v. Worwick*, L. R. 38 Ch. D. 370 (shorthand notes taken by the defendants, in prior litigation between the defendants and other persons, held not privileged, because taken in open court); 1887, *Young v. Holloway*, L. R. 12 P. D. 167 (letters sent to the client by third persons to be communicated to her solicitor to help the cause, held privileged; also anonymous letters sent to the solicitor, "with a view to the conduct of the action," but not on his express

other hand, in applying the rule of discovery exempting prospective witnesses' statements (*ante*, § 2318, *b*), the more clearly the person is an indifferent witness, the more plain is the exemption from discovery; while the more marked his capacity as a mere agent of the party, the plainer the liability to disclose. The two principles thus pull in opposite directions. What helps to apply the one exemption will tend to disfavor the other. Whether the judicial intention is to invoke the one or the other is not always plain to see. A ruling which is sound enough from the one point of view would be unsound from the other; and it becomes difficult to determine whether the ruling harmonizes or conflicts with either principle.⁵

(2) Furthermore, under both of these principles, the circumstance that litigation has begun, or not, is commonly important. That is, whether under the one principle (the exemption from discovery) the person is to be deemed to have written as prospective witness will often be determined by the circumstance that litigation has begun or not; and whether under the other principle (the privilege for communications to an attorney) he is deemed to have written as the client's agent for communication to the attorney, will also often be dependent on the same circumstance. But, on the other hand, the privilege at large was (in England) until 1870 in a state of controversy involving the very same circumstance (*ante*, § 2294), *i. e.* whether the privilege was restricted to litigious communications or not. Thus the rulings which helped to repudiate that restriction for the privilege at large helped at the same time to confuse the discussion of it in its present relation to the boundaries of ordinary discovery.⁶

request or inquiry; *Bowen, L. J.*, thought that the solicitor's employment was an implied invitation on his client's behalf to send information; 1893, *Learoyd v. Halifax J. S. B. Co.*, 1 Ch. 687 (shorthand writer's notes of a private examination of witnesses by the solicitor, at the instance of the plaintiff, a trustee in bankruptcy, with a view to possible litigation, held privileged; *Anderson v. Bank and Wheeler v. LeMarchant* discussed); 1895, *Re Strachan*, 1 Ch. 439, 444 (the privilege does not extend to documents filed with a master in lunacy); 1898, *Calcraft v. Guest*, 1 Q. B. 759 (documents prepared for former litigation over the same rights, privileged; "Wheeler v. LeMarchant was right, and *Mint v. Morgan* [*ante*, § 2294] was right too"); 1900, *Ainsworth v. Wilding*, 2 Ch. 315, 322 (notes made by a solicitor pending suit; opinion not clear); 1900, *R. v. Bullivant*, 2 Q. B. 163 (*Wheeler v. LeMarchant* followed).

Canada: B. C.: 1896, *Van Volkenburg v. Bank of B. N. A.*, 5 Br. C. 4 (letters between bank managers; *Anderson v. Bank, supra*, followed); *Ont.*: 1875, *Toronto G. R. Co. v. Taylor*, 6 Ont. Pr. 227 (expert opinions on a patent, not procured in contemplation of the present litigation, not privileged); 1876, *Merchants' Bank v. Moffatt*, *ib.* 348 (correspondence between the plaintiff's agents, written at the advice of the solicitor, held privileged); 1883, *Guelph C. Co. v. Whitehead*, 9 *id.* 509 (documents procured by

the defendant's solicitor from third persons, for use in the cause, held privileged); 1883, *Canada C. R. Co. v. M'Laren*, 8 Ont. App. 564 (railway engine-driver's report in a repairs-book; question not decided); 1887, *Betts v. Grand Trunk R. Co.*, 12 Ont. Pr. 86, 634 (report of an investigation made by the defendant's officers immediately after the accident, held not privileged; following *Wheeler v. LeMarchant, supra*); 1892, *Donahue v. Johnston*, 14 *id.* 476 (correspondence between the defendant and a third person, written at the advice of the defendant's solicitor to obtain information, after litigation threatened by the plaintiff, held privileged); 1895, *Hunter v. Grand Trunk R. Co.*, 16 *id.* 385 (similar reports, made for the benefit of the defendant's solicitor in the suit, held privileged); 1902, *Platt v. Buck*, 4 Ont. L. R. 421 (letters between P. and his attorney, given to the defendant by P.'s executor, and plaintiff and defendant both claiming title under P.; held not privileged).

⁵ The cases of *Storey v. Lord Lennox*, *MacKenzie v. Yeo*, *London Gaslight Co. v. Chelsea*, *Ross v. Gibbs*, *Woolley v. R. Co.*, and *Anderson v. Bank, supra*, illustrate this.

⁶ *Balguy v. Broadhurst*, *Goodall v. Little*, *Cossey v. R. Co.*, *Anderson v. Bank*, and *Wheeler v. LeMarchant, supra*, illustrate this. As late as 1898, an English judge (in *Calcraft v. Guest, supra*) thought it worth while to explain that

(3) Finally, the proper limits of the principle of agents' communications (*ante*, § 2317) are withal apparently too intricate to permit of a definite rule which will solve all concrete cases. In 1835, in *Curling v. Perring*, the Master of the Rolls applies the privilege to a solicitor's correspondence with a witness; in 1841, in *Mackenzie v. Yeo*, the contrary is done; forty years later, in *Anderson v. Bank and Wheeler v. LeMarchant*,⁴ the same inconsistency prevails, and the line between a mere witness and an agent of the solicitor appears to be ignored. *Young v. Holloway* and *Learoyd v. Halifax Co.*, ten years later, leave the distinctions still unsatisfactory. Certainly, the exact bearings and effect of all the different principles involved have not yet been clearly stated by any judge. Whenever such a statement shall have been made and generally sanctioned, the proper course will be to leave its application to the trial judge. As it is, the long series of reported precedents has accomplished little in the way of definition.

In the United States, it is noticeable that these bearings of the privilege have received very little development, — probably in part for the reasons elsewhere noted (*ante*, § 2294).⁵

§ 2320. **Communications by the Attorney to the Client.** That the attorney's communications to the client are also within the privilege was always assumed in the earlier cases,¹ and has seldom been brought into question.² The reason for it is, not any design of securing the attorney's freedom of expression, but the necessity of preventing their use as constituting admissions of the client (*ante*, § 1071), or as leading to inferences of the tenor of the client's communications, — although in this latter aspect, being hearsay statements, they could seldom be available at all (*ante*, § 1063).

6. "Are at his instance permanently protected"

§ 2321. **Privilege is the Client's, not the Attorney's, nor the Party's; Who may Claim.** Under the original theory of the privilege, it was the attorney's, not the client's (*ante*, § 2290). But under the modern theory (*ante*, § 2291),

"*Wheeler v. LeMarchant* was right, and *Minet v. Morgan* [*ante*, § 2294] was right too."

⁴ The proposition of *Jessel, M. R.*, that for third persons' communications to solicitors the test is whether they are made after litigation begun or contemplated seems unsound; for it ignores the necessity of a request, implied or expressed, sufficient to make the person the solicitor's agent; compare *Young v. Holloway*.

⁵ 1880, *Pinford's Appeal*, 48 Conn. 247, 249 (bill of particulars, prepared for the party by O., and handed by him to the attorney; O. and the party held compellable to produce it); 1877, *Williams v. Young*, 46 Ia. 140, 143 (attorney not privileged as to his deposit of the client's money with a third person); 1901, *State v. Herbert*, 63 Kan. 516, 66 Pac. 237 (testimony by a witness in the county attorney's hearing is not privileged); 1874, *Re Aspinwall*, 7 Ben. 433 (the privilege extends to information received on behalf of the client from persons to whom

the client has referred the attorney for such information); 1898, *Lalanc & G. M. Co. v. Haberman M. Co.*, 87 Fed. 563 (while communications with a witness are not privileged, a scientific expert engaged to help in presenting the case is in effect an assistant counsel; and the privilege exists for communications between legal counsel and himself, so long as he does not become a witness; the opinion clearly explains the reasons); 1899, *Hartness v. Brown*, 21 Wash. 655, 59 Pac. 491 (deed by W. to the plaintiff; W. consulted an attorney about the deed, and the attorney sent for the plaintiff; communications by the plaintiff excluded, because made to W.'s attorney about a matter of joint interest).

¹ *Ante*, § 2294.

² 1840, *Jenkinson v. Andrews*, 5 Blackf. 465 (whether the attorney had informed the client of the meaning of an affidavit, held privileged).

it is plainly the client's, not the attorney's; and this is now a commonplace, never disputed.

But it is as client, *not as party to the cause*, that he is entitled; for the reason of the privilege applies to all clients as such, whether or not they are parties when the disclosure is sought from them. Hence, the privilege equally forbids disclosure by the attorney of a client not in any way concerned in the cause.¹ Conversely, when the client is not a party, then on general principles (*ante*, § 2196) the party cannot invoke the privilege;² and, if the privilege is erroneously refused, the party cannot appeal on the ground of this error.³

§ 2322. *Inference from Claim of Privilege; Judge to determine Privilege.* If a client-party claims the privilege, *no inference* should be drawn against him as to the unfavorable nature of the information sought.¹ Whatever the reasoning may be for other privileges (*ante*, §§ 2243, 2272), it is plain that here the drawing of such an inference would virtually disclose the communication, and it is this very disclosure against which the privilege protects.

The claim of privilege being made, the *trial judge determines* whether the facts justify the allowance of the claim.² This follows from the general principle of the judicial function (*post*, § 2550). Its application is usually of no difficulty, except sometimes in determining what weight to give to the party's oath in answering a bill of discovery.³

§ 2323. *Protection continues, though Relation of Client and Attorney be ended.* The subjective freedom of the client, which it is the purpose of the privilege to secure (*ante*, § 2291), could not be attained if the client under-

¹ 1792, *Wilson v. Rastall*, 4 T. R. 753, 760, per Buller, J.; 1811, *R. v. Withers*, 2 Camp. 578, L. C. J. Ellenborough (communications by a third person, privileged, "although he be not in any shape before the court"); 1848, *Bank of Utica v. Mersereau*, 3 Barb. Ch. 528, 596; 1880, *Bacon v. Frisbie*, 80 N. Y. 394, 400 (nor, when the client objects, can the communication be disclosed under instructions to use it only against a party not the client); 1876, *Bowers v. State*, 29 Oh. St. 542, 546 (prosecutrix in a rape case, held privileged as to consultations with her attorney).

² 1826, *Merle v. Moore*, 2 C. & P. 275 (Best, C. J.; action by an assignee in bankruptcy against the debtor's fraudulent vendee; the bankrupt's attorney being called by the plaintiff, it was held that the defendant could not invoke the privilege, since the bankrupt alone could object); 1899, *McCooe v. R. Co.*, 173 Mass. 117, 53 N. E. 133 (counsel may not object for the party, even where the client is the party in the case); 1890, *Dowie's Estate*, 135 Pa. 210, 19 Atl. 936 ("It is the privilege of the client to object, and not of a stranger, [though he be the party to the cause,] even if the testimony objected to was a privileged communication"). *Contra*: 1880, *Bacon v. Frisbie*, 80 N. Y. 394, 401.

For this general principle as applicable to all privileges, see *ante*, § 2196.

³ 1847, *Weeks v. Argent*, 16 M. & W. 817, per Parke, B. *Contra*: 1884, *State v. Barrows*, 52 Conn. 323, 326. Compare the cases cited *ante*, § 2196.

¹ 1864, Lord Chelmsford, in *Wentworth v. Lloyd*, 10 H. L. C. 591. *Contra*: 1899, *McCooe v. R. Co.*, 173 Mass. 117, 53 N. E. 133.

² 1895, *McDonald v. McDonald*, 142 Ind. 55, 41 N. E. 342; 1901, *Press Publishing Co. v. Lefferts*, 67 N. J. L. 172, 50 Atl. 842; 1901, *People's Bank v. Brown*, 50 C. C. A. 411, 112 Fed. 652 (and the witness may "by way of preliminary investigation be subjected to such interrogation as may be necessary").

³ 1853, *Volant v. Soyer*, 18 C. B. 231 (the attorney's statement that a document is privileged should ordinarily suffice); 1881, *Lyeil v. Kennedy*, L. R. 27 Ch. D. 1, 21 (per Cotton, L. J.; in answers to interrogatories of discovery, "the Court must be satisfied, clearly satisfied, either from admissions or from other documents, that the oath of the defendant by which he claims his protection cannot be really available for the purpose for which he puts it forward"); 1842, *Reynolds v. Rowley*, 3 Rob. La. 201, 204 (the Court may refuse to accept the attorney's statement).

stood that, when the relation ended, or even after the client's death, the attorney could be compelled to disclose the confidences; for there is no limit of time beyond which the disclosures might not be used to the detriment of the client or of his estate. It has therefore never been questioned, since the domination of the modern theory,¹ that the privilege continues even after the end of the litigation or other occasion for legal advice,² and even after the death of the client. It follows, also, on another aspect of the principle (*post*, § 2324), that even after the death of the attorney the client could not be compelled to disclose the communications. The doctrine of *waiver* belongs in another place (*post*, § 2327).

7. "From disclosure by himself or by the legal adviser"

§ 2324. **Testimony by the Client or the Attorney.** The privilege being for the protection of the client in his subjective freedom of consultation (*ante*, §§ 2291, 2321), it would plainly be defeated if the disclosure of the confidences, though not compellable from the attorney, was still obtainable from the *client*. Accordingly, under the modern theory,¹ it has never been doubted that the client's own testimony is equally privileged.²

That the *attorney* himself is prohibited, whether he is willing or not, is of course the fundamental assumption of the modern theory.³

§ 2325. **Indirect Disclosure by the Attorney.** Clearly the privilege could not permit an evasion by receiving the voluntary extrajudicial disclosures of the attorney. Supposing them to be somehow admissible in spite of the Hearsay rule, they would be equally a violation of the privilege with his voluntary disclosures on the stand. If his disclosure has taken the form of handing a confidential document to a third person, the objection is equally forcible and the question is not complicated with the Hearsay rule. On the other hand, the attorney must be credited with some authority for negotiating with the opposing party, and in the course of such negotiations it becomes necessary to make communications and to deliver documents or copies which, apart from the rule as to compromise-admissions (*ante*, § 1061), may afterwards with propriety form the subject of proof as part of the transactions between the parties; indeed, to refuse to examine them would often

¹ Under the original theory, as already noticed in § 2290, the privilege might be thought to end with the ending of the relation.

² 1815, *Cholmondeley v. Clinton*, 19 Ves. Jr. 261, 268, per L. C. Eldon; 1878, *Bullock v. Corry*, L. R. 3 Q. B. D. 356 ("The rule is, once privileged, always privileged"); 1885, *Pearce v. Foster*, L. R. 15 id. 114, 118; 1899, *Struckmeyer v. Lamb*, 75 Minn. 366, 77 N. W. 987.

The doctrine of *waiver* is examined *post*, § 2327.

For the question of professional ethics, whether an attorney will be restrained from going over to the *service of the opponent*, see the following: 1815, *Earl Cholmondeley v. Lord Clinton*, 19 Ves. Jr. 261, and notes to Sumner's

edition; 1821, *Beer v. Ward*, 1 Jac. 77; 1821, *Brieheno v. Thorp*, ib. 300.

³ But not under the earlier theory: *ante*, § 2290.

² 1898, *Birmingham R. & E. Co. v. Wildman*, 119 Ala. 547, 24 So. 548; 1877, *State v. White*, 19 Kan. 445; 1856, *Hemenway v. Smith*, 28 Vt. 701, 707; and the cases cited *ante*, § 2319, assume this.

³ Distinguish the question whether it is allowable for him to testify, at the client's request, *on behalf of the client* (*ante*, § 1911). In the Georgia Code that question and the present privilege are confusedly dealt with in the same paragraph.

be to sanction the breaking of faith with the opponent. How can these opposing considerations be reconciled?

The judicial rulings are in confusion, and no clear appreciation of the significance of the dilemma is shown.¹ The following distinctions may perhaps furnish a solution: (1) Since the attorney has implied authority from the client (*ante*, § 1063) to make admissions and otherwise to act in all that concerns the management of the cause, all disclosures (oral or written) voluntarily made to the opposing party or to third persons in the course of negotiations for settlement, or in the course of taking adverse steps in litigation (*e. g.* in serving notices), are receivable, as being made under an implied authority to disclose the confidences when necessary in the opinion of the attorney; unless it appears that the attorney has acted in bad faith towards the client. (2) All other voluntary disclosures are inadmissible, except so far as the special circumstances show an implied authority of disclosure from the client over and above the general authority to conduct litigation. (3) All involuntary disclosures, in particular, through the loss or theft of documents from the attorney's possession, are not protected by the privilege, on the principle (*post*, § 2326) that, since the law has granted secrecy so far as its own process goes, it leaves to the client and attorney to take measures of caution sufficient to prevent the overhearing of third persons; and the risk of insufficient precautions is upon the client. This principle applies equally to documents.

§ 2326. **Third Persons Overhearing.** The law provides subjective freedom for the client by assuring him of exemption from its processes of disclosure against himself or the attorney or their agents of communication. This much, but not a whit more, is necessary for the maintenance of the privilege. Since the means of preserving secrecy of communication are entirely in the client's hands, and since the privilege is a derogation from the general testimonial liability and should be strictly construed, it would be improper to

¹ *England*: 1833, *Cocks v. Nash*, 6 C. & P. 154 (a deed was not producible, being in a trustee's hands for the plaintiff and therefore privileged; but a copy furnished by the trustee to the defendant and proved correct by the trustee was admitted); 1842, *Lloyd v. Mostyn*, 4 Dowl. Pr. n. s. 476 (the attorney refusing to produce by claim of privilege, proof was allowed by a copy already made by the attorney and furnished to the opponent under a judge's order; *semble*, Parke, B., declared the same rule applicable to a copy of a document stolen from the attorney); 1852, *Enthoven v. Cobb*, 17 Jmr. 81 (communication of a privileged document to another party and a solicitor, having a common interest, held "not made to allow an unlimited communication"); 1868, *R. v. Leverson*, 11 Cox Cr. 152 (letter to the prosecutrix' attorney, coming somehow to the hands of the defendant's attorney, not allowed to be read); 1880, *R. v. Downer*, 14 id. 486, 487 (solicitor's letter to a railway company, making claim for lost articles, held not privileged as involving facts communicated

in confidence); 1893, *Calcraft v. Guest*, 1 Q. B. 759 (copy of a privileged document obtained by accidental transfer of possession, admitted); *United States*: 1899, *Southern R. Co. v. White*, 108 Ga. 201, 33 S. E. 952 (letter to a party's attorney, handed by the latter to the opponent's attorney, excluded); 1887, *Tays v. Carr*, 37 Kan. 141, 14 Pac. 456 (letter from a client to the attorney, produced by a third person, held not privileged); 1892, *Liggett v. Glenn*, 2 C. C. A. 286, 51 Fed. 881, 4 U. S. App. 438, 472 (the communication being a letter or other writing, although it may pass, by loss or otherwise, into a third person's or the adversary's hands, it cannot be used); 1893, *Hicks' Estate v. Marchard*, 60 Vt. 673, 15 Atl. 401 (action on a note; the defendant not allowed to use a copy of the specifications of claim obtained from the plaintiff's attorney). In *Perry v. State*, 4 Ida. 224, 38 Pac. 658 (1895), where the attorney's exclamation, when found digging up money, "That is my client's money," was admitted as "part of an act," the opinion is confused and useless.

extend its prohibition to third persons who obtain knowledge of the communications. One who overhears the communication, whether with or without the client's knowledge,¹ is not within the protection of the privilege.² The same rule ought to apply to one who surreptitiously reads or obtains possession of a document in original or copy (*ante*, § 2325).

8. "Except the client waive the protection."

§ 2327. *Waiver in general; Voluntary Testimony as a Waiver.* The privilege is designed to secure the client's confidence in the secrecy of his communications (*ante*, § 2291); hence, the privilege is not violated by receiving such disclosures as the client by his own will permits to be made. There is no analogy whatever between a rule of conditional exclusion in the nature of privilege (*ante*, § 2196) and an absolute rule of disqualification (*ante*, § 477). Yet the common juxtaposition of the two classes of rules in statutory enactments — due in part to the indiscriminate use of the term "competent," long ago denounced by Bentham — has from time to time made it necessary for the Bench to correct this elementary misunderstanding on the part of the Bar. In respect to the present privilege, it has always been recognized that a waiver may be made;¹ although only since the domination of the modern theory (*ante*, § 2290) has it been perfectly plain that the waiver, like the privilege, belongs solely to the client (*ante*, § 2321), and not to the attorney.²

What constitutes a waiver by implication? Judicial decision gives no clear answer to this question.³ In deciding it, regard must be had to the double

¹ The fallacious distinction, here sometimes taken, that when the third person is present to the client's knowledge, that person may disclose, but not the attorney, has been already noticed (*ante*, § 2311).

² 1889, *Cotton v. State*, 87 Ala. 75, 6 So. 396 (conversation between the accused and his attorney, in the jailer's presence, held not privileged, as to the jailer's testimony); 1894, *Denver T. Co. v. Owens*, 20 Colo. 107, 125, 36 Pac. 848, *semble*; 1895, *Perry v. State*, 4 Ida. 224, 38 Pac. 658 (third person overhearing); 1885, *State v. Sterrett*, 68 Ia. 76, 25 N. W. 936 (third person overhearing); 1859, *Hoy v. Morris*, 13 Gray 519 (a "mere bystander," casually overhearing, and not an agent of the attorney, held not within the privilege; good opinion); 1895, *Basye v. State*, 45 Nebr. 261, 63 N. W. 811 (third person, known to the client to be present); 1829, *Jackson v. French*, 3 Wend. 337 (third person going with the client); 1874, *Cary v. White*, 59 N. Y. 336, 338; 1899, *Bntler v. Foyweather*, 33 C. C. A. 625, 91 Fed. 458 (execution and contents of will).

³ 1778, *Captain Baillie's Trial*, 21 How. St. Tr. 1, 341, 360, 408; 1826, *Merle v. Moore*, Ry. & Mo. 390; 1883, *Passmore v. Passmore's Estate*, 50 Mich. 626, 16 N. W. 170. In Georgia, where the attorney is disqualified on behalf of the client, as well as privileged, the client of

course cannot waive the disqualification: *ante*, § 1911.

² In 1816, in *Fenwick v. Reed*, 1 Meriv. 114, 122, L. C. Eldon was undecided whether the attorney's executor could waive; but this doubt would not arise to-day.

³ Some of the Codes cited *ante*, § 2292, lay down a rule. Judicial decisions are as follows: *Eng.*: 1654, *Waldron v. Ward*, Style 449 (counsel in the cause, being examined to prove a death, was not allowed to be examined by the opponent on privileged matters); 1841, *Mackenzie v. Yeo*, 2 Curt. Eccl. 866, 876 (a direct examination to matters within the privilege is a waiver permitting cross-examination on those matters); *Can.*: 1868, *Forsyth v. Charlebois*, 12 Low. Can. Jur. 264, *semble* (calling the attorney as a witness amounts to a waiver for all matters touched on in the direct examination); *U. S.*: 1873, *Rowland v. Plummer*, 50 Ala. 182, 194, *semble* (the client's taking the stand, held a waiver as to the attorney's testimony to those facts); 1897, *Louisville & N. R. Co. v. Hill*, 115 id. 354, 22 So. 163 (by using the same conversation for his own purposes, the client was held to waive the privilege); 1855, *Landsberger v. Gorham*, 5 Cal. 450 (direct testimony held on the facts not to amount to a waiver on a certain subject); 1884, *State v. Barrows*, 52 Conn. 323, 325 (witness' voluntary testimony to a preliminary statement

elements that are predicated in every waiver, *i. e.* not only the element of implied intention, but also the element of fairness and consistency. A privileged person would seldom be found to waive, if his intention not to abandon could alone control the situation. There is always also the objective consideration that when his conduct touches a certain point of disclosure, fairness requires that his immunity shall cease, whether he intended that result or not. He cannot be allowed, after disclosing as much as he pleases, to withhold the remainder. He may elect to withhold or to disclose, but after a certain point, his election must remain final. As a fair canon of decision, the following distinctions may be suggested:

(1) The client's offer of his *own testimony* in the cause *at large* is not a waiver, for the purpose either of cross-examining him to the communications or of calling the attorney to prove them; otherwise the privilege of consultation would be exercised only at the penalty of closing the client's own mouth on the stand. (2) The client's offer of the *attorney's testimony* in the cause at large is not a waiver so far as the attorney's knowledge has been acquired casually as an ordinary witness; but otherwise it is a waiver; for, considering that the attorney ought in general not to be used as a witness (*ante*, § 1911), the client ought to be discouraged from utilizing his attorney in double and inconsistent capacities, and if he has seen fit to furnish him knowledge as a witness, he should deny himself the right to invoke the attorney's function as an adviser. (3) The client's offer of his *own testimony* as to *specific facts* about which he has happened to communicate with

to her attorney, held not a waiver for the whole consultation); 1897, *Takamori v. Kanai*, 11 Haw. 1 (malicious prosecution; advice of counsel as furnishing probable cause; the client's calling the counsel, held a waiver); 1878, *Bigler v. Reyher*, 43 Ind. 112 (the client's taking the stand, held not to be a waiver, for the purpose either of calling the attorney or of cross-examining the client); 1878, *Oliver v. Pata*, *ib.* 182, 142 (similar; but voluntary testimony to the communication is a waiver, permitting the attorney to be called); 1874, *Barker v. Kuhn*, 38 Ia. 392, 395, *semble* (like *State v. White*, Kan., *infra*); 1877, *State v. White*, 19 Kan. 445, 447 (the client's taking the stand is not in itself a waiver of the privilege); 1878, *Wilkins v. Moore*, 20 id. 538, 540 (same); 1869, *Wohurn v. Henshaw*, 101 Mass. 198, 200 ("If the client sees fit to be a witness, he makes himself liable to full cross-examination like any other witness"); 1874, *Montgomery v. Pickering*, 116 Mass. 227, 231, 237 (calling the attorney is not in itself a waiver of the privilege; nor is the client's own testimony); 1892, *Blount v. Kimpton*, 155 id. 378, 29 N. E. 590 (same, on the first point); 1857, *Alderman v. People*, 4 Mich. 414, 423 (accomplice taking the stand for the State under promise of immunity waives his privilege; "he should be allowed no privileged communications; these he has voluntarily surrendered"); 1889, *People v. Gallagher*, 75 id. 512, 515, 42 N. W. 1063 (an accomplice, testifying for the State, waives

"all privilege as regards the crime in question"); 1890, *State v. Tall*, 43 Minn. 276, 45 N. W. 449 (the client's testimony to a specific fact is a waiver of the privilege as to the communication of that fact to his attorney); 1868, *Jones v. State*, 65 Miss. 179, 3 So. 379 (taking the stand is not in general a waiver; but here an accomplice, who had become State's evidence, was held to have waived and to be subject to cross-examination to his statements to counsel); 1860, *King v. Barrett*, 11 Oh. St. 261, 263 (Code applied; in a civil case the client's voluntary testimony is a waiver of the privilege on the same subject); 1877, *Duttenhofer v. State*, 34 id. 91 (in a criminal case the accused's voluntary testimony is not a waiver; the Code provision not being applicable to criminal cases); 1888, *Hunt v. Blackburn*, 128 U. S. 464, 470, 9 Sup. 125 (privilege held waived by "entering upon a line of defence which involved what transpired between herself and Mr. W. [the attorney]"); 1871, *Chahoon v. Corn.*, 21 Gratt. 822, 835 (one of three joint defendants, by taking the stand at the instance of the State and testifying to a communication between counsel and another defendant, held not to waive the privilege by implication); 1881, *Tate v. Tate*, 75 Va. 522, 533 (the client's testimony, not relating to the "privileged matter," held not a waiver, even where on cross-examination the communications were testified to).

the attorney is not a waiver, for the same reason as in (1), *supra*; but his offer of the attorney's testimony as to such specific facts is a waiver, for the same reason as in (2), *supra*. (4) The client's offer of his own or the attorney's testimony as to a *specific communication* to the attorney is a waiver as to all other communications to the attorney; for the privilege of secret consultation is intended only as an incidental means of defence, and not as an independent means of attack, and to use it in the latter character is to abandon it in the former. (5) The client's offer of his own or the attorney's testimony as to a *part of any communication* to the attorney is a waiver as to the whole of that communication, on the analogy of the principle of Completeness (*ante*, § 2113).

§ 2328. **Waiver by Joint Clients, Agents, Assignees.** A waiver at one stage of a trial should be final for all further stages;¹ and a waiver at a *first trial* should suffice as a waiver for a later trial, since there is no longer any reason for preserving secrecy. Where the consultation was had by *several clients jointly*, the waiver should be joint for joint statements, and neither could waive for the disclosure of the other's statements; yet neither should be able to obstruct the other in the disclosure of the latter's own statements.² Where the consultation was had by an *agent* of the client, it is ordinarily the client alone who may waive;³ but it has been already noticed that for certain extrajudicial purposes the attorney himself must be regarded as authorized to waive secrecy on behalf of his client (*ante*, § 2325). Where the client's interest has been *assigned*, it seems proper to say that the privilege is transferred to the assignee, for the purpose of waiver, so far as the communications affect merely the realization of the transferred interest; but it remains with the client so far as they affect any liability or right remaining in him.⁴

§ 2329. **Waiver by a Deceased Client's Representative.** That an executor or administrator may exercise authority over all the interests of the estate left by the client, and yet may not incidentally have the right, in the interest of that estate, to waive the privilege of concealing confidential communications affecting it, would seem too inconsistent to be maintained under any system of law. It has, indeed, seldom been maintained for the present privilege; but the denial of this waiver in another field, by some

¹ 1902, *Green v. Crapo*, 181 Mass. 55, 69 N. E. 956 (waiver for a hearing before the Probate Court prevents claim of privilege on a hearing before a Supreme Court justice).

² There are few rulings: 1848, *Bank of Utica v. Mesereau*, 3 Barb. Ch. 528, 596 ("Where the privilege belongs to several clients, I do not think any one of them, or even a majority, contrary to the expressed will of the others, can waive the privilege"); 1871, *Chahoon v. Com.*, 21 Gratt. 822, 835 (C. J. S., and R. S., being jointly indicted for conspiracy, met for consultation with counsel; each had a counsel, but C.'s was absent; L. was counsel for R. S.; at the trial, R. S. having testified to a statement of C. at the meeting, C. called L. to testify to C.'s statement;

but L. claimed the privilege; held, that L. could not testify without a waiver by all three, J. S. having in fact made no waiver; this seems unsound).

³ 1891, *Bingham v. Walk*, 128 Ind. 164, 27 N. E. 483 (here the agent was deceased).

⁴ The few rulings on this point do not take this distinction: 1831, *Bowman v. Norton*, 5 C. & P. 177 (similar facts to *Merle v. Moore*, § 2321, *supra*; Tindal, C. J., would not allow the assignees, as such, to waive the privilege on the bankrupt's behalf); 1838, *Benjamin v. Coventry*, 19 Wend. 353 (waiver may be by the client A, even though by assignment A's interest in the cause has passed to B; Bronson, J., diss.).

Courts (*post*, § 2391), demands here the more emphatic repudiation of such a fallacy:

1851, *Turner, V. C.*, in *Russell v. Jackson*, 9 Hare 387, 393: "In the cases of testamentary dispositions, the very foundation on which the rule proceeds seems to be wanting; and in the absence, therefore, of any illegal purpose entertained by the testator, there does not appear to be any ground for applying it. . . . That the privilege does not in all cases terminate with the death of the party, I entertain no doubt. That it belongs equally to parties claiming under the client as against parties claiming adversely to him, I entertain as little doubt; but it does not, I think, therefore follow that it belongs to the executor as against the next of kin, and in such a case as the present. In the one case the question is whether the property belongs to the client or his estate, and the rule may well apply for the protection of the client's interests. In the other case the question is to which of two parties claiming under the client the property in equity belongs, and it would seem to be a mere arbitrary rule to hold that it belongs to one of them, rather than to the other."

1860, *Collins, J.*, in *Layman's Will*, 40 Minn. 372, 42 N. W. 286: "There is an abundance of authority for saying that, upon the decease of the only person who could, in his life-time, exercise the privilege of waiver, the rule should not be so perverted by a strict adherence to it as to render it inconsistent with its objects, and thus bring it into direct conflict with the reason upon which it is founded. The object of the rule, so far as it relates to this class of communications, being the protection of the estate, there remains no reason for continuing it when the very foundation upon which it proceeds is wanting. The testimony called for was quite necessary in order to determine the weight which ought to be given the witness' opinion as to the mental condition of the testator, and his disclosures in no way reflected upon the character or reputation of the deceased. The testimony when given served to protect the estate, and tended to aid in a proper disposition of it. The issue in the case was as to the mental soundness of a person under whom each litigant claimed, and, whatever the result, the interest and the estate of the deceased were not prejudicially affected. It is not an action in which the success of an adverse third party must prove detrimental to the property. Neither of these litigants can be permitted to invoke the rule respecting privileged communications for the purpose of excluding material and important evidence of the character above described upon the only question involved in the dispute, namely, the sanity of the deceased."

1900, *Barker, J.*, in *Brooks v. Holden*, 175 Mass. 137, 55 N. E. 802: "To allow the executor or administrator of the deceased client to waive the privilege, and to call the attorney to testify as to a privileged communication, in a suit involving the client's estate, no more militates against the principle of public policy involved, than to allow the client himself to waive the privilege. Nor does it tend to weaken the protection which the rule gives for the benefit of the client as an individual. The executor or administrator acts with reference to the question of waiver as the personal representative of the deceased client, and solely in the interest of his estate."

This view is accepted with practical unanimity. It is further generally agreed that in testamentary contests the privilege is divisible, and may be waived by the executor, the administrator, the heir, the next of kin, or the legatee.¹

¹ *Eng.*: 1849, *Doe v. Hertford*, 13 Jur. 632 (waiver by heir and executors, against third persons, held proper, per Erle, J.); 1851, *Russell v. Jackson*, 9 Hare 387, 392 (in a contest between the next of kin and devisees, the privilege was held to belong to neither as against the other; quoted *supra*); 1838, *Greenlaw v. King*, 1 Beav. 137, 145, *semble*, per Lord Langdale, M. B. (waiver by the executor, allowable);

Can.: 1893, *Magoe v. R.*, 3 Exch. Can. 304, 327 (he must disclose "all that passed at the time relating to such execution"); *U. S.*: 1865, *Fossler v. Schriber*, 38 Ill. 173 (the "only heir" of the client, held competent to waive the privilege; and even if there were other heirs not parties, "the Court would presume their concurrence"); 1885, *Scott v. Harris*, 113 id. 447, 454, *semble* (in a controversy between legatees and

grantee, the privilege ceases); 1897, *Winters v. Winters*, 102 Ia. 63, 71 N. W. 184 (an heir, devisee, or other representative, but not a stranger, may waive; and hence, in a will contest, either party in interest may waive); 1900, *Brooks v. Holden*, 175 Mass. 137, 56 N. E. 802 (representative of a deceased client may waive; quoted *supra*); 1889, *Layman's Will*, 40 Minn. 272, 42 N. W. 286 (the attorney who prepared a will, permitted to testify as to the testator's sanity, in probate proceedings; quoted *supra*); 1897, *Glover v. Patten*, 165 U. S. 394, 17 Sup. 411 (privilege ceases "between devisees under a will," "between heirs or next of kin"). *Contra*: 1885, *Westover v. Ins. Co.*, 99 N. Y. 56, 59, 1 N. E. 104 (neither an executor, nor any one else, may waive the privilege after the party's death; said *obiter*).

Compare the testamentary cases decided on other grounds, *ante*, §§ 2314, 2315.

TOPIC B (continued): PRIVILEGED COMMUNICATIONS.

SUB-TOPIC III: COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN HUSBAND AND WIFE.

CHAPTER LXXXI.

1. In general.

§ 2332. Policy of the Privilege.
 § 2333. History of the Privilege.
 § 2334. Marital Disqualification and Anti-Marital Privilege, distinguished; Statutory Enactments.

2. Scope of the Testimony Privileged.

§ 2335. Knowledge obtained in Confidence, Express or Implied.

§ 2337. Communications, not Acts.
 § 2338. Exceptions and Distinctions.

3. Persons Prohibited and Entitled.

§ 2339. Third Persons Overhearing; Documents obtained by Third Persons.
 § 2340. Who may Claim the Privilege; Waiver.

4. Cessation of the Privilege.

§ 2341. Death; Divorce; Separation; Invalid Marriage.

1. In general.

§ 2332. *Policy of the Privilege.* The policy which should lie at the foundation of every rule of privileged communications (*ante*, § 2285) is amply satisfied in the present privilege. The communications originate in confidence; the confidence is essential to the relation; the relation is a proper object of encouragement by the law; and the injury that would inure to it by disclosure is probably greater than the benefit that would result in the judicial investigation of truth. There seems therefore to be no reason for objecting to the recognition of the present privilege:

1853, *Commissioners on Common Law Procedure*, Second Report, 13: "The question how far communications of married persons *inter se* should be matter of testimony in courts of justice stands on a very different ground [from that of compelling one to testify to facts against the other]. So much of the happiness of human life may fairly be said to depend on the inviolability of domestic confidence that the alarm and unhappiness occasioned to society by invading its sanctity and compelling the public disclosure of confidential communications between husband and wife would be a far greater evil than the disadvantage which may occasionally arise from the loss of light which such revelations might throw on questions in dispute. . . . [Hence,] all communications between them should be held to be privileged."

1871, *Freeman, J.*, in *State v. McAuley*, 4 Heisk. 424, 432: "If this could be permitted, it would tend to destroy that bond of mutual confidence and unquestioning trust that is essential to the peace and happiness of the most sacred of all domestic relations. No man would be willing to have his wife called on in a court of justice to detail the facts of which she gains a knowledge by reason of the fact that she is the companion of his privacy and has unlimited freedom of access to all the occurrences that transpire in his home and around the fireside."

1898, *Taylor, C. J.*, in *Mercer v. State*, 40 Fla. 216, 24 So. 154: "Society has a deeply-rooted interest in the preservation of the peace of families, and in the maintenance of the sacred institution of marriage; and its strongest safeguard is to preserve with jealous care any violation of those hallowed confidences inherent in, and inseparable from, the marital status. Therefore the law places the ban of its prohibition upon any breach of the confidence between husband and wife, by declaring all confidential communications between

them to be incompetent matter for either of them to expose as witnesses. The reason of the old rule for rendering interested witnesses incompetent to testify at all in any case to which they were parties was because their interest was supposed to be such a strong incentive to perjury, and, where husband or wife was interested in a cause, both of them were excluded as incompetent witnesses for any purpose, because of their unity of interest; they, in the eye of the law, being regarded as one person, and whenever either was interested both were considered to be equally interested; and the incentive to perjury from such interest was considered to be as strongly operative upon the one as upon the other. But the reason of the rule for excluding the confidences between husband and wife as incompetent matter to be deposed by either of them, though they may be competent witnesses to testify to other facts, is found to rest in that public policy that seeks to preserve inviolate the peace, good order, and limitless confidence between the heads of the family circle so necessary to every well-ordered civilized society."

§ 2333. *History of the Privilege.* The privilege for communications between husband and wife is apparently, in time of origin, the second of such privileges to be enforced at common law, and yet the last to be definitely recognized and distinguished. In the second half of the 1600s an instance of its application is found;¹ and yet the explicit statement of the privilege, as a distinct one from any other rule, did not come in England until the statutory reforms of the Common Law Procedure Act, just as the second half of the 1800s was beginning.² The explanation of the paradox is that until that time the present privilege for communications between husband and wife had not been plainly separated from the other privilege of husband or wife not to testify to any facts against the other. This latter privilege was fully established by the end of the 1600s (*ante*, § 2227). But among the various reasons advanced for its support was the policy of protecting domestic confidence by prohibiting their mutual disclosures (*ante*, § 2228). In other words, the true policy of the present privilege was perceived, and yet it was not enforced in the shape of any rule distinct from the old-established privilege of each not to testify against the other as a party or interested in the suit. That the two are distinct is plain; for the privilege not to testify against the other is broader in the respect that it excludes testimony to any adverse facts even though they have been learned wholly apart from marital confidence, and is narrower in the respect that it applies only to testimony adverse in its tenor and adverse to a party to the cause or to one in an equivalent position. Nevertheless, the privilege against adverse testimony remained for a long time alone in its recognition; and not unnaturally, for two reasons. In the first place, in the great majority of instances in which it was desired to make a wife reveal her husband's communications, he was an adverse party, and his long-established privilege against her adverse testimony served equally to protect him against that sort of her adverse testimony as against any other. In the second place, the other instances where it might be desired that she should reveal his communications would ordinarily be those in which he himself desired her

¹ 1684, *Lady Ivy's Trial*, 10 How. St. Tr. 555, 628 (a husband's oath to the wife's request to him to commit forgery, not admitted against her as witness).

² As late as 1852, Mr. J. Erle, in *Stapleton*

v. Crofts, 18 Q. B. 367, 274, believed that "as no protection was given to conjugal confidence in respect of the wives of witnesses not parties," the rule must be regarded as "not yet established."

testimony in his behalf, and this was of course prevented by her disqualification (*ante*, § 600). Thus there remained only one situation, and that the least common one, in which the two existing rules of disqualification and privilege did not already suffice to dispose of the evidence, namely, the situation in which the husband was not a party but an indifferent person and yet his communications to his wife were material to the cause and were offered to be proved by her. In view of the rarity of this situation under the system of married women's disabilities then prevailing, it is not to be wondered that at common law the question was not forced upon the consideration of the judges, and that the recognition of the present privilege as a rule independent of any other was so belated. Not until the marital disqualification and the marital privilege against adverse testimony were proposed to be abolished or modified did the existence of this third aspect of the subject begin to be perceived.³ Accordingly, when the legislators in the various jurisdictions took the first steps, in the period from 1840 to 1870, to reform the other two rules, by abolishing or restricting the disqualification and the other privilege, they invariably preserved by express enactment the present privilege for communications. So this privilege, hitherto existing rather in principle than in rule, practically begins its existence and is defined in its terms by the legislation of that period.

§ 2334. **Marital Disqualification and Anti-Marital Privilege, distinguished; Statutory Enactments.** (1) That the *disqualification* of husband and wife to testify the one *on the other's behalf* (*ante*, §§ 600-620) is distinct from the privilege of either against the other's disclosure of communications ought to be plain enough. The judicial confusion of them is nevertheless frequent; and the occasional legislative commingling of them in the same sentence of the same enactment has given rise to much of this confusion. Perhaps the commonest error is to ignore the husband's *right to waive* the privilege (*post*, § 2340), *i. e.* when he offers the wife to prove his communications to her, the erroneous tendency is to treat the disclosure as absolutely prohibited in spite of his consent. A disqualification, of course, cannot be waived; but it is of the essence of this privilege (as of every privilege) that it may be; and yet the communications, when offered by the privileged person, are even yet repeatedly excluded, in apparent ignorance of the distinction. Another practical difference is that the *disqualification affects only a party's* or interested person's husband or wife (*ante*, § 607), while the privilege is equally valid for the communications of a husband or wife not a party nor interested.¹ Still another difference is that the disqualification may cease upon the *death or divorce* of the husband or wife (*ante*, § 610), while the present privilege cannot (*post*, § 2341).

(2) The distinction between the present privilege for communications and the privilege against *adverse marital testimony* in general (*ante*, §§ 2227-

³ Compare Mr. J. Erie's remark, *supra*.

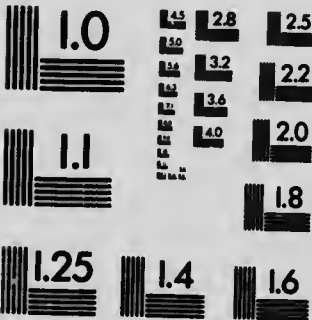
¹ 1878, *Winchester F. Ins. Co. v. Foster*, 90 Ill. 121, 125. *Contra* (but the words of the

extraordinary Illinois statute permit of this ruling): 1877, *Galbraith v. McLain*, 84 Ill. 379, 383.



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2245) has already been noticed in dealing with the history of the rules (*ante*, § 2333). One of the practical differences between them is that the former applies only where the testimony is adverse, *i. e.* where the other spouse is either a party or in an equivalent position (*ante*, § 2234), while the latter may be invoked by any spouse however indifferent to the cause.² Another difference is that the former may cease with the death or divorce of the spouse against whom the testimony may be offered (*ante*, § 2237), while the latter is perpetual (*post*, § 2341). Another and still more important difference is that the former prohibits the spouse's adverse testimony regardless of the source of knowledge, while the latter covers only knowledge obtained through the confidence of the marriage relation. The two privileges have practically nothing in common, either in policy or in rule; and their complete separation needs repeated emphasis before the possibility of confusion can be cleared away.³

The *statutory enactments* dealing with the present privilege are commonly united in the same enactment with the marital disqualification and the other marital privilege, and their interpretation cannot be always accurately made without comparing the entire enactment.⁴ The ensuing examination of the present privilege is made with reference to these statutes.⁵ In a few instances the phrasing of the local statute is peculiar and determining; but certain types of enactment are common to many jurisdictions, and in only one or two respects do the different types represent any substantial difference of policy or rule.

2. Scope of the Testimony Privileged.

§ 2336. **Knowledge obtained in Confidence, Express or Implied.** The essence of the privilege is to protect confidences only. This is inevitably required by the very nature of this class of privileges (*ante*, § 2285). The purpose is to insure subjectively the free and unrestrained secrecy of communication, divested of any apprehension of compulsory disclosure; and if the communication is not intended to be a secret one, the privilege has no application to it. The chief question must be, for the present privilege, merely whether *confidence* or *secrecy* is to be *presumed to have been intended*, in all marital communications, until the contrary appears, or whether the burden of showing the intention of secrecy should be upon the person claiming the privilege. It would seem proper to hold that all marital communications are by implication confidential, and that the contrary intention must be made to

² 1873, *Moore v. Wingate*, 53 Mo. 398, 409; 1878, *Willis v. Gammill*, 67 id. 730, 731.

³ See the opinion of Taylor, C. J., in *Mercer v. State*, Fla., partly quoted *ante*, § 2332.

⁴ The statutes have therefore been collected in one place (*ante*, § 488).

⁵ In the following cases, sundry interpretations are made of the effect of the local statutes: 1897, *People v. Warner*, 117 Cal. 637, 49 Pac. 841 (privilege applies to criminal cases);

1900, *Hyde v. Gannett*, 175 Mass. 177, 55 N. E. 991 (privilege still obtains in offering evidence under St. 1896, c. 445, quoted *ante*, § 1576, admitting certain hearsay evidence); 1897, *Hopkins v. Grimshaw*, 165 U. S. 342, 17 Sup. 401 (the privilege is not abolished by the statute; yet the dictum that the last proviso in § 877 merely qualifies the preceding section, and applies only to spouses who are parties, seems unsound).

appear by the circumstances of any given instance. Looking at the habits of married persons and the infrequency of express injunctions of secrecy, this implication of confidence seems more consonant with the facts of life. Such is practically the general judicial attitude, in spite of apparent differences of phrasing:

1830, *Carr, J.*, in *Robin v. King*, 2 Leigh 140, 144: "Suppose it proved that the declarations were so made [in the family's presence] and no secrecy enjoined; would it follow that the husband wished or expected they should be divulged? Are we to say that every word spoken in the thoughtless, careless confidence of the domestic circle is free for public disclosure unless secrecy be enjoined? Is not the converse of this proposition true? And would it not have a most mischievous effect, would it not seriously break in upon that confidence which is the charm of domestic life, if men should from our decisions have cause to fear that after they were in their graves their reputation might be injured and their children ruined by the declarations they had made in the bosoms of their families? This freedom from restraint or apprehension in the intercourse of one's own fire-side seems to me so necessary to the quiet and repose of society that I am fearful of trenching upon it in the slightest degree."

1833, *Daniel, J.*, in *Hester v. Hester*, 4 Dev. 228, 230: "The sanctity of such [confidential] communications will be protected. Persons connected by marriage tie have, as was said at the bar, the right to think aloud in the presence of each other. But the question remains, what communications are to be deemed confidential? Not those, we think, which are made to the wife to be by her communicated to others; nor those which the husband makes to the wife as to a matter of fact upon which a thing is to operate after his death, when it must be the wish of the husband that the operation should be according to the truth of the fact as established by his declaration. Suppose a husband to disclose to his wife that he has given to one of their children a horse, can she not after his death prove that as against the executor? . . . The same reason equally applies when from the subject of the conversation it is obvious he did not wish it concealed, but on the contrary must have desired to make it known, and through her, if he found no other means of doing so."

1872, *Sargent, J.*, in *Clements v. Marston*, 52 N. H. 31, 38 (allowing the wife to testify to the expenditures made by her for her husband on account of the defendant's intestate and to conversations in her presence between the latter and the husband): "This violation of marital confidence must be something confided by one to the other simply and specially as husband or wife, and not what would be communicated to any other person under the same circumstances. In this case the wife acted as the husband's agent and kept his money and knew how it was expended; but all the communications made to her were made to her as such agent, just as he would have made the same communications to any other agent doing the same business. There was no confidential communication between them as husband and wife, but simply the ordinary communications between principal and agent; and the communications would be no more confidential than those between any other principal and agent. . . . Allowing the wife to testify for or against her husband, in any case where a stranger would have been a competent witness, seems to be the rule now; and, in that view of the case, nothing should be excluded except something that is strictly confidential, and not only so but communicated in strict marital confidence."

1878, *Green, President*, in *White v. Perry*, 14 W. Va. 66, 80: "Where there is not even a seeming confidence, when the act done or declaration made by the husband, so far from being private or confidential, is designedly public at the time, and from its nature must have been intended to be afterwards public, there is no interest of the marriage relation or of society which in the absence of all interest of the husband or wife requires the latter to be precluded from testifying between other parties to such act or declaration not affecting the character or person of her husband."

The circumstances which will negative this implication of secrecy must of course vary with the particular case. Commonly, the presence of a third person within hearing will negative a marital confidence; so, too, the intended transmission of the communication to a third person. But fixed rules are scarcely possible.¹

¹ The following citations include those rulings which construe the statutes expressly making a requirement of confidentiality, as well as those which apply the principle of confidentiality to various situations; the statutes are collected *ante*, § 488: *Alabama*: 1874, *Sumner v. Cooke*, 51 Ala. 521 ("the line of separation . . . is incapable of expression definite enough for a rule"); 1881, *Gordon v. Tweedy*, 71 id. 202, 210 (certain deed-transactions, allowed to be disclosed); 1885, *Owen v. State*, 78 id. 425, 432 ("any transaction or communication between husband and wife which does not on its face appear to have been intended to be public or to become so," is privileged); *Arkansas*: 1874, *Spivey v. Platon*, 29 Ark. 603, 607 (a wife's testimony to sundry transactions by the husband with third parties, admitted); 1884, *Nolen v. Harden*, 43 id. 307, 815 (a wife admitted to testify to the delivery by her husband of a bag of gold to a bailee and the bailee's delivery to her); *Connecticut*: 1888, *Spitz's Appeal*, 56 Conn. 184, 187, 14 L. Ed. 776 (promises made by the husband on borrowing money from the wife, held "no more privileged than a promissory note would have been"); *Illinois*: 1871, *Reeves v. Herr*, 59 Ill. 81, 85 (the privilege is not confined to "subjects which are confidential in their nature"; but includes "any matter which came to her knowledge in consequence of the family relation"; here, an admission by the opponent in conversation with the husband); *Indiana*: 1872, *Mercer v. Patterson*, 41 Ind. 440, 444 (the husband's statements to a third person in the wife's presence, not privileged); 1873, *Griffin v. Smith*, 45 id. 866 (same); 1876, *Denbo v. Wright*, 53 id. 226 (same); 1878, *Floyd v. Miller*, 61 id. 224, 235 (same); 1881, *Smith v. Smith*, 77 id. 80, 82 (the husband's intoxication, not within the privilege); 1882, *Schmied v. Frank*, 86 id. 250, 257 (statements made between them in regard to a purchase by one as agent, not privileged; "the authority given by the wife to the husband to transact her business is not confidential nor intended to be private; . . . it is intended to be known, and would be worthless unless known"); 1883, *Sedgwick v. Tucker*, 90 id. 271, 281 (wife's testimony to agreements with the husband as to property interests, admitted); 1886, *Beitman v. Hopkins*, 109 id. 177, 9 N. E. 720 (privilege not applied to the wife's testimony to the husband's agreement to convey land to her); 1887, *Stanley v. Stanley*, 112 id. 143, 13 N. E. 261 (a wife allowed to testify to the husband's intoxication, not being under the circumstances a confidential fact); 1897, *Reynolds v. State*, 147 id. 3, 46 N. E. 31 (the privilege not applied to statements made in a third person's presence, after a robbery, as to the identity of an assailant); *Iowa*:

1883, *State v. Middleham*, 62 Ia. 150, 17 N. W. 446 (exclamations to others in the defendant's presence, as to the defendant's murder of his stepson, admitted, as not made to the defendant); 1897, *Allbright v. Hannah*, 103 id. 98, 72 N. W. 421 (conversation between the wife and her father, in the husband's presence, admitted); 1901, *Herrich v. Herrich*, 114 id. 643, 87 N. W. 689 (the statute excludes "any" communication); *Wright v. Wright*, — id. —, 87 N. W. 709 (communications "explanatory of transactions," held admissible); *Kansas*: 1893, *Chicago K. & N. R. Co. v. Ellis*, 52 Kan. 41, 47, 33 Pac. 478 (agreement of conveyance between husband and wife, excluded); 1899, *Eagon v. Eagon*, 60 id. 697, 57 Pac. 942 (communications are privileged, even though not confidential); *Kentucky*: 1841, *McGuire v. Maloney*, 1 B. Monr. 224 (the wife's testimony to the execution of an instrument with attesting witnesses, admitted; the transaction being "designedly public at the time, and from its nature must have been intended to be afterwards public"); 1899, *Hilbert v. Com.* — Ky. —, 51 S. W. 817 (dying declaration to the spouse, admissible); 1903, *Arnett v. Com.* — id. —, 71 S. W. 635 (a husband's dying declaration to his wife may be proved by her, as not being confidential, under Civ. C. § 606); *Maine*: 1869, *Walker v. Sanborn*, 46 Me. 470, 473 (the privilege does not cover an agreement between the husband and a third person made in the wife's presence); *Massachusetts*: 1861, *Dexter v. Booth*, 2 All. 559 ("private conversations," held to include the husband's ratification, in private, of a purchase made by wife); 1866, *Bliss v. Franklin*, 18 id. 244 (the privilege applied to communications by the wife as agent, showing good faith in the husband's prosecution of the defendant); 1873, *Jacobs v. Hesler*, 113 Mass. 157, 160 (conversation in the presence of their young children not paying any attention, held "private"); 1874, *Raynes v. Bennett*, 114 id. 424, 427 (similar to *Dexter v. Booth*, *supra*); 1875, *Drew v. Tarbell*, 117 id. 90 (similar); 1876, *Brown v. Wood*, 121 id. 137 (conversation promising to repay money borrowed, excluded); 1881, *Fay v. Guynon*, 131 id. 31, 33 (conversation in the presence of the wife's sister, who heard a part, admitted); 1887, *Com. v. Jardine*, 143 id. 567, 10 N. E. 250 (exclamations of pain made in the wife's presence, admitted); 1887, *Com. v. Hayes*, 145 id. 289, 293, 14 N. E. 151 (a wife's instructions to the husband as agent, excluded); 1890, *Com. v. Cleary*, 152 id. 491, 25 N. E. 834 (a husband's prohibition to the wife to sell liquors, excluded); 1891, *Lyon v. Pronty*, 154 id. 489, 28 N. E. 908 (the privilege not applied to the husband's communication to his wife in the presence of a daughter fourteen years old,

In many jurisdictions this fundamental element of confidence is not expressly named in the statutory enactment; it privileges "any communica-

who was not shown to have heard it); 1900, *Fuller v. Fuller*, 177 id. 184, 58 N. E. 588 (the privilege applied to an ordinary private conversation); *Michigan*: 1874, *Herrick v. Odeil*, 29 Mich. 47, 49 (the privilege does not cover admissions by the husband to a third person, in the wife's presence); 1884, *Hunt v. Eaton*, 55 id. 362, 366, 21 N. W. 429 (the privilege does not cover contracts between them as to separate property, when the parties are competent in that class of litigation); 1896, *Hagerman v. Wigent*, 108 id. 192, 65 N. W. 756 (delivery of a mortgage by a wife to her husband, with instructions to deliver it to the plaintiff after her death, admitted, because involving "an expectation on her part that the communication would be disclosed"); 1897, *McKenzie v. Lautenschlager*, 113 id. 171, 71 N. W. 489 (alienation of the wife's affections; testimony by the husband excluded); 1903, *Chaddock v. Chaddock*, — id. —, 95 N. W. 972 (deed transaction; no point decided); *Minnesota*: 1886, *Leppa v. Tribune Co.*, 35 Minn. 310, 29 N. W. 127 ("communication." In the statute, include "all conversations between husband and wife, though on subjects not confidential in their nature"); 1895, *Newstrom v. R. Co.*, 61 id. 78, 63 N. W. 253 (same; "except perhaps those which from their very nature were evidently intended to be communicated to others"); *Mississippi*: 1870, *Whitfield v. Whitfield*, 44 Miss. 254, 262 (a widow allowed to testify to her husband's management of slaves, as "facts not in their nature confidential"); 1895, *Saffold v. Horne*, 72 id. 470, 18 So. 433 (conversations between the husband and the deceased opponent, admitted); *Missouri*: 1874, *Darrier v. Darrier*, 58 Mo. 222, 234 (letter from a husband to the wife on a matter of business unspecified, held not a "confidential communication"); 1899, *Long v. Martin*, 152 id. 668, 54 S. W. 473 (communications in a third person's presence, admitted); *New Hampshire*: 1843, *Pike v. Hayes*, 14 N. H. 19, 22 ("facts which came to her knowledge from other sources, and not by means of her situation as a wife," admissible); 1859, *Aiken v. Gale*, 37 id. 494, 500 (knowledge acquired "through confidential communications from her husband," inadmissible); 1872, *Clements v. Marston*, 52 id. 31, 38 (quoted *supra*); *New Jersey*: 1876, *Wood v. Chetwood*, 27 N. J. L. 311 (husband and wife as trustees; their communications respecting the trust property, held not confidential; a trustee "can have no secrets or confidences respecting the trust property"); *New York*: 1838, *Ratcliff v. Wales*, 1 Hill 63 (criminal conversation; like the next case); 1861, *Chamberlain v. People*, 23 N. Y. 85, 89 (divorce; the wife's testimony to her intercourse with a third person, not privileged); 1888, *Parkhurst v. Berdell*, 110 id. 386, 393, 18 N. E. 123 ("not all communications made between husband and wife when alone" are included; but only such as are "expressly made confidential" or are "of a confidential nature or induced by the marital relation"); *North Carolina*: 1833, *Hester v. Hester*, 4 Dev. 228 (the husband's remarks of dissatisfaction with his will and of an intention to call in neighbors to help him revise it, held not confidential; quoted *supra*); 1851, *Gaskill v. King*, 12 Ired. 211, 215 (a wife's testimony to the husband's handing her a deed and telling her to record it for A. when she pleased, admitted); 1893, *Toole v. Toole*, 112 N. C. 152, 156, 16 S. E. 912 (communication in a third person's presence, admitted); 1895, *State v. Brittain*, 117 id. 783, 23 S. E. 433 (confession of incest by a wife to a husband, excluded); *Ohio*: 1849, *Cook v. Grange*, 18 Oh. 526, 531 (the privilege covers all matters, whether confidential or not; here held to cover a contract made between the husband and a third person); 1855, *Stober v. McCarter*, 4 Oh. St. 513, 523 (preceding case limited to a divorcee's testimony; the survivor may testify to non-confidential facts, other than conversations; the rule for conversations left undecided); 1877, *Duvai v. Davey*, 32 id. 604, 609 (the statute does not exclude the husband's testimony to defamatory words uttered to the wife in his presence); 1878, *Bean v. Green*, 33 id. 444, 447 (the wife's testimony in action for loss of support by furnishing liquor to the husband, admitted); 1881, *McCague v. Miller*, 36 id. 595 (a spouse may testify to the "known presence, hearing, or knowledge of such third person"); 1881, *Stevenson v. Morris*, 37 id. 11, 19 (a wife's testimony to the husband's directions, when alone with her, as to a trespass, excluded); 1883, *Sessions v. Trevitt*, 39 id. 259, 267 (testimony admissible, where a third person was present, even though he has died); *Pennsylvania*: 1846, *Cornell v. Vanartsdalen*, 4 Pa. St. 364, 374 ("the rule is the same, in its spirit and extent, as that which excludes confidential communications made by a client to an attorney"; here admitting the wife's testimony to the husband's transactions with a tenant); 1867, *Hitner's Appeal*, 54 id. 110, 111, 117 (reconciliation being a fact sufficient to avoid a deed of separation, a widow was not allowed to testify to cohabitation with the deceased husband after separation; *Thompson and Agnew, JJ., diss.*); 1868, *Peiffer v. Lytle*, 58 id. 386, 392 (communications about an advancement, admitted); 1881, *Rohb's Appeal*, 98 id. 501, 503 ("ordinary business transactions and conversations in which others have participated," not included); 1887, *Brock v. Brock*, 116 id. 109, 113, 9 Atl. 486 (certain business communications, excluded); 1887, *Adams v. Bleakley*, 117 id. 283, 292, 10 Atl. 884 (certain transactions, admitted); 1895, *Seitz v. Seitz*, 170 id. 71, 32 Atl. 578 (an avowal by the husband to the wife of his marital misconduct and of his intention to persist in it, admitted); 1898, *Dnmback v. Bishop*, 183 id. 602, 39 Atl. 38 (transactions between the wife, husband, and a third person, received); *Rhode Island*: 1879, *Campbell v. Chace*, 12 R. I. 333 (privilege held applicable to communications

tion." Some Courts, however, have construed this phrase in the spirit of the correct principle, and have implied a limitation to confidential communications. Others have literally applied the words of the statute, which is thus allowed to create an intolerable anomaly in the law of privileged communications. No justification for such an extension of the privilege has ever been attempted, and it must be supposed that this broad statutory phrasing originated in inadvertence. It is proper enough to maintain (as already noticed) that all marital communications should be presumed to be confidential until the contrary appears; but if the contrary appears, there is no reason for recognizing the privilege.

made in the presence of a third person); *South Carolina*: 1868, *Moseley v. Eakin*, 15 Rich. 324, 339 (the former statute of 1866 excluding "communications," held to "preserve the principles of the common law" and to mean "confidential communications"); *Tennessee*: 1851, *Brewer v. Ferguson*, 11 Humph. 565, 566 (the widow of the testator not admitted for contestants of his will to prove his "conduct and conversation" evidencing insanity; "the law will presume the trust and confidence from the relation"); 1858, *Kimbrough v. Mitchell*, 1 Head 539 (a wife not admitted to prove a husband's ill-usage leading to his quarrel with a third person); 1860, *Queener v. Morrow*, 1 Coldw. 123, 128 (a wife's statements to her husband in a third person's presence, admissible); 1866, *Allison v. Barrow*, 3 id. 414, 416 (same); 1869, *Geruan v. German*, 7 id. 180, 181 (unspecified "statements and conversations," excluded); 1871, *State v. McAuley*, 4 Heisk. 424, 432 (transactions between the husband and a third party, held not provable by the wife who had been present; preceding cases not cited); 1878, *Patton v. Wilson*, 2 Lea 101, 112 (the wife's testimony that she saw documents and money in the husband's possession, excluded); 1879, *Orr v. Cox*, 3 id. 617, 621 (privilege confined to "facts coming to their knowledge through the mutual relation"); after the trial of this case the statute of 1879, Code 1896, § 5596, was enacted; 1882, *Washington v. Bedford*, 10 id. 243, 246 (the wife's testimony to the husband's giving her money, etc., excluded); 1895, *Phoenix Ins. Co. v. Shoemaker*, 95 Tenn. 72, 81 S. W. 270 ("all secret confidential disclosures and communications between the husband and wife, the publication of which would betray conjugal confidence and trust and tend to produce discord in the family are prohibited" from disclosure, and "all transactions and conversations had between the husband and wife in relation to their own affairs, not in the presence of some third person," are also prohibited; yet "matters and conversations that occur between husband and wife and third persons or in the presence of third persons, and are not intended to be secret or of a confidential character," are admissible; and, further than this, the facts of each case must largely control; here excluding conversations and payments alleged to concern a resulting trust, and the delivery of a deed by husband to wife); 1898, *Young v. Hurst*, — id. —, 48 S. W. 355 (the rule in *Ins. Co. v. Shoemaker* applied to exclude the wife's testimony as to the husband's gift to her of money and a chattel, but admitting it as to her husband's statements to third persons concerning the title); *Texas*: 1891, *Mitchell v. Mitchell*, 80 Tex. 101, 216, 15 S. W. 705 (the meaning of "confidential" must be determined "by the subject-matter of the communication, or by the circumstances under which it is made, or by both"; here, certain letters were excluded); *United States*: 1839, *Stein v. Bowman*, 15 Pet. 209, 221 (a husband's admissions to the wife that he had committed perjury, excluded); *Utah*: 1903, *Van Alstine's Estate*, 26 Utah 193, 72 Pac. 942 (the communication must be confidential); *Virginia*: 1830, *Robin v. Kiug*, 2 Leigh 140 (a widow not admitted to prove the husband's disclaimers of title, "made in the presence of the family"; quoted *supra*); 1873, *Murphy v. Com.*, 23 Gratt. 960, 965 (assault; the injured person's admission to his wife that the defendant struck in defence only, excluded, though the two were then living apart); *Vermont*: 1835, *Williams v. Baldwin*, 7 Vt. 503 (a husband's possession of a letter, and its contents, provable by the wife); 1855, *Smith v. Proctor*, 27 id. 304, 306 (services rendered by a third person to the husband; the wife admitted); 1895, *Wheeler v. Campbell*, 68 id. 98, 34 Atl. 35 (a wife may testify to conversations between the husband and a third person); *Washington*: 1901, *Sackman v. Thomas*, 24 Wash. 660, 64 Pac. 819, *semble* (the statute does not apply to conversations on business matters, but only to confidential communications); *West Virginia*: 1878, *White v. Perry*, 14 W. Va. 66, 80 (the wife admitted to prove certain transactions of sale by the husband; quoted *supra*); *Wisconsin*: 1870, *Cook v. Henry*, 25 Wis. 569, 571 (authority to the wife to sell household goods, not a confidential communication); 1890, *Bigelow v. Sickles*, 75 id. 427, 429, 44 N. W. 761 (the husband's testimony to the wife's conduct with an adulterer, admitted); 1890, *Smith v. Merrill*, *ib.* 461, 462, 44 N. W. 759 (note written by a wife to an adulterer in the husband's presence, but kept by her; his testimony to it, excluded); 1897, *Lanctot v. State*, 98 id. 136, 138, 73 N. W. 575 (letters from a husband to the wife, revealing his identity, excluded).

§ 2337. **Communications, not Acts.** The privilege has for its object the security from apprehension of disclosure, — a security in consequence of which confidences will be freely given and not withheld. The protection therefore extends only to communications, *i. e.* utterances, not acts, — the reasoning being analogous to that which establishes a similar limitation for communications between attorney and client (*ante*, § 2306). Nevertheless, the statute in some jurisdictions extends the privilege to “transactions,” or to knowledge of any fact acquired in the marital relation; and there is at first sight some plausibility in this extension. The confidence, it may be argued, which the husband or wife desires, and the freedom from apprehension which the privilege is designed to secure, must be supposed to be equally as desirable for conduct as for utterances. For example, a husband intending a secret journey must be equally desirous to prevent the disclosure of his preparations of accoutrement as of his communications of plan. To be obliged, under pain of disclosure by legal process, to remain dumb as to his destination is no more incongruous with marital confidence than to be obliged to conceal his valise and his railroad-ticket and his travelling garb from the wife’s inspection. Must not the confidence be as desirable for the latter as for the former? And is not every act of domestic privacy, equally with every utterance, done in reliance upon a supposed confidence in the maintenance of that privacy? In short, in the preposterously extreme logic of one Court, must not the law “assume that no husband will commit a crime in the presence of his wife except in the confidence induced by the marital relation?”¹ The difficulty with this argument is that it proves too much. It requires quite as effectually that the same privilege be extended to the testimony of a son or a brother or a parent or a servant. It amounts merely to this, that every man would of course much prefer that no member of his family should, without his consent, be allowed to disclose the private doings of the household. This is natural enough; but it is not at all what the principle of privileged communications has ever assumed as its goal (*ante*, § 2285). The privilege concerns solely the relation of husband and wife; it cares nothing for the family as such, — nothing for parent and child, nothing for brother and sister, nothing for master and servant. It is the peculiar interest of the marital relation, and of that alone, which requires unrestricted confidence; and therefore that relation alone is protected and those confidences alone which spring from that relation are protected. Domestic conduct, therefore, may doubtless be private and confidential, but the confidence is towards the family at large, and not towards the wife in particular. It is only so far as there has been a special confiding of it to the wife (or husband) that it comes within the privilege.

It follows, therefore, on the one hand, that the privilege does not apply to domestic conduct as such. On the other hand, it is equally true that any particular act or conduct may in fact become the subject of a special con-

¹ Ross, C. J., in *French v. Ware*, 65 Vt. 338, 347, 26 Atl. 1096.

fidence in the wife alone, *i. e.* may become a communication to her. For example, the husband, bringing home a package of valuables, and calling his wife's attention, "Note that I place this in the fourth desk-drawer," in effect communicates to her not only the words but also the act of placing the package. While his domestic acts are ordinarily not to be treated as communications, nevertheless it is always conceivable that they may by special circumstances be made part of a communication. To formulate a precise test would perhaps be impracticable. It is clear, however, that the mere doing of an act by the husband in the wife's presence is not a communication of it by him; for it is done for the sake of the doing, not for the sake of the disclosure. There must be something in the way of an invitation of the wife's presence or attention with the object of bringing the act directly to her knowledge. Except in such cases, the privilege cannot cover anything but an utterance of words, spoken or written. One of the many aspects of this principle is illustrated in the following passage:

1882, *James, J., in U. S. v. Guiteau*, 12 D. C. 498, 547: "The exhibition of sanity or insanity is not a communication at all, in the sense of the rule which protects the privacy and confidence of the marriage relation, any more than the height or color or blindness or the loss of an arm of one of the parties is a communication. The rule which is supposed to have been violated was established in order that the conduct, the voluntary conduct, of married life might rest secure upon a basis of peace and trust, and relates to matters which the parties may elect to disclose or not disclose. It was provided in order that matters should not come to the light which would not do so at all without a disturbance and disregard of the bond of peace and confidence between the married pair. Therefore it has not been applied to any matter which the husband for example has elected to make public, by doing or saying it in presence of third persons along with his wife; and it cannot be applied to that which, whether he will or no, he inevitably exhibits to the world as well as to his wife. Some diseases a husband may conceal, and he may choose whether to reveal them or not. . . . But sanity or insanity are conditions which are not of choice; and when the disease of insanity exists, the exhibition of it is neither a matter of voluntary confidence nor capable of being one of the secrets of the married relation."

Apart from the statutes above mentioned, whose wording requires a broader scope, the privilege is commonly accepted as applying to utterances only.²

² Compare also some of the rulings cited *ante*, § 2236: *California*: 1898, *Poulson v. Stanley*, 122 Cal. 656, 55 Pac. 605 (delivery of a deed, not a "communication"); *District of Columbia*: 1882, *U. S. v. Guiteau*, 12 D. C. 498, 547 ("whether in your association with him you ever saw anything that would indicate that he was a man of unsound mind," allowed; quoted *supra*); *Georgia*: 1869, *Williams v. Phillips*, 39 id. 597, 605 (similar to the next case); 1869, *Jackson v. Jackson*, 40 Ga. 150, 153 (privilege covers "any fact which came to her knowledge by reason of the confidential relation of husband and wife"); 1869, *McIntyre v. Meldrim*, ib. 490, 491 (similar); 1872, *Davis v. Weaver*, 46 id. 626, 629 (similar); 1878, *Goodrum v. State*, 60 id. 509, 511 (a husband not allowed to testify that a wife did not complain to him of an assault; "the wife ought to feel . . . as secure that her silence will not be disclosed, to her

detriment or disadvantage, as that what she says will not be repeated"); 1879, *Stanford v. Murphy*, 63 id. 411, 416 (testimony by the wife to a note deposited with her by the husband, excluded; the privilege covers "facts ascertained by reason of such confidential intercourse"); *Illinois*: 1896, *Griffith v. Griffith*, 162 Ill. 368, 44 N. E. 820 (acts of self-abuse by the husband, observed by the wife, held privileged); *Indiana*: 1882, *Perry v. Randall*, 83 Ind. 143 (action for money lost by the plaintiff in the defendant's house and found and kept by the defendant; the defendant's wife not admissible to testify to the defendant's conduct in dealing with the money in her presence); 1893, *Polson v. State*, 137 id. 519, 524, 35 N. E. 907 (the fact of imparting a loathsome disease, not privileged); 1897, *Beyerline v. State*, 147 id. 125, 45 N. E. 772 (that the wife, testifying, had been taken by the neck by the husband and

§ 2338. **Exceptions and Distinctions.** (1) Under a few statutes, by express words or by construction, the communications may exceptionally be disclosed, commonly in cases involving the commission of an injury by one spouse upon the other.¹

(2) At common law, where exceptions were recognized to the rule forbidding one spouse to testify against the other, *i. e.* in the case of certain injuries done by one to the other (*ante*, § 2239), it would seem that the present rule suffered also an exception, and properly.

(3) At common law, before any statutory recognition of the present privilege had taken place, the wife's correspondence with the husband was always admitted in actions for *criminal conversation* (*ante*, § 1730). So far as it was admitted for the plaintiff, the husband's offer of it might be treated as a waiver; but so far as admitted for the defendant, it must have implied the recognition of an exception, and properly.²

compelled to forge a signature, admitted, partly because not a communication, partly because not confidential, partly because a crime); *Indian Territory*: 1899, *German-American Ins. Co. v. Paul*, 2 Ind. T. 625, 53 S. W. 442 (that his wife had given him property, admitted); *Iowa*: 1861, *Romans v. Hay*, 12 Ia. 270 (the privilege does not cover the fact of desertion); 1882, *Hanks v. Van Garder*, 59 Id. 179, 182, 13 N. W. 103 (the privilege does not cover a husband's transfer of a claim to the wife); *Kansas*: 1900, *State Bank v. Hutchinson*, 62 Kan. 9, 61 Pac. 443 (issue whether a wife's mortgage was executed in fear of threats to prosecute her husband; her testimony that she had heard that he was threatened, admissible, though the source of her hearing was a communication from the husband); *Kentucky*: 1871, *English v. Cropper*, 8 Bush 292 (the privilege does not cover facts known "from other means of information than such as result from the marriage relation"); 1877, *Elawick v. Com.*, 13 Id. 155, 156 (same); 1890, *Com. v. Sapp*, 90 Ky. 580, 585, 14 S. W. 834 (same); a wife admitted to testify to the husband's attempt to poison her); *Massachusetts*: 1868, *Baldwin v. Parker*, 99 Mass. 79, 83 (the fact of a communication, not merely its tenor, is privileged); *Missouri*: 1880, *Holman v. Bachus*, 73 Mo. 49, 51 (the privilege covers an act of payment which might be explained by the conversation accompanying); 1893, *McFadin v. Catron*, 120 Id. 252, 274, 25 S. W. 506 (preceding case approved); 1895, *Harlan v. Moore*, 132 Id. 483, 492, 34 S. W. 70 (the privilege does not cover mere "acts" of a spouse); 1897, *Shanklin v. McCracken*, 140 Id. 348, 41 S. W. 898 (testimony of the wife, that M. handed her husband a package, which he opened and handed back to M., and that she saw that it contained deeds, admitted); *New Hampshire*: 1899, *Noyes v. Marston*, 70 N. H. 7, 47 Atl. 592 (in Pub. St. § 20, the restriction of "violation of marital confidence" applies to "statement, etc.," as well as to "any matters," in spite of the lack of a comma after "matter"); *Ohio*: 1849, *Cook v. Grange*, 18 Oh. 526, 531 (the privilege covers "all transactions which occurred during mar-

riage"); 1855, *Stober v. McCarter*, 4 Oh. St. 513, 523 (preceding case limited to a divorcee's testimony; the survivor's testimony may include facts, other than conversations, occurring during coverture which do not violate deceased's confidence or injure his reputation); 1884, *Holtz v. Dick*, 42 Id. 23, 26 (husband allowed to testify to wife's handwriting); *Utah*: 1903, *Van Alstine's Estate*, 26 Utah 193, 72 Pac. 942 (condition of the husband as to intoxication in his wife's presence, held not a communication); *Vermont*: 1893, *French v. Ware*, 65 Vt. 338, 344, 26 Atl. 1096 (battery; complaints by the injured husband as to bodily pains, the fact of his inability to labor, and a perusal of accounts with others; the first held privileged, the others not; confidential are "matters of confidence" and "transactions affecting the character," including "direct testimony to the act of a crime"; opinion unsound); *Wisconsin*: 1897, *Lanetot v. State*, 98 Wis. 136, 73 N. W. 575 (admiralty; to prove the defendant's name and identity, letters to his wife bearing the name J. L., and signed as husband, were excluded).

¹ *Ind.*: 1883, *Doolittle v. State*, 93 Ind. 272 (criminal cases "where the wife is the injured party"; based on a comparison of Rev. St. § 1889, par. 2, "the party injured by the offence committed," with the general provision making the rules in criminal cases the same as in civil cases); 1895, *Jordan v. State*, 142 Id. 422, 424, 41 N. E. 817 (same); *Mo.*: 1889, *Henry v. Sneed*, 99 Mo. 407, 12 S. W. 663 ("in the present case, S. attempted to take advantage of a legal technicality as to conversations between husband and wife, to prevent the full extent of his fraud from being unearthed," and an exception to the privilege was recognized for fraud); 1896, *Moeckel v. Heim*, 134 Id. 576, 36 S. W. 226 (fraud; the husband, as alleged, having persuaded his wife to sign a note, the conversations between them were testified to); 1902, *Rice v. Waddill*, 168 Id. 99, 67 S. W. 605 (a husband's letters to his wife, showing a fraudulent scheme to deprive her of property, admitted against his grantees).

² 1896, *Horner v. Yance*, 93 Wis. 252, 67

(4) The wife's statements *in her husband's presence* are receivable against him as his admissions implied by silent assent (*ante*, § 2332); yet if the interview was private, the present privilege seems to forbid this; for, even regarding the statements as adopted and made by him, they are still private and confidential.²

3. Persons Prohibited and Entitled.

§ 2339. Third Persons Overhearing; Documents obtained by Third Persons.

(1) A *third person overhearing* a confidential communication may testify to it,¹ for the same reason recognized in the privilege for a client's communications with his attorney (*ante*, § 2326).

(2) For *documents of communication* coming into the *possession of a third person*, a distinction should obtain, analogous to that already indicated for a client's communications (*ante*, §§ 2325, 2326); *i. e.* if they were obtained from the addressee by voluntary delivery, they should still be privileged (for otherwise the privilege could by collusion be practically nullified for written communications); but if they were obtained surreptitiously or otherwise without the addressee's consent, the privilege should cease.²

§ 2340. *Who may Claim the Privilege; Waiver.* (1) The privilege is intended to secure freedom from apprehension in the mind of the one desiring to communicate (*ante*, § 2332); it thus belongs to the *communicating one*, and the other one — the addressee of the communication — is therefore not

N. W. 720 (but it is difficult to reconcile this with the local statute, § 4072).

¹ 1871, *R. v. Hilditch*, 12 Cox Cr. 181, Cox, J. ("what a wife says in the presence of her husband is admissible, and what she writes to him, if received and recognized by him, is equivalent to a statement made verbally by her in his presence"; a letter found on his person, here doubtfully held admissible).

² 1834, *R. v. Simons*, 6 C. & P. 540; 1889, *Gannon v. State*, 127 Ill. 507, 518, 21 N. E. 525; 1900, *State Bank v. Hutchinson*, 62 Kan. 9, 61 Pac. 448; 1872, *Com. v. Griffin*, 110 Mass. 181; 1862, *State v. Center*, 35 Vt. 378, 382, 386 (proved by a police-officer who was in the next room).

³ The rulings are not harmonious; compare the rulings on confession obtained by trick (*ante*, § 841): 1872, *R. v. Pameuter*, 12 Cox Cr. 177 (letter to a wife, given to a constable to post, but retained by him, excluded); 1902, *Ward v. State*, 70 Ark. 204, 66 S. W. 928 (a defendant, in jail, gave to his wife a letter, partly to her and partly to N., and the letter was taken from her; held, that the part to her was inadmissible, and, by a majority, that the part to N. was admissible); 1880, *State v. Hoyt*, 47 Conn. 540 (letters of the defendant to his wife, admitted from one who had obtained possession of them); 1898, *Mercer v. State*, 40 Fla. 216, 24 So. 154 (a husband's letter to his wife, obtained somehow by the defendant; excluded, regardless of the persons by whom it was possessed); 1893, *Wilkerson v. State*, 91 Ga. 729, 738, 17 S. E.

990 (a letter from a husband to the wife, given by her to her paramour, excluded); 1878, *State v. Buffington*, 20 Kan. 599, 618 (a letter from the defendant to his wife, handed by her to the prosecuting witness, admitted; "It is privileged only while it remains in their custody and control, or while it remains with the custody and control of their agents or representatives"); 1893, *Scott v. Com.*, 94 Ky. 511, 23 S. W. 219 (a letter by a husband to the wife, obtained from her by a third person, whether by force or otherwise, privileged); 1892, *State v. Ulrich*, 110 Mo. 350, 364, 19 S. W. 686 (a husband's letters to the wife produced from her custody, excluded); 1877, *Geiger v. State*, 4 Nebr. 545, 549 (a letter from a husband to the wife, found by a third person in the husband's house, admitted; "the Court will not take notice how they are obtained"); 1902, *People v. Truck*, 170 N. Y. 203, 63 N. E. 281 (the defendant's wife permitted to prove her receipt from him in jail of two letters, and her mailing of them, the wife not being aware of the contents or of the addresses); 1887, *Bowman v. Patrick*, 32 Fed. 368 (letters from a husband to a wife, found among his papers by the husband's administrator, and by him delivered to the party, excluded); 1889, *Selden v. State*, 74 Wis. 271, 274, 42 N. W. 218 (letters by a husband to a wife, deposited by her with her attorney for a divorce, held not producible by the latter in a prosecution of the husband for perjury; addresses and postmarks on the envelopes, equally excluded).

entitled to object;¹ unless, as already noticed (*ante*, §§ 2338, par. 4), the latter's silence is desired to be treated as an assent and an adoption of the statement, which thus makes it doubly a communication and doubly privileged.

(2) The spouse possessing the privilege may of course waive it. The waiver may be found in some extrajudicial disclosure,² or in some act of testimony which in fairness places the person in a position not to object consistently to further disclosure,³ — for, as already noted (*ante*, § 2327), the principle of waiver cannot depend solely upon the interpretation of conduct implying willingness to waive.

Nevertheless, in a few Courts the doctrine of waiver appears to be ignored entirely.⁴ This confusion of a disqualification with a privilege has been already adverted to (*ante*, § 2334); it is entirely unjustifiable (except as required by the express words of some perversely-phrased statute), and is so radical an error of principle that no further argument would cure such a misapprehension.

4. Cessation of the Privilege.

§ 2341. **Death; Divorce; Separation; Invalid Marriage.** The privilege is intended to secure such a guarantee against apprehension of disclosure as will induce absolute freedom of communication; and this can only be attained by continuing the protection in spite of the termination of the marital relation:

1859, *Stephens, J.*, in *Lingo v. State*, 29 Ga. 470, 483: "Communications between husband and wife are protected forever. This is necessary to the preservation of that perfect confidence and trust which should characterize and bless the relation of man and wife. Each must feel that the other is a safe and sacred depository of all secrets; and the protection which the law holds over the dead is the very source of greatest security to all the living."

(1) Hence, it has always been conceded that the *death* of the person communicating does not terminate the privilege.¹ In this respect, the present

¹ 1900, *Derham v. Derham*, 125 Mich. 109, 83 N. W. 1005; 1888, *Stickney v. Stickney*, 131 U. S. 227, 237, 9 Sup. 677, *semble* (cited *post*, § 2341). *Contra* (that the privilege belongs to both): 1890, *People v. Mullings*, 83 Cal. 138, 143, 23 Pso. 229; 1891, *People v. Wood*, 126 N. Y. 249, 271, 27 N. E. 362, *semble*. *Undecided*: 1882, *Perry v. Randall*, 83 Ind. 143, 146, *semble*.

² 1894, *People v. Hayes*, 140 N. Y. 484, 495, 35 N. E. 951 (letters from a wife to a husband, given by him to his mistress and by her to the district attorney, not privileged for the husband).

³ The statutes cited *ante*, § 488, sometimes provide for this: 1898, *Driver v. Driver*, — Ind. —, 52 N. E. 401 (divorce; husband's use of his own communications to the wife, treated as a waiver of privilege as to his letters on the same subjects); 1897, *Kelley v. Andrews*, 102 Ia. 119, 71 N. W. 251 (presence of the wife in Court at

a former trial when the husband disclosed the communications in question, not a waiver of the privilege for the second trial); 1898, *Nichols v. Nichols*, 147 Mo. 387, 48 S. W. 947 (examination of wife by opponent as to communications waives the privilege as to such communications); 1899, *Rose v. Mitchell*, 21 R. I. 270, 43 Atl. 67 (alienation of wife's affections; whether plaintiff's testimony to wife's language to him is a waiver, allowing her to testify to similar matters, *undecided*).

The following ruling is *unsound*; compare § 2276, *ante*: 1891, *Connolly v. Murrell*, 14 Ont. Pr. 187 (the husband may at any time claim the privilege, even after making partial disclosure).

⁴ 1877, *Chapman v. Holding*, 60 Ala. 522, 533, *semble*; 1900, *Robinson v. Robinson*, 22 R. I. 121, 46 Atl. 455. *Undecided*: 1882, *Perry v. Randall*, 83 Ind. 143, 146, *semble*.

⁵ 1824, *Doker v. Hasler*, Ry. & Moo. 198

privilege differs not only from the marital disqualification (*ante*, § 610) but also from the marital privilege against adverse testimony (*ante*, § 2237), so that, even where those two have been terminated by death or have been abolished by statute, the present privilege remains for enforcement. (2) In the same way, the privilege does not terminate with *divorce* or *separation*.² (3) But the application of the privilege to a communication made between husband and wife *living in separation*,³ or between persons living in *unlawful cohabitation*,⁴ cannot be conceded; for here the policy of the privilege does not apply (*ante*, § 2332), since the relation is not one in which the law need seek to foster confidence, and no privilege ever came into existence.

(a widow not admitted to prove a conversation between herself and the testator); 1895, *Emmons v. Barton*, 109 Cal. 662, 669, 42 Pac. 803; 1879, *Brooks v. Francis*, 10 D. C. 109; 1852, *Farmers' Bank v. Cole*, 5 Harringt. 418; 1859, *Lingo v. State*, 29 Ga. 470, 483; 1869, *Jackson v. Jackson*, 40 Id. 150, 153; 1895, *Goals v. Goals*, 157 Ill. 33, 41, 41 N. E. 756; 1895, *Gillespie v. Gillespie*, 159 Id. 84, 90, 42 N. E. 80; 1898, *Geer v. Goudy*, 174 Id. 514, 51 N. E. 623; 1872, *Mercer v. Patterson*, 41 Ind. 440, 444; 1873, *Griffin v. Smith*, 45 Id. 866; 1900, *Shuman v. Supreme Lodge*, 110 Ia. 480, 81 N. W. 717 (statute applied); 1901, *Hertrich v. Hertrich*, 114 Id. 643, 57 N. W. 639; 1841, *McQuire v. Maloney*, 1 B. Mour. 324; 1858, *Short v. Tinsley*, 1 Metc. Ky. 397, 401; 1890, *Com. v. Sapp*, 90 Ky. 580, 584, 14 S. W. 834; 1901, *Murphy v. Murphy*, — Ky. —, 65 S. W. 165 (privilege held not applicable to a widow's testimony to the testator's declarations in a will contest; *Du Relle, J., diss.*); 1902, *Manhattan L. I. Co. v. Beard*, 112 Id. 455, 66 S. W. 85 (privilege held applicable to a widow's testimony in a suit on the husband's insurance policy); 1903, *New York Life Ins. Co. v. Johnson*, — Id. —, 72 S. W. 762 (widow's testimony in favor of the deceased's estate, excluded); 1859, *Walker v. Sanborn*, 46 Me. 470, 472; 1861, *Dexter v. Booth*, 2 Ali. 559; 1886, *Maynard v. Vinton*, 59 Mich. 139, 152, 26 N. W. 401; 1895, *Newstrom v. R. Co.* 61 Minn. 78, 63 N. W. 253; 1895, *Buckingham v. Roar*, 45 Nabr. 244, 63 N. W. 398; 1842, *Babcock v. Booth*, 2 Hill N. Y. 181, 187; 1842, *Osterhout v. Shoemaker*, 3 Id. 518, 519; 1872, *Sonthwick v. Southwick*, 49 N. Y. 510; 1846, *Cornell v. Vanartadalen*, 4 Pa. St. 864, 374; 1871, *State v. McAuley*, 4 Heisk. 424, 432.

In some of the above cases the testimony was excluded even when it favored the deceased, partly because of the erroneous view already noticed (*ante*, § 2334, par. 1), partly because of a too strict view of the principle of waiver

(*ante*, §§ 2329, 2340); a correct solution is seen in the following cases: 1888, *Stickney v. Stickney*, 181 U. S. 227, 237, 9 Sup. 677 (a widow held to be "at liberty, though not compellable, to state the directions given by her to her husband respecting the investment of her money"); 1897, *Smith v. Cook*, 10 D. C. App. 488, 492; *Posey v. Hanson*, ib. 497, 509 (the widow allowed to disclose communications with the deceased husband in a suit against her involving the title to property).

² 1885, *Owen v. State*, 78 Ala. 425, 428; 1888, *Loug v. State*, 36 Id. 36, 41, 5 So. 443; 1884, *Nolan v. Harden*, 43 Ark. 807, 815; 1890, *People v. Mullings*, 38 Cal. 138, 143, 23 Pac. 229; 1896, *Griffith v. Griffith*, 162 Ill. 363, 44 N. E. 820 (divorced wife not allowed to testify for the plaintiff in an action by the second wife for divorce); 1898, *Geer v. Goudy*, 174 Id. 514, 51 N. E. 623; 1862, *Perry v. Randall*, 33 Ind. 143; 1901, *Evans' Estate*, 114 Ia. 240, 86 N. W. 283; 1872, *Anderson v. Anderson*, 9 Kan. 112, 115; 1890, *Com. v. Sapp*, 90 Ky. 580, 584, 14 S. W. 834; 1888, *Hitchcock v. Moore*, 70 Mich. 112, 116, 37 N. W. 914; 1886, *Leppia v. Tribune Co.*, 85 Minn. 310, 29 N. W. 127; 1900, *State v. Kodat*, 158 Mo. 125, 59 S. W. 78; *Ratcliff v. Wales*, 1 Hill N. Y. 63; 1861, *Chamberlain v. People*, 23 N. Y. 85, 89; 1849, *Cook v. Grange*, 18 Oh. 526, 529; 1887, *Brock v. Brock*, 116 Pa. 109, 113, 9 Atl. 486; 1900, *Robinson v. Robinson*, 22 R. I. 121, 46 Atl. 455; 1858, *Kimbrough v. Mitchell*, 1 Head 539, 540; 1870, *Cook v. Henry*, 25 Wis. 569, 571.

³ *Contra*: 1884, *Holtz v. Dick*, 42 Oh. St. 23, 26 (a wife's letters to a husband, while living separate from him, admitted on common-law principles; "that rule has not been limited by the present legislation, but enlarged").

⁴ 1831, *Wells v. Fisher*, 1 Moo. & Rob. 99 (here the man was a second husband, but the first husband, who had been supposed dead, had returned from foreign parts).

TOPIC B (continued): PRIVILEGED COMMUNICATIONS.

SUB-TOPIC IV: COMMUNICATIONS BY AND TO JURORS.

CHAPTER LXXXIII.

§ 2345. General Principles involved.

A. PETIT JURY.

1. Privileged Communications Rule.

§ 2346. Scope of the Principle.

2. Parol Evidence Rule.

§ 2348. General Principle.

§ 2349. (a) Motives, Beliefs, Misunderstandings, or Intentions of Jurors, as immaterial.

§ 2350. Same: Examining the Jury before Discharge, to ascertain the Grounds of Verdict.

§ 2351. (b) Issues of the Trial, as material; Judge's Instructions, as considered by the Jury.

§ 2352. (c) Irregularities and Misconduct, as material; Jurors impeaching their Verdict; History of the Rule.

§ 2353. Same: Policy of the Rule.

§ 2354. Same: State of the Law in Various Jurisdictions; Qualifications of the Rule.

§ 2355. (d) Mistake in Recording or Announcing the Verdict.

§ 2356. Same: Explaining the Verdict's Meaning; Mistake as to its Legal Effect; Retiring to Reconsider.

3. Arbitrators' Awards.

§ 2358. Foregoing Principles applied to Arbitrators' Awards.

B. GRAND JURY.

1. Privileged Communications Rule.

§ 2360. History and General Principle.

§ 2361. (a) Privilege of Grand Jurors; Secrecy of Vote and Opinion.

§ 2362. (b) Privilege of Witnesses before the Grand Jury; General Principle.

§ 2363. Same: Instances of the Cessation of the Privilege.

2. Parol Evidence Rule.

§ 2364. Grounds for Indictment; Illegal Evidence; Required Number of Votes; etc.

§ 2345. General Principles involved. The doctrine of privilege for confidential communications, when applied to jurors in their deliberations, found itself side by side with two other and totally distinct doctrines. To the natural risks of entanglement, add that one of these doctrines is not a principle of evidence at all, and that the other is a now discarded principle which at one time had great vogue in other relations; and it is easy to see that much obscurity of rule has resulted, together with much difference of judicial opinion. As the common formula has run, "a juror's testimony or affidavit is not receivable to impeach his own verdict." But this rule of thumb is in itself neither absolutely correct as a statement of the acknowledged law, nor at all defensible upon any principle in this unqualified form. It is a mere shibboleth, and has no intrinsic signification whatever. It resembles the popular notion in times of stringency that "the country needs more money," or the old tradal fallacy that a people's money ought to be spent within its own borders and not paid to foreign merchants for foreign goods, — both of which have a certain plausibility, and yet can only be exposed by a consideration of independent and fundamental economic principles which combine under certain circumstances to produce the facts that give plausibility to the popular dogmas. The dogma that a juror may not impeach his verdict is, then, in itself neither correct in law nor reasonable in principle; but it has reference to a group of rules deducible from three general and independent principles, which must be examined separately:

1. *Privileged communications.* The juror's subjective freedom of expression in consultation must be guaranteed. Hence the evidential principle of privileged communications (*ante*, § 2285) genuinely applies to the deliberations of a jury, so as to forbid any one of them to reveal the communications of another during retirement, without the latter's consent.

2. *Parol evidence (Integration).* The verdict of a jury is a written act, like a will or a contract or a judgment reduced to writing, and the "parol evidence" rule (*post*, § 2401) governs it, in a special application adapted to its circumstances. The results of this principle's application fall under four heads: *a.* The *negotiations* and *motives* preceding and leading up to the final act of uttering the verdict are immaterial and cannot be used to vary or set aside the verdict as uttered; *b.* The precise scope of the *issues* upon which the verdict is founded is always open to ascertainment; *c.* The failure to observe those forms of *behavior* which are essential to the validity of jurors' actions is always open to establishment; *d.* The incorrectness of the *foreman's declaration* or of the *clerk of court's record*, in not representing the actual terms of the verdict as finally assented to by the jury as a body, may always be established, for the purpose of correcting the record, by proceedings taken at a proper time; provided always that this permissible process is to be distinguished from the things prohibited by the rule of (*a*), above.

3. *Self-stultifying testimony.* In so far as the rule of 2, *c*, above, is attempted to be carried out by using a juror's testimony to prove his own misbehavior, this would be forbidden by the principle *nemo turpitudinem suam allegans audietur* (*ante*, § 525), if there were any such principle. But that principle of evidence has long ago disappeared from every other part of our law, and it should not survive for the present purpose.

The foregoing principles have application as well to *grand jurors* as to *petit jurors*, but naturally with some differences of result. The chief difference is that under the principle of 1, above (privileged communications), the communications of witnesses to the jurors, as well as of the jurors among themselves, are included, and a special development of the principle becomes necessary.

So also the award of *arbitrators* is governed by the same principles, the chief difference occurring in the application of 2, *b*, above, because of the arbitrators' combination of the functions of judge and jury.

A. PETIT JURY.

1. Privileged Communications Rule.

§ 2346. *Scope of the Principle.* The requirements of the general principle of privileged communications (*ante*, § 2285) are fully satisfied for communications between jurors during retirement. The communications originate in a confidence of secrecy; this confidence is essential to the due attainment of the jury's constitutional purpose; the relation of juror is clearly entitled to the highest consideration and the most careful protection; and the injury from

disclosure would certainly overbalance the benefits thereby gained.¹ It has therefore always been assumed and conceded that a juror is privileged not to have his communications with a fellow-juror disclosed upon the witness-stand against his consent.²

Nevertheless this principle has in practice not played a frequent part, and for three reasons: (a) The communications between jurors are seldom relevant in any way upon another trial;³ (b) even when they are desired to be used on motions for a new trial, they are usually excluded by virtue of the parol evidence rule in some aspect; when they are not so excluded, they are still usually without the privilege because they involve misconduct, which is perhaps not protected by the principle of the privilege;⁴ (c) even when the privilege would apply, the juror himself waives it by making voluntary affidavit.

It remains, however, to notice the practical differences between the application of the present principle, *i. e.* the genuine privilege, and the ensuing one, *i. e.* the parol evidence rule: (1) Under the parol evidence rule, the juror's testimony is excluded only when it is offered to prove facts nullifying the verdict, on a motion for a new trial. But under the privileged communications rule, the juror's testimony would be excluded for any purpose whatever, — for example, where upon another trial he was a witness and his bias was offered to be shown by his expressions during retirement with the former jury. Thus the genuine privilege may have a larger scope than the parol evidence rule. (2) Under the parol evidence rule, the juror's testimony is excluded (by the prevailing rule) in proving either his own misconduct or a fellow-juror's; but under the privileged communications rule the former is obviously not excluded, where the juror makes voluntary affidavit. Contrariwise, in the few jurisdictions which do not accept the rule prohibiting proof of misconduct, the juror might still be prevented from disclosing a fellow-juror's communications unless the latter consented. (3) Under the parol-evidence rule, the prohibitions, so far as they exist at all, are absolute and independent of the juror's consent; but under the privileged communications rule there is nothing left to prohibit if the privileged juror once consents.

2. Parol Evidence Rule.

§ 2348. **General Principle.** The principle of the Parol Evidence rule (the constitution of legal acts) is later examined in detail (*post*, §§ 2400-2478);

¹ 1834, Johnson, J., in *M'Kain v. Love*, 2 Hill S. C. 506 ("We know from experience that, in questions admitting of any doubt, the only possible means of arriving at unanimity of opinion amongst many is by a free interchange of thought, and to deny it to a jury would be to defeat the object of trial by jury").

² 1873, *R. v. Kahalewai*, 3 Haw. 465, 470 (rule applied); 1824, *State v. Powell*, 7 N. J. L. 244, 248 (knowledge of the condition of the body, acquired as a coroner's juror upon the same death, not privileged).

In 1757, Admiral Byng having been condemned to death by a court-martial, whose deci-

sion many thought harsh, a bill was presented to release from their oath of secrecy the members of the court-martial, so that an investigation might be had; this bill Lord Mansfield and Lord Hardwicke both opposed, and their arguments are analogous to those urged against the disclosure of a jury's deliberations and reasonings (*Cobbett's Parl. Hist.* 803-822, *Campbell's Lives of the Chancellors*, VI, 273).

³ They might be relevant to impeach the juror as a witness in a later trial; *e. g.* as attempted in *Phillips v. Marblehead*, 148 Mass. 326, 330, 19 N. E. 547 (1889).

⁴ *Post*, § 2354.

and a jury's verdict is one of the most important acts illustrating the application of that principle. To consider its application here is to separate the subject from its natural place, but is unavoidable.

That principle is that where the existence and tenor of a legal act — *i. e.* an utterance to which legal effects are attached — are in issue, the outward utterance as finally and formally made, and not the prior and private intention, is taken as exclusively constituting the act (*post*, §§ 2404, 2425); and therefore where the act is required (as judicial proceedings are) to be made in writing, the writing is the act (*post*, § 2450). But this assumes that there was an act; nothing therefore prohibits the investigation of the circumstances to determine whether an act of the alleged tenor was consummated by the will of the parties (*post*, § 2408). Moreover, if any formalities are essential to the validity of the act, their absence may of course be shown (*post*, § 2456). Finally, even when an act of the tenor alleged appears to have been done by written utterance, the failure of the written utterance to correspond with the private intention is good ground, in a proper proceeding, for judicial revision and correction of the writing, so far as there is no impolicy in unsettling the transaction and risking controversial uncertainty (*post*, §§ 2413, 2417).

In applying this principle to a jury's verdict, the subject naturally falls under four heads:

a. The *jurors' deliberations* during retirement, their expressions, arguments, motives, and beliefs, represent that state of mind which must precede every legal act and is in itself of no legal consequence. The verdict, as finally agreed upon and pronounced in court by the jurors, must be taken as the sole embodiment of the jury's act. Hence it stands, irrespective of what led up to it in the privacy of the jury-room, — precisely as the prior negotiations of the parties to a contract disappear from legal consideration when once the final agreement is reduced to writing and signed. The difference is that the parties need not have reduced their transaction to a single memorial (*i. e.* by integration) unless they wished to, while the law requires the verdict thus to be made; but the effect is the same, when the act is once done.

b. The *issues* submitted to a jury must be known before the scope of the verdict can be completely determined, because a general verdict purports only to state the net fact of a decision *pro* or *con*, and the subject of law and fact, upon which the decision is given, must still be sought in the pleadings, the testimony, and the instructions, — precisely as a written contract may by the parties' express intention cover only a part of a transaction and leave the rest to be determined from other materials (*post*, § 2430). Hence, properly, the issues covered by a verdict may always be established, in order to determine the scope of the judgment, and by a juror's testimony, if needed. Here, however, certain discriminations, as will be seen, come into play.

c. The jury's *failure to obey essential formalities of conduct* may invalidate the verdict, — just as the parties' failure to observe the required formality of recording a deed or attesting a will or stamping a contract (under the revenue

law) or making a memorandum (under the statute of frauds) may invalidate a transaction otherwise perfect (*post*, §§ 2454-2456). The transgression of these rules of formality may therefore of course be established as a ground for invalidating the verdict. What these formalities shall be is determined by the policy applicable to jury-trials, and is in no sense a question of evidence. There is, however, a rule of evidence, now generally but improperly accepted, that the fact of informality, so far as it involves improper conduct by the jurors, shall not be proved by one of the jurors themselves. This rule has nothing to do, in principle, with the trial rules of informality, nor with the parol evidence rule permitting informalities to be established.

d. The correction of a mistake in the jury's uttered verdict, occurring between the time of the act of voting or assenting in the jury-room and the final entry of the verdict by the clerk in court, may properly be made, upon the same principle that a deed may be reformed in equity for mutual mistake, so as to make it correspond with the expressed agreement of the parties as informally reached before the execution of the deed (*post*, § 2417), or that a judgment-roll may be corrected *nunc pro tunc* to correspond with the proceedings as originally contained in the pleadings or the clerk's minutes (*post*, § 2450). This process, however, has constantly to be distinguished from the improper attempt to violate the principle of (*a*) above by giving effect to the motives or beliefs of the jurors leading up to their final act of voting or assent.

From the general principle of the parol evidence rule, therefore, may be adequately deduced all the detailed rules that control the methods of correcting or setting aside the jury's verdict. So far as the privileged communications rule incidentally forbids anything which the parol evidence rule would permit, its effect will be noticed under the appropriate head. The effect of the supposed rule against self-stultification (*nemo turpitudinem suam*) will also thus be noticed. The rules defining the informalities fatal to a verdict will be assumed to be already prescribed by the law of trials.

§ 2349. (*a*) **Jurors' Motives, Beliefs, Misunderstandings, Intentions, and the like, as Immaterial.** For the reason already stated (*ante*, § 2348, par. *a*), the verdict as uttered is the sole embodiment of the jury's act, and must stand as such without regard to the motives or beliefs which have led up to their act. The policy which requires this is the same which forbids a consideration of the negotiations of parties to a contract leading up to the final terms as deliberately embodied in their deed, namely, the loss of all certainty in the verdict, the impracticability of seeking for definiteness in the preliminary views, the risk of misrepresentation after disclosure of the verdict, and the impossibility of expecting any end to trials if the grounds for the verdict were allowed to effect its overthrow:

1872, *Cleasby, B.*, in *Duke of Buccleuch v. Metropolitan Board*, L. R. 5 E. & I. App. 418, 434: "As soon as the award is made, it must speak for itself. It must be applied, as

¹ This opinion is dealing with an arbitrator's jurors' verdicts, and it contains the soundest award, but its reasoning is expressly applied to statement of the principle.

in other cases, by extrinsic evidence to the subject-matter, but cannot be explained or varied or extended by extrinsic evidence of the intention of the person making it. There appear to me to be the strongest objections against allowing the umpire to be examined for the purpose of shewing what he intended to be included in the award. In the first place it is (and, indeed, must be) a written instrument, and the general rule is applicable, that its effect must be collected from the instrument itself. . . . The award taken by itself is something certain and fixed, and settles the rights of the parties; but if evidence be admitted of the intention and state of mind of the umpire when he made it, its certainty is destroyed, and its effect depends upon his memory, clearness of intellect, and perhaps upon his views and wishes taken up afterwards. Surely it would be a most dangerous thing, after an award has been made which becomes of itself the foundation of a right, to allow any one to retain the power of explaining it away, or even of defeating it. We can properly investigate the acts of a judge or arbitrator in prosecuting a particular inquiry, and his judgment founded upon it; but how can we investigate his secret thoughts or intentions? He is the only master of them, and what he says must be conclusive, as there is nothing which can contradict or explain it. The objection to such evidence would be more striking if, instead of the umpire being appealed to, two arbitrators had joined in an award. Could each have been questioned as to the composition of the award? Although they had agreed as to the result and amount of the award, it would not at all follow that they agreed in the steps by which it was arrived at. Indeed, we know that agreement in such a result is often only arrived at by some concession and compromise, and in a case of a difference in the evidence of what was intended, which is to govern and influence the award. Or it may be farther illustrated by supposing the case, instead of going to arbitration, to go to a jury. There is an assessor who presides, and he directs the jury to reject certain heads of claim and to compensate for others. The jurymen give a general verdict. Could the twelve jurymen be called as witnesses to shew to what extent they had severally acted upon the direction given, or against it, so as to vitiate the verdict by shewing that some jurymen included in it matters they could not properly include? I submit not, and that the verdict must speak for itself. . . . The state of the arbitrator's or judge's mind is of no importance, except so far as it is embodied in some judicial act done by him. His mind may fluctuate and change more than once until the decision is delivered, and then, whether it be upon an interlocutory or final matter, the case is so far bound."

1802, *Tyler, J.*, in *Robbins v. Windover*, 2 Tyl. 11, 13: "The common law requires that the twelve jurors shall unite in a verdict. Whoever considers the variety and intricacy of causes they have to determine, the difficulty of bringing twelve persons of different habits and modes of thinking, and of unequal abilities, fortuitously elected, to concur in opinion, will perceive the wisdom of the Legislature in directing that their deliberations should be secret; for it was to be expected, that in bringing about a union of sentiment in the panel, the subject under consideration would be presented in various lights; that futile objections would be met with inconclusive arguments, theory opposed to practice, and legal science to common sense; that the reputations of witnesses would be scanned, the character of parties too often adverted to, and the whole investigation illustrated by relations of what each juror had heard or known in cases supposed similar; that the warmth of debate would excite an obstinacy of opinion, and a reluctant and tardy assent to the verdict, perhaps drawn from some one, which, on after reflection, might leave in the juror's mind a doubt of its rectitude. It would be of dangerous tendency to admit jurors by affidavit to detail these deliberations of the jury room, to testify to subjects not perfectly comprehended at the time, or but imperfectly recollected. From a natural commiseration for the losing party, or a desire to apologize for the discharge of an ungrateful duty, after the juror had been discharged from office, he would be too apt to intimate, that if some part of the testimony had been adverted to, or something not in evidence omitted, his opinion would have been otherwise, whilst others of the panel, with different impressions or different recollections, might testify favourably for the prevailing

party. This would open a novel and alarming source of litigation, and it would be difficult to say when a suit was terminated."

1836, *Turley, J.*, in *Hudson v. State*, 9 Yerg. 407, 410: "To establish the principle that jurors may file affidavits showing upon what particular parts of testimony they may have found their verdict, with a view of granting new trials if the Court shall be of opinion that the testimony thus made the basis of the verdict was not legal, and therefore ought not to have been received, would be casting obstacles in the way of criminal trials that would render it almost impossible ever to bring them to a conclusion."

1830, *Shaw, C. J.*, in *Murdock v. Sumner*, 22 Pick. 156: "The general rule is that affidavits of jurors will not be received to prove any mistake of the evidence or misapprehension of the law on the part of the jury. Different jurors, according to their different degrees of intelligence, of attention, and habits of thought, may entertain different views of the evidence and of the instructions of the Court in point of law. But the verdict, in which they all concur, must be the best evidence of their belief both as to the fact and the law, and therefore must be taken to be conclusive."

Accordingly, it is to-day universally agreed that, on a motion to set aside a verdict and grant a new trial, the verdict cannot be affected, either favorably or unfavorably, by the circumstance that one or more jurors *misunderstood* the judge's *instruction*, or were influenced by an *illegal paper* or by an *improper remark* of a fellow-juror, or *assented* because of *weariness* or illness or importunities, or *assented* under an *erroneous belief* that the judge would use clemency or have the legal right to vary the sentence, or had been *influenced by inadmissible evidence*, or had decided upon grounds which rendered newly-discovered evidence immaterial, or had *omitted to consider* important evidence or issues, or had miscalculated accounts by errors of fact or of law, — or that any other motive or belief, leading to their decision, had existed prior to their final assent and vote.³

³ *Eng.*: 1754, *Canning's Trial*, 19 How. St. Tr. 283, 669 (the jury having brought in a verdict of "guilty of perjury, but not wilful and corrupt," and the Court refusing to receive it, the jury retired and brought in a verdict of "guilty of wilful and corrupt perjury"; and, upon a motion for a new trial, based on two jurors' affidavits, the foreman of the jury "was sent for by the Court," and stated that two of the jurors would not consent to the second verdict unless the jury recommended the accused for mercy, whereon they all agreed on that basis; and the motion, being argued before five of the superior judges among others, was overruled); 1770. *R. v. Almon*, 5 Burr. 2686 (a juror's affidavit, that he had understood the judge's direction to be that certain evidence was conclusive, and that "if he had apprehended that the jury were at liberty to exercise their own judgment, he would have acquitted the defendant," was excluded; *Aston, J.*: "A juror's affidavit with regard to his sentiments in point of law, at the trial, ought not to be admitted"); 1832, *Ramsdage v. Ryan*, 9 Bing. 333, 338 (a juror having been charged with expressions of bias before the trial, the foreman's affidavit that "the verdict was not occasioned by the practice of that individual" was excluded, the Court "observing that the

affidavits on the other side applied only to the conduct of the juror before he entered the jury-box"); *Can.*: 1900, *Fraser v. Drew*, 30 Can. Sup. 241 (misunderstanding the evidence); *Ark.*: 1881, *St. Louis I. M. & S. R. Co. v. Cantrell*, 37 Ark. 519, 523, 527 (juror's affidavit as to the effect of the Court's instruction upon his vote, excluded); *Cal.*: 1854, *Amsby v. Dickhouse*, 4 Cal. 103 (juror's affidavit that he was dissuaded from a contrary verdict by a fellow-juror's improper conduct, excluded); 1860, *People v. Wyman*, 15 id. 70, 75 (that the verdict was not "a fair expression of the opinion of the jury," excluded); 1865, *People v. Hughes*, 29 id. 258, 263 (that two jurors would not have agreed to a verdict but for fear of being shut up over night, excluded); *Colo.*: 1890, *Knight v. Fisher*, 15 Colo. 176, 25 Pac. 78 (jurors' affidavits not received to show "improper arguments advanced by their fellow-jurors"); 1891, *Wray v. Carpenter*, 16 id. 271, 27 Pac. 248 (jurors' affidavits as to the "theory or ground upon which they rendered their verdict," excluded); *Conn.*: 1852, *Haight v. Turner*, 21 Conn. 593, 596 (juror's affidavit that the jury had considered certain evidence contrary to the Court's instruction, excluded); *Fla.*: 1878, *Coker v. Hayes*, 16 Fla. 368, 392 (juror's affidavit not received to show that he assented to

The following discriminations, however, must be made: (1) Many Courts reach this result by merely pronouncing the shibboleth that "a juror cannot

the verdict "because of the discontent of many of the jurors at his not agreeing with them"; *Ca.*: 1850, *Bishop v. State*, 9 Ga. 121, 125 (juror's affidavit that he was induced to agree "by the persuasion of his fellow-jurors and by their misrepresentations as to the effect of the verdict," excluded); 1853, *Clark v. Carter*, 12 id. 500, 503 (juror's affidavit that he misunderstood the case in arriving at his verdict, excluded); 1855, *Mercur v. State*, 17 id. 146, 174 (juror's admissions that he yielded to the verdict only "because he could not control the rest of the jury," excluded); 1859, *Coleman v. State*, 28 id. 78, 84 (similar); 1867, *Rutland v. Hathorn*, 36 id. 380, 384, 386 (similar); 1873, *King v. King*, 49 id. 622 (similar); 1885, *Coleman v. Slade*, 75 id. 61, 72 (like *Clark v. Carter*, *supra*); *Haw.*: 1859, *Howland v. Jacobs*, 2 Haw. 155 (juror's affidavit as to fellow-jurors' improper reasons for the verdict, excluded); 1873, *R. v. Kahalewai*, 3 id. 465, 469 (affidavits of jurors and third persons as to the language of jurors during deliberation, indicating bias, excluded); *Ill.*: 1841, *Smith v. Eames*, 4 Ill. 76, 81 (jurors' affidavits as to their understanding of the judge's instructions, excluded); 1878, *Niccolls v. Foster*, 89 id. 388 (jurors' affidavits not admitted to show "what the jury thought and did in their retirement"); *Ind.*: 1846, *Ward v. State*, 8 Blackf. 102 (juror's affidavit as to his "particular view of the testimony," excluded); 1858, *Elliott v. Mills*, 10 Ind. 368, 371 (jurors' statements that they "unintentionally overlooked" a credit in defendant's favor, excluded); 1864, *Hughes v. Listner*, 23 id. 396 (juror's affidavit that he yielded his verdict only to avoid further confinement, excluded); 1872, *Withers v. Fiscus*, 40 id. 131 (jurors' affidavits not admissible to show that they had made a mistake in calculating the interest); *Ind. T.*: 1903, *Langford v. U. S.*, — *Ind. T.* —, 76 S. W. 111 (juror's affidavit as to his reason for consenting, excluded); *Ia.*: 1849, *Lloyd v. McClure*, 2 G. Gr. 139, 142 (jurors' affidavits not admitted to show "what items they had allowed and what rejected," in an action on an account); 1851, *Abel v. Kennedy*, 3 id. 47 (not admitted to show that "the reading of the deposition [after retirement] did not influence their verdict"); 1856, *Cook v. Sypher*, 3 Ia. 484, 486 (juror's affidavit that "the verdict was not voluntary on his part," excluded); 1859, *Butt v. Tuthill*, 10 id. 585 (obscurely reported); 1863, *Davenport v. Cummings*, 15 id. 219, 228 (jurors' affidavits that they understood by an instruction that "a preponderance of evidence was not required," excluded); 1863, *Jack v. Naber*, ib. 450, 452 (jurors' affidavits that they "misunderstood the testimony," excluded); 1866, *Wright v. Tel. Co.*, 20 id. 195, 212 (principle of the prior cases approved; quoted *post*, § 2353); 1871, *Cowles v. R. Co.*, 32 id. 515, 518 (juror's affidavit that he found his verdict upon certain evidence alone, excluded); 1877, *Brown v. Cole*, 45 id. 601 (juror's affidavit that he had assented solely because of illness, excluded); 1878, *Ward v. Thompson*, 48 id. 598, 594 (jurors' affidavits as to their misunderstanding of the rule of damages, excluded); 1878, *State v. McConkey*, 49 id. 499, 504 (jurors' affidavits that they erroneously rejected evidence before them, excluded); 1884, *Fox v. Wunderlich*, 64 id. 187, 20 N. W. 7 (juror's affidavit that he assented to the verdict in order to shorten his confinement, excluded); 1885, *Wilkins v. Bent*, 66 id. 531, 24 N. W. 29 (jurors' affidavits that they erroneously deducted a certain amount, excluded); 1894, *State v. Beste*, 91 id. 565, 60 N. W. 112 (juror's affidavit that another juror argued that the defendant ought to have taken the stand, excluded); 1895, *State v. Landerbeck*, 96 id. 258, 65 N. W. 158 (like sundry prior cases); 1896, *State v. Whalen*, 98 id. 662, 68 N. W. 554 (jurors' affidavits as to the influence upon them of an illegal reading of law books by another juror, excluded); 1896, *Kassing v. Waite*, — id. —, 65 N. W. 832 (jurors' affidavits that they erroneously reckoned interest, admitted for the purpose of argument); 1898, *Christ v. Webster City*, 105 id. 119, 74 N. W. 743 (jurors' affidavits as to a misunderstanding of instructions, excluded); *Kan.*: 1874, *Perry v. Bailey*, 12 Kan. 539, 544 (juror's affidavit not admissible to show "a matter resting in the personal consciousness"; quoted *post*, § 2358); 1885, *State v. Burwell*, 34 id. 312, 8 Pac. 470 (foreman's affidavit that he "would not have signed the verdict had he known its real meaning," excluded); 1885, *State v. Clark*, ib. 289, 8 Pac. 528 (jurors' affidavits that documents illegally read by them influenced the verdict, excluded); 1892, *State v. Plum*, 49 id. 679, 31 Pac. 308 (jurors' affidavits that they consented only to avoid a hung jury, excluded); *Ky.*: 1808, *Taylor v. Giger*, *Hardin* 595, 598 (jurors' affidavits not admissible "to explain the train of reasoning or the grounds either of law or fact assumed by them"; here, to show an improper consideration of future damage by a continuing trespass); 1826, *Doran v. Shaw*, 3 T. B. Monr. 411, 415 (preceding rule applied to exclude proof of being influenced by the sheriff's directions); *La.*: 1860, *State v. Millican*, 15 La. An. 557 (juror's testimony not received to show the jury's misunderstanding of the judge's charge); 1876, *State v. Frugé*, 28 id. 657 (juror's testimony that a juror had used fallacious arguments, excluded); 1879, *State v. Wallman*, 31 id. 146 (juror's testimony that he had consented only in the belief that a petition for clemency would secure a commutation of sentence, excluded); 1886, *State v. Bird*, 38 id. 497 (similar); 1886, *State v. Bates*, ib. 491 (similar); 1889, *State v. Morris*, 41 id. 785, 6 So. 639 (juror's affidavit and statements that he consented only because of illness and a desire to be released, held inadmissible); *Me.*: 1831, *Bishop v. Williamson*, 8 Me. 162, *semble* (juror's testimony as to misunderstanding the evidence, held inadmissible); 1868, *Heffron v.*

impeach his verdict," and do not appreciate the vital distinction between impeaching it in the manner of the present rule and impeaching it in the manner

Gallupe, 55 Me. 563, 566 (jurors' depositions as to the influence of a paper illegally introduced before them, excluded); 1874, Greeley v. Mansur, 64 Id. 211, 213 (juror's affidavit that by reason of illness he did not understand the deliberations in the jury-room, excluded); *Id.*: 1766, Bladen v. Cockey, 1 H. & McH. 230, 235 (juror's testimony that "he gave his verdict because the witness A gave such evidence as he credited," said to be improper, because parol proof should not be used "to lessen the weight of the record"); 1831, Bosley v. Ins. Co., 3 G. & J. 450, 478 (jurymen's depositions that they charged the plaintiff with interest to a certain time in estimating damages, excluded); *Mass.* (here the rule of Pierce v. Woodward, *infra*, was afterwards repudiated in Hannum v. Belchertown): 1809, Whitney v. Whitman, 5 *Mass.* 405 (the Court refused to examine jurors as to whether they had been influenced by a paper illegally delivered to them: "the Court must be governed by the tendency of the paper apparent from the face of it"); 1827, Hix v. Drury, 5 Pick. 296, 302 (jurors not examinable to the effect of papers accidentally delivered; "although the jury may think that they were not influenced by such paper, it is impossible for them to say what effect it may have had on their minds"); 1828, Pierce v. Woodward, 6 Pick. 206 ("Where the judge is surprised by the verdict, it is not unusual to ask the jury upon what principle it was found"; new trial granted because "the principle of damages upon which they proceeded was incorrect"); 1829, Ferrill v. Simpson, 8 Pick. 359 (juror's testimony admitted to show "that a misapprehension at the trial, in regard to a certain line, had no influence upon the verdict"; the Court's discretion being invoked); 1830, Parrott v. Thacher, 9 id. 426, 431 ("Where there are distinct grounds upon which the verdict may be given, perhaps it is not improper to ascertain which they adopted, as there may be little or no evidence upon one and sufficient upon another; and if it appears that they did not agree [unanimously] upon either of the grounds, I do not see how their verdict can stand"); 1832, Dorr v. Fenno, 12 Pick. 520, 526 (preceding case and its language, approved; "this is, however, a discretionary power, which the Court will exercise very sparingly and with great caution"; here the principle was held to permit an inquiry into the jury's principle of computing interest; but an inquiry into their mode of agreeing upon damages by striking an average was treated as involving an act of misbehavior and therefore not ascertainable through the jurors themselves); 1837, Hannum v. Belchertown, 19 Pick. 311 (jurors' depositions not admitted to show that they had obeyed the rule permitting double damages; Dorr v. Fenno approved, but its principle impliedly repudiated); 1839, Murdock v. Sumner, 22 id. 156 (jurors' affidavits not admitted to show that they made a mistake of law in believing themselves bound to accept the opinion of an expert witness; quoted *supra*); 1854, Boston & Worcester R. Co. v. Dana, 1 Gray 83, 91, 105 (jurors' affidavits not admitted to show that they had averaged damages, on the principle of Dorr v. Fenno); 1867, Bridgewater v. Plymouth, 97 *Mass.* 382, 390 ("the affidavits or testimony of a part of the jury cannot be received to show that they misunderstood the instructions of the judge or that they were induced by misapprehension to assent to the affirmation of the verdict"; preceding cases not noticed; moreover the principle laid down in Hannum v. Belchertown, *supra*, was there applied even to the entire jury's unanimous testimony); 1871, Woodward v. Leavitt, 107 id. 458, 459, 471 (jurors' affidavits held not admissible to show that a juror B, alleged to have been prejudiced, did not take part in the discussion nor vote on the side of the alleged bias; Dorr v. Fenno and Ferrill v. Simpson disapproved, in this respect; yet their doctrine is accepted so far as it allows a questioning as to the grounds of verdict by the judge before the final delivery and affirmation of the verdict); 1887, Warren v. Spencer Water Co., 143 Id. 155, 165, 9 N. E. 527 (juror's subsequent declarations, or even his testimony, to the reasons for and manner of arriving at a verdict, held inadmissible); 1893, Harrington v. R. Co., 157 id. 579, 580, 32 N. E. 955 (Woodward v. Leavitt approved); *Minn.*: 1868, Knowlton v. McMahon, 13 *Minn.* 386 (jurors' affidavits not received to show that the officer in charge "sought to, and did, influence the verdict"); 1870, State v. Stokely, 16 id. 249, 255 (juror's affidavit that "he would not have concurred in the verdict" had not his health compelled his release from confinement, excluded); *Mo.*: 1883, State v. Fox, 79 *Mo.* 109, 112 (some one threw a rope with a hangman's noose into the jury-room; juror's testimony as to the effect of this incident, excluded); 1893, State v. Schaefer, 116 id. 96, 22 S. W. 447 (jurors' affidavits that the evidence was misunderstood by them, excluded); 1896, State v. Burk, 132 id. 363, 34 S. W. 48 (jurors' affidavits that they consented to the verdict on the understanding that the Court would reduce the sentence, excluded); *Mont.*: 1895, Fitzgersld v. Clark, 17 *Mont.* 100, 42 *Pac.* 273 (juror's affidavit that he consented to the verdict because he was ill and desired to be released, excluded); *Nebr.*: 1888, Harris v. State, 24 *Nebr.* 803, 40 N. W. 317 (jurors' affidavits not admissible to impeach a verdict in a matter "which essentially inheres in the verdict itself"; following the rule in Wright v. Tel. Co., *la.*); *N. H.*: 1827, Tyler v. Stevens, 4 *N. H.* 116 (jurors' affidavits that they had "misunderstood the directions by the Court," excluded); 1829, Page v. Wheeler, 5 id. 91 (following Whitney v. Whitman, *Mass.*); 1833, State v. Hascall, 6 id. 352, 363 ("They state generally that they were influenced by nothing except the law and evidence given at the trial; but this we cannot consider"); 1850, State v. Pike, 20 id. 344 (juror's affidavit that the absence of a certain paper, improperly

of rule *c* (post, § 2352). (2) In consequence of the foregoing indiscrimination, a few Courts have occasionally received testimony of the juror's state of mind

withheld, did not affect the jury's opinion of its contents or affect, admitted; *State v. Hascall* not cited); 1852, *Folsom v. Brown*, 26 id. 114, 123 (like *Griffin v. Auburn*, *infra*; jurors' affidavits here excluded); 1855, *Leighton v. Sargent*, 31 id. 119, 122, 137 (jurors' affidavits as to their consultations and how they determined the amount of damages, excluded); 1856, *Walker v. Kennison*, 34 id. 257 (jurors' affidavits that a fellow-juror misrepresented the testimony, etc., excluded); 1879, *Griffin v. Auburn*, 59 id. 286 (jurors' admissions, after verdict, as to having considered the question of costs, excluded); *N. J.*: 1792, *Randall v. Grover*, 1 N. J. L. 151 (juror's affidavit stating the "insufficiency of the evidence to justify the verdict," excluded); 1798, *Jessup v. Cook*, 6 id. 434, 439 (juror's affidavit that the jury divided a debt between the partners, offered to show that new evidence was material; Court equally divided); 1872, *Hutchinson v. Consumers' Coal Co.*, 36 id. 24 (jurors' affidavits "to explain the reasons or motives of the jurors, or any of them, for giving or consenting to the verdict," inadmissible); *N. Mex.*: 1895, *U. S. v. Biens*, 8 N. Mex. 99, 42 Pac. 70 (juror's affidavit that the verdict was based upon the testimony of one L., subsequently convicted of perjury, apparently held admissible; the true solution here would have been to grant a new trial on the sole fact of L.'s perjury, if on a material point, without regard to its probable influence on the jury); *N. C.*: 1878, *State v. Smallwood*, 78 N. C. 560 (like *State v. Best*, *infra*); 1884, *State v. Royal*, 90 id. 755 (juror's affidavit that the verdict was influenced by the defendant's failure to call his son as a witness, excluded); 1887, *Jones v. Parker*, 97 id. 35, 4 S. E. 370 (jurors' affidavits that they did not understand the judge's charge and did not concur in the verdict, excluded); 1898, *Johnson v. Allen*, 100 id. 131, 5 S. E. 670 (affidavits based on jurors' statements as to the mode of reckoning damages, excluded); 1892, *State v. Best*, 111 id. 638, 15 S. E. 930 (jurors' affidavits that they assented only on the supposition that a recommendation to mercy would save from the death penalty, excluded); 1896, *Purcell v. R. Co.*, 119 id. 728, 26 S. E. 161 (like *Johnson v. Allen*, *supra*); *Oh.*: 1858, *Holman v. Riddle*, 3 Oh. St. 384, 389 (jurors' affidavits that they misunderstood the judge's charge, excluded); *R. I.*: 1850, *Handy v. Ins. Co.*, 1 R. I. 400 (jurors' affidavits that they misunderstood the judge's charge, excluded; "the proper time . . . is immediately after the verdict is returned, while the jury may be polled"); 1859, *Tucker v. South Kingston*, 5 id. 553, 560 (similar affidavits, excluded); *S. C.*: 1855, *Smith v. Culbertson*, 9 Rich. L. 106, 111 (juror's affidavit "that his assent was forced, or was given under some misconception," said to be inadmissible); 1890, *State v. Senn*, 32 S. C. 392, 11 S. E. 292 (jurors' affidavits as to "the manner in which the verdict was reached," held inadmissible); 1894, *State v. Bennett*, 40 id. 308, 18 S. E. 386 (juror's affidavit that he consented only on the erroneous supposition that the recommendation to mercy would secure pardon or commutation, excluded); 1897, *State v. Aughtry*, 49 id. 285, 26 S. E. 619, 27 S. E. 199 (jurors' statement of their misunderstanding of the charge, not received); *Tenn.*: 1821, *Crawford v. State*, 2 Yerg. 60 (two jurors' affidavits admitted, that they had consented to a verdict of guilty for the sole reason that they believed that a new trial would be granted or that the Governor would by pardon act upon the recommendation to mercy which they made a condition of assenting to the verdict); 1836, *Hudson v. State*, 9 id. 407 (juror's affidavit that he had founded his verdict upon a fact improperly presented to the jury by a witness re-examined in open court after the trial, excluded; in effect repudiating *Crawford v. State* on this point; quoted *supra*); 1842, *Norris v. State*, 3 Humph. 393, 336 (preceding case approved; jurors' affidavits that they had misunderstood the judge's charge as to believing a witness, held not admissible); 1844, *Sannders v. Fuller*, 4 id. 514 (same ruling on similar facts); 1847, *Cochran v. State*, 7 id. 544, 547 (similar to *Crawford v. State*, *supra*); 1850, *Nelson v. State*, 10 id. 518, 532 (jurors' affidavits that they supposed a verdict of murder in the second degree to carry a possibility of sentence less than death, received on the facts, in consequence of the trial judge's conduct); 1856, *Larkins v. Tarter*, 3 Sneed 681, 686 (jurors' affidavits as to the influence of improper remarks of counsel, excluded); 1869, *Galvin v. State*, 6 Coldw. 283, 286 (juror's affidavit that he consented to the verdict only on the erroneous supposition that the Court could fix a punishment less than death, excluded; *Nelson v. State* treated as exceptional); 1872, *Wade v. Ordway*, 1 Baxt. 229, 234 (jurors' affidavits that they misunderstood the judge's statements, excluded); 1873, *Dunnaway v. State*, 3 id. 206, 208 (affidavits of the entire jury as to basing their verdict upon a state of facts not in issue, excluded); 1875, *Richardson v. McLemore*, 5 id. 586, 589 (juror's affidavit as to the influence of part of the charge, excluded); 1880, *Roller v. Bachman*, 5 Lea 153, 159 (jurors' affidavits as to misunderstanding the charge and miscalculating the statutory period of limitation, excluded); 1891, *Scruggs v. State*, 90 Tenn. 81, 15 S. W. 1074 (juror's affidavit not received to show a misunderstanding of the judge's charge); *Tex.*: 1846, *Campbell v. Skidmore*, 1 Tex. 475 (juror's affidavit as to the influence of the judge's charge, excluded); 1856, *Kilgore v. Jordan*, 17 id. 342, 346 (jurors' affidavits that they misapprehended the law, excluded); 1855, *Little v. Birdwell*, 21 id. 597, 602, 612 (jurors' affidavits that evidence withheld from them would have influenced their verdict, excluded); 1865, *Johnson v. State*, 27 id. 753, 769 (jurors' affidavits that they misconstrued the judge's charge, excluded); 1888, *Wills Point Bank v. Bates*, 72 id. 137, 10 S. W.

in support of the verdict, — applying that part of the rule of thumb (rule c) which receives jurors' testimony to disprove misconduct and thus to support the verdict.³ There is of course no justification for this; the principle of the present rule accepts the jury's utterance as the final and exclusive expression

348 (jurors' affidavits as to their understanding of the facts, excluded); 1895, *McCulloch v. State*, 35 Tex. Cr. 268, 33 S. W. 230 (similar to *Johnson v. State*; "this practice is getting entirely too common, and the lower courts should take occasion to correct it"); 1903, *Blackwell v. State*, — id. —, 73 S. W. 960 (that the jurors misunderstood the testimony, excluded); *U. S.*: 1806, *Ladd v. Wilson*, 1 Cr. C. C. 305 (jurors' affidavits that "a mistake was made by the foreman in calculating upon the principles agreed on by the jury," said to be "dangerous," and the practice of receiving them not to be sanctioned); 1890, *Glaspell v. R. Co.*, 43 Fed. 900, 907, *Thomas, J.* (jurors' affidavits as to their method of reckoning the damages, offered to show that an erroneous instruction was not followed and was therefore harmless, excluded); 1890, *Fuller v. Fletcher*, 44 id. 34, 39 (jurors' affidavits not admissible to show that they were or were not influenced by certain motives); 1892, *Mattox v. U. S.*, 146 U. S. 140, 142, 147, 13 Snp. 50 (rule of *Ferry v. Bailey, Kan.*, and *Woodward v. Leavitt, Mass.*, approved; quoted *post*, § 2352); *Utah*: 1891, *People v. Flynn*, 7 Utah 378, 26 Pac. 1114 (jurors' affidavits not admitted to show a misunderstanding of the judge's charge); *Vt.*: 1865, *Sheldon v. Perkins*, 37 Vt. 550, 557 (juror's affidavit, after separation, that a verdict was based on a particular ground, excluded; if the ground of the verdict is material, "the proper course is to suggest it to the Court so that it may be learned from the jury in open court while they are together and under the control and direction of the judge"); *Va.*: 1791, *Cochran v. Street*, 1 Wash. 79 (jurors' affidavits that four of them were opposed to the verdict, but yielded in the belief that they were legally bound to abide by the majority's view, admitted and a new trial ordered; the ensuing cases practically overrule this); 1822, *Shobe v. Bell*, 1 Rand. 39 (jurors' affidavits that they yielded only in order to avoid further detention, not considered); 1849, *Harnsbarger v. Kinney*, 6 Gratt. 287, 300 (jurors' affidavits that they misunderstood the judge's instruction, excluded); 1854, *Koiner v. Rankin*, 11 id. 420, 431 (similar; "they will not readily be received to invalidate the verdict"); 1857, *Bull v. Com.*, 14 id. 618, 626 (jurors' affidavits that one of them agreed to the verdict only on the understanding that all should unite in a request for a pardon, excluded); 1872, *Read v. Com.*, 22 id. 924, 947 (affidavits of admissions of two of the jurors that they had decided because of the defendant's failure to explain certain evidence, excluded); 1879, *Danville Bank v. Waddill*, 81 id. 469, 482 (like *Harnsbarger v. Kinney, supra*); 1879, *Stephens v. Flood*, ib. 323, 343 (two jurors' affidavits that the jury did not pass upon a document's genu-

ineness, contrary to the wishes of these two, who were "persuaded against our judgments to agree to the verdict," excluded); 1899, *Street v. Broadbna*, 96 Va. 823, 32 S. E. 466 (jurors' affidavits that certain elements of damage were not allowed for, excluded); *W. Va.*: 1872, *Lewis v. McMullin*, 5 W. Va. 582 (juror's affidavit that the verdict would have been for defendant, if certain evidence had been believed, excluded); 1883, *Reynolds v. Tompkins*, 23 id. 229, 234 (jurors' affidavits that they misunderstood the judge's charge, excluded); 1884, *Probst v. Bravenlich*, 24 id. 358, 360 (jurors' affidavits as to the items of claim entering into their consideration, excluded); 1892, *State v. Harrison*, 86 W. Va. 729, 15 S. E. 982 (juror's affidavit that his absence from the jury-room did not influence his verdict, not received); 1895, *State v. Cobbe*, 40 id. 718, 22 S. E. 310 (jurors' affidavits that they misunderstood the law as to the effect of a verdict of murder in the first degree, in respect to the Court's discretion in sentencing, excluded); *Wis.*: 1891, *Schultz v. Catlin*, 78 Wis. 611, 614, 47 N. W. 946 (juror's affidavits that they misunderstood the judge's charge, excluded).

³ 1892, *Fulton Co. v. Phillips*, 91 Ga. 65, 16 S. E. 260 (jurors' affidavits admitted to "sustain the verdict," by showing that they did not read and were not influenced by a verdict in a former case contained in the pleading); 1903, *Davis v. Huber Mfg. Co.*, 119 Ia. 66, 93 N. W. 78 (affidavit as to the items of claim allowed); 1894, *Ewers' Adm'r v. National I. Co.*, 63 Fed. 562, *Paul, J.* (jurors' affidavits admitted to show that a fellow-juror's prejudice had no influence on them); 1877, *Zickefoose v. Kuykendell*, 12 W. Va. 23, 27, 35 (that the juror could not have been biased because he voted at first against the party for whom he was said to be biased, allowed; this would probably not be followed, since *State v. Cartwright, post*, § 2353). In California the cases originally exhibiting this view have been overruled: 1888, *People v. Goldenson*, 76 Cal. 352, 19 Pac. 161 (juror's affidavit that a paper did not influence him, held admissible); 1890, *People v. Murray*, 85 id. 350, 361, 24 Pac. 666 *semble* (same); 1892, *People v. Murray*, 94 id. 212, 29 Pac. 404 (preceding cases approved; *De Haven and Harrison, JJ.*, diss.; *Garoutte, J.*, concurred in the judgment); 1894, *People v. Stokes*, 103 id. 193, 87 Pac. 207 (preceding cases repudiated; "A juror is not allowed to say, 'these matters had no influence upon my mind when casting my vote in the jury-room'; . . . there are intimations [!] in the cases of *People v. Goldenson* and *People v. Murray* tending to oppose the foregoing views, but they do not express the law"); 1895, *People v. Azoff*, 105 id. 632, 39 Pac. 59 (approving the preceding case).

of their views and declines to investigate for any purpose their prior and preliminary states of mind. (3) The jurors' motives or beliefs, as ineffective to control the uttered verdict, are to be distinguished from the facts that may properly be considered under rules *b* and *d*, *post*; though the distinction is sometimes a subtle one. (4) Where the jurors' belief is offered as material for any other purpose than that of controlling the verdict upon a motion for a new trial, it may be considered, so far as no other rule of evidence prevents, — as, for example, on a prosecution for corruptly rendering a verdict contrary to his belief.⁴ (5) Where the jurors' belief is so embodied in their inquiries to the judge, and in his answers, that a case of misinstruction by the judge is presented, this can of course be made a ground for invalidating the verdict;⁵ but here it is not because of their belief, but because of his instructions.

§ 2350. **Same: Examining the Jury before Discharge, to Ascertain the Grounds of Verdict.** The reasons for the foregoing rule, namely, the dangers of uncertainty and of tampering with the jurors to procure testimony, disappear in large part if such investigation as may be desired takes place before their discharge and separation, or before the recording of the verdict. Accordingly, some Courts, chiefly in New England, concede the propriety of examining the jurors while still in their box, after verdict pronounced, and of ascertaining the particular issues on which a general verdict is founded, and the detailed propositions of fact or of law which entered into the verdict; so that it may then and there be set aside if for the issue upon which it rested there is not in the judge's opinion sufficient evidence, or if they proceeded on a palpable mistake of law.¹ This process of making more precise the details of their finding has the same purpose as the expedient of a special verdict or a special finding on interrogatories, and is related in principle to rule *b*, *post*. There can be no doubt that in the traditional English practice this was common,² and it doubtless continues there. Under the system in the United

⁴ The following ruling is therefore erroneous, for the Opinion rule (*ante*, § 1963), upon which it was made, would present no obstacle: 1861, *Hatch v. Lewis*, 2 F. & F. 467, 475 (action against attorneys for negligent management of the plaintiff's case whereby he was convicted; to show that the conviction would not have occurred had the defendant called certain witnesses, the jurymen at the former trial were not allowed to be asked what verdict they would have rendered, on the ground of the Opinion rule).

⁵ The first of the New York rulings *infra* is apparently erroneous: *Wis.*: 1892, *McBean v. State*, 83 Wis. 206, 53 N. W. 497 (the jury sent to the trial judge a message, "If we bring in a verdict of guilty, can we depend on the clemency of the Court?" to which the judge answered "Yes," on which a verdict of guilty was brought in; this was allowed to be shown, the judge's answer being equivalent to an instruction in open court, and therefore an error demanding a new trial); *N. Y.*: 1825, *Sargent v. —*, 5 Cow. 106, 120 (affidavits of two jurors, that the jury considered, and supposed

that the judge had so permitted them, in estimating damages for seduction, the expense of maintaining the child, admitted, on the theory that "this is in effect equivalent to a misdirection of the judge," misleading the jurors; but this decision was reached "not without some hesitation"); 1826, *Ex parte Caykendoll*, 6 Id. 53 (jurors' affidavits as to a mistake in reckoning damages, arising from a misreading of the written contract, excluded; preceding case distinguished, as "equivalent to a positive misdirection of the judge," the counsel having there laid down in his argument a rule of law which the judge did not expressly deny); *Tenn.*: 1850, *Nelson v. State*, 10 Humph. 518 (cited *ante*, § 2349).

¹ *Parrott v. Thacher*, *Woodward v. Leavitt*, *Mass.*, and cases in *N. C.*, *R. I.*, and *Vt.*, *supra*, § 2349.

² *Thayer*, *Preliminary Treatise on Evidence*, pp. 145, 155, and the following later case: 1897, *Ash v. Ash*, *Comberh.* 357 (Holt, C. J.: "The jury were very shy of giving a reason of their verdict, thinking they have an absolute despotic power; but I did rectify that mistake, for the

States, in which the judges tend to degenerate into mere umpires, it is not likely to be often seen; but there is no reason why such a control of the verdict should not be exercised, for it merely assumes to remedy the verdict's aberrations before it has become a recorded finality and before the crucial line has been passed which must somewhere always be recognized in order that there may be an end of controversy. At the same time, this expedient is practically not of frequent utility, because the misapprehensions which it is designed to cure can seldom become the subject of suspicion at investigation by the parties until the jurors after their discharge have by public conversation disclosed the nature of the mistake.

§ 2351. (b) *Issues of the Trial, as Material; Judge's Instructions, as considered by the Jury.* (1) The tenor of the issues at the trial, as submitted to the jury, may be material for the purpose of ordering a new trial in the same cause. These issues will be ascertainable in part from the pleadings, which of course speak for themselves, and in part from the judge's instructions. An erroneous statement of the issue by the judge, or of the law applicable to the issue, being sufficient to justify a new trial, by the rules of new trials, may of course be proved; and there is no reason why it may not be proved by the testimony of one or more of the jurors. This will not be a frequent case, for other materials for proof are usually at hand; but there is no objection to it in principle, for the fact to be proved is separate from the jury's deliberations upon the issue, and the process does not consist in putting their deliberations in conflict with their verdict. The line between this and the preceding principle may be seen closely drawn in the distinction already noted (*ante*, § 2349, par. 5).¹

(2) The tenor of the issues as submitted to the jury may also become important, upon a different trial for a related claim, as determining the scope of matters adjudicated at the first trial. Our system of general verdicts does not adequately provide for the precise statement of details of claim covered by the jury's award. In cases of continuing trespasses, of consequential damages, of repeated libels, of running accounts, and the like, the matters actually included in the verdict depend as much upon the instructions as upon the pleadings, and do not always even then become precise. In particular, an affirmative finding, *i. e.* for the plaintiff, may leave it uncertain whether the jury has in fact passed at all upon some of the items of the plaintiff's claim. In such a case it is therefore proper to prove what issues were submitted to the jurors; and, as a part of the criteria of definition, the judge's instructions limiting the matter for their consideration may be proved, and of course by jurors as well as by any one else who heard them. In so doing, the offer sometimes is to show that the jury did or did not "consider" a certain item. This offer, though incorrect in form, may practically be sufficient; for though the jury's belief and reasoning upon the issues, as distinct from the Court's

jury are to try causes with the assistance of the judges, and ought to give reasons when required, that if they go upon any mistake, they may be set right").

¹ In revising an arbitrator's award the same question arises, though the solution is slightly different (*post*, § 2355).

definition of the issues, is immaterial, upon the principle already examined (*ante*, § 2349), yet where no attempt is being made to overthrow the original verdict, the jury's understanding of the issues is merely a convenient though loose mode of ascertaining the issues as actually submitted.²

§ 2352. (c) *Irregularities and Misconduct, as material; Jurors Impeaching their Verdict; History of the Rule.* The deliberations of a jury must be conducted with strict regard to certain formalities of conduct during retirement, — formalities which, though not vital in a particular case, yet are indisputably wholesome as requirements of general policy. They are mere outward marks or conventions, but they are the more technically strict because the impossibility, under the principle already examined (*ante*, § 2349), of regarding jurors' actual motives and reasonings, makes it the more necessary to depend upon the conventional canons of behavior for confidence in the verdict. Like the analogous formalities of other legal acts, already mentioned (*ante*, § 2348, *par. c*; *post*, § 2456), they are not inherent logical elements, but formal marks of precaution. A particular will may have been genuine and deliberate, though not executed in the presence of attesting witnesses; but the propriety of attestation as a fixed general rule cannot be doubted. So a particular jury's verdict may be a just and well-reasoned one, when the jurors during retirement have separated or talked with the parties or drunk intoxicating liquors; yet as a general rule it is proper to invalidate verdicts marked by such conduct.

Now the law of trials in general, and of verdicts in particular, must prescribe these requisite formalities of conduct for the jurors, and define those informalities and irregularities which *per se* invalidate the verdict. What those shall be is thus elsewhere in the law predetermined. The principle of the

² Compare with the following examples those cited *ante*, § 2349, *par. 5*, and *post*, § 2358 (arbitrators' awards); *N. H.*: 1870, *Smith v. Smith*, 50 N. H. 212, 219 (jurors' statements that they did not include in the former verdict in trespass certain fences, etc., now in issue in trespass, excluded; but here the judge's instructions were not offered to be shown, and the offer also included other doubtful matters; moreover the Court held that "it appears here that the whole matter was in point of fact submitted to the jury; . . . thus it appears that the issues presented by the declaration were in fact tried"); *N. Y.*: 1848, *Brownell v. McEwen*, 5 Denio 367 (affidavits of individual jurors, *pro* and *con*, as to having considered, in an action for seduction, the breach of promise of marriage and other claims as covered by the amount awarded, held inadmissible; but the Court further declared that proof of their unanimous consideration of the point would have been admissible); *Pz.*: 1817, *Haak v. Breidenbach*, 3 S. & R. 204 (continuing trespass by overflow; a former verdict for the same trespass being pleaded, and the plaintiff replying that the former verdict was confined to a different period, the testimony of one of the prior jurors was received that "the jury was directed by the Court not to

include that period of time in estimating the damages, and that they therefore only included the damages subsequently to the 4th August, 1786"); 1841, *Leonard v. Leonard*, 1 W. & R. 342 (account rendered; plea, former judgment for the defendant in assumpsit for the same claim; the plaintiff was then allowed to prove by a prior juror that "the verdict was given in pursuance of the instruction of the Court exclusively on the ground that the agreement was fraudulent, and that the respective claims of the parties were not considered"); 1873, *Follansbee v. Walker*, 74 Pa. 306, 309 (assumpsit by F. and W.; plea of former judgment for the defendants on a suit by F. for the same promise; replication, that the former suit alleged a promise by F. alone and that the defendant there claimed that the promise if any was to F. and W. jointly, and that the judge charged the jury, on this preliminary issue, that if they believed the defendant's allegation the verdict must be for the defendant and another action must be brought on the promise to F. and W. jointly; on this issue, testimony of the prior jurors was admitted that that jury "decided only on the preliminary question submitted by the Court, whether the transaction was with the firm of W. and F.").

parol evidence rule (*ante*, § 2346, par. *c*; *post*, § 2456) then enters and declares that the lack of such formalities, for this as for every other legal act (whatever the respective required formality may be), is always proper to establish as a ground for declaring the act void. Whatever misconduct of the jury, therefore, is an irregularity fatal to the verdict may always be proved.

But by whom? Naturally, by one or more of the jurors themselves, who will commonly be the sole witnesses, — at least to misconduct during retirement. Should the misconduct consist in improper utterances, the privilege proper (*ante*, § 2346) would apply, if the juror to be informed against should claim it. But if he does not, and if he is even willing by affidavit to avow his utterance, all question of privilege ceases. In that case, and in all cases of misconduct other than utterances, what is there to prevent the use of jurors' testimony in proof, as well as any other person's? Nothing in the world, except a curious doctrine of evidence once and temporarily in vogue, long ago discarded in every other relation, and now here persisting through the sponsorship of Lord Mansfield's great name, — the doctrine that a witness shall not be heard to allege his own turpitude; *nemo turpitudinem suam allegans audietur*.

The gradual appearance of this doctrine in the early 1700s, and its rapid spread under the earnest patronage of Lord Mansfield in the last quarter of the 1700s, has already been traced in another connection (*ante*, § 525). Its chief application was to forbid the drawer of commercial paper from proving usury or other illegal consideration, and to forbid similar occasional sorts of testimony; but, after two generations of controversy, these important aspects of it, together with the principle at large, were utterly repudiated, both in England and America (*ante*, §§ 525-531). Besides this, however, it led in Lord Mansfield's hands to the rule prohibiting married parents to testify to non-access in proof of bastardy (*ante*, § 2063); and here, the relation of the original principle having been early lost sight of, the rule survived. Furthermore, however, it received application, at his hands, to the present subject, — the testimony of a juror to his own misconduct.¹ Here it thrived, — apparently because new supposed reasons of policy were found, which buoyed up Lord Mansfield's rule long after the general repudiation of that favorite maxim, which had for him served apparently as its only justification.

The curious feature of his doctrine is that it came, in all these three of its chief applications, as an innovation upon the prior practice. Having no sound basis of policy (as its modern repudiation now testifies), it had also no basis of precedent. This appears abundantly for the other two rules already mentioned (*ante*, §§ 525, 2063). It is also true for the present rule. Up to Lord Mansfield's time, and within half a decade of his decision in *Vaise v.*

¹ 1785, *Vaise v. Delaval*, 1 T. R. 11, K. B. (two jurors' affidavits of a decision based upon chance were rejected; L. C. J. Mansfield: "The Court cannot receive such an affidavit from any of the jurymen themselves, in all of whom such conduct is a very high misdemeanor;

but in every such case the Court must derive their knowledge from some other source, such as some person having seen the transaction through a window or by some such other means").

Delaval, the unquestioned practice had been to receive jurors' testimony or affidavits without scruple. There were of course variances of ruling as to the sufficiency of this or that misconduct to invalidate a verdict; but the proof of it was received equally from jurors and others, without discrimination.³ If corroboration were needed, it is found in the early American practice, where many rulings were made upon the jurors' affidavits of misconduct.³ But *Vaise v. Delaval*, with the prestige of the great Chief Justice, soon prevailed in England,⁴ and its authority came to receive in this country an adherence almost unquestioned.

³ In *Prior v. Powers*, *infra*, the sole case of doubt, the affidavit was not actually rejected; moreover, the last clause of the ruling is inconsistent with the practice of the times: 1590, *Metcalf v. Deane*, Cro. El. 189 (complaint having been made to the judge of the jury's having re-summoned one of the witnesses during retirement, "he examined the inquest, who confessed all the matter," and a new trial was awarded); 1595, *Vicary v. Farthing*, ib. 411 (foregoing case cited, in dealing with a jury's inspection of a written document handed them by the party); 1623, *Heylor v. Hall*, *Palmer* 325 (the solicitor having handed certain depositions to the jurors when about to retire, they were examined on oath whether more had been read to them after retirement than had been read in court, and how they had been inclined to give their verdict before reading the depositions; apparently the verdict was held bad); 1665, *Prior v. Powers*, 1 Keh. 811 (a new trial, on the ground that the verdict was obtained by lot, was denied, "because it appeared only by pumping a jurymen, who confessed all; but, being against himself, it was not much regarded; also the Court cannot grant new trial without punishing the jury, which cannot be by this confession against themselves"); 1675, *Lord Fitzwater's Case*, *Freeman* K. B. 415 (verdict set aside because determined by lot; the jurors' affidavits must have been received, but no question was made); 1696, *Deat v. Hertford*, 2 Salk. 645 ("a new trial was granted upon affidavit that the foreman declared the plaintiff should never have a verdict, whatever witnesses he produced"); 1719, *Melish v. Arnold*, *Bunbury* 51 (new trial granted because damages were determined by lot; the affidavits "were made by persons who heard the jurymen talk of the matter, and the jurymen did not think fit to make any affidavit to clear themselves"); 1734, *Parr v. Seames*, *Barnes*, 3d ed., 438 (on a motion to set aside a verdict because determined by "hustling halfpence in a hat," "this matter not appearing upon the oath of any of the jurors, but by affidavit that two of them had confessed the same," the Court stayed judgment "to give plaintiff an opportunity to procure affidavits from some of the jurors"); 1735, *Philips v. Fowler*, ib. 441, *Comyns* 525 ("it being disclosed to defendant by two of the jurors" that lots had been cast, "defendant moved to set aside the verdict upon an affidavit of the fact made by the two jurors"; "the fact as to the jurors determining by chance

being undisputed, the verdict was set aside"); 1744, *Norman v. Beaumont*, *Willes* 484, 487 (in admitting an affidavit of a juror as to his disqualification, the Court added: "In cases of this sort where the objection could not appear of record, we always admitted of affidavits, — as in respect to a miabehaviour of any of the jury, or any declaration made by any of them either before or after the verdict to show that a jurymen was partial"); 1779, *Aylett v. Jewel*, 2 W. Bl. 1299, C. P. (new trial not granted on the affidavit of the attorney that "some of the jury had confessed to him" that the verdict had been reached by lot; "there being no affidavit by the jurymen, or any other that was cognizant of this transaction, but merely this hearsay affidavit, the Court, *absente* De Grey, C. J., thought it too dangerous to call a verdict in question that had been so deliberately given, upon so loose and slight a suggestion").

⁴ 1793, *Talmadge v. Northrop*, 1 Root 522 (cited *infra*); 1792, *Bradley v. Bradl*, Pa., 4 Dall. 112 (jurors' affidavits "that the jury had miabehaved by hearing testimony which was not delivered in open court," admitted); 1805, *Smith v. Cheetham*, 3 Caines 57 (conatable's affidavit, based partly on jurors' admissions, that damages had been reached by average, admitted; general principle of receiving jurors' affidavits to show misconduct, sanctioned; Kent, C. J., diss.); 1805, *Grinnell v. Phillips*, 1 Mass. 530, 542, per *Sewall, J.* (jurors' testimony admissible to prove "overt acts which may be the subject of legal inquiry," such as "gross mibehavior or legal impropriety of conduct sufficient to destroy the credit of a verdict"; *semble*, *Thacher, J., contra*). Compare also the early cases in New York, Virginia, and elsewhere, admitting such affidavits even in cases under the principle of § 2349, *ante*.

⁵ 1807, *Owen v. Warburton*, 1 B. & P. N. R. 326 (juror's affidavit, not receivable to show a decision by lot; quoted *post*, § 2353); 1839, *Straker v. Graham*, 7 Dowl. Pr. 223, 4 M. & W. 721 (juror's affidavit that a verdict was reached by tossing up, held inadmissible; *Alderson, B.*: "It is entirely against policy to allow a jurymen to make an affidavit of anything which passes in agreeing to a verdict"; quoted *post*, § 2353); 1843, *Burgess v. Laagley*, 5 M. & Gr. 722 (affidavit of the attorney as to declarations in open court, by one juror in the others' hearing, just after verdict rendered, that they had reached a verdict by lot, excluded; *Cresswell, J.*: "Had

§ 2353. **Same: Policy of the Rule.** What is to be said in support of this supposed rule, which distinguishes so sharply between the testimony of the juror himself and that of any other person? The question, it is to be remembered, is not whether certain conduct constitutes a fatal irregularity, or whether it can be proved at all, but whether a juror alone is to be forbidden to prove it:

1807, *Mansfield, C. J.*,¹ in *Owen v. Warburton*, 1 B. & P. N. R. 326, 329: "The affidavit of a juror [to the jury's misconduct] cannot be received. It is singular indeed that almost the only evidence of which the case admits should be shut out; but considering the arts which might be used if a contrary rule were to prevail, we think it necessary to exclude such evidence. If it were understood to be the law that a juror might set aside a verdict by such evidence, it might sometimes happen that a juror might set aside a verdict by such evidence, and not being able to bring over his companions to his opinion, might propose a decision by lot, with a view afterwards to set aside the verdict by his own affidavit, if the decision should be against him."

1830, *Straker v. Graham*, 4 M. & W. 721; an attorney's affidavit that a juror had admitted the drawing of lots for a verdict was offered: *Serjt. Atcherley* (for admission): "The affidavit of the juror himself is rejected because the conduct which he admits is such as would render him liable to punishment"; *L. C. B. Abinger*: "No; it is because otherwise no verdict would be safe"; *Parke, B.*: "When the jury have openly concurred in a verdict in open court, which ought to be their binding decision on the case, it would be most dangerous and lead to the greatest fraud and abuse to set it aside on such statements as that which is made in this case."

1811, *Yeates, J.*, in *Cluggage v. Swan*, 4 Binn. 150, 155: "I frankly confess that I feel the utmost repugnance to such testimony, although I am fully aware, that I thereby exclude almost the only evidence, which the case naturally admits of. But, by admitting it, I as readily perceive that I should open a door to the exercise of the most pernicious arts, and tampering with jurors; and that the practice would be replete with dangerous consequences. Jurors, who would have been sworn or solemnly affirmed to give a verdict according to evidence, come with a bad grace into a tribunal of justice to prove their own dishonorable conduct, and affix a stigma on their companions who may be unheard in their defence. Besides, in the language of some of the cases, I cannot see how such testimony could be heard by the Court, without proceeding against the jurors whose affidavits should this happen, will it not justly be deemed entrapping the jurors whose affidavits have been used? And will it not expose others implicated in the charge, to the temptations naturally incident to persons in a state of accusations? But above all, I greatly fear that the practice, if adopted, would tend to an inquisition over the consciences of jurors, as to the grounds and reasons of their verdict, and bring questions of fact more frequently before the Court for their decision than is consistent with sound policy. I am opposed to penetrating into the recesses of a jury-room, through the instrumentality of jurors, who are kept together until they have agreed upon their verdict."

As to these various reasons, it is unnecessary to refute the argument drawn in *Owen v. Warburton* from a fantastic imagination of what an occasional scheming juror might conceivably try to do. As well abolish appeals, because a wicked judge might give a wrong reason for a decision against a party whom he favored, so that there might be a new trial. Nor need

the statement made in the affidavit come from the officer who had charge of the jury we might have attended to it; but it has long been decided that the affidavit of a juror as to the

mode in which the jury arrived at their verdict cannot be received").

¹ This of course was not Lord Mansfield (*Murray*), but a judge of the next generation.

the original notion of Lord Mansfield, rejecting self-stultifying testimony, be further noticed. Of the remaining arguments, this much can be said, that they prove, if anything, much more than the rule in question. That is, they prove that certain facts of misconduct, such as the casting of lots or the communication of a juror's personal knowledge, should not as facts be considered at all, for the purpose of overturning the verdict, but should rather be regarded, under the principle already examined (*ante*, § 2349), as part of the motives and methods of deliberation leading up to the verdict, and therefore as immaterial. So far as any argument can be founded on the uncertainty that results from investigating the jury's deliberations, it rests virtually on the assumption that their methods or grounds of decision should be ignored, and that is another principle entirely. Whether a given piece of conduct during retirement should be classed as a formal and fatal irregularity (which may be proved) or as an erroneous ground of the verdict (which may not be proved) is often an arguable question (as noticed *post*, § 2354) but that is very different from the question whether, conceding that it is a fatal irregularity, the juror alone is to be prohibited from proving it. Finally, it must be pointed out that while Lord Mansfield's own statement of the rule obliged the proof of the misconduct to depend solely on the testimony of "some person having seen the transaction through a window or by some such other means," his successors have committed an absurdity which he would hardly have condoned. A bailiff or other court officer, who may have been present at the jury's deliberations, may by universal concession (*post*, § 2354) prove their misconduct, though it is a gross breach of duty (except in one or two jurisdictions) for him to attend or overhear. Thus, not only does the rule tempt the parties to seduce the bailiffs to tricky expedients and surreptitious eavesdroppings; but the law, furthermore, while with one hand it sanctimoniously puts away the juryman who reports his own misconduct done during the privacy of retirement, yet with the other hand it inconsistently invites to the same witness-stand the bailiff whose shameless disregard of his duty, in intruding upon that privacy, forms his only qualification as a witness and the sole tenor of his testimony. If there cannot be any principle in this rule, it should at least possess logic.

In the following passages, its defects have been sufficiently exposed :

1805, *Livingston, J.*, in *Smith v. Cheetham*, 3 Caines 57, 59: "With proper submission to his lordship [Mansfield], it appears the best and highest evidence of which the case admits. If a man will voluntarily charge himself with a misdemeanor, why should he not be indulged? Are not criminals in England every day convicted and even executed on their own confession? And is not our State prison filled in the same way? . . . If we ask for stronger proofs, and at the same time adopt Lord Mansfield's rule of shutting the mouths of the jurors, we may as well at once close the door on all inquiries of the kind, and leave them to act and decide as they please."

1821, *Whyte, J.*, in *Crawford v. State*, 2 Yerg. 60, 67: "[The observation of Chief Justice Mansfield in *Owen v. Warhurton*, is] 'It was singular indeed that the only evidence the case admits should be shut out,' and yet that decision excluded it. It might be added, that it is also the best evidence the case admits of; the jury from their recluse and retired situation are not subject to inspection, nor their proceedings to observation, at least of

that kind to admit of a correct account to be given of them by an indifferent person. They themselves are alone adequate to a development of their own conduct and proceedings. In *Vaux v. Delavel*, Lord Mansfield says, the Court must derive their knowledge from other sources. What source? The law contemplates their seclusion; the only alternative is the ignominious eavesdropper. Surely the jurors who fill this important office are not to be put on a level with those who by their own conduct have debased themselves. But it is said in the argument, the receiving the affidavit of jurors is against public policy; it would expose them to the being tampered with, the effect of which would be numerous applications to set aside verdicts. The like objection applies to every witness — the possibility of being practiced upon. But this does not produce the effect; the danger is imaginary; jurors in general are above attacks of this kind; and for the honor of human nature, I think there are few that would be found capable of making the attempt. Again, it is said, public policy forbids that a man should attempt to invalidate what he has himself done; a juror to defeat, to contradict, to impeach the verdict he has given. We have seen that this was not the public policy of the period of our law before the time of Lord Mansfield, . . . and in England at this day a man may come forward as a witness in all the above cases [of alleged turpitude], except as a juror to impeach his verdict, which we have seen does not constitute the rule here; and which is not the better opinion in my humble judgment, as it is in opposition to all the other analogies of law. . . . A verdict under such circumstances is to be approached with great caution and great circumspection; but it is not altogether intangible, and beyond the reach of the redressing power of the Court; if it were, I for one would think it a defect in the administration of the justice of the country, and a defect in the policy of the law."

1866, *Cole, J.*, in *Wright v. Telegraph Co.*, 20 Ia. 195, 210: "While we do not feel entirely confident of its correctness, nor state it without considerable hesitation, yet we are not without that assurance which, under the circumstances, justifies us in laying down the following as the true rule: That affidavits of jurors may be received for the purpose of avoiding a verdict, to show any matter occurring during the trial or in the jury room, which does not essentially inhere in the verdict itself, as, that a juror was improperly approached by a party, his agent, or attorney; that witnesses or others conversed as to the facts or merits of the cause, out of court and in the presence of jurors; that the verdict was determined by aggregation and average, or by lot, or game of chance or other artifice or improper manner; but that such affidavit to avoid the verdict may not be received to show any matter which does essentially inhere in the verdict itself,² as, that the juror did not assent to the verdict; that he misunderstood the instructions of the Court, the statements of the witnesses, or the pleadings in the case; that he was unduly influenced by the statements or otherwise of his fellow-jurors, or mistaken in his calculations or judgment, or other matter resting alone in the juror's breast. That the verdict was obtained by lot, for instance, is a fact independent of the verdict itself, and which is not necessarily involved in it. While every verdict necessarily involves the pleadings, the evidence, the instructions, the deliberation, conversations, debates, and judgments of the jurors themselves; and the effect or influence of any of these upon the juror's mind, must rest in his own breast, and he is and ought to be concluded thereon by his solemn assent to and rendition of the verdict (*verdictum* — a true declaration). To allow a juror to make affidavit against the conclusiveness of the verdict by reason of and as to the effect and influence of any of these matters upon his mind, which in their very nature are, though untrue, incapable of disproof, would be practically to open the jury room to the importunities and appliances of parties and their attorneys, and, of course, thereby to unsettle verdicts and destroy their sanctity and conclusiveness. But to receive the affidavit of a juror as to the independent fact that the verdict was obtained by lot, or game of chance, or the like, is to receive his testimony as to a fact, which, if not true, can be readily and certainly disproved by his fellow-jurors; and to hear such proof

² This is the principle of § 2349, *ante*.

would have a tendency to diminish such practices and to purify the jury-room, by rendering such improprieties capable and probable of exposure, and consequently deterring jurors from resorting to them. . . . While it is certainly illegal and reprehensible in a juror, to resort to lot or the like to determine a verdict, which ought always to be the result of a deliberate judgment, yet such resort might not evince more turpitude tending to the discredit of his statement than would be evinced by a person not of the jury, in the espionage indicated by Lord Mansfield and necessary to gain a knowledge of the facts to enable him to make the affidavit. At all events the superior opportunities of knowledge and less liability to mistake, which the juror has over the spy, would entitle his statement to the most credit. And if, as is universally conceded, it is the *fact* of improper practice, which avoids the verdict, there is no reason why a Court should close its ears to the evidence of it from one class of persons, while it will hear it from another class, which stands in no more enviable light and is certainly no more entitled to credit. Nor does the consideration of the affidavits of jurors, for the purposes stated, contravene sound public policy. It is true, however, that public policy does require that when a juror has discharged his duty and rendered a verdict, such verdict should remain undisturbed and unaffected by any subsequent change of opinion upon any fact or pretext whatever; and, therefore, a juror should not be heard to contradict or impeach that which, in the legitimate discharge of his duty, he has solemnly asseverated. But when he has done an act entirely independent and outside of his duty and in violation of it and the law, there can be no sound public policy which should prevent a Court from hearing the best evidence of which the matter is susceptible, in order to administer justice to the party whose rights have been prejudiced by such unlawful act. In other words, public policy protects a juror in the legitimate discharge of his duty, and sanctifies the result attained thereby; but if he steps aside from his duty, and does an unlawful act, he is a competent witness to prove such fact, and thereby prevent the sanction of the law from attaching to that which would otherwise be colorably lawful."

1874, *Brewer, J., in Perry v. Bailey*, 12 Kan. 539, 544: "As to all those matters lying outside the personal consciousness of the individual juror, those things which are matters of sight and hearing, and therefore accessible to the testimony of others, and subject to contradiction, — 'overt acts,' as the Massachusetts Court expresses it, — it seems to us that the interests of justice will be promoted, and no sound public policy disturbed, if the secret of the jury-box is not permitted to be the safe cover for the perpetration of wrongs upon parties litigant. If the jury has been guilty of no misconduct, no harm has been done by permitting their testimony to be received. If the jury has been guilty of misconduct, but such misconduct was not of such a nature as to prejudice the rights of the parties, the modern rule is to let the verdict stand, and simply punish the offending juror. But if such misconduct has wrought prejudice, not only should the juror be punished, but the verdict also should be set aside. Public policy forbids that a matter resting in the personal consciousness of one juror should be received to overthrow the verdict, because, being personal, it is not accessible to other testimony. It gives to the secret thought of one the power to disturb the expressed conclusions of twelve. Its tendency is to induce bad faith on the part of a minority; to induce an apparent acquiescence with the purpose of subsequent dissent; to induce tampering with individual jurors subsequent to the verdict. But as to overt acts, they are accessible to the knowledge of all the jurors. If one affirms misconduct, the remaining eleven can deny. One cannot disturb the action of the twelve. It is useless to tamper with one, for the eleven may be heard."

§ 2354. **Same: State of the Law in Various Jurisdictions; Qualifications of the Rule.** The doctrine of Lord Mansfield was so rapidly accepted that most of the Courts had committed themselves upon the subject long before the opinion of Mr. Justice Cole of Iowa, in 1866, was delivered. The exposition of Mr. Justice White, in Tennessee, in 1821, which had accurately pointed

out the true nature of the innovation, seems to have received no consideration from other Courts. Except in six jurisdictions, where the rule of Iowa is accepted,¹ the rule of Lord Mansfield seems now too firmly settled in most jurisdictions to be repudiated by judicial decision.²

¹ Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, Tennessee, Texas (criminal cases), and Federal Courts; in Ohio there is some doubt; in nearly a dozen Codes there is one express exception.

² The various rulings and statutes are as follows; certain distinctions made in some of them are noticed later in the text above: *Arkansas*: 1853, *Stanton v. State*, 13 Ark. 317, 319 (juror's affidavit as to a fellow-juror's absence from the room, said to be "subject to many serious objections"); 1855, *Pleasants v. Heard*, 15 id. 403, 408 (jurors' affidavits that damages were determined by average, held inadmissible, as well as jurors' admissions out of doors after verdict); *Gantt's Dig.* § 1971, *Manafield's Dig.* § 2298, *Sandels & Hill's Dig.* 1894, § 2269 ("a juror cannot be examined to establish [in criminal cases] a ground for a new trial, except it be to establish as a ground for a new trial that the verdict was made by lot"); 1874, *Wilder v. State*, 29 id. 298, 298 (statute applied to exclude jurors' testimony as to a bailiff's undue influence); 1879, *Fain v. Goodwin*, 35 id. 109, 113 (statute applied to exclude an affidavit as to jurors acting upon personal knowledge); 1887, *Ward v. Blackwood*, 48 id. 396, 3 S. W. 624 (juror's affidavit that damages were determined by drawing lots, excluded, following *Pleasants v. Heard*, *supra*); 1894, *Smith v. State*, 59 id. 132, 26 S. W. 712 (juror's affidavit not received to show the taking of evidence after retirement); *California*: 1854, *Amaly v. Dickhouse*, 4 Cal. 103 (juror's affidavit as to improper remarks during retirement, excluded); 1855, *Wilson v. Berryman*, 5 id. 44, 46 (computing damages by average; jurors' affidavits excluded); 1862, *Practice Act*, § 193, C. C. P. 1872, § 657 (where "any one or more of the jurors have been induced to assent" to a verdict by "a resort to the determination of chance, such misconduct may be proved by the affidavit of any one of the jurors"); 1863, *Donner v. Palmer*, 23 Cal. 40, 47 (statute applied to a verdict based upon guessing the face of a coin); 1864, *Turner v. Water Co.*, 25 id. 398, 401 ("as the law now stands, there are certain irregularities fatal to a verdict which may be proved by the affidavits of the jurors, and certain other irregularities equally fatal which can only be proved in the manner authorized by the common law"; here, the reckoning of damages by average was held improper, but not a "chance verdict," and therefore not provable by jurors' affidavits); 1864, *Boyce v. Stage Co.*, ib. 460, 474, 477 (preceding opinion approved and the same ruling made; the history of the above statute explained); 1882, *People v. Gray*, 61 id. 164, 183 (jurors' affidavits as to intoxication, excluded); 1891, *People v. Deegan*, 88 id. 602, 26 Pac. 500 (same); 1893, *Dixon v. Pluns*, 98 id. 384, 33 Pac. 268 (jurors' affidavits admitted to show determination of damages by average; *Turner v. Water*

Co., *supra*, repudiated on this point); 1893, *Weinburg v. Soms*, ib., 33 Pac. 341 (same); 1895, *People v. Azoff*, 105 id. 632, 39 Pac. 59 (jurors' affidavits that papers were illegally transmitted to them, excluded); 1901, *Stensen v. Electric R. Co.*, 134 id. 494, 66 Pac. 672 (jurors' affidavits to prove misconduct in visiting the premises in question, excluded); *Colorado*: C. C. P. 1895, § 217 (juror's affidavit receivable to show a "determination by chance"); 1890, *Knight v. Fisher*, 15 Colo. 176, 25 Pac. 78 (jurors' affidavits offered to show a determination of damages by average; question reserved); 1895, *Heller v. People*, 22 id. 11, 43 Pac. 124 (jurors' affidavits not received to show intoxication and other misconduct of fellow-jurors); *Connecticut*: 1824, *State v. Freeman*, 5 Conn. 348 (jurors' affidavits as to a fellow-juror's communication of personal knowledge on a fact not in evidence and not admissible, excluded; repudiating the earlier local practices to the contrary, as indicated in *Talmadge v. Northrop*, 1 Root 522, in 1793); 1824, *Meade v. Smith*, 18 id. 346, 356 (foregoing case approved); 1844, *State v. Fasset*, ib. 457, 466 (rule applied to grand jurors' testimony as to illegal testimony before them); *Delaware*: 1881, *Crossdale v. Tatum*, 6 Houst. 218 (jurors' affidavits not received to show a determination of damages by average); *Florida*: 1897, *Kelly v. State*, 39 Fla. 122, 22 So. 303 (general principle against impeachment, applied); *Georgia*: 1811, *State v. Doon*, R. M. Charl. 1 (Lord Mansfield's doctrine in *Vaise v. Delaval*, approved *obiter*); 1850, *Bishop v. State*, 9 Ga. 121, 125 (general principle that jurors cannot "impeach their own verdict," conceded *obiter*); 1853, *Clark v. Carter*, 12 id. 500, 503 (same); 1859, *Brown v. State*, 28 id. 199, 200, 217 (juror's affidavit that a fellow-juror gave private testimony to them, excluded); 1860, *McElven v. State*, 30 id. 869, 871 (same); 1867, *O'Barr v. Alexander*, 37 id. 195, 200, 203 (juror's affidavit as to the jurors' drinking of whiskey, excluded); 1869, *Hoye v. State*, 39 id. 718, 728 (like *Brown v. State*, *supra*); 1877, *Moughon v. State*, 59 id. 308 (juror's affidavit to a fellow-juror's improper bias during retirement, excluded); 1877, *Oatis v. Frown*, ib. 711, 717 (like *Brown v. State*, *supra*); 1893, *Hill v. State*, 91 id. 153, 16 So. 976 (like *Moughon v. State*, *supra*); 1892, *McTyler v. State*, ib. 254, 18 So. 140 (apparently similar); 1893, *Cornwall v. State*, ib. 277, 18 So. 154 (apparently similar); 1895, *Carr v. State*, 96 id. 284, 22 So. 570 (jurors' affidavits that newspaper reports were read, excluded); 1897, *Bolden v. R. Co.*, 102 id. 558, 27 S. E. 664 (general principle affirmed); *Hawaii*: 1882, *Kapohaku v. Koa*, 6 Haw. 326 (juror's affidavit as to another juror's conversation with an officer during the deliberations, admitted); *Idaho*: Rev. St. 1887, § 4438, subdiv. 2, Code Civ. Pr. 1901,

It remains to notice certain discriminations and qualifications.

(1) What kinds of misconduct of jurors shall constitute an irregularity sufficient to avoid the verdict is to be determined by the law of jury-pro-

§ 3524, subdlv. 2 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 657); 1893, *Flood v. McClure*, 3 Ida. 587, 32 Pac. 254 (jurors' affidavits that damages were determined by average, held admissible under the statute, such a verdict being a "determination of chance"; the California rulings upon the like statute, repudiated); 1895, *Griffiths v. Montaulon*, 4 id. 377, 39 Pac. 548 (rule of the California Code, as adopted in the Idaho statutes, § 4439, and interpreted in *Boyce v. Stage Co.*, Cal., applied, notwithstanding erroneous punctuation in the Idaho Code; here applied to misconduct in taking a private view); *Illinois*: 1820, *Sawyer v. Stebbenson*, 1 Ill. 24 (juror's affidavit of personal knowledge communicated by another juror after retirement, admitted; no question raised); 1823, *Forester v. Guard*, lb. 74 (similar facts, affidavit excluded); 1860, *Martin v. Ehrenfels*, 24 id. 187, 189 (unspecified misconduct; jurors' affidavits excluded); 1863, *Reins v. People*, 80 id. 256, 266, 274 (similar to *Forester v. Guard*, supra); 1867, *Allison v. People*, 45 id. 37, 39 (jurors' affidavits, and others' affidavits founded on jurors' statements, not admitted to show misconduct in permitting the constable to join in their discussions); 1868, *Peck v. Brewer*, 48 id. 54, 62 (like *Martin v. Ehrenfels*, supra); 1871, *Chicago v. Dermody*, 61 id. 481, 436 (general principle affirmed); 1873, *Bertholf v. Quinlan*, 68 id. 297, 303 (similar); 1878, *Reed v. Thompson*, 88 id. 245, 247 (similar; applying it to the determination of damages by average); 1885, *Roy v. Golings*, 112 id. 656, 367 (similar, forbidding a questioning of the jurors upon rendering the verdict); 1893, *Sanitary District v. Cullerton*, 147 id. 885, 389, 35 N. E. 723 (jurors' affidavits of unspecified misconduct, excluded); *Indiana*: 1840, *Drummond v. Leslie*, 5 Blackf. 453 (affidavit or admission of jurors that damages were determined by average, excluded); 1846, *Dunn v. Hall*, 8 id. 32, 34 (same); 1851, *Bennett v. State*, 3 Ind. 167, 170 (jurors' affidavits not received to show an improper agreement as to the balloting); 1861, *McCray v. Stewart*, 16 id. 377 (general principle affirmed); 1867, *Haun v. Wilson*, 80 id. 296, 298 (like *Drummond v. Leslie*, supra); 1876, *Stanley v. Sutherland*, 54 id. 339, 356 (jurors' statements or affidavits as to fellow-jurors' communication of personal belief, excluded); 1883, *Jones v. State*, 89 id. 82, 87 (jurors' affidavits that a book had been improperly read, held inadmissible); 1884, *Long v. State*, 95 id. 481, 485 (similar); 1887, *Taylor v. Garnett*, 110 id. 290, 11 N. E. 309 (jurors' affidavits excluded, as in *Stanley v. Sutherland*, supra; prior doctrine confirmed in a careful opinion by *Zollars, J.*); 1890, *Honk v. Allen*, 126 id. 589, 25 N. E. 897 (jurors' affidavits that a verdict was obtained by majority-agreement, excluded); *Iowa*: 1851, *Abel v. Kennedy*, 3 G. Gr. 47 (jurors' affidavits, held inadmissible, when alone offered as the basis of the motion, to prove their misconduct); 1856, *Forshee v. Abrams*, 2 Ia. 571, 578 (jurors' affidavits as to misconduct in determining damages by average, apparently held admissible under Code § 1810; but jurors held not compellable to make affidavits); 1856, *Cook v. Sypber*, 3 id. 484, 486 (jurors' affidavits said *obiter* to be inadmissible in general to impeach their verdict); 1857, *State v. Grady*, 4 id. 461 (like *Forshee v. Abrams*, supra, on the point of non-compellability); 1858, *Manix v. Malony*, 7 id. 81, 83 (juror's affidavit held admissible to show a determination of damages by average); 1858, *Ruble v. McDonald*, lb. 90 (same, for a verdict reached by lot); 1859, *Schanler v. Porter*, lb. 481 (like *Manix v. Malony*, supra); 1860, *Stewart v. R. Co.*, 11 id. 62, 65 (jurors' affidavits held admissible to show the reading of a paper illegally in their hands); 1860, *State v. Accola*, lb. 246 (similar); 1861, *Crumley v. Adkins*, 12 id. 863 (like *State v. Grady*, supra); 1863, *Shepherd v. Brenton*, 15 id. 84, 89 (preceding cases approved); 1866, *Wright v. Tel. Co.*, 20 id. 195, 212 (jurors' affidavits held admissible to prove misconduct and irregularity; quoted supra); 1873, *Bingham v. Foster*, 87 id. 339 (jurors' affidavits that fellow-jurors gave personal testimony during retirement, excluded; erroneously applying the rule in *Wright v. Tel. Co.*, supra); 1874, *Dunlavy v. Watson*, 38 id. 398, 402 (similar); 1888, *Griffin v. Harriman*, 74 id. 438, 88 N. W. 189 (similar); 1896, *State v. Whalen*, 98 id. 662, 68 N. W. 554 (jurors' affidavits that a law-book was unlawfully read and expounded by a juror, admitted; this is correct, but of course inconsistent with the preceding three rulings); *Kansas*: 1874, *Perry v. Bailey*, 12 Kan. 539, 548 (juror's affidavit to show overt acts of misconduct in general, held admissible; here, to show a fellow-juror's intoxication; quoted supra); 1879, *Johnson v. Husband*, 22 id. 277, 285 (jurors' affidavits admitted to show a determination of damages by average); 1885, *State v. Clark*, 84 Kan. 289, 8 Pac. 528 (jurors' affidavits that certain documents were illegally read and considered by the jury, admitted); 1889, *Atchison T. & S. F. R. Co. v. Bayes*, 42 id. 609, 22 Pac. 741 (jurors' affidavits admitted to show another juror's improper statements of personal knowledge); 1896, *State v. McCormick*, 67 id. 440, 46 Pac. 777 (like the preceding case); 1898, *Wichita v. Stallings*, 59 id. 779, 54 Pac. 689 (jurors' affidavits admitted to show a determination of damage by averaging; *Doster, C. J.*, diss., on the ground that "the method by which a conclusion of fact is reached by the jury" is not within the principle); *Kentucky*: 1808, *Taylor v. Giger*, *Hardin* 595, 597 (jurors' affidavits not admissible to show "misbehavior in themselves and their fellow-jurors"); 1826, *Doran v. Shaw*, 3 T. B. Monr. 411, 415 (preceding rule approved); 1821, *Steele v. Logan*, 8 A. K. Marsh. 394, 396 (jurors' affidavits that a

cedure; given such irregularities, and the present rule applies. Of this sort, plainly, are the acts of intoxication, separation, private view, consultation of

fellow-juror gave personal testimony during retirement, excluded, on the principle that they were inadmissible to prove "anything which may have transpired in the jury-room whilst consulting of their verdict"; 1830, *Johnson v. Davenport*, 3 J. J. Marsh. 390, 393 (preceding rule approved); 1896, *Pittsburg Coal Co. v. Withers*, — Ky. —, 37 S. W. 584 (jurors' affidavits of unspecified tenor, excluded); *Louisiana*: 1823, *Campbell v. Miller*, 1 Mart. N. S. 514, 518 (juror's affidavit not admitted to show a fellow-juror's communication of personal evidence after retirement); 1877, *Hawkins v. Publishing Co.*, 29 La. An. 134, 139 (juror's affidavit to his receipt of a bribe, through the court crier, during the jury's presence in court, apparently treated as admissible, but not "decided authoritatively"); 1878, *State v. Beatty*, 30 id. 1266 (juror's statements as to a fellow-juror's offer of a bribe during retirement, excluded); 1880, *State v. Nelson*, 32 id. 842 (juror's testimony to misconduct, apparently in reading law-books, excluded); 1883, *State v. Chretien*, 35 id. 1081 (general principle affirmed that jurors may not impeach their verdict); 1890, *State v. Richmond*, 42 id. 299, 7 So. 459 (juror's affidavit as to improper separation, excluded); 1903, *State v. Riggs*, 110 La. 509, 34 So. 655 ("an overt act can be shown by the testimony of a juror"; here, intimidation of a juror; following *Mattox v. U. S., Fed.*, and *Perry v. Bailey*, Kan.); *Maine*: 1867 *Heffron v. Gallupe*, 55 Me. 563, 566 (juror held not admissible to prove irregularity or misconduct during the jury's deliberations; except perhaps "such gross misconduct" as a party's attempt to bribe, etc.); 1876, *State v. Pike*, 65 id. 111, 117 (juror's affidavit that a legal report was read to the jury, excluded); 1890, *Shepherd v. Camden*, 82 Me. 535, 20 Atl. 91 (juror's testimony that he communicated personal knowledge during retirement, excluded); *Massachusetts*: 1832, *Dorr v. Fenno*, 12 Pick. 520, 525 ("The rule is now perfectly well-settled in both countries, and may be laid down to be that the testimony of jurors is inadmissible to show their own misbehavior, but may be received to explain or contradict other evidence tending to impeach their conduct"; here not received to show a determination of damages by averaging); 1837, *Hannum v. Belchertown*, 19 id. 311, 313 (same; doubling damages under a statute requiring double damages); 1852, *Cook v. Castner*, 9 Cush. 266, 278 (like the next case); 1853, *Folsom v. Manchester*, 11 id. 334, 337 (misconduct of a juror in stating his personal knowledge privately to the others; excluded); 1854, *Boston and Worcester R. Co. v. Dana*, 1 Gray 83, 91, 105 (like *Dorr v. Fenno*); 1855, *Chadborn v. Franklin*, 5 id. 312, 315 (taking a private view of the locality in issue; excluded); 1885, *Rowe v. Canney*, 139 Mass. 41, 29 N. E. 219 (unspecified improper utterance by one juror to another; excluded); 1888, *Com. v. White*, 147 id. 76, 80, 16 N. E. 707 (juror's testimony to another's expressions of opinion during trial and to threats by him and the foreman, excluded; the rule applying equally to misconduct out of the courtroom, if during the pendency of the trial); 1892, *Com. v. Meserve*, 156 id. 61, 30 N. E. 166 (jurors' affidavits, and testimony of others as to admissions out of court, about a juror's giving of personal testimony during retirement, excluded); *Michigan*: 1896, *Merriman's Appeal*, 168 Mich. 454, 462, 66 N. W. 372 (jurors' affidavits to their own misconduct, excluded; here the misconduct was unspecified, except that it included expressions of bias); *Minnesota*: 1853-7, *St. Martin v. Desnoyer*, 1 Minn. 156, 159 (jurors' affidavits not admitted to show damages determined by average); 1879, *State v. Mims*, 26 id. 183, 2 N. W. 494, 683 (unspecified misconduct; jurors' affidavits excluded); 1880, *Bradt v. Rommel*, ib. 505, 5 N. W. 680 (similar); 1891, *State v. Lentz*, 45 id. 177, 47 N. W. 720 (jurors' affidavits as to the reading of newspaper reports and the misstatements of a juror as to the law, excluded); 1897, *Rush v. R. Co.*, 70 id. 5, 72 N. W. 733 (general principle applied); *Mississippi*: 1839, *Prussel v. Knowles*, 4 How. 90, 95 ("the rule is well settled that a juror shall not impeach his verdict"); *Missouri*: 1862, *Pratte v. Coffman*, 33 Mo. 71, 77 (jurors' testimony to misconduct, held generally inadmissible, with exceptions for serious cases where a foundation has been laid by other evidence; here, not received to show the improper reading of law-books); 1866, *Sawyer v. R. Co.*, 37 id. 240, 263 (juror's affidavit that the damages were determined by average, excluded); 1867, *State v. Coupenhaver*, 39 id. 430 (similar ruling, as to a verdict by majority vote); 1877, *State v. Branstetter*, 65 id. 149, 156 (jurors' affidavits that a sentence was determined by average, excluded; repudiating the qualification intimated in *Pratt v. Coffman, supra*); 1877, *State v. Alexander*, 66 id. 148, 163 (juror's affidavit as to his improper communication with the judge, excluded); 1878, *Phillips v. Stewart*, 69 id. 149 (juror's affidavit that damages were determined by average, excluded); 1883, *State v. Dunn*, 80 id. 681, 694 (principle applied to misconduct in the manner of reaching the verdict); 1884, *State v. Cooper*, 85 id. 256, 261 (principle applied to misconduct in giving personal testimony during retirement); 1888, *State v. Rnsh*, 95 id. 99, 8 S. W. 221 (like the preceding case); 1892, *Easley v. R. Co.*, 113 id. 236, 20 S. W. 1073 (principle applied to misconduct in taking a private view); 1894, *State v. Wood*, 124 id. 412, 27 S. W. 1112 (like *State v. Branstetter, supra*); *Montana*: *C. C. P.* 1895, § 296, subdv. 2 (like *Cal. C. C. P.* 657); 1893, *Gordon v. Trevarthan*, 13 Mont. 387, 34 Pac. 185 (statute applied to admit jurors' affidavits that damages were determined by average; *Turner v. Water Co., Cal., supra*, not followed in its interpretation of "determination of chance"); *Nebraska*: 1888, *Harris v. State*, 24 Nebr. 803, 40 N. W. 317 (juror's misconduct in procuring law-books, etc., and

witness or party, acceptance of bribes, and reading of illegal documents. But there are some kinds of behavior which, though commonly classed as mis-

reading from them, allowed to be proved by other jurors' affidavits; rule in *Perry v. Bailey*, Kan., followed, as "much more reasonable and promotive of justice"; 1892, *Johnson v. Parrotta*, 34 id. 26, 51 N. W. 290 (jurors' admissions that he had given personal testimony and that he was prejudiced, excluded); 1895, *Gran v. Houston*, 45 id. 813, 64 N. W. 246 (jurors' affidavits as to conversations in the jury-room showing prejudices and improper motives, excluded); 1903, *Falls City v. Sperry*, — id. —, 94 N. W. 529 (expressions of personal knowledge); *New Hampshire*: 1827, *Tyler v. Stevens*, 4 N. H. 116 (general principle of exclusion laid down); 1851, *State v. Ayer*, 23 id. 301, 321 (same); 1879, *Dodge v. Carroll*, 59 id. 237 (jurors' affidavits that damages were determined by average, excluded); 1882, *Knight v. Epsom*, 62 id. 356, 361 (like the preceding case, which however is not cited); 1888, *Clark v. Manchester*, 64 id. 471, 18 Atl. 867 (like the preceding case); 1890, *Palmer v. State*, 65 id. 221, 19 Atl. 1003 (general principle held to exclude a juror's expressions of bias); *New Jersey*: 1790, *Brewster v. Thompson*, 1 N. J. L. 32 (a juror's affidavit that the verdict was reached by lot, excluded); 1823, *Den v. M'Allister*, 2 id. 46, 51 (jurors' affidavits stating a communication to them of private knowledge by a fellow-juror, excluded, because "it is a high misdemeanor" and "criminate the jurors themselves"; *Rossell, J. diss.*); 1842, *Kennedy v. Kennedy*, 18 id. 450, 454 (principle affirmed); 1849, *Deacon v. Shreve*, 22 id. 176, 181 (jurors' affidavits as to a private meeting with the parties, held inadmissible, as also testimony to the jurors' admissions of the fact during a recess of court, otherwise, if the juror's statement had been "part of the transaction and while the alleged payment was being made"); 1893, *Peters v. Fogarty*, 55 id. 386, 26 Atl. 855 (general principle affirmed); *New York*: 1809, *Dana v. Tucker*, 4 John. 487 (damages determined by average; "the better opinion is, and such is the rule adopted by the Court, that the affidavits of jurors are not to be received to impeach a verdict"; *Smith v. Cheetham, ante*, § 2352, not mentioned; *Kent, C. J.*, who there dissented, was still on the bench, and *Livingston, J.*, the champion of the contrary view in the earlier decision, had retired); 1825, *Sargent v. —*, 5 Cow. 106, 120 (*Dana v. Tucker* approved; *Smith v. Cheetham* treated as overruled); 1843, *Clum v. Smith*, 5 Hill 560 (jurors' affidavits not received to show misconduct in separating and obtaining information outside); 1875, *Williams v. Montgomery*, 60 N. Y. 648 (jurors' affidavits of unspecified misconduct, excluded); *North Carolina*: 1821, *State v. M'Leod*, 1 Hawks 344 (unspecified misconduct; jurors' affidavits excluded); 1883, *State v. Brittain*, 89 N. C. 481, 504 (jurors not allowed to be examined to show undue influence by the deputy-sheriff); 1886, *Lafoon v. Shearin*, 95 id. 391, 394 (juror's affidavit that he gave personal testimony after retirement, excluded); *North Dakota*: *Rev. C. 1899*, § 5472, par. 2 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 657); *Ohio*: 1841, *Hulet v. Barnett*, 10 Oh. 459 (jurors' affidavits that the jury took evidence from the constable after retirement, excluded); 1853, *Farrer v. State*, 2 Oh. St. 54, 73, 77 (jurors' affidavits held admissible to show misconduct in reading newspapers, etc., but only in an "exceptional case," and after a foundation laid "by other means than the affidavits of the jurors themselves"); *Oregon*: 1853, *Cline v. Broy*, 1 Or. 89 (juror's affidavit that damages were determined by average, excluded); *Pennsylvania*: 1811, *Cluggage v. Swan*, 4 Binn. 150, 155 (juror's affidavit that the verdict was reached by lot, held inadmissible, per *Yeates, J.*; *Tilghman, C. J.*, and *Brackenridge, J.*, expressing no opinion; quoted *supra*); 1821 *Ritchie v. Holbrooke*, 7 S. & R. 458 (juror's affidavit of another juror's having admitted consulting privately with a party to the cause, held admissible; *Tilghman, C. J.*, distinguishing *Cluggage v. Swan* as involving the juror's own misconduct); 1835, *White v. White*, 5 Rawle 61, 63 (jurors' affidavits "are inadmissible to inculpate their fellows or themselves"; here, to prove damages reckoned by average); 1893, *Smalley v. Morris*, 157 Pa. 349, 27 Atl. 734 (preceding cases approved); 1900, *Stull v. Stull*, 197 id. 243, 67 Atl. 240 (verdict reached by lottery; jurors' affidavits excluded); *Rhode Island*: 1891, *Luft v. Linganie*, 17 R. I. 420, 22 Atl. 942 (jurors' affidavits not received to show determination of damages by average); *South Carolina*: 1814, *Price v. M'Ilvain*, 3 Brev. 419 (jurors' declarations or affidavits not receivable to prove a fellow-juror's statement of personal knowledge and expression of bias after retirement); 1834, *M'Kain v. Love*, 2 Hill 506 (juror's testimony to a fellow-juror's statement, after retirement, of personal belief as to a witness' character, admitted, but on the ground that such communication of personal belief was not improper in respect to a witness's character); 1855, *Smith v. Culbertson*, 9 Rich. L. 106, 111 (jurors' affidavits that the verdict was reached by lot, held inadmissible; good opinion by *Wardlaw, J.*); 1856, *State v. Tindall*, 10 id. 212 ("We never listen to the affidavit of a juror ascribing misconduct to himself or fellows in the jury-room"; here, the reading of papers improperly before them during retirement); *South Dakota*: *Stats. 1901*, § 6306, par. 2 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 657); 1891, *Gainee v. White*, 1 S. D. 434, 441, 47 N. W. 524 (unspecified misconduct; statute applied); 1891, *Ulrick v. Dakota L. & T. Co.*, 2 id. 285, 294, 49 N. W. 1054 (jurors' affidavits that damages were determined by average, excluded; following *Boyce v. Stage Co., Cal.*); 1897, *Thompson Co. v. Junderson*, 10 id. 42, 71 N. W. 764 (jurors' affidavit not received to show an improper separation); *Tennessee*: 1821, *Crawford v. State*, 2 Yerg. 60 (jurors' affidavits admissible "to exhibit to the Court matter for setting aside the

conduct constituting an irregularity, ought perhaps rather to fall under the head of methods of reasoning and grounds of verdict, and thus to be governed by the other principle (*ante*, § 2349):

(a) The determination of a verdict by lot or other chance, and the estimation of damages by average, seem to be of this sort.³ Under the rule of Lord

verdict they themselves have rendered"; quoted *supra*; 1833, *Booby v. State*, 4 Id. 111 (juror's affidavit that a fellow-juror had stated his own knowledge after retirement, admitted); 1836, *Hudson v. State*, 9 Id. 407, 411 (preceding case approved on this point); 1839, *Elledge v. Todd*, 1 Humph. 43 (juror's affidavit that the verdict had been reached by averaging, held admissible); 1842, *Norris v. State*, 3 Id. 333, 337 (preceding cases approved on this point); 1872, *Wade v. Ordway*, 1 Baxt. 229, 236, 244 (juror's affidavit that another juror had taken a private view and communicated his observations, admitted); *Texas*: 1846, *Mason v. Russell*, 1 Tex. 721, 726 (jurors' affidavits, not admitted to show unspecified "irregularities of their proceedings, while out and considering of their verdict"); 1848, *Cannon v. State*, 8 Id. 31 (same general principle affirmed); 1852, *Burns v. Paine*, 8 Id. 159 (same principle implied); 1852, *Handleigh v. Leigh*, ib. 129 (like the next case); 1888, *Internationals & G. N. R. Co. v. Gordon*, 72 Id. 44, 11 S. W. 1033 (juror's affidavit that damages were determined by average, excluded); *C. Cr. P.* 1895, § 817, par. 8 (new trial allowable "where from the misconduct of the jury the Court is of opinion that the defendant has not received a fair and impartial trial, and it shall be competent to prove such misconduct by the voluntary affidavit of a juror; and a verdict may in like manner in such cases be sustained by such affidavit"); 1895, *Mitchell v. State*, 36 Tex. Cr. 278, 33 S. W. 367, 36 S. W. 456 (jurors' affidavits that fellow-jurors had stated their personal knowledge after retirement, admitted); 1896, *Ray v. State*, 35 Id. 354, 33 S. W. 869 (similar); *United States*: 1851, *U. S. v. Reid*, 12 How. 361, 362, 366 (jurors' affidavits that they read a newspaper report of the evidence during retirement but were not influenced by it; question not decided; "It would perhaps hardly be safe to lay down any general rule upon this subject"); 1890, *Hyman v. Eames*, 41 Fed. 676, *Hallett, J.* (jurors' affidavits as to a fellow-juror's statements of personal knowledge during retirement, admitted, to corroborate evidence of prejudice expressed before trial); 1890, *Fuller v. Fletcher*, 44 Id. 34, 39, *Gray, J.* (jurors' affidavits admitted to show that a paper was not read by them); 1892, *Stox v. U. S.*, 146 U. S. 140, 142, 147, 13 S. W. 50 (jurors' affidavits that newspaper comments were read to them during retirement and that the bailiff made statements concerning the case, admitted; rule of *Woodward v. Leavitt, Mass.*, and *Perry v. Bailey, Kan.*, approved); 1893, *Consolidated I. M. Co. v. Trenton H. I. Co.*, 57 Fed. 898, *Green, J.* (juror's affidavit not admitted to show a determination of damages by average); *Utah*: *Rev. St.* 1898, § 3292, par. 3 (like *Cal. C. C. P.* § 657); 1893, *Homer v. Inter-Mountain A. Co.*, 9 Utah 193, 33 Pac. 700 (jurors' affidavits not received to show the jurors' improper reading of a book of accounts); 1895, *People v. Ritchie*, 12 Id. 180, 42 Pac. 209 (juror's testimony "cannot be received to defeat his own verdict," — here, by showing an unauthorized view; the statute not applying to criminal cases, nor permitting self-impeachment other than on the specified charge of resorting to chance); 1903, *Black v. R. M. B. Tel. Co.*, 26 Id. 451, 73 Pac. 514 (preceding case approved); *Vermont*: 1802, *Robbins v. Windover*, 2 Tyl. 11 (juror's affidavit that fellow-jurors "related certain matters and things, in relation to the issue, to others of the panel after the cause was submitted to them, not witnessed on the trial of the cause in court," excluded); 1865, *Sheldon v. Perkins*, 37 Vt. 550, 557 (jurors' affidavits not admissible to show "any impropriety in the conduct of the jury or improper mode of arriving at the verdict"); 1893, *Carpenter v. Willey*, 65 Id. 188, 26 Atl. 488 (jurors' affidavits that damages were determined by average, excluded); *Virginia*: 1812, *Com. v. McCaul*, 1 Va. Cas. 271, 275, 302 (juror's affidavit as to his separation from the jury, admitted; no question raised on this point); 1851, *Thompson v. Com.*, 8 Gratt. 637, 650 (jurors' affidavits as to determining a sentence by average; not decided, "because it has never yet been so maturely considered and solemnly adjudged in Virginia . . . as to render it a settled question in cases either civil or criminal"); 1884, *Moses v. Cromwell*, 78 Va. 671, 675 (jurors' affidavits that damages were determined by average, not admitted); 1889, *Elam v. Commercial Bank*, 86 Id. 92, 9 S. E. 498 (jurors' affidavits as to unspecified misconduct, excluded); 1893, *Taylor v. Com.*, 90 Id. 109, 17 S. E. 812 (general principle affirmed); *West Virginia*: 1876, *Chesapeake & O. R. Co. v. Patton*, 9 W. Va. 648, 662 (juror's affidavit that damages were determined by average, excluded); 1889, *Bartlett v. Patton*, 33 Id. 71, 10 S. E. 21 (jurors' affidavits that a fellow-juror gave personal testimony after retirement, excluded); *Wisconsin*: 1864, *Edmister v. Garrison*, 18 Wis. 594 (jurors' affidavits to unspecified misconduct, excluded); 1867, *Shaw v. Fisk*, 21 Id. 368 (jurors' affidavits that they were incompetent by ignorance of English, and had to have an interpreter in the jury-room, excluded on the latter point); 1894, *Peppercorn v. Black River Falls*, 89 Id. 38, 61 N. W. 79 (jurors' affidavits that they took a private view, admitted, the rule applying only to "matters taking place during their retirement"); *Wyoming*: 1895, *Bunce v. McMahon*, 6 Wyo. 24, 42 Pac. 23 (jurors' affidavits that a paper was illegally introduced and read in the jury-room, excluded).

³ They were so considered by Baron Parke,

Mansfield, the result is of course the same in either class of cases; but under the Iowa rule the effect would be to exclude under the other principle (*ante*, § 2349) what would otherwise be admissible under the present one. The curious circumstance is that the single exception made to the prohibitive rule by the Codes following the California Code is directed to this kind of misconduct, *i. e.* the very one of all upon which no exception should exist. Moreover, of the usual rule (excluding jurors' testimony upon this point) it may be said that since a determination by lot can hardly ever be established by other than jurors' testimony, it becomes a mere pretence to declare a certain irregularity fatal and yet to exclude all practical means of proving it;⁴ so that the franker plan would be to decline to recognize it as falling under the class of irregularities of conduct. The only substantial reason for treating it as such is that it virtually signifies that the jury never deliberated at all, — which however is seldom the fact.

(b) The communication of a juror's personal knowledge during retirement is of course improper, since the juror ought to offer himself upon the stand as a witness (*ante*, § 1800). Nevertheless, his use and his fellows' use of that information during their deliberations is rather to be regarded as affecting the grounds of their verdict, and thus as falling under the other principle (*ante*, § 2349).

(2) Under the Iowa rule, a juror's expressions of personal knowledge and of bias, uttered during retirement, are provable. But the genuine privilege for confidential communications (*ante*, § 2346) ought to exclude them, when offered from any one but the juror himself voluntarily. The object of the privilege is to enable the jurors to speak out freely; and if a juror has stated that he knows the plaintiff to be a villain or that he will always vote against a money-lender like the defendant, surely it is precisely such statements which he is entitled to prevent from being afterwards disclosed without his consent. The only opposing argument could be that the privilege ought not to cover statements by the juror involving his own breach of duty; yet there is no such limitation for the other classes of privileged communications, and none should exist here.

(3) The usual rule of exclusion, on Lord Mansfield's theory of forbidding self-stultification, (a) ought equally to prohibit his own affidavit of his own expressions of disqualifying bias uttered before entering or after leaving the panel;⁵ and (b) it ought equally to prohibit his own proof of his misconduct during the trial but outside the jury-room⁶ and (c) it ought equally to prohibit a juror's proof of similar misconduct in a fellow-juror, since the prin-

in *Straker v. Graham*, and by Chief Justice Doster, in *Wichita v. Stallings* (Kansas).

⁴ 1894, Field, C. J., in *Wright v. Abbott*, 160 Mass. 395, 397, 36 N. E. 32 ("Either the law that a verdict must be set aside if determined by lot is nugatory, because the fact cannot be proved; or there must be a possible means of proving it").

⁵ 1851, *People v. Baker*, 1 Cal. 404, 406

(juror's affidavit that he had expressed an opinion before trial, excluded).

⁶ *Contra*: 1868, *Heffron v. Gallu*, 55 Me. 563, 566 (juror's obtaining evidential papers from a party by calling at his house, admitted); 1901, *Pierce v. Brennan*, 84 Minn. 422, 86 N. W. 417; 1901, *Hempton v. State*, 111 Wis. 127, 86 N. W. 596.

ciple regards the jurors as a single body and the shibboleth of "impeaching the verdict" applies equally to the impeachment of a fellow-juror's conduct.⁷

(4) On the other hand, the same usual rule ought to admit a juror's testimony in support of a verdict attempted to be impeached by other testimony, whether the juror's testimony goes to deny or explain expressions of bias before the trial,⁸ or to deny or explain misconduct during retirement.⁹ The Iowa rule leads to the same result. Moreover, this object of disproving bias alleged to have existed before trial may be attained by showing the juror's expressions and conduct during retirement as an evidential fact relating back and negating the supposed prior bias.¹⁰ But where the object is to determine the grounds or motives of the verdict as in themselves important for sustaining it (for example, to show that a certain illegal paper or erroneous charge did not influence the verdict), here the other principle (*ante*, § 2349) applies to forbid this.¹¹ The distinction is that in the former case the juror's expres-

⁷ 1841, *Cain v. Cain*, 1 B. Monr. 213 (juror's affidavit of a fellow-juror's expressions of bias since the finding, excluded).

⁸ 1833, *Irvin v. State*, 19 Fla. 372, 390; 1836, *Hughes v. People*, 116 Ill. 330, 337, 6 N. E. 55; 1837, *Spies v. People*, 122 id. 1, 264, 12 N. E. 365, 17 N. E. 898; 1824, *Haskell v. Becket*, 3 Me. 92; 1824, *Taylor v. Greeley*, ib. 204; 1871, *Woodward v. Leavitt*, 107 Mass. 453, 459, 471.

⁹ Ark.: 1853, *Stanton v. State*, 18 Ark. 317, 319; 1855, *Pleasants v. Heard*, 15 id. 403, 408; Cal.: 1838, *People v. Goldenson*, 76 Cal. 352, 19 Pac. 161; 1892, *People v. Murray*, 94 id. 212, 29 Pac. 494; 1894, *People v. Stokes*, 103 id. 193, 37 Pac. 207, *semble*; 1895, *People v. Azoff*, 105 id. 632, 89 Pac. 59; Ill.: 1871, *Chicago v. Dermody*, 61 Ill. 431, 435; 1878, *Reed v. Thompson*, 88 id. 245, 247; Ind.: 1827, *Barlow v. State*, 2 Blackf. 114; 1865, *Alexander v. Thomas*, 25 Ind. 263; 1867, *Hann v. Wilson*, 28 id. 296, 298; 1883, *Jones v. State*, 89 id. 82, 88; Ky.: 1902, *Howard v. Com.*, — Ky. —, 69 S. W. 721 (juror's affidavit "may always be received to sustain the verdict"); La.: 1898, *State v. Favre*, 51 La. An. 434, 35 So. 93 (juror's disqualification by a previous bet on the trial); Mass.: 1827, *Hix v. Drury*, 5 Pick. 296, 302; 1871, *Woodward v. Leavitt*, 107 Mass. 453, 459, 466; Minn.: 1853-7, *St. Martin v. Deanoer*, 1 Minn. 156, 160; Mo.: 1874, *State v. Underwood*, 57 Mo. 40, 52 (tampering by outsiders); 1888, *State v. Rush*, 95 id. 99, 8 S. W. 221; Mont.: 1896, *State v. Gay*, 18 Mont. 51, 44 Pac. 411; N. H.: 1833, *State v. Hascall*, 6 N. H. 352, 362; 1843, *Tenney v. Evans*, 13 id. 462 (jurors' affidavits received, "in exculpation of themselves and in support of the verdict," "where evidence has been introduced *aliunde* to impeach the verdict"; here the affidavits to rebut bias stated that the juror in question had expressed no opinion on retirement until after the others; good opinion); 1845, *State v. Howard*, 17 id. 171, 187 (to repel evidence of bias expressed before trial, jurors' affidavits were admitted that they had at first during retirement, proposed a finding of mur-

in the second degree, instead of the verdict for the first degree as usually rendered); 1851, *State v. Ayer*, 23 id. 301, 303, 321 (juror's testimony denying and explaining alleged expressions of bias, held admissible); 1864, *Boynton v. Trumbull*, 45 id. 408 (reaching a verdict by lot); 1882, *Knight v. Epsons*, 62 id. 356; 1890, *Palmer v. State*, 65 id. 221, 19 Atl. 1003; N. J.: 1842, *Kennedy v. Kennedy*, 18 N. J. L. 450, 453 (jurors' affidavits received to prove a determination of damages by average); Nevada and Elmer, J.J., *disa.*; N. Y.: 1808, *Hackley v. Haotic*, 3 John. 252; 1809, *Dana v. Tucker*, 4 id. 487 (damages determined by average); S. D.: 1897, *Thompson Co. v. Gunderson*, 10 S. D. 42, 71 N. W. 764; Tex.: 1848, *Cannon v. State*, 8 Tex. 81; U. S.: 1799, *U. S. v. Fries*, 3 Dall. 515, 517 (juror admitted to disprove expressions of prejudice alleged to have been uttered after being summoned); Vt.: 1857, *Downer v. Baxter*, 30 Vt. 467, 475; 1882, *State v. Cartwright*, 20 W. Va. 32, 41 (jurors' affidavits in exculpation said to be inadmissible both in "reason and the theory of criminal proceedings"; yet "the practice has been" to receive them); 1882, *State v. Robinson*, ib. 713, 756 (jurors' testimony admissible "to disprove or explain any such separation, misconduct, or irregularity; but their testimony will not be received to show by what motives they were actuated, or that any admitted fact, misconduct, or irregularity had no influence or effect upon their minds in producing the verdict"); 1892, *State v. Harrison*, 36 W. Va. 729, 15 S. E. 922. *Contra*: 1822, *Coster v. Merest*, 3 B. & B. 272, C. P. (to rebut affidavits that prejudicial papers had been seen by the jury, affidavits of all the jurors, denying that they had seen them, were rejected; no authority cited).

¹⁰ As in *Tenney v. Evans*, *State v. Howard*, N. H., *supra*, note 9, on the principle of §§ 387, 950, *ante*.

¹¹ Yet a few Courts, misunderstanding the principle, have admitted this; the rulings are noted *ante*, § 2349. Compare *State v. Robinson*, W. Va., *supra*, note 9.

sions are not considered in their aspect as establishing motives for the verdict, but merely as part of his whole conduct going to determine the question of his former bias.

(5) The usual rule, upon Lord Mansfield's theory of forbidding self-stultification, (a) does not exclude the juror's testimony to the *misconduct of a party or a court officer*; ¹² though a few Courts, taking literally the phrase about "impeaching a verdict" have reached a contrary conclusion; ¹³ and it is true that, so far as the third person's misconduct involves also the juror's own misconduct, the latter would be prohibited. (b) Nor does the rule of thumb interpose to prohibit a *court officer* from testifying to the juror's misconduct, ¹⁴ — in spite of the plain inconsistency of principle, already noted (*ante*, § 2353). But, apart from that inconsistency, it would seem that the genuine privilege for confidential communications (*ante*, § 2346) should suffice to protect jurors completely against the disclosure of their utterances by a third person present at their deliberations, especially when his presence is unlawful.

(6) So far as any of the foregoing facts may be proved at all by jurors, they should be proved by the juror's own testimony under oath, either by affidavit or on the stand, and not by his *hearsay statements* reported by others. ¹⁵

§ 2355. (d) *Mistake in Announcing or Recording the Verdict.* The act of assent to the terms of a document is constituted by the act of signing. The act of assent to a verdict is constituted by the express answer to the clerk at the polling in open court, or by the silence which implies an assent. ¹ This outward act is final. Just as the act of the party to a deed is judged and determined by his outward conduct, so the act of a juror is judged and determined by the jury's polling, irrespective, on the one hand, of motives or beliefs which may have led up to the verdict's terms (*post*, § 2413), and, on the other hand, of the deliberations and utterances of the juror during retirement (*post*, § 2425). The very purpose of the formality of

¹² 1895, *Heiler v. People*, 22 Colo. 11, 43 Pac. 124 (bailiff's misconduct); 1858, *Spurek v. Crook*, 19 Ill. 415, 426 (juror may testify to improper conduct of the party in furnishing evidence after the hearing in court or to other acts of corruption or impropriety by the party); 1868, *Knowlton v. McMahon*, 13 Minn. 386 ("perhaps" they are admissible to show "the misconduct of the prevailing party"); 1850, *Neims v. State*, 13 Sm. & M. 500, 508 (Clayton, J., *dis.*; officer's misconduct).

¹³ 1893, *Sanitary District v. Cullerton*, 147 Ill. 385, 392, 85 N. E. 723 (officer's misconduct); 1891, *Gardner v. Minea*, 47 Minn. 295, 50 N. W. 199 (bailiff's misconduct); 1883, *State v. Brittain*, 89 N. C. 481, 504 (jurors not allowed to be examined to show the deputy-sheriff's undue influence).

¹⁴ 1855, *Wilson v. Berryman*, 5 Cal. 44, 46 (sheriff); 1890, *Honk v. Allen*, 126 Ind. 569, 25 N. E. 897; 1894, *Wright v. Abbott*, 160 Mass. 395, 36 N. E. 62 (deputy-sheriff); 1880,

Bradt v. Rommel, 26 Minn. 505, 5 N. W. 680 (sheriff); 1864, *Boynton v. Trumhull*, 45 N. H. 408 (officer).

¹⁵ 1839, *Straker v. Graham*, 7 Dowl. Pr. 223; 1903, *People v. Dohhina*, 138 Cal. 694, 72 Pac. 339; 1891, *Cain Bros. Co. v. Wallace*, 46 Kan. 136, 26 Pac. 445; this is universally accepted. Whether the juror is *orally examinable* in court is sometimes said to lie in discretion; 1903, *State v. King*, 88 Minn. 175, 92 N. W. 965.

Distinguish the offer of a juror's expressions of bias before or during trial as *ground for disqualification to serve*; for here his utterances are themselves the disqualifying facts to be proved, and the Hearsay rule is not violated (*ante*, § 1770).

¹ For the manner of polling, the right to a poll, and the sort of expression that is equivalent to a dissent at the polling, see the following cases: 1852, *Nichols v. Suncook Mfg. Co.*, 24 N. H. 431; 1903, *Smith v. Paul*, 133 N. C. 66, 45 S. E. 348.

polling is to afford an opportunity for free expression, unhampered by the fears or the errors which may have attended the private proceedings:

1805, *Sewall, J.*, in *Grinnell v. Phillips*, 1 Mass. 530, 542 (rejecting an affidavit "that he thought it his duty to coincide with the rest of the jury, but in his mind he had never approved of the verdict or consented to it"); "He is not to be believed or heard. The record of a verdict implies a unanimous consent of the jury, and is conclusive and incontrovertible evidence of the fact. Besides, the secret or mental act of a juror can never be a subject of legal inquiry; and, from the necessity of the case, his conduct before the court is the best and only evidence that can be admitted of his assent to a verdict delivered in his presence."

(1) Hence, the fact that the verdict as delivered was by one or more individual jurors not assented to by them in the jury-room, or is different from the one there informally assented to by them, is no ground for later correcting or setting aside the verdict. Much less is the fact that the juror in his own mind was mistaken or unwilling in the assent which he confessedly gave in the jury-room; for here he has doubly committed himself to the verdict as delivered.² It may be added that this principle is to be discriminated from

² The rulings seldom distinguish between the above two cases; but the principle is best illustrated and tested by the former of the two. The rulings are unanimous: 1753, *Lawrence v. Boswell*, Sayer 100 (at the rendering of the verdict in open court, no objection was made by any juror; held, that five of them "shall not now be received to say that they did not acquiesce"); 1876, *Torques v. Carrillo*, 1 Ariz. 336, 55 Pac. 526 (juror's affidavit that he "did not agree to the verdict," excluded, where the verdict had been read aloud by the clerk and the jury had replied that it was their verdict); 1844, *Meale v. Smith*, 16 Conn. 346, 351, 356 (the foreman, before delivering the verdict, handed to the judge a paper stating that "the jury have agreed on a verdict handed in; the minority, however, desiring to have it understood that they come in silent"; the verdict was then read aloud and no dissent made by any juror; the jurors' affidavits were excluded, and the facts were further held not to avoid the verdict); 1853, *McCombs v. Chandler*, 5 Harringt. 428 (juror's affidavit that he "did not agree to the verdict and did not answer when polled," excluded); 1811, *State v. Doon*, R. M. Charl. 1 (two jurors' affidavits that they "did not in fact agree to the verdict which was rendered," excluded); 1880, *Hill v. State*, 64 Ga. 453, 466 (juror held to have signified his assent, when polled; his "affidavit afterwards taken," excluded); 1871, *Garretty v. Brazell*, 34 Ia. 100, 104 (jurors' affidavits that the findings "were not assented to by all of the jury," excluded); 1895, *Hallenbeck v. Garst*, 96 Id. 509, 65 N. W. 417 (juror's affidavit that his ballot for "plaintiff" was wrongly read out as "defendant" by the foreman in the jury-room, not admitted, since he did not there dissent and did afterwards answer for the defendant with the others when polled in court); 1830, *Johnson v. Davenport*, 3 J. J. Marsh. Ky. 390, 392 (juror's affida-

vit that he did not consent to the verdict, though on the calling of the clerk "So say you all," he made no dissenting expression, held not admissible); 1837, *Cire v. Righthor*, 11 La. 140 (the jurors were polled and answered "verdict for Righthor"; affidavit of two jurors, "that they were mistaken in their verdict, that when they rendered it they were under the impression it granted the land to the plaintiff," excluded); 1848, *State v. Caldwell*, 3 La. An. 435 (affidavit of two jurors "that they were overawed by abuse and threats from other jurors and forced to render a verdict contrary to their judgment," excluded); 1851, *State v. Bretta*, 6 Id. 652, 657 (preceding case approved); 1855, *State v. Price*, 37 Id. 215, 218 (apparently like *State v. Caldwell*, *supra*); 1805, *Grinnell v. Phillips*, 1 Mass. 530, 542, per *Sewall, J.* (affidavit that "he thought it his duty to coincide with the rest of the jury," but had not really approved the verdict, excluded; quoted *supra*); 1817, *Bridge v. Eggleston*, 14 Id. 245, 247 (similar); 1890, *State v. McNamara*, 100 Mo. 100, 13 S. W. 938 (juror's affidavit that he intended to find a verdict of carrying concealed weapons, and not of shooting with intent to kill, excluded); 1819, *Clark v. Read*, 5 N. J. L. 486 ("Some time after the jury was dismissed, one of the jurors swore that he was not agreed to the verdict, previous to judgment being rendered"; excluded); 1805, *Suttrell v. Dry*, 1 Murph. 94 (juror's affidavit "that he did not consent to the verdict," excluded); 1888, *State v. Harper*, 101 N. C. 761, 7 S. E. 780 (certain jurors' "surrender of convictions" to the majority, not allowed to be shown, where at the polling in court they were unanimous); 1858, *Boetge v. Landa*, 22 Tex. 105, 107 (on the polling of the jury, one juror denied his assent; the jury then retired again, and upon returning to court, this juror assented with the others when polled; his subsequent affidavit that he had been coerced

that of certain cases under the prior principle (*ante*, § 2349) about the grounds of a verdict (though the result is the same) for there the assent is conceded and the motive for the assent is the fact offered to be shown, while here the assent itself is desired to be negated.

(2) But where the error at the time of announcement of the verdict is a *unanimous one*, by all the jury, the situation is a different one. When the verdict as announced or delivered is different unanimously from the verdict as assented to in the jury-room at the time of voting, the case is the same as that of a deed which by mutual or common mistake does not conform to the original agreement as avowedly made by the parties to the deed. Just as such a deed may be reformed in equity, upon satisfactory proof of the error (*post*, § 2417), so such a verdict may be corrected to represent the verdict actually agreed upon by the jury as a whole. The same reasons of policy here also permit a departure from the general rule that formal acts of assent are conclusive; for a unanimous or mutual error can safely be inquired into and easily established, while an individual error opens a wide door for vacillation and uncertainty. As individuals, they must be judged by their open acts; but as an entire jury they may be trusted to correct that which is merely an error in the transmission of their act from the jury-room to the court-room:

1839, *Trotter, J.*, in *Prussel v. Knowles*, 4 How. Mis. 90, 96 (action of trespass against the defendant and six others, including Allen and McDonald; verdict for the plaintiff; after verdict announced and entered, when all but one jurymen had left the court, he stated, on suggestion from the counsel and the judge, that the jury had intended not to include in their finding either Allen, who was dead, or McDonald, who was not concerned; "the Court then directed the verdict to be changed so as to correspond with this statement; immediately after this, the whole panel came into court and confirmed the statement of the juror"; this alteration was approved on appeal): "[In a case cited] it was decided that the Court might send the jury back to re-consider their verdict, if it appears to be a mistaken one. This is constantly done; sometimes upon an intimation from the judge and more frequently from a suggestion of one of the parties or his counsel. It is highly conducive to justice to suffer mere slips of the jury to be remedied. Can there be any distinction in principle, between the case at bar, and that of sending the jury back before they are divested of the case by a manual delivery of the papers to the clerk? Does the naked fact of their separation before the discovery of the error deprive the Court of this salutary power? . . . In the case before us, the jury had a right to find some of the defendants guilty, and others not; and if they thought McDonald not guilty, he was entitled to the benefit of their verdict, and ought not to be deprived of it by a mistake which occurred at the time of delivering it. Nor was the Court bound to send the case to a new jury."

1860, *Bigelow, C. J.*, in *Capen v. Stoughton*, 16 Gray 364 (admitting the jurors' testimony to show that "after agreeing on a verdict for the petitioners and filling up a blank form accordingly, the jury by mistake signed the form of verdict for the respondents"): "The evidence of the jurors is offered only to show a mistake, in the nature of a clerical error, which happened after the deliberations of the jury had ceased, and they had actually agreed on their verdict. The error consisted, not in making up their verdict on wrong principles or on a mistake of facts, but in an omission to state correctly

to assent was excluded); 1891, *Letcher v. Morrison*, 79 id. 240, 14 S. W. 1010 (affidavits of certain jurors that the verdict was reached by a majority only, excluded).

in writing the verdict to which they had, by a due and regular course of proceeding, honestly and fairly arrived. . . . No considerations of public policy require that the uncontradicted testimony of jurors to establish an error of this nature should be excluded. Its admission does not in any degree infringe on the sanctity with which the law surrounds the deliberations of juries, or expose their verdicts to be set aside through improper influences, or upon grounds which might prove dangerous to the purity and steadiness of the administration of public justice. On the contrary, it is a case of manifest mistake, of a merely formal and clerical character, which the Court ought to interfere to correct, in order to prevent the rights of parties from being sacrificed by a blind adherence to a rule of evidence, in itself highly salutary and reasonable, but which upon principle has no application to the present case."

It has occasionally been said that this correction must be claimed before the jury are discharged;³ but this seems unsound, because such errors are seldom ascertained until after the jury have separated and conversed out of court; and if the error is satisfactorily established, there can hardly be any fixed time to limit its correction. Subject to this qualification, it is universally conceded that a unanimous error of the jury in delivering the verdict as already unanimously agreed on in the jury-room may be shown for the purpose of correcting it to correspond, or, when this is not safely to be done, of ordering a new trial.⁴

³ 1835, *Bridgewood v. Wynn*, 1 Harr. & Woll. 574 (affidavits of two of the jurors that the verdict was by mistake given for the defendant instead of the plaintiff, the jury being misled by the circumstance of the defendant beginning the case" and thinking that they were finding for the plaintiff, held not sufficient, "the jury as such being now separated"); 1853, *Breck v. Blanchard*, 27 N. H. 100, 103 (the jury having rendered a signed and written but informal verdict, and having been discharged with the understanding that the foreman should afterwards draw up a formal verdict, a further inquiry of the jurors, and the affidavits of some of them, as to their non-assent to the verdict as first signed and read aloud, was refused; "there must be a limit fixed, beyond and after which no such inquiry can be made; and we think that time is well settled to be the time when the verdict is recorded").

⁴ *England*: 1731, *Parker v. Thornton*, 21 Vin. Abr. 484, "Trial," T, §, pl. 12 (new trial granted "upon an affidavit of eleven of the jury that they had agreed on a verdict for the plaintiff, and 5s. damages, but by mistake the foreman gave a verdict for the defendant"); s. c., *s. v. Baker v. Miles*, *Cooke* 66 (98); 1757, *Cogan v. Ebdon*, 1 Burr. 383, L. C. J. Mansfield and others (there being two different issues, and the foreman having given in a "general verdict for the defendant upon both issues," affidavits of eight of the jury were received that "it was the meaning and intention of the whole jury" to find the former issue for the defendant, and the latter for the plaintiff, and that this mistake was discovered by them an hour afterwards, but not till the judge was gone to his lodgings; the Court holding, first, that the intent of the whole jury was sufficiently proved, and, next,

that it indicated "a mistake, arising from the jury's being unacquainted with business of this nature, and from the associate's omission in not asking the jury particularly how they found each respective issue and in not making the jury fully understand their own finding"); 1845, *Bentley v. Fleming*, 1 C. B. 479 (the judge's substitute having failed to take the answers separately to three issues submitted by the judge, and the colloquy in court showing that the verdict recorded for the plaintiff was probably a misrepresentation of the jury's findings, a new trial was ordered); *United States*: 1808, *Taylor v. Giger*, *Hardin Ky.* 595, 597, *semble* (jurors' affidavits admissible to show "that there was in truth no verdict," as by a mistaken announcement); 1830, *Johnson v. Davenport*, 3 J. J. Marsh. 390, 394 (preceding case apparently doubted); 1822, *Little v. Larabee*, 2 Me. 37 (jurors' affidavits that they had "misunderstood the legal terms in which they had drawn up their verdict and that they had returned a verdict for the defendant instead of one for the tenant, which last was their sole intention," admitted; the verdict was not corrected, but a new trial granted); 1860, *Capen v. Stoughton*, 16 Gray 364 (a mistake of the entire jury in filling up the wrong blank form, allowed to be shown; quoted *supra*); 1839, *Prussel v. Knowles*, 4 How. Miss. 90, 95 (jurors' testimony admitted to correct a mistake in the delivery of the verdict; quoted *supra*); 1893, *Peters v. Fogarty*, 55 N. J. L. 386, 26 Atl. 855 (jurors' depositions as to a mistaken announcement by the foreman of a verdict for the defendant, "the jury having agreed upon a verdict for the plaintiff," admitted; procedure for correcting the record, explained); 1875, *Dairymple v. Williams*, 63 N. Y. 361, 363 (jurors' affidavits

(3) It follows, for the same reason, that an error in the clerk's entry of the verdict, making it to appear different from the verdict as actually pronounced by the foreman and assented to by the other jurors, may be shown,⁶

that "the verdict as agreed upon by them was in favor of defendant W. and against the other defendant, . . . and that the announcement of the foreman [against both defendants] was made through mistake and inadvertence," admitted; "it is in the nature of an attempt to correct a clerical mistake"; 1824, *Cohen v. Dubose*, Harp. Eq. 102 (the foreman wrote a verdict for "two hundred and four dollars with interest," the agreement having been for \$244 with interest; the jurors discovering the error in omitting the word "forty," the verdict was re-written with the correct sum, but this time the words "with interest" were inadvertently omitted; this was allowed to be shown by jurors' testimony, on a bill to correct the verdict); 1890, *Murphy v. Murphy*, 1 S. D. 316, 320, 47 N. W. 142 (jurors' affidavits offered that they had agreed on a verdict for the defendant for \$2, but through a misunderstanding as to the proper form of stating their verdict, due to the existence of set-off claims, they handed in a verdict for \$690 "over and above the amount claimed in the complaint," believing that this would net \$2 for the defendant; excluded, on the words of the statute: the Court nevertheless admitting that the plaintiff's purpose was in fact to correct a formal error, and was "just and right and highly salutary and reasonable"; this case falls fairly on the line between the present principle and that of § 2356, *post*, but it also illustrates the unfortunate effect of patchwork statutes); 1885, *Burlingame v. Central R. Co.*, 23 Fed. 706, *Wheeler, J.* (a verdict for \$3500 was allowed to be corrected to \$3500 with interest, by reassembling the jurors on the second day after the verdict and ascertaining from their unanimous answers that the original verdict as handed in did not represent their consensus); 1896, *Pelzer Mfg. Co. v. Hamburg-Bremen F. I. Co.*, 71 Fed. 826, *Simonton, J.* (jurors' testimony that "the jury, with the full purpose and intention to find a verdict upon both policies set out in the complaint, inadvertently and by mistake brought in their verdict upon one policy only," held admissible, the case being that the jury had actually voted and agreed and the error came in reducing the verdict to writing; *Capen v. Stoughton, Mass.*, followed); 1896, *Hamburg-Bremen F. Ins. Co. v. Pelzer Mfg. Co.*, 22 C. C. A. 283, 76 Fed. 479 (allowing the correction of a clerical error by the foreman in announcing the verdict). *Contra*: 1889, *McKinley v. Bank*, 118 Ind. 375, 21 N. E. 36 (answers to interrogatories by special findings; after verdict and before judgment, jurors' affidavits were offered to show that "by inadvertence and mistake the word 'yes' was written and returned as the answer," instead of "no"; excluded, on the ground that it was an impeachment of the verdict; clearly unsound; *Elliott, C. J., diss.*)

Distinguish the case of a directed verdict,

where the jury's unwillingness to assent to it is immaterial: 1828, *Saville v. Farnham*, 2 Man. & R. 216 (the judge having directed a verdict for the defendant, a juror's affidavit that "the jury gave no verdict at all" was excluded); 1896, *Turney v. Barr*, 75 Ia. 763, 38 N. W. 550 (jurors' affidavit that they did not deliberate on their verdict, but merely signed a written verdict by order of the Court, excluded, partly on the present principle, but partly also because the offer was made on an application for *habeas corpus* and not a motion for a new trial).

⁶ *England*: 1599, *Madox v. Dawson*, Cro. El. 678 (the "note given by the jury to the clerk" was resorted to for amending a verdict erroneous in form "by the mis-entry of the clerk"); 1634, *Eliot v. Skypp*, Cro. Car. 338 (the clerk returning the *postea* with a verdict for the plaintiff in 10s. and for the defendant in 19s., the return was amended "because that issue was tried before Justice Berkeley and he well remembered that the jury found" for the plaintiff in 10s. of freehold rent, etc.); 1751, *R. v. Simons, Sayer* 35, 19 How. St. Tr. 680, 684 (the jury having found a verdict of guilty, a new trial was asked upon affidavits of the twelve jurors, substantially coinciding, that they had agreed to find the defendant guilty of "putting the said three ducats into the prosecutor's pocket," and that "the deponent apprehended that he and the rest of the jury had given such a verdict," "but the deponent hath since been informed that the verdict recorded finds the defendant guilty on the third count in the indictment," which alleged a putting into the pocket with intent to make it believed that the prosecutor had robbed the defendant, "whereas the deponent and the rest of the jury did not find that the same was done with such intent or any intent whatever"; these affidavits were considered by the King's Bench, no doubt of their propriety being expressed, and a new trial granted; which was said to be the first precedent of a new trial for a criminal offence); 1841, *Roberts v. Hughes*, 9 M. & W. 399 (juror's affidavit received as to "what passed on the delivery of their verdict," to show a mistaken entry of it; "the rule does not exclude jurymen from swearing to what took place in open court, but only as to what took place in their private room on the grounds upon which they found their verdict"); *United States*: 1855, *Castro v. Gill*, 5 Cal. 40, 42 (affidavits of several jurors, held not sufficient to overthrow the correctness of the record of the verdict); 1818, *Jackson v. Dickenson*, 15 John. 309, 317 (affidavits of five jurors, admitted to show that a mistake in recording the verdict was made, in omitting the answer to a question by the Court).

The following ruling is not law, in its limitation of time: 1818, *Davis v. Taylor*, 2 Chitty 268 (affidavits based on conversations with jurymen that "the verdict was entered by mistake,"

just as any judicial record may be corrected *nunc pro tunc* (*post*, § 2450). Whether the verdict as entered should be corrected, or a new trial be ordered, would depend on whether under the circumstances the precise tenor of the verdict as pronounced could be satisfactorily ascertained.

§ 2356. **Same: Explaining the Verdict's Meaning; Mistake as to its Legal Effect; Retiring to Reconsider.** (1) When the jury brings in its verdict, the judge, in his just and usual control of the proceedings, may refuse to accept it as final, and may require the jury to retire again to make the verdict more specific or more clear. This procedure is a traditional part of jury-trial (*ante*, § 2350); and in principle it is equivalent to holding the first utterance of the foreman as tentative and informal only. It is not that the jury adds explanations to the verdict; there is no verdict as yet; and they retire to restate it and to give it a final form:

1832, *Morton, J.*, in *Dorr v. Fenno*, 12 Pick. 520, 526: "It sometimes happens that the verdict first returned by the jury is not entirely certain, or does not precisely meet the issue joined, or some of the issues do not appear to be definitely found; in such cases, before the verdict can be drawn in form, it is not only proper but necessary to ascertain from the jury the real meaning of their finding, that when the verdict is affirmed it may with certainty express the intent of the jury, or that the jury may again be sent out for further deliberation if any material question appears not to have been determined by them."¹

No doubt this practice of questioning upon the delivery of verdict might be abused, for the purpose of browbeating a jury out of their sincere verdict. This was sometimes done in the older days, notably in Erskine's celebrated scene:

1784, *R. v. Dean of St. Asaph's*, 18 How. St. Tr. 1203, 1230; seditious libel; the great legal controversy at this time was whether the jury could lawfully find, not only upon the fact of publication, but also upon the fact of criminal intent, and here Mr. Justice Buller had charged the jury that they could not find upon the latter; the jury returned a verdict of "Guilty of publishing only"; then the judge endeavored to have the jury withdraw the word "only," on the theory that it went beyond their function, which concededly they did not intend to do; *Buller, J.*: "You say he is guilty of publishing the pamphlet, and that the meaning of the innuendoes is as stated in the indictment?" *A Juror*: "Certainly." *Mr. Erskine*: "Is the word 'only' to stand as part of your verdict?" *A Juror*: "Certainly." *Mr. Erskine*: "Then I insist it shall be recorded." *Buller, J.*: "Then the verdict must be misunderstood. Let me understand the jury." *Mr. Erskine*: "The jury do understand their verdict." *Buller, J.*: "Sir, I will not be interrupted!" *Mr. Erskine*: "I stand here as an advocate for a brother citizen, and I desire the word 'only' may be recorded." *Buller, J.*: "Sit down, sir! Remember your duty, or I shall be obliged to proceed in another manner." *Mr. Erskine*: "Your lordship may proceed in what manner you think fit. I know my duty as well as your lordship knows yours. I shall not alter my conduct." In the end, the jury accepted the judge's statement of what their verdict ought to be.

But there is nowadays, in this era of judicial self-abnegation, no likelihood of the abuse repeating itself.

excluded; "it must be whilst the jury are together"). *Miss. 90, 95; 1885, Cattell v. Dispatch Pub. Co., 88 Mo. 356.*

¹ *Accord*: 1839, *Prussel v. Knowles*, 4 How.

(2) *After the verdict*, however, has once been pronounced by the jury and accepted by the judge, it is final, as regards its meaning and effect; and *no statements by the jurors*, whether on affidavit or on examination, either unanimously or individually, can be resorted to for *explaining or changing its meaning or legal effect*. This must be so by virtue of the general principle that a legal act is to be construed by the words used in it, and not by the private meaning or intention of the person uttering them (*post*, § 2413). To resort to the jurors' motives, beliefs, or intentions, would be to violate the general principle already examined (*ante*, § 2349); and would be equally improper for the purpose of altering the uttered terms of the verdict (as here) as for the purpose of repudiating it altogether (as there). In the former application of the principle (*ante*, § 2349), the motive or ground of decision was sought to be shown as an improper one, invalidating the whole verdict; in the present application, though preserving it, yet as changing its effect; but, in either case, principle requires that the verdict as uttered be a finality in its terms. It may be so uncertain or inconsistent as to be incapable of application, and therefore void. But in any case its meaning and effect must be drawn from its terms alone:

1770, *Mansfield, L. C. J.*, in *R. v. Woodfall*, 5 Burr. 2661, 2667 (the jury brought in a verdict, on a charge of seditious libel, of "guilty of the printing and publishing only"; on a subsequent motion to omit the word "only" and enter up a verdict of guilty, a juror's affidavit of what he intended by the verdict was rejected). "Where there is a doubt, upon the judge's report, as to what passed at the time of bringing in the verdict, there the affidavits of jurors or bystanders may be received, upon a motion for a new trial or to rectify a mistake in the minutes; but an affidavit of a juror never can be read as to what he then thought or intended. . . . No argument can be urged for omitting the word 'only' which does not prove that it can have no effect though inserted; and therefore it is a question of law upon the face of the verdict. . . . The question is whether any meaning can be put upon the word 'only,' as it stands upon the record, which will affect the verdict. . . . It is impossible to say with certainty what the jury really did mean. Probably they had different meanings. If they could possibly mean that which, if expressed, would acquit the defendant, he ought not to be concluded by the verdict. . . . If a doubt arises from an ambiguous and unusual word in the verdict, the Court ought to lean in favor of a *venire de novo*."

This principle has ever been conceded;² although its application is sometimes difficult to distinguish from that which permits the correction of a unanimous mistake in delivering or recording the verdict (*ante*, § 2355).

² *England*: 1738, *Palmer v. Crowle*, Andrews 382 (the defendant having paid 23*l.* 7*s.* into court, and the law being that this was regarded as part payment received, a verdict for 23*l.* 17*s.* was rendered; the jurors' affidavits that the jury by mistake gave that verdict, intending only to give 10*s.* over and above the 23*l.* 7*s.* were held insufficient to call for a correction or a new trial); 1772, *Clark v. Stevenson*, 2 W. Bl. 803 (action against an executor; the jury rendered a verdict for \$1,000; but "after some interval," to a question by the judge, gave an answer of fact inconsistent with this verdict; a new trial was refused, "for the danger that might happen

if a subsequent declaration of the jury might be let in to explain a general verdict given upon full consideration"); 1788, *Jackson v. Williamson*, 2 T. R. 281 (trespass for personality; a verdict having been rendered and entered for £30, the entire jury's affidavits that they meant this to be for damages additional to the value of the goods, and that they had supposed that the clerk would add the two together, were excluded; the Court holding that "if any doubt had arisen, as to the meaning of the jury, if they had found a sum inadequate to the value proved, the proper time for requiring an explanation was at the trial; it was too late now"); 1855,

(3) From the foregoing principle must be distinguished also that by which the precise scope of the issues submitted to the jury may be investigated in order to determine whether a particular issue is *res judicata* (*ante*, § 2351). In such cases it is sometimes said that the jurors may testify to the matters which they considered and intended to include; but this loose form of statement, which is in apparent violation of the present principle, signifies properly nothing more than that certain issues were in fact submitted to their consideration.

3. Arbitrators' Awards.

§ 2358. *Foregoing Principles applied to Arbitrators' Awards.* The arbitrator appointed to make an award includes in his functions that of a jury; he hears evidence, and investigates and determines the facts in issue. But he has also a judge's function, in that he determines the rules of right governing his decision. Furthermore, in combining these functions, his procedure makes more difficult the discrimination between the two. To his function as jury, the foregoing principles apply, subject to such modifications as are involved in the peculiar nature of his authority:

Raphael v. Bank of England, 17 C. B. 161 (the questions being put by the judge to the jury on an issue of *bona fide* purchase of a bank-note, whether the purchaser had been notified and had the means of knowing that it was stolen, and these questions being answered in the affirmative, jurymen's affidavits that they did not suppose that these answers, as given in open court, were to be taken by the judge as equivalent to a verdict for the plaintiff and that they would not have concurred in such a verdict, were held inadmissible, chiefly on the ground that they amounted in effect to stating that the jury were prepared to disobey the rule of law as contained in the instructions of the judge relative to the meaning of *bona fides*); *United States*: 1872, *Anderson v. Green*, 46 Ga. 361, 374, 375 (jurors' affidavits, or their examination after verdict returned, as to whether "they intended to find defendant individually liable," held improper; "to justify such a course, the verdict must at least be so ambiguous as to convey no definite meaning upon one or more of the issues involved"); 1856, *Couner v. Winton*, 8 Ind. 315 (verdict "for the plaintiff one cent, and costs to the defendant"; juror's affidavit that the verdict meant the defendant to pay costs, excluded); 1860, *Sinclair v. Roush*, 14 id. 450 (similar); 1888, *Alexander v. Humber*, 86 Ky. 565, 6 S. W. 453 (a verdict finding "for the plaintiff, \$1000, jointly"; jurors' testimony and affidavits that the effect of this was mistaken, in that they intended to sever the damages and charge \$500 against each defendant, excluded); 1880, *Stevens v. Montgomery*, 27 Minn. 108, 6 N. W. 456 (testimony of all the jury, through the foreman, two days after discharge, that a verdict for \$27.50 was intended to be a verdict for the full claim of \$91.84 less a counterclaim of \$27.50, excluded; but apparently this was merely a case of mistaken announcement, falling under § 2355, *ante*); 1852, *Folsom v. Brown*,

25 N. H. 114, 123 (jurors' affidavits not admissible to show a misapprehension as to the effect of the verdict upon the costs); 1808, *Schenck v. Stevenson*, 2 id. 386 (affidavit of one of a jury of inquiry, as to the "items allowed by the jury," excluded, as being "nothing less than calling on the juror to disclose to this Court the ground and foundation of the verdict"; *Rossell, J., diss.*); 1879, *Lindauer v. Teeter*, 41 id. 255, 259 (juror's affidavit, in replevin, with a verdict for the plaintiff and damages for \$225, not admitted to show that they intended to find that "of the goods in dispute, so much of them as were of the value of \$225 only, belonged to the plaintiff"); 1828, *People v. Columbia Common Pleas*, 1 Wend. 297 (jurors' affidavits that their verdict finding a fraudulent judgment was supposed by them to have the effect of allowing recovery for a limited sum and not of denying recovery entirely, not received); 1833, *Hutchinson v. Sandt*, 4 Rawle 234 (an inquisition of lunacy found H. unsound in mind "for the space of five years last past and upwards"; at a trial in ejectment, the inquisition having been admitted, two members of the jury of inquest were offered to prove that "at the time of signing the inquisition they did not mean to overreach the period of five years"; excluded); 1893, *Smalley v. Morris*, 157 Pa. 349, 17 Atl. 734 (jurors' affidavits, as to a verdict for \$1500 on a note, that they all supposed that they were awarding a sum equal to the amount of the note in suit less a credit of \$1500, excluded); 1888, *Tarbell v. Tarbell*, 60 Vt. 494, 15 Atl. 104 (five jurors' affidavits that they had disallowed certain items, intending to deduct them, but did not deduct them, as appeared in the special verdict, excluded); 1871, *Howard v. McCall*, 21 Gratt. 205, 212 (affidavits of six jurors that they intended the verdict to entitle the defendant to the allowance of a certain credit, excluded).

1870, *Blackburn, J.*, in *Duke of Buccleuch v. Metropolitan Board*, L. R. 5 Exch. 221, 229: "An award is the decision of one having a limited authority to determine those matters submitted to him by the parties, or, as in the present case, by a statute, and no other. And from this it follows that if that limited authority has not been pursued and the arbitrator has awarded something beyond the authority, the award is *pro tanto* void, and if the void part is so mixed up with the rest that it cannot be rejected, the award is void altogether, otherwise those against whom the award is made would be compelled to fulfil the void part. And I think, both on authority and principle, this is a matter which may be pleaded as a defence to an action. In old times the only way of enforcing an award was by action upon it, and the only mode of resisting the enforcement of the award was by pleading to that action, and consequently all the old authorities, to the effect that an award is void for an excess of jurisdiction, are authorities that it may be shewn in evidence at the trial under a proper plea. . . . Now, in cases where an award is good on the face of it, but the arbitrator has made a mistake either of law or fact, if that mistake has been as to a matter within the arbitrator's authority, then, inasmuch as there is no court of appeal from the arbitrator, the mistake cannot be remedied; nor can the Court, even in the exercise of its equitable jurisdiction, set aside the award, unless it can be shewn there was misconduct or some other equitable ground for interference; and in the case of the verdict of a compensation jury, inasmuch as the *certiorari* is taken away, there is no remedy at law at all unless there be excess of jurisdiction. But if the mistake has been as to the extent and nature of the arbitrator's authority, leading him to exceed it, then, inasmuch as an excess of authority by mistake is just as much an excess as if it had been in consequence of a wilful disregard of the limits of the authority, the award may be impeached as being made without jurisdiction. Were this otherwise, no one who submits to a reference of one thing could be safe from having an award put upon him as to anything else. . . . Of course any attempt to annoy an arbitrator by asking questions tending to shew that he had mistaken the law [upon matters within his authority], or found a verdict against the weight of evidence, should be at once checked, for these matters are irrelevant. But where the question is whether he did or did not entertain a question over which he had no jurisdiction, the matter is relevant, and nobody can be better qualified to give testimony on that matter than the umpire. I wish to guard against being supposed to express an opinion that a jurymen might be asked on what grounds he and his fellows gave their verdict; that involves very different considerations."

In applying the foregoing principles of the Parol Evidence rule, *mutatis mutandis*, the following results would be reached:

a. The evidence and the facts forming the *grounds for the award* are immaterial and cannot be used to invalidate the award, and this upon the general principle (*ante*, § 2349). Thus, the arbitrator's mistake of fact or improper consideration of evidence, or his misapplication of the law, or his motives or intentions, in deciding the facts, are immaterial.¹ Moreover, his errors of law, in framing as judge the law to be applied by himself as juror, are immaterial, because there is by the nature of the proceeding no appeal from him in his capacity as judge.

¹ 1800, *Habershon v. Trosby*, 3 Esp. 38 (arbitrator held not examinable to the evidence before him, in a suit for malicious arrest in the proceeding which had been submitted to arbitration; partly because "the arbitrator might have proceeded to cut the knot, rather than to unloose it according to the strict rules of law, from a wish to do complete justice between the parties"); 1868, *Duke of Buccleuch v. Metropolitan Board*

(quoted *ante*, § 2349); 1895, *Re Christie & T. Junction*, 22 Ont. App. 21, 33, per *Order, J.*; 1845, *Withington v. Warren*, 10 Met. 431, 433 ("he could not be received thus by his parol testimony to contradict his formal award in writing"); 1849, *Bigelow v. Maynard*, 4 Cosh. 317, 321; 1902, *Corrigan v. Rockefeller*, 67 Oh. 354, 66 N. E. 95 (arbitrator's written statement of reasons for award, excluded).

b. The scope of the issues submitted to him defines the limit of his authority to award; hence, the award as made may always be invalidated by the circumstance that it exceeds that scope. In a jury trial, this is ascertainable from the pleadings and the judge's instructions; and the scope of a verdict and a judgment may always be examined in that respect (*ante*, § 2351). In an award, the terms of the contract of submission serve in part the corresponding purpose. But, furthermore, since the judge's and jury's functions are united in the arbitrator, and since he does not by distinct instructions to himself define the issues which he submits to himself, the ascertainment of the issues which he has actually investigated and decided may have to be made by inquiring of him *whether he considered certain issues*, in order to learn whether those issues, as considered, are within the scope of his authority. Such inquiries, however, must be distinguished from an inquiry as to the grounds of fact *believed* by him, within the scope of the issues actually submitted; for the latter inquiry would fall within the prohibition of *a*, above. This distinction between the scope of authority assumed by him and the grounds of belief reached by him is plain enough; but, the similarity of the concrete questions put to the arbitrator, properly for the one purpose and improperly for the other, has naturally led to some confusion of judicial language and an apparent conflict of rulings.²

c. That an arbitrator's *misconduct* is material to invalidate the award cannot be doubted. Whether he himself can be received to prove his own misconduct depends upon the same principle applicable to jurors. The sound doctrine (*ante*, §§ 2352-2354) admits them to testify.³ That there is, in the arbitrator's function as *judge*, nothing which should make it improper to testify (apart from the question of impeaching his award) has been elsewhere noticed (*ante*, § 1912).⁴

d. That the arbitrator by inadvertence *incorrectly stated the award* as reached by him could properly be shown, on the same principles as for verdicts (*ante*, §§ 2355-2356), and with the same limitations, *mutatis mutandis*.

The principles applicable to arbitrators might be equally applicable to *other officials* exercising similar functions.⁵ But the arbitrator is to be distinguished

² The opinion of Lord Blackburn (above quoted) sufficiently clears up the principles involved. The following cases illustrate them: 1868, *Re Dare Valley R. Co.*, L. R. 6 Eq. 429 432, 435 (damages for land taken; Giffard, V. C. held the arbitrator's testimony admissible "if there is a mistake in point of subject-matter, — that is, if a particular thing is referred to an arbitrator and he has mistaken the subject-matter on which he ought to make his award, or if there is a mistake in point of legal principle going directly to the basis on which the award is founded"; and admitted the arbitrator's "paper of reasons for his award"); 1868-1871, *Duke of Buccleuch v. Metropolitan Board*, L. R. 3 Exch. 307, 314, 324, 327, 329 (damages for land taken; held that the arbitrator's testimony was admissible to show that the "sum awarded includes an amount for something over which he

had no jurisdiction"; Bramwell, R. *disa.*, with hesitation); 5 *id.* 221, 225, 229, Exch. Ch. on appeal (Blackburn, J., delivered an opinion collating prior cases and approving the ruling below; quoted *supra*); on appeal, L. R. 5 E. & L. App. 418, 421, 433, 442, 449, 457, 462; 1856, *Spurck v. Crook*, 19 Ill. 415, 426 (arbitrators may testify that certain evidence was given or that "certain matters were or were not examined or acted upon by them or that there is a mistake in the award"). Compare Morse on Arbitration (1872), cc. X and XXI.

³ But, as with jurors, their hearsay admissions will not suffice: 1891, *Whitely and Roberts' Arbitration*, 1 Cb. 558, 567.

⁴ For the once supposed *privilege* of an arbitrator not to be harassed by questions as to his award, see *post*, § 2372.

⁵ 1889, *Phillips v. Marblehead*, 148 Mass.

from the *referee* (from whose rulings an appeal may lie),⁶ from the *master in chancery*, and from the officer known in New England practice as *auditor*. It is sufficient here to note that differences of function and procedure may produce differences of result in the application of the Parol Evidence rule.

B. GRAND JURY.

1. Privileged Communications Rule.

§ 2360. **History and General Principle.** That the proceedings of the grand jury, in taking testimony and in deliberating, must be held in privacy, has been the customary practice from early times. The traditional and peculiar form of oath administered to the grand jurors testifies to this:

"The foreman, by himself, lays his hand on the book, and the marshal administers to him the following oath: 'My lord, or sir (as the foreman's name may be), you, as the foreman of this grand inquest for the body of the county of A, shall diligently inquire and true presentment make of all such matters and things as shall be given you in charge; the king's counsel, your fellows', and your own, you shall keep secret; You shall present no one for envy, hatred, or malice; but you shall present all things truly as they come to your knowledge, according to the best of your understanding: So help you God.' The rest of the grand jury, by three at a time, in order, are sworn in the following manner: 'The same oath which your foreman hath taken on his part, you and every of you, shall well and truly observe and keep on your part: So help you God.'"¹

But the legal privilege of the jurors to hold their inquiries and deliberations in secret seems not to have been established until a comparatively late period. Under the last Stuart, attempts were frequently made to control the verdicts of petit juries in political causes, — though in this respect the efforts were rather survivals of the earlier Tudor and Stuart methods than original innovations.² As a part of this general effort, the control of the grand jury of indictment, by requiring the publicity of their proceedings, was also attempted, and for the time successfully. The colloquy on this notable occasion is interesting as expounding the reasons which were then advanced to justify the grand jury's privacy of investigation:

1681, *Earl of Shaftesbury's Trial*, 8 How. St. Tr. 759, 771; Sir F. Withins moved, after the charge to the grand jury, that the evidence be heard in court; and L. C. J. Pemberton declared that he would grant the motion; the jury then desired to have a copy of their oath, which was given them, and they withdrew; after returning shortly, the following colloquy ensued: *Foreman*: "My lord Chief Justice, it is the opinion of the jury that they ought to examine the witnesses in private, and it hath been the constant practice of our ancestors and predecessors to do it; and they insist upon it as their right to examine in private, because they are bound to keep the king's secrets, which they cannot do if it be done in court"; L. C. J. Pemberton: "Look ye, gentlemen of the jury, it may very

326, 330, 19 N. E. 547 (board of selectmen, condemning land).

⁶ 1899, *Story v. De Armond*, 179 Ill. 510, 53 N. E. 990.

¹ 8 How. St. Tr. 771.

² In 1616, L. C. J. Coke, when the grand jury did not satisfy him in his effort to indict for preunire those persons who went to Chancery

to prevent the enforcement of common-law judgments, "caused them to be called by the poll, and perceiving that 17 of the 19 were agreed to return *ignoramus*, seemed much offended, and said . . . he would have a more sufficient jury, and evidence given openly at the bar" (*Campbell's Lives of the Chancellors*, II, 363).

probably be, that some late usage has brought you into error that it is your right; but it is not your right in truth. . . . What you say concerning keeping your counsels, that is quite of another nature, that is, your debates, and those things, there you shall be in private, nor to consider of what you hear publicly. But certainly it is the best way, both for the king, and for you, that there should, in a case of this nature, be an open and plain examination of the witnesses, that all the world may see what they say"; *Foreman*: "My lord, if your lordship please, I must beg your lordship's pardon, if I mistake in anything, it is contrary to the sense of what the jury apprehend. First, they apprehend that the very words of the oath doth bind them, it says, 'That they shall keep the counsel's, and their own secrets:' Now, my lord, there can be no secret in public; the very intimation of that doth imply, that the examination should be secret; besides, my lord, I beg your lordship's pardon if we mistake, we do not understand anything of law"; *Mr. Papillon* [a juror]: "If it be the ancient custom of the kingdom to examine in private, then there is something maybe very prejudicial to the king in this public examination; for sometimes in examining witnesses in private, there come to be discovered some persons guilty of treason, and misprision of treason, that were not known, nor thought on before. Then the jury sends down to the court, and gives them intimation, and these men are presently secured; whereas, my lord, in case they be examined in open court publicly, then presently there is intimation given and these men are gone away. Another thing that may be prejudicial to the king, is, that all the evidences here, will be foreknown before they come to the main trial upon issue by the petty jury; then if there be not a very great deal of care, these witnesses may be confronted by raising up witnesses to prejudice them, as in some cases it has been. Then besides, the jury do apprehend, that in private they are more free to examine things in particular, for the satisfying their own consciences, and that without favour or affection; and we hope we shall do our duty;" *L. C. J. Pemberton*: "The king's counsel have examined whether he hath cause to accuse these persons, or not; and, gentlemen, they understand very well, that it will be no prejudice to the king to have the evidence heard openly in court; or else the king would never desire it;" *Foreman*: "My lord, the gentlemen of the jury desire that it may be recorded, that we insisted upon it as our right; but if the Court overrule, we must submit to it."

This attempt was never repeated, and the investigations of grand jurors were thereafter invariably made in privacy. But, owing perhaps to this ruling and to the earlier uncertainty of the law, the inviolability of the proceedings, when their disclosure was sought upon some later occasion, appears to have remained without defined limits in English precedents for a century or more.³ At some early period in our own practice, the principle received a tacit though firm acceptance. In most of the statutes regulating criminal

³ 1813, *Scarlet's Case*, 12 Co. 98 (indictment for fraudulently procuring himself to be sworn on the jury with malicious intent to indict innocent men; it appeared that the judges had discovered the fraud through noticing the number of "honest men" indicted and demanding then of the jurors on what testimony they had proceeded; whereon Scarlet's testimony appeared to have been the foundation); 1641, *Dr. Micklethwart's Case*, Clayt. 84, pl. 140 ("The judge would not suffer a grand jurymen to be produced as a witness to swear what was given in evidence to them, because he is sworn not to reveal the secrets of his companions. See, if a witness is questioned for a false oath to the grand jury, how it shall be proved if some of the jury be not sworn in each case"); 1641, *Mass. Body of Liberties* (Whitmore's ed.),

§ 61 ("No magistrates, juror, officer, or other man, shall be bound to inform present or reveal any private crime or offence, wherein there is no perill or danger to this plantation or any member thereof, when any necessarie tye of conscience binds him to secrete grounded upon the word of God, unlesse it be in case of testimony lawfully required"; repeated in the revisions of 1660 and 1672, under "Jurors"); 1817, *Watson's Trial*, 32 How. St. Tr. 107 (*Mr. Solicitor-General*: "My lord, I apprehend it is not competent for my learned friend to ask him what he deposed before the grand jury"; *Mr. Wetherell*: "I ask him only to facts, — the day of his attendance, and whether he produced the note [of the speech]"; *Ellenborough, L. C. J.*: "On that subject I have a considerable doubt").

procedure it was recognized; though the statement of its limitations is found to have various phrasings.⁴

⁴ The following list does not include statutes which merely prescribe that the jurors must keep secret their proceedings, for those do not have direct bearing on the rules of evidence; nor the statutes providing that the juror "shall not be questioned for anything he may say" during deliberation, for those refer to a civil or criminal liability for his utterances: *Ala. Code 1897*, § 4805 (a grand juror may testify that a witness privileged against prosecution for an offense testified to before the grand jury has so testified); *Alaska C. Cr. P. 1900*, § 27 (like *Or. Annot. C. 1892*, § 1257); *Ariz. P. C. 1887*, § 1418 (grand juror may be examined to a witness' testimony to ascertain "whether it is consistent with that given by the witness before the court," or on the charge of a witness' perjury); *Ark. Stats. 1894*, § 2055 (disclosure compellable of the testimony of an examined witness "for the purpose of ascertaining its consistency with the testimony given by the witness on trial" or on a charge of the witness' perjury); *Cal. P. C. 1872*, § 926 ("Every member of the grand jury must keep secret whatever he himself or any other grand juror may have said or in what manner he or any other grand juror may have voted on a matter before them; but may, however, be required by any Court to disclose the testimony of a witness examined before the grand jury, for the purpose of ascertaining whether it is consistent with that given by the witness before the Court or to disclose the testimony given before them by any person upon a charge against such person for perjury in giving his testimony or upon trial therefor"); *Fla. Rev. St. 1892*, § 2813 (a grand juror is not allowed "to state or testify in any court in what manner he or any other member of the jury voted on any question before them, or what opinion was expressed by any juror in relation to such question"); § 2814 (a grand juror is compellable to testify whether a witness' testimony "is consistent with or different from the evidence given by such witness before such court," and also to disclose testimony on a charge of perjury); *Ga. Code 1895*, § 5198, par. 3, § 5199 (communications "among grand jurors," excluded, but they "shall disclose everything which occurs in their service, whenever it becomes necessary"); *Ill. Rev. St. 1874*, c. 38, § 412 ("No grand juror or officer of the court or other person shall disclose that an indictment for felony is found or about to be found against any person not in custody or under recognition, except by issuing process for his arrest, until he is arrested; nor shall any grand juror state how any member of the jury voted or what opinion he expressed on any question before them"); *Ind. Rev. St. 1897*, § 1754 (a grand juror may be required to disclose a witness' testimony "for the purpose of ascertaining whether it is consistent with that given by the witness before the court," or on his trial for perjury); *Ia. Code 1897*, § 5267 ("Every member of the grand jury must keep secret the proceedings of that body and the testimony given

before it, except as provided in the next section, nor shall any grand juror or officer of the court disclose the fact that an indictment for a felony has been found against a person not in custody or under bail, otherwise than by presenting the same in court or issuing or executing process thereon, until such person has been arrested"); § 5268 (disclosure of a witness' testimony may be made to ascertain its consistency or to prove perjury); § 5269 ("No grand juror shall be questioned for anything he may say or any vote he may give in the grand-jury room relative to a matter legally pending before it," except for perjury); *Kan. Gen. St. 1897*, c. 102, §§ 110, 111 (a grand juror shall not disclose the evidence or name of a witness except when lawfully required as a witness; he may be required to testify whether testimony of an examined witness "is consistent with or different from the evidence given by such witness before such court," and to disclose such testimony on a charge of perjury); § 112 (he is not obliged or allowed to disclose the vote or expressed opinion of any grand juror); *St. 1901*, c. 233 (no person shall disclose any evidence or witness' name, in an inquisition in liquor cases, "except when lawfully required to testify as a witness in relation thereto," until the person charged has been arrested); *Ky. C. Cr. P. 1895*, § 113 (similar to *Tenn. Code* § 7043); *La. Rev. L. 1897*, § 2141 (a grand juror may testify to another's neglect of duty); *C. Fr. 1894*, §§ 590, 531 (the vote of a sick or deceased juror after adjournment may be ascertained by the testimony of himself or another juror); *Me. Pub. St. 1883*, c. 134, § 8 (no grand juror or court officer shall disclose an indictment until after arrest, "nor shall any grand juror state how any member of the jury voted, or what opinion he expressed, on any question before them"); *Mass. Pub. St. 1892*, c. 213, § 13, *Rev. L. 1902*, c. 218, § 13 (a grand juror is not allowed to state "in what manner he or any other member of the jury voted" or "what opinion was expressed in relation to each question" before them); *Mich. Comp. L. 1897*, § 11867 (a grand juror may be required to testify "whether the testimony of a witness examined before such jury is consistent with or different from the evidence given by such witness before such court," and also his testimony on a charge of perjury therein; but not to disclose the vote or expression of opinion of any juror); *Minn. Gen. St. 1894*, § 7216 (may be required by Court to disclose testimony "for the purpose of ascertaining whether it is consistent with that given by the witnesses before the court," or on a perjury charge); *Miss. Annot. Code 1892*, § 2381 (a grand juror, "except when called as a witness in court," shall not disclose the proceedings; "nor shall any grand juror disclose the name or testimony of any witness who has been before it"); *Mo. Rev. St. 1899*, § 2506 (grand juror compellable to disclose whether a witness' testimony "is consistent with or different from the evidence given by such witness

What those limitations ought to be must depend upon the reasons for the principle; and these reasons find exposition in the following passages:

1846, *Ruffin, C. J.*, in *State v. Broughton*, 7 Ired. 96; "By the policy of the law, grand juries act in secret; and, with a view of sustaining that policy, it is prescribed that a grand juror shall, amongst other things, swear, that 'the State's counsel, your fellows', and your own, you shall keep secret.' The whole sense in which those words are to be received, or the duration of the secrecy imposed, we do not find accurately stated by any ancient writer on the common law. There are some reasons for the rule, which are obvious enough; and as far as the public interests can be subserved by it, the secrecy ought to be kept, not only while the grand jury continues empaneled, but it ought also to be subsequently observed. The principal ground of policy is, no doubt, to inspire the jurors with a confidence of security in the discharge of their responsible duties, so that they may deliberate and decide without an apprehension of any detriment from an accused or any other person, but be free 'true presentment to make.' Therefore it is clear, that at no time nor upon any occasion ought a grand juror to make known who concurred in or opposed the presentment; as the power to do so would or might in some degree impair that perfect freedom from external bias, which a grand juror ought to feel. It is probable, likewise, that another ground is, that it might lead to the escape of criminals, if their friends or others on the grand jury were at liberty to make known the institution and progress of an inquisition into their guilt. But as that reason can operate only while the accused is at large, it would seem, that, as far as the rule depends on that, it would not be obligatory after his arrest. We think, too, that, in furtherance of justice, the law may have intended to forbid a grand juror from giving aid to one indicted, and thus found to be probably guilty, in his efforts to defeat the prosecution, by publishing the evidence before the grand jury, and thus enabling him to counteract it, perhaps by foul means, after he knew where the case pinched. That would be betraying 'the State's counsel,' which is necessarily opened to the grand jury. But that is the immunity of the public, and not the privilege of the witness; and, therefore, it would seem that the rule should create an obligation on the conscience of the juror and be

before such court," or to disclose testimony on charge of perjury); § 2507 (a grand juror is not compellable nor allowable to disclose votes or opinions expressed); *Mont. P. C.* 1895, § 1789 (like Cal. P. C. § 926); *Nev. Gen. St.* 1885, § 4095 (like Cal. P. C. § 926); *N. M. Comp. L.* 1897, § 988 (a grand juror may be required to disclose testimony to ascertain "whether it is consistent with that given before them, by any other person, upon a charge against him for perjury, or in giving his testimony, or upon his trial thereof"); *N. Y. C. Cr. P.* 1881, § 266 (disclosure is compellable of the testimony before grand jury, to ascertain its consistency with testimony in court or to prove perjury of the witness); *N. D. Rev. C.* 1895, §§ 8021, 8022 (like Cal. P. C. § 926); *Oh. Rev. St.* 1898, § 7205 (a grand juror is not to testify to the tenor of vote or expression of opinion of any juror); *Okl. Stats.* 1893, §§ 5057, 5058 (like Cal. P. C. § 926); *Or. Annot. C.* 1892, § 1257 (substantially like Cal. P. C. § 926, beginning at "may be required," etc.); *S. D. Stats.* 1899, §§ 8482, 8483 (like Cal. P. C. § 926); *Tenn. Code* 1896, § 7043 (a grand juror may be examined as to a witness' testimony to "ascertain whether it is consistent" with his testimony at trial, or to prove testimony charged as perjured); *Tex. C. Cr. P.* 1895, § 404 (the grand juror's oath is to be: "The State's counsel,

your fellows', and your own, you shall keep secret, unless you are required to disclose the same in the course of a judicial proceeding in which the truth or falsity of evidence given in the grand-jury room in a criminal case shall be under investigation"); *Utah Rev. St.* 1898, § 4721 (like Cal. P. C. § 926); *Wash. C. & Stats.* 1897, § 6820 ("No grand-jury juror shall be allowed to state or to testify in any court in what manner he or any member of the jury voted on any question before them, or what opinion was expressed by any juror in relation to such question, or what question was before them"); *Wis. Stats.* 1898, § 2553 (no grand juror or court officer shall disclose an indictment before arrest, if the Court so order); § 2554 ("No grand juror shall be allowed to state or testify in any court in what manner he or any other member of the jury voted on any question before them, or what opinion was expressed by any juror in relation to such question"); § 2555 (grand jurors "may be required by any Court to testify whether the testimony of a witness examined before such jury is consistent with or different from the testimony given before them by any person upon a complaint against such person for perjury or upon his trial for such offense"); *Wyo. Rev. St.* 1887, § 3234 (like Oh. Rev. St. § 7205).

enforced by a Court, when the public justice may be advanced by it, and that it cannot be urged by the witness himself, when it would defeat justice, and thus encourage witnesses before that body to commit perjury, by false statements or the suppression of the truth. For it is obvious, that if grand jurors are, through all time and to all purposes, prohibited from disclosing and proving the testimony of witnesses before them, there is a perfect exemption from temporal penalties of perjury before a grand jury. The consequences of such a doctrine would be alarming; for, besides the danger of tempting the witnesses to commit so great a crime without the fear of punishment, grand jurors would have no credible evidence on which to act, on the one hand, and the citizen, on the other, would be deprived of one of his most boasted and valuable protections against arbitrary accusations and arrests. It would be extraordinary were witnesses thus enabled to perjure themselves without responsibility."

1849, *Thacher, J.*, in *Sands v. Robinson*, 12 Sm. & M. 704, 710: "It would certainly be a great breach of duty for a grand juror, while the inquest was in session, to disclose the business of that body, by means whereof persons accused and not yet arrested, might make their escape, or take other measures to defeat the course of public justice. Indeed, in a certain state of case, a grand juror might thereby render himself liable to a criminal charge as an accessory, after the fact, in the commission of a crime. So, as many charges are confided to that body against individuals, which, for want of sufficient proof, or from want of foundation in fact, do not mature to a presentment or indictment, common prudence and charity, and a regard for the peace of society, and innocent men's reputations, imperatively should close the mouths of grand jurors, as to their proceedings, after the expiration of their session. It is the interest of all good citizens to observe this rule, in order to secure freedom of deliberation and opinion, which would be to a great extent impaired if the occurrences of a session were afterwards made the subject of comment and loose and malicious conversation. Indeed, thus a grand juror might well subject himself to an action of slander. But the policy of the law was never designed to injure or punish the innocent, or to obstruct the course of justice; nor can that rule be upheld, by which a grand-jury room shall be converted into an occasion for the safe and irresponsible utterance of false and malicious slander against upright and honorable citizens. Hence it will be seen that so much depends upon time and circumstances, that the competency of a grand juror to testify is peculiarly a matter of discretion with the Court to discriminate as to it."

1858, *Bigelow, J.*, in *Com. v. Mead*, 12 Gray 167: "The reasons on which the sanction of secrecy which the common law gives to proceedings before grand juries is founded are set out in the books to be threefold. One is that the utmost freedom of disclosure of alleged crimes and offences by prosecutors may be secured. A second is that perjury and subornation of perjury may be prevented by withholding the knowledge of facts testified to before the grand jury, which, if known, it would be for the interest of the accused or their confederates to attempt to disprove by procuring false testimony. The third is to conceal the fact that an indictment is found against a party, in order to avoid the danger that he may escape and elude arrest upon it, before the presentment is made."

These reasons are obviously fourfold in their bearing. (a) The *grand jurors themselves* are to be secured in freedom from the apprehension that their opinions and votes may be subsequently disclosed by compulsion. (b) The *complainants* and the *witnesses* summoned are to be secured in freedom from the apprehension that their testimony may be subsequently disclosed by compulsion, and this in order that the State may secure willing witnesses. (c) The *guilty accused* is not to be provided with such clues as will enable

* For another exposition of the reasons for Report to the Code of Criminal Procedure secrecy, see Edward Livingston's *Introductory* (Works, ed. 1872, I, 870).

him to flee from arrest or to suborn false testimony or tamper with witnesses. (d) The *innocent accused*, who is charged by complaint before the jury, but is exonerated by their refusal to indict, is entitled to be protected from the compulsory disclosure of the fact that he has been groundlessly accused.

Of these four classes of reasons, the third and the fourth disappear practically from consideration as a ground of privilege for witnesses. (c) The third disappears, in regard to the accused's opportunity of escape, as soon as he either escapes or is arrested, and cannot therefore have any bearing upon later stages of the proceeding. It affects merely the grand jurors' obligation not to give extrajudicial information between the times of their session and of the arrest. This reason also disappears, in regard to the accused's opportunity of tampering with the witnesses or suborning others in defence, as soon as the indictment is returned; for the indictment must bear the witnesses' names indorsed. Modern criminal procedure disregards the danger of subornation, and acknowledges that the accused is in fairness entitled to know before trial who are to be the witnesses against him (*ante*, §§ 1850-1854). (d) The fourth reason aims chiefly to prohibit the grand juror's extrajudicial disclosure of the details of the charges against persons found innocent. It can have little or no application to compulsory disclosure in court; first, because the bill is returned "*ignoramus*" or "not found," and thus the fact of the charge is necessarily published upon the records, and, secondly, because the only mode in which such a disclosure would practically be relevant would be an attempt to impeach a witness who testifies to the person's innocence by his former testimony before the grand jury to the person's guilt, and this implies that the person's doings have become so far a relevant matter of public investigation that it would be vain to secure any further technical privacy for the charges.

Thus the only reasons which remain as the possible foundation of any privilege in subsequent testimony are the first and the second. The effect of these may now be examined.

§ 2361. (a) *Privilege of Grand Jurors; Secrecy of Vote and Opinion.* The necessity for securing to the grand jurors an absolute freedom of deliberation and decision, iminune from apprehensions of injury from the persons charged by them, demands a guarantee that by no legal process will the disclosure of their votes and expressions of opinion in the jury room be compelled.¹ This rests upon precisely the same footing as the privilege of petit jurors (*ante*, § 2346) or that of husband and wife (*ante*, § 2332). It forbids that any grand juror shall be compelled to disclose his own utterances or permitted to disclose the utterances of his fellows. On principle, this privilege, like all others (*ante*, § 219f), may be waived by the person entitled to it. In practice, the privilege has little occasion to be exercised, because the utterances protected by it can seldom be relevant upon any issue.

¹ 1884, *Ex parte Sontag*, 64 Cal. 525, 2 Pac. 402; 1870, *Elbin v. Wilson*, 33 Md. 135, 144 (witness not allowed to be impeached by questions as to his conduct as grand juror in endeavoring to have the appellee indicted for perjury); 1879, *Gordon v. Com.*, 92 Pa. 216, 220 (votes may not be disclosed).

§ 2362. (b) *Privilege of Witnesses before Grand Jury; General Principle.* The witnesses and complainants appearing before the grand jury must be guaranteed temporarily against compulsory disclosure of their testimony and complaints, because otherwise the State could not expect to secure ample quantity of evidence for the information of the grand jury. The secrecy is the State's inducement for obtaining testimony. The policy is analogous to that of the privilege for informers in general (*post*, § 2374). The privilege, therefore, is not the grand juror's; for he is merely an indifferent mouth-piece of the disclosure. Nor is it the State's; for the State's interest is merely the motive for constituting the privilege. The theory of the privilege is that the witness is guaranteed against compulsory disclosure; the privilege must therefore be that of the witness, and rests upon his consent.

But obviously the secrecy that is guaranteed is only *temporary* and *provisional*. Permanent secrecy would be more than is necessary to render the witness willing. Moreover, it would go too far by creating an opportunity for abuse; since a corrupt witness would be able to utilize it for perjured charges. This much is now universally conceded:

1858, *Bigelow, J., in Com. v. Mead*, 12 Gray 167: "But when these purposes [as above quoted] are accomplished, the necessity and expediency of retaining the seal of secrecy are at an end. *Cessante ratione, cessat regula.* After the indictment is found and presented, and the accused is held to answer and the trial before the traverse jury is begun, all the facts relative to the crime charged and its prosecution are necessarily opened, and no harm can arise to the cause of public justice by no longer withholding facts material and relevant to the issue, merely because their disclosure may lead to the development of some part of the proceedings before the grand jury. On the contrary, great hardship and injustice might often be occasioned by depriving a party of important evidence, essential to his defence, by enforcing a rule of exclusion, having its origin and foundation in public policy, after the reasons on which this rule is based have ceased to exist. The case at bar furnishes a good illustration of the truth of this remark. No possible injury to the interests or rights of the government that we can see could happen by a disclosure of the testimony given by the witness before the grand jury. . . . On the other hand, it is clear that the rights of the accused might be greatly affected and his peril much increased, if he can be shut out from showing the fact that an important witness against him is unworthy of credit, or that his testimony before the jury of trials is to be taken with great caution and doubt, because on a previous occasion, when called to testify on oath, he had given a different account of the same transaction from that which he has stated in his evidence at the trial."

1893, *McSherry, J., in Izer v. State*, 77 Md. 110, 28 Atl. 282: "If witnesses who testify falsely before the grand jury are free from all the penalties of perjury merely because of the juror's oath of secrecy, the object designed to be effected by that clause of his oath would be perverted, and a measure intended to promote the public welfare would be transformed into a means to defeat the ends of justice. The law does not permit the obligation of secrecy which has been imposed for one purpose to be availed of for a totally different one. The grand juror's oath of secrecy cannot, therefore, be interposed to obstruct the administration of justice."

But what are the limits of this temporary secrecy? The answer is, on principle, that it ceases when the grand jury has finished its duties and has either indicted or discharged the persons accused. (1) Supposing the grand

jury to *indict* J. S. on Doe's testimony, it is plain that secrecy is no longer of any avail, for Doe will be summoned as a witness at the trial and will be compellable to testify. If he tells the truth, and the truth is the same as he testified before the grand jury, the disclosure of the former testimony cannot possibly bring to him any harm (in the shape of corporal injury or personal ill-will) which his testimony on the open trial does not equally tend to produce. If, on the other hand, he now testifies falsely, or if he testifies truly but formerly falsely, he is in no way a person who ought to have any privilege. The privilege therefore has no longer any reason to exist. (2) Supposing, on the contrary, that the grand jury, after hearing Doe's testimony, nevertheless *discharge* J. S., there may now be a motive for Doe to desire secrecy, — as when on a subsequent trial it is desired to impeach Doe as a witness by showing his biased utterances against J. S. before the grand jury. But here the privilege ought also to cease, for another reason, namely, that the chance that such a disclosure will be called for is too small a contingency to have any effect *a priori* in rendering Doe unwilling to make complaint or give testimony before the grand jury. Doe naturally will have expected that J. S. would be indicted. Moreover, when Doe is summoned on a civil trial involving the same matters as the criminal charge, and it is desired to impeach him by his former testimony, all motive for secrecy ends, for the same reasons noted in par. (1), *supra*. Furthermore, in the other rare contingencies in which his testimony before the grand jury might become relevant (*post*, § 2363, par. 2), justice requires in any case that Doe should not be exempted from disclosure.

There remain, therefore, on principle, no cases at all in which, after the grand jury's functions are ended, the privilege of the witnesses not to have their testimony disclosed should be deemed to continue. This is, in effect, the law as generally accepted to-day. It is, however, not usually stated in such a broad form. The common phrase is that disclosure may be required "whenever it becomes necessary in the course of justice." Disregarding a few local exceptions, this is in practice no narrower a rule than the one above deducible from principle.

§ 2363. **Same: Instances of the Cessation of the Privilege.** The instances in which the privilege ceases to operate, by virtue of the foregoing reasons, may be grouped according to the purpose for which the testimony is offered to be used :

(a) *Using the testimony as a self-contradiction in impeachment of the witness.* It is now universally conceded that a witness may be impeached, in any subsequent trial civil or criminal, by self-contradictory testimony (*ante*, § 1017) given by him before the grand jury.¹ In the same way, a party to

¹ To the statutes cited *ante*, § 2360, add the following cases: *Eng.*: 1842, *R. v. Gibson*, Car. & M. 672 (cross-examination of a witness to his prior testimony before the grand jury, allowed); *Md.*: 1896, *Kirk v. Garrett*, 84 Md. 883, 35 Atl. 1089; *Mass.*: 1858, *Com. v. Mead*, 12 Gray 167 (quoted *supra*); 1870, *Way v. Butterworth*,

106 Mass. 75; 1899, *Com. v. Chance*, 174 id. 245, 54 N. E. 551; *Mich.*: 1895, *People v. O'Neill*, 107 Mich. 556, 65 N. W. 540 (applying the statute); *Mo.*: 1889, *State v. Thomas*, 99 Mo. 235, 255, 259, 12 S. W. 643 (statute applied); *N. H.*: 1873, *State v. Wood*, 53 N. H. 484, 487, 498; *N. Y.*: 1847, *People v. Hulbut*,

the cause, not taking the stand as a witness, may be impeached by his admissions (*ante*, § 1048) made in testifying before the grand jury.² The occasional statutory sanction for the former of these uses cannot be construed to prohibit the latter, which goes upon the same reasoning. Nor should any of the ensuing legitimate purposes of disclosure be considered to be obstructed by the statutory omission to mention them, — else the integrity of common-law principles would tend to be diminished in direct ratio to the ignorance or unskilfulness of the Legislature which attempted in any respect to make a declaratory statute.

(b) *Perjury*. A witness' testimony before a grand jury may always be used upon a prosecution for perjury therein.³

⁴ Denio 133 (statutory rule confirmed); *Or.*: 1887, *State v. Moran*, 15 Or. 262, 14 Pac. 419; 1895, *State v. Brown*, 28 id. 147, 41 Pac. 1042; *Ill.*: 1846, *Granger v. Warrington*, 8 Ill. 299, 310; 1886, *Bresler v. People*, 117 id. 422, 436, 8 N. E. 62 (after an accused is put on trial, there is no reason against publicity "if the ends of justice require it"); *Ind.*: 1838, *Burnham v. Hatfield*, 5 Blackf. 21 (plaintiff's admissions, when before the jury); 1853, *Perkins v. State*, 4 Ind. 222 (witness' corroborative statements before the jury); 1873, *Burdick v. Hunt*, 43 id. 381, 389 (witness' self-contradiction); 1877, *State v. Van Buekirk*, 59 id. 384, 388 (preceding cases approved); *Ia.*: 1901, *State v. McPherson*, 114 Ia. 492, 87 N. W. 421 (disclosure by the clerk of the grand jury, as to prior testimony of a witness, in impeachment, held admissible, on common-law principles); *Me.*: 1874, *State v. Benner*, 64 Me. 267, 282 (disposing of the prior contrary intimation in *State v. Knight*, 43 id. 1, 128); *Pa.*: 1879, *Gordon v. Com.*, 92 Pa. 216, 219; *Tex.*: 1901, *Wooley v. State*, — *Tex. Cr.* —, 64 S. W. 1054 (referring to prior cases); *Va.*: 1874, *Little v. Com.*, 25 Gratt. 921, 930, *semble*.

The early *Connecticut* doctrine was very strict; this was the more absurd because the local practice of permitting the accused's presence at the grand jury's sessions utterly nullified the ground of the privilege. On the present point, however, the privilege seems always to have been denied, and would certainly to-day be denied: 1844, *State v. Fasset*, 16 Conn. 457, 467 (grand juror not admitted to prove certain evidence given to them); 1838, *State v. Coffee*, 56 Id. 410, 16 Atl. 151 (preceding opinion doubted as to the unqualified nature of its expressions).

The following early doubt in *New Jersey* would to-day be repudiated: 1800, *Imlay v. Rogers*, 2 N. J. L. 347 (two judges *pro*, and two judges *con*).

² 1895, *Jenkins v. State*, 35 Fla. 737, 18 So. 182 (accused's testimony as a witness before the jury; admitted, under a statute in part like the Missouri statute, though the accused had not taken the stand at the trial; the statutory specified cases for permitted use "do not exclude an inquiry in other cases sanctioned by the law"); 1897, *Hinshaw v. State*, 147 Ind. 334, 47 N. E. 158 (disclosure of the testimony of the defend-

ant, who had not taken the stand, allowed; R. S. 1894, § 1731, not excluding any uses before recognized, but confirming and adding others); 1899, *Steele-Smith G. Co. v. Potthast*, 109 Ia. 413, 80 N. W. 517 (party's admissions); 1890, *New Hampshire F. I. Co. v. Healey*, 151 Mass. 537, 24 N. E. 913 (party's admissions); 1846, *State v. Broughton*, 7 Ired. 96 (accused's testimony before the grand jury as a witness, making criminating statements; quoted *ante*, § 2360); 1813, *U. S. v. Charles*, 2 Cr. C. C. 76, *semble* (an accused's confessions when a witness); 1887, *U. S. v. Kirkwood*, 5 Utah 123, 13 Pac. 234 (accused's confessions in testifying before the jury; the statute held not to contain any express prohibition of this); 1892, *People v. Reggel*, 8 Id. 21, 28 Pac. 955 (similar).

In *Connecticut* the usual result is reached, but is attainable on peculiar grounds due to local practice: 1888, *State v. Coffee*, 56 Conn. 410, 16 Atl. 151 (the accused by local practice being permitted to attend the session of the jury, his confession to some of the jurors, made informally, was allowed to be proved by them, as not being "a part of the secrets of the case," nor obtained by them as "a part of their duty"). The ruling in *Missouri* would presumably be contrary to the sound doctrine: 1855, *Tindle v. Nichols*, 20 Mo. 326 (cited *infra*, note 6). The present law in *Texas* seems to be sound: 1898, *Gutgesell v. State*, — *Tex. Cr.* —, 43 S. W. 1016 (the Code exception is exclusive of others; hence, an accused's testimony as a witness before the grand jury cannot be used against him as an admission, if he is not a witness on his trial; unsonnd); 1900, *Spangler v. State*, 41 Id. 424, 55 S. W. 326 (preceding case approved); 1901, *Wisdom v. State*, — id. —, 61 S. W. 926 (admitting testimony to a confession, and repudiating any limitations "after the hearing before that body has been terminated"; explaining *Gutgesell v. State*, *supra*, and prior cases; Henderson, J., diss.); compare the peculiar rule in this State for confessions (*ante*, §§ 852, 1089).

³ This is usually declared in the statutes (*ante*, § 2360). Add the following rulings: 1844, *R. v. Hughes*, 1 C. & K. 519, 528, *Tindal*, C. J. (perjury before the grand jury; another witness before them admitted to prove the defendants' testimony; "it is for the purposes of public justice"); 1867, *People v. Young*, 31 Cal. 563;

(c) The mere fact that a certain person was a witness⁴ or a complainant⁵ before the grand jury may always be used, for the simple reason that the names of witnesses and of complainants are necessarily given publicity in the usual procedure of finding or rejecting indictments.

(d) Where a plaintiff seeking redress for *defamation* or *malicious prosecution* desires in his proof the testimony of witnesses, other than the defendant, before the grand jury, the privilege should not apply.⁶ Where the suit is for defamation uttered by the defendant in the course of testimony before the grand jury, much less should the privilege apply;⁷ for otherwise the right of action would be a vain pretence of the law, the sole means of establishing it being denied. It may be, however, that the utterance is privileged from liability by the substantive law of torts; in that event it is the substantive law, and not the law of evidence, that forbids its proof.

(e) Where the witness is sought to be impeached at a subsequent trial upon other issues, by *expressions of bias* in his testimony before the grand jury, the privilege does not necessarily apply. But here, if anywhere after the grand jury's session is ended, the privilege may conceivably be held to continue.

(f) So far as the privilege exists and continues, it prohibits disclosures, not only by the grand jurors themselves, but also by the *State's officers* and others who may be present, lawfully or unlawfully, at the private sessions; for the witness has no control over these persons' presence and their secrecy is as essential as that of the grand jurors to his security.⁸

1893, *Izer v. State*, 77 Md. 110, 26 Atl. 282;
1838, *Crocker v. State*, Meigs 127.

⁴ 1886, *Ex parte Schmidt*, 71 Cal. 212, 12 Pac. 55 (like the next case); 1888, *People v. Northey*, 77 id. 618, 19 Pac. 865, 20 Pac. 129 ("The fact that a person was called, sworn, and examined as a witness before a grand jury does not come within the rule of secrecy; if it did, it is violated whenever an indictment is returned with the names of the witnesses indorsed on it or inserted at its foot"); 1853, *Com. v. Hill*, 11 Cush. 137, 140 (to prove that no variance between the indictment and proof existed, a grand juror was allowed to testify, in impeachment of one who testified to his prior testimony before the grand jury, that he was not a witness at all before that jury); 1903, *Re Archer*, — Mich. —, 96 N. W. 442 (grand jurors' report to the judge that a witness on appearing refused to exhibit his books, held not privileged, in proceedings for contempt).

⁵ 1823, *Freeman v. Arkell*, 1 C. & P. 135 (that a certain person was the prosecutor on a bill ignored by them); 1846, *Granger v. Warrington*, 8 Ill. 299, 310 (malicious prosecution; name of the complainant required to be disclosed; but the Court offer the unsound reason that no oath of secrecy was then locally required of grand jurors); 1834, *Huidekoper v. Cotton*, 3 Watts 56 (malicious prosecution, the bill having been returned "ignoramus"; "so far is our law from forbidding the grand jury from disclosing the name of the prosecutor that it is provided that . . . if they return that the prose-

cutor shall pay the costs, they shall name who is the prosecutor"). Such statutes exist in many jurisdictions, requiring a prosecutor to be named.

⁶ 1879, *Hunter v. Randall*, 69 Me. 183, 189 (malicious prosecution; plaintiff allowed to prove what witnesses testified before the grand jury on the then complaint against the plaintiff for perjury). *Contra*: 1855, *Tindle v. Nichols*, 20 Mo. 326 (under a statute permitting the jury to testify in contradiction of a witness or on his trial for perjury, and forbidding them "except when lawfully required," the disclosure is forbidden in all other but the specified cases; here, in an action for slander charging the plaintiff with perjury before the jury, on a plea of truth; this is clearly unsound, as well as unjust; compare par. (a) *supra*); 1858, *Beam v. Link*, 27 id. 261 (similar ruling, in an action for malicious prosecution by procuring the plaintiff to be indicted; but here the local substantive law would apparently have exempted the defendant from liability in any case).

⁷ 1849, *Sands v. Robinson*, 12 Sm. & M. 704, 711 (a grand juror allowed to testify to utterances by a witness before them, in an action against the witness for defamatory utterances, the previous disclosure of the topic not making it necessary to preserve secrecy, and the utterances not being absolutely privileged from suit). Compare the rulings upon an *informers' privilege* (*post*, § 2374).

⁸ 1844, *State v. Fasset*, 16 Conn. 457, 470 (disclosure by "others who were present and

2. Parol Evidence Rule.

§ 2364. **Grounds for Indictment; Illegal Evidence; Required Number of Votes; etc.** The finding of an indictment by the grand jury, like the verdict of a petit jury, is a legal act and a part of a judicial record; and the Parol Evidence rule therefore applies to all attempts to invalidate it. The principles upon which depends the application of that rule to verdicts have been already examined (*ante*, §§ 2348-2356); and it will be sufficient here to note briefly, under the same heads, the effect of those principles *mutatis mutandis*, upon the grand jury's legal act of finding an indictment.

(a) The *motives, reasons, and grounds* upon which the indictment was based cannot be availed of to invalidate it (*ante*, § 2349). This much is generally conceded.¹ But suppose that there is a limitation of the grand jury's sources of investigation in the shape of a rule that they may receive only such kinds of evidence as would be receivable on a trial before a petit jury. Such a rule is a plain obstruction of justice, reprehensible in policy. But if it exists, it logically obliges the Court to permit the indictment to be invalidated by the fact of the jury's reception of illegal evidence. In an ordinary trial, the record of proceedings, containing the exceptions, furnishes the means of establishing the fact, and the fact, when established, may be used to invalidate the verdict. But in the grand jury's proceedings, if the rule is to be enforced at all, as it is for petit juries, the fact must be allowed to be shown by the grand jurors or others present. If, then, any community is willing to accept so deleterious a rule of criminal procedure, its enforcement in the only feasible way must be permitted by showing the facts.² Upon the recognition of such a rule the various jurisdictions are divided.³

have not taken this oath," not permitted); 1895, *Jenkins v. State*, 35 Fla. 737, 18 So. 182 (State's attorney); 1836, *McLellan v. Richardson*, 13 Me. 82, 86 (county attorney); 1899, *People v. Thompson*, 122 Mich. 411, 81 N. W. 344 (prosecuting attorney's stipulation as to testimony, not admitted on plea of abatement to indictment); 1839, *Clark v. Field*, 12 Vt. 486 (State's attorney). *Contra*, but unsound: 1877, *State v. Van Buskirk*, 59 Ind. 384, 388 (prosecuting attorney held not subject to the grand jurors' rule, because he "is not bound by any such oath of secrecy"; yet here, where he was allowed to impeach a witness, a juror would equally have been allowed); 1874, *Little v. Com.*, 25 Gratt. 921, 931 (third person present).

¹ 1902, *Hall v. State*, 134 Ala. 90, 32 So. 750 (jurors' testimony not admissible to show that the grand jury were brought to find a true bill only after several contrary votings, followed by repeated urgings of the prosecuting attorney and the judge); 1895, *Owens v. Owens*, 81 Md. 518, 32 Atl. 247 (inquiry of the foreman of a grand jury why a bill was dismissed, not allowed); 1847, *People v. Hulhut*, 4 Denio 133 (illegal liquor-selling, on an indictment in five counts charging five offences; grand jurors not allowed to testify that only one offence was testified to before them, mainly on the theory

that the indictment "like other records, imports absolute verity," and cannot be disputed "unless it be done upon motion" to quash or to strike out counts).

In Pennsylvania an unwise rule as to the jury's methods of investigation has led naturally to a variation from the present principle: 1889, *Com. v. Green*, 126 Pa. 531, 17 Atl. 878 (grand juror's testimony admitted, on a motion for quashing the indictment, to show that the indictment was founded on testimony of witnesses and not on their own "knowledge and observation," a procedure which under the local law was forbidden and constituted "a breach of privilege on the part of the grand jury").

² 1881, *U. S. v. Farrington*, 5 Fed. 343, Wallace, J. (for quashing an indictment, the proceedings may be inquired into with reference to the sufficiency or legality of the evidence; "whenever it becomes essential to ascertain what has transpired before a grand jury, it may be shown, no matter by whom; and the only limitation is that it may not be shown how the individual jurors voted or what they said during their investigations").

³ See the following typical cases: 1871, *State v. Beebe*, 17 Minn. 241; 1871, *U. S. v. Brown*, 1 Sawyer 531; 1902, *State v. Comer*, 157 Ind. 611, 62 N. E. 462.

(b) Where the question is as to the *issues* covered by the indictment (as when a former conviction for the same offence is pleaded), it may be necessary to ascertain the precise charge made by the testimony before the grand jury, so as to define the charge covered by the indictment. This is permissible on the general principle (*ante*, § 2351).⁴

(c) Where the *misconduct* of the jurors, or the *irregularity* of their proceedings, constitutes by the law of criminal procedure a ground for invalidating the indictment, the fact may properly be proved by the testimony of a grand juror, on the general principle (*ante*, § 2352);⁵ though a Court acknowledging the rule against a petit juror's impeaching his own misconduct should equally apply it here.

(d) That *less than the required number assented* to the verdict of a petit jury cannot be shown (*ante*, § 2355). Does the same consequence follow for a grand jury's indictment? For the petit jurors, the reason is that their outward assent, express or implied, at the time of polling, is the sole effective conduct constituting assent. This act of assent is in reality individual as well as joint, whether there is an individual polling or not. But the grand jurors are not polled; nor do they individually subscribe the indictment; nor is the tenor of each indictment brought home to them individually by public reading, as is that of a petit jury's verdict. There is, to be sure, some opportunity of dissent, but hardly a practical one. There is no formal outward act of assent in the sense in which there clearly is for petit jurors. Virtually, then, the time of the act of assent is carried back to the time of voting in the jury room. It is therefore consistent in principle to allow the absence of such assent by the requisite number to be shown.⁶ Some Courts are found to maintain the opposite view, following the analogy of a petit jury's verdict.⁷ So long as the present procedure is followed, the former view seems inevitably sound. But the proper course would be to poll the grand jurors on each indictment after the manner of a petit jury, and thus to satisfy the requirements of principle, for it is undeniably poor policy to hold out any inducements of principle, for it is undeniably poor policy to hold out any inducements (as the present rule does) to ferret among the grand jurors and ascertain the tenor of their votes, and to make necessary the quashing of an indictment which ought never to have been received in the beginning.

⁴ 1859, *Rocco v. State*, 37 Miss. 357, 369 (on a plea of former conviction for the same offence of illegal liquor-selling, a grand juror's testimony to the parties and evidence before them on the indictment was received, applying a statute).

⁵ 1858, *Shattuck v. State*, 11 Ind. 473, 477 (propriety of the indictment with reference to irregularities of proceeding before the grand jury; grand juror's testimony held admissible); 1815, *U. S. v. Coolidge*, 2 Gall. 364 (testimony of court officers that a witness before the grand jury was not duly sworn, admitted).

⁶ The leading opinion, fully expounding the principle and policy, is found in *Low's Case*, 4 Me. 439 (1827). To this add the following: 1888, *State v. Coffee*, 56 Conn. 410, 16 Atl. 151 (suggested as "one possible exception"); 1878,

People v. Shattuck, 6 Abb. N. C. 33 (on a motion to quash, the number of votes may be shown).

⁷ 1702, *Colonel Bayard's Trial*, 14 How. St. Tr. 478, New York (here the counsel for the defendant makes a good argument); 1878, *Spigener v. State*, 62 Ala. 383, 386 (neither jurors' testimony, nor that of others, admitted to show that less than twelve jurors assented to the bill; good opinion by Stone, J.); 1902, *Hall v. State*, 134 id. 90, 32 So. 750 (like *Spigener v. State*, *supra*); 1867, *State v. Oxford*, 30 Tex. 428 (that an indictment was not found by the requisite twelve can be shown only by the records of the court, and not by the testimony of the jurors; "our Code but follows the principles of the common law").

TOPIC B (continued) : PRIVILEGED COMMUNICATIONS.

SUB-TOPIC V: STATE SECRETS AND OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS.

CHAPTER LXXXIII.

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| § 2367. Several Principles discriminated. | § 2372. Same: Ambassadors, Consuls, Judges. |
| § 2368. (a) Tortious Non-Liability of the Executive. | § 2373. (e) Irremovability of Official Records. |
| § 2369. (b) Constitutional Exemption of the Executive from Judicial Process. | § 2374. (f) Privilege for Communications by Informers to Official Prosecutors. |
| § 2370. (c) Testimonial Privilege of the Executive not to be a Witness. | § 2375. (g) Privilege for Secrets of State and Official Communications. |
| § 2371. (d) Testimonial Privilege of the Executive and Subordinate Officers, not to attend Court. | § 2376. Same: Who determines the Necessity for Secrecy. |

§ 2367. *Several Principles discriminated.* The principle of privilege which protects from disclosure, through the testimony of governmental officers, the secrets of State and communications of informers to official prosecutors, is in practice superficially related to certain other principles, not resting upon testimonial privilege in general or upon this kind of privilege in particular. In order to discriminate the precise scope of these different principles, it is necessary to consider them together here. The necessity is the greater because some of them, being plainly valid, have in some courts been misused to give an unwarrantable scope to the present privileges for State secrets and informers' communications. By comparing their boundaries, the true and limited scope of the testimonial privileges can best be understood.

There are, then, seven distinct principles which in superficial features tend often to be confounded. (a) There is a doctrine of the *substantive law*, that the chief Executive and subordinate executive officers are in some respects *exempt from liability for torts* of violence and defamation. (b) There is a question of *constitutional law*, whether the chief Executive is corporally *exempt from the legal process of the Judiciary* for any purpose whatever. (c) There is a question of *testimonial privilege* at large, whether the Executive is exempted from the ordinary *duty to give testimony*; this is usually united with the preceding question, yet is distinct in theory. (d) There is a question of *testimonial privilege of attendance in court*, whether executive and other officers are exempted from the general duty to attend, though still liable testimonially to give evidence by deposition while remaining at their offices. (e) There is a doctrine, analogous to the foregoing privilege, that *official records are irremovable* and cannot be required to be taken, in the original, from their place of official custody to the court-room. (f) There is a genuine *communications-privilege*, permitting secrecy for communications by *informers to official prosecutors*. (g) There is a genuine *topical privilege* for facts constituting *secrets of State*, and this, by improper exten-

sion, has often been made to include a bastard *communications-privilege* for *communications between officials of the government*.

These various doctrines may now be examined in the above order.

§ 2368. (a) **Tortious Non-Liability of the Executive.** The chief Executive and subordinate executive officers have unquestionably some exemptions from liability for harm done in the course of their official acts. A sheriff, for example, is not liable for the death of a person hanged by him in pursuance to a lawful order of execution. In general, two classes of officials are distinguished in applying this principle. A subordinate or ministerial official, *i. e.* one who acts under the orders of a superior official, is absolutely exempted from liability if the harm done by him is done solely in the implicit obedience of an order lawful upon its face; conversely, he is not exempt, if he varies from the order, though in good faith. A superior official, *i. e.* one who is given by the law a discretionary authority and exercises his judgment independently and without looking higher for orders, is exempted from liability, because the nature of his responsibility requires that he should exercise his judgment free from apprehension of the harassment of subsequent litigation. Some Courts exempt such an official only when he has acted in good faith; but sound policy requires an absolute exemption, not in order to protect the malicious official, but in order that the upright official may be exempted from the burden of defending himself from a charge of malice. In the following passage this doctrine is exemplified:

1888, Chief Justice *Cooley*, *Torts*, 2d ed., * 376: "If we take the case of legislative officers, their rightful exemption from liability is very plain. Let it be supposed that an individual has a just claim against the State which the Legislature ought to allow, but neglects or refuses to allow. In such a case there may be a moral wrong, but there can be no legal wrong. The Legislature has full discretionary authority in all matters of legislation, and it is not consistent with this that the members should be called to account at the suit of individuals for their acts and neglects. Discretionary power is, in its nature, independent; to make those who wield it liable to be called to account by some other authority is to take away discretion and destroy independence. . . . If we take next the case of executive officers, the rule will be found to be the same. The governor of the State is vested with a power to grant pardons and reprieves, to command the militia, to refuse his assent to laws, and to take the steps necessary for the proper enforcement of the laws; but neglect of none of these can make him responsible in damages to the party suffering therefrom. No one has any legal right to be pardoned, or to have any particular law signed by the governor, or to have any definite step taken by the governor in the enforcement of the laws. The Executive in these particulars exercises his discretion, and he is not responsible to the Courts for the manner in which his duties are performed. Moreover, he could not be made responsible to private parties without subordinating the executive department to the judicial department, and this would be inconsistent with the theory of republican institutions. Each department, within its province, is and must be independent. Taking next the case of the judicial department, the same rule still applies. For mere neglect in judicial duties no action can lie. A judge cannot be sued because of delaying his judgments, or because he fails to bring to his duties all the care, prudence, and diligence that he ought to bring, or because he decides on partial views and without sufficient information. His selection for his office implies that he is to be governed in it by his own judgment; and it is always to be assumed that that judgment has been honestly exercised and applied. . . . For all duties the time, manner, and extent of the per-

formance of which are left to the wisdom, integrity, and judgment of the officer himself, it is conceded that, as a general rule, the only liability of the officer is to the criminal law, in case he shall wrongfully and maliciously neglect to perform his duties, or shall perform them improperly. Duties of this nature are usually spoken of as duties in the exercise of discretionary and judicial powers, and it is deemed a conclusive answer to any private action for an injury resulting from neglect or unfaithful performance to say that where a matter is trusted to the discretion or judgment of an officer, the very nature of the authority is inconsistent with responsibility in damages for the manner of its exercise, since to hold the officer to such responsibility would be to confer a discretion and then make its exercise a wrong."¹

The foregoing principle of substantive law comes, at two points, into apparent contact with the ensuing principles here to be considered. In the first place, a chief Executive who has ordered a *trespass* — for example, a Governor who has ordered the military to fire upon a mob — may appeal to the foregoing principle to exempt him from civil or criminal liability. At the same time and in the same litigation the question may arise whether he is constitutionally subject to judicial process compelling him to appear (*post*, § 2369), and whether he is privileged from testifying at all (*post*, § 2370), and, if not, whether he is privileged from attendance at court (*post*, § 2371). All of these questions are independent of each other; yet they have sometimes been confused. In the second place, an officer who has in an official report made a *libellous statement* may appeal to the principle of substantive law to privilege him from liability. If he is thus legally exempt and pleads his exemption, no question of testimonial privilege arises. Yet some Courts have preferred to attain the same end, not by recognizing a plea of substantive law, but by declaring a privilege of testimonial secrecy (*post*, § 2375), — thus defeating the action indirectly by suppressing the means of proof. Yet the testimonial and the tortious privileges should be strictly discriminated.

§ 2369. (b) **Constitutional Exemption of the Executive from Judicial Process.** Whether the apportionment of functions between Executive and Judiciary, in coordinate independent supremacy, signifies that the Executive can never be corporally subjected to the compulsory process of the Judiciary, is an interesting question, but solely one of constitutional law. The distinction between this question and the foregoing one (of exemption from tortious liability) is obscured when it is sought (for example) to sue the Governor of a State for a trespass done by the military under his order and at the same time to summon or to enjoin him by subpoena or to arrest him upon execution-process. But in a suit against him after expiration of his office, his supposed exemption from judicial process has clearly disappeared, and yet a proper plea claiming exoneration from tortious liability for executive acts would present that question nakedly and plainly, and would still defeat the action.

Whether, then, he has during office, as Executive, a constitutional immunity from compulsory process, after the analogy of the sovereign of a monarchy, is a large question independent of all others. Chief Justice

¹ Compare the following opinions: 1774, Mansfield; 1841, Hill v. Bigge, 3 Moore P. C. Mostyn v. Fabrigas, Cowp. 161, 175, L. C. J. 465, 4 St. Tr. N. s. 723, Lord Brougham.

Marshall, in Aaron Burr's trial,¹ raising the question in connection with the process of subpoena, noted that "a difference of opinion may exist with respect to the power to compel the same obedience to the process as if it had been directed to a private citizen," but did not attempt to force the issue. Since his time, the theory has received some attention, with differing judicial views, in determining the judicial power to enforce by mandamus the performance of ministerial duties by the Executive.² In the following passage the principle has been convincingly expounded, in its application to testimonial process:

1877, *Agnew, C. J., in Hartranft's Appeal*, 85 Pa. 433, 455: "The first point to be noticed is the argument that he is exempt from a subpoena because he is a coordinate branch of the State government. What is coordination or equality of rank, under the Constitution? It is not the absolute independence of each. If it were, the end would be disorder, conflict, and finally disorganization. It is not absolute superiority each over the others, for then they would not coexist in unity, as essential parts of the same common whole. . . . From the very nature of coordination in one and the same government, and the distribution to each branch of its appropriate functions, each is necessarily supreme in its own department, for neither can freely exercise its proper functions if it can be obstructed by the other. For example, the Judiciary cannot control or interfere with the discretion of the Governor in the exercise of an executive function. And for the same reason the legislative and executive branches cannot control the appropriate functions of the judicial. If the Legislative or Executive can oppose or obstruct the exercise of an appropriate judicial power the purpose of separation is defeated; a practical union takes place in them, and the surrender by the judiciary is effected. One of the appropriate and exclusive functions of the judiciary is the detection, trial, and punishment of offenders against the law. On the true principles of constitutional coordination, therefore, the Governor cannot obstruct this function, and must yield obedience to the judicial branch in this respect as the appropriate and superior repository of the power conferred by the people themselves. . . . The appropriate function of the Judiciary being the detection, trial, and punishment of offenders, and the inquiry for this purpose by witnesses being the constitutional and legal mode of procedure, it is equally clear that the Governor, just as any other citizen, being subordinate to the judicial power in this respect, must yield his obedience to the process necessary for the exercise of this judicial function. Good government and the welfare of the people demand this."

§ 2370. (c) **Testimonial Privilege of the Executive not to be a Witness.** The public (in the words of Lord Hardwicke) has a right to every man's evidence.¹ Is there any reason why this right should suffer an exception when the desired knowledge is in the possession of a person occupying at the moment the office of chief Executive of a State? There is no reason at all. His temporary duties as an official cannot override his permanent and fundamental duty as a citizen and as a debtor to justice. The general principle (*ante*, § 2192) of testimonial duty to disclose knowledge needed in judicial investigations is of universal force. It does not suffer an exemption

¹ Quoted *post*, § 2371.

² The following authorities exhibit the arguments: 1878, *People v. Governor*, 29 Mich. 320; 1888, *Martin v. Ingham*, 38 Kan. 641, 17 Pac. 162; *Merrill on Mandamus*, ed. 1892, §§ 92-96.

Note that a foreign ambassador, as his sovereign's personal representative, and, by treaty sometimes, a consul also, is exempt from process: *post*, § 2372.

¹ *Ante*, § 2192.

which would be irrespective of the nature of the person's knowledge and would rest wholly on the nature of the person's occupation. This duty, and its equal application to the Executive and subordinate officers, has perhaps never been doubted. But it tends to become confused with three other distinct principles.

In the first place, the amenability of the Executive to *compulsory process* (just examined) is a different question. It may be held that the person is thus exempt, and yet that the duty exists. That the enforcement of it is constitutionally impossible is still consistent with its existence. Indeed, the specific or direct enforcement of it is never possible, for if a subpoenaed witness be willing to lie in jail perpetually for contempt, no judicial power can actually effect any testimonial utterance. Neither the corporal nor the constitutional impossibility of enforcing the performance of the duty prevents us from recognizing and declaring its existence. Such, in effect, was the attitude of Chief Justice Marshall and Chancellor Zabriskie in their dealings with this problem. Such is presumably the attitude of the Department of State in its definition of a consul's duty, under a treaty expressly exempting consuls from compulsory process but not exempting them from testimonial duties.²

In the second place, this testimonial duty to disclose one's knowledge may coexist with exemption from *attendance in court* as a witness,—the duty to testify (*ante*, § 2192) and the duty to attend for the purpose of testifying (*ante*, § 2204) being plainly separable. The official's exemption from attendance is later examined (*post*, § 2371).

In the third place, this general testimonial duty of disclosure is compatible with definite exceptions to it for certain *official topics*, upon which secrecy may be preserved. The scope of this exception, by way of testimonial privilege, is elsewhere examined (*post*, §§ 2174–2176).

Let it be understood, then, that there is no exemption, for officials as such, or for the Executive as such, from the universal testimonial duty to give evidence in judicial investigations. The exemptions that exist are defined by other principles.

§ 2371. (*d*) *Testimonial Privilege of the Executive and Subordinate Officers, not to attend Court.* That an exemption from attendance in court may be sometimes properly recognized has already been noticed in its general principle (*ante*, § 2204). This exemption is conceded sometimes on the ground of illness, sometimes on the ground of the excessive inconvenience of travelling a long distance (*ante*, §§ 2205–2207). Whenever it applies, the testimonial duty at large — *i. e.* to disclose one's evidential knowledge — nevertheless continues, and may be exacted and performed by the taking of a deposition, which is then admissible on the ground of necessity (*ante*, §§ 1401–1418), instead of oral testimony.

The question now is whether the requirements of official business, demanding continual presence at the seat of office, bring within this principle

² *Post*, § 2372.

the chief Executive or subordinate executive officers. That the principle does apply to exempt them, within certain limits, cannot be doubted. Such an exemption was at common law in England conceded to the monarch, though to no other person;¹ and the dignity of the position seems here to have been a sufficient reason (apart from the monarch's immunity from compulsory process). In the United States the exemption must be placed upon grounds of public convenience, — a more inclusive consideration. In Chief Justice Marshall's notable exposition of the principle, it will be observed that his concession of this mere exemption from attendance does not involve any concession of an exemption from the Executive's general testimonial duty to furnish evidence or of a judicial inability to enforce the performance of that duty:

1807, *Aaron Burr's Trial*, Robertson's Rep., I, 121, 127 ff., 136, 131, 235, on motion for a *subpoena duces tecum* to the President of the United States to attend and bring certain correspondence with General Wilkinson, material to aid the defence, the counsel for the prosecution did not deny that the President was "as amenable to that process as any other citizen," but claimed that "if his public functions disable him from obeying the process, that would be a satisfactory excuse *pro hac vice*," and that the papers here asked for were State secrets and irrelevant; in granting the motion, and holding the papers relevant and not State secrets, the general principle of the President's amenability to process *ad testificandum* was thus expounded by Marshall, C. J.: "The exceptions [to the accused's right to process] furnished by the law of evidence, with one reservation, so far as they are personal, are of those [persons] only whose testimony could not be received. The single reservation alluded to is the case of the King. Although he may, perhaps, give testimony, it is said to be incompatible with his dignity to appear under the process of the Court. Of the many points of difference which exist between the First Magistrate in England and the First Magistrate in the United States, in respect to the personal dignity conferred on them by the constitutions of their respective nations, the Court will only mention two. (1) It is a principle of the English Constitution that the King can do no wrong, that no blame can be imputed to him, that he cannot be named in debate. By the Constitution of the United States, the President, as well as every other officer of the government, may be impeached, and may be removed from office on high crimes and misdemeanors. (2) By the Constitution of Great Britain the crown is hereditary, and the monarch can never be a subject. By that of the United States, the President is elected from the mass of the people, and, on the expiration of the time for which he is elected, returns to the mass of the people again. How essentially this difference of circumstances must vary the policy of the laws of the two countries, in reference to the personal dignity of the executive chief, will be perceived by every one. In this respect, the First Magistrate of the Union may more properly be likened to the first magistrates of a

¹ 1613, Countess of Shrewsbury's Case, 12 Co. Rep. 94 (before a Council including the Chancellor, Chief Justice, and Chief Baron; the Countess being required to declare her knowledge concerning Lady Arabella Stuart's escape, declined, for one reason, on the ground of her "privilege of nobility, &c., to answer only when she was called judicially before her peers"; the Council denied that nobility had "such privilege as is alleged," and the inability of a peer to be examined in Chancery, common-law Courts, and the Star-Chamber, was pointed out); 1854, Parke, F., in *Attorney-General v. Radloff*, 10 Exch. 84, 94 ("It is clear that the Sovereign cannot be a witness, because there is no means of

compelling her attendance"); 1861, Willes, J., in *Ex parte Fernandez*, 10 C. B. N. s. 3, 39 ("Every person in the kingdom, except the sovereign, is bound to give evidence). In L. C. J. Campbell's *Lives of the Chancellors*, III, 215, 4th ed., the learned author sets forth the authorities. Compare also the cases cited *ante*, § 1674 (certificate of the King).

In *Lady Daburgaveny's Case*, cited 6 Co. Rep. 53 a, it would seem that there had been a ruling that peers were not subject to examination upon oath, at least as *parties in wager of law*. Distinguish also the question whether a peer was obliged to take an *oath* or could merely affirm (*ante*, § 1825).

State, — at any rate, under the former Confederation ; and it is not known ever to have been doubted but that the chief magistrate of a State might be served with a *subpœna ad testificandum*. If in any court of the United States it has ever been decided that a subpœna cannot issue to the President, that decision is unknown to this Court. If upon any principle the President could be construed to stand exempt from the general provisions of the Constitution, it would be because his duties as chief magistrate demand his whole time for national objects. But it is apparent that this demand is not unremitting ; and, if it should exist at the time when his attendance on a court is required, it would be sworn on the return of the subpœna, and would rather constitute a reason for not obeying the process of the Court than a reason against its being issued. In point of fact, it cannot be doubted that the people of England have the same interest in the service of the executive government — that is, of the cabinet council — that the American people have in the service of the Executive of the United States, and that their duties are as arduous and as unremitting ; yet it has never been alleged that a subpœna might not be directed to them. It cannot be denied that to issue a subpœna to a person filling the exalted station of the Chief Magistrate is a duty which would be dispensed with more cheerfully than it would be performed ; but, if it be a duty, the Court can have no choice in the case. If then, as is admitted by the counsel for the United States, a subpœna may issue to the President, the accused is entitled to it of course ; and, whatever difference may exist with respect to the power to compel the same obedience to the process as if it had been directed to a private citizen, there exists no difference with respect to the right to obtain it. The guard furnished to this high officer to protect him from being harassed by vexatious and unnecessary subpœnas is to be looked for in the conduct of a Court after those subpœnas have issued, — not in any circumstance which is to precede their being issued." To this subpœna, President *Jefferson* responded, without attendance, by a letter to the prosecuting counsel, in which he offered to be examined at Washington by deposition, but explained his non-attendance at Court as follows : " As to our personal attendance at Richmond, I am persuaded the Court is sensible that paramount duties to the nation at large control the obligation of compliance with its summons in this case ; as it would, should we receive a similar one to attend the trials of *Bienerhasset* and others [co-conspirators] in *Mississippi Territory*, those instituted at *St. Louis* and other places on the western waters, or at any place other than the seat of government. To comply with such calls would leave the nation without an executive branch, whose agency nevertheless is understood to be so constantly necessary that it is the sole branch which the Constitution requires to be always in function. It could not, then, intend that it should be withdrawn from its station by any coordinate authority."

1871, *Zabriske, C.*, in *Thompson v. R. Co.*, 22 N. J. Eq. 111, 113 : " The subpœna was directed to the Governor by his individual name, and not as Governor. Every person, whatever his office or dignity, is bound to appear and testify in courts of law when required to do so by proper process, unless he has a lawful excuse. The official engagements and duties of the higher officers of the government may be, and in many cases are, a sufficient excuse. The dignity of the office, or the mere fact of official position, is not of itself an excuse, and whether the official engagements are sufficient must be determined from the circumstances of each case. . . . There is no reason why the Governor should not be called upon to testify as to the time when the engrossed bill was delivered to him. . . . But I will make no order on him for that purpose. . . . Such order ought not to be made against the Executive of the State, because it might bring the Executive in conflict with the Judiciary. If the Executive thinks he ought to testify, in compliance with the opinion of the Court, he will do it without an order ; if he thinks it to be his official duty, in protecting the right and dignity of his office, he will not comply, even if directed by an order ; and in his case, the Court would hardly entertain proceedings to compel him by adjudging him in contempt. . . . If the Governor, without sufficient or lawful reasons, refuses to appear and testify, he is, like all other citizens, liable to respond in damages to any party injured by his refusal."

That this exemption from attendance exists for the chief Executive of a State cannot be doubted. Perhaps also it exists for members of Congress during sessions. Whether it exists for subordinate executive officials may be doubted.³ By statute, in a few jurisdictions, specific officials have been exempted, — presumably those whose official duties are most likely to be seriously interfered with by frequent calls for attendance to give evidence.⁴

That the Court should determine whether a proper excuse exists in each case seems the sounder rule, for the reasons elsewhere noted (*post*, § 2376), though they do not apply as strongly to this exemption; and Chief Justice Marshall apparently reserves this power. But no decisive judicial opinion has here been expressed.⁴ For any officer other than the chief Executive, it seems hard to believe that a Court would abdicate its normal authority to determine all questions of privilege.

³ In the following rulings, the distinctions of §§ 2368, 2369, 2370, and 2371, *ante*, are not always observed: 1871, *Thompson v. R. Co.*, 22 N. J. Eq. 111 (a Governor is liable to attend; but no process of compulsion will issue; quoted *supra*); 1818, *Gray v. Pentland*, 2 S. & K. 23, 28, 32 (whether a Governor is compellable on subpoena *d. t.* to attend and produce a paper in his official custody, not decided); 1877, *Hartman's Appeal*, 85 Pa. 433 (grand jury's subpoena to the Governor and other officers, to attend and testify as to a riot; on a written answer alleging that public duties elsewhere prevented their attendance, an attachment was refused, partly on the ground that the Governor could not be summoned, partly on the principle of *Thompson v. R. Co.*, *supra*; the opinion is confused; *Agnew, C. J.*, and *Sterrett, J.*, diss.); 1800, *U. S. v. Cooper*, *Whart. St. Tr.* 659, 660 (*Peters, J.*, acceded to a request to address a letter to the Speaker requesting him to have process served on a member of Congress; but *Chase, J.*, refused, and "ordered process without such letter," but declared that if compulsion became necessary he would continue the case till the session of Congress was over; ultimately the attendance appeared to have taken place by waiver; *Peters* and *Chase, J.J.*, "refused to permit a subpoena to issue directed to the President of the United States"; no reasons were given); 1803, *Marbury v. Madison*, 1 Cr. 137, 142, 144 (clerks of the department of State, and the Attorney-General, held liable to attend on a subpoena); 1806, *Smith's and Ogden's Trial*, *Lloyd's Rep.* 2, 7, 13, 89 (a subpoena having issued for James Madison and two other heads of Federal departments, who responded that the President had signified to them that their "official duties cannot at this juncture be dispensed with," the Court of two judges divided, without reasons given, as to issuing an attachment); 1807, *Burr's Trial*, *Robertson's Rep.* I, 121 (quoted *supra*).

⁴ *Can.*: *B. C. St.* 1899, c. 62, § 22 (no land registrar need attend as a witness, but may be examined on commission); *Man. Rev. St.* 1902, c. 148, § 21 (a district registrar of land titles need not attend as witness without the town,

except after certain notice); *U. S.*: *Ida. St.* 1899, Feb. 10, § 6 (attendance "cannot be enforced" of a "State or county officer or judge" at a trial in other than the county of residence); *Ind. Rev. St.* 1897, § 433 (a State or county officer, judge, practising physician, or attorney-at-law, cannot be compelled to attend); *Ky. Stats.* 1899, § 235 (commissioners, officers, and servants, of State charitable institutions may testify at trials without the county by deposition, without attendance); *Tenn. Code* 1896, §§ 5624, 5626 (privileged not to attend Court are the following: an officer of U. S., an officer of this State or of a county, a clerk of another Court of record, a member of General Assembly in session or clerk or officer thereof, a practising physician or attorney, a jailer or prison-keeper of another county); *Va. Code* 1867, § 418 (no officer or employee of the treasurer, auditor, or second auditor is compellable to leave his office to testify as to the genuineness of coupon tendered in payment of State dues); *Wash. C. & State.* 1897, § 2658 (a superintendent of a State insane hospital is not required to attend as witness in a civil suit; nor in a criminal case, unless the judge of the court of trial shall require his attendance "upon being satisfied of the materiality of his testimony"); *Wis. Stats.* 1898, § 582 (a superintendent of a State insane hospital is not compellable to attend, except on certain specified conditions).

Add also the statutes exempting custodians of official records, *post*, § 2373. For attorneys at law, see *ante*, § 2206.

⁴ The possibilities of abuse that lie in conceding to the officer himself the determination of the necessity are suggested in the following passage from the opinion of *Agnew, C. J.*, in *Hartman's Appeal*, cited *supra*, n. 2 (*loc. cit.* p. 457): "The argument *ad inconvenientem* that it is necessary the Governor should always be at the seat of government, is preposterous, in view of frequent visits elsewhere, of business, courtesy, and pleasure. The absence of the Governor in the Rocky Mountains, on the way to California, at the time of these riots, is an apposite example."

§ 2372. *Same: Ambassadors, Consuls, Judges.* (1) An *ambassador*, being the personal representative of the foreign sovereign, is concededly immune from compulsory process; but this immunity rests also on a sound public policy, and is therefore by common custom of international law extended to *ministers* and (to some indefinite extent) to the persons of their official households. As a practical consequence, such officers are also exempt from attendance in court as witnesses.¹

(2) A *consul*, not being a diplomatic officer, does not by common custom of international law possess this immunity from compulsory process. But by treaty it has in many instances been expressly conceded.² Distinguish, however, first, this exemption from process or attendance and the duty to furnish evidence; for the two may properly coexist, and are recognized as co-existent for consuls abroad in the instructions of the Department of State;³

¹ 1663, *Earl of Clarendon's Trial*, 6 How. St. Tr. 291, 340 (the House discussing the sources of certain information, it was objected, "possibly a foreign ambassador, and no oath can be given him"); 1856, *Dubois' Case*, Wharton, *Digest of International Law*, I, 668, Lawrence's *Wheaton's International Law*, 393, Dana's *Wheaton*, § 226, note 129 (the Netherlands minister held exempt from summons; see Sen. Exec. Doc. 21, 34th Cong. 3d Sess.); 1881, *Guitseau's Trial*, I, 136 (Sr. Camacho, the Venezuelan minister, testified to what he saw of the murder; and the District Attorney announced that, although the minister was "entitled under the law governing diplomatic relations to be relieved from service by subpoena or sworn as a witness in any case," yet his Government had "instructed him to waive his rights").

For the admissibility, under the Hearsay rule, of an *ambassador's deposition*, see *ante*, §§ 1384, 1407.

² 1854, *Re Dillon*, 7 Sawyer 561 (the consul of France was summoned by subpoena *d. t.* in favor of a defendant in a criminal case; the treaty of 1853 with France, art. 2, provided for immunity of consuls from appearance in court as witnesses; held, that the constitutional provision entitling an accused to compulsory process did not override the treaty provision, the Constitution having given merely the same right to process which had before existed for the prosecution only, and therefore having given it subject to the established exemption for foreign ambassadors; and the subsequent addition of consuls to the exempt class, by treaty, was no new exemption but merely an enlargement of the class already exempt; official documents in a consular office were held privileged, here under express provision of the treaty of 1853 with France; the party summoning must show that the desired document is not an official one); 1854, *Dillon's Case*, Wharton's *Digest of International Law*, I, 665 (Mr. Marcy, Secretary of State, opposed the privilege in the preceding case, on the ground that the constitutional right was subject to such exemptions only as existed specifically at the Constitution's adoption, and the treaty exemptions of consuls were thus not

included); 1855, *Portuguese Consul's Case*, Wharton, *supra*, I, 775 (a Portuguese consul, assuming that the most-favored-nation clause gives him the French treaty-privileges, is exempted from process as a witness, except when required by an accused in a criminal case; per Marcy, Secretary); 1862, *Hanoverian Consul's Case*, Wharton, *supra*, I, 776 (a trading consul of Hanover held not exempt; per Seward, Secretary; no reason stated); 1867, *Janssen's Case*, Wharton, *supra*, I, 777, Sen. Ex. Doc. 1, spec. sess. 1867 (consul's exequatur may be revoked for failure to obey summons, when he is not privileged by treaty); 1891, *U. S. v. Trumbull*, 48 Fed. 94 (the Chilean vice-consul, under the existing treaty with Chili, which by the most-favored-nation clause secured the immunity for consuls under the treaty of 1853 with France, held exempt from compulsory process as witness on behalf of the prosecution; the constitutional guarantee invoked in Dillon's case not being applicable; here the testimony was asked against persons charged with violating the neutrality laws by aiding the insurrectionary party which by the time of the trial had become the lawful Government represented by the witness); 1894, *Mason's Case*, U. S. For. Rel. 1899, p. 304 (U. S. consul in Germany summoned; held, not privileged, unless by the most-favored-nation clause of Treaty 1871, art. V, the U. S. obtains the benefit of other treaties by Germany); 1899, *Gnether's Case*, ib. 302 (similar); 1899, *Clancy's Case*, ib. 566, 583 (similar); *Nicaragua treaty of 1867*, art. X, applied; but "information which came to him in his official capacity" is privileged); 1899, *Bais v. Malo*, 27 N. Y. Miscell. 655 (under treaties with Colombia giving most-favored-nation privileges, the French treaty-provision with the United States applies and exempts consuls from attendance); 1900, *Bruni's Case*, U. S. For. Rel. 1900, p. 705 ("a consul engaged in business [in Guatemala] is amenable to summons, etc., only for causes apart from his official functions; he cannot be summoned to give evidence of any matter of his consular business, nor to produce to the Court any part of the consular archives").

³ See the cases *infra*, note 4.

secondly, a genuine privilege of secrecy (even where no exemption from attendance exists by treaty) for the official archives of the consulate⁴ and the official facts known to the consul;⁵ for the privilege for secrets of State (*post*, § 2375) may well be deemed to apply (in the absence of international courts of justice) to all matters of international concern.

(3) A *judge* of a superior court seems to have been regarded as exempt from attendance at common law.⁶ But the exemption cannot be put upon any broader ground, so as to negative either the general duty to furnish evidence (*ante*, § 2270) or the amenability to compulsory process (*ante*, § 2371). Whether, on grounds other than privilege, a judge should be prohibited (not merely exempted) from testifying in the very cause over which he is presiding, is a distinct question, elsewhere examined (*ante*, § 1909).

§ 2373. (c) *Irremovability of Official Records.* On the general principle of the public inconvenience and danger involved in removing official records from their usual place of custody (*ante*, § 2182), the Court may refuse to compel the production of the originals in evidence:

⁴ 1894, *Mason's Case*, U. S. For. Rel. 1869, p. 304 (charges of under-valuation filed in U. S. consul's office in Germany; treaty provision of 1871, art. V, that consular archives shall be inviolable, applied); 1899, *Gnether's Case*, U. S. For. Rel. 1899, p. 302 (similar); 1899, *Clancy's Case*, *ib.* p. 566, 583 (similar); U. S. consul in Nicaragua; consular archives held inviolable, irrespective of treaties; but "personal books and papers of the counsel" are not privileged); 1900, *Bruni's Case*, U. S. For. Rel. 1900, p. 705 (quoted *supra*); 1903, *Kosler v. Best*, C. C., 121 Fed. 459 (documents being "part of the archives of the German consulate," privileged; no authority cited).

⁵ *Clancy's Case*, *Bruni's Case*, *supra*.

⁶ 1620, Declaration of Grievances, *Cobbett's Pari. Hist.* I, 1206 (the Lords having sent for several members of the Commons to testify in the investigation into abuses of royal patents, it was objected in the Commons that the members were virtually judges upon the grievances, and therefore not liable to be sworn; Sir E. Coke arguing that "the judges of the Common Pleas, or of any court, are never sworn as witnesses in any case, albeit they know of something concerning it and can testify in it; but if their knowledge be asked, they answer it without an oath; that no judge of the Star Chamber can be served with a subpoena *ad testificandum* in that court"; but finally the members volunteered their oaths out of courtesy); 1692, *Knowles' Trial*, 12 How. St. Tr. 1179 ff. (Holt, C. J., and Eyre, J., having quashed an indictment against a person claiming to be a peer, were summoned before the House of Lords to explain their reasons, the proceeding being by express vote not regarded as charging them, but only for information; they declined to make any explanation at that place, as being privileged); 1838, *R. v. Gizard*, 8 C. & P. 595 (perjury; the grand jury inquired whether they "ought to examine" the chairman

of the quarter sessions to prove the testimony, the chairman "having expressed a desire not to be examined as a witness"; *Patteson, J.*: "It is a new point, but I should advise the grand jury not to examine him. He is the president of a court of record, and it would be dangerous to allow such an examination, as the judges of England might be called upon to state what occurred before them in court"; an *amicus curie* having referred to a contrary instance, *Patteson, J.*, replied: "I think it is wrong, and that it ought not to be done"; 1858, *R. v. Harvey*, 8 Cox Cr. 99, 103 (*Byles, J.*, said that he should refuse to appear if subpoenaed to produce his notes of testimony, but that the rule did not apply to inferior magistrates); 1880, *Anon.*, 24 Sol. J. 398 (master of the Supreme Court, admonished to prove testimony before him on a charge of perjury; objection waived); *Tex. C. Cr. P.* 1896, § 779 ("When it is proposed to offer the testimony of a judge in a cause pending before him, he is not required to testify if he declares that there is no fact within his knowledge important in the cause"). The admissibility of a judge's notes, under the Hearsay rule, is still another question: *ante*, § 1666.

It was at one time thought that an arbitrator had some such privilege: 1808, *Ellis v. Saltau*, 4 C. & P. 327, note (an arbitrator being called to prove that he had exceeded the limits of his submission, "Mansfield, C. J., told the witness that he need not be examined unless he chose it, thinking that an arbitrator was not to be afterwards worried as a witness"). But this notion was entirely unfounded. It is now thoroughly understood that an arbitrator is not, by reason of that office, either disqualified or privileged (*ante*, § 1912); and that the only prohibitions applicable concern the facts which may be proved as to his award, these facts being determined by the principles of the parol-evidence rule as applied to awards (*ante*, § 2368).

1794, *Per Curiam*, in *Delaney v. Philadelphia*, 1 Yeates 403 (refusing a subpoena *d. t.* against the surveyor-general): "We ought not to issue a subpoena with such a clause in the present instance; otherwise the surveyor-general, or any other public officer, might be obliged to take any original public papers from his office to the farthest counties in the State, and the same papers might be demanded in different counties at the same time."¹

This rule of the common law has been supplemented in some jurisdictions by express statutes.²

Distinguish, however, (1) the *illegality* of removing such records; for this of itself is no ground for refusing to receive them (*ante*, § 2183); (2) the propriety of receiving an *original* always, in preference to a copy; for, apart from the prohibition of the present rule (which leaves much to the Court's discretion) the original of a document is always receivable (*ante*, § 1186);

¹ *Accord: England: 1788, R. v. King*, 2 T. R. 234 (application for an information against assessing-officers; the rule that, in granting an information against magistrates for misconduct, there should be a production of their proceedings before the Court was conceded; but, by exception, on the score of "public inconvenience," the order to bring the assessment books by *certiorari* was quashed; "every person is entitled to take copies, so that no injury can arise to the party from our refusing a *certiorari*; but on the contrary very great public inconvenience would ensue from permitting it to issue"); 1788, *Atherfold v. Beard*, 2 T. R. 610 (action on a wager as to the collection of taxes; revenue officers treated as not bound to produce the public books, chiefly on the ground of inconvenience); *United States: 1887, Stevenson v. Moody*, 85 Ala. 33, 35, 4 So. 595 ("except in special cases, a public record's original cannot be required for production; here said of probate record-book"); 1886, *Re Lester*, 77 Ga. 143 (a mayor, who was *ex officio* the presiding judge of a Court of record; held not subject to subpoena *d. t.* to bring his docket to be used as evidence); 1870, *Dunham v. Chicago*, 55 Ill. 357 ("books and documents, public records, in the custody of public officers"; the Court has power to order production, but will not do so where certified copies will answer as well; "public convenience and safety" being the reason); 1901 *Delaware Surety Co. v. Layton*, — N. J. Eq. — 50 Atl. 378 (Secretary of State enjoined from removing official documents out of the State); 1832, *Peney v. Gilliland*, Wright Oh. 38 (justice's docket; "strong circumstances must be shown to induce a Court to order the removal of the book"); 1794, *Delaney v. Philadelphia*, 1 Yeates 403 (subpoena *d. t.* to the surveyor-general to bring official papers, refused; quoted *supra*); 1840, *Devling v. Williamson*, 9 Watts 311, 317 ("To permit a person other than [the custodian] . . . to take them [out of the office] is a most dangerous and pernicious practice"; they should be taken out only by a custodian upon subpoena or special order); 1879, *Corbett v. Gibson*, 16 Blatchf. 334 (production of official documents in custody of a major-general, not

required, since copies could be obtained and need).

In a few cases the Court has exercised its power to require production: 1815, *Treasurer v. Moore*, 3 Brev. 550 ("A sheriff's books are public property, and whoever may be in possession of them is bound to produce them when called for by legal authority, even though as evidence against himself"); 1856, *Baahford v. Barstow*, Wis., Pamph. Rep. p. 289 (the Court required the Secretary of State to bring original election returns, bearing evidence of forgery, from another room in the same building).

² *Cal. C. C. P. 1872, § 1950* (no record of any sort of which a transcript is receivable may be removed from the office of custody, except on order of Court "in cases where the inspection of the record is shown to be essential to the just determination of the cause or proceeding pending, or where the court is held in the same building with such office"); *Kan. Gen. St. 1897, c. 97, § 2* ("no public officer herein named," viz., a probate judge, county clerk, county treasurer, register of deeds, clerk of the district court, justice of the peace, police judge, or other public officer, or "other custodian of public records shall be compelled to attend any court, officer, or tribunal sitting more than one mile from his office" with the records in his custody); *N. Y. C. C. P. 1877, § 866, Laws 1895, c. 946* (regulation of the use of records, by a qualified prohibition of removal); *Oh. Rev. St. 1898, § 5250* (the custodian of irremovable official documents is not compellable to attend, on certain conditions); *Okl. Stats. 1893, § 4278* (no public officer or other custodian of public records is to be compelled to attend with official records "more than one mile from his office"); *Pa. St. 1823, Pub. L. 233, § 1, P. & L. Dig., Evidence, 29* (documents in the offices of the secretaries of the Commonwealth and of the land-office, of the surveyor-general, auditor-general, and State treasurer, are producible on proper process); *Wash. C. & Stats. 1897, § 5996* ("no public officer having the possession or control of public records or papers which are required by law to be kept in any particular office or place shall be compelled to produce the same").

(3) the admissibility of *copies*, whenever the original is not removable; for this raises the question whether a specific kind of record is required to be produced in the original (*ante*, § 1218); the few instances of such required production — for example, on a plea of *nul tiel record* — are thereby made exceptions to the present rule.

§ 2374. (*f*) **Privilege for Communications by Informers to Official Prosecutors.** A genuine privilege for communications, on the fundamental principle of privilege (*ante*, § 2285), must be recognized for the communications made by informers to official prosecutors, because such communications ought to receive encouragement, and because that confidence which will lead to such communications can be created only by holding out immunity from a compulsory disclosure of the informant's identity:

1794, *Hardy's Trial*, 24 How. St. Tr. 8; the witness had reported the existence and doings of secret political societies: "I did not do it of myself, but by advice; a gentleman recommended me by all means to make a report. It was not to a magistrate"; Mr. *Erskine*: "Then to whom was it?" Objection was made. "I submit he must state the name of the person to whom he communicated it; then have I not a right to subpoena that person? I will then ask [this witness], When did you tell it him? At what place? Who were present? Then I ask that person, Is it true? . . . And if he were to say, I never saw his face [the witness'] till I saw him in court, would not that shake the credit of the witness with any man of understanding? I apprehend it would." Mr. *Attorney-General* [opposing]: "What is the principle upon which the Court says, You shall never ask where he got that information? . . . A court of justice does not sit to catch the little whispers or the huzzas of popularity; it proceeds upon great principles of general justice. It says that individuals must suffer inconveniences rather than great public mischief should be incurred; and it says that if men's names are to be mentioned who interpose in situations of this kind, the consequence must be that great crimes will be passed over without any information being offered about them, or without persons taking that part which is always a disagreeable part to take but which at the same time it is necessary should be taken for the interest of the public. . . . Nobody will deny but that it is a hard case; but it has become a settled rule, because private mischief gives way to public convenience"; *Eyre*, L. C. J.: "It is perfectly right that all opportunities should be given to discuss the truth of the evidence given against a prisoner; but there is a rule which has universally obtained on account of its importance to the public for the detection of crimes, that those persons who are the channel by means of which that detection is made should not necessarily be disclosed. . . . [As to (1) the person reported to,] I cannot satisfy myself that there is any substantial distinction between the case of this man's going to a justice of the peace or going to a magistrate superior to a justice of the peace, or to some other person who communicated with a justice of the peace. . . . [As to (2) the person above advising a report,] I am of opinion the principle extends to that question, because the disclosing who the friend was that advised him to go to a magistrate is a thing which puts that friend in a situation into which he ought not to be put, and into which it is inconvenient to general justice that he should be put. . . . My apprehension is that, among those questions which are not permitted to be asked, are all those questions which tend to the discovery of the channels by whom the disclosure was made to the officers of justice; that it is upon the general principle of the convenience of public justice not to be disclosed; that all persons in that situation are protected from the discovery; and that, if it is objected to, it is no more competent for the defendant to ask who the person was that advised him to make a disclosure than it is to whom he made the disclosure in consequence of that advice, [or] than it is to ask any other question respecting the channel of communication or all that was done under it"; *Buller*, J.: "My lord chief

justice and my lord chief baron both say the principle is that the discovery is necessary for the purpose of obtaining public justice; and if you call for the name of Informer in such cases, no man will make a discovery, and public justice will be defeated. Upon that ground, therefore, it is that the informer for the purpose of a public prosecution shall not be disclosed."

1888, *Parnell Commission's Proceedings*, 20th day, Times' Rep. pt. 6, p. 28; the Times had charged the Irish Land League with complicity in crime and agrarian outrage; part of its case was that, in spite of the League's avowedly peaceable purpose, there were inner circles of conspirators who used the League to advance criminal purposes; one of the police inspectors had testified that there was such an inner circle of criminals; on cross-examination he was asked by Mr. Reid: "You now say that you obtained this information from an Informer?" A. "Yes." Q. "Give me the name of the informer." A. "I will not." Q. "I must press you." A. "I repeat to my Lords that I cannot do any such thing." A. L. Smith, J.: "I always understood that a police-constable is not bound to state the name of a person from whom he received information"; Mr. Reid: "We are wanting to get to the bottom of this matter. Here is a police-constable who states that the Land League has an inner circle, according to his information. I am entitled to find out who gave him the information, otherwise we are at the mercy of an anonymous informer whom we are not allowed to ascertain, whose name even we are not allowed to find out. We may be able to prove him to be the greatest liar in the three kingdoms. I submit that I am entitled to have the name." Sir H. James (opposing): "My lords, we have to ask you to consider the entire question. I gather we may assume that Inspector Davis has some good reason for refusing to give this information. This man's life might not be safe." President Hannen: "When this sort of question arose before, I suggested that the question might be asked why the witness refused to give an answer. . . . It will be for us to say whether the excuse he gives will be a sufficient reason in our opinion, and whether we should or should not exercise the power we have of calling upon the witness to answer the question."

1872, *Gray, C. J.*, in *Worthington v. Scribner*, 100 Mass. 487, 488: "It is the duty of every citizen to communicate to his government any information which he has of the commission of an offence against the laws. To encourage him in performing this duty without fear of consequences, the law holds such information to be among secrets of State, and leaves the question how far and under what circumstances the names of the informers and the channel of communication shall be suffered to be known to the absolute discretion of the Government, to be exercised according to its views of what the interests of the public require. Courts of justice therefore will not compel or allow the discovery of such information, either by the subordinate officer to whom it is given, by the informer himself, or by any other person, without the permission of the Government."

This privilege is well established,¹ and its soundness cannot be questioned. But it is subject to certain limitations, inherent in its logic and its policy:

¹ *England*: 1790, *R. v. Akers*, 6 Esp. 126, note (information for obstructing a customs officer; the defendant not allowed to inquire the name of the person informing of the smuggling); 1794, *Harcly's Trial*, 24 How. St. Tr. 8 (quoted *supra*); 1817, *R. v. Watson*, 2 Stark. 116, 135, 32 How. St. Tr. 102 (a shorthand reporter of seditious speeches, not allowed to be asked as to delivering his notes to the Under-Secretary of State; L. C. J. Ellenborough "said that a communication to a member of the Government was a communication to Government"); 1845, *R. v. O'Connell*, 1 Cox Cr. 403, 5 State Tr. N. S. 1, 208 (a witness for the Crown was not allowed to ask "at whose suggestion"

he came over to Ireland, even on cross-examination); 1846 (?), *R. v. Candy*, cited 15 M. & W. 176 (the witness was allowed to be asked whether he was the informer; Rolfe, B.: "That was tried before me; the principle was rather followed than violated by asking that question of B., because it was perfectly clear and admitted that he was the informer, and it went to exclude the notion of anybody else being an informer"); 1846, *Attorney-General v. Briant*, 15 M. & W. 169 (information for penalties; the question, "Did you give the information?" was not allowed; "in a public prosecution a witness cannot be asked such questions as will disclose the informer, if he be a third person; . . . the

(1) The privilege applies only to the *identity* of the informant, not to the contents of his statement as such, for, by hypothesis, the contents of the communication are to be used and published in the course of prosecution. Much less does the privilege apply to prevent merely the proof of contents which have already been *de facto* disclosed, — as in an action against the informant for libel. To deny production in such a case is in effect to declare that the libel is privileged from liability. If that is indeed the judicial belief and the law, it should be frankly declared; if not, the action should not be defeated by an evasion which pretends to keep secret that which is not secret.²

(2) If the identity of the informer is *known and admitted*, then there is

principle of the rule applies to the case where a witness is asked if he himself is the informer"); 1848, *R. v. O'Brien*, 7 State Tr. N. S. 1, 123 (an informer was told by some one, not an official, to attend a treasonable meeting, but refused to name him on account of supposed danger of assassination; not compelled); 1868, Parnell Commission's Proceedings, 20th day, Times' Rep. pt. 6, p. 28 (quoted *supra*; another instance occurs on the 35th day, pt. 9, p. 241); 1890, *Marks v. Beyfus*, L. R. 25 Q. B. D. 494, 498 (malicious prosecution; on testimony by the director of public prosecutions that the original proceeding had been instituted by himself, he was held privileged from naming his informants or producing their written statements; following *Attorney-General v. Briant*, *supra*); *Canada*: 1884, *Bradley v. McIntosh*, 5 Ont. 227, 232 (libel); an anonymous letter sent by the defendant to the Attorney-General concerning the plaintiff was refused production by the head of the department; production not compelled); 1893, *Humphrey v. Archibald*, 20 Ont. App. 267 (police-officer sued for malicious prosecution, and refusing to disclose his informants, held privileged; "it is not the privilege of the witness, but is adopted on the grounds of public policy on account of its importance to the public"); *United States*: 1899, *Smith v. Smith*, 2 Penue. (Del.) 365, 45 Atl. 848 (communications by a citizen to a letter carrier as to addresses and other matters relating to mail delivery, not protected); 1839, *State v. Soper*, 16 Me. 293 (larceny of logs; questions as to the employees giving information to the owner, leading to a search by him, excluded on the facts; the informants being in fear of mob violence in case of disclosure); 1872, *Worthington v. Scribner*, 109 Mass. 487 (action for falsely informing the U. S. Treasury that the plaintiff was a fraudulent impostor; interrogatories to the defendant as to his giving such information, held privileged from answer; quoted *supra*); 1900, *Shinglemeyer v. Wright*, 124 Mich. 230, 82 N. W. 867 (slander; defendant's communications of his suspicions to detective officers, not admitted to show malice, because privileged; this seems unsound); 1839, *Howard v. Thompson*, 21 Wend. 319, 335 (libel, for a letter by a postmaster to the Secretary of the Treasury charging with fraud the plaintiff a customs inspector; intimated *obiter* that the letter was

privileged; *Gray v. Pentland*, *infra*, approved); 1815, *Gray v. Pentland*, 2 S. & R. 23, 28, 32 (libel, for a deposition made by defendant before a justice, charging the defendant, clerk of a court, with unfitness, and forwarded to the Governor; on a subpoena *d. t.* to the Governor and Secretary, they refused to attend, and evidence of the document's contents was offered; held inadmissible, since to allow such proof "would be a check on representations to the competent authority"; this is unsound, because both the name and the contents were already disclosed); 1837, *Yoter v. Sanno*, 6 Watts 164, 166 (preceding ruling approved); 1807, *Burr's Trial*, Robertson's Rep., II, 508, 520, 525 (a motion was made that "a communication confidentially made to the President, respecting the conduct of certain persons holding places of trust and confidence, but who have not hitherto been prosecuted or even suspected, should be produced"; Chief Justice Marshall in this instance ordered production of the letter, because it did not appear that the President objected to production; but the Chief Justice, while recognizing a privilege, did not indicate the limits of it, nor whether it here rested on the present ground or on that of State secrecy; the arguments of counsel *pro* and *con* are useful); 1827, *U. S. v. Moses*, 4 Wash. C. C. 726 ("the officer who apprehended the prisoner is not bound to disclose the name of the person from whom he received the information which led to the detection and apprehension"); 1884, *Vogel v. Gruaz*, 110 U. S. 311, 316, 4 Snp. 12 (*Worthington v. Scribner*, *supra*, followed, in holding a communication privileged when made to a State's attorney with reference to securing an indictment); 1902, *King v. U. S.*, 50 C. C. A. 647, 112 Fed. 988 (answers as to an accomplice-witness' immunity from prosecution under a promise from the government attorney, held not privileged as involving State secrets); 1816, *Morris v. Creel*, 2 Va. Cas. 49 (subpoena *d. t.* upon the clerk of the Executive Council, for "a certain memorial to the Executive," submitted "for public purposes, to enable the council to determine upon the conduct of executive officers"; attachment refused, because the clerk ought not to produce without the Council's order).

² For this reason *Gray v. Pentland*, *supra*, seems erroneous.

reason for pretended concealment, and the privilege of secrecy would be merely an artificial obstacle to proof.³

(3) The privilege applies to communications to such officers only as have a *responsibility or duty* to prevent public wrongs, and not to officials in general.⁴

(4) The privilege applies only to communications concerning *third persons' misdoings*. For example, a person's own statement of his own *taxable property*⁵ or his own *unfinished inventions*,⁶ to the proper official, may be protected by some express statute (based, to be sure, on an analogous principle), but not as an informer's disclosure under this rule.

(5) Even where the privilege is strictly applicable, the *trial Court may compel disclosure*, if it appears necessary in order to avoid the risk of false testimony or to secure useful testimony; the reasons for this qualification have been thus set forth:

1863, *R. v. Richardson*, 3 F. & F. 698; murder by poison; a policeman, having testified to finding poison on a search of defendant's premises in consequence of information received under police regulations to give the names of his informants; *Cockburn*, C. J., "ordered him immediately to answer the question, observing that in this case it was most material to the ends of justice that it should be stated"; and it then appeared that the informants were "two girls who were not called as witnesses for the prosecution"; the Chief Justice afterwards commenting strongly on the failure to produce them; the *Reporters* add: "Though in this particular case it was not so, yet it might be in similar cases that the information was given by or derived from the really guilty party with a view to divert suspicion from himself and fix it on an innocent person; or again, it might be (and in this case it was so) that the information was derived from the accused herself and was accompanied by a statement showing her innocence. . . . The effect of applying the supposed rule in such cases, it is manifest, would be to enable prosecutors or policemen to produce such portions of evidence as they might please, and to withhold the witnesses the whole of whose evidence might demonstrate the innocence of the accused. It is extraordinary that it should ever have been supposed that (in ordinary cases at all events) there ever was such a rule; and the latest writer on the subject, Mr. Best, entirely ignores it except in political cases. And it may deserve consideration whether ever in such cases it applies where the question is asked, not merely with a view to elicit the name for purposes of observation or credit, etc., but when (as in the present instance) the party who gave the information must have been in a position to disclose something further as to the facts of the case."

³ *R. v. Candy*, *supra*, illustrates this.

⁴ Note that a communication not protected by this privilege may be protected by the privileges for communications to an *attorney* (*ante*, § 2296) or to a *grand jury* (*ante*, § 2363), and *vice versa*.

⁵ 1900, *Re Joseph Hargreaves, Limited*, 1 Ch. 347 (financial misdoings of a corporation; the corporation balance-sheets, filed with the income-tax commissioner, were refused production by that officer, on the ground of public policy and also of the prohibition of disclosure in his oath required by the income-tax statute; held privileged from discovery on the facts; *Wright, J.*: "It seems to me it must be a matter of public concern that persons should have confidence in the secrecy of that procedure [of the Inland

Revenue Board]"); 1902, *Bowman v. Montcalm* Circuit Judge, — Mich. —, 89 N. W. 334 (in a proceeding to lower an assessment, the taxpayer may not compel the disclosure of the sworn assessment-lists of other persons; the statute providing that "no such statement shall be used for any other purpose" than enforcing the act).

⁶ U. S. Rev. St. 1878, § 4902 (caveat of an incomplete invention "shall be filed in the confidential archives of the office and preserved in secrecy, and shall be operative for the term of one year from the filing thereof"); 1891, *Edison El. L. Co. v. U. S. El. L. Co.*, 45 Fed. 55, 59 (statute held not applicable to an ordinary application pending. Compare the rulings upon *trade secrets* (*ante*, § 2212).

1890, *Lord Esher, M. R.*, in *Marks v. Beyfus*, L. R. 25 Q. B. D. 494, 498: "I do not say it is a rule which can never be departed from; if upon the trial of a prisoner the judge should be of opinion that the disclosure of the name of the informant is necessary or right in order to show the prisoner's innocence, then one public policy is in conflict with another public policy, and that which says that an innocent man is not to be condemned when his innocence can be proved is the policy that must prevail." 7

§ 2375. (g) *Privilege for Secrets of State and Official Communications.* What, then, yet remains, in the shape of official privilege? Eliminating the foregoing principles, is there still a genuine testimonial privilege which is to protect public officers from the disclosure of certain kinds of facts or communications received through their official duties? Some such privilege undoubtedly exists. But the scope of that privilege has not yet been defined with certainty.

So far as the tenor of the precedents has gone, they may be grouped into several classes. First, several rulings (all of them in England), in actions against an official for *defamation* contained in an *official report*, privilege the defendant from producing the defamatory writing, *i. e.* practically accord to him an exoneration from liability by refusing the means of proof.¹ Next,

¹ 1893, *Burton, J.*, in *Humphrey v. Archibald*, 20 Ont. App. 267, 269 (similar to *Marks v. Beyfus, supra*).

² 1816, *Wyatt v. Gore*, Holt 299, 302 (libel against the lieutenant-governor of Upper Canada, by the surveyor-general thereof; the defendant's consultation with the attorney-general, held privileged; *Gibbs, C. J.*: "No office of this kind could be executed with safety, if conversations between the governor of a distant province and his attorney-general, who is the only person upon whom such governor can lean for advice, were suffered to be disclosed"); 1820, *Home v. Bentinck*, 2 B. & B. 130, 134 (leading case; libel by a lieutenant-colonel, who was engaged in a mining company, against one of a court of inquiry appointed by the commander-in-chief to inquire into the plaintiff's conduct in the mining adventure and reporting his misconduct; the military secretary of the commander was held privileged, for the defendant, not to produce the minutes of the court of inquiry containing the alleged libel, nor was a copy obtained from the commander's office received; on the ground that the report was made under lawful orders, was confidential, and contained the names of witnesses and tenor of their evidence, and thus was privileged as an informer's report); 1822, *Earl v. Vass*, 1 Shaw 229, 236 (libel, for a letter by H. to the customs commissioners and the Treasury Office, in relation to the fitness of the plaintiff, nominee to a customs comptrollership; the commissioners were held privileged not to produce the correspondence; the application was *ex parte*, the opinion by L. C. Eldon, citing *Home v. Bentinck*; the Scotch Court had ordered production by a vote of 3 to 2); 1832, *Blake v. Pilfold*, 1 Mo. & Rob. 198 (libel of a post-office employee; defendant's letter of complaint to the secretary of the postmaster-general, offered as the libellous statement, held not privileged, because not writ-

ten by a public officer); 1860, *Beatson v. Skene*, 5 H. & N. 838, 853 (leading case; libel on an army-officer; letters to the Secretary of War and minutes of a court of inquiry, the Secretary of War having been subpoenaed to produce but having attended and objected on the ground of "prejudice to the public service," held privileged on that ground); 1863, *Guy v. Maguire*, 13 Lw. Can. 33, 49 (libel, for a communication to the Government by the defendant, a police superintendent; on a subpoena *d. t.* to the provincial secretary for the document, in order to prove the plaintiff's case, and on objection on the ground of "injury to the public service," production was held not compellable, because "the disclosure is to divulge *inter arcana imperii*, which no judge can dare to undertake"; *Mondelet, J.*, diss.; an absurdity was given to the ruling by the fact that the secretary had already sent a copy of the document to the plaintiff); 1864, *M'Elveuey v. Connellan*, 17 Ir. C. L. 55, 69 (libel, for a report by defendant as inspector-general of prisons to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland; motion to produce the report and the minutes of testimony taken before defendant, not granted, the Lord Lieutenant having stated that "in his opinion it would be injurious to the public service to produce the report"; the principle covering "official communications, or communications made to an official person in the discharge of a public duty, whenever it is plain that the duty in compliance with which they have been made requires an unreserved communication in relation to the matter of it"); 1869, *Stace v. Griffith*, L. R. 2 P. C. 420, 425, 428 (libel for a letter of complaint to the colonial secretary of St. Helena; Lord Chelmsford said *obiter* that in *Anderson v. Hamilton, supra*, n. 2, "the rule is correctly laid down"); 1873, *Dawkins v. Rokeby*, L. R. 8 Q. B. 255, 267 (leading case; libel, for testimony against the plaintiff by the

several similar precedents (all but one in England), in actions against officials for *other kinds of wrong* done to the plaintiff by *official acts*, have protected the defendant from disclosure of his acts or his written admissions, — thus again indirectly effecting his exoneration in substantive law by refusing the means of proof.³ Again, several precedents (representing England, the United States Federal Court, and two State Courts) have declared a *privilege of secrecy in general for official documents* in an officer's possession, particularly (so far as any definition has been attempted) for communications between officials; and in these precedents no question whatever of international politics or military defence was involved.³ Besides these, an occasional precedent has applied

defendant, his general, at a military court of inquiry; held, that the proceedings and testimony were privileged; the opinion confusing the two questions of defamation-privilege in the substantive law and evidence-privilege); 1888, *Hennesy v. Wright*, L. R. 21 Q. B. D. 509 (libel by the governor of Mauritius; dispatches, etc., between the governor or royal commissioner and the Secretary of State for Colonies or between the first two, directed by the Secretary of State not to be produced "on the ground of the interest of the State and of the public service," held privileged, approving *Beatson v. Skene, supra*; the personal appearance or affidavit of the Secretary to claim privilege not being here necessary). *Contra* (but practically repudiated by the foregoing cases): 1804, *Robinson v. May*, 2 J. P. Smith 3 (libel; defendant's letter of information to the Admiralty Commissioners, produced); 1859, *Dickson v. Wilton*, 1 F. & F. 419 (libel, for a letter by defendant as colonel reporting to the field-marshal about the plaintiff, and inclosing the report of a court of inquiry and other documents; "a clerk from the War Office was called to produce the letter, but submitted on behalf of the Secretary of War whether the proceedings ought to be produced"; *Campbell, L. C. J.*: "You must produce the letter," and both letter and documents were produced; that the Secretary did not attend to object personally is not mentioned as the ground of the ruling, and the distinction of this ruling on that ground in subsequent decisions does not affect the meaning of this ruling when made).

³ 1816, *Anderson v. Hamilton*, 2 B. & B. 156, note (action for imprisonment against the Governor of Heligoland; correspondence between the Governor and the Secretary of State for Colonies, with the plaintiff's letter to the Secretary giving rise to the correspondence, held privileged, first, because "it might be pregnant with a thousand facts of the utmost consequence respecting the state of the government, the connection of parties, the state of politics, and the suspicion of foreign powers with whom we may be in alliance"; secondly, because no extract material alone to the case could be received, "for the plaintiff must be entitled to the whole or none"—a ruling absurd in two respects, first, because it was not shown or even claimed that international secrets were in fact mentioned in the letters, and secondly, in that even the innocuous and separable parts were held inadmissible); 1817, *Cooka v. Maxwell*, 2 Stark. 183

(action for arrest of person and destruction of property in Africa; plea, that the plaintiff was illegally trading in slaves and defendant had acted as governor under the law; to prove the defendant's responsibility, the plaintiff called the military officer who had acted, and asked whether the defendant had given him the orders; upon objection that public policy prevented disclosure, *Bayley, J.*, apparently agreed, but allowed oral testimony to the fact of the order; "the law will not work injustice"; this was indeed beating the devil around a stump); 1875, *The Bellerophon*, 44 L. J. Adm. 5 (action for injury by collision with a Government vessel; its commander's report to the Admiralty Office, held privileged, following *Beatson v. Skene, supra*). The following ruling is practically of this sort: 1877, *Hartranft's Appeal*, 85 Pa. 433 (grand jury's subpoena to the Governor, Secretary, Adjutant-General, General, and Major, to testify as to a riot; on application for attachment, the respondents answered that their knowledge was obtained by official communications and its disclosure would be "detrimental to the public service"; the testimony was held privileged, approving *Beatson v. Skene*; the opinion inextricably confuses the present subject with the privilege against attendance; *Agnew, C. J.*, and *Sterrett, J.*, diss., quoted *ante*, § 2369).

³ *England*: 1723, *Bishop Atterbury's Trial*, 16 How. St. Tr. 495 (the Crown having obtained treasonable letters, imputed to the defendant, by intercepting the mails under a statute, it was resolved to be "inconsistent with the public safety," to allow any inquiry as to the special warrants issued for the purpose or the methods used in obeying them; many Lords dissenting; it was also resolved that a clerk of the Secretary's office, asked as to the skill of a fellow-clerk in unsealing letters and re-sealing with counterfeit seals, should not be examined "touching any transaction any way relating to the government, which came to his knowledge by reason of his being employed in the secretary's office"; *ib. pp.* 494, 543, 567, 629, 672 (the key by which Crown detectives deciphered alleged cipher letters was not allowed to be disclosed, as "tending to the discovery of their art," and thus destroying their usefulness); 1839, *R. v. Russell*, 7 Dowl. Pr. 693 (papers "of a public nature and in the possession of Lord John Russell in his

the privilege to refusing disclosure of matters involving "secrets of State" in military or international affairs.⁴ Furthermore, the supposed rule of these

public character as Secretary of State," held not producible); 1841, *Smith v. East India Co.*, 1 Phill. 50, 11 L. J. Ch. 71, L. C. Lyndhurst (bill for freight; correspondence on the subject between defendant's directors and the royal commissioners, held privileged on account of the company's governmental duties; without such a privilege "the effect would be to restrain the freedom of the communications and to render them more cautious, guarded, and reserved"); 1856, *Wadeer v. East India Co.*, 25 L. J. Ch. 345, 8 DeG. M. & G. 182, 187, 190 (bill for delivery of notes of Governor-General of India; discovery refused of political communications between defendant and its Indian governments; privilege held to cover "State papers, dispatches, minutes, or documents of any such description which relate to the carrying on of the government and are connected with the transaction of public affairs"; placed on the usual ground of the possibility of their affecting "the question of peace or war"; decided by L. L. J. Turner and Knight-Bruce, overruling the contrary decision of Romilly, M. R., who had said that "official documents in many cases are privileged, but in some cases they are not"); *New Jersey*: 1871, *Thompson v. R. Co.*, 22 N. J. Eq. 111 (subpoena *d. t.* upon the Governor for the engrossed copy of a private statute; held that he might withhold "any paper or document in his possession, or any part of it, if in his opinion his official duty requires him to do so"; here the Governor did place the document at the Chancellor's disposal); *United States*: 1800, *U. S. v. Cooper*, Whart. St. Tr. 659, 662 (libel on the President; production of unspecified official documents, not compelled); 1872, *U. S. v. Six Lots of Ground*, 1 Woods 284, 236 (correspondence between the attorney-general and a district attorney as to dismissing a writ of error, held confidential); 1895, *Re Hittman*, 70 Fed. 699 (Federal deputy collector of internal revenue not compellable to testify in a State court to statements made by an applicant for a liquor-dealer's tax-stamp, the statements being made for record in the office; on the ground that a State court in a prosecution under a State law has no jurisdiction to compel a Federal officer's disobedience to a Federal regulation, equivalent to law, forbidding such disclosure; on this point compare the principle of jurisdiction, *ante*, § 6); 1896, *Re Hirsch*, 74 id. 928 (unlawful liquor-selling by C.; the payment of a liquor-tax being admissible to show an intent to sell liquor, the deputy-collector of Federal internal revenue was ordered to produce a document in his custody in which C. applied for a license and declared his intention of selling liquor; held, that no privilege existed, in the absence of statute, requiring the secrecy of such declarations); 1897, *Re Weeks*, 82 id. 729 (habeas corpus for a U. S. collector imprisoned for contempt in refusing to produce evidence for the Court of Vermont as to the payment of a liquor-tax by a defendant in that court; on being asked whether X. had paid him for obtaining a tax-

stamp, he replied that he could not remember but had the means of ascertaining, "whereupon he was asked to ascertain and state the fact, which he refused to do because his means of knowledge of it had come to him solely in his official capacity," and because his superior's instructions forbade disclosure; held, that although by law the official records were open to public inspection, the official could not be compelled to give evidence; "the Federal government . . . cannot be required to provide evidence for the State Courts"); 1899, *Re Comingore*, 98 id. 552 (a Treasury regulation forbade revenue-collectors from producing records or furnishing copies; held, in a State action for taxes against a distiller, that his reports to the Federal collector were privileged not to be disclosed by the latter, on the grounds partly that the State could not control a Federal official, partly that the document was an official "quasi-confidential" document designed solely to aid in the collection of Federal revenue); 1900, *Booke v. Comingore*, 177 U. S. 459, 20 Sup. 701 (the preceding ruling affirmed on appeal); 1903, *Re Lamberton*, Ark. Dist., 124 id. 446 (deputy collector of internal revenue, held privileged from testifying whether he had seen a Federal license to sell liquor publicly posted in a certain house; applying the principle of *Booke v. Comingore*); *Vermont*: 1859, *Redfield, J.*, in *Clark v. Field*, 12 Vt. 485 ("I apprehend that the true doctrine, in regard to requiring a witness to disclose State secrets, is that the Court will exercise its discretion in each particular case"); 1902, *Nye v. Daniels*, 81 id. 75, 53 Atl. 150 (a postmaster held privileged not to disclose whether the plaintiff sent a registered letter, on the theory that a postal regulation prohibiting such a disclosure had the force of law; the fallacy of the Court appears in the proviso of the U. S. Rev. St. § 161, authorizing such regulations provided they be "not inconsistent with law").

For rulings under statutes concerning *assessment-lists* and *unfinished inventions*, see *ante*, § 2374.

⁴ 1817, *R. v. Watson*, 2 Stark. 116, 148 (sedition; a clerk of the War department, after testifying that a plan found in defendant's possession was a plan of the interior of the Tower of London, was asked on cross-examination whether another plan, printed and purchasable, was a correct plan of the Tower, but "the Court held that it might be attended with public mischief to allow an officer of the Tower to be examined as to the accuracy of such a plan"; 1807, *Aaron Burr's Trial* (cited *post*, § 2376; here the correspondence desired might have involved international relations with Spain and France); 1875, *Totten v. U. S.*, 92 U. S. 105 (no action can be maintained on a contract with the Government for secret service as a spy during war; "the secrecy which such contracts impose precludes any action for its enforcement").

foregoing precedents has been embodied in broad form in several statutes, by legislators who perhaps did not perceive the possible scope of their phrasing.⁶ To these classes must be added the rulings refusing to compel disclosure of the votes or speeches of a member of the House of Commons or of Congress,⁶ or to compel disclosure of the proceedings of the House of Commons;⁷ the former being in effect (like the rulings in libel actions) virtually an indirect enforcement of the member's non-liability for his utterances, and the latter resting merely on a traditional fiction of secrecy once much cherished by the British House. Finally, there are a few rulings (none of them important, except perhaps *Marbury v. Madison*) in which the existence of a privilege in the large scope predicated by the modern English rulings is negatived.⁸

⁶ Ont. Rev. St. 1897, c. 73, § 27 ("Where documents in the official possession, custody, or power of a member of the Executive Council or the head of a department of the public service of this province," and the officer having the documents is called as a witness, "he shall be entitled, acting herein by the direction and on behalf of such member of the Executive Council or head of the department, to object to produce the documents on the ground that they are privileged"; the objection to have the same effect as if the superior officer had made it); *P. E. I. St.* 1839, § 29 (like Ont. R. S. 1897, c. 73, § 27); *Cal. C. C. P.* 1872, § 1881, par. 5 ("A public officer cannot be examined as to communications made to him in official confidence, when the public interests would suffer by the disclosure"); *Calo. Annot. St.* 1891, § 4824 ("A public officer shall not be examined as to communications made to him in official confidence, when the public interests, in the judgment of the Court, would suffer by the disclosure"); *Calo. Code* 1895, §§ 3947, 3288 ("official persons" cannot be called on "to disclose any State matters of which the policy of the State and the interest of the community require concealment"); *Ida. Rev. St.* 1887, § 5958 (like *Cal. C. C. P.* § 1881); *Ida. Code* 1897, § 4609 (like *Cal. C. C. P.* § 1881); *Minn. Gen. St.* 1894, § 5662 (like *Cal. C. C. P.* § 1881); *Mont. C. C. P.* 1895, § 8163 (5) (like *Cal. C. C. P.* § 1881); *Nebr. Comp. St.* 1899, § 5909 (like *Cal. C. C. P.* § 1881); *Nov. Gen. St.* 1895, § 8407 (like *Cal. C. C. P.* § 1881); *N. D. Rev. C.* 1895, § 5703 (like *Cal. C. C. P.* § 1881); *S. D. Stats.* 1899, § 6544 (like *Cal. C. C. P.* § 1881); *Utah Rev. St.* 1893, § 3414 (like *Cal. C. C. P.* § 1881); *Wash. C. & Stats.* 1897, § 5994 (substantially like *Cal. C. C. P.* § 1881).

⁷ 1804, *Plunkett v. Oohbett*, 5 Esp. 136 (libel on plaintiff's conduct in parliament in Ireland; a witness called to prove the plaintiff's expressions in parliament, held privileged from disclosing the tenor of the speeches, though not from stating the fact of speaking there); 1852, *Chubb v. Salomons*, 8 C. & K. 75 (Pollock, C. B., after consulting the other judges of the Exchequer, refused to compel a member of the House of Commons to relate whether the defendant voted in the House, without the permission of the House that he might testify; an

officer of the House was then examined, the House having given permission); 1822, *Law v. Scott*, 5 H. & J. 438, 453 (slander; testimony to a vote in the Senate rejecting the plaintiff's nomination; question apparently not decided).

⁸ 1818, *Commons Journal*, vol. 73, p. 389, May 26, quoted in 8 C. & K. 77 (in consequence of the case of *R. v. Mercerou*, 2 Stark. 866, in which the shorthand reporter of the House had been examined without its leave, "Resolved, that all witnesses examined before this House or any committee thereof are entitled to the protection of this House in respect of anything that may be said by them in their evidence"); 1839, *Stockdale v. Hansard*, 9 A. & E. 1, 212, per Patterson, J. (Commons proceedings are in theory secret until the House permits publication); 1868, *Wason v. Walter*, L. R. 4 Q. B. 73, 96, *semble*, per Cockburn, C. J. (similar). Compare the following: *Can. Rev. St.* 1886, c. 11, §§ 5-8.

⁹ *Eng.* 1775, *Maharajah Nundocomar's Trial*, 20 How. St. Tr. 1057 (records of the Governor and Council of the East India Company, required to be produced, though the "safety of the State" was urged in opposing production); 1813, *Lee v. Birrell*, 3 Camp. 337 (defendant for penalty; to prove the defendant a collector of the property tax, the commissioners' clerk was summoned to produce the records; on objection that he had taken an official oath of secrecy, L. C. J. Ellenborough, said that the giving of evidence in court was an implied exception to the oath, and compelled production); *U. S.* 1843, *Capt. McKenzie's Case*, 2 Pars. Eq. Cas. 227, Pa. Com. Pl. (letters rogatory in an action for libel; testimony by officers of a court-martial to the votes given for and against the plaintiff therein charged, held not privileged; the Court, however unwilling "to establish a precedent which might in any way weaken the naval arm of the government, saw in all this no legal bar to the adnotation of evidence to which a citizen is entitled under the laws"); 1803, *Marbury v. Madison*, 1 Cr. 137, 143 (mandamus to the Secretary of State to deliver commissions to justices of the peace; the commissions were alleged to have been duly made out and sealed, but unlawfully withheld; clerks of the department of State being summoned to prove the fact, they claimed a privilege not to disclose the

It may be said, then, that the extent to which this privilege has gone (beyond "secrets of State" in the military or international sense) is by no means clearly defined; and, furthermore that it has not become a matter of precedent or even of debate in more than a few jurisdictions. Its scope and bearing are therefore open to careful examination in the light of logic and policy. What are the reasons which have been advanced for this privilege, and how do they bear testing? They are sufficiently represented in the following passages:

1640, *Earl of Strafford's Trial*, 3 How. St. Tr. 1427, 1441; Parliament was now striking at Charles I by prosecuting his chief political adviser; Sir Henry Vane having testified, as a member of the King's Council, that the defendant Strafford "did say at the Council Board" that he would help His Majesty Charles I with force to reduce the kingdom, if Parliament remained obstinate, Lord Clarendon remarks: "The ruin that this last act [of producing this testimony] brought to the King was irreparable; for . . . it was matter of horror to the counsellors to find that they might be arraigned for every rash, every inconsiderate, every imperious expression or word they had used there; and so made them more engaged to servile applications. It banished forever all future freedom from that board and those persons from whom His Majesty was to expect advice in his greatest straits; all men satisfying themselves 'that they were no more obliged to deliver their opinions there freely, when they might be impeached in another place for so doing'; and the evincing this so useful doctrine was without doubt more the design of those grand managers [of the prosecution] than any hope they had of receiving further information thereby."

1820, *Dallas, C. J., Home v. Bentinck*, 2 B. & B. 130, 162: "What is the ground upon which these cases [of informers] stand, except it be the ground of danger to the public good, which would result from disclosing the sources of such informations? For no person would become an informer if his name might be disclosed in a court of justice and if he might be subjected to the resentment of the party against whom he had informed. Does not this reasoning apply closely to the case now before us — [a report by a court of inquiry to a commander-in-chief] — on the broad rule of public policy and convenience, that these matters, secret in their natures and involving delicate inquiry and the names of persons, stand protected? Now what is this proceeding but consulting with those who are bound to give the advice which is required as to the exercise of a public duty? And whether the case be that of the attorney-general of a province advising a governor, or an officer present at a court of inquiry directed to be held by the commander-in-chief, it is equally a case of advice and information given for the regulation of a public officer."

1860, *Pollock, C. B., in Beatson v. Skene*, 5 H. & N. 838, 858: "We are of opinion that it cannot be laid down that all public documents, including treaties with foreign powers and all the correspondence that may precede or accompany them, and all communications to the heads of departments, are to be produced and made public whenever a suitor in a court of justice thinks that his case requires such production. It is manifest, we think, that there must be a limit to the duty or the power of compelling the production of papers which are connected with acts of State. As an instance, we would put the case of a British minister at a foreign Court writing in that capacity a letter to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in this country, containing matter injurious to the

transactions of the office, and the Attorney-General being summoned for the same purpose made the same claim; held that they must answer, the facts not being confidential; the Court said, "they had no doubt he ought to answer; there was nothing confidential required to be dis-

closed. If there had been, he was not required to answer it. . . . But the fact whether such commissions had been in the office or not could not be a confidential fact; it is a fact which all the world have a right to know"; good argument by Mr. Lee).

reputation of a foreigner or a British subject; can it be contended that the person referred to would have a right to compel the production of the letter in order to take the opinion of a jury whether the injurious matter was written maliciously or not? We are of opinion that, if the production of a State paper would be injurious to the public service, the general public interest must be considered paramount to the individual interest of a suitor in a court of justice."

1868, *Field, J., in Hennessy v. Wright*, L. R. 21 Q. B. D. 500, 512: "There are two aspects of this question. First, the publication of a State document may involve danger to the nation. If the confidential communications made by servants of the Crown to each other, by superiors to inferiors or by inferiors to superiors, in the discharge of their duty to the Crown, were liable to be made public in a court of justice at the instance of any suitor who thought proper to say '*fat justitia ruat calum.*' an order for discovery might involve the country in a war. Secondly, the publication of a State paper may be injurious to servants of the Crown as individuals; there would be an end of all freedom in their official communications if they knew that any suitor, that as in this case any one of their own body whom circumstances had made a suitor, could legally insist that any official communication, of no matter how secret a character, should be produced openly in a court of justice."

Of these reasonings three things are to be said:

(1) The brunt of the argument is that *an official should be secured from liability* based on his official communications made in the course of duty. Nobody can dispute this general principle. But it signifies nothing for the law of evidence. It signifies an exoneration from tortious or criminal liability. Whether and how far such exoneration should be conceded is a question of substantive law, and is now solved by that law liberally in favor of officials. But wherever that law has declined to concede an exoneration, and has predicated liability, all this reason for protection ceases, by hypothesis. It is a mockery to reserve, against righteous claims, a privilege of testimonial secrecy. This much seems plain. All the argument based upon hardship to officials may therefore at once be conceded; but for the purpose of testimonial privilege all such cases are irrelevant, being duly safeguarded by other means.

(2) The remainder of the argument consists in invoking secrecy for *acts of pending international negotiations or military precautions against foreign enemies*. This, too, may be conceded. There ought to be a protection for "secrets of State," in this narrow sense. But, this done, what remains? In only three or four of the precedents has there been even a pretence that the matters actually preserved from disclosure concerned international facts of negotiation or defence. If they do not, then this reason is insufficient; for it is vain to claim secrecy on the ground that something else might have been asked for, which is in fact not asked for.

(3) The question is then reduced to this, Whether there are any matters of fact, in the possession of officials, concerning *solely the internal affairs* of public business, civil or military, which ought to be privileged from disclosure when material to be ascertained upon an issue in a court of justice? Most emphatically, there are not. In any community under a system of representative government and removable officials, there can be no facts

which require to be kept secret with that solidity which defies even the inquiries of a court of justice. "To cover with the veil of secrecy," said Patrick Henry,⁹ "the common routine of business, is an abomination in the eyes of every intelligent man and every friend to his country." Such a secrecy cannot even be legitimately desired. It cannot be desired for any but the purposes of partisan politics or personal self-interest. The responsibility of officials to explain and to justify their acts is the chief safeguard against oppression and corruption. Whether it is the relation of the Treasury to the Stock Exchange, or the dealings of the Interior Department with government lands, or the orders of the War Department in colonial dependencies (and in all of these departments, in the last generation, instances susceptible of such a claim of privilege have occurred) the facts must constitutionally be demandable, sooner or later, on the floor of Congress. To concede to them a sacrosanct secrecy in a court of justice is to attribute to them a character which for other purposes is never maintained. — a character which appears to have been advanced only when it happens to have served the interests of some individual to obstruct investigation into facts which might fix him with a just liability.

It is urged, to be sure (as in *Beatson v. Skene*), that the "public interest must be considered paramount to the individual interest of a suitor in a court of justice." As if the public interest were not involved in the administration of justice! As if the denial of justice to a single suitor were not as much a public injury as is the disclosure of any official record! When justice is at stake, the appeal to the necessities of the public interest on the other side is of no superior weight. "Necessity," as Joshua Evans said,¹⁰ "is always a suspicious argument, and never wanting to the worst of causes." What is the necessity for secrecy in such matters? To justify a privilege, it must be, on settled principles (*ante*, §§ 2192, 2285), a secrecy indispensable to induce freedom of official communication or efficacy in the transaction of official business, and it must further be a secrecy which has remained and would have remained inviolable but for this compulsory disclosure. In how many transactions of official business is there ordinarily such a secrecy? After guaranteeing to official communications and acts an immunity from liability to civil or criminal consequences, and after further eliminating those acts and communications which are in no sense secret from their inception, what remains of real and intrinsic secrecy of transaction? If there arises at any time a genuine instance of such otherwise inviolate secrecy, let the necessity of maintaining it be determined upon its merits. But the solemn invocation, in the precedents above chronicled, of a supposed inherent secrecy, has commonly been only a canting appeal to a fiction. It seems to lend itself naturally to mere sham and evasion. The leading case of *Beatson v. Skene* is a sufficient example, *ex quo disce omnes*. The plaintiff, Skene, was a general of cavalry; at the close of the Crimean war he was superseded in command, and resigned; an investigation into the state of the corps was made by General Shirley,

⁹ Elliot's Debates, III, 170.

¹⁰ Arguing in *Home v. Beutinck*.

whose secretary and commissioner the defendant Beatson was; the defendant reported to his superior that the plaintiff had stirred up mutiny in the corps, and afterwards so testified as a witness before a military court of inquiry held to investigate General Shirley's alleged libel on the plaintiff; for this testimony the plaintiff's suit for libel was brought, and he sought production, in his proof, of the court's minutes of the defendant's testimony, and of the plaintiff's own letters to the Secretary of War. Now a plea of privilege in the substantive law might immediately have disposed of the matter. Since it did not, the case placed the defendant in the position of having uttered an unjustifiable libel on the plaintiff. To refuse the production of the desired documents was therefore virtually to deprive the plaintiff of his means of proving a just claim. And yet to protect the defendant, as the Court did, by placing this refusal on the ground of the secrecy of State affairs was to lay hold of the merest fiction,— first, because the topic involved was only one of the plaintiff's personal conduct in his own cavalry corps; next, because the whole subject and its details had long and notoriously been the theme of military and public gossip, and was in its inception known to scores of persons; and, again, because the very Court which appealed to this inviolable secrecy for withholding the notes of the testimony permitted a person who had been present at the military court to prove publicly the same oral testimony of the defendant which was recorded in the suppressed minutes! With such pharisaic shams and resounding incongruities is the rule replete in almost every instance.¹¹ Rested upon such fictions, and applied in such a spirit, it tends to become merely a technical advantage on the side of that party who happens to be interested as an official and to be in possession of important proof. Let John Doe sue a neighbor for encroaching on his boundary line, and he may compel the neighbor to produce the documents which vindicate Doe's just claim. But let him sue a colonial officer of the Philippine Islands for exploiting his land or imprisoning his person,— let him sue a postmaster for destroying his business by refusing the use of the mails, or a revenue collector for the illegal impounding of goods,— let him be the complainant against any government official for any oppressive conduct, and the same discovery of the facts is refused by law, provided only that the wrongdoer is sufficiently strong in interest with his superiors to induce them to invoke the privilege of official secrecy. The time has not yet come, with us, when such deliberate combination for the oppression of citizens by officials is rife. But the possibilities of such abuse are plainly latent in this supposed privilege. There is needed only the willingness to exercise them. The liquor-tax cases show how simple the expedient would be, *mutatis mutandis*, in a thousand cases, and how effective as an obstruction to justice and a refuge for cowardly oppressors. Rules of law much more innocent in appearance have been made to serve evil purposes upon a large scale. "No nation" (in the words of a great American

¹¹ *E. g.*, *Gugy v. Maguire*, *Hartranft's Appeal*, and other cases *ante*, especially those of the Federal liquor-tax receipts.

jurist¹³), "ever yet found any inconvenience from too close an inspection into the conduct of its officers; but many have been brought to ruin, and reduced to slavery, by suffering gradual imposition and abuses which were imperceptible only because the means of publicity had not been secured." The menace which this supposed privilege implies to individual liberty and private right will justify us in repudiating it before it is too solidly entrenched in precedent. More than once have plain warnings been given us of the potency of its abuse for partisan and selfish ends:

1807, Mr. *Botts*, arguing, in *Aaron Burr's Trial*, Robertson's Rep. II, 517: "I can never express, in terms sufficiently strong, the detestation and abhorrence which every American should feel towards a system of State secrecy. It never can conduce to public utility, though it may furnish pretexts to men in power to shelter themselves and their friends and agents from the just aimadversion of the law, — to direct their malignant plots to the destruction of other men while they are themselves secure from punishment. In a government of responsibility like ours, where all the agents of the public must be responsible for their conduct, there can be but few secrets. The people of the United States have a right to know every public act, every thing that is done in a public way by their public functionaries. They ought to know the particulars of public transactions in all their bearings and relations, so as to be able to distinguish whether and how far they are conducted with fidelity and ability; and with the exception of what relates to negotiations with foreign nations, or what is called the diplomatic department, there ought to be nothing suppressed or concealed. . . . I will again predict that, if a secret inquisitorial tribunal be established by your decision now, . . . if you determine that we be deprived of the benefit of important written or oral evidence by the introduction of this State secrecy, you lay, without intending it, the foundation for a system of oppression. If these things be established, to go down to posterity as precedents, the inevitable consequences will be that, whenever any man in the United States becomes an object of the vengeance or jealousy of those in power, he may easily be ruined. A wicked executive power will have nothing to do to effect his destruction but to foment divisions in this country, to encourage and excite accusations by its officers, to deny the use of all public documents that may tend to the justification of the accused, or to render the attainment of exculpatory evidence dependent on the arbitrary whim of its prosecuting officers, and he will be condemned to sink without the smallest effectual resistance."

1863, *Monsielet, J.*, in *Guy v. Maguire*, 13 Low. Can. 33, 38 (upon a Provincial Secretary's refusal to produce the report of a superintendent of police); "It has been pretended, as in the case of *Home v. Bentinck*, that it is necessary for the interest of the public that secrecy should be had in such and similar matters. . . . I cannot, I ought not, for a moment, as a judge living and administering justice under constitutional institutions, admit such a monstrous doctrine, — a doctrine which prostrates to the ground that liberty, that protection to life, honour, property, and to civil and religious liberty, which this country has so much right to boast of, too valuable to be thus thrown away and scattered to the four winds of Heaven! A doctrine which reduces the judge on the Bench to an automaton, who, like the statue of Don Juan, will bend at the bidding of any reckless politician, whatever shade of politics or party spirit it may be his misfortune to be tainted with, or of any unprincipled member of society, whoever he is or may be, who is desirous of, or has interest in being screened, or of screening others, from the responsibility his misdeeds have subjected them to. If that doctrine be law, or rather, were law, it would be appalling. It would be such that no one would feel himself secure. I cannot, I must not assent to it. It is not law. It is unconstitutional. It is tyrannical. It is monstrous. And it must more glaringly appear so, when we come to reflect that an

¹³ Edward Livingston, Works, I, 15.

attempt is made to give it currency, and to fasten it on the judges of the land, under constitutional responsible government. Such a pretension reminds me of what was so often done in France, under the old régime, by means of the maxim then looked upon as sacred by the government. The following will, much better than I could myself, illustrate this branch of the subject: 'Vainement les Parlemens et les autres Cours souveraines devoient une voix courageuse contre cet intolérable abus; la Cour ne répondait qu'en lançant de nouvelles lettres de cachet, on par cette maxime, "qu'il ne faut pas soumettre à l'inspection des tribunaux le secret de l'administration et l'exécution des ordres du roi"; d'où l'on concluait qu'il n'existait aucun recours contre les ordres donnés par ses ministres.' . . . I never can, and I trust never shall acknowledge as a true one, the paradoxical proposition, that under the protection of the freest and best constitution in the world, and the most solemn imperial statute guaranteeing our rights, an action may be instituted against any one who has caused damage to his fellow subject, but that it will be in the power of a secretary, or of any member of the government, to deprive the injured of the evidence which he may adduce to entitle him legally to a verdict or a judgment. . . . [It is] a dangerous, monstrous pretension."

1877, *Agnew, C. J.*, in *Hartranft's Appeal*, 85 Pa. 433, 458: "There were fearful crimes committed on the 21st and 22d of July. These are the undoubted subjects of judicial inquiry in the mode prescribed by law,—to wit, through a grand jury. In that unknown and vast multitude of citizens and soldiers, who were guilty? Who were innocent? By the 22d section of the Declaration of Rights, it is declared that the 'military shall in all cases, and at all times, be in strict subordination to the civil power.' The military took many lives—the multitude some. Did the military act under the authority of the civil power? This is one of the first points of inquiry by a grand jury, for it involves the question, whether their acts were murder, manslaughter, excusable or justifiable homicide. Thus the evidence of civil authority becomes essential to the inquiry. Did the Governor, as commander-in-chief, command their presence, and aid in quelling the violence of the mob? Or was his authority assumed by unauthorized persons? These are questions which the Governor alone, as a witness, might be able to answer satisfactorily, by competent testimony in a common-law proceeding. They are not State secrets, but acts of authority in their very nature public, and cannot be concealed from the inquiry of the law. The rights of life and public safety are too sacred to be subordinated to any right to conceal the authority by which they are destroyed or jeopardized. If the executive authority was duly given, he neither can nor ought to withhold the knowledge which acquits of crime the military acting under his own orders. Indeed, from the character of our excellent Governor, he would not for a moment refuse to come to their rescue, if he believed his duty demanded it. On the other hand, if his authority was unlawfully assumed, or was simulated, or was exercised at the bidding of persons without right—an inference which his absence in California very naturally raises—and the military have been involved in an unlawful act, his duty and the rights of the people demand his testimony, that the parties who have thus misled them may be reached. This is no State secret as to them, but its concealment is a crime against society, which no one who knows the Governor would attribute to him, if aware of his duty. . . . In every respect of personal and official duty, the State has a right to the disclosure. A contrary doctrine strikes at the essential and fundamental principles of a free government as set forth in the Declaration of Rights."

§ 2376. *Same: Who determines the Necessity for Secrecy.* So far as the privilege has any legitimate scope, it raises the question how the existence of the facts which make it applicable is to be determined. If it extends only (as its just limits prescribe) to matters involving international negotiations or military precautions against a foreign enemy, the presence of such matters in the documents or communications sought to be disclosed must by some

authority be predetermined, before the privilege can be deemed applicable. If it extends to the larger scope indicated by the English rulings, still the existence of a necessity for secrecy must be in each instance declared. Who shall make this determination? Obviously, and by analogy with other privileges, the Court (*ante*, §§ 2193, 2271, 2322, *post*, § 2550). But the judge, urges the learned incumbent of that office, in *Beatson v. Skene*,¹ "would be unable to determine it without ascertaining what the document was,"—surely an unavoidable process; "which inquiry," however, it is added, "cannot take place in private,"—a singular assumption. It would rather seem that the simple and natural process of determination was precisely such a private perusal by the judge. Is it to be said that even this much of disclosure cannot be trusted? Shall every subordinate in the department have access to the secret, and not the presiding officer of justice? Cannot the constitutionally coördinate body of government share the confidence? It is ludicrous to observe a chief magistrate, as in *Beatson v. Skene*, solemnly protesting his incompetence to share the knowledge of a fact which had never been secret at all and had for months been spread abroad by the hundred tongues of scandal. By the doctrine of judicial notice, to be sure, he could not judicially know anything that was not already notorious; by a sarcastic perversion of that doctrine, the perusal of the documents in *Beatson v. Skene* might have been urged upon the Court.

The truth cannot be escaped that a Court which abdicates its inherent function of determining the facts upon which the admissibility of evidence depends will furnish to designing officials too ample opportunities for abusing the privilege. The lawful limits of the privilege are extensible beyond any control, if its applicability is left to the determination of the very official whose interest it is to shield his wrongdoing under the privilege. Both principle and policy demand that the determination of the privilege shall be for the judge:

1807, *Aaron Burr's Trial*, Robertson's Rep. I, 121, 127, 186, 255; II, 536. treason; a subpoena *duces tecum* was issued by Chief Justice Marshall to President Jefferson, to attend and bring certain correspondence with General Wilkinson said to be material to the defence; as to the argument that reasons of State might forbid the disclosure, Marshall, C. J., said: "There is certainly nothing before the Court which shows that the letter in question contains any matter the disclosure of which would endanger the public safety; . . . if it does contain any matter which it would be imprudent to disclose, which it is not the wish of the Executive to disclose, such matter, if it be not immediately and essentially applicable to the point, will of course be suppressed. . . . Everything of this kind, however, will have its due consideration on the return of the subpoena. . . . I admit, in such a case, much reliance must be placed on the declaration of the President; . . . perhaps the Court ought to consider the reasons which would induce the President to refuse to exhibit such a letter as conclusive on it, unless such letter could be shown to be absolutely necessary in the defence. The President may himself state the particular reasons which may have induced him to withhold a paper, and the Court would unquestionably allow their full force to those reasons." President

¹ *Ante*, § 2375, note 1.

² He also held (II, 513, 536) that the President's delegation of discretion to the prosecuting counsel was not lawful.

Jefferson, while forwarding the desired letter, added the following: "With respect to papers, there is certainly a public and private side to our offices. To the former belong grants of land, patents for inventions, certain commissions, proclamations, and other papers patent in their nature. To the other belong mere executive proceedings. All nations have found it necessary that for the advantageous conduct of their affairs some of these proceedings at least should remain known to their executive functionary only. He, of course, from the nature of the case, must be the sole judge of which of them the public interest will permit publication."

1863, *Mondelet, J.*, in *Guy v. Meguire*, 13 Low. Can. 33, 38 (upon a provincial secretary's refusal to produce the report of a superintendent of police): "[Conceding that the privilege may exist,] are you to compare the discretion, the unbiassed mind, the position of the judge who is alike independent of the Crown and of the People, who is free from party spirit, who knows or should know no one, to the biassed mind — naturally, necessarily, biassed mind — of a politician, not independent as the judge is, but dependent upon a party, who knows or must know, the contending parties, and may have the most cogent reasons for supporting one party, in preference to another; who has to bear, and does bear the external pressure which the judge is or should be inaccessible to; whose interest it may be, under the flimsy pretence, under the transparent veil of pretended public interest, to screen some petty minion in office? The comparison cannot hold for a moment. In the case of the judge, you have sacred guarantees; in that of a politician, you have none. External pressure will curb down the politician, whilst you will behold the judge more erect than ever, calmly and firmly resisting and baffling its baneful influence. Clearly then, manifestly, should it be left to the judge on the Bench, in his discretion, to determine the question, instead of allowing a secretary, or any member of the government, to silence him, to interfere with the administration of justice, and to become the judge? . . . This very case, this very flimsy, unfounded pretence, this unjustifiable refusal of the honorable secretary to prove the letter, which, through the instrumentality of the assistant provincial secretary, one of the acknowledged channels of communication with the department of the secretary, and actually, in most cases of importance, the medium of such communication, has been made public, shews up, in its true light, the danger, were it even legal or constitutional (which it is not), of the exorbitant pretension now set up. The honorable Judge, who presided at the trial, had it in his power, and at a mere glance at it, with his well known clear mind and sound judgment, had he thought proper to do so, might have seen through the transparency of the objection raised by the honorable secretary and the respondent. Such a letter, if proved, injurious to the public service! In what respect? How could the fact that the respondent had libelled the appellant, supposing he has, be injurious to the public service? . . . It is manifestly laying down the rule, that a secretary, or other public functionary, member of the government, will be at liberty to say that white is black, and that he must be believed."^s

^s What the English ruling to-day would be is uncertain: 1860, *Beatson v. Skene*, 5 H. & N. 833, 853 (the executive officer's claim of injury to public interests determines the recognition of the privilege; unless perhaps where he merely sends a subordinate to make objection without such explanation; *Martin, B.*, *disa.*); 1888,

Hennessy v. Wright, L. R. 21 Q. B. D. 509, 515, 521 (disapproving *Beatson v. Skene*, on this point); 1884, *Bradley v. McIntosh*, 5 Ont. 227, 232, 236 (the officer determines). Compare some remarks by the judges in *Re Joseph Hargreaves, Limited*, 1900, 1 Ch. 347.

TOPIC B (continued): PRIVILEGED COMMUNICATIONS.

CHAPTER LXXXIV.

SUB-TOPIC VI: COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN PHYSICIAN AND PATIENT.

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| <p>§ 2380. History and Policy; Statutes.
 § 2381. (a) Confidentiality of Communications; (1) Implied Confidence; Burden of Proof; Third Persons' Testimony.
 § 2382. Same: (2) Professional Character of the Consultation.
 § 2383. (b) Communications Necessary for Prescription.
 § 2384. (c) Information, Active and Passive.
 § 2385. (d) Criminal Cases; Malpractice.
 § 2386. (e) Whose is the Privilege; Claim of Privilege; Inference from Claim.</p> | <p>§ 2387. (f) Termination of the Privilege; Death.
 § 2388. Same: Waiver, in general; Express and Implied Waiver.
 § 2389. Same: Waiver by Bringing Suit; by Testifying; by Former Waiver.
 § 2390. Same: Waiver by Calling the Physician; by using "Proofs of Death."
 § 2391. Same: Waiver by Deceased Patient's Representative.</p> |
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SUB-TOPIC VII: COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN PRIEST AND PENITENT.

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| <p>§ 2394. History: No Privilege at Common Law.</p> | <p>§ 2395. Statutes recognizing the Privilege.
 § 2396. Policy of the Privilege.</p> |
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Sub-topic VI: COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN PHYSICIAN AND PATIENT.

§ 2380. **History and Policy; Statutes.** It was early understood, in the precedents of English law, as soon as the secrecy of private confidence in general was finally settled to be no justification for a legal privilege (*ante*, §§ 2286, 2290), that confidences given to a physician stand upon no better legal footing than others:

1776, *Duchess of Kingston's Trial*, 20 How. St. Tr. 573; bigamy; Mr. Hawkins, a physician, who had attended the accused and her alleged husband, was asked: "Do you know from the parties of any marriage between them?" Ans.: "I do not know how far anything that has come before me in a confidential trust in my profession should be disclosed, consistent with my professional honor." L. C. J. Mansfield: "If all your lordships will acquiesce, Mr. Hawkins will understand that it is your judgment and opinion that a surgeon has no privilege, where it is a material question in a civil or criminal cause to know whether parties were married or whether a child was born, to say that his introduction to the parties was in the course of his profession and in that way he came to the knowledge of it. . . . If a surgeon was voluntarily to reveal these secrets, to be sure, he would be guilty of a breach of honor and of great indiscretion; but to give that information in a court of justice, which by the law of the land he is bound to do, will never be imputed to him as any indiscretion whatever."

This has ever since been accepted by English judges¹ (in spite of an occasional and proper dispensation by courtesy²); and would probably have

¹ 1792, *Wilson v. Rastall*, 4 T. R. 753, 760, per Buller, J. ("It is much to be lamented that the law of privilege is not extended" to medical persons; this judge's views on the subject were anachronistic, as noted *ante*, § 2285); 1822, *Garrow, B.*, in *Falmouth v. Moss*, 11 Price 455, 470; 1823, *R. v. Powell*, 1 C. & P. 97, Parke, B. (a surgeon attending an accused indicted for the murder of her bastard child, held not entitled to refuse testimony to

her confession); 1838, *Greenlaw v. King*, 1 Beav. 137, 145, per Lord Langdale, M. R.; 1851, in *Russell v. Jackson*, 9 Hare 387, 391, per Wigram, V. C.; 1876, *Jessel, M. R.*, in *Anderson v. Bank, L. R. 2 Ch. D. 644, 650, obiter*; 1881, the same judge in *Wheeler v. Le Marchant*, 17 id. 675, 681, *obiter*.

² 1825, *Gardiner Peerage Case*, Le Marchant's Rep. 65, 88, 133 (names of women whose periods of gestation were testified to).

been acknowledged as a common-law principle in every American court.³ But in New York in 1828⁴ came a statutory innovation, establishing a privilege; and the legislation of other States, accepting in this respect (as in so many others) the model constructed by the distinguished leaders of legal reform in that epoch-making movement in New York, embodied the privilege in other statutes — Missouri following next in 1835; until at the present day in one half of our jurisdictions the privilege is a settled part of the law.⁵

³ 1793, *Sherman v. Sherman*, 1 Root 486 (divorce for adultery; a doctor's testimony compelled, though "all he could testify came to his knowledge in confidence").

⁴ *N. Y. Rev. St. 1828*, II, 406 (Part III, c. VII, art. 9, § 73); in the second edition, in 1836, in an Appendix to the Revisers' Reports, vol. III, p. 737, is found their reasoning in justification, quoted *post*. In 1849 the Commissioners on Practice and Pleadings embodied the rule in the new Code of Civil Procedure (§ 1710, part 4).

⁵ *Alaska C. C. P. 1900*, § 1038 (like Or. Annot. C. 1892, § 712, par. 4, omitting "regular," and substituting for "without the consent," "against the objection"); *Ariz. St. 1899*, March 16, No. 65 ("A physician or surgeon practicing under the laws of the Territory of Arizona cannot without the consent of his patient be examined in civil or criminal cases as to any information acquired in attending the patient which was necessary to enable him to prescribe or act for the patient"); *Rev. St. 1901*, § 2335, par. 6 ("A physician or surgeon cannot be examined, without the consent of his patient, as to any communication made by his patient with reference to any physical or supposed physical disease or any knowledge obtained by personal examination of such patient; provided that if a person offer himself as a witness and voluntarily testify with reference to such communications, that is to be deemed a consent to the examination of such physician or attorney"; see also *P. C. § 1111*, par. 4); *Ark. Stats. 1894*, § 2919 ("No person authorized to practice physic or surgery shall be compelled to disclose any information which he may have acquired from his patient while attending him in a professional character, and which information was necessary to enable him to prescribe as a physician or do any act for him as a surgeon"); *Cal. C. C. P. 1872*, § 1881, par. 4 ("A licensed physician or surgeon cannot, without the consent of his patient, be examined in a civil action as to any information acquired in attending the patient which was necessary to enable him to prescribe or act for the patient"; amended by the Commission of 1901 by adding: "but this subdivision does not apply in an action between a physician or surgeon and his patient in which the treatment of the patient by the physician or surgeon is in issue; and provided that in an action brought under sections 375 and 377 [for death by wrongful act] a physician or surgeon is competent to testify as to the cause of the death of the deceased"; for the validity of this amendment, see *ante*, § 488);

§ 1882 (implied waiver; quoted *ante*, § 2292); *Colo. Annot. Stats. 1891*, § 4824 ("A physician or surgeon duly authorized to practice his profession under the laws of this State shall not, without the consent of his patient, be examined as to any information acquired in attending the patient, which was necessary to enable him to prescribe or act for the patient"); § 4825 (waiver by consent; like Or. Annot. C. 1892, § 713); *D. C. Code 1901*, § 1073, U. S. St. 1896, c. 245, May 25 ("In the Courts of the District of Columbia no physician or surgeon shall be permitted, without the consent of the person afflicted, or of his legal representatives to disclose any information, confidential in its nature, which he shall have acquired in attending a patient in a professional capacity and which was necessary to enable him to act in that capacity; provided, that this section shall not apply to evidence in criminal cases where the accused is charged with causing the death of or inflicting injuries upon a human being, and the disclosure shall be required in the interest of public justice"); *Hawaii Civil Laws 1897*, § 1418 ("No physician or surgeon shall, without the consent of his patient, divulge in any civil suit, action, or proceeding (unless the sanity of the patient be the matter in dispute) any information which he may have acquired in attending the patient, and which was necessary to enable him to prescribe or act for the patient"); *Ida. Rev. St. 1887*, § 5958 (like unamended *Cal. C. C. P. § 1881*); *Ind. Rev. St. 1897*, § 507 ("Physicians, as to matter communicated to them, as such, by their patients, in the course of their professional business, or advice given in such cases, shall not be competent"); *Ia. Code 1897*, § 4608 (quoted *ante*, § 2292); *Kan. Gen. St. 1901*, § 4771, par. 6 (like *Okl. Stats. § 335*); *Mich. Comp. L. 1897*, § 10181 ("No person duly authorized to practice physio or surgery shall be allowed to disclose any information which he may have acquired in attending any patient in his professional character, which information was necessary in order to enable him to prescribe for such patient as a physician or to do any act for him as a surgeon"); *Minn. Gen. St. 1894*, § 5662 ("A regular physician or surgeon cannot, without the consent of his patient, be examined in a civil action, as to any information acquired in attending the patient, which was necessary to enable him to prescribe or act for the patient"); *Mo. Rev. St. 1880*, § 8925 ("The following persons shall be incompetent to testify: . . . fifth, a physician or surgeon, concerning any information which he may have acquired from any patient

What is to be said in favor of such an innovation upon the common law? The privilege has been supported, in the home of its origin, in the following passages:

1898, *Commissioners on Revision of the Statutes of New York*, III, 737: "The ground on which communications to counsel are privileged, is the supposed necessity of a full knowledge of the facts, to advise correctly, and to prepare for the proper defence or prosecution of a suit. But surely the necessity of consulting a medical adviser, when while attending him in a professional character, and which information was necessary to enable him to prescribe for such patient as a physician, or do any act for him as a surgeon"; *Mont. C. C. P.* 1895, § 3163 (4) (like unamended Cal. C. C. P. § 1881); *Nev. Gen. St.* 1885, § 3406 (like unamended Cal. C. C. P. § 1881, omitting "in a civil action," and adding: "provided, however, in any suit or prosecution against a physician or surgeon for malpractice, if the patient or party suing or prosecuting shall give such consent, and any such witness shall give testimony, then such physician or surgeon, defendant, may call any other physicians or surgeons as witnesses on behalf of defendant, without the consent of such patient or party suing or prosecuting"); *N. Y. C. C. P.* 1877, § 834 ("a person duly authorized to practice physic or surgery shall not be allowed to disclose any information which he acquired in attending a patient in a professional capacity and which was necessary to enable him to act in that capacity"); § 836 (including amendments added by St. 1897-1899; the preceding section not to apply if "expressly waived upon the trial or examination" by the patient; moreover, except for "confidential communications and such facts as would tend to disgrace the memory of the patient," express waiver by the personal representative of the deceased suffices, or, in testamentary controversies, by the executor, surviving husband, widow, heir, or next of kin; quoted in full, *ante*, § 2292); *N. C. Stat.* 1885, c. 159 ("No person duly authorized to practice physic or surgery shall be required to disclose any information which he may have acquired in attending a patient in a professional character and which information was necessary to enable him to prescribe for such patient as a physician or to enable him to do any act for him as a surgeon; provided that the presiding judge of a superior court may compel such disclosure if in his opinion the same is necessary to a proper administration of justice"); *N. D. Rev. C.* 1895, § 5708 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881, unamended, omitting "in a civil action" and "licensed"); § 5704 ("If a person offers himself as a witness, it is a consent to the physician's examination "on the same subject"); *Okla. Annot. Rev. St.* 1898, § 5241 ("The following persons shall not testify in certain respects: . . . a physician, concerning a communication made to him by his patient in that relation, or his advice to his patient; but the attorney or physician may testify by express consent of the client or patient; and if the client or patient voluntarily testify, the attorney or physician may be compelled to testify on the same subject"); 1903, Metropolitan Life Ins. Co. v. Howle, 68 Oh. 614, 68 N. E. 4 (statute applied); *Okla. Stata.* 1893, § 335 ("The following persons shall be incompetent to testify: . . . Sixth, a physician or surgeon concerning any communication made to him by his patient with reference to any physical or supposed physical disease, or any knowledge obtained by a personal examination of any such patient; provided, that if a person offer himself as a witness, that is to be deemed a consent to the examination; (*sic?*) also, if [also of] an attorney, clergyman or priest, physician or surgeon on the same subject, within the meaning of the last three subdivisions of this section"); *Or. Annot. C.* 1892, § 712, par. 4 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881, unamended); § 713 ("If a party to the suit, action, or proceeding offer himself as a witness, that is to be deemed a consent to the examination also of a wife, husband, attorney, clergyman, physician, or surgeon, on the same subject, within the meaning of subdivisions 1, 2, 3, and 4 of the last section"); *Pa. St.* 1895, June 18, Pub. L. 195, § 1 ("No person authorized to practice physics or surgery shall be allowed, in any civil case, to disclose any information which he acquired in attending a patient in a professional capacity, and which was necessary to enable him to act in that capacity, which shall tend to blacken the character of the patient, without his consent"); *S. D. Stata.* 1899, § 6544 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881, unamended, omitting "licensed"); § 6545 (like *N. D. Rev. C.* § 5704); *U. S.*: 1884, Connecticut L. Ins. Co. v. Union Trust Co., 112 U. S. 250, 254, 5 Sup. 119 (the privilege given by the New York statute is to be applied in trials in the Federal Courts in New York); *Utah Rev. St.* 1898, § 3414 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881, unamended, omitting "licensed"); *Wash. C. & Stats.* 1897, § 5994 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881, unamended, substituting "regular" for "licensed"); § 6940 ("[Witnesses are competent in criminal as in civil cases;] but no regular physicians or surgeons, clergymen or priest[s], shall be protected from testifying as to confessions, or information received from any defendant, by virtue of their profession and character"); *W. Va. St.* 1897, c. 44 (quoted *ante*, § 488); *Wis. Stats.* 1898, § 4075 ("No person duly authorized to practice physic or surgery shall be compelled to disclose any information which he may have acquired in attending any patient in a professional character, and which information was necessary to enable him to prescribe for such patient as a physician or do any act for him as a surgeon"); *Wyo. Rev. St.* 1887, § 2589 (like Oh. Rev. St. 1898, § 5241).

life itself may be in jeopardy, is still stronger. And unless such consultations are privileged, men will be incidentally punished by being obliged to suffer the consequences of injuries without relief from the medical art, and without conviction of any offence. Besides, in such cases, during the struggle between legal duty on the one hand, and professional honor on the other, the latter, aided by a strong sense of the injustice and inhumanity of the rule, will, in most cases, furnish a temptation to the perversion or concealment of truth, too strong for human resistance."

1871, *Miller, J.*, in *Edington v. Ins. Co.*, 67 N. Y. 185, 194: "It is a just and useful enactment introduced to give protection to those who were in charge of physicians from the secrets disclosed to enable them properly to prescribe for diseases of the patient. To open the door to the disclosure of secrets revealed on the sickbed, or when consulting a physician, would destroy confidence between the physician and the patient, and, it is easy to see, might tend very much to prevent the advantages and benefits which flow from this confidential relationship."⁶

To test these arguments, let us refer to the fundamental canons which must be satisfied by every privilege for communications (*ante*, § 2285). The questions must be asked: Does the communication originate in a confidence? Is the inviolability of that confidence vital to the due attainment of the purposes of the relation of physician and patient? Is the relation one that should be fostered? Is the expected injury to the relation, through disclosure, greater than the expected benefit to justice? A negative answer to any one of these questions would leave the privilege without support. In truth, all of them, except the third, may justly be answered in the negative:

(1) In only a few instances, out of the thousands daily occurring, is the fact communicated to a physician confidential in any real sense. Barring the facts of venereal disease and criminal abortion, there is hardly a fact in the categories of pathology in which the patient himself attempts to preserve any real secrecy. Most of one's ailments are immediately disclosed; the few that are not openly ascertainable are at least explained to intimates. No statistical reckoning is needed; these facts are well enough known.

(2) Even where the disclosure is actually confidential, it would none the less be made though no privilege existed. People would not be deterred from seeking medical help because of the possibility of disclosure in court. If they would, how did they fare in the generations before the privilege came? Is it noted in medical chronicles that, after the privilege was established in New York, the floodgates of patronage were let open upon the medical profession, and long-concealed ailments were then for the first time brought forth to receive the blessings of cure? And how is it to-day in those jurisdictions where no privilege exists,—does the medical profession in one half of the Union enjoy, in a marked way, an afflux of confidence contrasting with the scanty revelations vouchsafed in that other half where no privilege protects? If no difference appears, then this reason for the privilege falls away; for it is undoubted that the rule of privilege is intended

⁶ Mr. Wm. A. Purrington, in *Hamilton and Godkin's System of Legal Medicine* (1900), 2d ed., I, 625-632, expounds the supposed reasons for the privilege.

(*ante*, § 2285), not to subserve the party's wish for secrecy as an end in itself, but merely to provide secrecy as a means of preserving the relation in question, whenever without the guarantee of secrecy the party would probably abstain from fulfilling the requirements of the relation.

(3) That the relation of physician and patient should be fostered, no one will deny. But (4) that the injury to that relation is greater than the injury to justice — the final canon to be satisfied — must most emphatically be denied. The injury is decidedly in the contrary direction. Indeed, the facts of litigation to-day are such that the answer can hardly be seriously doubted. Of the kinds of ailments that are commonly claimed as the subject of the privilege, there is seldom an instance where it is not ludicrous to suggest that the party cared at the time to preserve the knowledge of it from any person but the physician. From asthma to broken ribs, from ague to tetanus, the facts of the disease are not only disclosable without shame, but are in fact often publicly known and knowable by every one — except the appointed investigators of truth. The extreme of farcicality is often reached in litigation over personal injuries, — in the common case, a person injured by a street-car amid a throng of sympathizing onlookers. Here the element of absurdity will sometimes be double; in the first place, there is nothing in the world, by the nature of the injury, for the physician to disclose, which any person would ordinarily care to keep private from his neighbors; and, in the second place, the fact which would be most strenuously secreted and effectively protected, when the defendant called the plaintiff's physician and sought its disclosure, would be the fact that the plaintiff was not injured at all! Upon such a foundation of vain imaginations is the privilege reared. The injury to justice by the repression of the facts of corporal injury and disease is a hundred fold greater than any injury which might be done by disclosure. And furthermore, the few topics — such as venereal disease and abortion — upon which secrecy might be seriously desired by the patient come into litigation ordinarily in such issues (as when they constitute cause for a bill of divorce or a charge of crime) that for these very facts common sense and common justice demand that the desire for secrecy shall not be listened to.

There is but one form in which the argument for the privilege can be put with any semblance of plausibility, and in that form it doubtless commonly presents itself to the view of medical men jealous for their profession. This argument is that, since the secrets of the legal profession are allowed to be inviolable, the secrets of the medical profession have at least an equal title to consideration. This, to be sure, is no more than analogy; and nothing is more fallible than an argument from analogy. But, leaving aside the consideration that the privilege for communications to attorneys stands itself on none too firm a foundation (*ante*, § 2291), and leaving aside the primary tests (just examined) by which every privilege must be judged, and answering the argument as it is put, — the answer is that the services of an attorney are sought primarily for aid in litigation, actual or expected, while those of the

physician are sought for physical cure; that hence the rendering of that aid would result directly and surely in the disclosure of the client's admissions, if the attorney's privilege did not exist, while the physician's curative aid can always be rendered irrespective of making disclosure; and, finally, that thus the absence of the privilege would convert the attorney habitually and inevitably into a mere informer for the benefit of the opponent, while the physician, being called upon only rarely to make disclosures, is not consciously affected in his relation with the patient. The function of the two professions being entirely distinct, the moral effect upon them of the absence of the privilege is different.

Certain it is that the practical employment of the privilege has come to mean little but the suppression of useful truth,—truth which ought to have been disclosed and would never have been suppressed for the sake of any inherent repugnancy in the medical facts involved. Nine-tenths of the litigation in which the privilege is invoked consist of actions on policies of life insurance, where the deceased's misrepresentations of his health are involved; actions for corporal injuries, where the extent of the plaintiff's injury is at issue; and testamentary actions, where the testator's mental capacity is disputed. In all of these the medical testimony is absolutely needed for the purpose of learning the truth. In none of them is there any reason for the party to conceal the facts, except to perpetrate a wrong upon the opponent. In the first two of these, the advancement of fraudulent claims is notoriously common; nor do the culpable methods of some insurance or railway companies, whatever they may have been or still are, justify the infliction of retaliatory punishment, indirectly and indiscriminately, by means of an unsound rule for the suppression of truth.⁷ In none of these cases need there be any fear that the absence of the privilege will subjectively hinder people from consulting physicians freely; the actually injured person would still seek medical aid, the honest insured would still submit to medical examination, and the testator would still summon physicians to his cure. There is nothing to be said in favor of the privilege, and a great deal to be said against it.⁸ The adoption of it in any other jurisdictions is earnestly to be deprecated.

§ 2381. (a) Confidentiality of Communications; (1) Implied Confidence; Burden of Proof; Third Persons' Testimony. In the foregoing privileges for communications, the fundamental assumption has been that the communications, in order to deserve protection, must be confidential in their origin. This principle obtains equally for the present privilege.

When the confidential nature of the communication has been expressly stated at the time of making it, the application of the privilege is plain. But is *confidentiality to be implied from the mere relation of physician and patient*? Or is it to be implied only according to the circumstances of each

⁷ See the comment of Earl, J., in *Renihan v. Journal*, X, 33, 40 (1892), "The Medico-Legal Aspect of Privileged Communications," has stated
Dennin, 103 N. Y. 578, 580, 9 N. E. 320.

⁸ Mr. Albert Bach, in the *Medico-Legal* forcibly the objections to the privilege.

case, including the nature of the ailment and the occasion of consultation? The latter solution seems the natural one. Some Courts, however, have declared that the mere relation of physician and patient implies a confidentiality for all communications;¹ and this assumption is tacitly made in other Courts. Nevertheless, there is a general and sound doctrine, occasionally enforced, that the claimant of the privilege has the *burden of establishing* in each instance all the facts necessary to create the privilege;² and it would seem to be a consequence of this that the circumstances indicating confidentiality must also be established.

As with the other privileges, however, the privilege forbids compulsory disclosure by that person only to whom the confidence was extended. It therefore does not exempt a *third person*, overhearing the communication, from testifying to it;³ except so far as the third person is an agent of the physician.⁴

§ 2382. *Same*: (2) *Professional Character of the Consultation*. The confidence which is protected is that only which is given to a professional physician during a consultation with a view to a curative treatment; for it is that relation only which the law desires to facilitate.

Hence, the person consulted must be a *professional physician*, in the usual sense of the word. This does not include a veterinary surgeon;¹ nor a pharmacist;² nor a dentist,³ although the modern recognition of dental science as strictly a branch of medical science might here have justified the opposite conclusion. A practitioner of any branch or school of medical science, recognized as such by the reputable medical profession, is included; some of the statutes define the privileged class as "licensed" practitioners. A surgeon is in any case within the definition. How far the class should be extended, in these days of pretentious and successful quackery, may become difficult to determine.

The consultation with such a person must be had in his *professional character at the time*. A consultation, therefore, for some purpose other than that of ultimate curative or alleviative treatment is not privileged;⁴ nor is a

¹ 1881, *Masonic M. B. Ass'n v. Beck*, 77 Ind. 208, 210; 1902, *Munz v. R. Co.*, — Utah —, 70 Pac. 852 (physician sent by a railroad company to the injured person; privilege held applicable; Rolapp, J., diss.).

² 1902, *Wheeler v. State*, 158 Ind. 687, 68 N. E. 975; 1879, *Edington v. Aetna Life Ins. Co.*, 77 N. Y. 564, 571 (the proponent of the evidence is not required to negative the privilege; "the party objecting must in some way make it appear, if it does not otherwise appear, that the information is within the statutory exclusion"); 1887, *People v. Schuyler*, 108 id. 298, 304, 12 N. E. 783 (preceding case approved); 1902, *Griffiths v. R. Co.*, 171 id. 106, 63 N. E. 808; 1902, *Green v. R. Co.*, ib. 201, 65 N. E. 958.

³ 1894, *Springer v. Byram*, 137 Ind. 15, 36 N. E. 361 (undertaker's employees, allowed to testify to a conversation with the physician in the ambulance).

⁴ 1884, *Raymond v. R. Co.*, 65 Ia. 152, 21

N. W. 495 (a physician attending with his partner, not allowed to disclose the patient's statement made to his partner); 1886, *Remihan v. Dennin*, 108 N. Y. 573, 578, 9 N. E. 320 (a physician called in for consultation by the regular physician is within the privilege).

¹ 1898, *Hendershot v. Tel. Co.*, 106 Ia. 529, 76 N. W. 828 (treating a horse).

² 1877, *Brown v. R. Co.*, 66 Mo. 597 (a drug-clerk, asked what medicines he had sold the plaintiff).

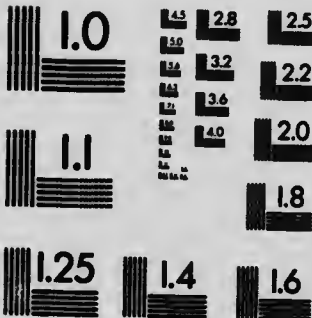
³ 1875, *People v. De France*, 104 Mich. 563, 62 N. W. 709.

⁴ 1875, *Bower v. Bower*, 142 Ind. 194, 41 N. E. 523 (admitted, where the physician called upon the patient for a money matter); 1889, *Hoyt v. Hoyt*, 112 N. Y. 493, 515, 20 N. E. 402 (physician's testimony as to interviews had with a testator to ascertain his opinion of his daughter's mental condition, held not privileged); 1879, *Edington v. Aetna Life Ins. Co.*, 77 N. Y. 564, 570 (that "the witness attended



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communication made at some time when the professional relation is not pending.⁵ An autopsy after decease is of course not privileged.⁶

A communication made to a physician invited to the inspection or consultation at the opponent's instance is not privileged, because it is not usually made for the purpose of curative treatment, and because a confidence cannot be implied in the absence of an invitation on the part of the communicating person.⁷

§ 2383. (b) **Communications Necessary for Prescription.** The privilege is intended (and by most statutes is declared) to protect only those communications which are necessary for obtaining the benefits of the professional relation,—in other words, for enabling the physician to prescribe remedies.¹ No doubt the patient's belief of what was necessary should be the test. The burden of showing necessity should in any case be upon the claimant of the privilege.²

the assured for some disease" does not raise a presumption "that be discovered that disease or learned its nature while attending him professionally"); 1880, *Grattan v. Ins. Co.*, 80 id. 281, 296 (professional character, found on the facts); 1899, *Bruend's Will*, 102 Wis. 45, 147, 78 N. W. 169 (examination of patient with reference to her mental competency as being fit for release from guardianship, held not within the statute).

⁵ 1901, *Herries v. Waterloo*, 114 Ia. 374, 86 N. W. 306 (opinion based on information acquired when not employed as physician, not privileged); 1903, *Patterson v. Cole*, 67 Kan. 441, 73 Pac. 54; 1897, *People v. Koerner*, 154 N. Y. 355, 48 N. E. 730 (communications during trial, but after the relation of physician had ended, excluded).

⁶ 1897, *Harrison v. R. Co.*, 116 Cal. 156, 47 Pac. 1019.

⁷ 1892, *Freel v. R. Co.*, 97 Cal. 40, 45, 31 Pac. 730, *semble* (a physician sent by the opponent to examine, held not privileged); 1894, *Nesbit v. People*, 19 Colo. 441, 461, 36 Pac. 221 (examination by a physician agreed on between the defendant and the prosecution, held not privileged); 1902, *State v. Height*, 117 Ia. 650, 91 N. W. 935 (information obtained by a physician examining the defendant, while in jail, for the prosecution, held not within the privilege); 1888, *People v. Glover*, 71 Mich. 307, 35 N. W. 874 (rapo; a physician's examination of the defendant in jail, at the district attorney's instance, held not privileged); 1890, *People v. Kemmler*, 119 N. Y. 580, 585, 24 N. E. 9 (a physician's opinion of an accused's mental condition, obtained by watching him in jail at the instance of the district attorney, held not privileged); 1893, *People v. Sliney*, 137 id. 570, 33 N. E. 150 (a physician sent by the district attorney to examine the defendant for insanity; the defendant's admissions not privileged); 1896, *People v. Hoch*, 150 id. 291, 44 N. E. 977 (an examination of the defendant for insanity, made by the witness as an expert for the prosecution, held not privileged).

¹ 1877, *Collins v. Mack*, 31 Ark. 693 (by a woman after a childbirth, that the father had

never promised to marry her, held not privileged); 1897, *Redfield's Estate*, 116 Cal. 644, 48 Pac. 794 (mental condition learned while treating for consumption; may be "necessary," etc.); 1901, *Black's Estate*, 132 Id. 392, 64 Pac. 695 (testamentary capacity; preceding case approved); 1890, *Pennsylvania Co. v. Marion*, 123 Ind. 415, 28 N. E. 973 (incidental facts, not necessary to be disclosed for the purpose of the treatment, held privileged); 1884, *Raymond v. R. Co.*, 65 Ia. 152, 21 N. W. 495 (injured person's statement that he "stepped off the car while it was in motion and thus fell," held privileged; this seems unsound); 1895, *Kansas C. F. S. & M. R. Co. v. Murray*, 55 Kan. 336, 40 Pac. 646 (injured person's statements as to the facts leading up to the injury, held not privileged); 1890, *Briesenmeister v. Supreme Lodge*, 81 Mich. 525, 531, 45 N. W. 977 ("all disclosures by the patient . . . respecting his ailments" are privileged, whether they are necessary for prescribing or not; said *obiter*); 1891, *Cooley v. Foltz*, 85 Id. 47, 48 N. W. 176 (patient's statements about the litigation, held not privileged); 1897, *People v. Cole*, 113 Mich. 83, 71 N. W. 455 (by the complainant in a bastardy action, to the attending physician, as to the father of the child); 1874, *Harriman v. Stowe*, 57 Mo. 93, 95, *semble* (plaintiff's statement to the physician that she had fallen through a trap-door left insecure, held admissible); 1839, *Hewitt v. Praine*, 21 Wend. 79 (seduction; defendant's admission, when asking for drugs for an abortion, that the woman was the plaintiff's daughter, held not privileged); 1898, *Nelson v. Oneida*, 156 N. Y. 219, 50 N. E. 802 (a disease discovered while treating for another disease, held privileged); 1902, *Green v. R. Co.*, 171 id. 201, 63 N. E. 958 ("information of how the accident happened," held not necessary for surgical treatment; three judges diss.); 1897, *Kenyon v. Mondovi*, 98 Wis. 53, 73 N. W. 314 (statute applied).

² 1878, *Campau v. North*, 39 Mich. 606, 609; 1894, *Lincoln v. Detroit*, 101 id. 245, 249, 59 N. W. 617 (claimant of the privilege must show the necessity); 1876, *Edington v. Mutual Life Ins. Co.*, 67 N. Y. 185, 194 (evidence of

§ 2384. (c) **Information, Active and Passive.** Communications are the subject of the protection. But communication may be made by exhibition, or by submission to inspection, as well as by oral or written narration or utterance. The invitation to the physician to prescribe assumes that he will first obtain the data for the prescription; and since the usual method of obtaining these involves the physician's own observation as well as the patient's narration, the invitation to prescribe is an implied communication of all the data which the physician may by any method seek to obtain as necessary for the prescription.¹ It is therefore well settled that the data furnished passively, through submission to inspection, are equally within the privilege, — and this whether the patient was himself aware or not of the existence of the specific data discovered. It might be doubtful whether the data of insanity are thus privileged, where the physician is called for another purpose, because here the foregoing principle — that the data must be necessary for prescription — would seem not to be satisfied; but so far as the present principle is concerned, they fall within it.²

the "necessity," is not required, "as it must be assumed from the relationship existing that the information would not have been imparted except for the purpose of aiding the physician in prescribing"; 1879, *Edington v. Aetna Life Ins. Co.*, 77 id. 564, 570 (the Court must be able "upon the evidence to say that such information was necessary": the mere relation does not suffice; preceding ruling not noticed); 1887, *People v. Schuyler*, 106 id. 298, 300, 12 N. E. 783 (preceding ruling approved); 1889, *Feeney v. R. Co.*, 116 id. 375, 380, 22 N. E. 402 (first *Edington* case approved; second one ignored).

The Court ought ultimately to determine (*ante*, § 2322) whether a necessity existed: *Contra*: 1903, *State v. Kennedy*, 177 Mo. 98, 75 S. W. 979 (in general, the physician must be the judge of the necessity; except as to matters "apparent to the ordinary observer").

¹ Compare the same question in other privileges (*ante*, §§ 2306, 2337).

² *Cal.*: 1901, *Nelson's Estate*, 132 Cal. 182, 64 Pac. 294 (capacity to make a will; attending physician's testimony inadmissible); *Ind.*: 1881, *Masonic M. B. Ass'n v. Beck*, 77 Ind. 203, 210 (like *Heuston v. Simpson*, *infra*); 1883, *Excelsior M. A. Ass'n v. Riddle*, 91 id. 84, 88 (same, under a revised phrasing of the statute); 1884, *Penn M. L. Ins. Co. v. Wiler*, 100 id. 92, 100 (same); 1887, *Williams v. Johnson*, 112 id. 273, 13 N. E. 872 (same); 1888, *Heuston v. Simpson*, 115 id. 62, 17 N. E. 261 (the statute applies "whether the knowledge is communicated by the words of the patient or is gained by observation"); 1889, *Morris v. Morris*, 119 id. 343, 21 N. E. 918 (same; applied to insanity); 1893, *Gurley v. Park*, 135 id. 440, 442, 35 N. E. 279 (sanity, in a will case, privileged); 1902, *Aspy v. Botkins*, 160 id. 170, 66 N. E. 462 (vacuum-ray photograph taken by the physician in the course of treatment, excluded); *Id.*: 1895, *Prader v. Accident Ass'n*, 95 Ia. 159, 63 N. W. 601 (privilege covers all information

obtained by observation); *Mich.*: 1870, *Briggs v. Briggs*, 20 Mich. 34, 41 (privilege includes "whatever was disclosed to any of his senses and which in any way was brought to his knowledge for that purpose"); 1879, *Fraser v. Jenkinson*, 42 id. 206, 225, 3 N. W. 982 (same; applied to a testator's mental condition); 1901, *Rose v. Supreme Court*, 126 id. 577, 85 N. W. 1073 (opinion based on the patient's appearance alone, excluded); *Mo.*: 1882, *Gartside v. Ins. Co.*, 76 Mo. 446 ("information acquired by a physician from inspection, examination, or observation of the person of the patient," is equally privileged; leading opinion by Norton, J., with a good argument by Mr. Jacob Klein); *N. Y.*: 1871, *Sloan v. R. Co.*, 45 N. Y. 125, 128 (existence of a disease, held within the privilege); 1876, *Edington v. Mutual Life Ins. Co.*, 67 id. 185, 194 (the statute includes "such knowledge as may be acquired from the patient himself, from the statement of others who may surround him at the time, or from observation of his appearances and symptoms"); 1879, *Edington v. Aetna Life Ins. Co.*, 77 id. 564, 571 (the exclusion affects only "such information as a physician may acquire of secret ailments by an examination of the person"; but not of the fact that the patient "has a fever or a fractured leg or skull or is a raving maniac"; the remaining judges apparently did not concur in the details of the opinion); 1880, *Grattan v. Ins. Co.*, 80 id. 281, 297 ("though the patient had been dumb, it would make no difference; the communication to his sense of sight is within the statute, as much so as if it had been oral and reached his ear"; the first *Edington* case cited, and the second ignored on this point); 1883, *Grattan v. Ins. Co.*, 92 id. 274, 287 (preceding case approved); 1886, *Renihan v. Dennin*, 103 id. 573, 579, 9 N. E. 320 (*Grattan* case approved); *Wis.*: 1900, *Shafer v. Eau Claire*, 105 Wis. 244, 81 N. W. 409 ("all that he discovered by examination of her person," held privileged).

But it is the tenor only of the communication that is privileged. The mere fact of making a communication, as well as the date of a consultation and the number of consultations, are therefore not privileged from disclosure, so long as the subject communicated is not stated.³

§ 2385. (d) **Criminal Cases, Malpractices.** The privilege, in general, applies as well in criminal as in civil cases; unless the statute expressly limits it to the latter.¹ But in two classes of instances the privilege, though apparently applicable, exhibits its inherent impropriety so plainly that Courts have sometimes sought, by main force, to set limits and prevent its evil effects, namely, in cases where the physician is himself a *partaker in the criminal transaction*, and in cases where the physician has acted *on behalf of the victim* of a crime. Courts have chosen various methods, more or less reasonable, of escaping from the dilemma.² All that can be said is that an ill-advised initial principle is sure to tempt judges, sooner or later, to do violence to it.

³ *Ia.*: 1900, *Nelson v. Ins. Co.*, 110 *Ia.* 600, 81 N. W. 807 (that he was consulted and that he prescribed; not privileged); *Mich.*: 1887, *Brown v. Ins. Co.*, 65 *Mich.* 306, 316, 32 N. W. 610 (the fact of the physician's treatment for typhoid fever, held not privileged, under the particular circumstances); 1890, *Briesenmeister v. Supreme Lodge*, 81 *id.* 525, 532, 45 N. W. 977 ("the fact that he attended the insured professionally, and the dates and number of his visits," held not privileged); 1891, *Cooley v. Foltz*, 85 *id.* 47, 48 N. W. 176 (similar to the preceding case); 1893, *Dittrich v. Detroit*, 98 *id.* 248, 57 N. W. 125 (same); 1897, *Lammiman v. R. Co.*, 112 *id.* 602, 71 N. W. 153 (for what disease he had treated the party, excluded); 1899, *Jones v. P. B. L. Assur. Co.*, 120 *id.* 211, 79 N. W. 204 (that the person had consulted a physician for a certain illness, excluded); *Minn.*: 1903, *Price v. Standard L. & A. Ins. Co.*, — *Minn.* —, 95 N. W. 1118 (the fact of treatment and number of visits, admissible; "this doctrine, looking at the question in a logical way, comes very near trespassing on the statute"); *Nebr.*: 1902, *Sovereign Camp v. Grandon*, 64 *Nebr.* 39, 89 N. W. 448 (the fact that a physician was called is not within the privilege); *N. Y.*: 1892, *Patten v. Ins. Ass'n*, 133 *N. Y.* 450, 452, 31 N. E. 342 (whether P. was a patient of the doctor and was attended as such and was sick, and how many times and when he attended P., held not privileged); *Wis.*: 1899, *McGowan v. Supreme Court*, 104 *Wis.* 186, 80 N. W. 603 (that he treated the person for a disease, excluded).

This distinction is often of some practical significance; for example, in life insurance cases, the insured's allegation of complete health during a certain period may be disproved by the fact that a physician was often consulted; and in personal injury cases, the fact that a certain physician was consulted may give rise in effect to an unfavorable inference because he was not called for the plaintiff, although no inference could technically have been drawn from the plaintiff's claim of privilege if the defendant

had sought to call and examine the physician (*post*, § 2386).

¹ 1894, *People v. Lane*, 101 *Cal.* 513, 516, 36 *Pac.* 16; 1895, *People v. West*, 106 *id.* 89, 39 *Pac.* 207.

² *Ind.*: 1897, *Hank v. State*, 148 *Ind.* 238, 46 N. E. 127, 47 N. E. 465 (a disclosure by a physician attending a miscarriage, allowed in a prosecution for the abortion, the privilege not being intended "to shield one who is charged with perpetrating an unlawful act upon the patient"); 1903, *Seifer v. State*, 160 *id.* 464, 67 N. E. 100 ("a request to a physician to commit a crime is not privileged"; applied to a woman consulting for an abortion); *Ia.*: 1882, *Guptill v. Verback*, 58 *Ia.* 99, 12 N. W. 125 (the act of producing a miscarriage in order to save the mother's life being not criminal, a physician's advice as to the best means of "getting rid of a child" was held presumably "made for a lawful purpose"; this ruling, as regards the presumption, is unsound); 1896, *State v. Smith*, 99 *id.* 26, 68 N. W. 428 (causing a miscarriage; privilege applied); 1901, *State v. Grimmell*, 116 *id.* 596, 88 N. W. 342 (murder by abortion; the privilege does not apply to the testimony of a physician, called by the prosecution, who attended the deceased just before her death; whether a formal waiver is necessary, and by whom, not stated; compare § 2382, *ante*); *N. Y.*: 1880, *Pierson v. People*, 79 *N. Y.* 424, 432 (murder by poisoning; a physician's information acquired while attending the deceased for the poison, admitted for the prosecution, as not within the spirit of the privilege; but no "general rule applicable to all cases" was ventured); 1886, *People v. Murphy*, 101 *id.* 126, 4 N. E. 326 (abortion; testimony of the physician attending after the operation, not admitted); 1893, *People v. Harris*, 136 *id.* 423, 437, 448, 33 N. E. 65 (defendant, a physician, told a physician attending the deceased that he had twice performed operations for abortion on her; not privileged, the statutory privilege not being intended to "shield a person charged with the murder of his patient").

The same temptation exists to save an innocent physician who, when charged with malpractice, might otherwise be stifled by the privilege;³ but the doctrine of waiver (*post*, § 2389) usually assists him here.

§ 2386. (e) **Whose is the Privilege; Claim of Privilege; Inference from Claim.** The privilege is plainly that of the *patient*, not of the physician; and the latter therefore cannot claim it if the patient abandons it.¹ Although in the first instance it is commonly the physician who as witness declines to answer, still the claim of privilege must formally be made, in analogy to the other privileges (*ante*, § 2196) by the patient, if he is before the Court; if he is not, then technically he should be given an opportunity to claim before the examination is proceeded with. The privilege, furthermore, is that of the patient as such, not of the party; hence, the claim should be made by the patient himself, in accordance with the analogy of other privileges (*ante*, §§ 2270, 2321),—though this rule is seldom observed in practice. The privilege, furthermore, may be claimed by the *representative* of a deceased patient, as his personal successor;² but not by a mere assignee of a contract-interest.³ When the privilege is claimed by a patient who is a party, *no inference* as to the facts suppressed can be drawn,⁴—following here the analogy of the other privileges (*ante*, §§ 2272, 2322).

§ 2387. (f) **Termination of the Privilege; Death.** The object of the privilege is to secure subjectively the patient's freedom from apprehension of disclosure; it is therefore to be preserved even after the death of the patient,¹—following the analogies of the other similar privileges (*ante*, §§ 2323, 2341).

§ 2388. **Same: Waiver, in general; Express and Implied Waiver.** The privilege may be waived,¹ like all other privileges. It is astonishing to find that this question could ever have been regarded as debatable. Nothing but a confusion of fundamental ideas could ever create any doubt.²

¹ 1900, *Cramer v. Hurt*, 154 Mo. 112, 55 S. W. 258 (action for loss of a wife's services by the defendant's malpractice; the defendant allowed on the facts, as of necessity, to testify for himself). *Contra*: 1903, *Aspy v. Botkius*, 160 Ind. 170, 66 N. E. 462 (action for malpractice; the plaintiff held privileged to withhold the testimony of other physicians attending her after the defendant; the ground of the ruling does not appear; but it is at any rate a mockery of justice).

² 1901, *Burgess v. Sims Drug Co.*, 114 Ia. 275, 86 N. W. 307; 1835, *Johnson v. Johnson*, 14 Wend. 636, 641; 1897, *Boyle v. Relief Assoc.*, 95 Wis. 312, 70 N. W. 351 (showing that "shall not be compelled" is equivalent to "shall not be allowed"; *Newman, J., diss.*). Compare the theories of attorneys' privilege (*ante*, § 2290).

³ *Post*, § 2391.

⁴ *Contra*: 1876, *Edington v. Mutual Life Ins. Co.*, 67 N. Y. 185, 194 (assignee of an insurance policy may assert the privilege of the insured).

⁵ 1901, *Brackney v. Fogle*, 156 Ind. 535, 60 N. E. 303; 1890, *McConnell v. Osage*, 80 Ia. 293, 45 N. W. 550 (refusing to allow the question on cross-examination whether the patient

was willing to let the physician speak); 1899, *Lane v. R. Co.*, 21 Wash. 119, 57 Pac. 367.

Perhaps it is sound to distinguish between failing to call the witness and claiming the privilege when the opponent calls him: 1891, *Cooley v. Foltz*, 85 Mich. 47, 48 N. W. 176 (plaintiff's failure to produce her physicians, held "a legitimate fact for the jury").

¹ 1876, *Edington v. Ins. Co.*, 67 N. Y. 185, 194; 1880, *Grattan v. Ins. Co.*, 80 id. 281, 298; 1885, *Westover v. Ins. Co.*, 99 id. 56, 1 N. E. 104; 1900, *Davis v. Supreme Lodge*, 165 id. 159, 58 N. E. 891 (physician's certificate of death, recorded with the board of health, excluded on the ground of privilege); 1903, *Beglin v. Ins. Co.*, 173 id. 374, 66 N. E. 102 (*Davis v. Supreme Lodge* followed).

² 1879, *Grand Rapids & I. R. Co. v. Martin*, 41 Mich. 667, 671, 3 N. W. 173; 1878, *Scripps v. Foster*, 4 ib. 742, 748, 3 N. W. 216; 1884, *Groll v. Tower*, 85 Mo. 249, 255 (repudiating the apparently contrary assumption in *Harriman v. Stowe*, 57 id. 93); 1888, *Carrington v. St. Louis*, 89 id. 212, 1 S. W. 240; 1886, *Blair v. R. Co.*, ib. 337, 1 S. W. 367.

³ Compare the theory of Privilege (*ante*, §§ 2192, 2196, 2197).

That the waiver must be in *express* language is not necessary, upon any principle. But this is sometimes by statute required.³ Distinguished, however, this statutory waiver, which is valid only within certain limits, and the ordinary principle that a rule of evidence will not be enforced if the opposing counsel fails to make objection when the witness is examined (*ante*, § 18); thus, whether or not the statutory waiver was permitted to be made by the attorney for the witness or party before or during trial,⁴ still the counsel's failure to object to the compulsion of the witness' answer would render futile any exception to the answer.⁵

That a waiver may be irrevocably made by *contract* before litigation begun has generally been conceded by the Courts.⁶ It should certainly be sanctioned, unless made under conditions of duress or fraud which would have rendered the contract in other respects voidable.

Coming now to waivers *implied from conduct*, it is to be noticed that these depend, as already observed for other privileges (*ante*, §§ 2327, 2340), on two considerations — the interpretation of the actual conduct, and the fairness of the situation created by that conduct. A waiver is to be predicated, not only when the conduct indicates a plain intention to abandon the privilege, but also when the conduct (though not evincing that intention) places the claimant in such a position, with reference to the evidence, that it would be unfair and inconsistent to permit the retention of the privilege. It is not to be both a sword and a shield (in Lord Mansfield's phrase concerning an infant's exemption from liability). The question then arises, What sorts of conduct, by inference or by fairness, should be treated as a waiver of the privilege to keep secret the communications to a physician?

§ 2389. **Same: Waiver by Bringing Suit; by Testifying; by Former Waiver.** (1) In the first place, the *bringing of an action* in which an essential part of the issue is the existence of physical ailment should be a waiver of the privilege for all communications concerning that ailment. The whole reason for the privilege is the patient's supposed unwillingness that the ailment should be disclosed to the world at large; hence the bringing of a suit in which the very declaration, and much more the proof, discloses the ailment to the world at large, is of itself an indication that the supposed repugnancy to disclosure does not exist. If the privilege means anything at all in its

³ *E. g.*, in New York, by the amendment of 1891.

⁴ *E. g.*: 1889, *Alberti v. R. Co.*, 118 N. Y. 77, 23 N. E. 35.

⁵ This distinction was ignored in the following case: 1889, *Hoyt v. Hoyt*, 112 N. Y. 493, 515, 20 N. E. 402.

⁶ 1902, *Keller v. Ins. Co.*, 95 Mo. App. 627, 69 S. W. 612 (waiver in a policy held valid, and effective also against "all who come within its terms," — here, a beneficiary); 1876, *Edington v. Mtnal Life Ins. Co.*, 67 N. Y. 185, 194 (undecided); 1896, *Foley v. Royal Arcanum*, 151 id. 196, 45 N. E. 456 (an express waiver, in an insurance-application, as to the testimony of ar

attending physician, sanctioned, on the theory that a waiver of the statutory right is not against public policy); 1900, *Holden v. Ins. Co.*, 165 id. 13, 58 N. E. 771 (stipulation of waiver by the insured in his application, held not sufficient under the statutory amendment of 1891); 1901, *Fuller v. Knights of Pythias*, 129 N. C. 318, 40 S. E. 65 (waiver in an insurance application, held binding on the beneficiary); 1888, *Adreveno v. Mtnal R. F. L. Ass'n*, 34 Fed. 870, *Theyer, J.* (waiver of the privilege by the insured in a policy is valid, and binds also one claiming under him after death). Compare such a waiver for another privilege (*ante*, § 2275).

origin, it means this as a sequel. By any other conclusion the law practically permits the plaintiff to make a claim somewhat as follows: "One month ago I was by the defendant's negligence severely injured in the spine and am consequently unable to walk; I tender witnesses A, B, and C, who will openly prove the severe nature of my injury. But, stay! Witness D, a physician, is now, I perceive, called by the opponent to prove that my injury is not so severe as I claim; I object to his testimony because it is extremely repugnant to me that my neighbors should learn of my injury, and I can keep it forever secret if the Court will forbid his testimony." If the utter absurdity of this statement (which is virtually that of every such claimant) could be heightened by anything, it would be by the circumstance (frequently observable) that the dreaded disclosure, which the privilege prevents, is the fact that the plaintiff has suffered no injury at all. In actions for *personal injury*, the permission to claim the privilege is a burlesque upon logic and justice. In actions upon *insurance policies*, where fraudulent misrepresentations as to health are in issue, the insured's initial conduct in volunteering a supposedly full avowal of his state of health has put him in the position of abandoning any desire to be secretive towards the insurer on that subject, and of giving the insurer in fairness the right to ascertain the truth; and a waiver should be predicated by the nature of the action. Yet here the injury to justice by denying a waiver is not so considerable; for in fairness (that is, to honest applicants, who have nothing to fear) the insurer ought immediately to make his extrinsic investigations among prior attendant physicians (which commonly he does not do), instead of waiting till more premiums have been paid and the insured has left the world;¹ so that here the moral inequities are more nearly balanced, and no particular harm is done by the privilege — except to the logic of the law. In *testamentary* causes, there is ordinarily no conduct amounting to waiver, — although it is otherwise unsound (*ante*, §§ 238¹ 2384) to treat the data of sanity and insanity as having been consciously confided, in any sense of the word, to the physician. So far as judicial rulings go, only actions *against a physician for malpractice* have been deemed to involve a waiver.²

(2) The *party's own voluntary testimony*, on trial, to his physical condition in issue, should be a waiver of the privilege for the testimony of a physician who has been consulted about the same physical condition in issue; the reasons here being merely somewhat stronger than those above noted.³ Courts have rarely conceded this;⁴ though statutes have often en-

¹ This is recognized by the insurers in the now frequent issuance of policies which are made incontestable after a short period; *i. e.* the insurer virtually has to make his inquiries within that period or not at all. But so far as these policies are contestable (*e. g.* for "willful misrepresentations"), the statement still applies.

² 1894, *Beckwell v. Hosier*, 10 Ind. App. 5, 37 N. E. 58C (patient's action for malpractice, held a waiver, permitting the defendant to testify); 1900, *Cramer v. Hurt*, 154 Mo. 112, 55 S. W. 258 (an action by a wife for personal in-

jury by malpractice by a physician is a waiver of privilege as to professional confidence; but not an action by a husband for loss of services of the injured wife). Compare the cases cited *ante*, § 2385.

³ 1891, *Lane v. Boicourt*, 128 Ind. 420, 27 N. E. 1111 (malpractice on the plaintiff's wife; the plaintiff's use of the testimony of himself, his wife, and her mother, held a waiver).

⁴ *Contra*: 1887, *Williams v. Johnson*, 112 Ind. 273, 13 N. E. 872 (the plaintiff's testimony that she had called Dr. H. and he had "pre-

acted it.⁵ Certainly it is a spectacle fit to increase the layman's traditional contempt for the chicanery of the law, when a plaintiff describes at length to the jury and a crowded court-room the details of his supposed ailment and then neatly suppresses the available proof of his falsities by wielding a weapon nominally termed a privilege.

(3) A waiver at a former trial has been held not to affect the privilege at a later trial.⁶ This is clearly unsound; for the original disclosure takes away once for all the benefit aimed at by privilege; to enforce it thereafter is to seek to preserve a privacy which exists in legal fiction only.⁷

§ 2390. **Same: Waiver by Calling the Physician.** (1) To request a physician to attest one's will is by implication to request him to bear testimony, if called on, to all facts affecting the validity of the will, and is therefore a waiver.¹ (2) To call a physician to the stand, and examine him as a witness to one's physical condition as formerly communicated to him, is a waiver of the privilege in regard to his knowledge of the physical condition asked about;² no reasoning could pretend to maintain the contrary. (3) To call a physician as a witness to one's physical condition is a waiver of the privilege as to the knowledge acquired by other physicians of the same condition. This is generally not conceded in the judicial rulings;³ but it cannot be escaped, if regard is had to the foundation of the privilege. What further

scribed for her back and side," held not to permit the opponent to call Dr. H. to testify that he had found no injury; this was a gross error; it practically permitted the plaintiff to invoke the physician's credit falsely, with a guarantee against the exposure of her lie); 1890, *McConnell v. Osage*, 80 Ia. 293, 45 N. W. 550 (plaintiff's direct testimony to her previous condition of health and sickness, naming her physician, held not a waiver permitting the calling of the physician to contradict her); 1901, *Burgess v. Sims Drug Co.*, 114 id. 275, 86 N. W. 307 (testifying on cross-examination to the subject of the desired testimony of the physician is not a waiver, because not voluntary); 1902, *Green v. Nebagmain*, 113 Wis. 508, 89 N. W. 520 (a party's own testimony to the same injury, held not a waiver).

⁵ *Ante*, § 2380.

⁶ 1901, *Burgess v. Sims Drug Co.*, 114 Ia. 275, 86 N. W. 307 (testifying to the same subject, or calling the same physician, at a former trial, held not a waiver); 1883, *Grattan v. Ins. Co.*, 92 N. Y. 274, 288 (questioning the physician on a former trial, held not a waiver).

⁷ 1887, *McKinney v. R. Co.*, 104 N. Y. 352, 355, 10 N. E. 544 (*contra* to the preceding ruling; "after its publication no further injury can be inflicted upon the rights and interests which the statute was intended to protect; . . . the consent, having been once given and acted upon, cannot be recalled").

¹ 1895, *Mullin's Estate*, 110 Cal. 252, 42 Pac. 646.

² 1893, *Wheelock v. Godfrey*, 100 Cal. 587, 35 Pac. 317 (calling the physician, held on the facts a waiver); 1897, *Lissak v. Crocker Est.*

Co., 119 id. 442, 51 Pac. 698 (calling the physician to testify to an examination, held a waiver); 1902, *Sovereign Camp v. Grandon*, 64 Nebr. 39, 89 N. W. 448 (cross-examination of the physician to the injury; held a waiver). Statutes (*ante*, § 2380) often declare this in terms.

³ 1884, *Penn. Mutual L. Ins. Co. v. Wiler*, 100 Ind. 92, 102 (calling physician A is not a waiver of the privilege as to the same subject for physicians B and C); 1897, *Baxter v. Cedar Rapids*, 103 Ia. 599, 72 N. W. 790 (several physicians having examined the plaintiff, the calling of one does not waive the privilege as to the others); 1885, *Dotton v. Albion*, 57 Mich. 575, 577, 24 N. W. 786 (the calling of one physician to prove the plaintiff's good health before the injury, held not to permit the calling of other physicians to negative her good health before the injury); 1891, *Mellor v. R. Co.*, 105 Mo. 455, 16 S. W. 849 (plaintiff's calling of C, who attended him for the injury, held not to permit the calling of S., who had preceded C. in attending for the same injury); 1888, *Hope v. R. Co.*, 110 N. Y. 643, 17 N. E. 873, 40 Hun 438 (calling one of three physicians who had visited the plaintiff at separate times for the same injury; held not a waiver as to the other two; *Earl and Finch, J.J., diss.*); 1895, *Morris v. R. Co.*, 148 id. 88, 42 N. E. 410 (where two physicians were called in attendance for a joint examination, the plaintiff, by putting one on the stand, also waived the privilege as to the other; in effect overruling *Record v. Saratoga Springs*, 120 id. 646, 24 N. E. 1102); 1902, *Metropolitan St. R. Co. v. Jacobi*, 50 C. C. A. 619, 112 Fed. 924 (following *Hope v. R. Co.*).

reason is there for secrecy, if the patient has thrown it aside by permitting one physician to testify? The unfairness of allowing a party to play fast and loose with medical testimony in this shifty manner is obvious to the untechnical intelligence. (4) The sending of a physician's certificate, as part of the "proofs of death," by the beneficiary of a contract of life insurance or the representative of the insured, is a voluntary disclosure of the physician's knowledge though made in pursuance of contract, and is therefore a waiver.⁴

§ 2391. Same: Waiver by Deceased Patient's Representative. The personal representative of the deceased may waive the privilege. One who is entrusted with the management of the deceased's property may surely be trusted to protect the memory and reputation of the deceased, in so far as it is liable to injury by the disclosure of his physical condition when alive. It is incongruous to hold that the person who manages the litigation of the deceased's property-interests has no power to waive rules of evidence for the purpose of advancing those interests. The power of an heir may also be conceded, if we remember that the heir, first, is at least equally interested in preserving the ancestor's reputation, and, secondly, has an equal moral claim to protect the deceased's property-rights from unwarranted diminution. The futility, under the circumstances, of predicating any privilege is the more apparent when (as in the usual case) the issue turns upon the fact of insanity, which is so bruited publicly in the litigation that the pretence of preserving secrecy is a vain one. Except in two or three jurisdictions,¹ it is usually agreed that the deceased's representative (and probably also the heir) may waive the privilege.²

⁴ 1900, *Nelson v. Ins. Co.*, 110 Ia. 600, 81 N. W. 807 (physician's affidavit, sent with proofs of death, received as an admission of the beneficiary); 1891, *Buffalo L. T. & S. D. Co. v. Knights T. & M. M. A. Ass'n*, 126 N. Y. 450, 454, 27 N. E. 942 (physician's certificate of cause of death, sent with proofs of death, receivable as the party's admission).

Distinguish the following ruling: 1900, *Davis v. Supreme Lodge*, 165 N. Y. 159, 58 N. E. 391 (physician's certificate of death, required by law, excluded; N. Y. City Charter, Laws 1897, c. 378, § 1172, making admissible the records of the board of health, does not repeal the Code section; *Gray and Landon, JJ., diss.*); 1903, *Beglin v. Ins. Co.*, 173 Id. 374, 66 N. E. 102 (preceding case followed).

For the question how far these "proofs" may be used as admissions or otherwise, see *ante*, § 1073.

¹ *Cal.*: 1893, *Flint's Estate*, 100 Cal. 391, 395, 34 Pac. 863 (no waiver, following the N. Y. construction; here, not for an heir as against a devisee); 1897, *Harrison v. R. Co.*, 116 Id. 156, 47 Pac. 1019 (following the New York rulings); *Ia.*: 1900, *Shnman v. Supreme Lodge*, 110 Ia. 480, 81 N. W. 717 (contest between beneficiaries of insurance; the privilege held to apply; compare the Iowa cases *infra*); *N. Y.*: 1885, *Westover v. Ins. Co.*, 99 N. Y. 56, 1 N. E. 104;

1888, *Loder v. Whelpley*, 111 Id. 239, 246, 18 N. E. 874.

² *Ind.*: 1881, *Masonic M. B. Ass'n v. Beck*, 77 Ind. 203, 210 (said *obiter*; waiver by deceased's representative, allowable); 1884, *Penn. M. L. Ins. Co. v. Wiler*, 100 Id. 92, 101 (same; beneficiary of an insurance policy, held to have the right of waiver); 1889, *Morris v. Morris*, 119 Id. 343, 21 N. E. 918 (administrator allowed to waive); *Ia.*: 1894, *Denning v. Butcher*, 91 Ia. 425, 436, 59 N. W. 69 (waiver by an executor allowable; here, by calling as a witness); 1897, *Winters v. Winters*, 102 Id. 53, 71 N. W. 184 (a physician may testify to the deceased's mental condition; whether on the ground that either heir or alleged devisee has the right to waive the privilege as representative, or that the statute does not apply where the proceedings are not adverse to the estate, as in a will contest, is expressly not decided, both grounds being approved); *Mich.*: 1879, *Fraser v. Jennison*, 42 Mich. 206, 225, 3 N. W. 882 (testamentary contest; waiver by an executor allowed); *Mo.*: 1884, *Groll v. Tower*, 85 Mo. 249, 255 (personal injury; waiver by a representative, allowed); 1889, *Thompson v. Ish*, 99 Id. 160, 12 S. W. 510 (testamentary contest; a residuary legatee allowed to waive; "all claiming under the deceased" may waive).

Sub-topic VII: COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN PRIEST AND PENITENT.

§ 2394. **History; No Privilege at Common Law.** It is perhaps open to argument whether a privilege for confessions to priests was recognized in common-law courts during the period before the Restoration. The only available data appear to be an indecisive incident in the Jesuit trials under James I,¹ and a statute of much earlier date and of ambiguous purport,² together with the general probabilities to be drawn from the recognition of Roman ecclesiastical practices prior to Henry VIII.³ But since the Restoration, and for more than two centuries of English practice, the almost unanimous expression of judicial opinion (including at least two decisive rulings) has denied the existence of a privilege.⁴ A single judge, to be sure, distinctly declared for the privilege;⁵ and several took occasion to avow that in their

¹ 1606, Garnet's Trial, 2 How. St. Tr. 218, 255 (Garnet was Superior of the Jesuits, and on his trial refused certain answers because "he was bound to keep the secrets of confession"; "whereupon the earl of Nottingham asked him, if one confessed this day to him that to-morrow morning he meant to kill the king with a dagger, if he must conceal it? Whereunto Garnet answered that he must conceal it"; but the questioners did not attempt to compel a disclosure of the confessional's secrets).

² St. 9 Edw. II, c. 10 (Articuli Cleri); quoted and commented on in 2 Co. Inst. 629.

³ Mr. Badeley's pamphlet, written about 1860 (a copy of which has not been accessible), rested the privilege on the supposed demonstration that it was recognized directly in the canon law, and implicitly in the English authorities of the 1600s; but his data seem to have been adequately explained away by Mr. Hopwood, in his learned article on Confessions in Criminal Cases (1865; Juridical Society's Papers, III, 129, 137). The arguments of Mr. Badeley are in part reproduced in a note to R. v. Hay, 2 F. & F. 4.

⁴ 1693, Anon., Skinner 404 (L. C. J. Holt declared communications with an attorney or scrivener were with the protection of a counsellor; "for he is counsel to a man, with whom he will advise, if he be intrusted and educated in such way of practice; otherwise, of a gentleman, parson, etc."); 1791, R. v. Sparkes, cited in Peake N. P. 77 (the confession of a papist to a protestant clergyman was admitted by Buller, J.); 1792, Buller, J., in Wilson v. Rastall, 4 T. R. 753, 759 ("I take the distinction to be now well settled that the privilege extends to those three enumerated cases [of counsel, solicitor, and attorney] at all times, but that it is confined to these cases only"); 1802, Butler v. Moore, Ire., McNally, Evidence, 253 (title to property under a will; on the question whether the testator by having conformed to the Roman church had become incapable of devising his estates, a Roman clergyman was asked by the heir "what religion did Lord Dunbcyne profess at the time of his death?"; Smith, M. R., declined to recognize the privilege claimed by the witness on the ground of "confidential communications made

to him in the exercise of his clerical functions"); 1823, R. v. Radford, cited by Mr. Moody, arguing in R. v. Gilham, Moo. Cr. C. 197 (confession to a clergyman, excluded; but probably not because of the privilege, but on the principles of confessions); 1828, R. v. Gilham, *ubi supra* (confession to a mayor, made after exhortations by a clergyman, admitted); 1828, Broad v. Pitt, 3 C. & P. 518, Best, C. J. ("The privilege does not apply to clergymen, since the decision the other day in the case of Gilham. I for one will never compel a clergyman to disclose communications made to him by a prisoner; but if he chooses to disclose them, I shall receive them"); 1838, Grosvenor v. King, 1 Beav. 137, 145, *obiter*, per Lord Langdale, M. R. (privilege denied); 1851, Wignam, V. C., in Russell v. Jackson, 9 Hare 387, 391, *obiter* (privilege denied); 1860, R. v. Hay, 2 F. & F. 4 (a Catholic priest objected to reveal from whom he received the watch charged as stolen, claiming that he "received it in connection with the confessional"; Hill, J.: "You are not asked at present to disclose anything stated to you in the confessional"; and committed the witness for contempt, on his continued refusal to answer); 1865, Nash's Life of Lord Westbury, II, 104 (Lord Westbury, in the controversy over the "Road Murder," declared that no such privilege existed); 1876, Jessel, M. R., in Anderson v. Bank, L. R. 2 Ch. D. 644, 651, *obiter* (privilege denied); 1881, the same judge, in Wheeler v. LeMarchant, 17 id. 675, 681, *obiter* (same); 1893, Normanshaw v. Normanshaw, 69 L. T. Rep. 468, Jeune, P. J. (divorce for adultery; an answer compelled as to the respondent's admissions to the vicar; "each case of confidential communication should be dealt with on its own merits, but . . . it was not to be supposed for a single moment that a clergyman had any right to withhold information from a court of law").

⁵ 1846, Alderson, B., in Attorney-General v. Briant, 15 L. J. Exch. 265, 271 (on R. v. Gilham being cited: "That case was not well argued; there was a statute upon the subject, which was not referred to; I think the words are: 'Let confessors beware that they do not

discretion they would not compel disclosure in practice.⁶ But the privilege cannot be said to have been recognized by the common law, either in England or in the United States.⁷

§ 2395. *Statutes recognizing the Privilege.* In two jurisdictions of Canada and in more than one half of the jurisdictions of the United States the privilege has been sanctioned by statute.¹ In the application of these statutes, it

disclose that which they receive from prisoners, excepting in treason; the exception proves the rule"; this statute's meaning is explained by Mr. Hopwood, in the article cited *supra*; 1853, R. v. Griffin, 6 Cox Cr. 219, Alderson, B. (the chaplain of a workhouse, who had visited the accused "as her spiritual adviser to administer the consolations of religion" was held privileged, on the ground that by analogy to the attorney's privilege, which secures "proper legal assistance," so the accused should have "proper spiritual assistance"; yet the judge added: "I do not lay this down as an absolute rule; but I think that such evidence ought not to be given").

⁶ 1828, Best, C. J., in *Broad v. Pitt*, quoted *supra*, n. 1; 1874, R. v. Castro (Titchborne Case), Charge of C. J., 1, 648 (a priest refused to disclose subject-matter of a confession, and was not compelled to speak).

⁷ It was early denied in Massachusetts: 1818, Com. v. Drake, 15 Mass. 161 (lowliness; defendant's penitential confessions to fellow-members of his church, admitted); but was recognized in an inferior court in New York: 1820 *circa*, People v. Phillips, 1 West. L. J. 109, Anthon's Law Student, 217.

¹ *Newf. Consol. St.* 1892, c. 57, § 5 ("A clergyman or priest shall not be compellable to give evidence as to any confession made to him in his professional character"); *Que. : C. C. P.* (ed. 1886) § 275 ("[A witness] cannot be compelled to declare what has been revealed to him confidentially in his professional character as religious or legal adviser"); *Alaska C. C. P.* 1900, § 1037 (substantially like Or. Annot. C. 1892, § 712, par. 3); *Ariz. Rev. St.* 1901, § 2535, par. 5; P. C. § 1111, par. 3 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881, unamended); *Ark. Stats.* 1894, § 2918 ("No minister of the gospel or priest of any denomination shall be compelled to testify in relation to any confession made to him in his professional character, in the course of discipline enjoined by the rules or practice of such denomination"); *Cal. C. C. P.* 1872, § 1881, par. 3 ("A clergyman or priest cannot, without the consent of the person making the confession, be examined as to any confession made to him in his professional character in the course of discipline enjoined by the church to which he belongs"; amended by the Commission of 1901 by adding: "nor as to any information obtained by him from a person about to make such confession and received in the course of preparation for such confession"; for the validity of this amendment, see *ante*, § 488); § 1882 (implied waiver; quoted *ante*, § 2292); *Colo. Annot. Stats.* 1891, § 482 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881, unamended); § 4825 (waiver by consent; quoted

ante, § 2380); *Hawaii Civil Laws* 1897, § 1118 ("No clergyman of any church or religious denomination shall, without the consent of the person making the confession, divulge in any action, suit, or proceeding, whether civil or criminal, any confession made to him in his professional character according to the uses of the church or religious denomination to which he belongs"); *Ida. Rev. St.* 1887, § 5958 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881, unamended); *Ind. Rev. St.* 1897, § 507 ("Clergymen, as to confessions or admissions made to them in course of discipline enjoined by their respective churches," shall not be competent); *La. Code* 1897, § 4608 (quoted *ante*, § 2292); *Kan. Gen. St.* 1901, § 4771, par. 5 (like Okl. *Stats.* § 335); *Ky. C. C. P.* 1895, § 606 (5) ("Nor shall a clergyman or priest testify to any confession made to him, in his professional character, in the course of discipline enjoined by the church to which he belongs, without the consent of the person confessing"); *Mich. Comp. L.* 1897, § 10180 ("No minister of the gospel or priest of any denomination whatsoever shall be allowed to disclose any confessions made to him in his professional character, in the course of discipline enjoined by the rules or practice of such denomination"); *Minn. Gen. St.* 1894, § 5662 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881, unamended); *Mo. Rev. St.* 1889, § 8925 ("The following persons shall be incompetent to testify: . . . fourth, a minister of the gospel or priest of any denomination, concerning a confession made to him in his professional character, in the course of discipline enjoined by the rules of practice of such denomination"); *Mont. C. C. P.* 1895, § 3163 (3) (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881, unamended); *Nebr. Comp. St.* 1899, § 5902 (" . . . The following persons shall be incompetent to testify: . . . fifth, a clergyman or priest, concerning any confession made to him in his professional character in the course of discipline enjoined by the church to which he belongs, without the consent of the person making the confession"); § 5907 (quoted *ante*, § 2292); *Nev. Gen. St.* 1885, § 3405 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881, unamended); *N. Y. C. C. P.* 1877, § 833 ("a clergyman or other minister of any religion shall not be allowed to disclose a confession made to him in his professional character in the course of discipline enjoined by the rules or practice of the religious body to which he belongs"); *N. D. Rev. C.* 1895, § 5703 (like Cal. C. C. P. § 1881, unamended); § 5704 ("If a person offers himself as a witness," it is a consent to the priest's examination "on the same subject"); *Oh. Annot. Rev. St.* 1898, § 5241 ("The following persons shall not testify in certain respects: . . . 2. A clergyman or priest, concerning a confession made to him in

has been held, following the dictates of principle, that the privilege applies only to communications made in the understood pursuance of that church discipline which gives rise to the confessional relation,² and, therefore, in particular to confessions of sin only, not to communications of other tenor;³ that it includes only the communications, and not information otherwise acquired;⁴ and that it exempts the penitent also, as well as the priest, from disclosure.⁵

§ 2396. *Policy of the Privilege.* Even by Bentham, the greatest opponent of privileges, this privilege has, in the following argument, been conceded, to justify recognition:

1827. Mr. *Jeremy Bentham*, *Rationale of Judicial Evidence*, b. IX, pt. II, c. VI (Bowring's ed. vol. VII, pp. 367 ff.): "To form any comparative estimate of the bad and good effects flowing from this institution, belongs not, even in a point of view purely temporal, to the design of this work. The basis of the inquiry is, that this institution is an essential feature of the catholic religion, and that the catholic religion is not to be suppressed by force. . . . I set out with the supposition, that, in the country in question, the catholic religion was meant to be tolerated. But with any idea of toleration, a coercion of this nature is altogether inconsistent and incompatible. In the character of penitents, the people would be pressed with the whole weight of the penal branch of the law; inhibited from the exercise of this essential and indispensable article of their religion; prohibited, on pain of death, from the confession of all such misdeeds as, if judicially disclosed, would have the effect of drawing down upon them that punishment; and so, in the case of inferior misdeeds, combated by inferior punishments. Such would be the consequences to penitents; to confessors, the consequences would be at least equally oppressive. To them, it would be a downright persecution, if any hardship, inflicted on a man on a religious account, be susceptible of that, now happily odious, name. To all individuals of that profession, it would be an order to violate what by them is numbered amongst the most sacred of religious duties. In this case, as in the case of all conflicts of this kind, some would stand firm under the persecution, others would sink under it. To the former, supposing arrangements on this head efficient and consistent, it would have the effect of imprisonment — a most severe imprisonment for life. . . . The

his professional character, in the course of discipline enjoined by the church to which he belongs"; *Okla. Stats.* 1898, § 335 ("The following persons shall be incompetent to testify: . . . Fifth, a clergyman or priest concerning any confession made to him in his professional character in the course of discipline enjoined by the church to which he belongs, without the consent of the person making the confession . . . provided that, if a person offer himself as a witness, that is to be deemed a consent to the examination; also, if [of] an attorney, clergyman or priest, physician or surgeon on the same subject, within the meaning of the last three subdivisions of this section"); *S. D. Stats.* 1899, § 6544 (substantially like *Cal. C. C. P.* § 1881, unamended); § 6545 (like *N. D. Rev. C.* § 5704); *Utah Rev. St.* 1898, § 3414 (like *Cal. C. C. P.* § 1881, unamended); *Vt. St.* 1896, No. 30 ("No priest or minister of the gospel shall be permitted to testify in any court in this State to statements made to him by any person under the sanction of a religious confessional"); *Wash. C. & Stats.* 1897, § 5994 (like *Cal. C. C. P.* § 1881, unamended); § 6940 (quoted *ante*, § 2380); *Wis. Stats.* 1898, § 4074 (like *N. Y. C. C. P.* § 833, adding "without consent thereto

by the party confessing"); *Wyo. Rev. St.* 1887, § 2589 (like *Oh. Rev. St.* 1896, § 5241).

² 1895, *State v. Brown*, 95 Ia. 381, 64 N. W. 277 (the defendant met the minister on the train, and communicated his story without any purpose of obtaining advice or assistance; held not privileged); 1835, *People v. Gates*, 13 Wend. 311, 323 (admissions "not in the course of discipline," held not privileged).

³ 1877, *Gillooley v. State*, 58 Ind. 182; 1901, *Hills v. State*, 61 Nebr. 589, 85 N. W. 836 (bigamy; defendant's memorandum of instructions, given to a clergyman, who was to communicate to the first wife the reasons stated therein for influencing her to abandon the prosecution, admitted).

⁴ 1880, *Toomes' Estate*, 54 Cal. 509, 515 (a priest's testimony to a testatrix' mental condition just before death, admitted, because covering, not a confession, but only the testatrix' "proper condition of mind to make a confession"). Compare *R. v. Hay*, 2 F. & F. 4, cited *ante*, § 2394.

⁵ 1880, *Masse v. Rohillard*, 10 Rev. Légale 527 (under the statutory privilege in Quebec, the penitent himself cannot be compelled to disclose the communications of the priest).

advantage gained by the coercion — gained in the shape of assistance to justice — would be casual, and even rare; the mischief produced by it, constant and all-extensive. Without reckoning the instances in which it happened to the apprehension to be realized, the alarm itself, intense and all-comprehensive as it would be, would be a most extensive as well as afflictive grievance. . . . If in some shapes the revelation of testimony thus obtained would be of use to justice, there are others in which the disclosures thus made are actually of use to justice under the assurance of their never reaching the ears of the judge. Repentance, and consequent abstinence from future misdeeds of the like nature, — repentance, followed even by satisfaction in some shape or other, satisfaction more or less adequate for the past, — such are the well-known consequences of the institution; though in a proportion which, besides being everywhere unascertainable, will in every country and in every age be variable, according to the degree and quality of the influence exercised over the people by the religious sanction in that form, and the complexion of the moral part of their character in other respects. But, without any violation of this part of his religious duty, and even without having succeeded so far as to have produced in the breast of the misdoer any permanent and efficacious repentance, motives are not wanting in which it may be in the power, as it naturally will be in the inclination, of a conscientious and intelligent confessor, to furnish such information as shall render essential service to the interests of justice. I mean, by ministering to the prevention of such individual misdeeds as, though meditated, are as yet at a stage short of consummation; or of such others as, though as yet not distinctly in contemplation, are in a way to present themselves to the same corrupted mind. Who the misdoer is, the confessor knows better than to disclose; as little will he give any such information as may lead to the arrestation of the delinquent, under circumstances likely to end in his being crushed by the afflictive hand of the law. But, without any such disclosure, he may disclose what shall be sufficient to prevent the consummation of the impending mischief. . . . Warnings of this kind, if I understand aright, have not unfrequently been given, — warnings, which might have been given and would have been given in better times, — might (had they been given) have operated as preventives to the most grievous public calamities.”

The propriety of the privilege may be tested by the four canons already laid down for privileged communications (*ante*, § 2285). (1) Does the communication originate in a confidence of secrecy? It is so commonly understood. The ecclesiastical rules, to be sure, do provide in some measure that the penitent cannot obtain absolution unless he makes reparation, which may involve an open repetition of the confession; and this, it may be argued, indicates that ultimate secrecy is not an assumption of the confessional. Whether in theory or in practice such is the case, must be a question of fact as to actual ecclesiastical rules. In any event the ultimate disclosure in that manner must be supposed to rest upon the priest's discretion according to the needs of each case. Thus, in effect, it may be assumed that a permanent secrecy, subject only to an optional variation by the priest, is an essential of any real confessional system as now maintained. In so far as it may not be, in the discipline of any particular church, the privilege cannot apply. (2) Is confidentiality of communication essential to the relation? In other words, would penitential confessions, under such a system as the above, continue to be made if they were liable to be demanded for disclosure in a court of justice when needed? In so far as such confessions concern crimes and wrongs, they

¹ In the following place also the arguments Introductory Report to the Code of Evidence are considered: *circa* 1823, Edward Livingston, (Works, ed. 1872, I, 467).

would certainly, in some indefinite but substantial measure, be discontinued, and the penitential relation be to that extent annulled. (3) Does the penitential relation deserve recognition and countenance? In a State where toleration of religions exists by law, and where a substantial part of the community professes a religion practising a confessional system, this question must be answered in the affirmative. Historically, the failure to recognize the privilege during three centuries in England has probably been due to a reluctance to concede this affirmative answer. The disabilities of adherents of the Roman Church in England and Ireland — the only church actually enforcing a confessional system — also involved a disfavor to that system. In the United States these disabilities and that disfavor do not exist; they have now disappeared in their original home. The privilege therefore satisfies this canon. (4) Would the injury to the penitential relation by compulsory disclosure be greater than the benefit to justice? Apparently it would. The injury is plain; it has been forcibly set forth by Bentham. The benefit would be doubtful. Even assuming that confessions of legal misdeeds continued to be made, the gain would be merely the party's own confession. This species of evidence, as already noticed in other connections (*ante*, §§ 2251, 2291), ought in no system of law to be relied upon as a chief material of proof; for it tempts prosecutors to lack of diligence and thoroughness in the investigation of the entire case against an accused. In criminal cases, it would be impolitic to encourage a resort to this too facile channel of confessions. In civil cases, the ordinary process of discovery upon oath would be a sufficient equivalent. On the whole, then, this privilege has adequate grounds for recognition.

PART IV: PAROL EVIDENCE RULE
(CONSTITUTION OF LEGAL ACTS).

CHAPTER LXXXV.

INTRODUCTORY.

§ 2400. Parol Evidence Rule, not a Rule of Evidence.

§ 2401. Parol Evidence Rule, a group of Rules defining the Constitution of Legal Acts; Four Subdivisions of the Subject.

A. CREATION OF LEGAL ACTS
(VOIDNESS AND VOIDABLENESS).

§ 2404. General Principle; Subject, Terms, and Delivery; Intent and Expression.

§ 2405. History of the Principle.

1. Subject, Terms, Delivery, in general.

§ 2406. (a) Subject must concern Legal Relations; Transactions of Jest, Friendship, Charity, and Pretence.

§ 2407. (b) Terms must be Definite; Terms Implied from Conduct; Document void for Uncertainty.

§ 2408. (c) Act must be Final; (1) Delivery, as applied to Deeds; Conditions Precedent; Escrows.

§ 2409. Same: (2) Delivery, as applied to Negotiable Instruments.

§ 2410. Same: (3) Delivery, as applied to Contracts in general; Conditions Precedent and Subsequent; Assent of Third Persons; Blanks; Dates.

§ 2411. Same: (4) Publication, as applied to Wills.

2. Intent and Mistake, as applied to Subject, Terms, and Delivery, of an Act.

§ 2413. Intent and Mistake, in general; Modern Test of Reasonable Consequences, applied to Expressed Intent.

§ 2414. (A) Jural Subject of an Act; Intent not to be Bound.

§ 2415. (B) Terms of an Act; (a) Signing a Completed Document by Mistake; (1) Individual Mistake not Known to or Induced by the Second Party.

§ 2416. Same: (2) Individual Mistake Known to or Induced by the Second Party.

§ 2417. Same: (3) Mutual Mistake; General Principle.

§ 2418. Same: Mutual Mistake as affecting Bona Fide Holders for Value.

§ 2419. Same: (b) Signing a Document having Blanks, or capable of Alteration; Writing one's Name not as a Signature.

§ 2420. (C) Delivery of a Document; Escrow Deeds or Negotiable Instruments delivered to Bona Fide Holder contrary to Intent of Maker.

§ 2421. Unilateral Acts; foregoing Principles applied to Wills and Ballots.

3. Voidable Acts.

§ 2423. Motive as making an Act Voidable; Mistake, Fraud, Duress, Infancy, and Insanity.

B. INTERPRETATION OF LEGAL ACTS
(VARYING THE TERMS OF A DOCUMENT).

§ 2425. General Theory of the Rule against Varying the Terms of a Writing.

§ 2426. History of the Rule.

1. Integration of Unilateral Acts.

§ 2427. Official Documents (Surveys, Appointments, Assessments, etc.).

2. Integration of Bilateral Acts.

§ 2439. No Integration at all; Casual Memoranda.

§ 2430. Partial Integration; General Test for Applying the Rule; "Collateral Agreements."

§ 2431. Same: Incorrect Tests; (a) "Varying the Terms of the Writing"; (b) "The Writing is the Sole Criterion"; (c) Fraud, in Pennsylvania.

§ 2432. Receipts and Releases; Bills of Lading.

§ 2433. Recital of Consideration in a Deed.

§ 2434. Warranty in a Sale; Insurance Warranties.

§ 2435. Agreements not to Sue, or not to Enforce, or to hold Conditional only.

§ 2436. Agreements of Counterclaim, Set-off, Renewal, or Mode of Payment.

§ 2437. Agreement to hold a Deed Absolute as Security only; Agreement to hold in Trust.

§ 2438. Agreement to hold as Agent or Surety only.

§ 2439. Fraud.

§ 2440. Trade Usage and Custom.

§ 2441. Novation, Alteration, and Waiver; Subsequent Agreements.

§ 2442. Miscellaneous Applications of the Rule, to admit or exclude "Collateral" Agreements.

§ 2443. Rule Applied to Negotiable Instruments; General Principle.

§ 2444. Same: (a) Agreements affecting the Express Terms of the Document.

§ 2445. Same: (b) Agreements affecting the Implied Terms.

§ 2446. Rule binding upon the Parties to the Document only.

§ 2447. Burden of Proof; Who must Produce the Document.

3. Integration required by Law.

§ 2450. At Common Law: (1) Judicial Records.

§ 2451. Same: (2) Corporate Acts and Records; (3) Negotiable Instruments.

§ 2452. Under Statutes: (1) Wills; (2) Ballots; (3) Insurance Policies.

§ 2453. Conclusiveness Certificates, distinguished.

C. SOLEMNIZATION OF LEGAL ACTS.

2454. Writing as a Formality; Statute of Frauds.

§ 2455. Same: Discharge and Alteration of Specialties, etc.

§ 2456. Other Formalities than Writing; Signature, Seal, Attestation, Registration, Stamp.

D. INTERPRETATION OF LEGAL ACTS.

§ 2458. General Nature of Interpretation; Standard and Sources of Interpretation.

§ 2459. Same: "Intention" and "Meaning," distinguished.

1. Standard of Interpretation.

§ 2461. General Principle; Four Standards, — Popular, Local, Mutual, Individual.

§ 2462. Rule against "Disturbing a Plain Meaning," or, Forbidding Explanation except of Ambiguities; History and General Principle.

§ 2463. Same: Application of the Rule to Wills, Deeds, etc.

§ 2464. Usage of Trade or Locality, when to apply.

§ 2465. Parties' Mutual Understanding; Identifying a Description.

§ 2466. Individual Party's Meaning; (1) Deeds and Contracts.

§ 2467. Same: (2) Wills.

2. Sources of Interpretation.

§ 2470. General Principle; All Extrinsic Circumstances may be Considered.

§ 2471. Exception for Declarations of Intention.

§ 2472. Same: (1) Exception for Equivocation or Latent Ambiguities.

§ 2473. Same: Blanks and Patent Ambiguities.

§ 2474. Same: (2) Exception for Erroneous Description.

§ 2475. Same: (3) Exception for "Rebutting an Equity" (Legacies, Advancements, and Disinheritance).

§ 2476. *Falsa Demonstratio non Nocet*; General Principle.

§ 2477. Same: Application to Deeds and Wills.

§ 2478. Sundry Rules; Interpretation of Statutes.

INTRODUCTORY.

§ 2400. **Parol Evidence Rule, not a Rule of Evidence.** "Few things," wrote Professor Thayer, "are darker than this, or fuller of subtle difficulties"; and this condition of the law all members of the profession will concede. Two circumstances appear to be responsible for it, — first, an inherent necessity for certain distinctions, simple in themselves but subtle and elusive in their application, and, secondly, the unfortunate prevalence of a terminology in which the subject cannot possibly be discussed with entire accuracy and lucidity. With these two features as marked as they are, it is not strange that the so-called parol evidence rule is attended with a confusion and an obscurity which make it the most discouraging subject in the whole field of Evidence. Rather is it surprising that, in spite of these obstacles, so much has actually been achieved of consistency and of definiteness in the law as it stands. What is chiefly needed to-day, for clarifying the subject and rendering manageable its mass of rules, is, first of all, a systematic arrangement of all the connected principles in their due relation, and, secondly, a simple and accurate nomenclature which shall replace the present absurdly incorrect usage and thus make intelligible discussion possible. No one can attempt to re-state the law, except with a due sense of temerity. But the present condition of the subject is beyond endurance; unless improved, it threatens within a generation to result in an irrational and incurable chaos. In the following

treatment the object will be, while preserving as much as possible the language of present usage, to set forth the rules systematically and to discuss them in their proper terms, and thus to assist the future development to proceed along natural and harmonious lines.

But at the outset certain discriminations must be kept in mind:

(1) First and foremost, *the rule is in no sense a rule of evidence*, but a rule of substantive law. It does not exclude certain data because they are for one or another reason untrustworthy or undesirable means of evidencing some fact to be proved. It does not concern a probative mental process,—the process of believing one fact on the faith of another. What the rule does is to declare that certain kinds of fact are legally ineffective in the substantive law; and this of course (like any other ruling of substantive law) results in forbidding the fact to be proved at all (*ante*, § 2). But this prohibition of proving it is merely the dramatic effect of the process of applying the rule of substantive law. When a thing not to be proved at all, the rule of prohibition does not become a rule of evidence merely because it comes into play when the counsel offers to "prove" it or "give evidence" of it; otherwise, any rule of law whatever might be reduced to a rule of evidence; a ruling (for example) that on a plea of self-defence, in an action of battery, no evidence of the plaintiff's insulting words is to be received, would become the legitimate progeny of the law of evidence. This employment of terms of evidence for rulings of substantive law, by reason of the constant dramatic presentation of the latter in the course of a trial, is an old and natural failing of the profession, and has been already noticed at the outset of the general subject of Evidence (*ante*, § 2). But in the present department it has risen to a dominating influence of confusion, because there existed in this branch of the law no systematic terminology capable of holding its ground against the usurpation. Let us dismiss, then, once for all, any notion that the parol evidence rule, in any of its aspects,¹ is concerned with any precautions or limitations based on probative value, or indeed with any regulation of evidence in the legitimate sense of that word. This must be the first step to a clear understanding of the working of the rule.²

(2) Next, *the matter excluded by the rule is not inherently or even most commonly anything that can be properly termed "parol."* That word (in spite of its numerous other derived applications) signifies and implies essentially the idea "oral," *i. e.* matter of speech, as contrasted with matter of writing.³ Now, so far as the phrase "parol evidence rule" conveys the impression that what is excluded is excluded because it is oral—because somebody spoke or

¹ Except, perhaps, the statute of frauds and the rule for interpreting by declarations of intention, where there is a possible question.

² 1903, Archbald, J., in *Pitcairn v. His Co.*, 125 Fed. 110 ("According to the modern and better view, the rule which prohibits the modification of a contract by parol is a rule, not of evidence, but of substantive law. . . . The writing is the contractual act, of which that

which is extrinsic, whether resting in parol or in other writings, forms no part"). Compare Professor Thayer's exposition, in his *Preliminary Treatise*, p. 390.

³ It is necessary to abandon the improper use of "verbal" as synonymous with "oral." The former signifies "relating to words," whether written or oral; the latter signifies "spoken," whether words or sentences.

acted other than in writing, or is now offering to testify orally —, that impression is radically incorrect. When the prohibition of the rule is applicable, what is excluded may equally be written as oral, — may be letters and telegrams as well as conversations; and where the prohibition is applicable on the facts to certain written material, nevertheless for the very same transaction certain oral material may not be prohibited. So that the term "parol" not only affords no necessary clue to the material excluded, but is even positively misleading. It must be understood to be employed in a purely unnatural and conventional sense.⁴

(3) There is *no one and undivided parol evidence rule*. There are at least four distinct principles or bodies of doctrine. They concern a common subject — legal acts —, but their content and details are separate and distinct. The case lies very much as if we possessed one term "action" for all the various forms of remedial procedure. It is true enough that they all may be looked upon as mere species of the general notion of a remedy, but it would be by all conceived impossible to discuss the details of mandamus, certiorari, injunction, capias, replevin, bill in chancery, action on the case, scire facias, subpoena, and the rest, with no better word-materials than the one word "action." Yet this is not far from the impossible task which has been attempted with the term "parol evidence rule." There is no one generalization for that rule, — at least none which has any practical consequence. There are four general groups of doctrine which go to make up the whole where each a separate set of rules; the chief problem in their application is to ascertain which kind of rule is involved in the case in hand, and to keep one from being mistaken for another.

(4) *The parol evidence rule is not the only rule which concerns the use of written things*. There are several other rules, with which it has nothing to do, that have also something to say about writings, — the chief of which are the rule about Producing Documentary Originals (*ante*, §§ 1177-1282) and the rule about Authenticating Documents (*ante*, §§ 2129-2169). These are rules of Evidence in the genuine sense, and the term "parol" is often naturally employed (especially with the former) in discussing them. But they are of no kith or kin with the Parol Evidence rule proper, as here involved, *i. e.* the rule of substantive law. Their difference from the present rule is plain enough; but the false nomenclature of the latter has sometimes caused a relation between them to be suspected.

(5) Finally, it needs to be insisted, in opposition to the popular and natural view which tends to thrust itself forward at trials, that *a writing has no efficacy per se*, but only in consequence of and dependence upon other circumstances external to itself. The exhibition of a writing is often made as though it possessed some intrinsic and indefinite power of dominating the situation and quelling further dispute. But it needs rather to be remembered that a writing is, of itself alone considered, nothing, — simply nothing. It

⁴ How unnatural it is may be seen from the contrast to "sealed contract," in *Briggs v. Partridge*, 64 N. Y. 357. phrase "written parol contract," used in con-

must take life and efficacy from other facts, to which it owes its birth; and these facts, as its creator, have as great a right to be known and considered as their creature has. Granting that there is a writing before us: Has it been brought home to anybody as his act? Was it meant to supersede other materials? Was it essential to the transaction? What external objects does it apply to? These are questions which cannot be answered without looking away from the writing to other data; and until they are answered the efficacy of the writing is merely hypothetical. There is no magic in the writing itself. It hangs in mid-air, incapable of self-support, until some foundation of other facts has been built for it. So far as the parol-evidence rule is concerned with writings at all, it concerns these questions of the relation between the writing and other data, and it points out what other data are essential and available for the proper use of the writing. It conduces, then, to a sound understanding of the rule if we dispel wholly that natural notion which falsely attributes to a writing some mystic independence and automatism.

In short, then, (1) the parol-evidence rule is not a rule of evidence; (2) nor is it only a rule for things parol; (3) nor is it a single rule; (4) nor is it all of the rules that concern either parol or writing; (5) nor does it involve the assumption that a writing can possess, independently of the surrounding circumstances, any inherent status or efficacy.

§ 2401. **Parol Evidence Rule, a group of Rules defining the Constitution of Legal Acts; Four Subdivisions of the Subject.** What, then, is the Parol Evidence rule? It concerns the constitution of legal acts. This requires a brief notice of the nature of legal acts.

Only a small part of conduct is legal conduct, *i. e.* conduct having legal effectiveness. The nature and effect of such conduct as will be given legal effect is therefore a question of general consequence in all departments of the law. Leaving aside the field of crimes (which deal with the relation between State and individual) and of torts (which deal with irrecusable or involuntary civil relations), we are here concerned with voluntary relations, *i. e.* those relations which may be created, defined, transferred, or extinguished by will of the parties. The conduct which is allowed to have such effect is a *legal act*.¹

For the purpose of specific varieties of legal effects — sale, contract, release, and so on —, there are specific requirements, varying according to the subject. But there are also certain fundamental elements, common to all, and capable of being generalized. These elements present problems which run through all

¹ "There is a very important class of acts in which the legal result follows because that result was itself contemplated and desired as one of the consequences of the act. From the fact that legal results are in contemplation in this class of acts, the Germans call them *Rechtsgeschäfte*, Frenchmen call them *actes juridiques*. English lawyers have not yet agreed upon any name for them. The terms 'juristic acts' and 'acts in the law' have been suggested" (Markby, *Elements of Law*, 3d ed., § 235); "It has been

defined, by a high authority [Puchta], as an 'act the intention of which is directed to the production of a legal result.' . . . A better definition [by Windscheid] is 'a manifestation of the will of a private individual directed to the origin, termination, or alteration of rights.' A juristic act has also been well described [by Ihering] as 'the form in which the subjective will develops its activity in creating rights, within the limits assigned to it by the law'" (Holland, *Jurisprudence*, 3d ed., c. 8).

the varieties of legal acts, and must therefore be analyzed and discussed in union. Their principles, when applied to specific kinds of acts, usually give substantially similar results; and, when they do not, it is merely because special circumstances call for local variances. It is therefore impossible to solve these problems adequately as a peculiarity of any one kind of act, since they do not peculiarly belong there, and do not take their significance from any one variety. For example, whether a mistake due to signing a document unread can avoid the effect of the document is not a question solvable separately for deeds, wills, simple contracts, and negotiable instruments; it is a question common to all, and solvable only in comparison. So, too, the question whether an oral promise to give money, made at the same time with a written one, is legally effective, is not essentially one question for deeds, another for promissory notes, and another for wills; whatever variation there is must be a variation from a common principle underneath all. Again, whether the word "dollars" may be considered to signify the lawful money of the United States or the money of the unlawful Confederate States, is the same kind of a question for bills of exchange, for ordinary contracts, and for wills, — a question of some general principle of interpretation. Even when the answer is different for different kinds of acts, it appears in all cases as a variation from some general doctrine. What has to be done, therefore, is to compare under one head the principles common to all legal acts, and to take account of the specific variations for specific kinds of acts. This is what the "parol evidence" rule does in our law.

These principles fall into four groups, marking the four possible elements of every legal act: (A), The Enaction, or Creation, of the act; (B), its Integration, or embodiment in a single memorial, when desired; (C), its Solemnization, or fulfilment of the prescribed forms, if any; and (D), the Interpretation, or application of the act to the external objects affected by it. Of these four, the first and the fourth are necessarily involved in every legal act; the second and the third may or not become practically important, but are always possible elements.

A. The Enaction, or Creation, of an act is concerned with the question *whether any legal act at all, or a legal act of the alleged tenor, has been consummated*; or, if consummated, whether the circumstances attending its creation authorize its *avoidance* or *annulment*. Under the first head arise the questions whether a writing is anything more than a preparatory draft, whether it has been completed by delivery, whether its tenor is to be judged by its actual words or the intended words, and the like. Under the second head arise the questions whether it can be avoided because of mistake, fraud, or duress, affecting the motive leading to its enaction.

B. The Integration of the act consists in embodying it in a *single utterance* or *memorial*, — commonly, of course, a written one. This process of integration may be required by law, or it may be adopted voluntarily by the actor or actors; and, in the latter case, either wholly or partially. Thus the question in its usual form is whether a particular document is the one deemed

by law to be the sole memorial of the act, or how far a particular document was intended by the parties to cover certain subjects of transaction between them and therefore to deprive of legal effect all their other utterances.

C. The Solemnization of the act concerns the *forms* which are *required by law* to attend it in order to give it legal effect. This always becomes a question of some particular subject in the law, because there is no universal formality required in common for all acts. Thus the formalities of attestation, seal, registration, and the like, are essential for some but not for other acts. Writing is naturally the most important and most common instance of a required formality. The resort to writing may sometimes be an instance of Integration and sometimes of Solemnization, but either may exist without the other.

D. The Interpretation of an act is the *application of it to external objects*, in the process of defining and enforcing the right or obligation affected by its terms. The words of a legal act are merely the symbols by which the actor indicates the external objects which the act is expected to affect — a parcel of land or a barrel of sugar or John Doe the legatee. The connection between these words and their possible objects must be judicially established before the terms of the act can be given the effects expected by the parties. In this process of Interpretation, the main questions concern the standard of meaning to be adopted and the data which may be used in determining that meaning.

For these four elements in the act, the principles are independent of each other, — so independent, indeed, that they sometimes appear to be contradictory; and the chief inherent difficulty in their application arises from the necessity of distinguishing which element and which principle is really involved.

In the present exposition, it is impossible to do more than trace the general principles into their main details. Not only is the subject properly one of substantive law, instead of evidence; but it involves logically an application to many particular branches of the substantive law. Nothing short of separate treatises would suffice for a complete collection of precedents. For example, the statute of frauds, with its myriad rulings, is involved; and the doctrine of collateral agreements as applied to negotiable instruments, the doctrine of mistake and misrepresentation as a motive for a deed or contract, the doctrine of judicial records as unimpeachable, — these and numerous other applications of the principle, would require for their complete exposition far more scope than is appropriate in a treatise upon the law of evidence. The purpose in this chapter is to collect in systematic form the various applications of the principles and to examine in as much detail as is necessary those particular topics which have hitherto been commonly discussed as a part of the law of evidence and not of the substantive law.²

² No attempt has been made to collect all of the precedents on any of the topics; but in those topics commonly appropriated to the law of evidence the greatest part of the English cases and a large portion of the American cases are believed to be here collected.

A. CREATION OF LEGAL ACTS
(VOIDNESS AND VOIDABLENESS).

§ 2404. **General Principle; Subject, Terms, and Delivery; Intent and Expression.** A legal act — that is, here, an act regarded as capable of having legal effects in civil relations other than tort — may be analyzed from two points of view. With reference to its *tenor*, it involves three elements, — its Subject, its Terms, and its Stages of Utterance. With reference to the *mental condition* of the actor himself, it involves two elements, Volition and Expression.

1. In the former aspect, it is clear that each of these three elements raises its own set of questions. (a) The act must be *jural*, as to its *subject*. Thus, on the one hand, an act which concerns merely relations of courtesy, or duties of morality, or other non-jural subjects, will receive no legal effects. On the other hand, acts which concern transactions prohibited by some policy of law — such as gambling or cheating — will equally be left without legal effects. (b) The act must be *definite* as to its terms. This excludes all acts whose terms are so uncertain or unintelligible that they are incapable of enforcement. Within these limits, the terms of the act will be whatever the actor has used. (c) The act must be *final* in its *utterance*. It does not come into existence as an act until the whole has been uttered. As almost all important transactions are preceded by tentative and preparatory negotiations and drafts, the problem is to ascertain whether and when the utterance was final; because until there has been some finality of utterance, there is no act. The necessity for a delivery of a document, and the nature of a delivery, are here the most usual questions in practice. — These three elements, then, are all essential to any legal act, and no others are essential to all legal acts.

2. In the second aspect, it is clear that there must be both Volition and Expression; for an unexpressed volition would receive no legal effect, and an expression without some sort of volition would be equally ignored. But the volition and the expression may not correspond, and thus the usual problem is to define the *relation that must exist between volition (or intention) and expression*, in each one of the three elements of (1), above, in order to make the act legally effective. For example, Doe and Roe go through the form of marriage, Doe secretly intending it in jest, but Roe seriously; here the *subject* is jural in Doe's expression, but not in his volition; which shall prevail? Again, Doe by mistake of absent-mindedness writes in a contract "\$100," instead of "\$10," and hands it to Roe; here the *terms*, in expression, are different from the terms in volition; which is to prevail? Again, Doe writes a check payable to bearer and places it in his desk, and the check is stolen and handed to Roe; here, in expression — that is, in outward appearance — there has been *finality of utterance*, but not in Doe's volition; shall the former or the latter be decisive? This is the world-old legal problem, inevitably faced in the history of every jurisprudence, — the problem of the competition between the external and the internal standards, the objective and the subjective

points of view. It is useless to prescribe either that the internal will alone or that the external expression alone shall be decisive. Probably no developed system of law has ever practically enforced either the one or the other standard exclusively. It is rather a question of the relation between the two elements, *i. e.* not whether the legal act shall be only as willed or only as expressed, but what sort of volition is sufficient in order to make the actor responsible for a given expression; and this must depend more or less on varying experience in different epochs and communities and in different kinds of transactions. The modern test, for bilateral acts, will be found, with fair uniformity, to predicate some relation of reasonable consequence (judged by the community's standard) between the outward expression and the inward volition; because in bilateral acts the just reliance of the other party to the transaction upon the first party's outward expression must be the salient consideration. For unilateral acts — chiefly wills — more of a concession can be made, and is made, to the actual volition, so far as it is ascertainable.

Such, then, are the elements and the problems with which we are concerned in defining the creation of legal acts in general.

§ 2405. *History of the Principle.* The two chief problems that have most commonly occupied practical jurisprudence have been that of the finality of the utterance (*ante*, § 2404, (1) *c*) and that of the correspondence between intent and expression (*ante*, § 2404 (2), *i. e.* how far a *formal delivery* of a document is essential and decisive, and how far an *unexpressed intent* can be allowed to overthrow the outward act.

As might have been expected, the progress has been from a strict formalism to a liberal and flexible practicality. The mark of primitive legal standards, throughout all, is formalism, — a characteristic already noted here in its effects upon other parts of the law (*ante*, §§ 2032, 575, 1815). It must be kept in mind, for appreciating the traditions against which the modern law has had to struggle:

1885, Professor *Andreas Heusler*, *Institutions of Germanic Private Law*, I, 70, 74: "Without such formalism the [primitive] people could not perceive their law; it would be to them but a buried treasure; and thus to them form is itself law. They resort to form for its own sake, and because in it alone is law perceived. To us, because we cannot in thought put ourselves back to that stage of intellectual development, this stiff domination of form is too apt to appear as an intolerable fetter of the free exercise of the will. But, when these things prevailed, there was no such attitude towards them. . . . The Frankish period is the flourishing period of this symbolism. Thus, in the process of commendation, the act of placing the clasped hands of the ward or the vassal in the opened hands of the lord symbolizes the submission to the wardship or the suzerainty; the acts of pointing and crooking the fingers in the Saxon release ("*digitis incurvatis abnegationem facere*"), symbolizes the surrender of claim to the transferred property; the handing of twig and turf, the delivery of seisin of land; the grasping of altar-cloth or bell-rope, the taking possession of church and chapel; the widow's act of laying the house-key or the cloak on the bier or the tomb of the deceased husband, her surrender of the entire marriage-estate to the husband's creditors; the handing over of a lock of hair from head and beard, the transfer into household service; the delivery of hat or glove, the transfer of ownership; the lending of staff, scepter, spear, or pennon, the granting of a fief. . . . But by the time of the [Germanic] codes [1200-1300] this symbolism is already in decay.

Writing is the sworn enemy of all symbolic representation. A people who do not write feel the need of making the law visible by external and perceptible symbols, and thereby of providing expression for acts and volitions as legal acts and legal volitions. But as soon as acts come to be put into writing, this formalism becomes first a luxury, then a burden, and finally is repudiated entirely."

The persistence of this formalism, however, even under the regime of writing, is equally notable in the first stages of Anglo-Norman history. In its present relations, it has left its mark in the technical rule concerning delivery of a deed:

1895, Sir *F. Pollock*, and Professor *F. W. Maitland*, *History of the English Law*, II, 83-86, 190: "[In Bracton's time] a livery of seisin either on the land or within the view was necessary. Until such livery had taken place there was no gift; there was nothing but an imperfect attempt to give. . . . But this change of possession and the accompanying declaration must be made in very formal fashion. . . . A knife is produced, a sod of turf is cut, the twig of a tree is broken off; the turf and twig are handed by the donor to the donee; they are the land in miniature, and thus the land passes from hand to hand. Along with them the knife also may be delivered. . . . When, under Roman influence, the written document comes into use, this also can be treated as a symbol. It is delivered in the name of the land; the effectual act is not the signing and sealing, but the delivery of the deed, and the parchment can be regarded as being as good a representative of land as a knife or a glove would be. Just as of old the sod was taken up from the ground in order that it might be delivered, so now the charter is laid on the ground and thence it is solemnly lifted up or 'levied' (*levatio cartæ*); Englishmen hereafter will know how to 'levy a fine.' . . . The written document, which few have the art to manufacture, is regarded with mystical awe; it takes its place beside the *festuca*. The act of setting one's hand to it is a *stipulatio*; it is delivered over as a symbol along with twig and turf and glove."

Thus it comes down to the succeeding centuries that the technical and unvarying symbol of finality is a delivery of the deed. "Delivery," says Chief Baron Gilbert, in the early 1700s,¹ "is necessary to the essence of a deed, and the deed takes effect from the delivery; so that unless the delivery be proved, there is no perfect proof of the deed." The first signs of flexibility are seen in the concession that a prepared deed (an "escrow," or mere scroll), placed in the hands of a second person for subsequent handing to the grantee, is not yet effective.² Yet even here the formalism—now becoming dead bark—encases the rule, and the requirement of delivery is merely made abstract, so as not to have inherent connection with the maker's own hand. This concession, moreover, is still refused for a draft deed placed directly in the grantee's hands in anticipation of some future event which shall make it effective; there can be no escrow to a grantee, it was said.³ At the same

¹ 5th ed., p. 99.

² 1432, Y. B. 10 H. VI, 25. Later, the rule comes to be analyzed and philosophized: 1523, Y. B. 14 H. VIII, 17, 6 and 7 (Brudnel, J.): "If I deliver a deed [to a second person] to be delivered to another [third person] as my deed, then if he takes it [from the second person] without delivery, though he has the deed, he will have no action; for in these cases the act which

makes them perfect was not accomplished nor performed".

³ 1612, *Thoroughgood's Case*, 9 Co. Rep. 137 ("If A makes a writing to B and seals it and delivers it to B as an escrow, to take effect as his deed when certain conditions are performed, it has been adjudged to be immediately his deed; for the law respects the delivery to the party himself, and rejects the words which

time there had already begun an effort to refine this technicality, and to deny effectiveness to a manual transfer even to the grantee himself, if it purported to be, not a true delivery, but only a draft or escrow.⁴ But the authority and vogue of Coke's and Sheppard's writings obscured and suppressed prematurely this progressive conception; and it has been reserved for very modern times to repudiate this last relic of primitive formalism.⁵

Passing to the problem of intent as competing with expression, it is equally plain that the primitive legal conception was strictly formalistic:

1895, Professor *Andreas Heusler*, *Institutions of Germanic Private Law*, I, 60: "A strictly formal system of law knows no contrast between the will and the utterance, and no possibility of a contradiction between the two. This is thoroughly the conception of the Germanic law. The utterance is the law's embodiment. No more, and yet no less, than what is uttered can bind or loose. Hence the minute precision with which obligations of debt were written out. . . . Hence the legal proverbs, 'one man one word,' 'the word stands,' 'words make the bargain,' and the like. A necessary result is that mistake in contractual relations receives but scanty consideration. . . . All that a man does is judged alone by its external manifestations and its objective effect, not by his inward motive. The law concedes nothing either to good or to bad faith, as long as it is concerned with the legal consequences of conduct."

In the field of legal acts the application of this notion to writings plays but a small part until the rise and spread of the seal, in the 1100s and 1200s; for until then the contents of the document seldom enter into the inquiries of a trial.⁶ But it is amply illustrated by the formalism of all oral transactions and pleadings:

1892, Professor *Heinrich Brunner*, *Germanic Legal History*, II, 347: "Plea and answer of the parties were, in the formalism of legal procedure, bound to legal forms. Their utterances must contain the precise formal catchwords. Every assertion of the parties is treated on the principle of strict and literal interpretation. . . . The party is bound to the spoken word. If he has made some faulty utterance, still he cannot correct his speech."

1892, Mr. *Henry C. Lea*, *Speratition and Force*, 4th ed., 78-9: "[In Lille, until 1651,] the minutest regulations were enforced as to this ceremony [of the oath of denial]. . . . The slightest error committed by either party lost him the suit irrecoverably. The royal ordinance [abrogating the older rules] declares that the oath was 'in strange language and peculiar words, not easy to remember or to pronounce,' and yet that if either party 'failed in form or words, or by weakness of tongue misspoke or forgot his words, or lifted his hand more than required by the regular manner, or did not hold firmly his sack in his palm, or failed to preserve and follow various other trifling and vain things and rules belonging to the oath, according to the trial mode of the city when done by parol, he has lost his whole cause.'"

1895, Sir *F. Pollock* and Professor *F. W. Maitland*, *History of English Law*, I, 190: "The old procedure required of a litigant that he should appear before the court in his own person and conduct his own cause in his own words. . . . The extreme captiousness of the

will make the express delivery to the party upon the matter no delivery"); Sheppard, *Touchstone*, IV, p. 58.

⁴ 1801, *Hawksland v. Gatchel*, Cro. El. 835 ("There is not any difference where it is delivered to the party himself as an escrow and where to a stranger; . . . when it is first delivered as

an escrow, though to the party himself, it is clear that it is not his deed until it be performed; . . . for if upon the delivery the words spoken by the obligor purport that it shall not be his deed, it is clear it is not").

⁵ The authorities are examined *post*, § 2408.

⁶ See *post*, § 2426.

old procedure is [in the 1100s] defeating its own end, and so a man is allowed to put forward some one else to speak for him, — not in order that he may be bound by that other person's words, but in order that he may have a chance of correcting formal blunders and supplying omissions. What the litigant himself has said in court, he has said once for all, and he is bound by it; but what a friend has said in his favor he may disavow. . . . Perhaps the main object of having a [professional] pleader is that one may have two chances of pleading correctly."⁷

This strictness of spirit is slow in changing. The chief statutes of jeofails, removing by degrees the primitive crudities which made difficult the amendment of pleadings, are strwn along the statute-book from 1341 to 1711,⁸ and did not even then cease to be needed. The persistence of the older notions, in their application to oral utterances, is seen markedly in the struggle against the modern doctrine of interpretation,⁹ for the "meaning" of words and the "intent" of the speaker were not distinguished, and both alike were supposed to be determinable from the uttered words alone. "The sense and signification of the words must be expounded by the law,"¹⁰ and "the intent of a man is uncertain, and a man should plead such matter as is or may be known to the jury."¹¹ With regard to its present application to the mistaken use of words, modern policy confirms primitive tradition in binding a man, irrespective of his mistakes, to those precise utterances which another party has taken at their face value; but this is a rationalized rule, and falls far short of the early formalism which inexorably and invariably pledged the man upon his spoken word.

If this was the strictness of formalism for acts contained in winged words, it might be assumed to have been at least as marked for written acts. But in one aspect the history seems to have begun to change at an early stage, — namely, the doctrine of mistake as applied to the contents of the writing. That a man who could not read had sealed a document which had been incorrectly read over to him, was recognized, before the 1400s, as sufficient to relieve him from liability.¹² When it is remembered that as yet the mass of the community could not read, this rule is seen to be almost the normal rule, to which the contrary case would be the exception; indeed the rule is in form laid down for "lay people," that is, those who were not

⁷ This general feature has been elaborately demonstrated by Professor Brunner in his *Wort und Form im altfranzösischen Prozess*, 1868 (Sitzungsber. d. K. Akad. d. Wiss. b. Wien, vol. 77, p. 655; translated, in 1871, in the *Revue critique de législation et de jurisprudence*, vol. 21, pp. 22 ff.; reprinted in Brunner's *Forschungen z. Geschichte des deutschen u. französischen Rechts* (1894), 260, 266); Professor Heusler, in his *Institutionen des deutschen Rechts* (1885; I, 45) has also acutely analyzed it; see also Professor Siegel's *Deutsche Rechtsgeschichte* (1895), p. 545.

⁸ Blackstone, *Commentaries*, III, 407.

⁹ *Post*, § 2462.

¹⁰ *Ante* 1726, Gilbert, *Evidence*, 4th ed., 79.

¹¹ 1465, Y. B. 4 Edw. IV, 8, 9.

¹² 1377, Y. B. 44 Ass. 30 (here the general

principle appears to be already conceded); 1374, Y. B. 47 Edw. III, 3, 5 ("To every deed there ought to be writing, seal, and delivery, and when a thing is to pass from those who have no understanding except by hearing, there ought to be a reading to them; . . . It would be very unfair if the [other] party's own deceit should help him, for it is a principle of our law, *fraus et dolus nemini patrocinantur*; . . . and for the reason that the law does not favor fraud or trickery, it wishes also that no one shall be prejudiced by his ignorance and error in his deed, for in the one party was *bona fides*, and in the other *dolus malus*"); 1422, Y. B. 9 II, V, 15, 3; 1494, Y. B. 9 H. VI, 59, 8 (here Strange, J., seems to have doubted, on the ground that "he has acknowledged the delivery into the hands of the person").

"clerks" and therefore not skilled in reading. How did such an anomalous rule develop? The course of it would seem to have been somewhat as follows: At the time of the Conquest, the form of most transactions still lay "in pais," i. e. livery of seisin or the like. Comparatively few transactions were in writing.¹³ When writing was used, the terms were none the less orally stated, to be proved, if need arose, by the witnesses called in for the transaction; the witnesses' oath controlled, and the terms of the writing played only a minor part.¹⁴ It was thus not a question likely to arise whether the party could read the writing, or whether it had been read over to him beforehand; it *could* not be so read over to him, considering that by the traditional procedure the words were not written on the parchment by the scribe till after formal delivery of it by the maker.¹⁵ But, by the 1200s the seal comes into general use, for authenticating documents; legal writings become more common; and the other rule develops, that the terms of a sealed writing shall be indisputable as representing the actual transaction.¹⁶ This development, however, begins while the great mass of the community are still illiterate. They have seals, and can now bind themselves indisputably by affixing the seal, yet they cannot read what they have sealed. They are even bound by a seal stolen and used by the thief.¹⁷ This combination of rules immediately raises the present problem, and presents itself as an intolerable consequence. Hence, almost at the very outset, comes the rule that a layman, not being a "clerk," is not bound by a document sealed by him but erroneously read over to him by another person. The present part of the parol evidence rule thus appears as a natural alleviation and a practically contemporary consequence of the other part of that rule (*post*, § 2425). Had printing come into use a century earlier than it did, and had the mass of the community thus earlier ceased to be illiterate, the present rule might not have arisen. As it was, the rule appears almost full-fledged by the 1400s. Perhaps in the earlier cases, the inclination was to restrict it to instances of fraud by the other party to the document, and the Latin maxims used by the judges suggest that they had borrowed something from an alien and more advanced system. But by the 1500s it appears to be conceded that a false reading by a stranger is equally fatal to the deed; and the only controversy then remaining is whether the deed may be valid as to the part correctly

¹³ "To all appearance, writing has hardly been used for any legal purpose [in 1066] except when land is to be conveyed or a last will made. . . . When making a feoffment, it was possible for the giver to impose conditions or to establish remainders, and all this by word of mouth; it is probable, however, that a charter was executed if anything elaborate was to be done" (Pollock & Maitland, *Hist. Eng. Law*, II, 191, 193).

¹⁴ *Post*, § 2426, where this part of the history is examined.

¹⁵ 1877, Brunner, *Die frankisch-romanische Urkunde als Wertpapier*, *Zeitschr. für Handelsrecht*, XXII, 64, 505, 530, republished in his

Forschungen z. Geschichte d. deutschen n. französischen Prozess (1894), 524, 612 ("im juristischen Sinne erfolgt das *scribere cartulam* nach der Uebergabe des Pergaments"). So also Brunner, *Deutsche Rechtsgeschichte*, I, 397; compare Bresslau, *Urkundenlehre*, 778; Poase, *Privaturkunden*, 135.

¹⁶ This part of the rule is examined *post*, § 2426.

¹⁷ Schroeder, *Deutsche Rechtsgeschichte*, 701; Schuitze, *Urkundenbeweis* (cited *post*, § 2426), 118; 1187-89, Glanvil, X, 6, § 8; Holmes, *Common Law*, 272. By the time of Britton (65 b), about 1300, this is relaxed

read while void as to the part falsely read.¹⁵ For literate persons, there seems never to have been any doubt; and the doctrines of mutual mistake and the like (*post*, § 2417) are the product of equity and modern rationalism.

1. Subject, Tenor, Delivery.

§ 2406. (a) **Subject must concern Legal Relations; Transactions of Jest, Friendship, Charity, and Pretence.** Conduct which is to be given legal effects must be jural in its subject (*ante*, § 2404, par. (1) a), *i. e.* must concern legal relations, not relations of friendship or other non-legal relations.¹ The father who promises to bring home a box of tools for his boy is not bound in contract, though the same promise to his neighbor may be binding. The friend who promises to come to dinner is not legally liable, though he who agrees with a restaurant-keeper to dine there is under a contract of liability. Barristers could not, as late as Blackstone's time, recover for their fees, because the client's payment was theoretically "*quiddam honorarium*,"² *i. e.* the transaction was looked upon as outside of the field of legal relations. In all such cases, therefore, the conduct is legally ineffective, or void. In the traditional phraseology of the parol evidence rule, then, it may always be shown that the transaction was *understood by the parties not to have legal effect*.

Ordinarily, the bearing of this principle is plain enough on the circumstances. It has been judicially applied to household services rendered by a *member of the family*,³ and to a writing representing merely a family understanding.⁴ It is of course also applicable to the signature of an *attesting witness*.⁵ When the document is to serve the purpose of a mere *sham*, this principle in strictness exonerates the makers; but a just policy would seem to concede this only when the pretence is a morally justifiable one (as, to calm a lunatic or to console a dying person),⁶ and not when it is morally

¹⁵ 1523, Y. B. 14 H. VIII, 25, 7; 1532, *Thoroughgood's Case*, 2 Co. Rep. 9; 1615, *Pigot's Case*, 11 id. 27.

¹ 1811, Lord Stowell, in *Dalrymple v. Dalrymple*, 2 Hagg. Consist. 54, 105 ("It is said they [marriage engagements] must be serious; so surely must all contracts; they must not be the sports of an idle hour, mere matters of pleasantry and badinage, never intended by the parties to have any serious effect. . . . [But] it is not to be presumed *a priori* that a man is sporting with such dangerous playthings as marriage engagements").

² Commentaries, III, 28.

³ 1870, *Bundy v. Hyde*, 50 N. H. 116, 122 ("The relationship of debtor and creditor depends upon the simple question whether the parties understood that relationship to exist").

⁴ 1872, *Earle v. Rice*, 111 Mass. 17 (husband and wife signed a document providing that her land should be sold and the proceeds handed to trustees for her life and then for her children; her land having been sold and the proceeds given to trustees, it was allowed to be shown, for the wife, that this document was made between husband and wife merely as a memo-

randum of moral obligation, not as a legal transaction).

⁵ 1892, *Tomhler v. Reitz*, 134 Ind. 9, 14, 33 N. E. 789 (that a name indorsed on a note was signed as witness only, allowed to be shown); 1898, *Isham v. Cooper*, 56 N. J. Eq. 398, 37 Atl. 462, 39 Atl. 760 (parol evidence admitted to show that initials were signed to a paper, not as a party to the contract, but merely to attest an interlineation); 1844, *Garrison v. Owens*, 1 Pinney 473 (that a name has been signed as attesting witness, admitted).

For the case of a *surety*, see *post*, § 2438.

⁶ 1896, *Church v. Case*, 110 Mich. 621, 68 N. W. 424 (a mortgage for \$6,000 given by a son who had received the land in return for an agreement to support the mother; a showing allowed that no consideration had been received for the mortgage, and that it was given as a mere form, to satisfy the jealous relatives, and to safeguard the interests of the grantor; the mortgage decreed void); 1900, *McCartney v. McCortney*, 93 Tex. 359, 55 S. W. 311 (the plaintiff's wife was losing her mind, and impounded him to execute deed to her, which he did "to satisfy her mind"; he then retained it

beyond sanction.⁷ In all these cases a common understanding for all parties is here assumed to exist; when the intent of one party is different from his outward act as understood by the other, the question becomes a different one, and involves the other part of the principle (*post*, § 2414).

Conduct, furthermore, will be denied legal effect when it falls within a class of facts prohibited by some policy of the law. The act is then commonly said to be void on grounds of *public policy*,—for example, trading with an enemy in war, selling public offices, engaging to render champertous legal services, stifling a public prosecution, ousting a court's jurisdiction, wagering, restraining trade, and scores of other transactions. Such acts are jural, but not lawful. These prohibitions, however, concern the validity of particular kinds of acts, and not legal acts in general or uniformly, and therefore need be referred to here only to note their place in the theory of legal acts.

§ 2407. (b) **Terms must be Definite; Terms implied from Conduct; Document void for Uncertainty.** It is clear that the terms of the act need not be in express words; the terms may be *implied from conduct*, as in the case of the commoner contracts of service. *Usage* may thus by implication furnish the terms,—subject to the limitations of another principle (*post*, § 2440).

When express words are employed, they must be in themselves definitely intelligible, so that the act may be capable of enforcement (*ante*, § 2404, par. (1), b). It is common learning that a deed or a will is often held *void for uncertainty*. Lord Bacon, giving his classical instance of a grant to "*J. D. et J. S. et heredibus*," calls this a "patent ambiguity . . . by matter within the deed," such as "shall make the deed void for uncertainty." So, too, Mr. Elphinstone's example, "I give my dog Ranger to my nephew John or Thomas,"¹ illustrates the same kind of uncertainty. A blank, an illegible word, an unknown language,—these various instances show how an act which is impossible to comprehend and therefore to enforce cannot be deemed a legal act. This doctrine is more particularly involved in dis-

without recording, and later it was taken from his papers without his knowledge and recorded; this was allowed to be shown to defeat it).

Sometimes, the illustrations of this principle, that a transaction which is a *sham* is without the scope of legal acts, are hard to distinguish from those cases where the transaction is in substance a legal one but the understanding is that it shall be merely *nominal*: here, in effect, one party agrees to hold the other party harmless, and this involves rather the rule about varying a document's terms; these cases are collected *post*, § 2435, but the following will serve as an example: 1898, *Gunz v. Giegling*, 108 Mich. 295, 66 N. W. 48 (that the defendant W. indorsed a note given to the plaintiff for a debt of the defendant G., on the plaintiff's representation that it was a mere matter of form, to induce G. to pay, and that no claim should be made upon the defendant W.; treated as involving

the principle of § 2443, *post*, and not allowed to exonerate the defendant).

⁷ 1900, *Southern St. R. Adv. Co. v. Mfg. Co.*, 91 Md. 61, 46 Atl. 513 (instrument of advertising contract, allowed to be shown to have been signed merely for exhibition to other advertisers to induce them to pay the stated rates; this seems unsound); 1856, *Conner v. Carpenter*, 28 Vt. 237, 240 (written contract of sale and hire of horses; that it was "understood to be a sham, and to be only to keep off the creditors of the plaintiff from attaching the property," held not sufficient to permit the party "to thus escape from his contract"); 1898, *Grand Isle v. Kinney*, 70 id. 381, 41 Atl. 130 (that a party was not to pay anything under a contract signed to deceive the State engineer, excluded).

¹ *Juridical Soc. Papers*, III, 266.

tinguishing it from the interpretation of "latent ambiguities" (*post*, § 2472); it is enough here to notice its correct place in the theory of legal acts.²

So, far, then, as concerns the precise terms of an act, they will be — if intelligible — whatever the actor has made them. There are no other requirements. When, however, the terms as expressed do not correspond to the terms as intended, we are brought to the other question, — that of Intention (*post*, § 2415).

§ 2408. (c) **Act must be final; (1) Delivery, as applied to Deeds; Conditions Precedent; Escrows.** A legal act does not come into existence as such until its utterance is final and complete (*ante*, § 2404, par. (1) c.).¹ All transactions require an appreciable lapse of time for their fulfilment; most important transactions in writing are consummated only after successive inchoate acts of preparation, drafting, and revision. Moreover, the written terms may be prepared with a precision which leaves nothing further (as it turns out), and still may be for a while retained for reflection or submitted for suggestion, without as yet any final adoption. Until some finality of utterance takes place, there is no legal act. Whenever, therefore, certain conduct or writing is put forward against a party as his purporting act, no principle prevents him from showing that there never was a consummation of the act.²

(1) But where shall the line be drawn? The earlier law (*ante*, § 2405) drew the line formally for deeds — *i. e.* sealed instruments — at the stage technically known as "delivery." The mark of finality was the *delivery of the deed*. But it is clear that there can be no fixed and invariable mark of finality; or, in the older phraseology, what amounts to a delivery depends upon the circumstances of the case. No specific manual act is decisive. On the one hand, it is well accepted that the *handing* of the deed to a *third person* is not necessarily final; the document may still be withdrawn, or (less correctly) "revoked."³ On the other hand, the *maker's retention* of the document does not necessarily negative the act's finality; this, too, may be deemed unquestionable law since Mr. Justice Blackburn's masterly exposition.⁴ Again, that specific variety of delivery to a *third person* which con-

² Mr. Justice Holmes' classification (Common Law, §10) of certain contracts under this head seems doubtful; "suppose that A agreed to buy and B to sell 'these barrels of mackerel,' and that the barrels turn out to contain salt; . . . the promise is meaningless; . . . two of its essential terms are repugnant, and their union is insensible." On the contrary, the words are in themselves certain in meaning; it is only in their application to external objects that they become impossible, and the question is not as to a mistake or uncertainty in the terms of the contract, but as to the materiality of an assumption of fact exterior to the contract, *i. e.* a condition rendering it void or voidable, and falling under the principle of § 2423, *post*.

¹ For a German statement of the theory, see Schultze, *Urkundenbeweis* (cited *post*, § 2426), pp. 70, 88, 104.

² 1866, *Wilde, P. J.*, in *Guardhouse v. Black-*

burn, L. R. 1 P. & D. 109 ("The truth is that the rules excluding parol evidence have no place in any inquiry in which the Court has not got before it some ascertained paper binding and of full effect"); 1871, *Dixon, C. J.*, in *Walker v. Ebert*, 29 *Wis.* 194, 197 ("It must always be competent for the party proposed to be charged upon any written instrument to show that it is not his instrument or obligation").

³ Compare the following cases: 1847, *Merrialls v. Swift*, 18 *Conn.* 257; 1813, *Maynard v. Maynard*, 10 *Mass.* 456; 1849, *Blight v. Schenck*, 10 *Pa.* 285; 1857, *Cook v. Brown*, 34 *N. H.* 460; 1901, *Fred v. Fred*, — *N. J. Eq.* —, 50 *Atl.* 776. The case of an escrow is one variety of this sort of delivery.

⁴ *Eng.*: 1826, *Doe v. Knight*, 5 *B. & C.* 671 (the question "whether when a deed is duly signed and sealed and formally delivered with apt words of delivery, but is retained by the

sists in naming a condition precedent to be performed, and making the act final except for the happening of the condition — the usual meaning of "escrow" —, has long been recognized as leaving the act incomplete;⁶ though here it may well be that the document cannot be withdrawn, since nothing but the condition remains to complete the act.⁸ A conditional delivery *in escrow to the grantee*, however, has come down to us traditionally as a complete act, the condition being deemed vain.⁷ But this is an arbitrary distinction; no reason and no policy justifies it. In England, the older rule, as handed down in Coke's treatises, has for more than two generations been repudiated.⁸ In the United States, it has been generally trenchanted upon so far as to recognize an escrow to a co-obligor as incomplete.⁹ In other respects, it is maintained

party executing it, that retention will obstruct the operation of the deed," was answered in the negative), 1856, *Gudgen v. Besset*, 6 E. & B. 986 (action for rent; whether *indebitatus assumpsit* or covenant was the proper action depended on whether a written and sealed lease in the plaintiff's possession was in force; the understanding between the parties that the tenant should go into possession but that the lease as signed and sealed and nominally delivered should be kept by the lessor till the payment of a certain sum of money was held to have prevented the operation of the document); 1866, *Xenos v. Wickham*, 2 H. L. C. 296 (insurance policy, signed by the defendant-insurer, but left in his custody according to trade usage; held that it was not "essential that the deed should be given out of the defendant's possession in order to its perfect delivery as an operative instrument"; Blackburn, J.: "No particular technical form of words or acts is necessary to render an instrument the deed of the party sealing it; the mere affixing the seal does not render it a deed; but as soon as there are acts or words sufficient to show that it is intended by the party to be executed as his deed presently binding on him, it is sufficient"; L. C. Chelmsford: "The question is one more of fact than of law"); *Can.*: 1899, *Zwicker v. Zwicker*, 31 N. Sc. 333, 29 Can. Sup. 527, 532 (following Lord Blackburn, in *Xenos v. Wickham*); *U. S.*: 1861, *Stevens v. Hatch*, 6 Minn. 64 (19); 1869, *Fisher v. Hall*, 41 N. Y. 416.

Distinguish the much-mooted but wholly separate question whether the *grantee's assent is necessary* for the passing of title: 1866, *Xenos v. Wickham*, *supra*; 1847, *Merrills v. Swift*, 18 Conn. 257; 1860, *Welch v. Sackett*, 12 Wis. 243; 1830, *Jones v. Swayze*, 42 N. J. L. 279.

Whether delivery is necessary for the gift, pledge, or sale of a chattel is a question, not of legal acts in general, but of the requisites of a specific kind of act.

⁶ *Ante*, § 2405.

⁷ Cases cited *supra*, note 3. As to the time of an escrow's taking effect by relation, see the following opinions: 1809, *Belden v. Carter*, 4 Day 66; 1841, *Foster v. Mansfield*, 3 Metc. 412; 1843, *Hall v. Harris*, 5 Ired. Eq. 303; 1860, *Welch v. Sackett*, 12 Wis. 243.

⁸ *Ante*, § 2405. This technical rule does not

apply except where the deed's delivery is made dependent on a specific condition; the mere manual handing of a finished writing to the grantee does not of itself invoke this rule: 1898, *Curry v. Colburn*, 99 Wis. 319, 74 N. W. 778 (that a deed was handed to the grantee to take to his attorney for inspection, allowed to be shown).

⁹ *Eng.*: 1821, *Johnson v. Baker*, 4 B. & Ald. 440 (delivery of a deed of covenant by a debtor to a creditor, on condition of obtaining other creditors' signatures, held invalid); 1829, *Hudson v. Revett*, 5 Bing. 368 (deeds of lease and release and of trust for the benefit of creditors, signed, sealed, and delivered by the debtor in prison to the creditors' agent, with a blank for the amount of a certain claim, which was afterwards filled in, according to the understanding, by the creditors' agent; Best, C. J.: "This position about delivery as an escrow is merely a technical subtlety; . . . I decide the case on this, that either it was no deed . . . all until the sums were written in, and that then the jury were warranted in presuming a delivery to make it a deed; or, if it were a deed, it was delivered only to have operation from the time that those sums were written in which were to give it all its effect"); 1843, *Bowker v. Burdekin*, 11 M. & W. 128, 146 (conveyance in fraud of creditors, by one partner to take effect upon the execution by the other two partners; Parke, B.: "I take it now to be settled, though the law was otherwise in ancient times, as appears by Sheppard's Touchstone, that in order to constitute the delivery of a writing as an escrow, it is not necessary it should be done by express words, but you are to look at all the facts attending the execution"); 1856, *Gudgen v. Besset*, *supra*, note 4; 1866, *Xenos v. Wickham*, *supra*, note 4; 1875, *Watkins v. Nash*, L. R. 20 Eq. 262; *Can.*: 1882, *Confederation L. Ass'n v. O'Donnell*, 10 Can. Sup. 92 (policy forwarded to the agent on conditions, and handed by him to the applicant to read, without countersigning or exacting the conditions; held not valid on the facts; two judges diss.).

¹⁰ 1808, *Pawling v. U. S.*, 4 Cr. 219, 222 (a bond delivered as an escrow by a surety to the obligor, conditioned on the signatures of others, is not valid if the condition is unperformed).

by the authority of the older decisions in most jurisdictions.¹⁰ But it is being gradually cut away, sometimes by subtly re-casting the definition of a delivery;¹¹ and the solid establishment of the contrary rule (*post*, § 2410) for contracts and writings in general (*i. e.* other than sealed instruments — bonds and land-deeds) will ultimately efface this last tradition of formalism.¹²

There is, therefore, no invariable mark of finality for a deed, — whether it be the act of writing,¹³ or of sealing, or of manually delivering, or of publicly recording.¹⁴ Subject to certain usual presumptions of conduct, the circumstances of each case must control.¹⁵

§ 2409. **Same:** (2) **Delivery, as applied to Negotiable Instruments.** The English custom of merchants, in respect to the rules for written instruments, represented the advanced ideas of Mediterranean, Flemish, and Hanseatic mercantile law. As early as the 1200s and 1300s, when the common law of the King's courts was still dealing with the raw material of the more primitive Germanic system of a feudal, pastoral, and agricultural life, the mercantile notions were already in a more modern stage, and furnished some of the lessons for the progress of the former.¹ Thus it happened that no formal rule about delivery or escrow-delivery found a place in the law of negotiable instruments, when that law came into the ordinary courts for recognition. In particular, for the acts of *making, drawing, or accepting*, no one formal piece of conduct has been deemed invariably necessary or decisive.² So also, for the act of *indorsement*, a manual transfer may, on the one hand, be decisive even without writing,³ while, on the other hand, it may not be in it-

¹⁰ Cases cited in Jones, Real Property (1896), § 1303.

¹¹ 1886, Price v. Hudson, 125 Ill. 284, 287, 17 N. E. 517 (Shope, J.: "It is not competent to control the effect of a deed by parol evidence when it has once taken effect by delivery; but it is always competent to show that the deed, although in the grantee's hands, has never in fact been delivered; unless the grantor, or those claiming under him, are estopped in some way from asserting the non-delivery of the deed"); 1896, Stanley v. White, 160 id. 605, 43 N. E. 729 (a deed manually placed with the grantee, on condition that it should not take effect until all the heirs of M. S. signed it, would be ineffective until the condition was fulfilled; but where the mutually understood intention was to give title immediately on delivery, subject to the condition subsequent that other heirs should sign, the non-performance of the condition cannot be set up to defeat the absolute terms of the deed. Of course, a condition subsequent is not effective: *post*, §§ 2410, 2435.

¹² The effectiveness of an escrow against one ignorant of the condition raises the question of intention (*post*, § 2420).

¹³ For the case of a blank, to be filled later, see *post*, § 2410.

¹⁴ Even registration or recording does not of itself and invariably complete the act, though it is of course a strong circumstance of presumption; compare the following opinions: 1862, Derry Bank v. Webster, 44 N. H. 264; 1854,

Mitchell v. Ryan, 3 Oh. St. 377; 1859, Smith v. South Royalton Bank, 32 Vt. 341.

¹⁵ Whether an instrument is a deed or a will depends upon the intent of the maker as to the time of its operation; whether this intent goes to the existence of the instrument and therefore depends on conduct of the maker exterior to the instrument, or whether it is a part of the terms of the grant and must therefore be determined by the contents of the instrument, is an interesting question; the former view is accepted in Pollock v. Glassell, 2 Gratt. 439, 455 (1846), in a useful opinion by Baldwin, J., collecting precedents.

¹ The history is more fully noticed *post*, § 2426.

² 1822, Bayley, B., in Cox v. Troy, 5 B. & Ald. 474 (with reference to the completion of an acceptance, "I have no difficulty in saying, from principles of common sense, that it is not the mere act of writing on the bill, but the communication of what is so written, that binds the acceptor"; holding void a bill on which the drawee's signature had been placed and then erased by him before return to the payee's agent); and cases cited in Ames' Cases on Bills and Notes, I, 135, note, 157-166, 207 ff.

³ 1861, Harrop v. Fisher, 10 C. B. n. s. 196 ("If by mistake, accident, or fraud, a bill has been omitted to be indorsed upon a transfer, when it was intended that it should be, the party may be compelled by a court of equity to make the indorsement").

self decisive, even when coupled with the writing.⁴ Furthermore, a manual delivery to a third person on a condition precedent may leave the instrument incomplete;⁵ and the doctrine that a deed-escrow to the grantee is binding, in spite of the condition (*ante*, § 2408), never found any orthodox place in this part of the law,⁶ though in some jurisdictions the analogy of deeds has naturally been given recognition.⁷ For purchasers for value without notice, the principle of Intention may affect these results (*post*, § 2420).

§ 2410. *Same*: (3) *Delivery, as applied to Contracts in general; Conditions Precedent and Subsequent; Assent of Third Persons; Blanks; Dates.* Sealed instruments — otherwise known as deeds — were the chief legal documents, in the earlier history of our legal system, and for a long time the only ones whose contents were indisputable.¹ Other writings thus came down to us without the tradition of delivery as a formal and arbitrary mark of the finality of the act. It has therefore long been well understood, for other writings, that the finality of the writing as a legal act depends upon the circumstances of each case; that it may be left to depend on a third person's assent or upon any other precedent condition, and, in particular, that this is so whether the writing (or escrow) is provisionally handed to the grantee himself or to any one else. The case of *Pym v. Campbell*, in England,² is commonly taken as the leading one. In the United States, the

¹ 1836, *Brind v. Hampshire*, 1 M. & W. 365 (indorsement is effected, "either by the actual delivery . . . or by some binding engagement"); 1841, *Marston v. Allen*, 8 id. 494 (indorsement followed by a placing in the custody of the indorser's agent, not sufficient).

² 1875, *Chipman v. Tucker*, 38 Wis. 43 (that a note was delivered to a third person with an agreement not to deliver to the payee unless a certain vote of mortgagees took place, and that the custodian delivered it without such a vote, allowed to invalidate the note).

³ *Eng.*: 1840, *Adams v. Jones*, 12 A. & E. 455 (bill accepted by the defendant for F. as payee, and indorsed in blank and delivered by F. to the plaintiff as agent for R. only; defendant's plea denying title in the plaintiff, held good); 1848, *Bell v. Ingestre*, 12 Q. B. 317 (indorsement of bills sent by mail to plaintiff, on the express condition that certain other bills should be returned by post, but they were not; "they were delivered to them as mere trustees"; "on a plea traversing the indorsement of a bill, its delivery with intent to transfer an interest is put in issue"); *U. S.*: 1859, *Burns & S. L. Co. v. Doyle*, 71 Conn. 742, 43 Atl. 483 (acceptance of a bill delivered with the condition that it should not operate until a cottage was completed and money became due, admitted); 1899, *Mehlin v. Mutual R. F. L. Ass'n*, 2 Ind. Terr. 396, 51 S. W. 1063 (handing of a note to payee's agent, to be delivered to payee on certain conditions only; allowed); 1893, *Robertson v. Rowell*, 155 Mass. 94, 32 N. E. 898 (agreement to leave a note with payee as incomplete until indorsement by a third person; admitted); 1895, *McCormick Co.*

v. Faulkner, 7 S. D. 363, 64 N. W. 163 (condition enforced that notes should not become operative till signed by a third person); 1894, *Burke v. Dulaney*, 153 U. S. 228, 234, 14 Sup. 816 (admitting proof of an agreement that a note was left in the payee's hands "to become an absolute obligation of the maker in the event of his electing, upon examination or investigation, to take the stipulated interest in the property in question").

⁴ 1877, *Stewart v. Anderson*, 59 Ind. 375; and cases cited *pro* and *con* in *Ames' Cases on Bills and Notes*, II, 99, note.

The question whether a conditional acceptance is valid (*i. e.* an acceptance, final as such, but expressly subject to the contingency of a condition subsequent) is a different one; see *Ames' Cases on Bills and Notes*, II, 152-154.

⁵ *Post*, § 2426.

⁶ 1856, *Pym v. Campbell*, 6 E. & B. 370 (purchase of an invention; a writing formally complete and signed, and delivered to plaintiff, was offered by the plaintiff; the defendant was allowed to show that, upon a meeting of all persons concerned except A., "it was then proposed that, as the parties were all present, and might find it troublesome to meet again, an agreement should then be drawn up and signed, which, if A. approved of the invention, should be the agreement, but, if A. did not approve, should not be one; A. did not approve of the invention when he saw it"; *Erle, J.*: "If it be proved that in fact the paper was signed with the express intention that it should not be an agreement, the other party cannot fix it as an agreement upon those signing. The distinction in point of law is that evidence to vary the

doctrine is not only completely accepted,³ but has even been applied to sealed instruments other than deeds of land⁴ in jurisdictions still bound by precedent to the older rule for deeds (*ante*, § 2408). The only opportunity for doubt arises, not from any question as to the correct theory, but from the difficulty of distinguishing in practical application the present principle and that other one (*post*, § 2435), also a part of the parol evidence rule, which denies validity to any oral part of an act when the act has been reduced completely to writing. By the other principle, a *condition subsequent*, which of course forms a part of the act which it qualifies, must be contained in the writing, in order to be enforced, and an oral one is therefore ineffective. But by the present principle, the act is not an act until the final moment

terms of an agreement in writing is not admissible, but evidence to show that there is not an agreement at all is admissible"; 1856, *Davis v. Jones*, 17 C. B. 625 (agreement for a lease, allowed to be invalidated by the fact that by agreement no obligation was to arise until repairs had been completed and then a date inserted in the instrument); 1861, *Wallis v. Littell*, 11 C. B. n. s. 369 (similar ruling for agreement of assignment of a lease, conditioned on the landlord's assent; *Erle, C. J.*: "It is in analogy with the delivery of a deed as an escrow; it neither varies nor contradicts the writing, but suspends the commencement of the obligation"); 1897, *Pattle v. Hornibrook*, 1 Cb. 25 (allowing proof that the plaintiff signed a lease as lessee, and subsequently the defendant signed it, but handed it to his solicitor and told him "not to complete" until two additional persons signed as responsible lessees).

³ 1899, *Hurlburt v. Dusenbery*, 26 Colo. 240, 57 Pac. 860 (agreement not to be effective until a third person advanced money, admitted); 1898, *Stanley v. White*, 160 Ill. 605, 43 N. E. 729 (cited *ante*, § 2408); 1902, *Sutton v. Griebel*, 118 Ia. 78, 91 N. W. 825 (agreement of subscription; an agreement that the defendant might withdraw, if he substituted another subscriber, before the meeting of the subscribers for final arrangement, allowed to be shown); 1881, *Wilson v. Powers*, 131 Mass. 539 (document by the payee of a note, purporting to extend time to the maker, and thus to discharge the sureties, allowed to be shown to have been delivered to the maker with a condition to become binding only upon assent of the sureties); 1902, *Nichols v. Rosenfeld*, 181 Id. 525, 63 N. E. 1063 (effect of a temporary custody of finished documents before final delivery, discussed); 1897, *Cleveland Ref. Co. v. Dunning*, 115 Mich. 238, 73 N. W. 239 (that an order was given conditionally on the consent of a third person which was not given, allowed); 1900, *Ada Dairy Ass'n v. Mears*, 123 Id. 470, 82 N. W. 258 (that a contract was signed, but not to be binding until the signer had seen a third person and verified a statement of the promisee's agent, admitted); 1873, *Benton v. Martin*, 52 N. Y. 570, 573 (general principle stated, in a clear opinion by *Folger, J.*); 1894, *Blewitt v. Boorum*, 142 Id. 357, 37 N. E. 119 (the present doctrine and

that of deeds, distinguished); 1893, *Kelly v. Oliver*, 113 N. C. 442, 18 S. E. 698 (that an agreement signed by defendant was not to bind until the plaintiff had procured twenty other signatures, admissible); 1895, *Manufacturers' Furn. Co. v. Kremer*, 7 S. D. 463, 64 N. W. 528 (contract delivered to the promisee on condition that it should not be binding till other signatures were obtained); 1888, *Ware v. Allen*, 128 U. S. 590, 595, 9 Sup. 174 (contract to pay money; the fact that "before the paper was signed or agreed upon, it was distinctly understood that it was to be of no effect, unless upon consultation with H. or A. or both of them the defendants were assured that the proceeding was lawful," and that H. and A. were consulted and did not assure them but declined to approve, held to invalidate the instrument); 1898, *Tug R. C. & S. Co. v. Brigel*, 30 C. C. A. 415, 86 Fed. 818 (that an agreement should not be binding until approved by the signer's attorney, admissible); 1901, *Reiner v. Crawford*, 23 Wash. 669, 63 Pac. 516 (contract to sell stock, delivered on condition that the seller's agent at S. had not sold it before the buyer's arrival at S.; condition allowed to be shown); 1897, *Gilman v. Gross*, 97 Wis. 224, 72 N. W. 885 (stock subscription; agreement that it should not be binding till a certain number subscribed, admissible).

Curiously, the only Court that insists on adopting here, for writings in general, the analogy of the old escrow-rule for deeds is a Court which had already repudiated that rule (*ante*, § 2409, *infra*, note 4) for notes and bonds: 1903, *Findley v. Means*, — Ark. —, 73 S. W. 101.

⁴ 1893, *State v. Wallis*, 57 Ark. 64, 73, 20 S. W. 811 (agreement that a bond should not bind until another person signed, admitted); 1894, *Blewitt v. Boorum*, 142 N. Y. 357, 37 N. E. 119 (contract under seal, delivered not to be binding till the plaintiff had acquired the interest of a third person; admitted, distinguishing between this and the special prohibition of escrow of deeds to the grantee).

The principle seems also to be generally accepted for *insurance policies*: 1897, *Joyce, Insurance*, I, §§ 90-102; and cases cited *ante*, § 2408.

appointed, and that moment may by the parties be made to depend upon some future event, which thus becomes a condition precedent to the legal existence of the act. Theoretically, these two things are entirely distinct, but in particular negotiations it may become difficult to determine judicially which of them the parties were providing for. In such cases, opposite results may turn upon an apparently trifling difference of phrase.⁵

It follows, from the present principle, that a writing signed and delivered, but left with a *blank part*, may or may not be valid, according to circumstances; and that whether the filling up of the blank by a third person completes the instrument and makes it effective depends upon whether this circumstance was agreed upon beforehand as the decisive one.⁶ It also follows that the *date* of a document's execution may be established by proving the actual time of the conduct, regardless of any statement of date contained in the writing;⁷ because the time of finality of the utterance, as a legal act, is something essentially independent of and exterior to the writing itself. It may also be suggested that the much-mooted questions, in the specific field of contracts, whether the *acceptance of a contractual offer*,⁸ or the *revocation of such an offer*,⁹ must be communicated, are dependent (in part, at least) upon this principle that the finality of an act varies according to circumstances and cannot be prejudged by any invariable test.

§ 2411. *Same*: (4) *Publication, as applied to Wills*. The formal rule of delivery was never applied to wills, — partly, no doubt, because their history was distinct from that of other written acts, and partly because the notion of delivery does not naturally suggest itself for unilateral acts. Yet the element of finality of utterance must somehow be marked, and the term "publication" came to be used for that purpose. But this test, concededly, was flexible. Apart from the statutory formality of attestation, no arbitrary or uniform mark of finality was ever fixed upon in the law of wills. Thus, for all wills between the statute of Henry VIII (1540) and the statute of Charles II (1678), and for wills of personalty from the latter date until the

⁵ The cases of doubt are placed *post*, § 2435. Compare the instructive case of *Stanley v. White*, 160 Ill. 605, 43 N. E. 729, cited *ante*, § 2408.

⁶ 1829, *Hudson v. Revett*, 5 Bing. 368 (a deed may be prepared leaving a blank, and prescribing this to be filled by a specified person, and will then have effect from the time when the blank is filled in; quoted *ante*, § 2408). The following ruling is heretofore unsound: 1811, *Weeks v. Maillardet*, 12 East 568 (contract to sell certain machinery "as per schedule annexed"; the parties signed, sealed, and delivered duplicate originals, lacking any schedule, and separated; held, that a schedule afterwards written in by one G. P., a subscribing witness, in accordance with the understanding and expectation of the parties, was no part of the deed).

⁷ 1804, *Hall v. Cazenove*, 4 East 477, 482 (date of delivery); 1866, *Reffell v. Reffell*, L. R. 1 P. & D. 139 (a will's date of 1855, shown to

be a mistake for 1865; thus effecting a revocation of a will of 1858); 1898, *Lambe v. Manning*, 171 Ill. 612, 49 N. E. 509 (date of execution of undated paper attached to a deed); 1892, *Saunders v. Blythe*, 112 Mo. 1, 6, 20 S. W. 319 (deed); 1893, *Vaughan v. Parker*, 112 N. C. 96, 100, 18 S. E. 908 (deed); 1895, *Moore v. Smead*, 89 Wis. 558, 62 N. W. 426 (deed).

⁸ 1879, *Household F. & C. A. Ins. Co. v. Grant*, L. R. 4 Exch. D. 216; 1857, *Hallock v. Ins. Co.*, 26 N. J. L. 268; 1871, *White v. Corlies*, 40 N. Y. 467 ("A mental determination not indicated by speech, or part in course of indication by act to the other party, is not an acceptance which will bind the other; nor does an act which in itself is no indication of an acceptance become such because accompanied by an unevinced mental determination").

⁹ 1880, *Byrne v. Van Tienhoven*, L. R. 5 C. P. D. 344; 1887, *Coleman v. Applegarth*, 68 Md. 21, 11 Atl. 284.

statute of Victoria in England (1837) and the corresponding statutes in the United States, the problem constantly arose whether a particular testamentary writing had been finally acted upon by the decedent; and this question depended entirely upon the circumstances.¹ But under the statutory solemnity of attestation (*post*, §§ 2421, 2456) this question practically disappeared; for the attestation serves as an unquestionable mark of finality.²

2. Intent and Mistake, as applied to Subject, Terms, and Delivery, of an Act.

§ 2413. Intent and Mistake, in general; Modern Test of Reasonable Consequences, applied to Expressed Intent. The elements of an act, in themselves considered, being its subject, its terms, and its final utterance (*ante*, § 2404, par. 1), it is obvious that these must all be preceded and brought into being by some sort of volition or intent.¹ The result, however, that is thus brought into outward being does not always correspond with the inward intent; and the problem thus arises (*ante*, § 2404, par. 2) how far either the expression or the intent shall be treated as legally paramount the one to the other. The primitive law (*ante*, § 2405) looked only at the expression. Juristic speculation of the metaphysical sort tended in modern times at first to regard the intent as vital. But in truth neither can be exclusively the standard; it is a question of adjusting the due relation between the two; and this is the trend of the last half-century in law and in juristic thought.

In order to solve the problem, it is indispensable that the different possible meanings of the words "intent" or "intention" be kept apart, and that the distinction between "volition" and "intention," in the proper sense of the words, be established:

Circa 1832, Mr. John Austin, *Jurisprudence*, Campbell's ed., Sect. XVIII, XIX, §§ 602-617: "In order that we may settle the import of the term 'intention,' it is necessary to settle the import of the term 'will.' For, although an intention is not a volition, they are inseparably connected. . . . These expressions, and others of the same import, merely signify this: Certain movements of our bodies follow invariably and immediately our wishes or desires for those same movements. . . . For example: If I wish that my arm should rise, the desired movement of my arm immediately follows my wish. There is nothing to which I resort, nothing which I wish, as a mean or instrument wherewith to attain my purpose. But if I wish to lift the book which is now lying before me, I

¹ 1814, *Nichols v. Nichols*, 2 Phillim. 180 (a paper drawn merely as an example of conciseness in testamentary language was held not to be a will); 1853, *Boling v. Boling*, 22 Ala. 826 (certain unfinished papers, held not a will of personality; "the final action, the settled purpose of mind to pass his property, did not then exist"; here the paper was olographic, but undated and unsigned).

² Temp. Geo. II, *circa* 1730, *Allen v. Hill*, Gilbert 257, 261 ("The design [of the statute requiring attestation] was that the will may appear to be compleat, and not a preparation only; for by taking the names of the witnesses

to his paper, the testator has shown that he has compleated his will").

³ 1568, *Brett v. Rigdon*, Plowd. 340, 343 ("The making of a testament consists of three parts, as do all other human acts which are done with discretion [*i. e.* sound mind], viz., inception, progression, and consummation. . . . But there is one same thing annexed to each of these parts, and that is the intent of the party, for every one who does any act with discretion has an intent in the inception of it, . . . and in the progression and consummation of it the same intent also subsists; so that one same intent runs through all the parts and continues in the doing of them").

wish certain movements of my bodily organs, and I employ these as a mean or instrument for the accomplishment of my ultimate end. . . . Our desires of those bodily movements which immediately follow our desires of them, are therefore the only objects which can be styled volitions. And as these are the only volitions, so are the bodily movements, by which they are immediately followed, the only acts or actions properly so called. . . . Most of the names which seem to be names of acts, are names of acts coupled with certain of their consequences. For example: If I kill you with a gun or pistol, I shoot you. And the long train of incidents which are denoted by that brief expression, are considered (or spoken of) as if they constituted an act, perpetrated by me. In truth, the only parts of the train which are my act or acts, are the muscular motions by which I raise the weapon, point it at your head or body and pull the trigger. These I will. The contact of the flint and steel, the ignition of the powder, the flight of the ball towards your body, the wound and subsequent death, with the numberless incidents included in these, are consequences of the act which I will. I will not those consequences, although I may intend them. But in common language the words 'will' and 'intend' are often confounded. . . . To desire the act is to will it. To expect any of its consequences is to intend those consequences. The act itself is intended as well as willed. For every volition is accompanied by an expectation or belief that the bodily movement will immediately follow the wish. And hence (no doubt) the frequent confusion of will and intention. Feeling that will implies intention, numerous writers upon jurisprudence (and Mr. Bentham amongst the number) employ 'will' and 'intention' as synonymous or equivalent terms. They forget that intention does not imply will."

It may be assumed, then, that there must at least be a volition of some sort preceding every legal act. But it is also apparent that the act, as expressed and apprehensible to the world at large, or to the other party in particular, may not be such an act as was intended. In those cases, then, where a volition was exercised, but the outward consequences were not produced according to intention, are we to say that because there was a volition, the person is necessarily to be fixed with all the consequences, of whatever sort they be? Or are we to say that, because there was no intention of certain consequences, the person is necessarily not to be fixed with them? We are to accept neither solution in this absolute form. The latter solution is not fair to the community dealing with the person. The former solution is not fair to the person himself. No practical system of law could be content with either, applied in rigid uniformity. The established doctrine of tortious responsibility suggests an analogy and provides a solution. We are to fix the person with such expressed consequences as are the reasonable result of his volition. In other words, *the act as legally effective will be determined, in respect to the three elements of subject, terms, and finality, by that expression of it which results, to the other person in the transaction, as the consequence, reasonably to have been anticipated under all the circumstances, of the volition of the actor.* This avoids on the one hand the impracticality of the merely external standard, so far as it would have held the person liable for an apparent act which was not the reasonable consequence of his conduct; and, on the other hand, it avoids the impracticality of the merely internal standard, so far as it would have exonerated the person from an unintended consequence which he ought to have foreseen and might have avoided. In short, it adapts, to the general doctrine of legal acts, the test of *negligence, i. e.* responsibility

resting on a volition having consequences which ought reasonably to have been foreseen.

Such, without doubt, is the general principle of the modern law. Whatever may happen to be said, here and there, broadly declaring an actual and precise intent either to be necessary or to be immaterial, nevertheless, whenever the precise problem is presented, modern judicial good sense has usually accepted this median rule, for all sorts of legal acts:²

1886, Professor *T. E. Holland*, *Jurisprudence*, 3d ed., 99: "It was laid down by Savigny that, in order to the production of a juristic act, the will and its expression must be in correspondence. This view is in accordance with the *prima facie* interpretation of most of the relevant passages in the Roman lawyers, and is still predominant in Germany, but certainly cannot be accepted as universally true. An investigation into the correspondence between the inner will and its outward manifestations is in most cases impossible, and where possible is in many cases undesirable. . . . Is it the case that a contract is not entered into unless the will of the parties are really at one? Must there be, as Savigny puts it, 'a union of several wills to a single, whole, and undivided will?' Or should we not rather say that here, more even than elsewhere, the law looks, not at the will itself, but at the will as voluntarily manifested? When the law enforces contracts, it does so to prevent disappointment of well-founded expectations, which, though they usually arise from expressions truly representing intention, yet may occasionally arise otherwise. If, for instance, one of the parties to a contract enters into it, and induces the other party to enter into it, resolved all the while not to perform his part under it, the contract will surely be good nevertheless. Not only will the dishonest contractor be unable to set up his original dishonest intent as an excuse for non-performance, but should he, from any change of circumstances, become desirous of enforcing the agreement against the other party, the latter will never be heard to establish, even were he in a position to do so by irrefragable proof, that at the time when the agreement was made the parties to it were not really of one mind. . . . The language of systems of positive law upon the point is generally ambiguous, nor is this to be wondered at. The question is practically a new one. The process of giving effect to the free acts of the parties to a contract, rather than to the fact that certain rigidly defined formalities have been complied with, has lasted so long that legal speculation has only recently begun to analyse the free act itself into its two factors of an inner will and an outward expression, and to assign to one or to the other a dominant place in the theory of contract. Just as the Romans used, without analysing them, the terms '*velle*,' '*consensus*,' '*sententia*,' so the modern Codes, though some appear to look rather to the inner will, others rather to its outward expression, as a rule employ language which is capable of being interpreted in either direction. The same may be said of the English cases. In these one constantly meets with such phrases as 'between him and them there was no *consensus* of mind,' 'with him they never intended to deal'; but one also meets with much that supports the view of the question which we venture to hope may ultimately commend itself to the Courts as being at once the most logical and the most favourable to the interests of commerce. . . . In other words:³ the legal meaning of such acts on the part of one man as induce another to enter into a contract with him, is not what the former really intended, nor what the latter really supposed the former to intend, but what a 'reasonable man,' i. e. a judge or jury, would put upon such acts. This luminous principle at once sweeps away the ingenious speculations of several generations of moralists, while it renders needless long lists of subtle distinctions which have been drawn from decided cases."

² For tortious responsibility, its phrasing was first broadly given in the epoch-making book of Mr. Justice Holmes, *The Common Law* (pp. 110, 161).

³ This principle is here put forward by the learned author for contracts only.

1850, *Pollock, C. B.*, in *Cornish v. Abington*, 4 H. & N. 549, 555: "The word 'willfully,' in the rule as laid down in *Pickard v. Sears*, means nothing more than 'voluntarily.' Lord Wensleydale, perceiving that the word 'willfully' might be read as opposed not merely to 'involuntarily' but to 'unintentionally,' showed that if the representation was made voluntarily, though the effect on the mind of the hearer was produced unintentionally, the same result would follow. If a party uses language which, in the ordinary course of business and the general sense in which words are understood, conveys a certain meaning, he cannot afterwards say he is not bound if another, so understanding it, has acted upon it. If any person, by a course of conduct, or by actual expressions, so conducts himself that another may reasonably infer the existence of an agreement or license, whether the party intends that he should do so or not, it has the effect that the party using that language, or who has so conducted himself, cannot afterwards gainsay the reasonable inference to be drawn from his words or conduct."

1871, *Blackburn, J.*, in *Smith v. Hughes*, L. R. 6 Q. B. 507, 607: "I apprehend that if one of the parties intends to make a contract on one set of terms, and the other intends to make a contract on another set of terms, or as it is sometimes expressed, if the parties are not *ad idem*, there is no contract, unless the circumstances are such as to preclude one of the parties from denying that he has agreed to the terms of the other. The rule of law is that stated in *Freeman v. Cooke*.⁴ If, whatever a man's real intention may be, he so conducts himself that a reasonable man would believe that he was assenting to the terms proposed by the other party, and that other party upon that belief enters into the contract with him, the man thus conducting himself would be equally bound as if he had intended to agree to the other party's terms."

1840, *Denman, L. C. J.*, in *Trueman v. Loder*, 11 A. & E. 588 (action on a contract of sale in the name of one Higginbotham; the plaintiff was allowed to show that H., though carrying on business in his own name, had been held out by the defendant as his agent, so that the business was virtually the defendant's, done in H.'s name): "Some cases were quoted in which the question whether an agent or a partner bound himself only, or his principal or firm, has been held to depend on his intention to deal for himself or for the principal or partnership. But on examining all those cases, it will be found that the contracting party was carrying on two different concerns, one for himself, the other for his principal or his firm. The world would know him in two different characters; and each party dealing with him was bound to inquire in which he appeared on any particular occasion. But here is the case of one exclusively an agent for another, and in that light only regarded by the customer. Having full authority so to represent himself, he forms the design in his own mind to divert one of his numerous contracts from its expected destination to some purpose of his own. But that design cannot operate to oust the opposite party of those rights against the principal, which both the principal and agent had by their conduct concurred in persuading him that he possessed. Suppose a landed proprietor to send his steward habitually to the neighboring fairs and markets to make sales and purchases for him in matters connected with the management of his estate; that the steward makes all these contracts in his own name, but that he is universally known to have no land of his own, and to be acting solely for his employer, by his direction and on his credit; could his intention to make himself the owner of articles bought on one particular occasion in the course of the same dealing deprive the vendor of his recourse against the master? Certainly not."

1884, *Elliott, J.*, in *Indianapolis v. Kingsbury*, 101 Ind. 201, 213: "We fully agree with counsel for the appellees that an essential element of dedication is the intent of the owner to devote his land to a public purpose, and we unhesitatingly affirm that without such an intention it is impossible that there should be a valid dedication. But the intention to which Courts give heed is not an intention hidden in the mind of the landowner, but an intention manifested by his acts. It is the intention which finds expression in con-

⁴ 2 Exch. 663.
3391

duct, and not that which is secreted in the heart of the owner, that the law regards. Acts indicate the intention, and upon the intention clearly expressed by open acts and visible conduct the public and individual citizens may act. Nor is it to mere secret agreements or arrangements unknown to public officers and to purchasers of lots that Courts are to look. What they do look to, and what good conscience and fair dealing require they should regard, is the conduct of the landowner; that is open to the scrutiny and knowledge of the community and its members."⁵

The foregoing principle, it will be noticed, throws useful light on "time-honored but misused distinction between *void* acts and *voidable* acts. The *voidness* of an act (or, more correctly, of conduct which has never become a legal act) is seen to be a quality *purely relative*, *i. e.* an instrument may be void, as against the grantee or payee, yet valid as against the indorsee or the grantee's grantee. It may even be valid as against one of two grantees, though void as against the other, or valid for one clause and void for the next, — consequences thoroughly accepted in the modern judicial rulings (*post*, §§ 2415-2420, *passim*). The conception, so often met with, that voidness, when conceded for one person, necessarily involves voidness in the absolute sense, *i. e.* for every other person,⁶ is therefore unfounded and unpractical, since the test of reasonable consequences will differ for different persons affected by the conduct.

As a part of the same erroneous conception, the *relative quality* of an act, as valid for one person while invalid for another, has been associated exclusively with the term *voidable*. But this is the confounding of two separate ideas in the same term. A voidable act is one which may be annulled at the actor's option (*post*, § 2423), but is valid till annulled; while a void act is of itself null, and requires no further act exercising an option, — the practical differences being, first, that the voidable act remains valid if the option is

⁵ The following opinions further illustrate this principle: 1898, *Fox v. R. Co.*, 70 Conn. 1, 38 Atl. 871 (transfer of bonds; the transferor was not allowed to be asked, "Was it your intention to convey the coupons?" because it called for "the actual, secret, unmanifested intention of H., which under the circumstances was of no legal significance; the real question was as to his manifested intention, and this could be ascertained only from the contract, read in the light of the circumstances under which it was made"); 1880, *Stoddard v. Ham*, 129 Mass. 363 (the plaintiff sold goods to L., believing without good ground that he was only agent for the defendant, and the defendant bought the goods from L.; the defendant was held not liable; "a party cannot escape the natural and reasonable interpretation which must be put on what he says and does, by showing that his words were used and his acts done with a different and undisclosed intention"); 1893, *Hobbs v. Massasoit W. Co.*, 158 id. 194, 33 N. E. 495 ("the general principle that conduct which imports acceptance or assent is acceptance or assent in the view of the law, whatever may have been the actual state of mind of the party"; per Holmes, J.); 1854, *Lennig v. Ralston*, 23 Pa. 137 (under a statute giving

extra damages for dishonor of a bill drawn in Pennsylvania upon a foreign drawee, the defendant was held liable upon a bill bearing the word "Philadelphia" but actually completed by the defendant's partner in England; "It bore the dress of a bill of exchange drawn in Pennsylvania, and, upon the principle that every one is presumed to intend to produce all the consequences to which his acts naturally and necessarily tend, the presumption is that the defendant intended that the purchasers should receive it under the belief that it was a bill drawn in Philadelphia"). For the state of juristic opinion in Germany, see *Der Irrthum bei nichtigen Verträgen*, Rudolf Leonhard, Berlin, 1882, *passim*; and the references in Holland, *Jurisprudence*, 3d ed., c. 8, p. 101, note 1.

⁶ *E. g.*: 1824, *Parker, C. J.*, in *Somes v. Brewer*, 2 Pick. 184, 191: "Between the grantor and the grantee in such cases, the technical difference between 'void' and 'voidable' is wholly immaterial. Whatever may be avoided may in good sense, to this purpose, be called void. . . . But in regard to the consequences to third persons the distinction is highly important, because nothing can be founded upon a deed which is absolutely void; whereas from those which are only voidable fair titles may flow."

never exercised, and, secondly, that its invalidity must be pleaded affirmatively.⁷ Now the relative quality — *i. e.* of affecting one person though not another — is concededly true of voidable acts. But that it is not their inherent mark may be perceived from two circumstances; on the one hand, that a voidable act may continue to be voidable in the hands of a third person, so far as he is a transferee with notice (*i. e.* the voidability, like the voidness, may absolutely affect the act under certain circumstances), and, on the other hand, that some acts ordinarily voidable are by modern doctrine (*e. g.* the contracts of a lunatic⁸) valid for even the immediate promisee, if he did not and could not know of the avoiding circumstance.

The result is, then, that the distinction between relative and absolute validity must be separated from the idea of voidness and voidableness. The only place for the former contrast is between acts permitted and acts prohibited by public policy (*ante*, § 2414). So long as an act does not fall within the classes absolutely prohibited and made null, *its validity is always relative*, depending on the foregoing principle of reasonable consequences as governing intent.

The application of that principle is now to be examined. It comes to be applied under each of the three elements (*ante*, § 2404) of a legal act, namely, (A) its subject, (B) its terms, and (C) its finality.

§ 2414. (A) *Jural Subject of an Act; Secret Intent not to be Bound.* The result of the foregoing principle, as applied to the requirement that an act must be jural in its subject (*ante*, §§ 2404, par. (1), *a*, § 2406) is plain. When the first party has so conducted himself that the natural outward import of his act is a legal transaction, it is immaterial what his own actual intent was, — whether to jest, or to do a charity, or otherwise to be without legal consequences. This rule has been applied to *marriage ceremonies*, to *household services*, and to a variety of transactions.¹

In the other aspect (*ante*, § 2406), however, in what concerns the prohibitions of *public policy against transactions* of certain kinds, making them void, this is obviously independent of the will of the parties. They cannot

⁷ 1765, *Zouch v. Parsons*, 3 Burr. 1794, 1805 (L. C. J. Mansfield: "An infant, or they who stand in his place, cannot plead 'non est factum' and give the infancy in evidence; but they must plead the infancy specially, to avoid the deed").
⁸ 1892, *Imperial Loan Co. v. Stone*, 1 Q. B. 599; *Harriman, Contracts*, § 409.
¹ *Eng.*: 1727, *Osborn v. Guy's Hospital*, 2 Str. 728 (services as a friend, not as a broker, in transacting stock affairs); 1813, *Taylor v. Brewer*, 1 M. & S. 290 (a promise that "such remuneration shall be made as shall be deemed right"; this was held "merely an engagement of honor," "throwing the plaintiff upon the mercy" of the defendant); *U. S.*: 1876, *Day v. Caton*, 19 Mass. 513 ("The circumstances of each case would necessarily determine whether silence, with a knowledge that another was doing valuable work for his benefit and with the expectation of payment, indicated that consent which

would give rise to a contract"); 1863, *Keller v. Holderman*, 11 Mich. 248 (check for an old watch, given as a jest); 1870, *McClurg v. Terry*, 21 N. J. Eq. 225, 237 (marriage in jest); 1851, *Perkins v. Harney*, 1 R. I. 493 ("It is not necessary for you to consider that there was an express promise made and accepted in terms; but if his conduct was such as to induce her to believe that he intended to marry her, and she acted upon that belief, . . . that will raise a promise"); 1890, *Henderson Bridge Co. v. McGrath*, 134 U. S. 260, 275, 10 Sup. 730 (an assurance to "do what was right"); 1845, *Andrus v. Foster*, 17 Vt. 556 (household services of a child; "it is incumbent upon her to show that at the time it was expected by both parties that she should receive such compensation, or that the circumstances under which the services were performed were such that such expectation was reasonable and natural").

be allowed to control or evade the prohibition in any manner; hence, the nature of the transaction, as being *usurious* or the like, may always be shown, and the parol evidence rule interposes no obstacle.²

§ 2415. (B) *Terms of an Act; (a) Signing a Completed Document by Mistake; (1) Individual Mistake not known to or induced by the Second Party.* In applying the general principle (*ante*, § 2413) to the second element of an act, namely, its terms or contents (*ante*, § 2404, par. 1, *b*), the doctrine of reasonable consequences calls for several important distinctions in order to solve the various forms of practical problems. In the first place, a distinction may arise between *negotiable instruments* and other documents, for in the former a new person, entering posterior to the original circumstances, may by the law acquire original rights; and thus the rule may have a different result according as the second party is the immediate or the subsequent holder of the instrument. Furthermore, specific kinds of contracts are in experience often accompanied by inattention or by imposition — such as bills of lading and insurance policies —, and the principle of reasonableness may be affected by this feature of practical life. In the second place, and running through all kinds of legal acts, a distinction is necessary (based on the principle of reasonable consequences) between *individual* and *mutual mistake* (*i. e.* by one party alone and by both parties), and also between *unilateral mistakes* which are *known to the second party* and those which are *not known* to him. In the third place, a distinction is necessary between signing a specific and *complete document* under mistake as to its actual terms, and signing a paper which is *blank* or *unfinished* or is capable of being altered. These various distinctions are to be noted separately under each head.

(a) *Signing a Completed Document by Mistake; (1) Individual Mistake, not known to or induced by the Second Party.* Where a legal act is executed by signing a specific and *complete document*, the second party has a right to treat the signed contents as representing the terms of the act. The principle of reasonable consequences plainly requires this result. That the signer did not intend to execute such terms is immaterial; and whether the lack of intent was due to a failure to read it over, or to some other cause, is immaterial. In other words, his individual innocent mistake or deliberate secret dissent cannot be shown. Such may be taken to be the general rule.¹ As

² 1767, *Collins v. Blantern*, 2 Wils. 347 (usury); 1781, *Lowe v. Waller*, 2 Doug. 736 (usury); and cases cited in Ames' Cases on Bills and Notes, I, 400, note, 416, note, 464, note, 574, note.

¹ *Eng.*: 1860, *Lewis v. R. Co.*, 5 H. & N. 867 (Pollock, C. B., sanctioned a ruling "that if a person signs a contract [without reading], and will not venture to deny that he was aware it was a contract, and that he saw the 'conditions,' and there is no evidence to detract from the apparent result, he is bound by it"); *U. S.*: 1903, *Georgia Med. Co. v. Hyman & Co.*, 117 Ga. 351, 45 S. E. 238 ("that igno-

rance [of the contents] was due to his own negligence"); 1884, *Black v. R. Co.*, 111 Ill. 351, 358 ("When a party of mature years and sound mind, being able to read and write, without any imposition or artifice to throw him off his guard, deliberately signs a written agreement without informing himself as to the nature of its contents, he will nevertheless be bound"; whether here the plaintiff was misled by the defendant's representations that a release of liability was a free pass, held a question of fact); 1894, *State National Bank v. Butler*, 149 Id. 575, 36 N. E. 1005 (defendant held liable as partner, to the payee of a partnership note, the

exceptions to this rule, there may be two classes of cases. 1. Where a document was drafted and prepared by the second party, and contains also parts which physically constitute virtually a separate document and are not included in the scope of the first party's signature, it may be proper, in order to protect against imposition, to exonerate him if he misunderstood the extent of the terms to which his signature apparently applied. This may be the case for an insurance application.² 2. Where a person is illiterate, or blind, or ignorant of the alien language of the document, his case, again, is to be tested by the doctrine of reasonable consequences as applied to the circumstances. In other words, he is of course not bound as against the second party if that party himself misrepresented the contents (*post*, § 2416), nor is he bound against a transferee of a chose in action, who can be in no better position; but if the instrument is negotiable, and has come to the hands of a bona fide holder for value, then the signer is liable if under the circumstances he had not taken proper precaution to ascertain the contents, i. e. if he was negligent.³

partnership agreement having been signed by the defendant in ignorance of its contents and in reliance upon the statements of her brother, who was a partner); 1903, *Johnson v. Richardson*, 67 Kan. 521, 73 Pac. 113 (release of liability for injuries); 1858, *Diman v. R. Co.*, 5 R. I. 130 (the defendant, being solicited to increase or renew his subscription to stock of the plaintiff railroad company, having formerly been a subscriber to 10 shares of a total value of \$1000, took the subscription-book from the agent, intending to renew his old subscription, and wrote 20 shares and \$2000, and handed the book to the agent; on later discovering his mistake, the subscription as written was held binding; "grant that he designed, and at the time expressed his design, of renewing only his old subscription, . . . and permitted his hand to write what his will did not direct," yet this "necessarily imported, in such a personal act, negligence or carelessness on his part"); 1896, *Coates v. Early*, 46 S. C. 220, 24 S. E. 305 (the plaintiff sent the defendant a sample card of needles containing 25, and a blank order for "needle cards"; the defendant filled out an order for five thousand needle cards; held, that the defendant could not show that he thought that he was ordering five thousand needles, instead of five thousand cards of needles).

For individual mistake as a bar to specific performance, see *post*, § 2417.

1895, *Yoch v. Ins. Co.*, 111 Cal. 503, 44 Pac. 189 (application for insurance, containing the words "less than 15 rooms," and signed by the insured; the insured was allowed to testify that he did not read the application nor know that the words were there; the ordinary rule was held not to apply where "the instrument contains no words of obligation and the clause invoked by the signer does not purport to be a statement by him or in answer to a question put to him"); 1875, *Hartford L. Ins. Co. v. Gray*, 80 Ill. 28, 31 (insurance application; the signature being proved, "it affords *prima facie*

evidence that the contents of the instrument were known to the subscriber, and that it is his act, and hence that the burden is upon those who assert the contrary"); 1903, *Gwaltney v. Provident S. L. Assur. Co.*, 132 N. C. 925, 44 S. E. 659 (insurance policy handed to the insured on the street; failure to read, allowed to be shown). The following opinion collects numerous cases: 1902, *Bostwick v. Ins. Co.*, 116 Wis. 392, 89 N. W. 538, 92 N. W. 246 (insurance policy signed without reading).

The earlier rule, as laid down in *Thoroughgood's Case* (*ante*, § 2405), seems to have made it a formal test whether the illiterate demanded a reading and obtained a false one; but the modern rule is more flexible: *Eng.*: 1869, *Foster v. Mackinnon*, L. R. 4 C. P. 704 (when a document is falsely read over to a blind or illiterate person, "then, at least if there be no negligence, the signature so obtained is of no force"); *U. S.*: 1871, *Puffer v. Smith*, 57 Ill. 527 (similar to *Walker v. Ebert*, Wis., *infra*); 1896, *Green v. Wilkie*, 98 Ia. 74, 66 N. W. 1046 (note signed by an illiterate person on false representations that it was a note of an entirely different tenor from the one agreed, held invalid in the hands of a bona fide holder for value; "the rule we apply is not the usual one in which innocent holders of negotiable paper are protected against fraud in the inception of a note; in such cases there is a note, but the bona fides of it is questioned; in this case the note has never existed in the sense of the minds of the parties meeting, and there is no negligence to render the defendant liable on other grounds"); 1881, *Trambly v. Ricard*, 130 Mass. 259 ("The fact that the plaintiff was an unlettered person, who could not read and write, is of controlling importance; . . . a party who is ignorant of the contents of a written instrument, from inability to read, who signs it without intending to, and who is chargeable with no negligence in not ascertaining the character of it, is no more bound than if it were a forgery"); 1903, *New*

Where the document has been *not signed*, but merely *taken into possession* — as a bill of lading or a notice —, it is less easy to fix upon a definite test. For formal *bills of lading*, there is a tendency to lay down a general rule that the shipper's acceptance of the manual custody of the document from the carrier is conclusive;⁴ though even here it is in Illinois always left to the jury as a question of fact in each case.⁵ But for *tickets, receipts, and notices*, the circumstances of each case are usually investigated (as a question of law, however), and the decision turns upon varying considerations of good sense and experience.⁶

§ 2416. *Same*: (a) *Signing a Completed Document*; (2) *Individual Mistake known to or induced by the Second Party*. Where the party's error as to the contents of his signed document is *known to the second party*, the first party may, of course, by the general principle (*ante*, § 2413), insist upon the terms as supposed by him, because these are identical with those which he appeared to the second party to be intending to utter. In other words, the actual and therefore the reasonable consequence of his volition to express himself in certain terms was precisely what the second party understood to be that expression. 1. The ordinary instance is that of *fraudulent misrepresentations* of the document's terms by the second party;¹ and, in

York C. & H. R. R. Co. v. Difendaffer, — C. C. A. —, 125 Fed. 893 (contract signed by an illiterate person, without seeking explanation from the other party or from third persons, held binding); 1871, Walker v. Ebert, 29 Wis. 194, 196 ("the party whose signature to such paper is obtained by fraud as to the character of the paper itself, who is ignorant of each character and has no intention of signing it, and who is guilty of no negligence in affixing his signature or in not ascertaining the character of the instrument, is no more bound by it than if it were a total forgery, the signature included").

⁴ 1868, Grace v. Adams, 100 Mass. 505 (a consignor of a package held to assent to the terms of a bill of lading taken by him without reading; "it was his duty to read it; the law presumes, in the absence of fraud or imposition, that he did read it, or was otherwise informed of its contents and was willing to assent to its terms without reading it; . . . the defendants have a right to this protection, and are not to be deprived of it by the wilful or negligent omission of the plaintiff to read the paper").

⁵ In Illinois, the mere acceptance of the bill of lading, or even the reading of it, is treated as *per se* inconclusive: 1873, Anchor Line v. Dater, 68 Ill. 369 ("the shipper had no alternative but an acceptance of it, and his assent to its conditions cannot be inferred from that fact alone"); 1895, Chicago & Alton R. Co. v. Davis, 159 Ill. 53, 42 N. E. 382; 1893, Wabash R. Co. v. Harris, 55 Ill. App. 159, 162 ("It was necessary to show that he accepted it with a full understanding on his part of the condition or limitation, and actually intended to assent to it; and these were questions for the jury").

⁶ 1848, Rice v. Mfg. Co., 2 Cush. 80 (regula-

tions for mill hands, given to an applying employee, who thereupon went to work; held that the plaintiff was bound "if she had read the regulations, or if she had received from the operatives in the mill or from other sources general information as to their contents, and was content to waive further inquiry"); 1891, Fonseca v. Cunard S. Co., 153 Mass. 553, 27 N. E. 665 (the plaintiff held to have assented to the conditions of a passenger ticket, printed on two large quarto pages, received by him but not signed nor read, the circumstances being such that "the passenger taking it should have understood that it was a contract containing stipulations"; the case of a check or pasteboard ticket distinguished, because it does not "purport to be a contract"); 1870, Blossom v. Dodl, 43 N. Y. 264 (a passenger held not to have assented to terms printed in small type on the face of a baggage receipt given to him at a time and place which made it illegible and given without oral notice of its tenor).

¹ 1896, Bank of Guntersville v. Webb, 108 Ala. 132, 19 So. 14 (as between the parties, a deposit-slip signed without reading, upon the faith of misrepresentations by the other party as to the contents, is not binding); 1879, Kilmer v. Smith, 77 N. Y. 226 (conveyance containing an undertaking to pay a mortgage debt; the party not having orally understood this as a term, and the defendant having inserted it deliberately with the intent of deceiving the plaintiff, though the plaintiff signed it without noticing the clause, the clause was struck out); 1881, Albany C. S. Inetit. v. Burdick, 87 Ill. 40 (facts and ruling similar to Kilmer v. Smith, *supra*).

particular, a false reading to a person illiterate, blind, or alien.³ Where the instrument is negotiable, and a *bona fide* holder later receives it, the question becomes one of negligence at large, *i. e.* whether, with reference to the possible consequences to people in general of signing documents, the person signing used such caution as was reasonable; and this principle will be the same for illiterate³ as for literate⁴ persons, though the decision of it might be different in the two cases. 2. Where the first party's error is merely *known* to the second party, *without fraudulent means* by the latter, the result is still the same, for the latter cannot claim that the first party's expressed words were reasonably so accepted by him;⁵ the only difference ought to be that in this case the first party should be satisfied with having the document reformed, while in the case of fraud he ought to be entitled to repudiate the entire transaction, by way of penalty upon the trickster. 3. Where the first party's error was *not known* to the second party, but was *induced by the latter's own conduct*, here also the first party may not be bound; for in such case it may well be that the terms actually expressed did not come to be expressed as the natural consequence of the first party's volition, but were due rather to the second party's own conduct. In that event the latter is not entitled to charge the former with them; in the contrary event the case becomes the ordinary one of individual mistake, which is immaterial (*ante*, § 2415). This distinction in practical application may lead, of course, to fine shades of interpretation of conduct.⁶

³ Cases cited *ante*, § 2415, note 8, and the following: 1900, *Pioneer Cooperage Co. v. Romasnowicz*, 186 Ill. 9, 57 N. E. 864 (release of right of action by a workman); 1901, *Cameron v. Estabrooks*, 73 Vt. 73, 50 Atl. 838.

⁴ Cases cited *ante*, § 2415, note 8.

⁵ 1869, *Foster v. Mackinnon*, L. R. 4 C. P. 704 (C. brought to the defendant, who was aged, a bill of exchange, stating that it was a guarantee, and the defendant, seeing only the back of the paper, and believing it to be a guarantee of a sort formerly signed, wrote his name; an instruction that the defendant was not liable to a *bona fide* holder if he signed it on fraudulent representations "in the belief that it was a guarantee and if the defendant was not guilty of any negligence in so signing the paper," was held correct; "it was not his design, and, if he were guilty of no negligence, it was not even his fault, that the instrument he signed turned out to be a bill of exchange; it was as if he had written his name on a sheet of paper for the purpose of franking a letter, or in a lady's album").

⁶ 1885, *Loomis v. Day*, 52 Conn. 483 (the plaintiff was held entitled to the correction of certain bonds whose terms made them redeemable in 20 years, instead of in 10 years as by the vote of the town-meeting; the plaintiff's treasurer having signed the bonds without reading them, but the defendant knowing of the error; good opinion by Loomis, J.); 1883, *Shelton v. Ellis*, 70 Ga. 297 (the plaintiff printed some schedules of railroad-fares, in which by mistake a certain fare was printed as \$21.25 in-

stead of \$36.70; the defendant, knowing of the error, bought from an agent of the railroad a quantity of tickets at the erroneous price; the plaintiff was held entitled to have the tickets impounded); 1888, *Keister v. Myers*, 115 Ind. 312, 17 N. E. 161 (similar situation for a mortgage; "a party who admits that an instrument which a court of equity is asked to reform does not set forth the agreement as it was actually made, and as the other party believed it did, will not be heard to say that he intentionally brought about or silently acquiesced in the discrepancy between the instrument and the agreement as made"); 1903, *Story v. Gazmell*, — Nehr. —, 94 N. W. 982; 1890, *Wanner v. Landis*, 137 Pa. 61, 20 Atl. 950 (the plaintiff signed a deed on the representation that its contents affected only a tenancy in common, but it in fact included a release of dower; the defendant purchased at a public sale, but after notice of the error given by the plaintiff; the deed was held invalid as to the dower).

⁶ *Eng.*: 1869, *Mackenzie v. Coulson*, L. R. 8 Eq. 368 (the defendants, desiring to secure an insurance against particular average by rust, engaged F. to secure insurance; F., acting through H., who acted through S., whose clerk W. negotiated, procured from the plaintiffs a memorandum which expressly excepted particular average, but in filling out the policy this clause was inadvertently omitted, and the plaintiffs signed the policy without reading it or knowing of the omission, and the policy on being transmitted to the defendants was accepted by them as being in accordance

§ 2417. **Same:** (a) **Signing a Completed Document;** (3) **Mutual Mistake; General Principle.** Concerning mutual mistake and its effect on the terms of the legal act, it is necessary at the outset to exclude two questions which do not involve the present principle. In the first place, the question what sort of mistake — including individual mistake — will suffice to *bar a bill for specific performance*, is a distinct one; it involves merely the choice of remedies, not the terms of the valid act.¹ In the next place, the question whether an act may be avoided for a *mistaken assumption of fact external to the contract*, is a distinct one, belonging under the principle of avoidability (*post*, § 2423). This kind of question arises for all varieties of acts, — for example, a will or a gift is made to a younger son on the erroneous assumption that the elder one is deceased; or a deed is made of land seen by the parties and accurately described in the deed, on the erroneous assumption that it contains forty acres, though in fact it contains only thirty acres; or a deed attempting merely to release dower employs, by error of law, terms which effect a transfer of the wife's estate sole.² In all such instances the present principle is not involved. This is to be seen in three respects; for one thing, the terms of the act itself are not the subject of error; they are precisely as intended, and the error is as to a fact exterior to the instrument; for another thing, there is no variance between the oral understanding and the subsequent document; the question would be precisely the same had no writing been used, — as when a horse,

with their intention; held, (1) that the policy as signed and sent by the plaintiffs was a mere proposal, and became a contract only when accepted; (2) that the defendant was not responsible for the erroneous transcription by S.'s clerk; and (3) that the plaintiffs' own carelessness made them responsible for the terms of the instrument as transmitted by them and accepted by the defendant); *U. S.*: 1887, *Palmer v. Ins. Co.*, 54 Conn. 438, 9 Atl. 248 (the parties having agreed to renew a policy of insurance, the defendant wrote into the new policy, without calling the plaintiff's attention, a new clause of co-insurance, and the plaintiff signed it without reading; "the rule of law that no person shall be permitted to deliver himself from contract obligations by saying that he did not read what he signed or accepted is subject to this limitation, namely, that it is not to be applied in behalf of any person who by word or act has induced the omission to read"); 1896, *Marshall v. Westrope*, 98 Ia. 324, 67 N. W. 257 (defendant and plaintiff, negotiating for a sale, differed as to the medium of payment; the defendant, having said that he would consider the matter and make a final proposition, sent by mail a draft-contract signed by himself containing his original terms, which the plaintiff after reading signed, in the supposition that the terms represented his own original terms; held, that the only agreement made "was the one expressed in writing," and that even if the plaintiffs wished to cancel it, "their own negligence in signing the contract would seem to be a bar"); 1878, *Moran v. McLarty*, 75 N. Y. 25 (plaintiff held not en-

titled to the reformation of an instrument containing a guaranty clause, which was to have been a part of the agreement by the defendant's understanding but not by the plaintiff's, the plaintiff having partially read the instrument and then signed it without noticing the clause).

¹ 1746, *Joynes v. Statham*, 8 Atk. 388; 1794, *Rich v. Jackson*, 6 Ves. Jr. 334, note (L. C. Hardwicke: "Parol evidence of the conduct of the parties, the manner of conducting the transaction, the unfairness and hardship, may afford a good ground to leave the party in the condition in which he puts himself at law, to make what he chooses to make of it; but ought not to make this Court give him any aid"); 1801, *Townshend v. Stangroom*, 6 Ves. Jr. 328, 888 (L. C. Eldon; holding it not true "that because parol evidence [of unilateral mistake] should not be admitted at law, therefore it shall not be admitted in equity upon the question whether, admitting the agreement to be such as at law it is said to be, the party shall have a specific execution"); compare the cases and citations in *Ames' Cases on Equity Jurisdiction*, 374 ff.

² The following cases will serve as examples: 1871, *Stockbridge Iron Co. v. Hudson Iron Co.*, 107 Mass. 290, 318 (where the mistake is only as to the legal effect of intended words, reformation will not be granted); 1889, *Newton v. Tolles*, 66 N. H. 136, 19 Atl. 1092; 1875, *Bush v. Hicks*, 60 N. Y. 298, 301 (a deed reformed in which the descriptive words of the boundaries were the intended ones, but the description covered more land than was intended).

sold orally, proves to have been dead at the time of the sale; and, finally, in these cases the problem varies for different kinds of acts, for the rules about materiality of error as applied to the case of a testator or donor are different from those which apply to deeds and contracts.

The kind of mutual mistake involved in the present principle is purely a mistake as to the *actual words intended to form part of the act*, just as in the cases of individual mistake already considered (*ante*, §§ 2415-2416). This sort of mutual mistake can rarely occur in oral acts, but it is common enough in written acts. The case is the simple one of an oral agreement which, when reduced to writing for signature, contains terms varying from the actual understanding of the parties, but is nevertheless signed by them both in ignorance of the variance. No one appears ever to have doubted that in such cases the instrument should be judicially amended to represent the actual agreement.³ The only uncertainty has been in the theory of this proceeding. The important aspect of theory is that the amendment ought not to be conceived as a change or correction of the actual agreement. The erroneous instrument itself is not the actual agreement; *that* is found in the parties' common supposition of what the instrument contained, because, on the general principle (*ante*, § 2413), the terms of the act, for either party, are such as were reasonably caused by him to be apprehended by the other, and these clearly the instrument itself does not represent. "Neither party," in the language of Mr. Justice Holmes, "has purported or been understood to express assent to the conveyance as it stands."⁴ Hence the frequent emphasis of judicial opinion upon this theory of the process:

1869, *James, V. C.*, in *Mackenzie v. Coulson*, L. R. 8 Eq. 368: "Courts of equity do not rectify contracts; they may and do rectify instruments purporting to have been made in pursuance of the terms of contracts."

1858, *Ames, C. J.*, in *Diman v. R. Co.*, 5 R. I. 130: "A court of equity has no power to alter or reform an agreement made between parties, since this would be in truth a power to contract for them; but merely to correct the writing executed as evidence of the agreement, so as to make it express [to all the world] what the parties actually agreed to. It follows that the mistake which it may correct in such a writing must be, as it is usually expressed, the mistake of both parties to it; that is, such a mistake in the draughting of the writing as makes it convey the intent or meaning of neither party to the contract."

1879, *Rapallo, J.*, in *Whitemore v. Farrington*, 76 N. Y. 452: "The jurisdiction to reform written instruments in cases free from fraud is exercised only where the instrument actually executed differs from what both parties intended to execute and supposed that they were executing or accepting."

1894, *Torrance, J.*, in *Park Bros. & Co. v. Blodgett & C. Co.*, 64 Conn. 28, 29 Atl. 133: "The written agreement certainly fails to express the real agreement of the parties in a material point; it fails to do so by mutual mistake; . . . and the instrument, if corrected,

³ The doctrine goes back to the beginnings of modern equity: 1750, *Baker v. Paine*, 1 Ves. Sr. 456 (bill for account on a sale of goods, with a deduction for certain charges; but "it appeared by the minutes and the calculation made by themselves at the time that this was contrary to the intent and a mistake by the drawer"; L. C.

Hardwicke held that "these minutes must be taken to be the agreement of the parties, and if any material variation (as is admitted by the defendant), the articles must be rectified").

⁴ 1891, *Goode v. Riley*, 153 Mass. 585, 28 N. E. 228.

will place both parties just where they intended to place themselves in their relations to each other."

There is therefore an insidious fallacy in the language of an early and much quoted decision⁵ which places this doctrine upon the ground of enforcing *specific performance of contracts*, *i. e.* of assuming that there are two acts of contract, the prior one including by implication an oral agreement to reduce the oral transaction to written form. But written contracts are not necessarily preceded by oral ones; the moment of assent, and thus of the beginning of obligation, to the terms as finally settled upon may be the moment of signature of the writing, — as in numerous negotiations by mail; and in such instances it is equally possible (though not common) for an erroneous term to be inserted in the draft at the last moment. The correction of erroneous instruments therefore does not rest necessarily upon any assumption that a prior completed oral contract is being enforced. This fallacious assumption has, however, led practically, in a few jurisdictions, to the anomalous doctrine that a term *omitted* from the writing *by mutual mistake* (as distinguished from a term inserted by mistake) cannot be inserted in amendment, if the contract is one *required by the statute of frauds to be in writing*.⁶ If it had been appreciated that the process of reformation consists in making the instrument state what the parties supposed that it represented — in short, in making it represent what *they are* doing, not what they have already agreed to do, this anomaly would not have been accepted. For example, if the parties, for the first and last time, met and signed a document in ink which proved to be a disappearing ink and became straightway invisible, the Court could undoubtedly cause the terms to be indelibly restored according to the parties' understanding of what the paper contained; here the process is in effect precisely the ordinary one known as "reformation," and yet there is no writing as required by the statute. The theory of reformation is that the instrument already *is* subjectively — *i. e.* to the parties — what they supposed it to be, and therefore that the statutory requirement of writing is, subjectively at least, satisfied; and that the "reformation" is needed only to make the instrument appear to all the rest of the world as it appeared (and therefore legally was) to the parties when they signed it.

The really complicated and troublesome questions concerning mutual mistake, as commonly so called, are those of the character first mentioned, namely, questions as to the materiality of some expressed term or unexpressed assumption. These are questions common to all contracts, written or unwritten, and involve the theory of avoidability (*post*, § 2423).

⁵ 1825, Washington, J., in *Hunt v. Rorsmanier*, 1 Pet. 1: "The execution of agreements, fairly and legally entered into, is one of the peculiar branches of equity jurisprudence, and if the instrument which is intended to execute the agreement be from any cause insufficient for that purpose, the agreement remains as much unexecuted as if one of the parties had refused altogether to comply with his engagement; and a court of equity will in the exercise of its ac-

knowledge jurisdiction afford relief in the one case as well as in the other, by compelling the delinquent party fully to perform his agreement according to the terms of it and to the manifest intention of the part s."

⁶ 1869, Glass v. Hulbert, 102 Mass. 24 ("From the oral agreement there can be derived no legal right, either to have performance of its stipulations or written evidence of its terms").

§ 2418. Same: (a) **Signing a Completed Document**; (3) **Mutual Mistake, as affecting Bona Fide Holders for Value.** The theory of reformation is to make the instrument state, objectively and in appearance to others, what it did subjectively state to the parties themselves. The one party is not bound to the other by the purporting tenor of the act, because the other party shared the error. But as against third persons, who are not sharers of the same supposition, and who are authorized by the substantive law to rely upon the instrument as defining the rights acquired by it, the tenor of the instrument controls, as a necessary result of the general principle (*ante*, § 2413) that the actor is responsible for the reasonable consequences of his act. In other words, an instrument may be reformable as against one person, but not as against another; the only condition being, in the latter case, that the transaction is one by which subsequent transferees may acquire rights not wholly dependent on the title (*i. e.* the legal acts) of their transferors. This will of course be the case with *commercial paper*. It should also be recognized for deeds.¹ The theory of the law is well illustrated in the circumstance that the same deed may at the same time be reformable as against one of the original parties to it, though not as against another.²

§ 2419. Same: (b) **Signing a Document having Blanks, or capable of Alteration; Writing One's Name not as a Signature.** (1) When a document as signed contains a *blank space*, and the blank is afterwards filled in by another person, the liability of the maker to be charged with the terms thus filled in is determined by the general principle of reasonable consequences (*ante*, § 2413). As against the *person filling the blank*, the maker is of course chargeable for such terms as accord with his own authority or consent,¹ and is not chargeable with any other terms. But even against *third persons* who may by substantive law rely on the instrument as the foundation of their rights, the maker may be chargeable, by the test of reasonable consequences; because an improper insertion by the immediate transferee may be (in the circumstances) a consequence which a prudent man might well have apprehended. For negotiable instruments,² as well as for deeds, this principle

¹ 1862, *Garrard v. Frankel*, 30 Beav. 445 (the plaintiff and the defendant agreed for a lease by the former to the latter at 230 ℓ ., but the plaintiff, in filling out the blanks, wrote by mistake 130 ℓ . for 230 ℓ .; the defendant signed the lease with knowledge of the discrepancy; held, (1) that the defendant might give up the lease, but if she retained the lease, could do so only at a rent of 230 ℓ .; but (2) that B., who had advanced money to the defendant on an assignment of the lease, was to be treated as a purchaser for value without notice and have a lien on the house for the amount of the advances, whether the defendant retained or gave up the lease); 1891, *Holmes, J.*, in *Goode v. Riley*, 153 Mass. 585, 28 N. E. 228 ("As things stand, a purchaser without notice could hold him to the words which he has used").

² 1862, *Garrard v. Frankel*, *supra*; 1876, *Wilcox v. Lucas*, 121 Mass. 22 (W. sold his

share of mining land to L. and A., and, by mistake in supposing certain ore land not to be within the share, an intended reservation of rights was omitted; reformation was ordered as to L., who shared the mistake, "to prevent him from relying on the grant," but not as to A., who did not share the mistake).

¹ 1829, *Hudson v. Revett*, 5 Bing. 363 (quoted *ante*, § 2408).

² 1853, *Montague v. Perkins*, 22 L. J. C. P. 187 (defendant held liable on an acceptance in blank, filled up and negotiated by the payee twelve years later: "he must be taken to have intended the natural consequence of his act"); and cases cited in *Ames' Cases on Bills and Notes*, I, 526, note.

³ 1890, *State v. Matthews*, 44 Kan. 506, 25 Pac. 36 (the grantor executed a deed with a blank for the grantee's name, and left it with M. to negotiate with a proposed grantee; M. filled

seems to have settled into a rule of thumb, where the blank is expressly left for the purpose of later completion and the document is *handed away*. But where the document, though expressly left incomplete, is *retained* by the maker and later leaves his custody without his consent,⁴ or where the blank is a mere superfluous space left uncancelled in an otherwise complete instrument,⁵ the act is treated as not negligence *per se*, and the question turns upon the circumstances of each case.

(2) Where at or execution a document has been *altered* and is acquired by a third person in its altered condition, the same principle serves as a test;⁶ here the question seems always to be open upon the circumstances of each case.

(3) Where the person charged had not signed any document at all, but had *written his name alone, i. e.* for some other purpose than as a signature to a preceding written statement, it is natural to find the Courts holding him not responsible, as a matter of law.⁷ Only rarely could the circumstances here justify leaving the question of negligence to the jury.

in his own name, and recorded the deed, then mortgaging the land to T., on the faith of the record; T. was held to obtain a good title); 1889, *Dohbin v. Cordiner*, 41 Minn. 165, 42 N. W. 870 (a deed executed by a married woman without reading it, on her husband's false representations, was left blank as to grantee and description of property, and the husband filled it with a grantee's name and a description of the wife's property; the *bona fide* grantee was held to obtain a good title, on the ground of the wife's "culpable negligence").

⁴ 1839, *Van Amringe v. Morton*, 4 Whart. 382 (a deed executed and acknowledged, with a blank for the grantee's name, locked by the grantor in a drawer of which the key was given to his brother, who abstracted the deed, filled out the name of a grantee and delivered it, was held not effective, there being no negligence or default in the maker).

⁵ 1827, *Young v. Grote*, 4 Bing. 253 (defendant held liable for checks signed by him in blank, left in his wife's custody, and so filled out by her direction that a blank space before the amount could be filled in to make 50l. into 350l.; "we decide here on the ground that the banker has been misled by want of proper caution on the part of his customer"; "the checks, left by him to be filled up by his wife, when filled up by her become his genuine orders"); 1854, *Barker v. Sterne*, 9 Exch. 684 ("whether the better ground for supporting that decision is that the drawer is responsible for his negligence . . . or that the rest of the world must judge of the authority to fill it up by the paper itself and not by any private instructions, it is unnecessary to inquire"); 1873, *Halifax Union v. Wright*, L. R. 10 Exch. 183 (the ruling in *Young v. Grote* approved, as "perhaps only an application of one of those general principles . . . that a man cannot complain of the consequences of his own default against a person who was misled by that default without any fault of his own").

⁶ *Eng.*: 1859, *Ingham v. Primrose*, 7 C. B. N. s. 82 (defendant held liable on an acceptance delivered to M. without consideration to be discounted, returned to the defendant by M. after failing to obtain discount, then torn in two pieces by the defendant and thrown into the street, and picked up by M. in the defendant's presence, and afterwards negotiated by M.; "the case appears to turn on the question whether the act of tearing the bill in two pieces, being manifest on the face of it, is such an act as *prima facie* ought to have indicated to the plaintiff that it had been withheld or withdrawn from circulation; . . . it was properly a question for the jury whether the bill exhibited appearances which would have led a man of ordinary intelligence to the conclusion that it had been torn for the latter purpose"); *U. S.*: 1870, *Wait v. Pomeroy*, 20 Mich. 576 (defendant held not liable on a note from which, before indorsement to the plaintiff, had been detached a memorandum at the foot, conditioning payment on delivery of a machine; "no one is bound to guard against every possibility of felony"); 1870, *Harvey v. Smith*, 55 Ill. 224 (similar note, bearing the condition in pencil, which was erased before transfer; the defendant held guilty of "gross carelessness," and an instruction that he was liable if the erasure could have been made "without leaving any trace which could be detected by a prudent and careful man," held proper); 1875, *Brown v. Reed*, 79 Pa. 370 (defendant signed an agreement to pay over the proceeds of machines sold by him as agent, the words being so printed that, on separating the paper vertically, one half bore the signature and a form of promissory note; "whether there was negligence in the maker was clearly a question of fact for the jury").

⁷ 1669, *Foster v. Mackinnon*, L. R. 4 C. P. 704 ("It was as if he had written his name on a sheet of paper for the purpose of franking a letter, or in a lady's album"); 1870, *Caulkins v. Whisler*, 29 Ia. 495 (the defendant wrote his

§ 2420. (C) *Delivery of a Document; Deed or Negotiable Instrument delivered to Bona Fide Holder contrary to Intent of Maker.* The third element of every act, its finality of utterance (*ante*, § 2404, par. 1, c, § 2408) — usually marked by the delivery of the instrument — is equally governed, in respect to the competition between intent and expression, by the principle of reasonable consequences (*ante*, § 2413). Whether the act has been completed, or delivered, is not to be determined by the actual intention of the actor, but by the inquiry whether his conduct produced as a reasonable consequence the appearance of finality to the other person.

Where the other person is an *immediate party to the transaction*, and the mutual understanding is that the document has not yet been finally issued and delivered, there is no difficulty; in such cases, the first party is of course not to be charged with the document.¹ But where the other party is a *subsequent transferee* in good faith, and the document is of that sort which permits third persons to acquire independent rights under it, the conduct of the first party, in so dealing with it that as a reasonable consequence it appeared to have been delivered, may charge him, even when he has not actually intended to consummate its delivery. For *commercial paper* there is no doubt, whether the document has been manually handed away subject to a condition,² or whether it has been retained after preparation but unlawfully abstracted from the maker's custody;³ though in the latter case it would of course be rare that the conduct would be deemed negligent, while in the former case the manual transfer would as a rule be made at peril. For *deeds*, an *escrow to the grantee* would be treated as absolute, by the Courts accepting the modern doctrine (*ante*, § 2408), if the grantee was reasonably led to suppose that the delivery was absolute, in spite of the grantor's private intent to the contrary;⁴ and even in those Courts which preserve the traditional arbitrary

name upon a blank piece of paper and gave it to S. to be sent to S's employer so as to identify the defendant's signature when orders for machines were sent to them bearing his name as sales-agent; S. filled in with the words of a note; the defendant was held not liable, because not "so far in fault in the transaction that he ought to be required to bear the loss resulting from the crime").

¹ The cases in §§ 2408-2410, *ante*, illustrate this.

² 1841, *Marston v. Allen*, 8 M. & W. 494 (indorsed bill placed in the custody of the indorser's agent and by him transferred in fraud, held binding); 1860, *Fearing v. Clark*, 16 Gray 74 (defendant held liable on a note wrongfully negotiated by the custodian in escrow; "it is essential that there should have been a delivery of the note by the maker, to take effect as a contract; . . . but this rule is qualified and limited as between the maker and a *bona fide* holder"); and cases cited in *Annes' Cases on Bills and Notes*, I, 573, note.

³ 1878, *Baxendale v. Bennett*, 3 Q. B. 525 (the defendant held not liable on a bill of exchange, written by him, with an acceptance to his own order, but without a drawer's name,

this being then stolen from his desk and negotiated after filling in the drawer's name; *Bramwell, L. J.*: "The defendant here has not voluntarily put into any one's hands the means, or part of the means, for committing a crime; . . . I confess I think he has been negligent, . . . but then this negligence is not the proximate or necessary cause of the fraud; a crime was necessary for its completion"; *Brett, L. J.*: "It was not negligence, for two reasons, first, he did not owe any duty to any one, and, secondly, he did not act otherwise than in a way which an ordinary careful man would act"); 1870, *Burson v. Huntington*, 21 Mich. 415, 431 (holding invalid a note which had been signed by the maker, left on a table pending the obtaining of a surety and the delivery of the payee's deed, and thence taken forcibly by the payee and transferred to the plaintiff).

⁴ 1856, *L. C. J. Campbell*, in *Gudgen v. Besset*, 6 E. & B. 986, 992 ("I should attach no weight whatever to what the grantor might think or intend when he delivered the instrument, unless I thought that it was intended and agreed by both parties that the delivery should operate only as the delivery of an escrow").

rule making absolute an escrow to the grantee (*ante*, § 2408), there is a tendency to rest the result on the ground of negligence, where a *bona fide* third party's interests are involved.⁵ Where the escrow has been made to a *third person*, the principle of reasonable consequences, and the analogy of all the preceding rules, require that the grantor should be bound, to one subsequently holding it, by a delivery made without observance of the condition and contrary to his intent; and such is the rule of most Courts to-day.⁶ But the metaphysical error that a specific actual intent is an indispensable feature of every act (*ante*, § 2413), and the failure to perceive (what the foregoing topics amply illustrate) that the very same conduct may constitute a valid legal act as against one person, though at the same time not as against another person, *i. e.*, that nullity is a relative term only, has induced some Courts to refuse to accept this rule, and to deny title to the subsequent holder.⁷

§ 2421. **Unilateral Acts; foregoing Principles applied to Wills and Ballots.**

(1) A *will* is a unilateral act, *i. e.* there is no second party who acts upon the faith of it as a part of the transaction. Is there then the same reason to require the enforcement, for wills, of the general principle of intent (*ante*, § 2413), namely, that the terms of the act shall be such as were by the actor caused to be expressed as a reasonable consequence to the other party dealing with him? It would seem not. (a) So far as the *terms of the will* are concerned, it is clear that the law does not attempt to apply that principle in its stringency. The signing of a specific document as a will does not, as it does with bilateral acts (*ante*, § 2415), conclude all consideration of the signer's intent to enact those terms into the will; the question of intent is still open. Nevertheless, since the maker is deceased, and the ascertainment of his actual intent is always an elusive and jeopardous inquiry, some practical rule of thumb must if possible be adopted, taking some tangible circumstance of outward conduct as the mark of intent. Such a circumstance, for one, is the

⁵ 1879, *Ordinary v. Thatcher*, 41 N. J. L. 403 (guardian's bond delivered to the county surrogate as agent for the probate judge, the obligee; a delivery in escrow, conditionally on another surety's signature, held absolute; though the old doctrine was invoked, the opinion proceeded upon the ground that "If the matter is left in doubt as to the character of the delivery of this instrument, such doubt should be resolved in favor of the innocent person to secure whom the bond was given, rather than to the advantage of these defendants, whose carelessness has at all events produced this situation").

⁶ 1849, *Blight v. Schenck*, 10 Pa. St. 285, 294 (escrow delivered by the third person without performance of conditions prescribed by the grantor, held effective in favor of a *bona fide* grantee, "who acts on the presumption that the records of the county are not intended to mislead, but speak the truth, that the acts and declarations of the grantor are such as they purport to be"); 1892, *Hnhberd v. Greeley*, 84 Me. 340, 24 Atl. 799 ("Escrows are deceptive in-

struments; they are not what they purport to be; they purport to be instruments which have been delivered, when in fact they have not been delivered; . . . they are capable of being used to deceive innocent purchasers, and the makers of such instruments cannot fall to foresee that they are liable to be so used; . . . [the maker] ought to be responsible for the use that may in fact be made of it").

⁷ 1903, *Mays v. Shields*, 117 Ga. 814, 45 S. E. 68 (yet modifying the doctrine to some extent on lines of negligence); 1859, *Smith v. South Royalton Bank*, 32 Vt. 341 (Bennett, J.: "The deed not having been delivered, it was a nullity and void, or, more properly speaking, never existed; . . . there is a radical distinction, as it respects the rights of a *bona fide* purchaser or assignee without notice, between a void and a voidable instrument; . . . let the principle be as it may in regard to commercial paper, no question can be made as to a void deed"). The authorities are collected in Jones, *Real Property*, §§ 1315 ff.

reading over of the will to or by the testator; and there may be other circumstances which mark his knowledge of the document's contents. Given his knowledge and his ensuing act of signature, and further inquiry must cease, — subject only to those varying circumstances of fraud which may here and there arise. Such apparently is the judicial attitude to-day:

1800, *Wilde, P. J.*, in *Guardhouse v. Blackburn*, L. R. 1 P. & D. 100: "The following propositions commend themselves to the Court as rules which, since the statute, ought to govern its action in respect of a duly executed paper: First, that before a paper so executed is entitled to probate, the Court must be satisfied that the testator knew and approved of the contents at the time he signed it. Secondly, that except in certain cases, where suspicion attaches to the document, the fact of the testator's execution is sufficient proof that he knew and approved the contents. Thirdly, that although the testator knew and approved the contents, the paper may still be rejected, on proof establishing, beyond all possibility of mistake, that he did not intend the paper to operate as a will. Fourthly, that although the testator did know and approve the contents, the paper may be refused probate, if it be proved that any fraud has been purposely practised on the testator in obtaining his execution thereof. Fifthly, that, subject to this last preceding proposition, the fact that the will has been duly read over to a capable testator on the occasion of its execution, or that its contents have been brought to his notice in any other way, should, when coupled with his execution thereof, be held conclusive evidence that he approved as well as he knew the contents thereof. Sixthly, that the above rules apply equally to a portion of the will as to the whole."¹

(b) So far as concern the *finality* of the act — that which corresponds to delivery in deeds — the question was once an open one, as already noticed (*ante*, § 2411); whether an intent to consummate execution existed, was a question of the circumstances of each case. But the formality of attestation has indirectly put such questions at rest; for this formality, indispensable to almost all wills, effectually marks the final adoption of the document as a testamentary utterance;² and no one has ever suggested that such a thing as an attestation in escrow would be judicially sanctioned. Only for holographic wills, so far as these are still recognized, can the question of finality be now raised.³

(2) *Ballots* of election furnish the only other important type of unilateral act. Here again, theoretically, the general principle (*ante*, § 2413) does not

¹ *Accord*: 1873, *Harter v. Harter*, L. R. 3 P. & D. 11; 1891, *Boehm's Goods*, Prob. 247; 1901, *Garnett-Botfield v. same*, Prob. 335; 1890, *Sheer v. Sheer*, 159 Ill. 591, 43 N. E. 334 (the testator had personally requested the witnesses to sign the document he produced as his will; the Court listened to evidence as to its non-conformity with the instructions and as to his probably not having read the final draft; but decided that the presumption arising from his act of signing was not overthrown); 1834, *Downey v. Murphy*, 1 Dev. & B. 82 ("It should have been left to the jury to say whether . . . the presumption, from execution, that the party knew the contents of the paper, understood them, and assented to them, was in fact rebutted by the state of his mind and health at the time the will was prepared and executed, by

its contents, and by the circumstances relied on by the defendant").

Consequently, *words inserted by mistake* may be struck out, though (perhaps inconsistently) words omitted by mistake will not be inserted: 1891, *Boehm's Goods*, *supra* (bequest of 10,000*l.* each to two daughters F. and G.; the name of F. having been inserted by mistake instead of G., it was struck out, though the Court would not replace it by the name of G.); 1901, *Garnett-Botfield v. same*, *supra*; 1991, *Schott's Goods*, Prob. 190; 1902, *Brisco v. Bailie Hsmilton*, Prob. 234; 1902, *O'Connell v. Dow*, 132 Mass. 541, 66 N. E. 788.

² See the quotation *ante*, § 2411.

³ But the actual *date* of a will is always open to inquiry (*ante*, § 2410).

necessarily govern, and the voter's intent — for example, in voting by mistake for an unintended person — might be open to inquiry. But the difficulties of investigation and the possibilities of cajolery and fraud are too great to permit this. Practical needs oblige us to take the written expression of the ballot as the sole and definite element of the voter's act:

1863, *Selden, J.*, in *People v. Prase*, 27 N. Y. 72, 84: "It is proper to ask him for whom he intended to vote; not however, on the ground that his intention as an independent fact could be material, but on the ground that it was a circumstance tending to raise a presumption for whom he did vote; *Denio, C. J.*: "It is only the intention of the voter as expressed by the ballot — interpreted, if necessary, as all written evidence may be — by proof of the concomitant circumstances — which can be taken into consideration on the trial. If the elector who deposited the vote should swear ever so strongly that he intended it to be for a particular candidate, it could not be allowed to him, unless it appeared upon the other competent evidence that his name was actually written or printed upon it."⁴

3. Voidable Acts.

§ 2423. **Motive as making an Act Voidable, Mistake, Fraud, Duress, Infancy, and Insanity.** The distinction between acts void and voidable is well enough established, and the specific conditions of avoidability are for the most part settled in the law. It is here necessary merely to ascertain the part played by this doctrine in the so-called parol evidence rule.¹

That an act is voidable assumes that it is an act, — in other words, that all the requirements of an act, as already examined, are satisfied. So far, then, as an act is held to be voidable, it must be for some other reason than one of the foregoing elements, that is, some reason which concedes that the act is jural and lawful in its subject, intelligible and definite in its terms, and final in its utterance, and that in all these respects there existed in the actor an intention to do the act, or a volition having consequences equivalent to intention. The inquiry, therefore, is, What is the distinction between these elements, the lack of which leaves the act void, and those other elements which merely make the act voidable?

The other elements are all reducible finally to a single consideration, namely, that of motive, — i. e. the relation between the actor's state of mind and some fact external to himself and his act.² This consideration of Motive falls under three general heads:

1. When the fact creating the motive is somewhere mentioned in the *terms of the act*, it is commonly spoken of as a *Condition*. Conditions may be

⁴ *Accord*: 1875, *Beardstown v. Virginia*, 76 Ill. 34, 48 (that a ballot was cast by mistake, held inadmissible); 1898, *Tutt v. Hawkins*, 53 Nebr. 367, 73 N. W. 692 (that ballots were improperly printed in distinguishing between full and unexpired terms, excluded); 1896, *State v. Steinborn*, 92 Wis. 605, 66 N. W. 798 (a voter's intent to vote for a different person, excluded).

How an *ambiguous ballot* may be interpreted is a different question (*post*, § 2461). Whether the ballots, not the *election officer's certificates*,

are the ultimate subject of inquiry is another question (*ante*, § 1351).

¹ Whether an act may be void or voidable as to one person, but not to another, has already been considered (*ante*, § 2413).

² "It is not true, then, as it is sometimes said, that the law does not concern itself with the motives for making contracts. On the contrary, the whole scope of fraud outside the contract is the creation of false motives and the removal of true ones" (Holmes, *The Common Law*, 326).

established by *express stipulation* in the act, or by *implication of law*. Of the latter sort may be, for example, in contracts, a warranty of a horse's pedigree; in deeds, a description of land as containing specified buildings; in wills, a recital (incorrectly) of the death of an elder son as the reason for devising to a younger one.³

2. When the fact creating the motive is *not mentioned in the terms of the act*, the recognized grounds of avoidance are of two general sorts, *Error* and *Compulsion*. (a) *Error* may exist either by the inducement of the second party, or without it. (1) *Error induced by the second party* may involve a fact misrepresented *fraudulently* or *innocently*. In both cases, the fact must have been material as a motive to induce the act; but the right to avoid is much narrower in scope in the latter case than in the former. In both cases, however, the avoidance is due to a fact external to the legal act itself,⁴ and this marks the distinction between void and voidable acts. (2) *Error not induced by the second party* will involve either mutual or individual mistake. Where the mistake is *mutual* — for example, where the parties agree to buy and sell a specific lot of land, supposing it to contain forty acres, and in fact it contains thirty-four acres only, but the price is made proportionate to forty acres, and the terms of the deed do not mention the area —, the question is whether this mistaken mutual motive will authorize either the total avoidance of the act, or at least its judicial reformation on equitable lines. This is one of the chief sources of controversy in the so-called doctrine of mutual mistake; and it has been already noticed (*ante*, § 2417) that this is entirely distinct in its problem from the doctrines of mutual mistake as to the actual contents of a document signed. So, too, a mutual erroneous assumption as to the legal effect of words intentionally used belongs under the present head. The practical problem here is a difficult one, and the rules are by no means uniform in acceptance; but in nature it is a problem common to all legal acts, whether oral or written.⁵ Where the mistake is *individual* only — for example, in the above case, if one party alone entertained the mistake as to area —, it is generally conceded that the act cannot be avoided. (b) *Compulsion*, or duress, so far as it means a coercion to choose between the signing of a document and the suffering of some harm, whether corporal or otherwise, signifies that the act has been consummated because of the motive of fear of

³ Under this head falls Mr. Justice Holmes' well-known illustration (Common Law, 310) of a sale of "this barrel of mackerel," the barrel turning out to contain salt. Here the question is merely whether the mackerel contents are by implication an essential term and therefore a condition, just as when land is described by metes and bounds and by area and the two are inconsistent. In both cases the terms of the contractual act in themselves are perfectly intelligible and valid, and it is only in application to the external objects that they prove inaccurate; hence it seems not the real explanation to hold (Common Law, 311) that the act is "meaningless," and therefore void; rather, it is sensible and valid, but it rests upon the as-

sumption of the external correctness of an essential term, and is therefore voidable.

⁴ 1751, *Pitcairn v. Ogbourne*, 2 Ves. Sr. 375 ("The present evidence [of fraud] is offered not to contradict the import of the bond on the face of it; . . . it is admitted the written instrument is as it was designed to appear at the original transaction").

⁵ For ordinary parol contracts, but little recognition seems to be given to such mutual mistake as a ground of avoidance (Harriman on Contracts, 2d ed., § 418). But in equity the term "mutual mistake" is so often employed without discrimination that the legitimate doctrine as to the terms of the writing (*ante*, § 2417) has often been used to extend to the present cases.

that harm. Since motive alone is thus involved, it follows that compulsion, like fraud, merely makes the act voidable. In fact, then, compulsion is always of this nature, and there is no clear distinction of principle between "equitable" and "legal" duress so-called. The only conceivable case in which duress could go to deny the very existence of the act is that of the physical seizure of the person's hand, and a forcible movement of his pen, by another person, for there the first person's volition (*ante*, § 2413) is lacking.⁶

3. A peculiar variety of the foregoing doctrine is found in the avoidability of acts of *infants* and *lunatics*. Here a rule of thumb is adopted, by which the person's age or disease serves of itself virtually to raise a fixed presumption of fraud or compulsion, and thus to create the option to avoid, regardless of any inquiry whether there was in the individual case deceit or duress. The general probability of it is regarded as sufficient. At the same time there has always been a tendency, in one or another court, to break from the fixed rule, and to treat such persons' contracts, especially after performance on one side, as voidable then only when in fact there was in the particular case fraud or duress. It may be added that the earlier doctrine that a lunatic's contracts are void, not merely voidable, is referable to the natural opportunity for doubting whether his mental condition, as respects legal acts, is that of total absence of real volition or merely of an unintelligent apprehension of the proper motives of his conduct; for, if the former be the case, it is logical to treat his act as void. — The voidness of a *married woman's* acts at common law was a pure anomaly; either it had no reason at all (as modern legislation practically pronounces), or it was based on an apprehension of imposition, in which view the rule of voidability should have been applied. The invalidity of acts *ultra vires* of a *corporation* does not involve the present principle, but rather that of prohibited acts (*ante*, § 2414); for the law's prohibitions of such acts by corporations are of the same nature as its prohibition of gaming or trading contracts by natural persons.

. B. INTEGRATION OF LEGAL ACTS (VARYING THE TERMS OF A DOCUMENT).

§ 2425. **General Theory of the Rule against Varying the Terms of a Writing.** When parties negotiate at a distance, by letters and telegrams, — first an offer, then a declination, then a revision of the offer, then a halt upon an important term, afterwards an offer of its concession in return for the concession of some prior term now to be changed, and finally an acceptance of

⁶ 1887, *Fairbanks v. Snew*, 145 Mass. 153, 13 N. E. 596 (Holmes, J.): "No doubt, if the defendant's hand had been forcibly taken and compelled to hold the pen and write her name, and the note had been carried off and delivered, the signature and delivery would not have been her acts; . . . there sometimes still is shown an inclination to put all cases of duress upon this ground; but . . . it is well settled that where, as usual, the so-called duress consists only of threats, the contract is only voidable;

. . . the ground upon which a contract is voidable for duress is the same as in the case of fraud, and is that, whether it springs from a fear or a belief, the party has been subjected to an improper motive for action; but if duress and fraud are so far alike, there seems to be no sufficient reason why the limits of their operation should be different". Compare the article of Professor J. B. Ames, *Specialty Contracts and Equitable Defences*, 1895, *Harvard Law Review*, IX, 49.

this concession, and thus an end of the negotiations, — where are the terms of this contract to be found? Obviously, in this congeries of letters and telegrams, as mutually modifying and complementing each other. The whole of the contract is not in any one document. Nor, on the other hand, does the whole of any one document (probably) represent a part of the contract, because some of its terms have been impaired and replaced by other documents in the series. Nor can it be said that there is a series of legal acts, each one independent, successively modifying the preceding ones; for each letter and telegram is merely tentative and preparatory, and there exists no legal act (*ante*, §§ 2401, 2404) until the final assent is given. That assent, when it comes, adopts and vivifies the entire mass, which until then was legally inchoate only. The process is not unlike the fall of cards in the play of a trick at whist; the total effect cannot be determined till the last card has fallen, and no one card exhibits in itself the effect of the trick; yet, when all are played, the second card may prove to be the decisive factor and may remain unimpaired by any later play.

On the other hand, if instead of leaving the net effect of the negotiations to be gleaned from the mass of writings, a single document is finally drawn up to replace them and to embody their net effect, and is signed or otherwise adopted by the parties, this document will now alone represent the terms of the act. Instead of leaving the wheat mingled with the chaff, the wheat has been definitely selected and set apart in a single mass. The wheat existed there, no less before than now, but it has now been placed in a single receptacle by itself.

This process of embodying the terms of a legal act in a single memorial may be termed the Integration of the act, *i. e.* its formation from scattered parts into an integral documentary unity. The practical consequence of this is that its scattered parts, in their former and inchoate shape, have no longer any legal effect; they are replaced by a single embodiment of the act. In other words: *When a legal act is reduced into a single memorial, all other utterances of the parties on that topic are legally immaterial for the purpose of determining what are the terms of their act.*

This principle, perfectly well settled in our law, has several aspects which it is necessary here to notice:

(1) In the first place, it is *not a rule of evidence*, because it has nothing to do with the probative value of one fact as persuading us of the probable existence of another fact (*ante*, § 2). It is a rule of substantive law, because it deals with the question where and in what sources and materials are to be found the terms of a legal act (*ante*, § 2401). This understanding of the rule is plain enough in the modern judicial utterances, in spite of the frequent loose employment of the word "evidence" — a faulty habit, but easily enough succumbed to when applying the rule at trials:

1813, *Gibbs, J.*, in *Pickering v. Dowson*, 4 Taunt. 779, 786: "I hold that if a man brings me a horse and makes any representation whatever of his quality and soundness, and afterwards we agree in writing for the purchase of the horse, that shortens and cor-

rects the representations; and whatever terms are not contained in the [written] contract do not bind the seller, and must be struck out of the case."

1824, *Abbott, C. J.*, in *Kain v. Old*, 2 B. & C. 627, 634: "Where the whole matter passes in parol, all that passes may sometimes be taken together as forming parcel of the contract (though not always, because matter talked of at the commencement of a bargain may be excluded by the language used at its termination). But if the contract be in the end reduced into writing, nothing which is not found in the writing can be considered as a part of the contract."

1846, *Parke, B.*, in *Knight v. Barber*, 16 M. & W. 68 (the plaintiff and the defendant had made an oral agreement for the sale of shares; on the same afternoon the defendant signed a memorandum, which was then handed to the plaintiff, reciting the sale, the price, etc.; it was held that this memorandum should have borne a stamp): "With respect to the first point made by Mr. Baines [for the plaintiff], that there was a distinct parol contract between these parties before the memorandum was signed, if that memorandum was afterwards made and signed by the defendant, and was intended to contain the terms of the contract and to be acted upon by the plaintiff, it became, when it was so acted upon, the real contract between the parties. The parol agreement goes for nothing, if it was intended that it should be reduced into writing and this is afterwards done."

1875, *Blackburn, J.*, in *Angell v. Duke*, 32 Law T. Rep. n. s. 320: "It is a most important rule that, where there is a contract in writing, it should not be added to, if the written contract is intended to be the record of all the terms agreed upon between the parties. Where there is a collateral contract, the written contract does not contain the whole of the terms."

1880, *Van Fleet, C.*, in *Van Syckel v. Dalrymple*, 32 N. J. Eq. 283: "What was said during the negotiation of the contract or at the time of its execution must be excluded, on the ground that the parties have made the writing the only repository and memorial of the truth, and whatever is not found in the writing must be understood to have been waived and abandoned."¹

(2) In the next place, this rule has no necessary relation to any rule of law requiring acts to be done with a *particular formality*, such as *writing*. On the one hand, a contract may be entirely in written form, prescribed by law, and yet the terms may be scattered through many writings and not integrated in a single document; for example, a will of personalty under the statute of Charles II (against frauds and perjuries) had to be in writing, and yet the ecclesiastical Courts constantly dealt with valid wills which were made up from numerous separate writings of all sorts.² On the other hand, even where no form of writing is prescribed, the rule of integration applies if the parties have in fact embodied their act in a single memorial.³

¹ In the following passages the theory is concisely stated: 1781, *L. C. Thurlow*, in *Irnham v. Child*, 1 Bro. Ch. C. 92 ("The rule is perfectly clear that where there is a deed in writing, it will admit of no contract that is not part of the deed"); 1859, *Pollock, C. B.*, in *Harris v. Pickett*, 4 H. & N. 1, 7 ("The rule relied on by the plaintiffs only applies where the parties to an agreement reduce it to writing and agree or intend that that writing shall be their agreement"); 1859, *Martin, B.*, in *Langton v. Higgins*, 4 H. & N. 401, 408 ("Where two parties enter into a contract and put it into [a single] writing, that writing determines the terms of the bargain"); 1861, *Hoar, J.*, in *Kelly v. Cun-*

ingham, 1 All. 478 ("The writing is the contract of the parties, in the view of the law, and supersedes all the previous parol agreements"); 1878, *Depne, J.*, in *Franklin F. Ins. Co. v. Martin*, 40 N. J. L. 568, 581 ("The written contract shall be regarded as the sole repository of the intentions of the parties").

² See the cases cited *post*, § 2454.

³ 1846, *Pollock, C. B.*, in *Eden v. Blake*, 13 M. & W. 614, 618 ("Whatever be the value of the goods sold, whether it be such as calls for a memorandum in writing, under the statute of frauds, or not, if there has been a memorandum in writing, it cannot be altered by extrinsic evidence").

(3) As a consequence of the same principle, it is to be noted that, in theory, the rule of Integration would apply equally to an act embodied in *oral form*, i. e. to a single oral pronouncement.⁴ Such a transaction is entirely unlikely in fact; it can be imagined, perhaps, in a contract by heliograph or by unwritten electric telegraph. But it serves to illustrate and emphasize the principle that the essence of the present rule is the embodiment of the act in a single utterance, and that the rule applies to acts as acts, independently of whether the form be written or oral.

(4) Finally, the notion of Integration is not that any *additional terms* are involved in that process, but merely that the terms are contained in a different material or embodiment; and therefore the act is complete and binding when finally assented to before integration, even if it is an agreed condition that the act shall be so reduced or integrated.⁵

§ 2426. **History of the Rule.** Looking back to find the origin and development of this rule, the precise inquiry, then, is this: The modern rule being that when the parties have embodied a transaction in a single document, the writing is indisputable as to the terms of the transaction, how far back in our history does this rule go, and what were the circumstances of its origin and development?

It might have been supposed that this great principle of our law had come down to us as a continuous tradition from the earliest days. The indisputability of the terms of a writing seems to harmonize with that rigid formalism of primitive days which is elsewhere in the law constantly observable (*ante*, § 2405). Resting though it does now on a rational foundation of experience and policy, did it not nevertheless exist, even at the very beginning, as a natural part of the earlier system? Curiously enough, its history is quite the contrary. Our primitive system knew it not. Only towards the end of the middle ages does it come into being; and only in fairly modern times does it gain complete recognition. Its history falls, by a rough division, into three periods: I, from primitive times till the vogue of the seal, in the 1200s; II, then, on English soil, till the statute of frauds and perjuries, in 1678; III, and thence, its modern recognition.

I.¹ In the primitive Germanic notions, at the time of the barbarian inva-

⁴ 1854, Mr. (later Justice) Blackburn, arguing, in *Brown v. Byrne*, 8 E. & B. 703 ("It may be convenient first to answer a question, put from the Bench, as to whether there is a distinction between written and verbal contracts. There is a difference; but in this respect there is none. If the parties met for the first and last time, and made a contract entirely by [oral] words, these words would, if proved, have precisely the same construction as if they had been written down"); 1885, Milkey, J., in *Gilbert v. McGinnis*, 114 Ill. 28, 28 N. E. 382 ("The rule here stated [as to interpolating a usage] is equally applicable to a verbal contract, where the terms of it are definitely fixed, as they are in the present case").

⁵ 1894, *Sanders v. Pottlitzer B. F. Co.*, 144

N. Y. 209, 39 N. E. 75 (defendant and plaintiff had settled by letters and telegrams upon the terms of their contract, and had mutually assented, the intention being also to embody the terms thereupon in a single document; the defendant then refused to execute the document unless a new condition was inserted; held, that the understanding that the contract should be embodied in a single document did not involve the addition of any substantive terms to the obligation, and that the contract could therefore be enforced in spite of its not having been so embodied).

¹ The materials for this first part of the story are to be gleaned from the following works: 1877-8, Ficker, *Beiträge zur Urkundenlehre*; 1885, Heusler, *Institutionen des deutschen Pri-*

sions and under the Merovingian and Carolingian monarchies, there was certainly no notion of the indisputability of the terms of a document. This is explained, and was indeed predetermined, by the character of the civilization of those peoples. When the Germanic tribes spread west and south, and absorbed the Roman territories in Gaul, Spain, and Northern Italy, they brought with them two marked traits, — an ignorance of letters, and a legal system of formal oral transactions. They found writing in use among the Romanized peoples, and (in Italy at least) an advanced habit of transaction by notarial documents; and this they in part fell in with. But it remained alien to their own ideas; and after the dissolution of the Carolingian empire and the subsidence of Romanesque influence (say, by the 900s), the alien element that had found entrance was excised, and the development of their native system proceeded on its own main lines.² The document, then, even in its most definite type (*carta*), is in the Germanic system merely one of the symbols that entered into the formalism of the transaction and, like the wand, the glove, and the knife, has an efficacy independent of its written tenor, — which indeed could mean nothing to the parties who employed it:

“In the legal affairs of a people who, from the lowest churl to the great Emperor Charles, were unskilled alike in reading and in writing, the written document could have but a precarious position, and its acceptance into legal practice was opposed by all sorts of obstacles, — in particular, by an almost ineradicable distrust of everything written, which they feared with the fear of a man who stands weaponless and helpless. For us moderns a written document is quite another thing than for the Germanic tribes, confronted with it yet not comprehending it. Nowadays, our documents of debt, or the like, we write ourselves, or at least sign them after perusal; we are masters of them, and we know that the thing we have written or signed is precisely what it is, and no fearsome mysterious thing. Quite otherwise with the Germanic peoples, confronted with the alien practice of legal writings, upon their invasions of Roman regions. The grantor of land, the borrower of money, could neither read nor write the document which might be executed in his name; he could but mark his cross at the bottom, and hope that all was right. Thus we hear, even in the early 1200s, a certain bailiff of the abbey of Pruem, in a litigation with the abbey before Henry IV, scornfully protesting, when the abbey produces a royal charter against him, that a partisan scribe could indite whatever he might please to

vatrechts; 1887, Posee, Die Lehre von Privaturkunden; 1889, Bresslau, Handbuch der Urkundenlehre für Deutschland und Italien, I, 478-555; 1887-92, Brunner, Deutsche Rechtsgeschichte (based upon earlier separate essays by the same author, especially his Rechtsgeschichte der römischen und germanischen Urkunden); 1903, Brunner, Grundzüge der deutschen Rechtsgeschichte (confirming his earlier results); 1895, A. S. Schnltze, Zur Lehre vom Urkundenbeweise, Zeitschrift für das privat- und öffentliches Recht, XXI, 70; 1898, Déclareuil, Les preuves judiciaires dans le droit franc du V^e au VII^e siècle, Nouv. revue hist. du droit fr. et étrang., XXI, 220, 747, 757 (independently reaching results in harmony with the German scholars); 1902, Schroeder, Lehrbuch der deutschen Rechtsgeschichte, 4th ed., 361, 698. All these scholars are in substantial agreement upon the historical facts to be referred to; Ficker and

Bresslau having contributed most to establish the correct story of the great fact, the relation of the seal and the attesting witnesses to the effect of the document. Pertile (Storia del diritto italiano, ed. 1900, VI, pt. 1, pp. 417-419) is in accord as to most points, yet does not notice the importance of the seal; but in Italy the early vogue of notaries gave a different turn to the story of its local law. Stoff (Étude sur la formation des contrats par l'écriture dans le droit des formules du V^e au XII^e siècle; Nouvelle revue hist. de droit, XI, 249; 1887) ignores entirely the historical place of the seal; but Bresslau and Posee had not at that date published their researches copiously confirming Ficker's.

² Ficker, I, 83-88; Brunner, R. G., I, 399, II, 420; id., Grundz., 41, 119; Pollock & Maitland, II, 88-190.

invent ('*irridens testamenta, dicens quod penna cuiuslibet quelibet notare posset, non ideo suum jus amittere deberet*'). So too, in even a later age, there was an almost proverbial verse⁴ which ran, 'On parchment, scribes may place with ease Exactly what their own minds please.' It is, in short, easy to imagine the mistrust which must in those days have attached itself to the written document. . . . The truth is that the legal value of the *carta* consisted in this, that by means of it the legal transaction was completed. . . . The grantor of a piece of land could transfer it in the ancient national form of *sale* and *restitura*, or he could now accomplish the transfer by means of the document (*per cartam venditionis*), and the *traditio per cartam* effected the transfer of ownership, just as before this the *sale* had done. . . . Thus the *traditio cartarum* was itself a formal act. The act of delivery of the document was performed by the maker grasping the still blank parchment, lifting it from the earth (in land transfers at least, by Frankish usage), calling upon the witnesses to grasp it with him, handing it to the scribe to fill out the writing, and, after signatures affixed, delivering it to the grantee."⁴

In this stage, then, the *carta* merely plays a convenient part, first, by enabling the formal delivery of the land to be made symbolically away from the premises, and, next, by preserving against future forgetfulness the names of the witnesses.⁵ The important and unquestionable fact is that the tenor of the writing *does not legally and bindingly establish anything*.⁶ If the truth of its statement is disputed — the amount of money loaned, the area of land conveyed, the conditions of tenure annexed —, the terms of the transaction may and must be proved by calling the witnesses to it, regardless of any contradiction of the writing.⁷ The attendant witnesses continued to be, as they had been, the main reliance for the proof of a disputed transaction. The procedure for disputing by the witnesses' oaths the correctness of the document was elaborate and w⁸ttled, and its ultimate settlement might turn upon a wage⁹ battle. E¹⁰ long was the persistence of this subsidiary status of the document, and how continuous the connection between Germanic usage and early Anglo-Norman legal ideas, may be seen from the following record of English litigation two hundred years after the Conquest:

1292, *Anon.*, Year Book 20 Edw. I, 258 (Horwood's ed.): "A brought the mordances-ter against B, on the death of his father, for tenements in C; and he prayed the assise. — B. 'There ought not to be an assise: for see here your father's charter, by which he enfeoffed us and put us in good seisin. Judgment if there ought to be an assise.' — A. 'I admit perfectly that the charter is the deed of my father; but I tell you that he gave you the tenements by that charter upon these terms, viz., that you should hold it for one month, and that at the end of the month you should espouse his daughter Emma; and that if you did not, the land should revert to him and his heirs. Now, he died within the month, and at the end of the month you would not marry his daughter; therefore we pray judgment if there ought not to be an assise.' — B. 'You have admitted the charter, which is simple and unconditional. Judgment if there ought to be an assise.' — A. 'Whatever the words of the charter may be, such was the covenant between my father

⁴ Konrad von Würzburg, Schwanritter, l. 571.

⁵ Heusler, I, 86.

⁶ Ficker, I, 85; Bresslau, I, 729, 730.

⁷ Ficker, 82 ff.; Posse, 63; Brunner, R. G., I, 393, II, 420; id., Grundz., 76, 119, 159; Heusler, I, 91; Déclareuil, 757; Bresslau, 483, 500, 799; Schultze, 101; Schroeder, 361, 698;

Pertile, I, pt. 1, p. 417, pt. 2, p. 192; Glasson, Hist. du droit et des inst. de la France, III, 503.

⁸ "That the probative value of a document lay only in its witnesses may be gathered from the fact that the word *urkunde* meant nothing else than 'witness': Schroeder, 361; so Brunner, R. G. II, 391.

and his friends and your friends; ready, etc.'—B. 'The reverse.—Therefore to the country.'—The Jurors said that such was the contract even as A said; and that his father died within the month.—They were asked if he died seised in his demesne as of fee.—The Jurors. 'We pray your assistance.'—The Justice. 'And inasmuch as it is found that the estate of B was conditional, which condition was not specifically performed, by reason of the default of B, and therefore his seisin was null.' " 8

II. The *rise of the seal* brings a new era for written documents, not merely by furnishing them with a means of authenticating genuineness (*ante*, § 2161), but also by rendering them indisputable as to the terms of the transaction and thus dispensing with the summoning of witnesses. The vogue of the seal and of the transaction-witness wax and wane, the one relatively to the other.⁹ This legal value of the seal was the result of a practice working from above downwards, from the King to the people at large. It is involved, in the beginning, with the Germanic principle that the King's word is indisputable. Who gives him the lie, forfeits life. The King's seal to a document makes the truth of the document incontestable. This leads, along another line, to the modern doctrine of the verity of judicial records,—to be noticed later. Here, for private men's documents, its significance is that the indisputability of a document sealed by the King marked it with an extraordinary quality, much to be sought after. As the habitual use of the seal extends downwards, its valuable attributes go with it. First, a few counts and bishops acquire seals; and then their courtesies are sought in lending the impress and guarantee of their seal to some document of an inferior person, as serving him in future instead of witnesses.¹⁰ Finally, the ordinary freeman comes usually to have a seal; and his seal too makes a document indisputable—at least, by himself. This extension of the seal begins in the 1000s, and is completed by the 1200s.¹¹ Thus the old regime of proof by transaction-witnesses disappears by degrees; by the 1300s they are almost superfluous.¹² This means that when a transaction has been made by writing, the parties rely for their future proof no longer on witnesses called in at the time of the transaction, but on the opponent's seal found affixed to the document, which thereby makes its terms indisputable by him as representing the actual terms of the transaction between the parties.¹³

⁸ Another case of a similar sort is cited by Professor Thayer (Preliminary Treatise on Evidence, 106) from Forayth, who cites from Jocelyn de Brakelonde. About the 1300s, the following passage also is found: Mirror of Justices, *ubi infra*, pp. 75, 115, 152, 163 ("a charter is vicious if it testifies that a gift has been made, whereas as yet there has been no delivery of seisin").

⁹ Ficker, I, 94, 95, 106, 107, 115; Bresslau, 510-549; Brunner, R. G., I, 393, II, 420, 523.

¹⁰ Ficker, 94; Posse, 130; *ante*, § 2161.

¹¹ Ficker, 91, 97; Posse, 129; Bresslau, 534 ("by the second half of the 1200s even ordinary burgers seal their documents"); Holmes, The Common Law, 272; Pollock and Maitland, II, 221 ("at the date of the Conquest the Norman duke has a seal, and his cousin the late King of

England had a seal; . . . before the end of the thirteenth century the free and lawful man usually had a seal").

¹² Ficker, 95-97; Bresslau, 545. The course of thought is seen in the attribution of the qualities of a witness to the seal, as in a much quoted passage of the Schwabenspiegel, c. 34, § 2: "Hilfet ein toter gezinge [i. e. die briefe] als wol dir als ein lebendiger" (Schultze, 119).

¹³ Ficker, 82-91; Bresslau, 546 ("there is therefore no counter-proof allowable against the statements of fact [*den sachlichen Bericht*] in a sealed document"); *id.* 539 ("as a first principle of the law for documentary proof in Germany after the 1200s, it may be considered . . . [exceptions excepted] that the sealing was an indispensable requirement for the legal evidential force of a document, no matter who was its

The tool for shaping the new doctrine had now been supplied; and it remained to develop and extend the doctrine. Here it must be remembered that in Anglo-Norman times people are still, on the whole, unfamiliar with writing, and that the chief varieties of transaction — namely, those affecting land — are still practised with oral forms;¹⁴ the essential, working conception is the livery of seisin, not the charter. Whatever virtue there is in the writing is testimonial only. It furnishes one sort of proof; but it is not a necessary kind of proof, and the main thing is something done apart from the writing. "This indenture" merely "witnesseth"; and the now time-worn phrase was once the actual conception.¹⁵

So long as this notion of the operative element of transactions persisted, it must oppose a constant obstacle to the progress of the idea of an indisputable sealed document. Since the writing is not the vital thing, why yield to its terms? And so for two centuries or more the extension and adaptation of the new idea is slow. For mercantile contracts, the advance seems to have been settled by the 1300s.¹⁶ But for land-transactions there was more tardy progress. By that time, charters (*i. e.* deeds) were becoming necessary accoutrements;¹⁷ but they were not yet indisputable in every respect. For example, Littleton, about 1466, tells us¹⁸ that where the deed is in terms absolute but the livery of seisin was made with an oral condition, still the condition is enforceable, because "nothing of the tenements passeth by the deed, for that the condition is not comprised"; and again, that though, for a condition attached to the transfer of a freehold, some writing must be shown, yet "a man may be aided upon such a condition by the verdict of twelve men taken at large,"¹⁹ — just as the twelve men, in the case (above cited) of two centuries before, aided the plaintiff by a verdict directly contradicting the deed.²⁰

author"); Schroeder, 701; Schultze, 103, 118. This was long ago noted by Mr. Justice Holmes for English law: 1881, *The Common Law*, 272. Space does not suffice to note the very interesting stages of progress, pointed out by Ficker and Bresslan, by which this result was reached. The indenture or chirograph of the Anglo-Saxons was one of the intermediate expedients for securing genuineness and conclusiveness. But the seal proved its superiority for the latter purpose, and finally prevailed.

¹⁴ Pollock & Maitland, II, 83, 93, 202, 217 (quoted *ante*, § 2405).

¹⁵ The word *urkunde* signified, by etymology, "witness": note 7, *supra*. This was the usual conception still in the 1300s and 1400s; see the citation *supra*, n. 12, *infra*, n. 19; and the following: Circa 1300, *Mirror of Justices*, b. II, c. 27, *Seld. Soc. Pub.* VII, 75 ("escritz testimonials de contracts," *i. e.* deeds); b. III, c. 23, lb. 107, 152 ("hy way of aid for men's memory are writings, charters, and mnniments very necessary for to testify the conditions and the points of contracts"); 1466 (?), Littleton's *Tennres*, sect. 365, 371 ("nnescript south seale provent mesme la condition"); 1881, Holmes, *The Common Law*, 270 ("a writing was a more general way

of establishing a debt in Glanvill's time than witnesses; . . . [it was] only another, although more conclusive, mode of proof"); and it persists as a phrase to the time of Sheppard's *Tonchatone*, in the 1600s: c. IV, p. 56 ("a deed is a writing or instrument, written on paper or parchment, sealed and delivered, to prove and testify the agreement of the parties whose deed it is to the things contained in the deed").

¹⁶ 1368, Y. B. 41 Edw. III, 10, 6 (quoted *infra*, note 30).

¹⁷ Pollock & Maitland, II, 82, 91.

¹⁸ *Tenures*, sect. 359.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, sect. 366. Compare the following, in 1523: Y. B. 14 H. VIII, 17, 6 and 7 (Brulnel, J.: "Such things as pass by parol, are as well hy parol as written on condition; for every grant of a chattel is good on condition without writing; for a deed is nothing but a proof and testimonial of the agreement of the party, — as a deed of feoffment is nothing but a proof of the livery, for the land passes by the livery; but when the deed and the livery are joined together, that is a proof of the livery").

²⁰ In a later day, this tradition is thus expounded: *Ante* 1726, Gilbert, *Evidence*, 84

On the other hand, Littleton in the very same treatise²¹ is mentioning as "common learning" that a plea of condition, except in some special cases, shall not defeat a freehold "unless he showeth the proof in writing." The 1400s were evidently a transition period. By the time of Coke's commentary upon Littleton and of Sheppard's Touchstone — by the 1600s, on the whole — the modern rule of indisputability is established for all transactions affecting realty.²²

No doubt by that time the surrounding circumstances had facilitated, and judicial reflection and conscious policy had stimulated, the natural growth of the newer rule. In the first place, the community had become *more generally lettered*, and this in its turn had resulted from the spread of the printing process in the late 1400s. Reading and writing were no longer the mysterious arts of a few. It was natural to hold that a man was bound by his written version of the transaction, when he might easily guard himself against the writing's being deficient in some of the agreed terms;²³ and it was the more natural to rely wholly upon the writing since the dying out of old methods (due in part to jury-trial) had made transaction-witnesses not commonly available. In the second place, *mercantile custom* had already pointed the way in advance. The Lombards in London (and doubtless also — somewhat later — the Flemings and the Hansas) were employing the commercial forms which had developed with the revival of commerce in the preceding three centuries. These mercantile documents of debt had already invented the device of indisputability, — to some extent, no doubt, preserving in tradition the expedients of the advanced Roman law. Such models can be seen to have had some influence upon English ideas.²⁴ In the third place, the rigid

("Things that" in livery may be pleaded without deed; . . . so a man may plead a demise, without deed, and give the indenture in evidence, for the indenture may be used as an evidence of the contract that would be good whether there were any indenture or not. . . . [Livery of seisin] is a fact a man cannot impeach or deny, and this is from the notoriety of the ceremony, . . . therefore if the defendant pleads the livery and seisin of the plaintiff, the plaintiff cannot reply that the livery was conditional, without showing the deed, inasmuch as the plaintiff is estopped to defeat his own livery by a naked averment and parol evidence only. But the jury are not estopped on the *general issue* from finding such a conditional feoffment, for the jury are men of the neighborhood that are supposed to be present at the solemnity . . . and by consequence may exhibit the condition on the feoffment. But since the use of the solemnities before men of the country hath ceased . . . therefore the statute of fraude and perjuries hath enacted that no . . . [estates] shall be assigned, granted, or surrendered unless it be by deed or note in writing").

²¹ Sect. 365.

²² Yet, even in Sheppard's day, relics remain, as where he says (c. IX) that if the words of livery are to one effect and the deed to another effect the deed is void; though if the livery is

secundum formam chartae, any additional words of oral livery are void.

²³ *E. g.*, Babington, J., in 1430, Y. B. 3 H. VI, 26, 15, repudiating proof of an oral condition to qualify a deed: "And it will be adjudged my own folly that I did not wish to have it written in." The contrast between this effect of the spread of letters, and the effect on the doctrine of intention or mistake (*ante*, § 2405), is worth noticing; in the latter aspect, it bound a man to what was *in* the deed; in the present aspect, it kept out what was *not* in the deed.

²⁴ As early as the 1200s, this leaven is seen working; "Note that by the law merchant a man cannot wage his law against a tally": 1222, Y. B. 20 Edw. I, p. 68; and the same rule for a sealed confession of debt is put forward as late as 1460 as a "custom of London": Y. B. 39 H. VI, 34, 46, cited in Thayer, Preliminary Treatise, 394. Further illustrations are furnished in Pollock & Maitland, II, 212, 222. For this doctrine of the foreigners' commercial law, see Baldus, *Consilia* I, no. 48 ("Stabiles et firmes debent esse scriptura mercatorum, — juxta illud vulgare dictum 'quod scripsi scripsi,' quia scriptura mercatorum et camporum habetur pro sententia et sua fide transit in rem judicatam"), quoted in Goldschmidt, *Handh. des Handelsrechts*, (1891) 3d ed., I, 1, p. 389, note; see also *ib.* 306; Franken, *Das Französische Pfand-*

control of the jury influenced the judges, indirectly, by leading them to keep from the jury all alleged oral transactions which might be misused by them to overturn the words of the writing. The safety of written proof was supposed to be at stake. If the parties were allowed to put in averments extraneous to the writing, it must go to the jury, and there was no telling what the jury might do; but if the judges took exclusive charge, they could better control the situation. This reasoning is not much reported till later times,²⁵ but it was plainly there.²⁶ Finally, a general policy of regard for the trustworthiness of writing, as against the shiftiness of mere testimonial recollection, was beginning to be consciously avowed, irrespective of any discrimination against the jury. This is a distinctly modern attitude, but it emerges as one of the considerations that finally tended to fix the rule. "Thus you would avoid a matter of record by simple surmise," says Paston, J., in 1430.²⁷ Coke, of course, furnishes such reflections in plenty, by the time of the 1600s; "it would be full of great inconvenience that none should know by the written words of a will what construction to make or advice to give but it should be controlled by collateral averments."²⁸ Thus a judicial legislative policy comes to reinforce the other influences.

But, meantime, what of the theory of the rule? At the outset, in the Anglo-Norman times, as already noticed, it arises merely as a testimonial rule; the writing replaces the transaction-witnesses as a mode of proof. But in its modern shape it is a constitutive rule (*ante*, § 2425). The writing itself is operative; the writing is the act, not merely one of the possible ways of proving the act. By what sequence of ideas was this transition of theory effected?

(1) At first, the new principle appears merely as a *waiver of ordinary proof*, permitting the substitution of another. The man who has sealed a document is not allowed to bring his transaction-witnesses or his compurgators to prove what the transaction really was; he has in advance waived this right. Such was the notion on the Continent;²⁹ and such was the first con-

recht (1879), 258; Pertile, VI, pt. 1, 421. The part played by foreign mercantile custom in developing other aspects of our law is well illustrated in Mr. Hazeltine's essay on The Gage of Land in Medieval England (1904, Harvard Law Review, XVIII, 36, 43).

²⁵ The examples cited *supra*, note 8, show how the earlier juries might make short work of deeds. A passage in Thayer, Prelim. Treat. 105, further illustrates this. It must be noted, too, as indicated in the quotation from Gilbert, *supra*, note 20, that "the use of the solemnities of livery before men of the country" was dying out, and that so long as the vital thing had been this livery, the matter might well be left to them; but there was no reason for considering a transaction of writing as within their province.

²⁶ 1610, Altham's Case, 8 Co. Rep. 155 ("It was resolved that the said foreign or collateral averment out of the said deed [setting up a prior inconsistent agreement] was not of any

force or effect in the law. For every deed consists upon two parts, *scil.*, matter of fact, and upon the construction in law; matter of fact is to be averred by the party and triable by the jurors; the other, being matter in law, is to be discussed by the judges of the law"; 1659, Lawrence v. Dodwell, 1 Lutw. 734 (Powell, J.: "The averment should be gathered from the words of the will; it is not safe to admit a jury to try the intent of a testator"); 1708, Strode v. Russell, 2 Vern. 621 (in chancery; "We will consider how far it shall be allowed and how far not, after it is read; and this is not like the case of evidence to a jury, who are easily biased by it, which this Court is not").

²⁷ Y. B. 8 H. VI, 26, 15.

²⁸ 1591, Lord Cheyne's Case, 5 Co. Rep. 68a; 1605, Countess of Rutland's Case, *ib.* 26 (quoted *infra*, note 38).

²⁹ Ficker, I, 93.

ception in England. This waiver is commonly spoken of as an "estoppel," *i. e.* a conception which concedes that the truth might be as alleged, and that ordinarily the party would have a right to prove it in the usual way, but that here he is "stopped" from that proof, by his own sealed act. "It does not lie in your mouth to say the obligation is not good."³⁰ The merely subjective effect of the seal in this respect is well illustrated by a controversy surviving in Littleton's time;³¹ some lawyers thought, where a feoffment had been made, and a deed-poll given (*i. e.* in the single name of the feoffor, not sealed by both and indentured), naming a condition to the feoffment, that the feoffor could not take advantage of the condition; that is, because it could be used only by way of estoppel, and the feoffee was not estopped by a deed which he had not sealed; the effect being to refuse efficacy to the condition though named in the deed.³²

(2) Alongside of this theory, but playing gradually a more important part, was the theory that a transaction of one "nature" cannot be overturned by *anything of an inferior nature.* This is the real lever which helps on the progress to the modern idea. But it appears early, and apparently as a borrowing from the Roman law.³³ It has broad aspects, and is responsible for some other rules, now mostly abandoned, — such as the rule that the oral payment of a bond is no discharge.³⁴ But in its present relations it serves to introduce and emphasize the operative notion of a writing. Once concede the possibility that a sealed document may be indisputable, and then this other idea will expand and reënforce the former in every direction. In particular, the sealed instrument will "discharge" and "determine" any prior transactions, whether really separate and distinct in time, or practically contemporaneous. In other words, the sealed instrument will not merely *prove* the transaction, but rather, by replacement, will now *be* the transaction. This theory was struggling for ascendancy in the 1400s. For example, in 1422, where the plaintiff sues for money given on account, and the defendant asks for profert of the deed of acknowledgment given by him, and argues that the deed superseded everything else, just as a bond for 20*l.* would have discharged a prior simple contract for the same, the plaintiff, replying, concedes

³⁰ 1368, Y. B. 41 Edw. III, 10, 6. So also in 1460: Y. B. 39 H. VI, 34, 46: "If I bring a writ of debt, and count that the defendant bought of me a horse for 10*l.*, and he wishes to wage his law, I may estop him by the speciality proving the said contract; the same law of a receipt, — if he wishes to plead, 'never received,' and tenders his law, he will be estopped of his law by the speciality proving the receipt," but some were of contrary opinion. In the neat phrase of Mr. Justice Holmes (*The Common Law*, 262), "if a man *said* he was bound, he *was* bound."

³¹ Tenures, sect. 375.

³² This notion of estoppel is illustrated in Pollock & Maitland, II, 205-222, *passim*. It is still seen in Sheppard's day: Touchstone, c. 14 (in deeds, "an estoppel doth bar and conclude either party to say or except anything against anything contained in it").

³³ It has been noted, in Pollock & Maitland, II, 219, as occurring in Bracton and elsewhere, *e. g.* Y. B. 33-5 Edw. I, pp. 331, 547 (1306). In the Digest, it appears in *de solutionibus*, § 3, 80, and also in *de diversis regulis*, 50, 17, 35 (Ulpian: "Nihil tam naturale est quam eo genere quidque dissolvere quo colligatum est; ideo verborum obligatio verbis tollitur; nudi consensus obligatio contrario consensu tollitur").

³⁴ 1542, *Waberley v. Cockerel*, Dyer 51 (payment of a bond is no discharge; "although the truth be that the plaintiff is paid his money, still it is better to suffer a mischief to one man than an inconvenience to many, which would subvert a law; for if matter in writing may be so easily defeated and avoided by such surmise and naked breath, a matter in writing would be of no greater authority than a matter of fact").

the case put, "for the contract and the bond are two different contracts, and by the greater I am discharged from the less; but in the case of this receipt of money, and the deed which proves its receipt, there is but one contract," *i. e.* a contract by delivery of the money, the deed being merely evidence.²⁵ Again, in 1460, "if I make a contract [of loan] by deed indented, I shall not be compelled to count on the indenture; for the contract is not 'determined' by the indenture, but continues [as independent], and a man may elect how he will bring his action,"²⁶ — although if he had chosen to bring it on the deed, its terms could not have been disputed.²⁷ Here appears plainly enough the idea of the indisputability of the document coexisting with the idea that the transaction is something independent of the document and is merely proved by it; and yet the notion that the document "determines" and merges the whole transaction is winning its way. For two centuries to come this mode of speech — that the writing "dissolves," "discharges," "determines," or "destroys" all other prior or coexisting transactions — is predominant in expounding the theory of the rule.²⁸ The way is thus prepared for the modern idea of operativeness, forming the third stage of the rule's history.

III. However, one step still remains to be taken. As yet — say, in the 1500s — this theory is applicable to "matter of a higher nature," *i. e.*, specialties, sealed documents, and *not to writings as such*. How and when did this last extension of ideas occur?

The Statute of Frauds and Perjuries, in 1678, seems to note the modern epoch's full beginning. The result was predetermined by the influences already mentioned; this statute appears, of course, as the mark rather than the cause of the final development. But still its literal scope was limited, as to the kinds of transactions and documents; and it had a really causal influence of its own, as a plain example leading the Courts to complete the process by expanding and familiarizing the general idea for all writings whatever.

That example was furnished by the first and third sections, in which the estate was spoken of as "*put in writing*" and as "*assigned, granted, or surrendered, . . . by deed or note in writing.*" Here were two notable features,

²⁵ Y. B. I H. VI, 7, 31; cited in Thayer, Prelim. Treat. 394.

²⁶ Y. B. 39 H. VI, 34, 46; cited in Thayer, *ubi supra*.

²⁷ Again: 1439, Y. B. 18 H. VI, 17, 3 (where a lease is by deed, and action brought on it, "the foundation of my action, which is a specialty, is so high in its nature that it cannot be destroyed by anything except a thing of as high a nature as it is, such as a release").

²⁸ 1605, Countess of Rutland's Case, 5 Co. Rep. 26 ("every contract or agreement ought to be dissolved by matter of as high a nature as the first deed; . . . also it would be inconvenient that matters in writing made by advice and on consideration, and which finally import the certain truth of the agreement of the parties should be controlled by averment of the parties to be proved by the uncertain testimony of slippery memory"); *Circa* 1610; *Burglacy v. Ellington*, Brownl. 191 (title to

land by deed of bargain and sale, alleged to be void for usury; plea that the buyer orally agreed that the seller could keep the rents; the counsel for the deed's validity "put that maxim that everything must be dissolved by that by which it is bound, and his whole argument depended upon that"; notice that he was evidently relying on the phrase of Ulpian, quoted *supra*, note 33); 1696, L. C. J. Holt, in *Falkland v. Bertie*, 2 Vern. 334, 339 ("the last will . . . must be admitted sufficient to repeal all former wills, and much more to control all parol declarations"); *ante* 1726, Gilbert, Evidence, 279 (a release under seal is a good discharge of an account, for "any deceit or mistake in former payments is but matter in *paris*, and therefore not of as high a nature as the deed; and in giving evidence, everything must be contradicted by a matter of the same notoriety as *the* whereby it is proved").

practically novel in this relation. The legal act was to be constituted, not merely proved, by the document, and the document might be an ordinary writing, not necessarily a "deed," *i. e.*, under seal. It is true that these features were not absolutely without precedent. There had been already two other statutes, — one in 1535, requiring a transfer by bargain and sale to be "made by writing,"³⁹ and the other in 1540, permitting freedom of devise of lands by "last will and testament in writing."⁴⁰ But the former statute had required the writing to be a deed, "indented and sealed," so that in this respect it involved no novelty; and the latter statute was as yet so little conceived from the modern point of view that in its construction the Courts had preserved rather the old testimonial idea, and had virtually treated the testator's oral utterance as merely evidenced by the writing.⁴¹ The contrast between this attitude of the 1500s and the attitude of a century later is seen in the corresponding provision (sect. 5) of the statute of frauds, which requires devises of land to "be in writing and signed, . . . or else they shall be utterly void and of none effect." The lingering of the old, also, and its meeting with the new, are to be seen in the same statute's provisions about trust estates; for the creation of these (by sect. 7) "shall be manifested and proved by some writing signed, . . . or else they shall be utterly void and of none effect," while their assignments (by sect. 9) "shall likewise be in writing signed, . . . or else they shall likewise be utterly void and of none effect." The contrast between the two ideas is further apparent in the phrases of sect. 4 ("unless the agreement, . . . or some note or memorandum thereof, shall be in writing"), which distinctly signified that the contract and the writing might be separate things.

The significance of the statute for the present purpose, then, was in the main, first, that it abolished the practice of creating estates of freehold by oral livery of seisin only, and, secondly, that it permitted the required document (for leases) to be a writing without seal.⁴² By the former, it emphasized the constitutive (as opposed to the testimonial) nature of the document; by the latter, it extended the conception of constitutive documents beyond sealed ones to include all writings. The scope of these provisions was limited; but their moral and logical influence was wide and immediate. The statute now began to be appealed to, in all questions of "parol evidence," as setting an example and typifying a general principle.⁴³

The important consequence was that for that great mass of transactions

³⁹ St. 27 H. VIII, c. 16.

⁴⁰ St. 32 H. VIII, c. 1, § 1.

⁴¹ Sheppard's Touchstone, 406 ("If the notary do only take certain rude notes or directions from the sick man, which he doth agree unto, and they be afterwards written fair in his life-time, and not showed to him again, or not written fair until after his death, these are good testaments of lands").

⁴² These effects have been clearly analyzed in *Mayberry v. Johnson*, 3 Green N. J. Eq. 116.

⁴³ *E. g.*: 1696, *Falkland v. Bertie*, 2 Vern. 833 (proof of the testator's parol intention con-

trary to the legal effect of his will was excluded; L. C. J. Holt said that "the great uncertainty there is of proof in this case shows how necessary it was to make the statute against frauds and perjuries"); 1708, *Strode v. Russell*, 2 Vern. 621 ("No parol proof or declaration ought to be admitted out of the will to ascertain it; . . . and now since the statute of frauds and perjuries, this is stronger, because by that statute all wills are to be in writing"). Compare also Chief Baron Gilbert's remarks, about the same period, quoted *supra*, note 20.

which were not affected by the statute, but were none the less put in writing voluntarily by the parties, though not sealed — *i. e.* transactions for which by the older idea the writing would merely have been "evidence" —, the writing now came to be treated and spoken of as the constitutive thing. The modern view had come into complete existence; and the period of this seems to be about the end of the 1600s.⁴⁴ There are still recurring traces of the older theories;⁴⁵ but the modern result is practically achieved. The Chancellor's Court seems to have been slow to accept the full doctrine, — partly, no doubt, because of the older idea that it had something to do with the untrustworthiness of juries,⁴⁶ but also partly because that Court was still invoked as having a discretionary power to relieve against fixed rules of law.⁴⁷ But this inconsistency of practice soon disappeared; and the transition-period of four hundred years was accomplished. A legal transaction when reduced in writing was now to be conceived of as constituted, not merely indisputably proved, by the writing. — and this whether the writing was a requirement of law or merely voluntary, and whether it was sealed or unsealed. The reminiscence of the older idea, in the use of the term "parol evidence," to designate that which was legally inoperative, still persisted as a convenient term of discussion; but the correct legal theory, whenever it has been forced into consideration, has not failed to be avowed.

It remains to notice the development of the older conception in one other direction but to the same end. The King's word, it has been seen, was incontestable, and this quality attached itself to his sealed sanction of documents.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ 1719, Lilly's Practical Register, 48, as quoted in Vinar's Abridgment, "Contract," G. 18 ("If an agreement made by parol to do anything be afterwards reduced into writing, the parol agreement is thereby discharged; and if an action be brought for the non-performance of this agreement, it must be brought upon the agreement reduced into writing, and not upon the parol agreement; for both cannot stand together, because it appears to be but one agreement, and that shall be taken which is the latter and reduced to the greater certainty by writing; for *vox emissa volat littera scripta manet*").

⁴⁵ As in the passages from Lilly and Gilbert, *supra*, and in *Benson v. Bellasis*, *infra*.

⁴⁶ See *Strode v. Russell*, *supra*, note 26.

⁴⁷ 1673, *Tyler v. Beversham*, Rep. temp. Finch 80 (deed of conveyance of a farm; the oral agreement was much considered, and apparently became decisive); 1673, *Feilder v. Studley*, ib. 90 (covenant in deed, not enforced); 1673, *Cheek v. Lisle*, ib. 98; 1674, *Garnan v. Fox*, ib. 172; 1681, *Fane v. Fane*, 1 Vern. 30 ("One may aver a trust of personal estate," here upon testimony to the testator's intention); 1681, *Lee v. Henley*, ib. 37 (a scrivener's mistake in a settlement of land, in the nature of a will, was not allowed to be corrected); 1684, *Bechiusii v. Bechinail*, 1 Vern. 246 (a deed of marriage-settlement, proved to have been "not drawn according to the agreement," was ordered

by L. C. Nottingham to be "left out of the case"; but this decree was reversed by L. Keeper Guilford, to the extent of letting the deed be "given in evidence" at the trial at law); 1681-5, *Benson v. Bellasis*, 1 Vern. 15, 369 (deed of marriage-jointure; a parol agreement "made on the marriage" was set up; L. C. Jeffries said that "the jointure-deed is an evidence that all the precedent treaties and agreements were resolved into that"; but afterwards he increased the jointure "on evidence of her father and uncle that B., [the husband,] when he proposed the treaty of marriage, offered to settle £500 per annum jointure; . . . but note, there was no [written] covenant or agreement proved whereby he bound himself to make a jointure of that value"); 1686, *Harvey v. Harvey*, 2 Ch. Cas. 180 (similar agreement of marriage-settlement allowed to overturn a deed); 1689, *Towers v. Moor*, 2 Vern. 98 (a testator's instructions were not received to show a mistake in a will; "we cannot go against the act of Parliament"; but in case of a surrender made [on the roll] by a steward of a copyhold, "if there be any mistake there, it is only a matter of fact, and the Courts of law will in that case admit an averment that there is a mistake, etc., either as to the lands or uses"); 1706, *Hill v. Wiggett*, ib. 547 (good example of the overturning by parol of such a copyhold-transfer).

⁴⁸ *Supra*, note 10.

But, long before this, it was also conceived to sanction the indisputability of his judges' reports of their judicial doings.⁴⁹ Their *recordatio* (recollection or relation), oral though it be, is made indisputable. The progress of this doctrine is traced in the following passage:

1895, Sir F. Pollock and Professor F. W. Mailland, *History of the English Law*, II, 666: "The distinction that we still draw between 'courts of record' and courts that are 'not of record' takes us back to very early times when the King asserts that his own word as to all that has taken place in his presence is incontestible. This privilege he communicates to his own special court; its testimony as to all that is done before it is conclusive. If any question arises as to what happened on a previous occasion, the justices decide this by recording or bearing record (*recordantur, portant recordum*). Other courts, as we have lately seen, may and, upon occasion, must bear record; but their records are not irrefragable; the assertions made by the representative doomsmen of the shire-moot may be contested by a witness who is ready to fight. We easily slip into saying that a court whose record is incontrovertible is a court which has record (*habet recordum*) or is a court of record, while a court whose record may be disputed has no record (*non habet recordum*) and is no court of record. In England, only the King's court — in course of time it becomes several courts — is a court of record for all purposes, though some of the lower courts 'have record' of some particulars, and sheriffs and coroners 'have record' of certain transactions, such as confessions of felony. In the old days, when as yet there were no plea rolls, the justices when they bore record relied upon their memories. From Normandy we obtain some elaborate rules as to the manner in which record is to be borne or made; for example a record of the Exchequer is made by seven men, and, if six of them agree, the voice of the seventh may be neglected. In England at a yet early time the proceedings of the royal court were committed to writing. Thenceforward the appeal to its record tended to become a reference to a roll, but it was long before the theory was forgotten that the rolls of the court were mere aids for the memories of the justices; and as duplicate and triplicate rolls were kept there was always a chance of disagreement among them. A line is drawn between 'matter of record' and 'matter in pays' or matter which lies in the cognizance of the country and can therefore be established by a verdict of jurors."

As the art of keeping the written records developed, and the practice of indisputability became trite, it might have been supposed that the constitutive feature of these writings would have developed early. But it is late in appearing; the record is usually said to "import absolute verity";⁵⁰ but no further progress is for a long time made. And naturally enough; for any other theory, however necessary, is here palpably artificial. When a seller orally names a price and then writes it in a contract, it is easy to conceive of the writing as displacing the oral utterance and constituting alone the act. But when a counsel files a pleading or makes a motion, or a jury renders a verdict, it is plain that the clerk's act of writing is an actually separate thing from any of these. Only for the utterances of the judge himself is it entirely

⁴⁹ Brunner, *Schwurgerichte*, 189; *Rechtsgeschichte*, II, 523; *Word and Form in alt-französischen Prozess*, republished in his *Forschungen z. Geschichte des deutschen und französischen Prozess*, 269 (quoting the maxim, "Ne contre record ne puet en riens fere").
⁵⁰ 1628, Coke upon Littleton, 260a ("Recordum is a memoriall or remembrance in rolles of parchment of the proceedings and acts of a

Court of justice. . . . And the rolles, being the records or memorialls of the judges of Courts of record, import in them such incontrollable credit and veritie as they admit no averment, plea, or proefe to the contrarie; . . . and the reason hereof is apparent, for otherwise [as our old authors say, and that truly] there should never be any end of controversies, which should be inconvenient").

natural to think of the record as *per se* his own act. Nevertheless, in the end, the most practical and easily handled notion is that which identifies the record with the proceedings. This theory has finally prevailed,⁶¹ and the notion of a constitutive writing is now extended to include the record of a judicial proceeding.⁶²

1. Integration of Unilateral Acts.

§ 2427. **Official Documents (Surveys, Appointments, Assessments, etc.).**

The reduction of an act to a writing, so as to bring it under the present rule (*ante*, § 2425), may be made as well for a unilateral act (*i. e.* an act involving a single party only) as for a bilateral act (*i. e.* an act involving two or more parties). In either case, it is a question of the nature of the act and of the party's intention to embody it solely in the writing.

Of ordinary acts of private persons, there are few that are integrated. A notice or demand would be a not uncommon instance; for example, if orally a party should give notice of a lease's termination or forfeiture, or should demand a payment, and then should follow this by the same notice in written form, the latter would presumably merge and replace the former, and the terms of the writing would be decisive, so far as concerned the sufficiency of the act of notification.¹ Other instances are rare.²

Of acts of officials, there are occasional instances of integration, though they come infrequently into litigation. It may be said that where the act is not by law required to be integrated, the Courts are not inclined to discover a voluntary integration. For example, the appointment of a sheriff's deputy³ or the enlistment of a recruit⁴ have been allowed to be proved as oral acts, even though a writing was also made. On the other hand, the levy of an assessment has been treated as embodied solely in the book-entry.⁵

Both the foregoing classes of cases must be distinguished from cases involving the application of two other principles, superficially similar, namely, compulsory integration (*post*, § 2453) and conclusive testimony (*ante*, § 1345):

(1) Where by law an act is required to be done in writing, *i. e.* is ineffective

⁶¹ 1774, L. C. J. Mansfield, in *Jones v. Randall*, Cowp. 17 ("The minutes of the judgment are the solemn judgment itself"); 1846, Nisbet, J., in *Bryant v. Owen*, 1 Ga. 355, 367 ("The record is tried by inspection; and if the judgment does not there appear, the conclusion is that none has been rendered").

⁶² The history of the two other chief instances of the application of the principle, negotiable instruments and records of corporate proceedings, is beyond the present purview.

¹ Though so far as concerned the state of mind of the party notified, both sources of his information would be equally material.

² The following is an example: 1820, Thistlewood's Trial, 33 How. St. Tr. 757 (high treason; inquiry was made as to certain proclamations prepared by the defendant; the latter dictated the words to H., who wrote them down, but owing to a difference of opinion as to the phras-

ing, the writing was not completed; the Court doubted as to the propriety of any inquiry as to the words spoken in dictation, and intimated that the contents of the document alone were to be regarded).

³ 1895, *Pentecost v. State*, 107 Ala. 81, 18 So. 146 ("It was like a receipt").

⁴ 1869, *Wilson v. McClure*, 50 Ill. 366 (that substitutes were received into the service of the army; the officer's entry of it not necessary to be proved).

⁵ 1903, *Allen v. McKay*, 139 Cal. 94, 72 Pac. 713 (the assessment-roll, completed and certified by the assessor, "is the only evidence of his acts and intentions"); 1897, *Dresden v. Bridge*, 90 Me. 489, 38 Atl. 545 (assessment to "S. J. B., Est. of"; evidence of the assessor's intention to assess the tax to the executor, excluded).

unless so done, the writing is of course the only permissible subject of proof. It is immaterial what the person intended; his act must be in the writing and must be judged by the writing alone (*post*, § 2453).

(2) Certain official documents are sometimes made *preferred conclusive testimony*, and it is difficult to distinguish whether that principle or the present one is involved.⁶ For example, the question may be whether a sheriff's record of prisoners received is conclusive,⁷ or whether a State auditor's books are conclusive,⁸ and here the mere principle of conclusive testimony is concerned. But when the question is whether an official survey is conclusive as to boundary lines,⁹ it is in fact an inquiry as to the terms of the government's grant as defined by the grantor's agent; the written survey therefore constitutes the surveyor's act, and is not merely a testimony to some independent fact. In general, then, where an official writing represents the act itself of the officer, it is an instance of the present principle of integration; but where the official writing states another person's acts or some external happening, it is an instance of testimony; how far, in the latter case, it is preferred and is made conclusive has been already examined under that head (*ante*, §§ 1345-1353). The practical differences in the effect of the two rules have also been there pointed out (*ante*, § 1346), but may here be compared. (a) If a conclusive testimonial writing *never was made*, then the fact to be proved may be otherwise evidenced, — for example, where an officer's jurat (or certificate of an oath made before him) has not been recorded on the document, the fact of the swearing may be otherwise evidenced;¹⁰ though if the written jurat had been the sole embodiment of an official act, the failure to write it would be the failure to act at all, and hence no other proof could have been made. (b) If a conclusive testimonial writing was made but is *lost*, its preferential nature is at an end, and any other testimony to the fact in issue may be received in its stead;¹¹ but if a written legal act is lost, the proof must be of its contents, because the very fact to be proved is the writing itself. Thus, while these marked differences result, there remains the common feature that, by both principles, the oral utterance of the official cannot be proved, nor can the terms of the writing (if available) be

⁶ Compare the additional cases cited *ante*, §§ 1335, 1339, 1345-1352.

⁷ 1898, *Goodrich v. Senate*, 92 Me. 243, 42 Atl. 409 (sheriff's calendar of prisoners kept, not conclusive).

⁸ 1878, *State v. Newton*, 33 Ark. 276, 284 (action on an official bond; the State Auditor's books held not conclusive under a statute making them "efficient evidence").

⁹ 1814, *Ringgold v. Galloway*, 3 H. & J. 451, 461 (an official survey being lost, a junior survey of the same estate was admitted; in the absence of loss, the former would be conclusive); 1897, *Carter v. Hornback*, 139 Mo. 238, 40 S. W. 893 (U. S. survey, held conclusive as to "the actual locations of the boundary lines of sections," etc.); 1895, *Reusene v. Lawson*, 91 Va. 226, 21 S. E. 847 ("Such [extrinsic] declarations of the sur-

veyor are not admissible, because the policy of the law forbids that his solemn acts, done in the discharge of his official duty, should be annulled by his subsequent declarations").

Whether a *ship-survey* is conclusive is a question of contract.

¹⁰ 1895, *Bantley v. Finney*, 43 Nebr. 794, 62 N. W. 213.

¹¹ 1855, *People v. Clingan*, 5 Cal. 389 (a certificate of election being lost, testimony was admitted both of its contents and of the fact of election as known to others); 1847, *Dutchess Co. Bank v. Ibbotson*, 5 Denio 110 (a notary's certificate of demand and notice, made evidence by statute; if lost, its contents cannot be proved; the notary's testimony in some other form must be obtained); 1846, *Lloyd v. McGarr*, 3 Pa. St. 475, 482 (similar).

contradicted by his oral utterance; yet this is due in the one instance to the conclusiveness of the written testimony, and in the other instance to the operative character of the writing as an act.

2. Integration of Bilateral Acts.

§ 2429. **No Integration at all; Casual Memoranda.** The mere circumstance that *some* writing has been made by parties, for the better recollection of the terms of their transaction, does not of itself make that writing the sole memorial of the transaction, even to the extent covered by the writing. There may have been no integration at all, in spite of the written notes; *i. e.* no attempt to make the writing embody the transaction or any part of it (*ante*, § 2425), but merely to furnish an aid to the writer's recollection or a written admission for the other party's satisfaction. The essential idea remains for it, that the writing is something distinct from the transaction itself. There can hardly be any precise test; the circumstances of each case, as indicating the parties' intent, must control.¹

§ 2430. **Partial Integration; General Test for applying the Rule; "Collateral Agreements."** The most usual controversy arises in cases of partial integration, *i. e.* where a certain part of a transaction has been embodied in a single writing, but another part has been left in some other form. Here obviously the rule against disputing the terms of the document will be applicable to *so much of the transaction as is so embodied, but not to the remainder.*

It is of course incorrect to assume that what was not so embodied was in truth a part of that same transaction; it may have been a totally distinct transaction, merely coinciding in time. For example, a banker, at an interview with a promoter, who comes from a distant city and compresses all their affairs into a short interview, may within the same half-hour sign articles of incorporation, authorize an overdraft, assign a mortgage, and join in a committee's report to stockholders. Or a purchaser of land, negotiating with a broker, may at the same sitting accept a deed of grant of one piece of land and appoint the broker his agent to sell another piece. In such instances,

¹ *Eng.*: 1803, *Dalison v. Stark*, 4 Esp. 163 (action for goods sold; the plaintiff called his selling agent, who had taken the order, and it appeared that "the order was given to Lim verbally by the defendant, and that he had put it down in writing to assist his own recollection, merely as a memorandum; it was not made by the buyer, nor was his name signed"; held, that the writing was not the contract); 1814, *Ramsbottom v. Tunbridge*, 2 M. & S. 434 (a memorandum of a lease handed to a purchaser by an auctioneer after the knocking down; held, not an integration); 1820, *Doe v. Cartwright*, 3 B. & Ald. 326 (a memorandum of tenancy, drawn up and assented to, but conditional on getting a surety, and never signed; held, not controlling); 1835, *R. v. Wrangle*, 2 A. & E. 514 (employer and employee went to a clerk,

who entered the terms of hiring in writing, which however was not read or shown to them or signed by them; held not integrated); 1838, *Allen v. Pink*, 4 M. & W. 140 ("Bought of G. P. a horse for the sum of 7l. 2s. 6d., G. P." held to be intended "merely as a memorandum of the transaction or an informal receipt for money, not as containing the terms of the contract itself"); *U. S.*: 1900, *Atwater v. Cardwell*, — Ky. —, 54 S. w. 960 (a mere temporary memorandum, held not indisputable); 1895, *Vaughan v. McCarthy*, 63 Minn. 221, 65 N. W. 249 (a "mere informal memorandum," held not indisputable); 1897, *Burditt v. Howe*, 69 Vt. 563, 38 Atl. 240 (a series of letters, held not to have been made the sole memorial of the contract).

the transactions are so clearly distinct, that each one, if integrated, will certainly be embodied in a writing wholly distinct from the others and regardless of whether the others are reduced to writing at all; and no controversy can plausibly arise. But in those instances in which a negotiation concerns one general subject — such as the purchase of a single lot of land having buildings on it — and yet several more or less separable features of bargain, the relation between the writing and the whole bargain is usually difficult to ascertain, and forms a perpetually recurring controversy. To say that the question is whether the parties intended to embody “the whole of the transaction” or only a part, is therefore hardly correct; because by hypothesis the writing *does* represent the whole of what was finally done on the subject covered by it; and because to assume that the subject not covered was a “part” of the transaction covered would be inconsistent, and would involve holding that the writing which embodies the transaction does not embody that “part” of it. More correctly, the inquiry is whether the writing was intended to cover a *certain subject* of negotiation; for if it was not, then the writing does not embody the transaction on that *subject*; and one of the circumstances of decision will be whether the one subject is so associated with the others that they are in effect “parts” of the same transaction, and therefore, if reduced to writing at all, they must be governed by the same writing.

In searching for a general test for this inquiry, three propositions at least are capable of being generally laid down:

(1) Whether a particular subject of negotiation is embodied by the writing *depends wholly upon the intent of the parties thereto*.¹ In this respect the contrast is between voluntary integration and integration by law (*post*, § 2450). Here the parties are not obliged to embody their transaction in a single document; yet they may, if they choose. Hence it becomes merely a question whether they have intended to do so.

(2) This intent must be sought where always intent must be sought (*ante*, §§ 42, 1714, 1790), namely, in the *conduct and language* of the parties and the *surrounding circumstances*. The document alone will not suffice. What it was intended to cover cannot be known till we know what there was to cover. The question being whether certain subjects of negotiation were intended to be covered, we must compare the writing and the negotiations before we can determine whether they were in fact covered. Thus the apparent paradox is committed of receiving proof of certain negotiations in order to determine whether to exclude them; and this doubtless has sometimes seemed to lower the rule to a quibble. But the paradox is apparent only. The explanation is that these alleged negotiations are received only provisionally. Although in form the witnesses may be allowed to recite the facts, yet in truth the facts will be afterwards treated as immaterial and legally void, if the rule is held applicable. There is a preliminary question for the judge to decide as to the intent of the parties, and upon this he hears

¹ This intent must of course be judged by an external standard: *ante*, § 2413.

evidence on both sides;² his decision here, *pro* or *con*, concerns merely this question preliminary to the ruling of law. If he decides that the transaction was covered by the writing, he does not decide that the excluded negotiations did not take place, but merely that *if* they did take place they are nevertheless legally immaterial. If he decides that the transaction was not intended to be covered by the writing, he does not decide that the negotiations did take place, but merely that *if* they did, they are legally effective, and he then leaves to the jury the determination of fact whether they did take place. In this anomalous process, it merely happens that some of the conduct and other data which are at first resorted to *evidentially* on the question of intent are usually identical with the conduct that may subsequently be treated as legally *inoperative*; but this is a mere coincidence. The two vital differences are, first, that they are looked at for different purposes, and secondly, that they may be dealt with by different branches of the tribunal.

(3) In deciding upon this intent, the chief and most satisfactory index for the judge is found in the circumstance whether or not the *particular element of the alleged extrinsic negotiation is dealt with at all* in the writing. If it is mentioned, covered, or dealt with in the writing, then presumably the writing was meant to represent all of the transaction on that element; if it is not, then probably the writing was not intended to embody that element of the negotiation. This test is the one used by the most careful judges,³ and is in contrast with the looser and incorrect inquiry (*post*, § 2431) whether the alleged extrinsic negotiation contradicts the terms of the writing.

§ 2431. **Same: Incorrect Tests; (a) "Varying the Terms of the Writing"; (b) "The Writing is the Sole Criterion"; (c) Fraud, in Pennsylvania.** (a) It is not uncommon to speak of the present rule as a rule against "*varying the terms of the writing*." No doubt that is precisely the effect of applying the rule. But it can never serve as a test to determine in the first instance whether the rule is applicable. The applicability and the effect of the rule are distinct things. To employ this phrase as a test is to reason in a circle; for it is to attempt to decide whether something conceded to be different from the writing ought to be excluded, by showing that it *is* different. All the

² Of course, not always in form; but he considers the data *pro* and *con*. Sometimes, but erroneously, the question of intent is left to the jury.

³ The following will serve as examples: 1815, *Yeats v. Pim*, Holt 95 (sale of bacon, warranted to be prime singed; a custom to claim a breach at the time of inspection or waive it, excluded; "by requiring a warranty, he is to be understood as excepting against all terms but such as are stipulated in the bargain"); 1819, *Bayley, J.*, in *Webb v. Plummer*, 2 B. & Ald. 746, 750 ("Where there is a written agreement between the parties, it is naturally to be expected that it will contain all the terms of their bargain. But if it is entirely silent as to the terms of quitting, it may let in the custom of the country as to

that particular. If, however, it specifies any of those terms, we must then go by the lease alone"); 1851, *Maule, J.*, in *Dickson v. Zizina*, 10 C. B. 602, 610 ("We should not by inference insert in a contract implied provisions with respect to a subject which the contract has expressly provided for"); 1892, *Bretto v. Levine*, 50 Minn. 168, 52 N. W. 525 (deed of land and store, including "all the shelving in the building"; an agreement to sell part of the stock also, admitted; "if the clause had mentioned one or more articles of personal property, as chairs, of such a nature that there could be no doubt that they constituted a part of the realty so as to pass under a deed of the property, the result would probably be different").

phrases about transactions that "vary," or "contradict," or are "inconsistent," involve the same futility. The fundamental question is as to the intent of the parties to restrict the writing to specific elements or subjects of negotiation (*ante*, § 2431, par. 3); and if that intent existed, then the other subjects of negotiation can be established, even though they be (as they always are) different from the writing:

1854, Mr. (later Justice) *Blackburn*, arguing, in *Brown v. Byrne*, 3 E. & B. 708: "The parties may by express words or by implication agree to exclude the incident which the general law would annex if they were silent; and it is exactly the same where the incident is annexed by custom or local law. . . . Then the question is, not whether the custom if admitted will vary or be inconsistent with the contract as it would stand without the custom; but whether it is impliedly excluded by the tenor of the instrument. The other mode of enunciating the proposition has been used by high authorities, but evidently is inaccurate. No one ever did or ever will seek to annex an incident by proof of a custom except for the express purpose of varying the contract from what it would be if the custom were not proved." *Coleridge, J.* (for the Court): "Merely that it varies the apparent contract is not enough to exclude the evidence; for it is impossible to add any material incident to the written terms of a contract without altering its effect more or less."

1878, *Grove, J.*, in *Hutchinson v. Tatham*, L. R. 8 C. P. 482, 488: "In one sense the contract must always be varied by the admission of the evidence of custom, inasmuch as the effect of the contract would not be the same without the parol evidence, or else the parol evidence would itself be unnecessary."

(b) It has occasionally been laid down that, in ascertaining, in the first instance, the parties' intent to embody or not in the writing certain subjects of negotiation, "*the writing is the sole criterion*," i. e. no search for data of intent can be made outside the four corners of the document:

1892, *Depue, J.*, in *Naumberg v. Young*, 44 N. J. L. 331: "In what manner shall it be ascertained whether the parties intended to express the whole of their agreement in the written contract? . . . The only safe criterion of the completeness of a written contract as the full expression of the terms of the parties' agreement is the contract itself. . . . If the written contract purports to contain the whole agreement, and it is not apparent from the writing itself that something has been left out to be supplied by extrinsic evidence, parol evidence to vary or add to its terms is not admissible."¹

Such a proposition, however, is untenable, both on principle and in practice. Its fallacy is indicated by what has been already noticed (*ante*, § 2430). The problem being to ascertain whether the parties intended a certain writing to cover certain subjects, the relation between the writing and those subjects and their conduct is necessarily involved; and all these matters must be considered. When two parties are found playing a game of chess, it cannot be told whether this is the sole and decisive game, or merely one of

¹ So also, but less rigid in statement, the following exposition: 1901, *Potter v. Easton*, 82 Minn. 247, 84 N. W. 1011 (Start, C. J.): "In considering whether or not a particular writing is an incomplete contract, within the rule stated, the controlling question is whether it appears upon the face of the writing that the parties intended it to be the exclusive evidence of their agreement. While the writing itself is the only criterion by which the intention of the parties is to be ascertained, yet it is not necessary that the incompleteness of the writing should appear on its face from a mere inspection of it, for it is to be construed in the light of its subject-matter and the circumstances under which and the purposes for which it was executed".

a series, by watching that particular game. Whether a piece of land which we see a surveyor marking out is the entirety of the owner's estate cannot be determined by looking merely at the boundaries of that piece; if we look far enough, we may find that it is only a part of a larger survey. Whether a certain box of cards represents the whole catalogue of a man's library cannot be determined by the mere contents, nor by the circumstance that they are all in one box, nor yet by the circumstance that they are arranged alphabetically and include titles from A to Z; for perhaps he has also a separate catalogue of French and German books, or perhaps he has separate catalogues for law books and for general literature, or possibly he has taken out all the cards for books sent to the bindery. The conception of a writing as wholly memorial and intrinsically self-determinative of the parties' intent to make it the sole memorial of one or seven or twenty-seven subjects of negotiation is an impossible one. The odd feature of it is that it is never enforced in practice by its theoretical advocates.²

(c) In *Pennsylvania*, the application of the rule seems to be governed by a test so anomalous that it may almost be said to destroy the essence of the rule in that jurisdiction. That test is *fraud*; although it would seem that every attempt knowingly to invoke the letter of a writing against the actual oral understanding of the parties (however different from the written terms) could properly be considered as fraudulent:

1884, *Paxson, J.*, in *Phillips v. Meily*, 106 Pa. 536, 543: "The English rule that parol evidence is inadmissible to vary the terms of a written instrument does not exist in this State; . . . the cases in this State in which parol evidence has been allowed to contradict or vary written instruments may be classed under two heads: "1st, where there was fraud, accident, or mistake in the creation of the instrument itself; and 2d, where there has been an attempt to make a fraudulent use of the instrument in violation of a promise or agreement made at the time the instrument was signed and without which it would not have been executed."*

The application of the general principle to various specific kinds of transactions and documents may now be examined.

§ 2432. *Receipts and Releases; Bills of Lading.* A receipt — *i. e.* a written acknowledgment, handed by one party to the other, of the manual custody of money or other personalty —, will in general fall without the line of the rule; *i. e.* it is not intended to be an exclusive memorial, and the facts may be shown irrespective of the terms of the receipt.¹ This is because usually a

* See a good illustration of this in *Naumberg v. Young*, the case quoted *supra*.
² A clue to the numerous rulings in *Pennsylvania* may be found in the following cases: 1884, *Thomas v. Loese*, 114 Pa. 35, 45, 6 Atl. 326; 1902, *Sutch's Estate*, 201 id. 305, 50 Atl. 943; and cases cited *post*, § 2442, note 1. The development and present state of the *Pennsylvania* rule has been carefully examined in an article by Mr. Stanley Folz, "Oral Contemporaneous Inducing Promises to affect Written Instruments in *Pennsylvania*," 1904, *American Law Register*, LII, 601.

¹ *Eng.*: 1788, *Buller, J.*, in *Straton v. Rastall*, 2 T. R. 366, 371 ("Equity distinguishes between the persons who join in a receipt and him who actually receives the money; and the receipt is not conclusive against him [the defendant], as he was only a surety and in fact received no part of the consideration-money"); 1852, *Singleton v. Barrett*, 2 Cr. & J. 368; *U. S.*: 1898, *Gravlee v. Lamkin*, 120 Ala. 210, 24 So. 756; 1902, *Starkweather v. Maginnis*, 196 Ill. 274, 63 N. E. 692; 1897, *Monroe v. Kurtz*, 101 Ia. 192, 70 N. W. 119; 1896, *Missouri P. R. Co. v. Lovelace*, 57 Kan. 195, 45

receipt is merely a written admission of a transaction independently existing, and, like other admissions, is not conclusive (*ante*, § 1058). But where the writing is itself the very act, as where it grants a discharge or *release* of a claim, or embodies a new obligation, it obviously falls within the rule, and its terms cannot be overthrown:

1832, *Fenterden, C. J.*, in *Graves v. Key*, 3 B. & Ad. 313 (admitting the circumstances of payment of a bill, so as to show an indorsed receipt not to be a satisfaction): "A receipt is an admission only, and the general rule is that an admission, though evidence against the person who made it and those claiming under him, is not conclusive evidence (except as to the person who may have been induced by it to alter his condition). A receipt therefore may be contradicted or explained."

1836, *Cowen, J.*, in *M'Crea v. Purnort*, 16 Wend. 400, 473: "A release cannot be contradicted or explained by parol, because it extinguishes a preëxisting right. But no receipt can have the effect of destroying *per se* any subsisting right; it is only evidence of a fact. The payment of the money discharges or extinguishes the debt; a receipt for the payment does not extinguish the debt; it is only evidence that it has been paid. Not so of a written release; it is not only evidence of the extinguishment; but it is the extinguisher itself."

1897, *Buck, J.*, in *Ramsdell v. Clark*, 20 Mont. 103, 49 Pac. 591: "Whether a receipt possesses any contractual feature or not must often be determined from its entire language, and also, at times, from the language in connection with the circumstances under which it was given. If A, to whom B is indebted in the undisputed sum of \$200, is paid by the latter \$100, and signs a receipt for the sum, of \$200, or, mentioning the sum paid, acknowledges payment in full of the debt, nevertheless A, in an action against B for the unpaid balance, without showing any fraud, mistake, or other excuse for having signed the receipt, can contradict it by extrinsic evidence, and show that only \$100 was paid. It would only be evidence of B's having paid the debt, just as an oral admission proved against A would be. If, however, B has been indebted to A on an account the amount of which has been in dispute between them, a receipt by A definitely specifying the entire account, and acknowledging a sum received as payment in full of the same, would possess a contractual feature; and, in order to contradict or vary the terms of it by extrinsic evidence in so far as it would be a contract, A would be required to observe the rules of law applicable to contracts, and could not treat it in evidence against him as if it were of no greater weight than a mere oral admission on his part."

Which of these characters a given document possesses must of course depend on the particular case; but it is well understood that a document which is a receipt may in some instances be indisputable as being also in effect a release or a contract.²

Pac. 590; 1897, *Equitable Secur. Co. v. Talbert*, 49 La. An. 1393, 27 So. 762 (even when acknowledged notarially); 1897, *Joelin v. Giese*, 59 N. J. L. 130, 36 Atl. 680; 1903, *Komp v. Raymond*, 175 N. Y. 102, 67 N. E. 113; 1896, *Keaton v. Jones*, 119 N. C. 43, 25 S. E. 710 ("have this day settled all accounts"); 1830, *Keene v. Meade*, 3 Pet. 1, 7 (entry in a cash-book, acknowledging an advance of money, held not to exclude proof of the payment by parol); 1893, *Riddle v. Hudgins*, 7 C. C. A. 335, 58 Fed. 490, 19 U. S. App. 144, 150.

The following utterance may therefore be regarded as overruled: 1803, *Alner v. George*, 1 Camp. 392 (L. C. J. Ellenborough: "A receipt

in full, where the person who gave it was under no misapprehension and can complain of no fraud or imposition, is binding upon him").

² 1884, *Goss v. Ellison*, 136 Mass. 503 (a receipt for \$51 "as full payment, as per claim," held conclusive, because equivalent to a "settlement and satisfaction of the claim" for tort thus discharged); 1897, *Ramsdell v. Clark*, 20 Mont. 103, 49 Pac. 591 (quoted *supra*); 1880, *Goodwin v. Goodwin*, 59 N. H. 548 (a receipt for \$2,500, "in consideration of which I hereby waive all right to contest said will or the proof thereof and all claim I have or might have as heir of said deceased" was held to exclude the oral agreement concerning the precise claims re-

§ 2433. **Recital of Consideration in a Deed.** By an application of principle similar to the foregoing, a recital of consideration received, when it occurs in a deed of grant, is usually intended merely as a written acknowledgment of the distinct act of payment, being there inserted for convenience. Hence it is not an embodiment of an act *per se* written, and may be disputed like any other admission (*ante*, § 1058). But the statement of a consideration may, on the other hand, sometimes be itself an operative part of a contractual act, — as when in the same writing the parties set out their mutual promises as considerations for each other; here the word "consideration" signifies a term of the contract, and hence the writing alone can be examined:

1805, *Cooper, C. J.*, in *Baum v. Lynn*, 72 *Mass.* 932, 18 *So.* 428 (in a deed I. recited that, whereas L.'s guardian had loaned money to L., I., in consideration of a full release from such loans, and of ten dollars paid in hand, conveyed, etc.; the fact that a release of the guardian's liability to L. was also a part of the consideration was excluded): "Judge Robertson [in a case cited] illustrates his own views by noting the difference between the mere statement of a fact (*e. g.* the admission of the receipt of the purchase price) and the vesting, creating, or extinguishing a right (*e. g.* by the execution of a release), in the following language: 'A party is estopped by his deed. He is not to be permitted to contradict it. So far as the deed is intended to pass a right, or to be the exclusive evidence of a contract, it concides the parties to it. But the principle goes no further. A deed is not conclusive evidence of everything it may contain. For instance, it is not the only evidence of the date of its execution, nor is its omission of a consideration conclusive evidence that none passed, nor is its acknowledgment of a particular consideration an objection to other proof of other and consistent considerations; and, by analogy, the acknowledgment in a deed is not conclusive of the fact. This is but a fact, and testing it by the rationality of the rule we have laid down, it may be explained or contradicted. It does not necessarily and undeniably prove the fact. It creates no right; it extinguishes none. A release cannot be contradicted or explained by proof, because it extinguishes a preëxisting right. But no receipt can have the effect of destroying *per se* any subsisting right. It is only evidence of a fact. The payment of the money discharges or extinguishes the debt. A receipt for the payment does not pay the debt. It is only evidence that it has been paid. Not so of a written release. It is not only evidence of the extinguishment, but is the extinguishment itself.' The deed now under examination contains, as is clearly to be seen, no mere recital of a consideration paid or to be paid. Its recital is only of the facts necessary to be stated to intelligently apply the contract of the parties to the subject-matter. Having set out the relationship of debtor and creditor, and the history of the transaction from which it arose, the deed then proceeds to state what the parties agreed, contracted, and did in reference to the dissolution of the relationship. Mrs. Irving did something. She conveyed the land to Mrs. Lynn. Mrs. Lynn did something. She released the debt to Mrs. Irving. One transferred a right; the other released a right. If it be said that the release was a mere recited consideration for the conveyance, it may with equal accuracy be replied that the conveyance was a mere recited consideration for

leased thereby); 1898, *Jackson v. Ely*, 57 *Oh.* 450, 49 *N. E.* 792 (receipt for money, with statement of settlement in full, treated as a memorial not to be varied); 1898, *Casilly v. Casilly*, *ib.* 582, 49 *N. E.* 795 (receipt for money, including release of a claim in an estate, not variable by parol); 1897, *Allen v. Mill Co.*, 18 *Wash.* 216, 51 *Pac.* 372 (receipt, held not explainable on the facts). The presumption of payment arising from a receipt is another question (*post*, § 2518).

The application of the above doctrine to a bill of lading may be seen in the following cases: 1871, *The Delaware*, 14 *Wall.* 579; 1898, *Tallassee F. M. Co. v. R. Co.*, 117 *Ala.* 520, 23 *So.* 139; *McClain, Cases on Carriers*, 233-248. Its application to a passenger ticket may be seen in the following: 1893, *Mann B. C. Co. v. Dupre*, 4 *C. C. A.* 540, 54 *Fed.* 646; *Hutchinson, Carriers*, §§ 563 ff.; *Professor J. H. Beale, Tickets, Harvard Law Review*, I, 17.

the release; and therefore, if one of the terms of the contract may be varied by parol, because it is a consideration, so also may the other for the same reason, and by this process a solemn and executed written contract would be totally eaten away. The true rule is that a consideration recited to have been paid or contracted for may be varied by parol, while the terms of a contract may not be, though the contract they disclose may be the consideration on which the act or obligation of the other party rests."

In general, then, it may be said that a recital of consideration received is, like other admissions, dispositive so far as concerns the thing actually received;¹ but that, so far as the terms of a contractual act are involved, the writing must control, whether it uses the term "consideration" or not.²

§ 2434. **Warranty in a Sale; Insurance Warranties.** When a document embodies terms of a sale, it is the more natural to suppose that the document would cover such warranties, if any, as accompanied the sale, because the warranty is certainly a part of the contract and not a separate obligation. But when obviously only some of the terms of the bargain are represented in the document, and there must have been others — such as the time of delivery — left unembodied in it, it is possible to regard a warranty as equally without its purview. The decision will thus depend almost entirely on the circumstances of each transaction; and generalizations can hardly be made. In most instances, however, Courts are found treating the writing of sale as

¹ Some of the rulings, of course, may be open to argument: 1789, *R. v. Scammonden*, 3 T. R. 474 (panper settlement; the deed of purchase reciting a consideration of 23s., it was allowed to show that 30s. was in fact the amount received); 1898, *Hendon v. Morris*, 110 Ala. 106, 20 So. 27; 1892, *Gnidery v. Green*, 95 Cal. 630, 635, 80 Pac. 786; 1881, *Feltz v. Walker*, 49 Conn. 93 (the plaintiff's assignor, B., buying land, had it conveyed to the defendant's name, and took a bond and mortgage from the defendant for \$3,250, the sole consideration for the bond being the land thus conveyed to the defendant for B.; held that the bond could be enforced only to the extent of appropriating the land in satisfaction); 1897, *Droop v. Ridenhour*, 11 D. C. App. 224, 238; 1895, *Reese v. Strickland*, 96 Ga. 784, 22 S. E. 323; 1897, *Thompson v. Cody*, 100 id. 771, 28 S. E. 669; 1895, *Stewart v. R. Co.*, 141 Ind. 55, 40 N. E. 67; 1893, *Hill v. Whidden*, 158 Mass. 267, 274, 33 N. E. 526; 1902, *Galvin v. R. Co.*, 180 id. 587, 62 N. E. 961 (release of claim for personal injury, reciting a money consideration; a promise of employment by the releasee, allowed to be proved); 1880, *Strohauer v. Voltz*, 42 Mich. 444, 4 N. W. 161; 1895, *Fitzpatrick v. Hoffman*, 104 id. 228, 62 N. W. 349; 1897, *Ford v. Savage*, 111 id. 144, 69 N. W. 240; 1895, *Squier v. Evans*, 127 Mo. 514, 30 S. W. 143; 1836, *McCrea v. Purmort*, 16 Wend. 460, 467 (summing up the cases in England and the United States; pointing out that the acknowledgment of a consideration is merely a receipt); 1895, *Baird v. Baird*, 145 N. Y. 659, 40 N. E. 222; 1898, *Marcom v. Adams*, 122 N. C. 222, 29 S. E. 333; 1892, *Velten v. Carmack*, 23 Or. 282, 289, 31 Pac. 658 (consid-

eration in a deed to a married woman, shown to have been a gift to her by the grantor); 1895, *Wheeler v. Campbell*, 68 Vt. 98, 34 Atl. 35; 1896, *Van Lehn v. Morse*, 16 Wash. 219, 47 Pac. 435; 1897, *Don Yook v. Milling Co.*, ib. 459, 47 Pac. 964.

² 1902, *Arnold v. Arnold*, 187 Cal. 291, 70 Pac. 23 (deeds of transfer by one partner to another, containing mutual covenants as a part of the consideration; other consideration excluded); 1895, *Sandage v. Mfg. Co.*, 142 Ind. 143, 41 N. E. 380 (rejecting the fact that for a supplementary contract dealing with a prior contract buying a patent the consideration was a release of the guaranty in the prior one); 1900, *Schrimper v. R. Co.*, — Ia. —, 82 N. W. 916; 1897, *Thompson v. Bryant*, 75 Miss. 12, 21 So. 655 (the assumption of the seller's share of his liability as partner for firm debts, excluded as contractual); 1887, *Parker v. Morrill*, 98 N. C. 232, 3 S. E. 511 (agreement of accounting between a ward P. and her guardian B., by which "in consideration of one dollar to us paid by B., the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged," the ward grants to B. the sum of money due, and "do forever release and discharge said B." from his bond, the money to be applied by B. to certain named uses; the plaintiff ward offered to show an oral agreement by which B. additionally promised to devise property to the ward, and to prove that "only upon this promise and agreement did the plaintiff agree to sign the written agreement"; excluded as "a consideration not mentioned or referred to in it"); 1900, *Kahn v. Kahn*, 94 Tex. 114, 53 S. W. 825; 1881, *Hei v. Heller*, 53 Wis. 415, 10 N. W. 620 (sale of land, in consideration of

the sole memorial of the transaction as to warranties;¹ occasionally, on the circumstances, they permit extrinsic warranties to be valid.² The enforcement of an implied warranty of fitness seems to involve a similar question.³

mortgage and bond; a further consideration of certain personalty, excluded).

Note that as between "good" and "valuable" consideration, on which the line of descent may depend, it is said that the nature of it cannot be determined by oral facts, though the amount of it may be: 1902, *Groves v. Groves*, 65 Oh. St. 442, 62 N. E. 1044.

¹ *Eng.*: 1305, *Hodges v. Drakeford*, 1 B. & P. N. R. 270 (action on a warranty that the trade of a shop bought by the plaintiff reached a certain amount; the writing of assignment held to control); 1810, *Powell v. Edmunds*, 12 East 6, 10 (sale of timber described by number and kind of trees; an oral warranty as to the weight excluded); 1813, *Pickering v. Dowson*, 4 Taunt. 779, 785 (warranty of a ship, excluded); 1814, *Meyer v. Everth*, 4 Camp. 22 (bought-note of a sugar sale, naming "50 hogheads of H. sugar loaves, at 155 c. free on board of a British ship, acceptance at 70 days"; an oral warranty of quality like sample, excluded); 1815, *Gardiner v. Gray*, lb. 144 (similar); 1824, *Kain v. Old*, 2 B. & C. 627 (bill of sale of ship, containing warranties of title and of further assurance; a parol warranty of copper-bolting, excluded); 1831, *Bradshaw v. Bennett*, 5 C. & P. 43, 49 (sale of property held on three lives; the auctioneer's statement at the sale that one of the persons was dead, *semble*, not admissible); 1838, *Chanter v. Hopkins*, 4 M. & W. 399 (sale of a smoke-consuming furnace; oral warranty of suitability for a brewery, excluded); *Can.*: 1897, *Saults v. Eaket*, 11 Man. 597 (warranty of a binder, excluded on the facts); *U. S.*: 1893, *Hills v. Farmington*, 70 Conn. 450, 39 Atl. 795 (building contract in great detail; oral warranty of the architect's plans, excluded); 1897, *Maxwell v. Willingham*, 101 Ga. 55, 28 S. E. 672 (agreement to buy a tract of "about 150 acres"; oral warranty by seller that it contained no more than 150, excluded); 1896, *Barrie v. Smith*, 105 Id. 34, 81 S. E. 121 (oral warranty of the moral quality of Balzac's works, excluded); 1903, *Bullard v. Brewer*, — Id. —, 45 S. E. 711 (sale of a horse); 1839, *Conant v. Bank*, 121 Ind. 324, 22 N. E. 250 ("We will furnish the following machinery for a 100-barrel mill, of 24 hours, set up in your mill building"; warranty of grade, excluded); 1898, *Younie v. Walrod*, 104 Ia. 475, 73 N. W. 1021 (written agreement to buy land, vendor to furnish abstract, etc.; oral agreement as to time of furnishing abstract, etc., excluded); 1902, *Ehrsam v. Brown*, 64 Kan. 466, 67 Pac. 867 (machinery; warranty excluded); 1894, *McCray E. & C. S. Co. v. Woods*, 99 Mich. 269, 58 N. W. 320 (refrigerator sale; oral warranty excluded; prior cases distinguished); 1895, *Zimmerman Mfg. Co. v. Dolph*, 104 Id. 281, 62 N. W. 539 (oral warranty, additional to the written warranty, excluded); 1885, *Thompson v. Libby*, 34 Minn. 374, 26 N. W. 1 (bill of sale of logs; warranty excluded); 1896, *Miller v. Elec-*

tric Co., 133 Mo. 205, 34 S. W. 585 (a contract for boilers of a certain horse-power; collateral oral agreement excluded); 1896, *Quinn v. Moss*, 45 Nebr. 614, 63 N. W. 931 (a guarantee that cigars sold should be "union made," excluded); 1882, *Nannberg v. Young*, 44 N. J. L. 331 (lease of a building for the purposes of a button factory, an engine and boiler passing as fixtures; oral guarantee that the engine and boiler were in thorough repair, excluded); 1890, *DeWitt v. Berry*, 134 U. S. 312, 10 Sup. 536 ("If a contract of sale is in writing and contains no warranty, parol evidence is not admissible to add a warranty"); 1891, *Seltz v. Refrig. Co.*, 141 Id. 510, 12 Sup. 46 (sale of refrigerating machine, mentioning only size and price; warranty excluded); 1892, *Van Winkle v. Crowell*, 146 Id. 42, 48, 13 Sup. 13 (machinery furnished; oral warranty excluded); 1893, *Wilcox v. Cate*, 65 Vt. 473, 26 Atl. 1105 (boiler-engine lease; oral warranty excluded); 1894, *Milwaukee B. Co. v. Duncan*, 87 Wis. 120, 125, 58 N. W. 232 (boiler-sales; oral warranty excluded); 1895, *Case Plow Works v. N. & S. Co.*, 90 Id. 590, 63 N. W. 1013 (a written warranty as to quality of wheels; an oral warranty as to manner of securing spokes in hubs rejected); 1896, *Caldwell v. Perkins*, 93 Id. 89, 67 N. W. 29 (contract to sell fixtures and stock of merchandise; agreement to include furniture and tools, excluded).

Where the written warranty, whose existence is disputed, is said to have been lost, the oral transaction may of course, on another principle (*ante*, § 102), be used as evidence of its existence and terms: 1896, *Ingram v. Music House*, 51 S. C. 261, 28 S. E. 396.

² *Can.*: 1895, *Gordon v. Waterous*, 36 U. C. Q. B. 321, 332 (oral warranty here admitted); 1884, *Ellis v. Abell*, 10 Ont. App. 226, 242, 246 (good opinion by Burton, J.; oral warranty here held admissible by a divided court); *U. S.*: 1879, *Chapin v. Dobson*, 78 N. Y. 74 (written sale of machinery described; oral guarantee that it should work satisfactorily and, if not, might be returned, admitted; "It is one thing to agree to sell or furnish machines of a specific kind, as of such a patent or of a particular designation, and another thing to undertake that they shall operate in a particular manner"); 1885, *Eighmie v. Taylor*, 98 Id. 288 (transfer of lease of oil wells; warranty of capacity offered; "If upon inspection of the writing, read, it may be, in the light of surrounding circumstances in order to its proper understanding and interpretation, it appears to contain the engagement, . . . it constitutes the contract between them. . . . If *Chapin v. Dobson* be near the border line in the application of the exception to the facts, there can be no question of the soundness of the doctrine").

³ 1814, *Meyer v. Everth*, 4 Camp. 22 (cited *supra*, note 1); 1895, *Case Plow Works v. N. & S. Co.*, 90 Wis. 590, 63 N. W. 1013 (a written

The insurer's oral waiver of the insured's written warranty is also commonly determined upon the same principle.⁴

§ 2435. *Agreements not to sue, or not to enforce, or to hold Conditional only.* (a) Where an obligation is embodied in a single document, the very essence of the obligation is its validity and enforcement. Hence an agreement, alleged to have been a part of the transaction, that the obligation should not be used as binding or enforceable can never be permitted to be shown, for the writing necessarily determines that very subject to the contrary; in the ordinary phrase, it is necessarily inconsistent with the writing. But here some distinctions are necessary. (1) By the general principle of legal acts (*ante*, § 2406), no legal obligation is created by a document which concerns merely transactions of friendship or the like. Hence a difficulty to determine whether that or the present principle should control, *i. e.* whether the understanding not to enforce the document signifies that it never became a legal act at all, or that it was a legal act which is still not to be observed in its terms; the former sort of agreement can be established, the latter not.¹ (2) Where the obligation is a negotiable instrument, different considerations may control; these are separately examined (*post*, § 2443). (3) Where an agreement not to sue is made subsequent to the original and written agreement, it is of course an independent transaction and may be established (*post*, § 2441). But such an independent agreement could not in a common-law trial defeat the claim; it could only create a separate cause of action for its breach, to be pursued by a separate suit. If, however, the damages in such a separate suit would be precisely equivalent to the amount recovered in the present suit, a Court of chancery, to avoid circuity of action, would enjoin the present suit; and that situation would be presented when the agreement was to refrain forever from suit, but not when it was to refrain for a limited time. In the former instance, therefore, the independent subsequent agreement could be availed of in chancery for that purpose, or in the original suit at law wherever equitable defences are permissible in common-law actions.²

(b) An extrinsic agreement providing a condition qualifying the operation of a written obligation is of course equally ineffective; for an obligation

warranty of wheels "against defects in material and workmanship" excludes an implied warranty of suitability for the purposes intended; distinguishing *Merriam v. Field*, 24 Wis. 640).

¹ 1872, *Dewees v. Ins. Co.* 35 N. J. L. 366 (stipulation in an insurance policy that the property shall not be used for any other purpose than that described; the insurer's knowledge of such actual use at the time of the contract, excluded); 1878, *Franklin Ins. Co. v. Martin*, 40 Id. 568, 574 (same; leading case, dealing with the further question of reforming the policy in equity); 1895, *Knudson v. Grand Council*, 7 S. D. 214, 63 N. W. 911; 1903, *Manpin v. Scottish U. & N. I. Co.*, 53 W. Va. 557, 45 S. E. 1003.

² Examples are found in the following cases, which should be compared with the cases cited *ante*, § 2406: 1898, *Western Mfg. Co. v. Rogers*, 54 Nebr. 456, 74 N. W. 849 (sale of goods with

note; oral agreement that buyer took on commission only, excluded); 1897, *Ellison v. Gray*, 55 N. J. Eq. 581, 37 Atl. 1018 (a promise that a certain requirement in a contract was "all right," meaning that it would not be binding, excluded); 1857, *Towner v. Lucas*, 13 Gratt. 705 (oral agreement between obligee and surety of a bond, to abstain from enforcement of it and to give a written indemnity, excluded); 1896, *Lowenfeld v. Curtis*, — C. C., — 72 Fed. 105 (a clause in a theatrical contract as to the prior submission to the play-owner of the personnel of the cast; the fact that the submission was not intended to be required, excluded).

³ *Harriman on Contracts*, 2d ed., § 508, citing *Ford v. Beech*, 11 Q. B. 852; *Guard v. Whitehouse*, 13 Ill. 7; *Chicago v. Babcock*, 143 Id. 358, 32 N. E. 271.

absolute is plainly exclusive of a condition. So far as the present principle is concerned, there is no doubt. But by the general principle of delivery (*ante*, § 2410), no conduct becomes effective as a legal act if its consummation is suspended until the happening of a condition precedent; and hence such a condition, precedent to the existence of the obligation, may always be established, and has the effect of destroying the apparent obligation of the writing embodying the draft of the act. The difficulty is to distinguish whether, in a given case, the condition is such a precedent one, or whether it is a subsequent one such as the present principle forbids recognizing. Here some subtlety of construction may be required.¹

§ 2436. **Agreements of Counter-Claim, Set-off, Renewal, or Mode of Payment.** For the same reason as in the foregoing class of cases, an agreement concerning the *mode* or *medium of payment* of an obligation cannot be established, where the document in any respect deals with that subject; but documents bear such variances of detail that a certain fixed rule can be laid down.¹ An agreement of *set-off*, though it might be construed as virtually affecting the length of term of an obligation,² seems really to concern a new and different obligation. An agreement of *counter-claim* or *set-off*, provided it is not in form or essence a mere qualification of the mode of payment specified in the document, may properly be established, for it concerns a separate obligation.³

§ 2437. **Agreement to hold a Deed Absolute as Security only; Agreement to hold in Trust.** When a document of transfer of property is absolute in its terms, may an extrinsic contemporary agreement to *hold the property as security only* be established? This question has generally been answered in the affirmative;¹ though in one or two jurisdictions the contrary view is

¹ Compare with the following the cases cited *ante*, §§ 2408, 2410, especially the Illinois rulings: 1890, *Beard v. Boylan*, 59 Conn. 181, 22 Atl. 152 (action for a debt; the defendant setting up a composition agreement with creditors, signed by the plaintiff, the plaintiff was not allowed to show that the writing was signed on an agreement that "it should be void unless so signed by all the creditors etc.," this being treated by the Court as a condition subsequent); 1898, *Ryan v. Cooke*, 172 Ill. 302, 50 N. E. 213 (sealed contract to manufacture; oral agreement on delivery that it was to be binding only on condition that the promisor obtained a city contract, excluded); 1898, *Houck v. Wright*, — Miss. —, 23 So. 422 (written contract for a piano; oral condition that the order might be countermanded within 30 days in case of a flood, etc., excluded); 1896, *Nebraska Expro. Ass'n v. Townley*, 46 Nehr. 893, 65 N. W. 1062 (condition to liability on a stock-subscription contract, excluded); 1880, *Van Syckel v. Dalrymple*, 32 N. J. Eq. 235 (mortgage payable April 1, 1873; agreement that "the mortgage should not be due and payable during the mortgagor's life, provided the mortgagor kept the interest paid up and put the property in repair and kept it so," excluded); 1896, *Taylor v. Hunt*, 118 N. C.

168, 24 S. E. 359 (agreement that if a debt was not indulged a lease should be void, excluded); 1898, *Shea v. Leisy*, 85 Fed. 243 (bond and mortgage to pay in four years; agreement to cancel on a lesser payment upon conditions, excluded).

² 1819, *Campbell v. Hodgson*, Gow 74 (agreement between acceptor and payee that the latter should not demand payment if he should reimburse himself from the effects of J., excluded; otherwise, so far as the reimbursement amounts to payment). Compare also the cases cited *ante*, § 2435, and, for negotiable instruments, *post*, § 2443.

³ 1902, *Armington v. Stelle*, — Mont. —, 69 Pac. 115 (agreement of renewal of a lease, excluded). For the renewal of negotiable instruments, see *post*, § 2443.

⁴ *Contra*: 1845, *St. Louis Perp. Ins. Co. v. Homer*, 9 Metc. 39 (agreement that a sum found to be due under an insurance policy should be set off and applied in satisfaction of a note, excluded); 1837, *Eaves v. Henderson*, 14 Wend. 190 (agreement that a book account and the purchase of goods should serve as a set-off to a note for \$28.84, excluded). For negotiable instruments, see *post*, § 2443.

⁵ These cases apply their conclusion alike to transfers of realty and of personality: *Can.*:

maintained,³ and though in any event the terms of a particular document may require the contrary result.³ But the theory upon which the prevailing view rests has varied decidedly. By some Courts it has been placed on the ground (*post*, § 2439) of fraud,⁴ by others on the doctrine (*ante*, § 2433) of consideration,⁵ or both of those;⁶ and again it is said to involve merely the "object" of the parties,⁷—whatever that may signify. Still others suggest a distinction between chancery and law,⁸ and between a proceeding in ejectment and other remedies.⁹ But none of these theories seem to be adequate, — for one reason, to name no others, because the rule of exclusion may sometimes become applicable on the facts of a given case.¹⁰ The apparent obstacle, which invokes the rule, is the absolute terms of the transfer, together with the circumstance that the traditional form of mortgage at common law — a condition of defeasance — seems to be plainly at war with the terms of such a deed. But that traditional form is a form merely, not recognized in modern law as literally valid. The essence of a security is an

1852, *Le Targe v. De Tuyl*, 3 Grant U. C. 369 (best opinion, by Blake, C.); 1852, *Holmes v. Matthews*, ib. 879, 884; 1892, *McMicken v. Ontario Bank*, 20 Can. Sup. 548, 575; *U. S.*: 1898, *Hieronymus v. Glass*, 120 Ala. 46, 23 So. 674; 1895, *Ahern v. McCarthy*, 107 Cal. 382, 40 Pac. 482; 1903, *Clark v. Ducheneau*, — Colo. —, 73 Pac. 831 (that a note was given only as security for performance of another contract, allowed); 1893, *Shad v. Livingston*, 31 Fla. 89, 97, 12 So. 646; 1888, *Okuu v. Kaiakawaha*, 7 Haw. 34 (in a common-law court); 1894, *Helbreg v. Schumann*, 150 Ill. 12, 21, 37 N. E. 99; 1896, *Trogdon v. Trogdon*, 164 id. 144, 45 N. E. 575; 1895, *Bever v. Bever*, 144 Ind. 157, 41 N. E. 944 (a reservation of a life estate shown to have been intended as a mortgage); 1895, *Libby v. Clark*, 88 Me. 32, 33 Atl. 657; 1872, *Campbell v. Dearborn*, 109 Mass. 130; 1895, *Riley v. Bank*, 164 id. 482, 41 N. E. 679 (stock-shares); 1897, *Dixon v. Ins. Co.*, 168 id. 48, 46 N. E. 436 (insurance policy); 1868, *Bowker v. Johnson*, 17 Mich. 42; 1896, *Finch v. Willard*, 108 id. 204, 66 N. W. 42; 1897, *Kellogg v. Northrup*, 115 id. 327, 73 N. W. 230; 1898, *Germain v. Lumber Co.*, 116 id. 245, 74 N. W. 644; 1893, *Winters v. Earl*, 52 N. J. Eq. 52, 588, 28 Atl. 15; 1898, *Vanderhoven v. Romaine*, 56 id. 1, 39 Atl. 129; 1891, *Barry v. Colville*, 129 N. Y. 302, 29 N. E. 307; 1896, *Stith v. Peckham*, 4 Okl. 254, 46 Pac. 664; 1898, *Weisham v. Hocker*, 7 id. 250, 54 Pac. 464; 1893, *Voorhies v. Hennessy*, 7 Wash. 243, 34 Pac. 931; 1897, *Shank v. Groff*, 43 W. Va. 337, 27 S. E. 340; 1897, *Gettelman v. Assur. Co.*, 97 Wis. 237, 72 N. W. 627 (insurance policy).

³ 1894, *Eckford v. Berry*, 87 Tex. 415, 28 S. W. 937; 1897, *Goon Gan v. Richardson*, 16 Wash. 373, 47 Pac. 762. So, too, apparently, in Kentucky, after much vacillation: 1824, *Thompson v. Patton*, 5 Litt. 74; 1830, *Edrington v. Harper*, 3 J. J. M. 353; 1839, *Thomas v. McCormack*, 9 Dana 108; 1898, *Munford v.*

Green, 103 Ky. 140, 44 S. W. 419 (repudiating the remark in *Seiler v. Bank*, 96 id. 131).

⁴ 1891, *Thomas v. Scutt*, 127 N. Y. 133, 27 N. E. 961 (sale of logs; that the transfer was merely in satisfaction of a chattel mortgage and the vendee was to pay only what remained after the debt and expenses were deducted, excluded on the facts).

⁵ 1895, *Baird v. Baird*, 145 N. Y. 659, 40 N. E. 222 ("The rule which excludes evidence of parol negotiations or conditions, when offered to contradict or substantially vary the legal import of a written agreement, does not prevent a party to the agreement, in an action between the parties, from showing by way of defence the existence of a contemporaneous oral agreement, made at the time the writing was executed and delivered, which would render the use of the written instrument, for any purpose contrary to or inconsistent with the oral stipulation, dishonest or fraudulent").

⁶ 1888, *Colt v. McConnell*, 116 Ind. 249, 19 N. E. 106 (Elliott, J.: "The facts pleaded do not impeach the conveying qualities of the mortgage; they simply impeach its consideration"); 1886, *McMillan v. Bissell*, 63 Mich. 66, 70, 29 N. W. 737 ("The agreement for the defeasance, whether written or unwritten, is no more than one of the conditions upon which the deed was given, and therefore constitutes a part of the consideration for the conveyance").

⁷ 1851, *Russell v. Southard*, 12 How. U. S. 139, 148 (said by Curtis, J., to involve in effect "both fraud and a vice in the consideration").

⁸ 1878, *Brick v. Brick*, 98 U. S. 514 (transfer of shares of stock, shown to be a pledge only; "the rule does not forbid an inquiry into the object of parties in executing and receiving the instrument").

⁹ Considered in the following cases: 1865, *Newton v. Fay*, 10 All. 503, 507; 1896, *German Ins. Co. v. Gibe*, 162 Ill. 251, 44 N. E. 490.

¹⁰ *German Ins. Co. v. Gibe*, Ill., *supra*.

¹¹ *Thomas v. Scutt*, N. Y., *supra*.

agreement to deal with the property so as to extinguish a certain debt, and no otherwise. In other words, the act of transfer and the user of the property transferred are distinct legal ideas; or, put still differently, the kind of estate — according to the category of fee simple, life estate, and the like — is a different thing from the quality of the estate, *i. e.* trust or security. The simple question is, then, whether the parties, under all the circumstances, appear to have intended the document to cover merely the kind of estate transferred, or to cover all possible aspects of the transfer, including that of the quality of the estate, *i. e.* its subjection to an equity of redemption; in the latter case, no extrinsic agreement can be considered.

By the same reasoning is to be determined the question whether an extrinsic agreement to hold in trust can be established. So far as the present rule is concerned, there would seem to be no objection; and this would be so also for agreements equivalent to a trust, for example, an agreement to reconvey on demand.¹¹ But by the statute of frauds (*post*, § 2454) such an agreement not in writing may be unenforceable; and thus, for a different reason, the agreement may still be unavailable; unless the doctrine of resulting trusts be held to remove the objection of the statute of frauds.¹²

§ 2438. **Agreement to hold as Surety or Agent only.** (1) Where a document is executed by A and B, apparently as equal principals, B may of course establish, as against A, an extrinsic agreement that between themselves B should be *surety only*, because the document does not embody the transaction between A and B, but only the transaction between them and the obligee.¹ But may B avail himself of an extrinsic agreement between himself and the obligee to treat B as surety only? On the analogy of the foregoing doctrine (*ante*, § 2437), it would seem that he may.² It is true that the execution is general and not limited in form; yet it may be said that the agreement does not dispute the existence and tenor of the obligation, but merely affects the use to which it may be put by the holder.

(2) Where a document is executed by "A, agent for B," or by "A, treasurer of B. Co.," whether A or B shall be liable, and whether A may avail himself of an agreement not to hold him personally, seems to be essentially a question of the proper interpretation of the terms used.³

(3) Where, however, a document is executed by A without any indication of agency in the document, and it is desired to establish an agreement between A and B that B shall as *undisclosed principal* be a party, for the purpose either of charging or entitling B or of exonerating A, the applica-

¹¹ 1885, *Hutchins v. Hutchins*, 98 N. Y.

56, 63.
¹² The cases are cited in Ames' *Cases on Trusts*, 1st ed., pp. 291, 295-320.

¹ The cases are cited in Brandt, *Suretyship*, 2d ed., §§ 29, 30.

² The following case is opposed: 1897, *Hobbs v. Batory*, 86 Md. 68, 37 Atl. 713 ("J. B. has rented his farm . . . to the said T. A. H. and S. R. H. for one year"; an agreement that

S. R. H. was to be surety only, not admitted against the lessor).

The agreement must of course, on the principle of § 2415, *ante*, be one known to and shared by the party holding the obligation. Where the document is a negotiable instrument, special considerations apply: *post*, § 2443.

³ 1893, *Mathews v. Mattress Co.*, 87 Ia. 246, 54 N. W. 225; and cases collected in Wambaugh, *Cases on Agency*, 658-664, 723-728, and Cook, *Corporations*, 4th ed., 1898, § 722.

bility of the present rule is directly involved. Here several distinctions have been taken. (a) In the first place, where the unnamed principal is *unknown* to the obligee, it is proper to give force to the contract between principal and agent for the purpose of charging or entitling the principal, though not of exonerating the agent;⁴ unless in the particular case the document plainly was intended to deal otherwise with the transaction.⁵ (b) In the second place, where the unnamed principal was *known* to the obligee but nevertheless not named in the document, the rule *may* here equally permit the agreement to be available for the former purpose above mentioned; yet the ordinary inference will be that the named parties intended the document to be exclusive of all other parties, unless a contrary intention be made to appear. The general state of the law is sufficiently outlined in the following passage:

1896, *Wolverton, J.*, in *Barbre v. Goodale*, 28 Or. 465, 38 Pac. 67, 43 Pac. 378: "The question is here presented whether it is competent to show by parol testimony that a contract executed by and in the name of an agent is the contract of the principal, where the principal was known to the other contracting party at the date of its execution. There are two opinions touching the question, among American authorities, — the one affirming, and the other denying; but the case is one of first impression here, and we feel constrained to adopt the rule which may seem the more compatible with the promotion of justice, and the exaction of honest and candid transactions between individuals. The English authorities are agreed that parol evidence is admissible to show that a written contract executed in the name of an agent is the contract of the principal, whether he was known or unknown; and the American authorities are a unit, so far as the rule is applied to an unknown principal, but disagree where he was known at the time the contract was executed or entered into by the parties. All the authorities, both English and American, concur in holding that, as applied to such contracts executed when the principal was unknown, parol evidence which shows that the agent who made the contract in his own name was acting for the principal does not contradict the writing, but simply explains the transaction; for the effect is not to show that the person appearing to be bound is not bound, but to show that some other person is bound also. And those authorities which deny the application of the rule where the principal was known do not assert or maintain that such parol testimony tends to vary or contradict the written contract, but find support upon the doctrine of estoppel; it being maintained that a party thus dealing with an agent of a known principal elects to rely solely upon the agent's responsibility, and is therefore estopped to proceed against the principal. The underlying principle, therefore, upon which the authorities seem to diverge, is the presumption created by the execution of the contract in the name of the agent, and the acceptance thereof by a party, where the principal is known. Is this presumption conclusive, or is it disputable? Without attempting to reconcile the decisions, we believe the better rule to be that the presump-

⁴ 1841, *Higgins v. Senior*, 8 M. & W. 834, 844 (Parke, B.): "[To allow an unnamed principal to be entitled or charged] in no way contradicts the written agreement; it does not deny that it is binding on those whom, on the face of it, it purports to bind, but shows that it binds also another, by reason that the act of the agent in signing the agreement in pursuance of his authority is in law the act of the principal. But, on the other hand, to allow evidence to be given that the party who appears on the face of the instrument to be personally a contracting

party is not enough, would be to allow parol evidence to contradict the written agreement".

⁵ 1848, *Humble v. Hunter*, 12 Q. B. 310 (rule not applicable to a charter-party wherein the alleged agent described himself as "owner" of the ship). The following further distinction seems sound: 1871, *Fleet v. Murton*, L. R. 7 Q. B. 126, 130 (broker's contract expressly as broker for undisclosed principal; custom to undertake personal liability in case the principal is not disclosed, admitted); 1873, *Hutchinson v. Ham*, L. R. 8 C. P. 482, 486 (similar).

tion thus created is a disputable one, and that the intention of the party must be gathered from his words, and the various circumstances which surround the transaction, as its practical effect is to promote justice and fair dealing. — The principal may have recourse to the same doctrine to bind the party thus entering into contract with his agent. Parol evidence, however, is not admissible to discharge the agent, as the party with whom he has dealt has his election as to whether he will hold him or the principal responsible.”

§ 2439. **Fraud.** The doctrine of extrinsic fraud as sufficient to make a legal act voidable has already been considered (*ante*, § 2423). But what is the bearing of the present rule? When a transaction has been reduced to a single document, how is it that fraud can be established extrinsically? A simple answer seems to be that since the present rule depends (*ante*, § 2430) on the intent of the parties to embody one or more subjects of transaction exclusively in the document, it is impossible to suppose that the subject of fraud was intended thus to be covered, since by hypothesis the party upon whom the fraud is practised does not know of it and therefore could not have had such an intent. But, if this be true, what becomes of that other application of the rule, well established for most transactions (*ante*, § 2434), that warranty-representations extrinsic to the document cannot be availed of? Fraud is always a matter of false representations; and how is it that extrinsic representations are as warranties to be ignored but as fraud to be admitted? The explanation seems to be that the vital additional element in fraud is the party's state of mind, which neither can be nor is intended to be embodied in the written document, and that hence the rule does not forbid considering it wherever it is the vital element of the claim. In other words, in an action of *deceit*, or in a proceeding of *rescission of contract* wherever this by the law depends upon the promisor's conscious falsity, the present rule interposes no obstacle; although in an action of contract upon an alleged warranty as a part of it, or in a proceeding of rescission for breach of warranty or innocent misrepresentation, the same representations could not be considered.¹

It may be added that the term “fraud” must here be understood in its legitimate narrow sense. *i. e.* a misrepresentation of a *present* or *past fact*; for, although a much looser significance has been occasionally intimated,² yet it is obvious that an intent not to perform a promise (*i. e.* a misrepresentation as to a future fact), or a subsequent failure knowingly to perform an extrinsic agreement not embodied in the writing, cannot in strictness be legally included in the term “fraud.” It seems to be a disregard of this distinction

¹ The authorities are collected in Wambaugh, *Cases on Agency*, 627-657, 673-723. The distinction sometimes made between sealed contracts and simple contracts (*Briggs v. Partridge*, 1876, 64 N. Y. 357) ought to have no place here.
² 1614, *Meyer v. Everth*, 4 Camp. 22 (*deceit*); 1889, *State v. Casa*, 52 N. J. L. 77, 18 Atl. 972 (fraudulent representations as to speed, in the sale of a horse; “as an additional warranty, that is, an addition to the contract, the present representations were clearly inadmissible; so soon, however, as they displayed such features

as went to show that through them the contract had been fraudulently induced, and so was unenforceable for that reason at the election of the defrauded party, the rule excluding parol testimony to enlarge a written contract became inoperative”).

³ 1840, *Story, J.*, in *Bottomley v. U. S.*, 1 Story 135, 152 (“I know of no case where parol evidence is not admissible to establish fraud, even in the most solemn transactions and conveyances”).

that is in part responsible for the anomalous attitude of the Pennsylvania Court (*ante*, § 2431) towards the general rule.³

§ 2440. **Trade Usage and Custom.** Where the parties have not intended to make the document embody the transaction upon a particular topic, its terms may be as well supplied by implied extrinsic agreement as by express extrinsic agreement. In other words, that *usage* or *custom of a trade or locality*, which would otherwise by implication form a part of the transaction, will equally form a part when the transaction has been embodied in a document, provided the document was not intended to cover the topic affected by the custom. The test is on principle the same as for express extrinsic agreements; except that in the case of the custom the ordinary presumption is in favor of its implication, because the topics covered by the writing will usually be those which do not concern some known and usual term but vary in each particular transaction:

1836, *Parke, B.*, in *Hutton v. Warren*, 1 M. & W. 466, 475: "[The inclusion of customs into written contracts] has been done upon the principle of presumption that in such transactions the parties did not mean to express in writing the whole of the contract by which they intended to be bound, but a contract with reference to those known usages."

1854, *Coleridge, J.*, in *Brown v. Byrne*, 3 E. & B. 703: "In all contracts, as to the subject-matter of which known usages prevail, parties are found to proceed with the tacit assumption of these usages; they commonly reduce into writing the special particulars of their agreement, but omit to specify these known usages, which are included however, as of course, by mutual understanding; evidence therefore of such incidents is receivable. The contract in truth is partly express and in writing, partly implied or understood and unwritten."

1837, *Story, J.*, in *The Schooner Reeside*, 2 Sumn. 567: "I own myself no friend to the almost indiscriminate habit, of late years, of setting up particular usages or customs, in almost all kinds of business and trade, to control, vary, or annul the general liabilities of parties under the common law, as well as under the commercial law. It has long appeared to me, that there is no small danger in admitting such loose and inconclusive usages and customs, often unknown to particular parties, and always liable to great misunderstandings and misinterpretations and abuses, to outweigh the well-known and well-settled principles of law. And I rejoice to find, that, of late years, the Courts of law, both in England and in America, have been disposed to narrow the limits of the operation of such usages and customs, and to discountenance any further extension of them. The true and appropriate office of a usage or custom is, to interpret the otherwise indeterminate intentions of parties, and to ascertain the nature and extent of their contracts, arising, not from express stipulations, but from mere implications and presumptions, and acts of a doubtful or equivocal character. It may also be admitted to ascertain the true meaning of a particular word, or of particular words, in a given instrument, when the word or words have various senses, some common, some qualified, and some technical, according to the subject-matter to which they are applied. But I apprehend that it never can be proper to resort to any usage or custom to control or vary the positive stipulations in a written contract, and, *a fortiori*, not in order to contradict them. An express contract of the parties is always admissible to supersede, or vary, or control a usage or custom; for the latter may always be waived at the will of the parties. But a written and express contract cannot be controlled, or varied, or contradicted by a usage or custom; for that would not only be to admit parol evidence to control, vary, or contradict written contracts, but it would be

³ The unsoundness of that theory of fraud is well expounded in an opinion by Allen, P., in *Towner v. Lucas* (1857), 13 Gratt. 705, 716.

to allow mere presumptions and implications, properly arising in the absence of any positive expressions of intention, to control, vary, or contradict the most formal and deliberate written declarations of the parties."

The application of the rule in a given instance depends entirely on the nature of the transaction and the terms of the particular document, and precedents are of little service.¹

§ 2441. **Novation, Alteration, and Waiver; Subsequent Agreements.** The general rule now under consideration rests on the assumption that a specific

¹ The following will suffice as examples; distinguish the cases cited *post*, §§ 2462, 2464 (usage to interpret the words in a document): *Eng.* 1779, *Wiggleworth v. Dallison*, 1 Doug. 201 (lease for 21 years; custom for the tenant to take crops sown before expiration of the lease, admitted); 1800, *Ougier v. Jennings*, 1 Camp. 505, note (policy on a ship from Newfoundland to Portugal "beginning the adventure from the loading thereof"; usage admitted to include an intermediate loading before the voyage to Portugal); 1806, *Vallance v. Dewar*, 1 Camp. 503 (policy on a ship "at and from any port or ports in Newfoundland"; usage admitted to include an intermediate voyage after arrival in Newfoundland and before starting homeward); 1816, *Yates v. Pym*, 6 Tannt. 446 (written sale of bacon; trade usage requiring inspection of defects before a certain time, excluded); 1832, *Blackett v. Ins. Co.*, 2 Cr. & J. 244, 249 (policy on a ship, tackle, apparel, etc.; a usage of underwriters not to pay for boats hung outside the ship on the quarter, excluded, since the policy was "upon the face of it, upon the whole ship, on all her furniture, and all her apparel"); 1838, *Bottomley v. Forbes*, 5 Bing. N. C. 121 (a charter-party provided for the payment of freight on cotton, "cotton to be calculated at 50 cubic feet per ton"; cotton after unloading expands so that the cubic measurement at loading and unloading differ greatly; a usage to measure at the shipper's warehouse was admitted); 1843, *R. v. Stoke-upon-Trent*, 5 Q. B. 303 (contract to work "from the 11th day of November next until the 11th November 1817"; a custom in that branch of manufacturing "to allow holidays at certain fixed times of the year," on the ground that "its notoriety makes it virtually part of the contract"); 1848, *Syers v. Jonas*, 2 Exch. 111, 116 (usage in the tobacco trade that sales should be conditioned on correspondence with sample, admitted; "such usage is admissible whenever it is not expressly or impliedly excluded by the tenor of the written instrument"); 1854, *Brown v. Byrne*, 3 E. & B. 703 (bill of lading agreeing to pay "freight $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per pound, with 5 per cent prime, and average accustomed," and saying nothing about time of payment or discount; a local custom to allow 3 mo. discount, admitted); 1859, *Martin, B.*, in *Langton v. Higgins*, 4 H. & N. 401, 408 (sale of goods in writing, and issue as to time of delivery to pass title; "they cannot add to the writing by showing that at the time the contract was made they had been accustomed to do something further"); *U. S.*: 1803, *Withers v. Moore*, 140 Cal. 591, 71 Pac. 697 (custom as to alteration of coal prices, excluded); 1841, *Kilgore v. Bulkley*, 14 Conn. 362, 391 (note falling due on a date which was Sunday; local usage admitted to show that in such cases the note was payable on the Saturday before; clear opinion by Storrs, J.); 1885, *Gilbert v. McGinnis*, 114 Ill. 28, 28 N. E. 382 (sale of corn, with an agreement by the buyer to make "advances" of money; a custom among grain merchants to make such an advance only upon a note by the seller for the amount advanced, excluded); 1890, *Scott v. Hartley*, 128 Ind. 239, 25 N. E. 826 (sale of grain at "50 $\frac{1}{2}$ net"; a custom to deduct freight paid by the consignee, excluded); 1893, *Destrehan v. Lumber Co.*, 46 La. An. 920, 924, 13 So. 230 (custom of measuring, etc., allowed, to supply the contract on matters not covered by the writing); 1900, *Menage v. Rosenthal*, 175 Mass. 368, 56 N. E. 579 (salesman's contract to travel "throughout the New England States"; custom to stay and work in New York "whenever trade is in town," excluded); 1898, *Germain v. Lumber Co.*, 116 Mich. 245, 74 N. W. 644 (custom as to taking away logs, not admitted on the facts); 1895, *Fairly v. Wappoo Mills*, 44 S. C. 227, 22 S. E. 112, 114 ("sold 2000 tons, seller paying brokerage at 10 cents per ton"; evidence of a custom to pay brokerage on only the amount delivered, not the amount contracted for, was rejected); 1895, *Richards Co. v. Hildebeitel*, 92 Va. 91, 22 S. E. 806 (a contract specifying the prices for laying bricks; local usage admitted as to the method of ascertaining the quantities laid); 1897, *Hansbrough v. Neal*, 94 id. 722, 27 S. E. 593 (custom admitted to fix the value of services).

From the foregoing rule are to be distinguished three other classes of questions in which usage becomes material: (a) The question of contract, whether a particular usage may be implied into a contract, supposing it not to have been reduced to writing; and the doctrine that a local custom will not be added by implication alone to the terms of a contract, where a definite rule of law obtains to the contrary (*Barnard v. Kellogg*, 1870, 10 Wall. 383); (b) The question of standard of interpretation, whether a term used in a transaction, written or oral, is to be interpreted by a usage not known to both parties (*post*, § 2464); (c) The further question of interpretation, whether a usage adopted by both parties can be allowed to displace the general meaning of a word when contrary to the usage (*post*, § 2462); the cases involving this question are often apt to be confused with cases involving the rule here under consideration about varying the terms of a document.

transaction has been embodied exclusively in a single document. All distinct and separate transactions may therefore be established and availed of, whenever they are in themselves valid. Now a transaction *subsequent in time* must always be a separate transaction. The rule of exclusion can only apply to negotiations contemporaneous in time, or prior but incomplete. Where a document, for example, is executed on July 1, it may be held to embody the final and exclusive result of negotiations before and up to the time of execution; but a transaction on August 1 must be a separate one and therefore can never be excluded, so far as the effect of the document of July 1 is concerned. It may be that some rule of form (*post*, § 2454) will sometimes make the transaction of August 1 invalid in itself (as when a writing is required by the statute of frauds, or where a parol release will not discharge a sealed contract); but the present rule can interpose no obstacle. In particular, any subsequent agreement *altering, waiving, discharging, or otherwise novating* a prior transaction is not excluded by reason of the prior transaction having been reduced to writing:

1833, *Denman, C. J.*, in *Goss v. Lord Nugent*, 5 B. & Ad. 58: "By the general rules of the common law, if there be a contract which has been reduced into writing, verbal evidence is not allowed to be given of what passed between the parties, either before the written instrument was made, or during the time that it was in a state of preparation, so as to add to or subtract from, or in any manner to vary or qualify the written contract; but after the agreement has been reduced into writing, it is competent to the parties, at any time before breach of it, by a new contract not in writing, either altogether to waive, dissolve, or annul the former agreements, or in any manner to add to, or subtract from, or vary or qualify the terms of it, and thus to make a new contract; which is to be proved, partly by the written agreement, and partly by the subsequent verbal terms engrafted upon what will be thus left of the written agreement. And if the present contract was not subject to the control of any act of Parliament, we think that it would have been competent for the parties, by word of mouth, to dispense with requiring a good title to be made to the lot in question, and that the action might be maintained. But the Statute of Frauds has made certain regulations as to contracts for the sale of lands."

The application of this principle varies in practice according to the nature of the particular legal right and the actual separation of the transactions in time.¹

§ 2442. **Miscellaneous Applications of the Rule to exclude or admit "Collateral" Agreements.** It does not seem possible to generalize further than on

¹ The following rulings will serve as examples: 1773, *Milton v. Edgworth*, 5 Bro. P. C. 313 (the rate of interest on a mortgage loan made in writing may be reduced by subsequent oral agreement); 1892, *Guidery v. Green*, 95 Cal. 630, 634, 30 Pac. 786 (oral agreement that another instrument should be substituted for the one in question, admitted); 1892, *Chicago B. & O. R. Co. v. Dickson*, 143 Ill. 368, 32 N. E. 380 (agreement not to ride in stock-car; a practice of the railroad to permit it, admitted as a waiver); 1837, *Eaves v. Henderson*, 14 Wend. 190 (though a contemporary agreement to apply other claims in set-off of a note was excluded, a subsequent agreement to accept them

in payment was admitted); 1896, *Harris v. Murphy*, 119 N. C. 34, 25 S. E. 708 (contract for work and labor in raising a barge; a subsequent alteration admitted); 1896, *Dunklee v. Goodnough*, 68 Vt. 113, 34 Atl. 427 (subsequent agreement relating to the mode of payment; admitted); 1899, *Keating v. Pacific S. W. Co.*, 21 Wash. 415, 58 Pac. 224 (the plaintiff signed shipping-articles as seaman; on boarding the vessel, he found a sail unsawworthy; he had then the right to abandon the voyage, and a parol agreement by the ship not to use the defective sail was a new contract which could be availed of).

the preceding topics. The application of the rule, resting as it does upon the parties' intent, can be properly made only after a comparison of the kind of transaction, the terms of the document, and the circumstances of the parties. Even in the foregoing classes of transactions, it is rarely that the circumstances of a particular case cannot justify a special result contrary to the ordinary one. Such is the complexity of circumstance and the variety of documentary phraseology, and so minute the indicia of intent, that one ruling can seldom be of controlling authority or even of utility for a subsequent one. The opinions of judges are cumbered with citations of cases which serve no purpose there except to prove what is not disputed,—the general principle. Other than in relation to some of the foregoing topics which have broad and uniform bearings, individual rulings can have little value as precedents unless the entire detail of the documents and circumstances is set forth; and an abbreviation of them is therefore more likely to mislead than to profit. The application of the rule should in almost all instances be left (*ante*, § 16) to the trial judge's determination.¹

¹ The following citations may serve to illustrate the variety of application of the rule: *England*: 1769, *Preston v. Mercan*, 2 W. Bl. 1249 (in an action for rent on a house-lease "for 21 years at 26/ per annum," the lessor, who owned the house only, was not allowed to prove a further agreement by the defendant to pay the ground rent of 2l. 12s. 6d. a year); 1806, *Higgason v. Clowes*, 15 Ves. Jr. 516 (auction-sale in writing of lots of land, the purchaser "to take the timber at a fair valuation"; the auctioneer's oral statement at the sale that the timber of each lot was to be valued separately, excluded); 1836, *Ellis v. Thompson*, 3 M. & W. 445, 452 (sale of lead, "deliverable in the river Thames"; "the question of reasonable or not reasonable time is collateral to the contract"); 1845, *Eden v. Blake*, 13 id. 614 (at an auction sale the catalogue described an article as silver, but the auctioneer before selling announced publicly that it was only plated; the defendant bought but refused to accept; held, that the oral declaration of the auctioneer could be received, subject to the jury's finding that the catalogue was understood by the buyer not to be the exclusive basis of the purchase; "the sole question is, what were the terms upon which this article was sold? Are they in writing? . . . It is for the jury to say whether the contract existed in the printed particulars alone or partly in them and partly in parol"); 1871, *Morgan v. Griffith*, L. R. 6 Exch. 70 (lease of grass land; oral agreement by the landlord to destroy the rabbits, held "collateral to the lease") 1875, *Angeil v. Duke*, 32 Law T. Rep. n. s. 320 (lease of premises, with the furniture on the premises; an agreement by the lessor to put in more furniture, excluded); 1894, *Grimston v. Cunningham*, 1 Q. B. 125 (written agreement to employ an actor; oral agreement to give him certain parts, excluded); *United States*: *Ala.*: 1897, *Brewton v. Glass*, 116 Ala. 629, 22 So. 916 (written agreement to build waterworks, etc.; oral agreement to give bond for faithful

performance, excluded); *Ark.*: 1896, *Rector v. Bernaschina*, 64 Ark. 650, 44 S. W. 292 (written agreement to board "three persons"; oral agreement specifying the three, excluded); *Cal.*: 1897, *Bradford S. Co. v. Joost*, 117 Cal. 204, 48 Pac. 1083 (agreement as to the use of collateral security); 1897, *Wolters v. King*, 119 id. 172, 51 Pac. 35 (written agreement for commissions; oral agreement as to time of payment received); *Colo.*: 1896, *United States M. A. Ass'n v. Kittinger*, 22 Colo. 257, 44 Pac. 595 (oral agreement different from terms of policy; excluded); *Fla.*: 1897, *Chamberlain v. Lesley*, 39 Fla. 452, 22 So. 736 (papers not purporting to contain the whole agreement; other evidence admitted); *Ida.*: 1897, *First Nat'l Bank v. Bawa*, 5 Ida. 678, 51 Pac. 777 (mortgage of building, etc.; oral agreement of mortgagees to insure for \$25,000, excluded); *Ind.*: 1855, *Noble v. Epperly*, 6 Ind. 468, 471 (replevin; written agreement between the parties affecting an alleged partnership; their true intent in making the agreement allowed to be shown, on the facts); 1859, *Draper v. Vanhorn*, 12 id. 352 (treated as similar); 1859, *Williams v. Dewitt*, 12 id. 309, 312 (writing containing terms of arbitration, held exclusive); 1896, *Smith v. McClain*, 146 id. 77, 45 N. E. 41 (the fact rejected that a quitclaim deed transferring the interest of heirs to an estate was intended merely as a partition, and therefore merely severed unity of possession without conferring additional title); 1896, *Lowry v. Downey*, 150 id. 264, 50 N. E. 79 (exchange of land by deeds; oral agreement by one party to pay off an incumbrance on the land conveyed, admitted); *Ia.*: 1894, *Lerch v. Times Co.*, 91 Ia. 750, 60 N. W. 611 (written lease; oral agreement to put in a steam-heating apparatus, excluded); 1897, *Beeson v. Green*, 103 id. 406, 72 N. W. 555 (deed containing assumption of mortgages; grantee not allowed to deny the agreement); *Kan.*: 1896, *Milch v. Packing Co.*, 60 Kan. 229, 56 Pac. 1 (contract between next of kin and one charged with

§ 2443. Rule applied to Negotiable Instruments; General Principle. The general principle of Integration (*ante*, § 2425)—in other words, the rule

deceased's death, the former releasing and agreeing to procure a release from another, the latter agreeing to pay; parol agreement by the latter to employ the former, excluded); *Ky.*: 1898, *Sutton v. Lumber Co.*, — *Ky.* —, 44 S. W. 86 (written agreement for hauling lumber; agreement to furnish right of way, excluded); 1898, *Vansant v. Rnyon*, — *id.* —, 44 S. W. 949 (lumber-contract; agreement as to mode of advances, excluded); *Mo.*: 1898, *Gould v. Excelsior Co.*, 91 Mo. 214, 39 Atl. 555 (written agreement for cutting, peeling, and driving poplar timber; oral agreement as to who should scale it, received); *Md.*: 1900, *Hawley Down-Draft Furnace Co. v. Hooper*, 90 Md. 390, 45 Atl. 456 (defendant bought of plaintiff a furnace with the written guaranty that it "will save 12 per cent in cost of fuel over present method of making steam"; oral agreement that the "saving of 12 per cent" was to be determined by a comparative test "measured by the number of tons of coal consumed before the Hawley furnace was put in with the coal consumed after it was put in"; held admissible); *Mass.*: 1843, *Brockett v. Bartholomey*, 6 Metc. 396 (the understanding of all the parties to a lease, that the amounts payable included the price for the stock of goods agreed by the writing to be purchased, excluded); 1876, *Carr v. Dooley*, 119 Mass. 294 (deed of land; oral agreement by the vendor to pay for an adjacent sewer in the course of construction, admitted); 1887, *Graffam v. Pierce*, 143 id. 386, 9 N. E. 819 (deed of two houses and lease of a hall, by defendant to plaintiff; an oral agreement by defendant to put hard-pine flooring into the hall, admitted); 1888, *Ayer v. Mfg. Co.*, 147 id. 46, 16 N. E. 754 (sale of soap; vendor's agreement to advertise it, admitted); 1892, *Durkin v. Cobleigh*, 156 id. 108, 30 N. E. 474 (deed of land described as bounded on a street; the vendor's oral agreement to build the street, and to put in water connections, admitted as "an independent collateral agreement which need not be included in the deed"); 1896, *Rackemann v. Impr. Co.*, 187 id. 1, 44 N. E. 990 (agreement by a vendor of land not to sell adjoining lots at a less price, admitted); *Mich.*: 1894, *Adams v. Watkins*, 105 Mich. 431, 61 N. W. 774 (sale of land; agreement to return one third of the proceeds of the crop, excluded); 1895, *Hatchison Mfg. Co. v. Pinch*, 107 id. 12, 64 N. W. 739, 66 N. W. 340 (agreement to pay for machinery when the mill "gives good results"; parol condition as to the power of the machinery, excluded); 1896, *Harrison v. Howe*, 109 id. 476, 67 N. W. 527 (a lease allowed sub-leasing for "business purposes"; an agreement not to sub-lease for a saloon, excluded); 1897, *Patek v. Waples*, 114 id. 669, 72 N. W. 995 (written stipulation for discontinuance without costs; oral agreement to pay counsel fees, admitted); *Minn.*: 1896, *Hand v. Ryan Drug Co.*, 63 Minn. 539, 65 N. W. 1081 (a contract to give a credit on specified terms; agreement to give similar credits on other terms held admissible); *Miss.*: 1898, *Maxwell v. Chamberlin*, — *Miss.* —, 23 So. 266 (written agreement conveying property subject to a lien; oral agreement by the grantee to assume the debt secured, excluded); *Nebr.*: 1898, *Sylvester v. Paper Co.*, 55 Nebr. 621, 75 N. W. 1092 (agreement concerning personal services in a printing establishment); *N. J.*: 1896, *McTague v. Finnegan*, 54 N. J. Eq. 454, 35 Atl. 842 (agreement as to inheritance and support); *N. Y.*: 1897, *Emmett v. Penoyer*, 151 N. Y. 564, 45 N. E. 1041 (a contract of sale of stock and fixtures contained nothing about the price, except the figures "\$2500"; extrinsic agreement as to the price, admitted); *Oh.*: 1895, *Tuttle v. Bargett*, 53 Oh. St. 498, 42 N. E. 427 (in a contract in covenant form to furnish support, an agreement that the promisee would live at a certain place was excluded); *S. D.*: 1898, *Roberts v. Machine Co.*, 8 S. D. 579, 87 N. W. 607 (commission-agent's contract); *Tenn.*: 1898, *Hines v. Wilcox*, 96 Tenn. 148, 33 S. W. 914 (memorandum of lease dealing only with the obligations of the tenant; oral promise of the landlord to put in repair, admitted); 1898, *Lewis v. Tamley*, 97 id. 197, 38 S. W. 872 (deed of sale; provision for the transfer of insurance policies, admitted); *Tex.*: 1895, *Jones v. Risley*, 91 Tex. 1, 32 S. W. 1027 (building contract; agreement as to powers of engineer, rejected); *U. S.*: 1895, *The Poconoket*, 67 Fed. 267 (agreement as to the vesting of title of a vessel, the construction-agreement being silent, admitted); 1895, *Harman v. Harman*, 17 C. C. A. 479, 70 Fed. 894, 898 (lease of land in writing; parol agreement by the lessor to devise the lands to the lessees on his death, on condition that they improved the land and paid an annual rent, admitted); 1897, *Godkin v. Monahan*, 27 id. 410, 83 Fed. 116 (written agreement to cut, bank, and deliver timber; oral agreement by the other party to furnish a place for banking, excluded); 1898, *Reid v. Diamond P. G. Co.*, 29 id. 110, 85 Fed. 193 (written agreement for sale at a certain price; oral agreement for reduction of price in case of a fall in the market, excluded); 1902, *Sun P. & P. Ass'n v. Edwards*, 51 id. 279, 113 Fed. 445 (contract of employment of a superintendent of printing, mentioning salary and powers, held to exclude an additional oral agreement by the appointee to furnish compositors and other employees); *Utah*: 1897, *Moyle v. Congreg. Soc.*, 16 Utah 69, 50 Pac. 806 (agreement as to the effect of an assignment of a contract, excluded); *Vt.*: 1897, *Pictorial League v. Nelson*, 69 Vt. 162, 37 Atl. 247 (contract to send cuts, etc.); *Va.*: 1895, *Witz v. Fite*, 91 Va. 446, 22 S. E. 171 (whether the giving of a higher security merges other securities); *W. Va.*: 1895, *Long v. Furine*, 41 W. Va. 314, 23 S. E. 611 (sale of fruit-land; oral agreement to allow the buyer to take fruit from adjoining land of the seller till the trees bought should bear fruit, excluded); 1895, *Wilfong v. Johnson*, *ib.* 283, 23 S. E. 730 (agreement to furnish support, as a consideration for a conveyance); *Wis.*: 1897, *Oliver v. Hall*, 95

against "varying the terms" of a document — takes on an altogether peculiar aspect when applied to agreements collateral to a negotiable instrument.

The first characteristic feature of such a document, as being the embodiment of an obligation capable of transfer without hindrance, is, not merely that all the essential terms of the obligation — persons, amount, and time, — must be therein contained in writing (*post*, § 2451), but that certain others than these essential terms *must not* be. The advantages of unhindered transfer, due to the certainty and precision of its terms and the independence of a transferee's rights, can be attained only by limiting the scope of the obligation to a few elemental attributes. Its contents therefore are both predetermined and limited, if it is to possess the character of negotiability at all:

1780, *Eyre, L. C. B.*, in *Minet v. Gibson*, 2 H. Bl. 569: "Everything which is necessary to be known, in order that it may be seen whether a writing is a bill of exchange, and as such by the custom of merchants partakes of the nature of a specialty and creates a debt or duty by its own proper force (whether by the same custom it be assignable, and how it shall be assigned, and whether it has in fact been assigned agreeable to the custom) appears at once by the bare inspection of the writing; with the circumstance, in the case of a bill payable to bearer, of that bill being in the possession of him who claims title to it. The wit of man cannot devise anything better calculated for circulation. The value of the writing, the assignable quality of it, and the particular mode of assigning, are created and determined in the original frame and constitution of the instrument itself; and the party to whom such a bill of exchange is tendered has only to read it, need look no further, and has nothing to do with any private history that may belong to it. The policy which introduced this simple instrument demands that the simplicity of it should be protected, and that it should never be entangled in the infinitely complicated transactions of particular individuals into whose hands it may happen to come."

1848, *Gibson, C. J.*, in *Overton v. Tyler*, 3 Pa. St. 846: "A negotiable bill or note is a courier without luggage. It is a requisite that it be framed in the fewest possible words, and those importing the most certain and precise contract; and, though this requisite be a minor one, it is entitled to weight in determining a question of intention. To be within the statute, it must be free from contingencies or conditions that would embarrass it in its course; for a memorandum to control it, though indorsed on it, would be incorporated with it, and destroy it."

That it *must* contain some things is therefore not so important for the present purpose as that it *must not* contain other things.

The other important consideration, tending to affect the present principle, is that the largest part of the terms of the obligation of a negotiable instru-

Wis. 364, 70 N. W. 346 (time of payment, excluded); 1397, *Morgan v. S. M. L. V. Co.*, 97 id. 275, 72 N. W. 872 (conveyance subject to mortgage; grantee's agreement to pay mortgage, allowed to be shown).

The peculiar *Pennsylvania* rule (*ante*, § 2431) is illustrated in the following cases: 1895, *Dixon-Woods Co. v. Glass Co.*, 169 Pa. 167, 32 Atl. 432 (written contract to give the plaintiff possession of defendant's premises for the purpose of building; parol agreement at the time to provide certain room for storage, excluded); 1897, *Dickson v. Mfg. Co.*, 179 id. 343, 36 Atl. 246 (agreement as to time, the original contract of employment being silent, excluded); 1897,

Beaver v. Slear, 182 id. 213, 37 Atl. 991 (a note for one day not mentioning interest, but legally subject to interest after maturity; an agreement as to the payment of interest during life, admitted); 1898, *Myerstown Bank v. Poesler*, 186 id. 431, 40 Atl. 963 (agreement not to assign a mortgage in a certain way, admitted).

For proving a document's date erroneous, see *ante*, § 2410.

For proving the parties' "understanding" as to the terms of a contract, see *ante*, § 1971 (Opinion rule) and *post*, § 2465 (Interpretation).

For the use of an account stated, as embodying an agreement, see *ante*, § 1071.

ment is annexed to it by the law, without expression in the document. The rules of presentment and demand, of acceptance and dishonor, of transfer of title and obligations by indorsement, of primary and secondary liability — all of the terms, except the individually variant ones of person, amount, time, and perhaps place, are prescribed and annexed by the law. Moreover, they form a systematic whole, and are implied as a whole if at all.

What is the situation, then, of parties who wish to employ a negotiable instrument for the sake of some one or more specific attributes, but wish also to modify for their own case some of the other generic consequences ordinarily implied as a part of the whole? They cannot specify these modifications in the instrument without destroying all its negotiable qualities, including those which they desire to secure.¹ On the other hand, by making no specific modification, they will be fixed with consequences which they do not desire. For example, A is desirous of obtaining the use of B's credit in buying from C, but B owes nothing to A; if B draws a bill of exchange on A, payable to C, and A accepts it, this will secure the purpose of adding B's credit and liability to the obligation and C will consent to receive it; then if A fails to pay at maturity, and B is obliged to pay, the normal consequence, by implication of law, is that B recovers the amount from A. Here no modification of the law's annexed incidents is necessary for carrying out all parts of their desired transaction. But suppose that C will not consent to receive A as the primary obligor, but insists on having B in that relation; then this purpose can be accomplished by drafting the bill in A's name as drawer and B's name as drawee and acceptor, or by drafting a note in B's name as maker, with A's name as payee and indorser. But in these two cases, if B, the primary obligor, is compelled by C to pay, there remains to him, as acceptor or maker, no claim for reimbursement by A, or, if A is compelled to pay C, then A as indorser or drawer has a claim for reimbursement against B, — at least so far as the law's annexed incidents prescribe. Here, then, an agreement by A to reimburse or not to sue B must be made, and this agreement can find no place in the document, though it modifies the fixed implications of the instrument. Will the parol evidence rule refuse to recognize that agreement as enforceable? It is a platitude of the law that it will not; an accommodation bill or note is never allowed to be used against the accommodating party by the accommodated one.

The law, then, it is plain, has recognized the dilemma. It perceives that parties must constantly wish to employ a negotiable instrument for the sake of one or more of its special attributes while discarding others; it concedes that commercial transactions are variant in their exigencies, while the normal incidents of a negotiable instrument are fixed; and it does not force parties into the alternative of employing either all or none of them. It therefore

¹ The importance of this consideration is seen in an analogous situation under a statute requiring a certain document to cover named terms and no others: 1860, *Chapman v. Callis*, 2 F. & F. 161 (written bill of sale of a ship, under

the Merchant Shipping Act 1854, held not to displace a prior agreement to assume the vendor's liabilities; "the parties could not have put this term of their agreement in the bills of sale").

concedes that by special agreement the parties may discard or alter a specific implied incident, so far as its operation would affect themselves.

But the applicability of the present rule in a given case is always a question of the parties' intention (*ante*, § 2430). Now, while the extent of this agreement to discard or modify would thus ordinarily be a mere question of fact as to intention, still the parties' choice of a negotiable instrument necessarily signifies the adoption of *some* essential implied feature of such an instrument, — else they would have used some other form of document; hence, they cannot be allowed to avail themselves of an agreement which would render that choice practically meaningless. Moreover, the written tenor of the obligation — as to person, time, and amount — varies with each document as the parties choose; hence the writing is clearly the final embodiment of the obligation in these respects. For testing the application of the rule, therefore, the following two canons may be laid down:

(a) As regards the *variable*, or *expressed*, terms of the obligation in the document, no extrinsic agreement can be availed of to avoid their enforcement; but, (b) As regards the *fixed*, or *implied*, terms of the obligation, an extrinsic agreement can be availed of, if the transaction in hand is such, as a whole, that for one purpose of it the form of a negotiable instrument, or some particular feature of it, would be essential or peculiarly convenient, while for another and separate part of the transaction a different contract would be feasible and consistent.

These two canons may now be applied to the kinds of agreements most commonly arising, — the purpose here being not to consider the state of the law in detail,² but merely to illustrate the application of the general principle to this class of documents.

§ 2444. *Same*: (a) **Agreements affecting the Express Terms of the Document.** (1) An extrinsic agreement as to the *mode of payment*,¹ or the *amount of payment*,² must be, by the foregoing test, ineffective, since the parties have expressly dealt with those matters in the instrument; and although an agreement to concede a *credit* or *counter claim*, as offsetting the obligation of the instrument, would be a separate transaction and therefore valid, yet the distinction between the two may sometimes be hard to draw.³

(2) An extrinsic agreement as to the *time of payment* is for the same reason ineffectual,⁴ although an agreement of *renewal*, which may practically be

¹ See a note collecting the authorities, appended to *American Gas & V. M. Co. v. Wood*, (1897) 90 Me. 516, 38 Atl. 548, in 43 L. R. A. 449.

² 1896, *Stein v. Fogarty*, 4 Ida. 702, 43 Pac. 681 (agreement that a promissory note should be payable in labor, excluded); 1895, *Mumford v. Tolman*, 157 Ill. 258, 41 N. E. 617 (excluding a parcel agreement that a note was payable only out of certain dividends).

³ 1895, *Loudermilk v. Loudermilk*, 93 Ga. 443, 21 S. E. 77 (agreement not to collect more than a limited sum on a note, excluded).

⁴ 1897, *Phelps v. Abbott*, 114 Mich. 88, 72

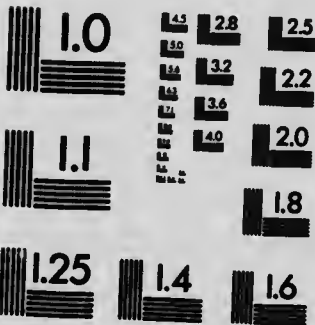
N. W. 3 (agreement to credit on a note a sum to be found due the maker, excluded); 1902, *Roe v. Bank*, 167 Mo. 406, 67 S. W. 303 (agreement that any deposit made in the payee bank by the maker should be credited against the note, held admissible); 1896, *Bennett v. Tillman*, 18 Mont. 28, 44 Pac. 80 (agreement that notes should be paid by an account-counterclaim, admitted).

⁵ 1819, *Woodbridge v. Spooner*, 3 B. & Ald. 233 (agreement between maker and payee that a note payable on demand should not be payable till the death of the maker, excluded); 1895, *Getto v. Binkert*, 55 Kan. 617, 40 Pac. 925



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equivalent, is in theory an agreement for an independent transaction and should be recognized.⁵ An agreement subjecting the obligation of the instrument to any *condition* or contingency, whether in time or otherwise, is ineffective, because the terms of a negotiable instrument are expressly unconditional;⁶ if it be said that the law would not permit the condition to be inserted and that thus it must be extrinsic if at all, the answer is (according to the second canon above stated) that there would then have been no peculiar necessity for resorting to the form of a negotiable instrument.

(3) An agreement *not to enforce* or *sue upon the instrument at all* must be equally ineffective;⁷ the only doubt here arising from the necessity of dis-

(agreement fixing a different time of payment, excluded); 1894, *Van Etten v. Howell*, 40 Nehr. 850, 59 N. W. 389 (that a note due in a certain time should not be collected till a certain suit was decided, excluded); 1857, *Brown v. Wiley*, 20 How. 442, 447 (bill of exchange payable May 1, 1855; agreement between the parties that it should not be presented for acceptance until a certain other draft had been provided for, excluded). *Contra*: 1808, *Dow v. Tuttle*, 4 Mass. 414 (note payable one year from Feb. 16, 1804; an agreement that "payment should not be demanded until the expiration of five years," held to be "a collateral promise" and actionable, and said to be "in chance" a sufficient ground for injunction").

⁵ *Contra*: 1811, *Hoar v. Graham*, 3 Camp. 57 (agreement by indorsees with indorsers that the note should be renewed when due, excluded, as an "incongruous parol condition"); 1898, *New London Cred. Syndicate v. Neale*, 2 Q. B. 487 (agreement to renew a bill of exchange if not paid at maturity, excluded). Cases *pro* and *con* are cited in Ames' Cases on Bills and Notes, II, 124, note.

⁶ *Eng.*: 1817, *Free v. Hawkins*, Holt N. P. 550, 8 Tantt. 92 (agreement, between plaintiff as indorsee and defendant as indorser of a note indorsed as security for the maker, not to enforce payment till after the sale of the maker's effects, held not receivable); 1830, *Moseley v. Hanford*, 10 B. & C. 729 (note payable on demand; stipulation that the note should not be payable till the payee delivered possession of premises and rendered account, excluded); 1835, *Foster v. Jolly*, 1 C. M. & R. 703 (action by the payee against the maker, on a note payable 14 days after date; agreement that it should not be enforced in case the plaintiff's principal obtained a verdict against the defendant's brother-in-law, excluded); L. C. B. Abinger: "The maker of a note payable on a day certain cannot be allowed to say, 'I only meant to pay you upon a contingency'"; 1836, *Adams v. Wordley*, 1 M. & W. 374 (action by the drawer against the maker of hills payable in 6 and 12 months; agreement that until the plaintiff should recover on a certain note he should not require payment of the bills, excluded); Parke, B.: "You seek by a parol contemporaneous agreement to alter the absolute engagement entered into by the bill"; U. S.: 1853, *Harlow v. Boswell*, 15 Ill. 56 (note payable 12 months after date "or as soon as I can sell \$50 worth" of goods; an oral agree-

ment that the note should not become due until \$50 of goods were sold was excluded); 1896, *Murchie v. Peck*, 160 id. 175, 43 N. E. 356 (agreement that payment of a note be dependent upon the sale of property by the maker, excluded); 1895, *Northern Trust Co. v. Hilgten*, 62 Minn. 361, 64 N. W. 909 (excluding an agreement that a note should not be valid if the maker performed a certain contract); 1894, *Wilson v. Wilson*, 26 Or. 251, 38 Pac. 185 (agreement that a note should not be paid except on a specified condition, excluded); 1902, *Levy & Cohn M. Co. v. Kauffman*, 52 C. C. A. 126, 114 Fed. 170 (oral agreement that an acceptance of a draft be on condition that the payee should advance other money to other parties, excluded); 1895, *Gurney v. Morrison*, 12 Wash. 456, 41 Pac. 192 (an agreement that notes given for the benefit of a corporation to be formed should not be binding after its formation, excluded). Other cases are cited in Ames' Cases on Bills and Notes, II, 133, note. *Contra*: 1899, *Quin v. Sexton*, 125 N. C. 447, 34 S. E. 542 (that a note for 12 months was not to be paid until a note of K. was paid, allowed to be shown).

The only doubt in these cases can arise from the occasional necessity of distinguishing the principle of § 2409, *ante*, which permits a condition precedent to the existence of the obligation, *i. e.* an *escrow*, to be valid.

Sometimes an agreement to hold the instrument as *security* (which by the principle of § 2437, *ante*, would be valid) presents in appearance an agreement resembling the present sort: 1897, *Clinch Co. v. Willing*, 180 Pa. 165, 36 Atl. 737 (notes given for the purchase of land; an agreement that the land held as security should first be sold and the proceeds applied before proceeding against the maker, enforced).

⁷ 1874, *Davis v. Randall*, 115 Mass. 547, 551 (agreement between an indorsee and an acceptor for accommodation that the indorsee would not enforce payment, excluded; "the acceptance of the defendant was an absolute promise to pay"); 1895, *First Nat'l Bank v. Foote*, 12 Utah 157, 42 Pac. 205 (that a note was signed on the assurance that it would not be enforced, excluded). *Contra*: 1858, *Norman v. Norman*, 11 Ind. 288 (agreement to hold merely as a receipt a note given by the defendant's son to his father's executor for money received by the former as an advancement, admitted, as an agreement which would have "entitled in equity to a cancellation of the instruments"). This

tinguishing between this rule and another rule (*ante*, § 2406), which concedes that a document intended merely as a friendly memorandum is without legal effect. On the other hand, an agreement by an *accommodated party*, who appears on the face of the document as the obligee (*e. g.* the payee of a note), not to enforce it against the nominal obligor who accommodates him, is of course effective.⁸ The distinction between the two is apparent from what has been already said (*ante*, § 2443). In the former instance, there being no purpose of further negotiation of the obligation, the form of a negotiable instrument was wholly unnecessary, if the transaction had been what the defendant claims, for a receipt or some other memorandum would have served equally well. But in the latter instance, the essential purpose being to negotiate the obligor's credit with other parties, a negotiable instrument was indispensable, and the transaction between the original parties was necessarily extrinsic to that instrument. It may be added that the explanation, advanced by high authority, that the avoidance of circuitry of action is the ground of this distinction,⁹ seems not to suffice, for it serves only to determine whether a valid agreement which would secure an injunction in equity would suffice as an equitable defence in a common law suit, and it leaves undetermined the question whether the agreement can be recognized at all under the parol evidence rule, even in equity.

(4) An agreement between one *co-maker* and the *payee*, to hold the former as surety only, seems at first sight to be a mere condition qualifying the face of the instrument, and therefore ineffective; but, as in the case of accommodation paper, it may be that the negotiation of the instrument requires several parties having primary liability; hence the surety would have to appear as co-maker and not as a drawer, and the suretyship agreement would have to be extrinsic. Such an agreement is generally given effect.¹⁰

(5) The question whether one who signs as "*agent*"¹¹ or "*president*"¹² or "*guardian*"¹³ is personally liable seems to be mainly a question of interpretation; for if no such word had been inserted, the agreement would be in-

ruling, as well as a few similar ones cited in Ames' Cases on Bills and Notes, II, 99, note, are probably due to a misapplication of the distinction above-mentioned in the text.

⁸ 1836, *Thompson v. Clubley*, 1 M. & W. 212 (indorsee's accommodation; the agreement that "no claim or demand should at any time be made against the defendant" was objected to as "contradicting the written contract of acceptance, which purported to be an absolute engagement to pay the bill"; but it was held a "collateral agreement, and not part of the original contract").

⁹ Professor Ames, in his Cases on Bills and Notes, Summary, II, 804.

¹⁰ 1809, *Leeds v. Lancashire*, 2 Camp. 205 (as between the original parties, two signers of a promissory note were allowed to show that they signed merely as guarantors of the maker); 1849, *Bank v. Mumford*, 6 Ga. 44, 52, 61, 66 (Nisbet, J., diss.); 1863, *Ward v. Stout*, 32 Ill. 399, 409; 1870, *Rose v. Williams*, 5 Kan. 483, 489 ("It is simply pleading and proving a fact

outside and beyond the terms of the contract"); 1838, *Harris v. Brooks*, 21 Pick. 195 ("It is not to affect the terms of the contract, but to prove a collateral fact and rebut a presumption"); 1845, *Garrett v. Ferguson*, 9 Mo. 125; and cases cited in *Brandt, Suretyship*, 1891, 2d ed., §§ 29, 30. *Contra*: 1895, *McColum v. Boughton*, 132 Mo. 601, 30 S. W. 1028, 33 S. W. 476, 34 S. W. 480 (a married woman pledged land to pay a note signed by her husband and others; the fact that they were agreed to be sureties only, and that she knew it, was excluded, on the ground of the pledgor being a married woman; three judges dissenting).

¹¹ 1850, *Hicks v. Hinde*, 9 Barb. 528; 1893, *Frankland v. Johnson*, 147 Ill. 520, 523, 35 N. E. 480, and cases cited in Ames' Cases on Bills and Notes, II, 224, note. Compare § 2438, *ante*.

¹² 1847, *Kean v. Davis*, 21 N. J. L. 633, 688; *Cook, Corporations*, 4th ed., 1891, § 722.

¹³ 1901, *Andrus v. Blazzard*, 23 Utah 233, 63 Pac. 888.

effectual, as totally destroying the validity of the instrument; while if the signature had been of the principal, ward, or company, "by" the representative, the representative would not have been liable; the question thus becomes one of the construction of the document.

It may be added that by the principle of novation (*ante*, § 2441), any of these agreements which when contemporaneous with the instrument's execution are ineffective, may of course be effective when *made subsequently*, as a separate transaction; and further, that by the nature of negotiable instruments, these extrinsic agreements, so far as recognized at all, are effective, naturally, against only the parties assenting to them, and not against *holders for value without notice* before maturity.

§ 2445. *Same: (b) Agreements affecting the Implied Terms of the Instrument.* The application of the rule to cases falling under the second class above-mentioned (§ 2443) may now be considered.

(1) An extrinsic agreement *not to transfer* an instrument payable "to order" cannot be effective;¹ for the term "to order" imports negotiability, and there is no purpose which the term could serve if that element were discarded.

(2) An extrinsic agreement, between drawer and payee, *not to enforce the drawer's secondary liability* on the bill, is plainly a discarding of the implied terms of a drawer's contract. Nevertheless, since there are several varieties of transactions for which such a form of draft would be peculiarly appropriate without involving the nominal drawer's liability — such as payment by a seller's agent to his principal, or payment by a buyer's agent to the seller, or assignment of a claim without guaranty of the amount collectible —, the agreement ought to be given effect.²

(3) For the same reason, an extrinsic agreement between *indorser* and *indorsee*, cutting down the indorser's implied liability, either by *denying recourse* altogether, or by placing both as co-sureties for a prior party, or by limiting liability to a *warranty of genuineness* of prior signatures, is effective;³ because the act of indorsement is necessary for the purpose of trans-

¹ 1903, *Black v. Bank*, 96 Md. 399, 54 Atl. 88 (agreement with a payee not to negotiate notes, excluded); 1895, *Waddle v. Owen*, 43 Nebr. 489, 61 N. W. 731 (agreement between drawer and payee of a bill to the payee's order that the payee should merely collect and not negotiate it, excluded; "having deliberately inserted words importing negotiability, the drawer cannot be heard to urge a contemporaneous oral agreement contrary to the plain terms of the bill").

² 1840, *Roberts v. Anstin*, 5 Whart. 313 (payment by a buyer's agent to the seller); 1850, *Hicks v. Hinde*, 9 Barb. 528 (similar); 1896, *Montgomery v. Page*, 29 Or. 320, 44 Pac. 689 (agreement between maker and indorser to be co-sureties only). *Contra*: 1895, *Bryan v. Duff*, 12 Wash. 233, 48 Pac. 936 (the defendant being indebted to the plaintiff, and H. being indebted to the defendant, the latter drew a bill on H. to the plaintiff's order; an agreement between the

plaintiff and the defendant that the former would not hold the latter liable for the drawee's default, excluded; *Dunbar, J., diss.*, on the ground that this was virtually an agreement to take the bill in absolute payment of the plaintiff's claim). Other cases *pro* and *con* are cited in *Ames' Cases on Bills & Notes*, II, 218, 224, note.

³ 1828, *Pike v. Street*, M. & M. 226 (oral agreement that the indorsee should not sue the defendant as indorser, received); and cases *pro* and *con* cited in *Ames' Cases*, id., II, 135, note; 1870, *Denton v. Peters*, L. R. 5 Q. B. 475 (agreement by an indorsee to hold merely as agent for collection); and cases cited in *Ames' Cases*, id., II, 185, note; 1870, *Ross v. Espy*, 66 Pa. 481 (agreement between the plaintiff indorsee and the defendant indorser, that they should be merely sureties for the maker, admitted as a defence, the defendant having paid into Court one half of the amount; "the agreement . . . was a

ferring title, and yet the transfer of title may be only one feature of several transactions, the remaining features of which cannot be embodied in the instrument without impairing its credit, -- such as a purchase of a claim on speculation as to the obligor's credit, or a transfer to an agent for collection. A distinction, however, is in some jurisdictions here taken between an indorsement in full and an *indorsement in blank*; and in the latter case the agreement, either when denying recourse,⁴ or when limiting the liability to that of guarantor,⁵ is treated as invalid; but it is difficult to see what ground there is on principle for this distinction.

(4) The extrinsic agreement made with an *anomalous indorser* — *i. e.* one who, not being the maker, drawer, drawee, or payee, writes his name upon the back of a negotiable note before delivery to the payee or before indorsement by him — should on the same principle be given effect; and this is generally conceded.⁶

§ 2446. **Rule binding upon the Parties to the Document only.** It is commonly said that the parol evidence rule, in the present aspect, is binding upon only those persons who are parties to the document. This form of statement suffices in most instances to reach correct results; but it is not sound on principle. The theory of the rule is that the parties have determined that a particular document shall be made the sole embodiment of their legal act for certain legal purposes (*ante*, § 2425). Hence, so far as that effect and those purposes are concerned, they must be found in that writing and nowhere else, no matter who may desire to avail himself of it. But so far as other effects and purposes are concerned, the writing has not superseded their other conduct, nor other persons' conduct, and it may still be resorted to for any other purpose for which it is material, either by other persons or by themselves. For example, where the issue is as to title by adverse possession of a right of way, and the deed has not reserved such a right, a conversation between grantor and grantee, the former conceding the way, would be available as affecting the permissory nature of the grantee's possession;¹ because the deed embodied only the title as constituted by grant, and did not cover the act of permissory user. So, too, a creditor, attacking a mortgage-deed as

flat bar to Espr's right to recover more than the one-half of the money"); and cases cited in Ames' Cases, *id.*, II, 245, note.

The further question may then arise whether, on an indorsement *expressly made without recourse*, an extrinsic waiver even of the implied warranty of genuineness may be effective: 1902, Carroll v. Nodine, 41 Or. 412, 69 Pac. 51.

⁴ 1865, Harrison v. McKim, 18 Ia. 485 (leading opinion, by Wright, C. J.; Cole, J., *diss.*); 1895, Iowa V. S. Bank v. Sigstad, 96 Ia. 491, 65 N. W. 407 (rule applied to a blank indorsement of a note containing a full indorser's contract on the face of it); 1881, Martin v. Cole, 104 U. S. 30 (leading opinion, by Matthews, J.). *Contra*: 1895, True v. Bullard, 45 Nebr. 409, 63 N. W. 824.

⁵ 1872, Beattie v. Browne, 64 Ill. 360 ("It cannot be a parol contract where the payee in-

dorses a note in blank, for there is in legal contemplation written over his name the extent and character of his undertaking"); 1896, Hatley v. Pike, 162 Ia. 241, 44 N. E. 441 (indorsement in blank; oral agreement to sign as guarantor not admitted; explaining prior cases, and distinguishing the contrary rule for a stranger's indorsed signature); 1856, Prescott Bank v. Caverly, 7 Gray 217 (agreement by indorsee with indorser that the latter signed only as guarantor of identity, not received); and cases cited *pro* and *con* in Ames' Cases, *id.*, II, 233, note.

⁶ 1875, Boynton v. Pierce, 79 Ill. 145; 1895, Richardson v. Foster, 73 Miss. 12, 18 So. 573; 1903, Elliott v. Moreland, — N. J. L. —, 54 Atl. 224; and cases cited in Ames' Cases on Bills and Notes, I, 269, note.

¹ 1855, Ashley v. Ashley, 4 Gray 197.

fraudulent, may establish the debtor's fraudulent extrinsic agreement with the mortgagee,² because the agreement is here invoked not as effecting a transfer but as constituting fraud; for a creditor claiming under the deed could not avail himself of the agreement to enlarge the terms of the transfer. Again, an oral promise by an employer to concede certain moneys to an employee could not be availed of to enlarge the employee's rights, where a written contract covered the subject; but in a prosecution for embezzlement, where the employee's criminal intent in taking the money is the issue, the extrinsic agreement of the employer may be availed of as affecting the employee's honest belief that he was entitled.³ Again, to overthrow the words of a will, the testator's extrinsic declarations of testamentary intent cannot be used, because here the object is to give testamentary effect to that which the will has superseded for that purpose; but if the object be merely to use these declarations evidentially as indication of the testator's plan, to prove the probable contents of a lost will, they may be used for this distinct purpose.⁴ The truth seems to be, then, that the rule will still apply to exclude extrinsic utterances, even as against other parties, provided it is sought to use those utterances for the very purpose for which the writing has superseded them as the legal act.

Nevertheless, owing to the inaccurate phrasing of the doctrine as commonly laid down — that the rule does not apply to others than the parties to the document — the precedents are often arbitrary and confused, and cannot be reconciled by any general distinctions.⁵

² 1894, *Jewett v. Sundback*, 5 S. D. 111, 119, 58 N. W. 20.

³ 1898, *Walker v. State*, 117 Ala. 42, 23 So. 149.

⁴ Cases cited *ante*, §§ 1735-1737.

⁵ 1848, *Re Clapton*, 3 Cox Cr. 126 (embezzlement of funds by a servant; the memorandum of agreement covering the nature of his duties, required to be produced); 1896, *Dunn v. Price*, 112 Cal. 46, 44 Pac. 354 (agreement of sale; between assignees of buyer and seller, not claiming under them, an oral agreement admitted); 1895, *Roof v. Pulley Co.*, 36 Fla. 284, 18 So. 597 (assignee of property and note); 1900, *Dickey v. Grice*, 110 Ga. 315, 35 S. E. 291; 1901, *Central Coal & C. Co. v. Good*, — Ind. T. —, 64 S. W. 677 (breach of contract to pay for lumber furnished for a railroad; defendant claimed that plaintiff had failed to perform and had thus caused him damage; testimony by another contractor as to the part of the construction to be done by him, held admissible, irrespective of the terms of this contract); 1903, *Livingston v. Heck*, — Ia. —, 94 N. W. 1098 (action against the purchaser from T. of cattle sold to T. by the plaintiff, and mortgaged back to the plaintiff; the oral agreement between T. and the plaintiff, permitting a sale free from the mortgage, admitted); 1899, *Gould v. Leavitt*, 92 Me. 416, 43 Atl. 17 (mortgage from S. to defendant, expressly excluding intoxicating liquors, and an assignment of the mortgage by defendant to plaintiff; that the transaction in truth covered intoxicating liquors, allowed to

be shown); 1895, *Libby v. Land Co.*, 67 N. H. 587, 32 Atl. 772 (garnishor against a stock-subscriber as garnishee, whose parol agreement to pay 25% only of face value of stock was not received); 1893, *Plainfield F. N. Bank v. Dunn*, 58 N. J. L. 404, 27 Atl. 908 (action against indorser; oral agreement with J., not a party to the written agreement, to extend time of payment, admitted); 1897, *Hankinson v. Vantine*, 152 N. Y. 20, 46 N. E. 292 (mechanic's lien for labor done by the plaintiff upon a building owned by the defendant and leased by R.; the lease of R. containing a clause against alterations without the lessor's consent, on penalty of forfeiture, the defendant gave a written consent; held, that since the sole purpose of this writing was to avoid the lessee's forfeiture, it did not exclude the oral transactions at the time relative to the defendant's consent, for the purpose of determining whether the statutory consent to the plaintiff's labor had been given; a good example of the principle); 1902, *Pacific Biscuit Co. v. Dngger*, 42 Or. 513, 70 Pac. 523 (action for goods sold to defendant through her agent S., the issue being whether S., was general selling-agent or not; the plaintiff having introduced a bill of sale of the store from S. to defendant, in which defendant appointed S. to remain as general selling-agent, the defendant was allowed to show that the sale was a mortgage only, and thus S. remained owner; unsound, because the document was offered as creating the plaintiff's right; the Court erroneously saying that it was "not offered for the

§§ 2400-2478] BINDING THIRD PERSONS; BURDEN OF PROOF. § 2447

§ 2447. **Burden of Proof; Who must Produce the Document.** If a document has by the parties' intent been made the sole embodiment of the transaction, then all proof of the transaction involves proof of the document (*ante*, § 2425); and proof of the document involves a production of the original document or an accounting for its absence (*ante*, § 1179). But obviously the latter requirement depends upon the assumption first above made, namely, that the parties *have* embodied the transaction in writing. The question then arises, On whom is the burden of proof to show that they have or have not done so? This question, in turn, has two branches.

(1) In an action on a contract, for example, *must the plaintiff show* that the contract is *not* a written one, or must the defendant rather show that it *is* a written one? The practical difference will be, when it is a written one, that the plaintiff must produce or account for it, in the former view; while in the latter view, the defendant must produce or account for it, in order to prove its terms, and this requirement may be difficult to fulfil. The correct solution here seems to favor the plaintiff. In other words, there is no presumption that the transaction was reduced to a single document; therefore if the plaintiff does not involuntarily disclose such a document as a part of his case, the opponent must raise the objection and establish the fact, if he wishes to invoke the operation of the rule. The practical justification for this is that, though some document may exist, it remains uncertain whether the documents covered the precise transaction in issue, and until the opponent, by production, has demonstrated that it does, it is fairer that no assumptions should be made:

1818, *Burrough, J.*, in *Stevens v. Pinney*, 3 B. & Ald. 349, 355 (action for work and labor): "The distinction in this case turns on the proof of the existence of the original agreement having been given by the defendant's witness instead of the plaintiff's. The latter had fully made out his case [by evidence of oral hiring], and nothing whatever was proved as to whether there had been such an agreement or not. It was therefore incumbent on the defendant to show that there had been a legal instrument of that description, or to give the plaintiff notice to produce it."¹

purpose of asserting any rights thereunder"); 1901, *Myers v. Taylor*, 107 Tenn. 364, 64 S. W. 719 (plaintiff claimed lumber under a sale from M., who claimed by purchase of it from defendant's land, and this purchase was denied by defendant; M. was not allowed to testify to his contract irrespective of the writing; this ruling seems unsound); 1896, *Johnson v. Portwood*, 82 Tex. 235, 34 S. W. 596, 787 (agreement of sale on terms; a third person claiming a lien on the vendee's interest was allowed to show other oral terms for the sale); 1901, *O'Shea v. R. Co.*, 44 C. C. A. 601, 105 Fed. 559 (the plaintiff was injured by the joint negligence of defendant and C., and executed an instrument to C. in form acknowledging satisfaction; held, that as against the defendant, though a joint tortfeasor, the plaintiff might show that the instrument was understood to be merely a covenant not to sue C.); 1903, *Carmack v. Drum*, 32 Wash. 236, 73 Pac. 377 (a landlord suing for rent was allowed to show, in spite of his deed transferring

the premises, an oral agreement with the grantee that the grantor should retain the right to the rents).

¹ *Eng.*: 1818, *Stevens v. Pinney*, 3 B. & Ald. 349, 8 Tannt. 327 (work and labor; on the defendant's side it appeared that there was a writing covering the subject; held, that it was for the defendant to prove; therefore, he should have given notice to produce, before proving the contents, i. e. before being able to invoke its controlling effect); 1827, *Littledale, J.*, in *Reed v. Deere*, 7 B. & C. 261 ("If indeed a plaintiff gets through his case without giving the defendant any opportunity of mentioning the written instrument, the latter must produce it"); 1840, *Magnay v. Knight*, 1 Man. & G. 944 (action for services; general rule applied; production required of the defendant, and the defendant held not to cure his position by having given notice; since the document being unstamped was unavailable); 1860, *Cox v. Couveless*, 2 F. & F. 139 (the cross-examination may be interposed,

(2) But may not this rule be modified where the fact of a writing appears from the plaintiff's own witnesses? In other words, if, even before the defendant has proved the precise terms of the writing, it appears that there was some writing connected with the transaction, may it not then be presumed against the plaintiff that this writing covered the transaction in issue, so as to shift to him the burden of showing, by production, that it does not cover the transaction? Here a distinction is to be taken between the direct and the cross-examination. It is generally conceded that, when the fact of writing appears on *direct examination*, the plaintiff must produce or account for it before he can go any further.² But whether the same rule will be applied where the same fact has been made to appear by the defendant on the *cross-examination* of the plaintiff's witness has been the subject of variant rulings and much controversy in English practice. The argument against applying the same rule has been thus stated:

1829, *Tindal, C. J.*, in *Fiedler v. Ray*, 6 Bing. 332: "It has been argued that if it be shown that a contract is evidenced by writing, it is immaterial whether this appear on cross-examination of the plaintiff's witnesses or in the course of the defendant's evidence. But there is this difference in the case, — that if it appear by the [direct] testimony of the plaintiff's witness, the absence of the writing is an inherent defect in his cause which it is incumbent on him to get over; whereas if it appears from the defendant's witness, it is an objection which the defendant must substantiate by the production of the instrument in the regular way. Otherwise this inconvenience might follow, that the plaintiff might, on a mere assertion of the defendant, be non-suited for the non-production of a written instrument, which if it had been produced might turn out not to apply to the contract in question."

This reasoning does not seem adequate, although a few rulings have accepted it.³ To place the burden on the plaintiff equally in such cases seems

and, on denial of any writing, evidence of its existence may be offered by the opponent, to prevent the proponent from proving the transaction orally; *U. S.*: 1866, *Patterson v. Mining Co.*, 30 Cal. 360, 365 (allegation by the defendant of a sale; on the defendant's evidence, the sale appeared to be in writing; production by him required); 1867, *King v. Handlett*, 33 Md. 318, 321 (same, the plaintiff alleging a sale); 1895, *St. Louis A. & T. H. R. Co. v. Baner*, 156 Ill. 106, 40 N. E. 448 (testimony as to a railroad rule; the opponent was required to object and discover whether it was in writing, before the rule would be applied). *Contra*: 1823, *Allen v. Potter*, 2 McC. 322 (assumpsit for the value of articles bought but not delivered, etc.; in the defendant's evidence, it appeared that a bill of sale existed; production required from the plaintiff).

² *Eng.*: 1818, *Stevens v. Finney*, 2 J. B. Moore 349 (action for work and labor; held, that if a writing had appeared, as a part of the plaintiff's case, to cover the matter, the plaintiff must produce it; but where he proved his case without involving it, then it was for the defendant to show its existence and give notice to produce it); 1824, *Sinclair v. Stevenson*, 1 C. & P. 532 (negotiations for a lease or sale); 1825, *Cot-*

terill v. Hobby, 4 B. & C. 465 (case, for injury to a reversioner's interest, the plaintiff's evidence of his interest referring to a written agreement; held, that he should produce it); 1842, *Partou v. Cole*, 6 Jur. 370 (but here the judge first looked at the document); *Can.*: 1855, *Doe v. Blanche*, 3 All. N. Br. 180 (written agreement for possession); *U. S.*: 1877, *Com. v. Goodwin*, 122 Mass. 19, 34 (whether a building was insured; production not required because no written contract was mentioned); 1867, *Hatch v. Pryor*, 42 N. Y. 441, 443 (agreement to pay a note); 1842, *Eubanks v. Harris*, 1 Speer 183, 192 (agreement as to a boundary).

³ 1810, *Doe v. Morris*, 12 East 237 (action of ejectment, turning upon whether the landlord had a right to end the lease; on cross-examination of the plaintiff's witness, it appeared that there was a lease in writing; held, that it was for the defendant to put it in, not the plaintiff); 1810, *Doe v. Pearson*, ib. 239, note (ejectment against a tenant, turning upon the time of notice to quit; the plaintiff's witness disclosed that there was a written agreement; held, that the plaintiff was not bound to produce it); 1829, *Reid v. Batte, M. & M.* 413 (assumpsit for an entablature put on the front of a house; on cross-examination it appeared that there was a

more satisfactory, because his own witness' testimony has sufficed to show that there was *some* writing, and because a distinction between the direct and the cross-examination would tend to increase petty manœuvring and the suppression of facts. Such was the view of the majority of English judges.⁴

Here certain questions may properly be distinguished: (a) When the document is *void for want of a legal stamp*, or does not fulfil the requirement of the *statute of frauds*, it may be ineffective as a legal act, and therefore the party who is bound to produce it if he relies upon it may fail (*post*, § 2456); and thus the incidents of the burden of proof may indirectly have other consequences. (b) Where the plaintiff desires to prove a *fact independent of the document* — as when he relies upon a person's acts and not upon his written appointment, to prove his agency or official incumbency⁵ —, there is of course no burden of producing the document; whether the purpose in hand is really the proof of the document or of the independent fact depends upon the principle of documentary originals, already examined (*ante*, §§ 1242-1250). (c) Where the parties have by mutual consent *waived the resort to the written transaction* and agreed to rest upon the oral facts, the question arises whether by stipulation or judicial admission a rule of substantive law or of evidence may be waived (*post*, § 2592).

3. Integration required by Law.

§ 2450. **At Common Law**; (1) **Judicial Records**. The integration of a transaction (*ante*, § 2425), *i. e.* its reduction to a single document, is either voluntary or compulsory. In the former instance it may or may not be made, as the party or parties to the act may choose; but when made, the legal consequences already noticed will follow, and the document supersedes all other utterances. In the latter instance — compulsory integration — the law insists, independently of the parties' choice, that the transaction be embodied in a single document, and when this is done, the same legal consequences attach.

written contract for the inside work on the house, but that the present claim was sued on as an extra; held that the plaintiff need not produce the contract).

⁴ *Eng.*: 1800, *Brewer v. Palmer*, 3 Esp. 213 (action for use and occupation; on cross-examination, it appeared that there had been an agreement in writing; Eldon, C. J., said that "the plaintiff was bound to show what that contract was; it might contain some clauses which might prevent the plaintiff from recovering, and others for the benefit of the defendant, which he had a right to have produced"); 1816, *Jeffery v. Walton*, 1 Stark. 267; 1828, *Vincent v. Cole, M. & M.* 257 (assumpsit for building a party-wall; on cross-examination it appeared that there was a written contract for the building of the house but that the party-wall claim was sued on as extra; held, that the plaintiff must first produce the document, so that it could be seen whether it covered the claim in question); 1828, *R. v. Rawden*, 8 B. & C. 708 (in proving a tenancy, the cross-examination

showed a written instrument to have been made; the prover held bound to produce it); 1832, *R. v. Padstow*, 4 B. & Ad. 208; 1844, *Buxton v. Cornish*, 12 M. & W. 426 (*Abinger, L. C. B.*: "The practice has prevailed in Westminster Hall ever since I have known it, and before every judge for the last quarter of a century"); *Ire.*: 1841, *Bridge v. M'Carthy*, 4 Ir. L. R. 157; 1845, *Thunder v. Warren*, 8 id. 181 (requiring the plaintiff to give notice to produce); *Can.*: 1873, *Betts v. Venning*, 14 N. Br. 267, 269 (on cross-examination, here); 1852, *Farley v. Graham*, 9 U. C. Q. B. 438; *U. S.*: 1826, *Boone v. Dyke*, 3 T. B. Monr. 530, 531; 1868, *Littlejohn v. Fowler*, 5 Coldw. 284, 286 (contract for cutting timber; the existence of a writing appearing on cross-examination of the plaintiff's witness, other testimony was excluded). The following ruling stands by itself: 1854, *Campbell v. Moore*, 3 Wis. 767 (peculiar facts; Court's discretion discussed).

⁵ For example: 1895, *Newby v. Security Co.*, 110 Ala. 663, 17 So. 940.

The instances of compulsory integration are few. At common law the only instances appear to be those of judicial records, corporate records, and negotiable instruments. By statute have been added testaments and a few miscellaneous documents.

(1) The theory of *judicial records* is that the judgment roll, as finally made up, embodies in itself alone the entirety of the controversy as adjudicated, and thus supersedes the miscellaneous mass of oral and written pleading, motions, and orders, which have gone to make up the proceedings. The history of this theory has already been examined (*ante*, § 2426). Its principle is to-day well established in the law:

1814, *Ellenborough, C. J.*, in *Ramsbottom v. Buckhurst*, 2 M. & S. 565, 567: "The judgment roll imports incontrovertible verity as to all proceedings which it sets forth; and so much so that a party cannot be admitted to plead that the things which it professes to state are not true. . . . Every part of the record, as long as it remains on the files of the Court, must be taken to speak absolute verity."

1842, *Hubbard, J.*, in *Sayles v. Briggs*, 4 Metc. 421, 423 (in an action for malicious prosecution, to show the acquittal in the previous proceeding, the plaintiff produced the written complaint only, and wished to show orally the issuance of warrant, the arrest, the arraignment, and the discharge; no record or minutes had been made): "A record is a memorial or history of the judicial proceedings in a case, commencing with the writ or complaint, and terminating with the judgment; and the design is, not merely to settle the particular question in difference between the parties, or the government and the subject, but to furnish fixed and determinate rules and precedents for all future like cases. A record, therefore, must be precise and clear, containing proof within itself of every important fact on which the judgment rests; and it cannot exist partly in writing and partly in parol. Its allegations and facts are not the subject of contradiction. They are received as the truth itself, and no averment can be made against them nor can they be varied by parol. . . . It is argued that this testimony should be received from necessity, as there is no way by which the plaintiff can obtain redress, and that this is the best evidence which now exists. But in my judgment it will be productive of far less mischief for an individual to suffer from the neglect or misfortune of an officer in not making a judicial record than to establish a precedent that the record itself or a part of it may be proved by parol,—that it may speak one language to-day and another to-morrow, depending on the different witnesses who are called or on their changing recollections. And without prescribing a rule for a case where a magistrate might by the act of God be deprived of the opportunity of making even any minutes of proceedings before him from which a record could be made (if such a case should ever occur), we are of opinion that the want of a judicial record cannot be supplied by parol evidence; and that the rules which apply to the admission of testimony to prove the contents of a lost record, or to the introduction of minutes by which the record may be extended, have no real bearing on a case like the present, where no such loss ever took place and no such minutes ever were made. A party who is to be affected by the record will in the exercise of ordinary care see that it is correctly made up; and if the officer should neglect or refuse to perform his duty, he can be compelled by mandamus to make a true record."

1854, *Merrick, J.*, in *Wells v. Stevens*, 2 Gray, 115, 119: "It has been argued in behalf of the plaintiff [offering to show orally a claim of appeal not in the record] that the evidence offered by him should have been received, because otherwise he can obtain no redress for the loss of the right of which he complains that he has been unjustly deprived; and also because a magistrate ought not to be allowed to shield himself from responsibility for an act of wrong or oppression by an additional violation of duty in neglecting or wilfully refusing truly to record the proceedings of a case tried before him. But the rejection of

such evidence is an obvious and inevitable consequence of the incontrovertible verity which the law, for reasons lying (as it has been said) at the foundation of all well-ordered jurisprudence, attaches to judicial records. Judges and magistrates are responsible to the government from which they derive their authority, but not to individuals, for the negligent performance or wilful violation of official duty."

It is not within the present purview to trace in detail the state of the law of records, involving as it does a separate body of law, contained in a mass of variant statutes and local differences of practice. But it is worth while to notice the logical consequences of this general principle as applied at common law.

(a) In the first place, the record being the sole embodiment of the judicial proceedings, no other materials or utterances, oral or written, can be set up in competition with it. In other words, but less correctly, the record is *conclusive*.¹ This is so even though the record has *not been made up*;² for herein appears the compulsory nature of the rule, as distinguished from voluntary integration (*ante*, § 2430). It *must* be made up; and if it is not, then in legal theory there is yet no judgment or other proceeding; and it is always in the power of litigating parties to prevent hardship by compelling the proper officer to make up the record. Furthermore, if the record has been made up and is then lost or destroyed, the proof of the proceedings consists in proof of the contents of the record,³ — though if copies are unavailable, other materials may be resorted to.⁴ Finally, though the record is in the sole embodiment of the transaction, yet in an appropriate proceeding the Court may amend it so

¹ 1874, *Ex parte Gillebrand, re Slidebotham*, L. R. 10 Ch. App. 52 (when they "purport to contain a full record of what took place at the trial, they must be taken as the sole materials on which the Court of Appeal can proceed," unless by agreement); 1863, *Michener v. Lloyd*, 16 N. J. Eq. 38, 40 (order of a Court directing payment; oral evidence of "what passed at the time of making the order," excluded); 1841, *People v. Gray*, 25 Wend. 465 (minutes or other record of a criminal trial, not contradictable as to the plea entered); 1846, *Ward v. Saunders*, 6 Ired. 382, 385 (theoretically, the enrolled memorial of all the documents in a cause is the record, not the original documents themselves; here an objection to the originals' not having been enrolled was held waived by consent to use the originals); 1869, *Coyne v. Sonther*, 61 Pa. 455, 457 (entry of satisfaction of judgment in docket by clerk, conclusive in favor of purchaser at sheriff's sale).

The principle that a judgment is conclusive upon the parties is a different thing (*ante*, § 1347). The present question is not what external facts are established by the judgment, but what were the actual terms of the judgment itself.

² 1842, *Kendall v. Powers*, 4 Metc. 553 (a record cannot be affected by parol; in an action for false imprisonment, the defendant justice was not allowed to show that a waiver of appeal, not in the record, had been made); 1842, *Sayles v. Briggs*, 114 421, 423 (proceedings in a prosecution alleged as malicious; quoted *supra*);

1854, *Welis v. Stevens*, 2 Gray 115 (trespass against a magistrate for committing to prison without allowing an appeal; the plaintiff not allowed to show orally that he claimed an appeal, no claim being contained in the record of the magistrate; quoted *supra*); 1863, *Hackett v. King*, 6 Ali. 58, 60 (warrant and arrest, not provable by parol); 1866, *Fleming v. Clark*, 12 Id. 191, 196 (whether a trial Court had refused to allow exceptions; an agreement of counsel, for a *habeas corpus* hearing, as to this fact, excluded; "the rulings of the Superior Court can appear only by its own records"); 1841, *People v. Gray*, 25 Wend. 465 (original minutes of a trial during session, not made up as required by statute, are not the record).

³ 1843, *Gore v. Elwell*, 9 Shepl. 442, 444 (lost writ and return are to be proved by evidence of the record's contents, not of the parol acts); 1894, *Burden v. Taylor*, 124 Mo. 12, 22, 27 S. W. 349 (tax-collector's testimony to supply want of recitals of proceedings in a tax-deed only the record of the proceedings, or copies of them where destroyed, or receipts, or copies of *Mandeville v. Reynolds*, 63 N. Y. 528, 533 (where a judgment roll is lost, the proof is to be of the contents of the lost roll, and *semble* not of anything but its contents).

⁴ 1859, *Conger v. Converse*, 9 Ia. 554, 557 (lost execution; docket-entries as preferred to oral evidence; question not decided); 1821, *Cook v. Wood*, 1 McC. 139 (on the loss of records of Court, its journals were received).

as to remove errors;⁵ and thus the theory is preserved while practical injustice is avoided.

(b) Of the various books kept in a court, which of them is deemed to be this record? Here the practice and the phraseology have come to vary so much in different jurisdictions that uniformity of ruling is not attainable. But on principle there is one final and comprehensive document, termed the judgment-roll, for each litigation; in this are set forth all the proceedings from beginning to end; and this is theoretically the record:

1768, Sir William Blackstone, Commentaries on the Law of England, III, 317: "The record is a history of the most material proceedings in the cause, entered on a parchment roll, and continued down to the present time; in which must be stated the original writ and summons, all the pleadings, the declaration, view or oyer prayed, the imparlances, plea, replication, rejoinder, continuances, and whatever farther proceedings have been had, all entered *verbatim* on the roll, and also the issue or demurrer and joinder therein."⁶

This roll then is primarily the record, and supersedes all intermediate books of docket, minutes, entries, and the like, as well as the original papers containing the pleadings of the parties.⁷ If however the time has not yet elapsed when the roll can be made up, the clerk's temporary minutes and entries, together with the original papers of the parties, constitute the record *ad interim*;⁸ this relaxation being conceded to practical necessity. Moreover, in inferior courts — typically, that of a justice of the peace — in which by tradition (*ante*, § 2426) the doctrine of incontrovertible records never

⁵ The following cases exemplify the rules on this subject: 1856, *Weed v. Weed*, 25 Conn. 337, 345 (where the analogy with reformation of deeds in chancery is noted); 1862, *Frink v. Frink*, 43 N. H. 506, 514; 1897, *Jacks v. Adamson*, 56 Oh. 397, 47 N. E. 48 ("all sources of information that are competent under general rules"; here the testimony of the ex-judge of probate to the fact of an order of sale); 1897, *State v. Fiester*, 32 Or. 254, 50 Pac. 561; 1873, *Ex parte Lange*, 18 Wall. 163, 167.

⁶ Examples of records set out in full are given in the Commentaries, Appendix to Book III.

⁷ 1807, *Ayrey v. Davenport*, 2 B. & P. N. R. 474 (the book of entries of judgments is not evidence of a judgment); 1805, *Lee v. Meacock*, 5 Esp. 177 (a day-book from the judgment-office, containing copies of the entries of judgments, etc., not admitted; "an office copy of the judgment ought to be produced," if not the docket itself); 1901, *Baxter v. Pritchard*, 113 Ia. 422, 85 N. W. 633 (record book, not judgment docket, is the judicial record).

But this strictness of the common law is not always observed; compare the following opinions: 1897, *Simmons v. Threshour*, 118 Cal. 100, 50 Pac. 312 (whether the judgment-book suffices instead of the judgment-roll); 1849, *Browning v. Flanagan*, 22 N. J. L. 567, 573 (clerk's "sealing-docket"; its nature well explained); 1902, *Amundson v. Wilson*, 11 N. D. 193, 91 N. W. 37 (whether a judgment-docket suffices to establish a judgment, instead of the record book).

⁸ 1839, *Pruden v. Alden*, 23 Pick. 184, 167 (the clerk first records the doings briefly "in a minute-book, called the docket, from which a full, extended, and intelligible record is afterwards to be made up; but until they can be made up, these short notes must stand as the record"); 1848, *Read v. Sutton*, 2 Cush. 115, 123 ("The docket is the record until the record is fully extended, and the same rules of presumed verity apply to it as to the record"; excluding testimony of the clerk and the judge as to the non-making of an order of judgment); 1861, *McGrath v. Seagrave*, 2 All. 443 ("minutes may be introduced when the record has not been drawn out *in extenso*, as containing the elements of a record, and in truth for the time being constituting the record itself"; here a docket entry, together with the original papers, was received where "every essential fact appears . . . without resorting to parol proof").

How much depends on local custom may be seen by the following case: 1850, *Willard v. Harvey*, 24 N. H. 344, 348 (the custom in this State had been not to extend the record of a judgment from the minutes and original papers until a resort to the judgment in another proceeding was needed, and then the clerk made a copy "of the record supposed to exist in legal intentment, and certified as such [copy], without the labor of first making an original"; so that "the record thus extended is deemed by the Court an original record," and is conclusive; corrections can be made only by process of amendment).

obtained, the final enrolment was never customary at common law. Hence the justice's docket or minutes, with the original papers, represent in the first instance the proceedings;⁹ and though the legal theory persevered that these courts do not possess records at all, in the strict sense,¹⁰ yet the practical features of a record are usually attributed to these books, so as to exclude proof of oral transactions.¹¹

(c) What are the transactions which in legal theory form part of the record? Obviously many things are said and done, and many documents used, not only out of court but in court, which do not in strictness form a part of the proceedings in the controversy, and hence do not need to appear in the record, — hence may be established without regard to the contents of the record. This involves the whole theory of trials and appeals. It is enough to note that the application of the present principle is dependent on that theory;¹² for example, whether the date of a writ or declaration is disputable depends on the theory of terms of court and times of filing of pleadings,¹³ and further to note that so far as the purpose is not to rely on the judicial proceeding and therefore on the record, but to prove the parties' conduct in other aspects, the record is not involved and therefore does not control.¹⁴

It remains to distinguish some other principles often invoked in the proof

⁹ 1880, *State v. Bartlett*, 47 Me. 398, 401 (original complaint and warrant with return, admitted); 1882, *Folsom v. Cressey*, 73 id. 270 (citation and return, etc., in poor-debtor's Court; "such inferior Courts are not required to make up full and formal records, and their doings may be shown by their minutes and the original papers, or certified copies"); 1825, *Com. v. Bolkom*, 3 Pick. 281, 282 (a Court of Sessions licensing innholders does not act judicially; its minutes are therefore admissible); 1836, *Davidson v. Slocomb*, 18 id. 464, 488 ("the minutes of the justice [of the peace] are not technically a record; but they contain all the material parts which the record would comprise if it were made up at large and in the usual form"; here used because the justice had died before extending them); 1897, *State v. Rice*, 49 S. C. 418, 27 S. E. 452 (conviction of a crime; the trial justice's book admitted as the record).

¹⁰ 1824, *Dyson v. Wood*, 3 B. & C. 449 (for a court not of record, the judgment must be pleaded or denied as a fact, and not the memorandum or docket that may have been kept; while for a court of record, though the record itself is pleaded or denied, it merely "imports," or not, a judgment).

¹¹ 1772, *Fisher v. Lane*, 2 W. Bl. 834 (minute-book of the Mayor's Court of London; in proving its judgment on foreign attachment, in defence to an action, the omission in the minutes of a record of summonses, etc., held fatal, and semble not to be supplied by parol); 1833, *Boomer v. Lane*, 10 Wend. 525 (parol evidence of a justice's judgment, not admissible).

¹² The following rulings will show the scope of the inquiry: 1878, *Williams v. Goodell*, 60 Ga. 482 (that a notice had not been served; the

opponent's testimony excluded, the record of proceedings being the proper source); 1897, *Pritchett v. Davis*, 101 Id. 236, 28 S. E. 686 ("homestead papers," not the record in the Court, are the original, in proving the setting-apart); 1831, *Frost v. Shapleigh*, 7 Greenl. 236 (writ of attachment never returned and thus not matter of record; the attachment proved orally); 1824, *Crauford v. State*, 5 H. & J. 231, 234 (a bond filed in the Orphan's Court; non-delivery allowed to be shown); 1893, *Munro v. Meech*, 94 Mich. 596, 54 N. W. 290 (that the former suit was not tried on its merits, admitted); 1825, *Judge of Probate v. Briggs*, 3 N. H. 309 (Probate Court; record held conclusive as to the filing of a claim); 1850, *Brackett v. Hoitt*, 20 id. 257, 260 (the case made by the presiding judge for determination on appeal is a part of the record); 1826, *Wolfe v. Washburn*, 6 Cow. 281, 265 (minutes of a justice as to a claim of set-off, held no part of the records and therefore contradictable).

¹³ 1781, *Morris v. Pugh*, 3 Burr. 1242 (whether a writ in trover was dated before the demand and refusal; the *nisi prius* record spoke of it as "of Easter term"; held, that the presumption that it was filed on the first day of the term could be rebutted by the writ itself); 1826, *Granger v. George*, 5 B. & C. 149 (the declaration's statement of the time of action begun is disputable); 1828, *Lester v. Jenkins*, 8 Id. 339 (so also for a writ); 1826, *Johnston v. Darrah*, 8 N. J. L. 282, 285 (the time of recording an execution may be shown).

¹⁴ 1832, *Loury v. Cady*, 4 Vt. 504, 505 (the fact of attachment may be proved, between sheriff and receivers, by the receipt; the attachment-writ itself not required).

of records, — genuinely principles of evidence. (1) The doctrine about *producing the original* of a document, or accounting for its absence, permits copies to be used when the original is not obtainable; the application of this to the production of the original judicial record is elsewhere dealt with (*ante*, §§ 1215–1217). (2) The copy thus used must be verified by a witness; but the hearsay verification of the official custodian, in the shape of a *certified copy*, may be used, under an exception to the Hearsay rule, without calling the officer to the stand in person (*ante*, §§ 1677–1681). (3) The doctrine of the completeness requires in many cases that the *whole of a document* be produced (*ante*, § 2110). (4) The rules of authentication often have a special application in the proof of *genuineness* of a judicial record (*ante*, §§ 2158–2164). (5) The conclusiveness or admissibility of a *sheriff's return* involves sometimes the present principle and sometimes certain distinct ones (*ante*, §§ 1347, 1664).

§ 2451. *Same*: (2) *Corporate Acts and Records*; (3) *Negotiable Instruments*. (2) Whether the *acts of a corporation* must at common law be integrated in a written record is a question which has given rise to a great variety of opinions and of practice,¹ though the modern tendency is to apply no different rule to corporate than to natural persons.² Whether the *proceedings* of a corporate meeting are subject to the same rule is a distinct question, and the analogy of judicial records here makes for preserving the same compulsory rule;³ but again the modern tendency is to leave the transaction without legal restriction.⁴ Where such a record is made, the principle of voluntary integration (*ante*, § 2430) may of course be applied, and the record made to control.⁵

It may be added that for corporate records analogous subordinate questions arise as for judicial records, — for example, concerning the particular book or

¹ 1827, *Bank v. Dandridge*, 12 Wheat. 64, 67, 69 (Story, J.: "In ancient times it was held that corporations aggregate could do nothing but by deed under their common seal; but . . . the rule has been broken in upon in a vast variety of cases, in modern times, and cannot now as a general proposition be supported; . . . we do not admit as a general proposition that the acts of a corporation, although in all other respects rightly transacted, are invalid merely from the omission to have them reduced to writing, unless the statute creating it makes such writing indispensable as evidence or to give them an obligatory force"; Marshall, C. J., dissents at 91).

² Cases cited in Cook, *Corporations*, 1898, 4th ed., §§ 721, 725.

³ 1824, *Taylor v. Henry*, 2 Pick. 397, 401 (an unrecorded adjournment, not provable orally; "if a fact of this kind can be proved by parol evidence, it is difficult to see why the election of officers may not be proved in the same manner; this goes to the foundation of our system of civil society"); 1827, *Manning v. Fifth Parish*, 6 id. 6, 16 (agreement as to church property; a vote of a parish corporation, not provable in parol); 1896, *Dennis v. Mfg. Co.*, 19 R. I. 666, 36 Atl.

129 (parol proceedings not admissible; but an exception to the rule is conceded). For a learned opinion to the contrary, see that of Story, J., in *Bank v. Dandridge*, *supra*, 12 Wheat. 64, 82; Marshall, C. J., dissents at 113.

⁴ 1896, *Boggs v. Ass'n*, 111 Cal. 354, 43 Pac. 1106 (if no record is kept, the parol proceedings suffice); 1897, *Zalesky v. Ins. Co.*, 102 Ia. 512, 70 N. W. 187, 71 N. W. 433 (similar); 1901, *Green v. Lancaster Co.*, 61 Nehr. 473, 85 N. W. 439 (county board's administrative acts — here, an accord and satisfaction of a claim — need not be by written record) 1892, *Winnepesaukee C. M. Ass. v. Gordon*, 67 N. H. 98, 29 Atl. 412 (religious camp-meeting; acts provable by parol, no charter, rule, or vote to record them being shown); and cases cited in Cook, *Corporations*, § 714.

⁵ 1897, *State v. Main*, 69 Conn. 123, 37 Atl. 80 (destruction of trees having a contagious disease; to show that certain alleged regulations of the State Board of Agriculture had not been adopted, evidence that the record of their adoption had been subsequently interlined was rejected); 1894, *Roland v. District*, 161 Pa. 102, 106, 28 Atl. 995, 1007 (school-directors; the record must be used, if there is one).

paper which constitutes the record,⁶ and the correction of records *nunc pro tunc* by special proceeding.⁷

(3) A *negotiable instrument* is by common-law custom required to be integrated into a single document. The only feature in which this appears to have been left doubtful at common law was the acceptance, which (even though distinguished from a promise to accept) was by some thought to be effective though not contained in the bill; but this anomaly was cured by statute.⁸ The peculiarity of the general rule in its application to negotiable instruments is that it not only requires the essential features of the negotiable obligation to be included, but also requires the exclusion of other terms of the transaction. Hence the peculiar aspect of the rule of voluntary integration when applied to the remaining parts of the transaction, as already examined (*ante*, §§ 2413-2445). Whether, as a matter of theory, those consequences should be deemed to belong under the present head, as due to the element of compulsory integration, may be open to argument.

§ 2452. **Under Statutes:** (1) **Wills**; (2) **Ballots**; (3) **Insurance Policies**.

(1) By the statute of Henry VIII (*post*, § 2454), a *will* of land was required to be in writing, and by the statute of frauds of Charles II a will of personalty was practically (through the restrictions of section 19 on nuncupative wills) required also to be in writing. But under neither of these provisions was any integration required, *i. e.* any reduction of the testamentary acts into a single document. Hence, wills of land, from 1540 to 1678, and wills of personalty, down to 1837 in England, might be contained in several writings, more or less fragmentary and inconsistent, and yet valid as written testamentary utterances taking effect as a single will upon the testator's death. In the practice of the ecclesiastical Courts up to the last moment of this régime might be found frequent instances of the lack of any rule of integration.¹

Nor was the change effected by any express legislative statement. But the formality of attestation, indirectly but practically, produced an equivalent result. By the statute of frauds (in 1678) wills of land, and by the statute of wills (in 1837) all kinds of wills, were required to be executed with the formality of attestation. This formality ousted the earlier loose practices, and in effect compelled testators to place all their testamentary provisions in a single document:

1866, *Wilde, P. J.*, in *Guardhouse v. Blackburn*, L. R. 1 P. & D. 109: "The Wills Act [of 1837, requiring signature and attestation] has worked a great change in the testamen-

⁶ 1876, *Fraser v. Charleston*, 8 S. C. 318, 337 (transfer-book of a corporation is secondary to the share-certificate, in showing the fact of a transfer); 1869, *Iowa & M. R. Co. v. Perkins*, 28 Ia. 281, 283 (corporation subscription-book, not the memoranda containing the actual signatures, treated as the original contract, the officer being the agent to prepare it).

⁷ 1897, *Everett v. Deal*, 148 Ind. 90, 47 N. E. 219 (town board's records).

⁸ Cases cited in *Ames' Cases on Bills and*

Notes, I, 168, 186, notes; 1704, St. 3 & 4 Anne, c. 9, §§ 4, 5; 1821, St. 1 & 2 Geo. IV, c. 78, § 2; 1878, St. 41 & 42 Vict. c. 13, § 1; Crawford, *Negotiable Instruments Law*, §§ 220-233; 1875, *Scudder v. Union Nat'l Bank*, 91 U. S. 406, 410.
¹ 1783, *Blackwood v. Damer*, 3 Phillim. Eccl. 458, note; 1830, *Taylor v. D'Egville*, 3 Hagg. Eccl. 202; 1830, *Bragge v. Dyer*, ib. 207; 1830, *King's Proctor v. Daines*, ib. 218, 231 (showing the looseness of practice then obtaining in the ecclesiastical Court).

tary law, as administered by the ecclesiastical Courts on this head. Under that [prior] law, a testamentary paper needed not to have been signed, provided it was in the testator's writing; and all papers of a testamentary purport, if in his writing, commanded the equal attention of the Court, save so far as one, from its date or form, might be manifestly intended to supersede or revoke another, as a will superseding instructions, or a subsequent will revoking a former."³

Under this requirement, to be sure, the document containing testamentary act need not be a *physically single* and undivided paper; but the physically separate pieces must at least form a single grammatical or literary structure.³ Nevertheless, it remains true in theory that no statute compels the testator to integrate in a single document; if the formality of attestation is observed, he may have any number of documents. The only aspect in which the theory can have any practical consequence is in the difference between a will and a codicil. In effect, a codicil is a document, separate perhaps in existence and time, which is made appurtenant to a will, and goes to modify it and to make up with it one entire testamentary act. A will, on the other hand, is an independent document complete in itself, superseding and integrating all other testamentary acts.⁴ Hence, for example, a document which is strictly a will must be held to revoke by implication all parts of a prior will, though a codicil would revoke only such parts as were inconsistent with it. Possibly, however, this aspect of the distinction may better be explained by denominating each codicil a separate testamentary act, altering or novating the prior act, — as contracts are novated (*ante*, § 2441), and this would leave it practically true in every aspect that the formality of attestation has in effect compelled the integration of testamentary acts.

(2) By statute an electoral *ballot* is now almost universally required to be integrated into a single document; although even under the system of the common law there was seldom any opportunity of casting a written vote in any other way.⁵

(3) By statute in several jurisdictions all parts of a transaction of *insur-*

³ So also in this country: 1895, *Barnewall v. Murrell*, 108 Ala. 366, 18 So. 831 (under modern statutes, "the true inquiry is not as to the completeness of the paper, but as to the finality of the intent and purpose of the testatrix, manifested by the observance of the formalities of execution required by the statute").

⁴ 1801, *Smart v. Prujean*, 6 Ves. Jr. 560, 565 (L. C. Eldon: "The rule of law is that an instrument properly attested, in order to incorporate another instrument not attested, must describe it so as to be a manifestation of what the paper is which is meant to be incorporated, in such a way that the Court can be under no mistake. . . . The true question is, if these papers were found in the bureau with the will, can I say, from the contents of the will, these two papers are the papers referred to?"); 1830, *Dillon v. Harris*, 4 Bligh. n. s. 321, 358 (will devising property to a son so long as he keeps a certain "solemn engagement, . . . which engagement signed by him I have put into the hands of my said trustees"; a certain engage-

ment not admitted, because not sufficiently identified); 1858, *Allen v. Maddock*, 11 Moore P. C. 427; 1881, *Gonid v. Lakes*, L. R. 6 P. D. 1; 1894, *Garnett's Goods*, Prob. 90; 1895, *Barnewall v. Murrell*, 108 Ala. 366, 18 So. 831 ("The validity of the instrument as a will is unaffected because of the fact that it is composed of or written on several separate sheets, if they are connected and coherent in sense and by an adaptation of the several parts"). Compare *Burge v. Hamilton*, 1884, 76 Ga. 568, 619.

⁵ 1799, *Arden, M. R.*, in *Crosbie v. Macdonal*, 4 Ves. Jr. 10 ("There is a great distinction between wills and codicils in this respect. If there are two separate papers, both called wills, inconsistent with each other, it is not the rule to prove both, in the Ecclesiastical Court; the last is the will; from the nature of the instrument it revokes the other. . . . But if it does purport to be coupled with another instrument, it is as much a part of that instrument as if it was written upon the same paper").

⁶ Compare §§ 1967, 2421, *ante*.

ance must be embodied in a single document;⁶ and the construction of this type of statute illustrates neatly the distinction between the doctrine of Integration (*ante*, § 2425) and that of Written Formality (*post*, § 2454); because even written parts of the transaction not embodied in the policy will by this rule be ignored.⁷ It is also to be noted that these statutes go further than any other application of the rule, in that they require a physical, and not merely (as for wills) a grammatical or literary integration.

§ 2453. **Conclusive Certificates, distinguished.** The principle of Integration, by which the document becomes the very embodiment of the transaction, must be distinguished from the principle of Conclusive Testimony (*ante*, §§ 1345-1353), by which a particular person's written report is taken as conclusive and no contrary testimony is allowed to overthrow it. The common result of both principles, though by different reasonings, is that the terms of the writing are decisive. But the practical difference between the two principles appears when the writing itself is lost and cannot be produced; for here, by the former principle, the terms of the writing must nevertheless be proved (*ante*, § 2450) because it is the sole embodiment of the transaction; while by the latter principle the conclusive testimony is merely preferred to others, and therefore when it becomes unavailable the preference ceases, and other testimony may be used (*ante*, § 1346).

There are but few genuine instances, of the principle of conclusive testimony, and these not universally conceded; the chief of these are a *magistrate's report of testimony* at a preliminary examination (*ante*, § 1349), the *enrolled copy of a legislative act* (*ante*, § 1350), and the *election-judges' certificate of votes* (*ante*, § 1351). There are a few other instances (*ante*, § 1352) in which the principle is involved in appearance only; for example, the conclusiveness (in some jurisdictions) of a notary's certificate of a *married woman's voluntary acknowledgment* of a deed at a privy examination is in reality an instance of the binding effect of a judicial proceeding, and depends upon the law of judgments. In all the foregoing cases, the difference between the rule of conclusiveness of testimony and the rule of judicial records is seen in this feature, that the judicial record represents and is in legal theory the transaction itself of the Court, while in the former instances the certificate is the officer's report of somebody else's doing or of some external happening. Obviously, in such instances the theory of integration cannot apply, because the writing of the officer cannot be the embodiment of the act of some other person, but can only be testimony about it. In the case of a deposition, on the other hand (*ante*, § 802), the written deposition signed by the deponent is the embodiment of his testimony, while the caption-certificate is the officer's report of what happened in his presence.

⁶ Mass. St. 1894, c. 522, § 73 (every insurance policy must have the application attached thereto, "and unless so attached the same shall not be considered a part of the policy or received in evidence"); 1897, Joyce, Insurance, I, §§ 186-187, 190 (citing other statutes).

⁷ 1896, *Considine v. Ins. Co.*, 165 Mass. 462, 43 N. E. 201 (both the unattached application and the insured's oral utterances, excluded); 1902, *Albro v. Ins. Co.*, C. C., 119 Fed. 629 (*Considine v. Ins. Co.* followed).

Further to be distinguished are statutory rules of substantive law which, in the guise of rules of conclusive evidence, practically declare certain facts legally immaterial, — for example, the rule that a tax-officer's recitals, in his deed, of the due performance of certain prior proceedings shall be conclusive evidence of these facts (*ante*, § 1353). Such a rule, so far as constitutionally valid, is no rule of evidence, but merely a rule declaring certain facts legally immaterial to avoid or produce a certain result.

C. SOLEMNIZATION OF LEGAL ACTS.

§ 2454. **Writing as a Formality; Statute of Frauds.** When it is required that a transaction, to have legal effect, must be in writing, the requirement is one of *form* or solemnity. The principle of solemnization differs from the two preceding ones in that it does not inquire whether the act was done at all, nor whether it was embodied in a single utterance, but merely whether its form of utterance was sufficient. Stamp, seal, attestation, writing, — all these are different varieties of formality; but the fundamental and most common one, in all modern systems of law, is writing.

That the rule of Written Formality is independent of the rule of Integration, just examined, is plain. For example, a will of land, during the century after it was first required to be in writing (*ante*, § 2452), was in all that time not required to be in a single document. So, too, of insurance applications under modern statutes (*ante*, § 2452). On the other hand, when the parties have reduced their transaction to a single writing, the rule of Integration applies (*ante*, § 2425), although the transaction might have been valid without any writing. Whenever, then, the question is whether a transaction, to be valid, must be in writing, not merely oral, it is a question of Written Formality. This question is presented when the parties have used no writing, and is a distinct one from that which arises after the transaction has been done in writing, *i. e.* from the question of "varying the writing" already dealt with.

What transactions, then, are required by law to be done in writing, as a condition of legal validity? At common law, none, it would seem. The historical surroundings of the common law in its origins were unfavorable to such a requirement (*ante*, § 2426). Even for dealings with land, livery of seisin persisted for centuries as a sufficient formality; and only where livery was impossible, namely, for incorporeal rights, was the requirement of a written deed of grant developed, and even here some sort of symbolic seisin, in the way of attornment or view or the like, was needed to complete the title.¹ Judicial records, another example of the modern necessity of writing, began as the mere recollection of the judge (*ante*, § 2426); and negotiable instruments, the one full and indubitable instance of compulsory writing, were a distinct borrowing from international mercantile custom. In modern times, numerous local statutes have insisted on the formality of writing for

¹ Pollock and Maitland, *History of the English Law*, II, 82, 93, 139.

specific miscellaneous transactions.² Yet it may be said that, in general, apart from statutes, and apart from one special doctrine (*post*, § 2455), no legal act was required to be in writing.³

Even among statutes, there are few of wide scope. These date back to the innovating provisions of the 1500s, by which bargains and sales,⁴ as well as wills,⁵ of land must be in writing. The next and greatest measure of this kind was the statute of frauds and perjuries, in 1678, which extended the formality of writing to the remaining most important transactions in land and to many classes of contracts and of dealings with personalty.⁶ This is

² The following will serve as examples: 1600, *White v. Wilson*, 2 B. & P. 116, 119 (the statute requiring agreements for wages of crews to be in writing, and the articles in this case having noted the wages of the mate at 6l. a month, a further oral agreement that the mate should have the average price of a negro slave sold on the ship's account was excluded, because the statute required writing); 1814, St. 54 Geo. III, c. 144, §§ 3-5 (contracts of marine insurance to be in writing); 1851, *Greeley v. Quimby*, 22 N. H. 335, 338 ("As the law required that the return of the selectmen laying out the road should be in writing, no other proof can be substituted for it, so long as it is in existence and within the power of the party to produce"); 1826, *Fox v. Lambson*, 9 N. J. L. 275, 276 (manmission being required to be done in writing, etc., other evidence of manmission was excluded).

³ 1900, *Johnson v. Griswold*, 177 Mass. 34, 58 N. E. 157 (where no statute controls, an official resignation may be oral); and cases cited *ante*, § 2427. The case of corporate records (*ante*, § 2451) was perhaps an exception.

⁴ 1535, St. 27 H. VIII, c. 16 ("no manors, lands, tenements, or other hereditaments, shall pass, alter, or change from one to another, . . . by reason only of any bargain and sale thereof, except the same bargain and sale be made by writing indented, sealed, and inrolled in one of the king's courts of record . . .").

⁵ 1540, St. 32 H. VIII, c. 1, § 1 (gives liberty to devise all lands "as well by his last will and testament in writing, or otherwise by any act or acts lawfully executed in his life"); 1603, *Molinenx v. Molinenx*, Cro. Jac. 144 ("a will cannot refer to words only, without writing; but it ought to be a will in writing for all").

⁶ 1678, St. 29 Car. II, c. 3, § 1 ("all leases, estates, interests of freehold, or terms of years, or any uncertain interest of, in, to, or out of any messuages, manors, lands, tenements, or hereditaments, made or created by livery and seisin only, or by parol, and not put in writing and signed by the parties so making or creating the same, or their agents thereunto lawfully authorized by writing, shall have the force and effect of leases or estates at will only, and shall not either in law or equity be deemed or taken to have any other or greater force or effect . . ."); § 3 ("no leases, estates, or interests . . . [in land] shall . . . be assigned, granted, or surrendered, unless it be by deed or note in writing, signed by the party so assigning . . ."); § 4 ("no action

shall be brought whereby to charge any executor or administrator upon any special promise to answer damages out of his own estate, or whereby to charge the defendant upon any special promise to answer for the debt, default, or miscarriages of another person, or to charge any person upon any agreement made upon consideration of marriage, or upon any contract of sale of lands, tenements, or hereditaments, or any interest in or concerning them, or upon any agreement that is not to be performed within the space of one year from the making thereof, unless the agreement upon which such action shall be brought, or some memorandum or note thereof, shall be in writing, and signed by the party to be charged therewith, or some other person thereunto by him lawfully authorized"); § 5 ("all devises and bequests of any lands or tenements . . . shall be in writing, and signed by the party so devising the same, or by some other person in his presence and by his express directions, and shall be attested and subscribed in the presence of the said devisor by three or four credible witnesses, or else they shall be utterly void and of none effect"); § 7 ("all declarations or creations of trusts or confidences of any lands, tenements, or hereditaments, shall be manifested and proved by some writing signed by the party . . . , or else they shall be utterly void and of none effect"); § 9 ("all grants and assignments of any trust or confidence shall likewise be in writing signed by the party granting or assigning . . . or else shall likewise be utterly void and of none effect"); § 17 ("no contract for the sale of any goods . . . shall be allowed to be good, except the buyer shall accept part of the goods so sold, and actually receive the same, or give something in earnest to bind the bargain, or in part of payment, or that some note or memorandum in writing of the said bargain be made and signed by the parties to be charged by such contract, or their agents thereunto lawfully authorized"); § 19 ("no nuncupative will shall be good . . . that is not proved by the oaths of three witnesses (at the least) that were present at the making thereof, nor unless it be proved that the testator at the time of pronouncing the same did bid the persons present, or some of them, bear witness that such was his will, or to that effect"); § 20 ("after six months passed from the speaking of the pretended testamentary words, no testimony shall be received to prove any will nuncupative, except the said testimony, or the substance thereof, were committed to writing within six days after the making of the said will").

not the place to follow out in detail the requirements of this statute and those which have adopted its provisions in the United States. But it is necessary here to examine its provisions so far as they bear on the theory of the parol evidence rule, and to discriminate its relation to the principles already considered.

The provisions of the statute fall into two classes, — those of Sections 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9, and those of Sections 4 and 17. (a) The terms of the first group deal plainly with the *formality* of the act. It must be "put in writing," and otherwise it "shall be utterly void." Such a transaction, then, if not in writing, is of no legal effect. The writing is constitutive, not merely evidential. But if it *is* put in writing, according to the statute, is the writing the exclusive memorial of the transaction, — in other words, is there compulsory integration, under the principle already considered (*ante*, §§ 2450-2452)? Not necessarily, — that is, not in consequence of the statute. The requirement of signature, in all those five sections, will tend to induce parties to reduce their transaction in its entirety into a single document, but this is only an indirect consequence of the statute, — as already noticed in the case of wills (*ante*, § 2452). The embodiment in a single writing is voluntary, not compulsory. For example, if the owner of a farm by a single negotiation makes leases and crop-contracts of various parts of it,⁷ the statute would be apparently satisfied by a series of signed letters between the parties.⁸ Furthermore, if the transaction covered matters both within and without the statute, such as a lease of land and a sale of tools, and the former was embodied in a single writing, there is nothing in the statute to render the latter part of the transaction invalid; and if a Court should refuse to give effect to the oral part, it would be solely because of the principle of voluntary integration, leading the Court to believe that by the intent of the parties the document was the sole memorial of the entire transaction.⁹ Thus, so far as the Sections 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9, of the statute are concerned, the question whether the transaction satisfies the statute by being "in writing" is essentially distinct from the further question whether by the other rule (of integration) the transaction has been so embodied in a single document as to exclude other writings or oral utterances which passed in the course of the negotiations.

(b) The terms of the second group — Sections 4 and 17 — differ radically in theory of formality, but their relation to the principle of integration is the same. They differ, in theory of formality, from Sections 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9, because they require only a "note or memorandum in writing" of the "agreement" or "bargain." In other words, the writing *is not* the contract, but is distinct from it and is merely the party's admission that such a contract was

⁷ The case of a transfer of freehold estates would be different, because a sealed deed is there required: Browne, *Statute of Frauds*, 5th ed., § 6.

⁸ This point does not appear to have been decided, so far as the citations in Browne, *ubi supra*, show.

⁹ A good example of this is seen in *Bretto*

v. Levine, 50 Minn. 163, 52 N. W. 525 (1892), cited *ante*, § 2450. Compare also *Lowrey v. Downey*, Ind., *Brockett v. Bartholomew*, Carr *v. Dooley*, *Durkin v. Cobleigh*, Mass., *Harman v. Harman*, U. S., *Long v. Perine*, W. Va., cited *ante*, § 2442.

made. This difference is plain, and is generally conceded,¹⁰ and shows its practical results in various ways. For example, the written admission may be made subsequently to the contract;¹¹ it may even in terms attempt to repudiate the contract;¹² it may be a letter to a third person.¹³ Practically, to be sure, the effect is the same, so far as the necessity of a writing is concerned; for it must mention and cover all the essential terms, if not all the terms whatever, of that part of the transaction covered by the statutory requirement;¹⁴ and these terms so written, of course, cannot be overthrown or varied by other written or oral utterances;¹⁵ so that the parties are in this respect in the same plight practically as under Sections 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9, in spite of the difference of theory. But what of the rule of integration? Is there any difference in that respect? By no means. For example, under Sections 4 and 17, a series of letters or other documents will suffice to satisfy the statute, and yet the terms of the transaction may be scattered through the negotiation and not embodied in a single document.¹⁶ Again, if a transaction includes matters both within and without the statute, the satisfaction of the statute for the former may be made, and then the remainder though not in writing may be enforced.¹⁷ In short, the parties may satisfy the statute without embodying their entire transaction in a single writing, or with embodying the statutory part of it in writing and the remainder orally. Thus the question whether any particular writing is the sole embodiment of their transaction is a distinct one, and depends upon the intent of the parties. Here, then, as under the other Sections of the statute, the principle of integration is found to be independent of the principle of Written Formality.

§ 2455. **Same: Discharge and Alteration of Specialties, etc.** (1) Although writing was in general at common law no necessary formality to any transaction (*ante*, § 2454), yet in one respect it was made necessary by the application of a peculiar doctrine, whose Roman origin and mediæval vogue have been already noticed (*ante*, § 2426), namely, the doctrine that an *act of a higher "nature" cannot be altered or annulled by anything of an "inferior nature."* The result of this was that where the parties had chosen to adopt the "higher" form in their original transaction, a form equally "high" could alone suffice to discharge of it. This notion was seen in the rules that a sealed covenant could not be discharged by a transaction *in pais*,¹ and that an assumpsit was dischargeable by parol, unless broken, and then only by sealed deed,² and in the controversies whether payment before maturity could dis-

¹⁰ *Browne, ubi supra*, §§ 115 a, 135, 136, 344; 1852, *Leroux v. Brown*, 12 C. B. 801, 824 (oral contract made in France, and there valid, not enforced in England, since the 4th section did not make contracts void, but only affected the remedy by requiring a specific kind of evidence); 1893, *Maddison v. Alderson*, L. R. S. App. Cas. 467, 474; 1902, *Vaughan Williams, L. J.*, in *Re Holland*, 2 Ch. 360, 375 ("The statute of frauds does not deal with the validity of the agreement; it deals only with the evidence to prove the agreement"); 1875, *Townsend v. Hargreaves*, 118 Mass. 323, 334.

¹¹ *Browne, ubi supra*, § 352 a.

¹² *Ib.* § 354 a.

¹³ *Ib.* § 354 a.

¹⁴ 1804, *Wain v. Walters*, 5 East 10, 19; 1878, *Grafton v. Cummings*, 99 U. S. 100; *Browne, ubi supra*, §§ 331 ff.

¹⁵ *Browne, ubi supra*, §§ 417, 418.

¹⁶ *Ib.*, § 348. Compare the cases cited in *Ames' Cases on Trusts*, 2d ed., p. 179, note.

¹⁷ *Ib.* §§ 117, 117 a.

¹ 1606, *Blake's Case*, 6 Co. Rep. 43 b.

² 1676, *Milward v. Ingram*, 2 Mod. 43.

charge a bond,³ and whether a parol extension of time to the principal of a bond would discharge the surety.⁴ Most of these questions are now governed by a rational policy irrespective of the scholastic technicality of the traditional maxim.⁵ It is enough here to note the place they hold in the general theory of legal acts.

(2) Under the statute of frauds, a not dissimilar question arises, when a transaction covered by the statute is duly made in writing and then an *oral alteration* is afterwards made. This oral alteration makes a new transaction together with the terms of the original transaction. Yet the result is that the new transaction as a whole is no longer in writing as required by the statute, but is partly oral and partly written; and thus, although the mere alteration is in itself not expressly required to be in writing, yet the transaction as a whole is now unenforceable.⁶

Neither of the foregoing doctrines involves the rule of Integration. By that rule, as already noticed (*ante*, § 2441), the reduction of a transaction to a single document makes it exclusive and controlling for that transaction only, and hence any subsequent transaction of discharge, novation, or alteration may be availed of to vary the original document.⁷ Whatever there is, therefore, to prevent the parties from availing themselves of the subsequent transaction is the result of one of these rules of Written Formality, and not of the rule of Integration.

§ 2456. **Other Formalities than Writing; Signature; Seal; Attestation; Registration; Stamp.** It remains here to note, for the sake of completeness, the remaining formalities receiving the sanction of modern law.¹ These formalities, so far as required, take their place with the rule for writing, in some of the sections of the statute of frauds, as an inherent element of form in the validity of the transaction. Like all other requirements of form, they are arbitrary, in the sense that the act may be sufficient in its terms (for example, to constitute a contract or a release), and may be fully proved by evidence, and yet remains legally ineffective. Nevertheless, they are not arbitrary, to the extent that they rest on a conscious policy of avoiding certain general dangers or abuses, and that they enforce a rigid rule merely for the sake of this policy.

(1) A *signature* is required by the statute of frauds, for all of the transactions in which writing is required; and obviously the signature is a formal requirement over and above that of writing alone.² A signature, however, was not required at common law for a deed.³

³ 1790, *Sturdy v. Armand*, 3 T. R. 599.

⁴ 1821, *Davey v. Prendergass*, 5 B. & Ald. 187.

⁵ Compare the cases cited in Professor Ames' *Cases on Trusts*, 2d ed., p. 128, note, and his article on Specialty Contracts in the *Harvard Law Review*, IX, 49, 55 (1895), and in Professor Williston's article on Discharge of Contracts, in the *Columbia Law Review*, IV, 455 (1904).

⁶ 1833, *Goss v. Lord Nugent*, 5 B. & Ad. 58; 1840, *Marshall v. Lynn*, 6 M. & W. 109, 114;

1895, *Browne*, *Statute of Frauds*, 5th ed., §§ 410 ff.

⁷ *Goss v. Lord Nugent*, quoted *ante*, § 2441.

¹ An interesting exposition of the development of formalism in primitive and modern Germanic law will be found in Hensler, *Institutionen des deutschen Rechts*, I, 68 ff.

² 1895, *Browne*, *Statute of Frauds*, §§ 10, 106, 355.

³ 1698, *Cromwell v. Grunsden*, 2 Salk. 462; 1845, *Parks v. Hazelrigg*, 7 Blackf. 536.

(2) A seal was essential at common law for the chief sorts of documents.⁴ The origin of the significance of the seal, in its relation to the use of writings, has already been noticed (*ante*, § 2426). What the form of a seal should be was long a subject of elaborate discussion.⁵

(3) The attestation of a document was originally not a formality to the validity of the document, but merely a precaution desirable for securing testimony to the transaction (*ante*, § 2426); the noting of the names of the witnesses on the document was thus only a memorandum for future usefulness. But the statute of frauds (*ante*, § 2454) introduced, for wills, the act of attestation as a formality. This formality includes two things, first, the presence of the witnesses at the act of signature by the testator, and, secondly, the signature of the document by the witnesses. The two together thus constitute an intrinsic element in the validity of the document.⁶ It may be noted that whatever questions are thus raised — for example, whether the document must bear a written recital of the witnesses' presence, or whether, if their signatures are borne, the fact of presence may be otherwise established? — do not involve the principle of integration (*ante*, § 2425), but only the principle of formality.

(4) The registration of a document may be made an essential formality of its validity, apart from and additionally to its service as a constructive notice of the document's validity. But this quality is seldom attributed to it unless by express statutory declaration.⁷ Under the modern (or Torrens) system of registration of title, no doubt this is the actual result.⁸ It may be noted that by this modern system the document of title would seem also to furnish one of the rare instances (*ante*, § 2452) of a compulsory integration.

(5) A stamp has by some legislation been made formally necessary to the validity of a document; the policy of such laws being to compel indirectly the payment of a tax. So far as a rule of evidence may be involved, the subject has been elsewhere briefly examined (*ante*, § 2184). It may be here noted that in one respect the rule of integration is affected by the stamp-requirement; for, though a transaction has been embodied in writing, yet the writing if unstamped cannot be given any legal effect, either as superseding the oral transaction or as altering a previous written one, and consequently the party on whom lies the burden of proof of integration (*ante*, § 2447) must fail in the establishment of that part of his case.¹⁰

⁴ Pollock and Maitland, *History of the English Law*, II, 218-222.

⁵ *Eng.*: 1871, *Re Sandilands*, L. R. 6 C. P. 411; 1886, *National Provincial Bank v. Jackson*, L. R. 33 Ch. D. 1; *U. S.*: 1810, *Warren v. Lynch*, 5 John. 239, Kent, C. J. 1851, *Pillow v. Roberts*, 13 How. 472; 1845, *Corrigan v. Trenton D. F. Co.*, 1 Halst. Ch. 52; 1865, *Bates v. R. Co.*, 10 All. 251; and a note in *Gray's Cases on Real Property*, III, 644.

⁶ See *ante*, §§ 1287, 1292, for its relation to the rule of evidence requiring the calling of an attesting witness.

⁷ 1846, *Pollock v. Glassell*, 2 Gratt. 439, 463 (examining the cases upon wills and powers).

⁸ 1835, *Doe v. Ford*, 3 A. & E. 649 (annuity deeds on premises of less than a certain value being by statute void unless registered, the defendant was allowed to plead the non-registration in avoidance, although a covenant in the deed declared the premises to be of a value sufficient to satisfy the statute); *Jones, Real Property*, § 1382.

⁹ See the treatises of Olmstead, Niblack, and Sheldon, and articles in the *Harvard Law Review*, VI, 302, 369, 410; VII, 24.

¹⁰ 1818, *Stevens v. Finney*, 8 Taunt. 327 (*Dallas, J.*: "It turned out to be unstamped, and therefore inadmissible in evidence, and consequently not amounting to an agreement";

D. INTERPRETATION OF LEGAL ACTS.

§ 2458. **General Nature of Interpretation; Standard and Sources of Interpretation.** The process of Interpretation is a part of the procedure of realizing a person's act in the external world. It is, in a sense, the completion of the act; for without it the utterance, whether written or oral, must remain vain words. If a person could be content with proclaiming his contracts at the top of a mountain, or nailing his deeds to the garden gate, he would not need to be concerned with the process of interpretation. But deeds and contracts and wills, if they are not to remain empty manifestations, must be enforced. They must be applied to external objects. Somewhere possession must be yielded, or goods delivered, or money transferred; and in order that the law may enforce these changes in external objects, the relation between the terms of the legal act and certain specific external objects must be determined, as an indispensable part of the process. In short, the interpretation of the terms of a legal act is an essential part of the act considered as capable of legal realization and enforcement.¹ The only difference is that the actor alone creates the terms of his act, while the interpretation of it, being a part of the enforcement, comes into the hands of the law.

The process of interpretation, then, though it is commonly simple and often unobserved, is always present, being inherently indispensable.² The method of it consists in ascertaining the actor's associations or connections between the terms of the act and the various possible objects of the external world. Those terms may be dramatic or verbal. The lantern of Paul Revere, and the twenty-one guns of a warship's salute, are as much the subject of interpretation as the words of a will. In all cases, the process is that of applying the symbol or word to external objects. Since men cannot go forth and instantaneously transform, with the *presto* of a magician, the existing to the desired state of things, they must embody their desire in marks which will serve to point out the effects desired, and then wait for the law, or for some one's voluntary obedience to it, to produce the realization of the effects thus pointed out in advance. The process of interpretation may be compared to a wireless telegraph station. A vessel approaches the coast and

Park, J.: "It was not in fact an existing agreement"; 1829, *Fielder v. Ray*, 6 Bing. 332 (action for work and labor in printing; the defendant offered to show that there was an agreement in writing, but as it was unstamped, it could not be used, and the objection was held to fail). *Contra*: 1827, *Reed v. Deere*, 7 B. & C. 261 (the plaintiff sued on a written agreement to arbitrate; when it appeared that a later agreement had been made, held that the fact that it put an end to the first could be considered, though it was itself not admissible to sue upon because unstamped).

¹ 1789, Answer of the Judges to the House of Lords, 22 How. St. Tr. 301 ("Your lordships ask us, 'whether the sense of the letter be matter of law or matter of fact?' We find a difficulty in separating the sense of the letter from the letter. The paper without the sense is not a letter").

² Such remarks as the following illustrate the occasional perversity on this subject: *Hartford I. M. Co. v. Cambria M. Co.*, 80 Mich. 491, 499, 45 N. W. 351 (1890): "There should be interpretation only when it is needed."

perceives the station-pole standing straight above the cliffs. Until the current can be intercepted, it is but a dumb rod of metal; it sends no message and accomplishes no purpose. It may have any one of various attunements; and it will tell nothing until a similar attunement be established by the vessel. To ascertain that attunement, the particular country where it is fixed must be known, and then the authorized records of its methods and signals must be consulted. Not until then can the station's message be made actual to the vessel.

Such is the process of interpretation. The analogy of the telegraph-station illustrates the important distinction between the two great divisions of the process. The first question must always be, What is the *standard* of interpretation? The second question is, In what *sources* is the tenor of that standard to be ascertained? Sometimes one or the other of these questions may interpose no difficulty; but both must always be settled.

(1) The *standard* of interpretation, as involved in legal acts, is the personality whose utterances are to be interpreted. There are practically four different available standards. First, there is the standard of the normal users of the language of the forum, the *community at large*, represented by the ordinary meaning of words. Next, there is the standard of a *special class of persons* within the community, — the followers of a particular trade or occupation, the members of a particular religious sect, the aliens of a particular tongue, the natives of a particular dialect, who use certain words in a sense common to the entire class, but different from that of the community at large. Thirdly, there is the standard of the *specific parties* cooperating in a *bilateral act*, who may use words in a sense common to themselves and unknown to any others. Finally, there is the standard of an *individual actor*, who may use words in a sense wholly peculiar to himself; and here the question will naturally arise whether he may insist on his individual standard in the interpretation of the words of a contract, or even of a unilateral act such as a will. The first inquiry in interpretation, then, is to determine which of these standards is the proper one for the particular act to be interpreted; and for this purpose certain working rules have to be formulated.

(2) The *sources* for ascertaining the tenor of the standard form the second object of inquiry. Since interpretation consists in ascertaining the associations between the specific terms used and certain external objects, and since these associations must be somehow knowable in order to proceed, the question is where they are to be looked for. So far as the standard of interpretation is solely the normal one of the community, the inquiry is a simple one; the usage of the community (as represented in dictionaries and elsewhere) is the source of information. But that standard (as will be seen) is rarely the exclusive one. The mutual standard of parties to a bilateral act, and for wills the individual standard of the testator, is constantly conceded to control; and it then becomes necessary to search among the prior and subsequent utterances of the party or parties to ascertain their usage, or fixed associations with the terms employed. In resorting to these data, the question then

arises whether there is any prohibitive rule of law which limits the scope of search and forbids the use of certain data. These rules, if any, form the second part of the law of interpretation.

Before proceeding, however, to these two parts of the subject in their order, it is necessary to fix upon a terminology and to avoid misunderstanding in the use of words. When we seek to ascertain the standard and sources of interpretation, and thereby to discover the actor's association of words with external objects, what is the term, in one word, which describes the object of the search? Is it the person's "meaning"? Or is it his "intention"? Over this difference of phraseology has persisted an endless controversy, which, like that of the two knights and the shield at the cross-roads, is after all resolvable mainly into a difference of epithets only.²

§ 2459. Same: "Intention" and "Meaning," distinguished. The distinction between "intention" and "meaning" is vital. The distinction is independent of any question over the relative propriety of these names; for there exist two things, which must be kept apart, yet never can be unless different terms are used. The words "will" and "sense" may be taken as sufficiently indicative of these two things and free from the ambiguity of the other terms.

Will and Sense, then, are distinct. Interpretation as a legal process is concerned with the Sense of the word used, and not with the Will to use that particular word. The contrast is between that Will, or volition to utter,¹ which, as the subjective element of an act, makes a person responsible for a particular utterance as his, and that Sense or meaning which involves the fixed association between the uttered word and some external object. It has already been seen (*ante*, § 2413) that by the general canon of legal acts, the person's actual will or intent to utter a given word can seldom be considered for legal purposes. If he has exercised a volition to utter something, then he is responsible for such utterance as is in external appearance the utterance he intended, — whether or not he actually intended it. On the other hand, the sense of his word as thus uttered — his fixed association between that symbol and some external object — may usually be given full effect, if it can be ascertained. The rules for the two things may be different. The law has thus constantly to emphasize the contrast between the prohibitive rule applicable to the creation of an act (*ante*, § 2413), and the present permissive rule applicable to its interpretation. Judges are desirous, when investigating the sense of the words as uttered by the person, of emphasizing that they do not violate the rule against inquiring whether he

² The word "meaning" has been favored by Mr. Nichols, in his article on Extrinsic Evidence in the Interpretation of Wills (Juridical Society Papers, II, 352), and before him by V. C. Wigram, in his treatise on Extrinsic Evidence in Aid of the Interpretation of Wills (who however often uses the words interchangeably). The word "intention" has been favored by Mr. Hawkins, in his article on Principles of Legal Interpretation (Jurid. Soc. Pap. II, 298, re-

printed in Thayer, Prelim. Treat. on Evidence, App. C.), who declares the opposite usage to involve "a fallacy of no small importance." Mr. Phipson has compared the views of these and other writers in the Law Quarterly Review for July, 1904. Professor Thayer's treatment of the subject is found in his Preliminary Treatise, pp. 412, 480.

¹ Examined *ante*, § 2413.

actually intended to utter those words. Hence the reiteration of the contrast between "intention" and "meaning":

1780, *Kenyon, L. C. J.*, in *Hay v. Coventry*, 3 T. R. 83, 84: "We must collect the meaning of the testator from those words which he has used, and cannot add words which he has not used."

1833, *Parks, J.*, in *Doe v. Gwillim*, 5 B. & Ad. 122, 129: "In expounding a will, the Court is to ascertain, not what the testator actually intended, as contradistinguished from what his words express, but what is the meaning of the words he used."

1833, *Denman, L. C. J.*, in *Rickman v. Carstairs*, 5 B. & Ad. 603: "The question . . . is not what was the intention of the parties, but what is the meaning of the words they have used."

The common terminology of these judicial explanations is unfortunate, because "meaning" has a suggestion of the state of the person's mind as fixed on certain objects, and "intention" bears the same suggestion. The constant exclusion of the state of the person's mind in one aspect, and yet its consideration in another aspect, are thus apparently contradictory and irreconcilable. But the terms "will," or "volition," and "sense," serve to avoid this ambiguity. They emphasize the distinction that the will to utter a specific word is one thing, and the fixed association of that word is another thing. Thus the Creation of the act and its Interpretation as created are kept distinct.

The analogy of other symbols than words will best illustrate how common and fundamental is this difference in other affairs, and how instinctively it is appreciated and applied. Suppose a foreign vessel to be coasting the shore and entering various harbors where the Government maintains a uniform system of harbor-buoys in various colors and shapes, indicating respectively channels, sandbars, sunken rocks, and safe anchorages; here the significance of each kind of buoy is known to be the same in every harbor under Government control. But suppose the vessel to enter a harbor or inlet under the control of an individual or a city having a peculiar and different code of usage for the buoys; here it is immaterial whether a red buoy under the Government system signifies a channel or a sandbar; the vital question for the vessel now is what a red buoy signifies under the code of the local authority, and all other systems of meaning are thrown aside as useless. This illustrates that though, in interpreting a person's (for example, a testator's) words, we are concerned with his individual meaning, as distinguished from the customary sense of words, still we are not dealing with his state of mind as to volition, but with the associations affixed by him to an expressed symbol as indicating to others an external object. That is to say, the local harbor authorities may have "intended" to put a green buoy instead of a red buoy, or to have put the red buoy at another spot; they may have made a "mistake," just as the testator may have intended to use other words; but in both cases the state of mind as to volition, or mistake, is a wholly different thing from the fixed association, according to that individual's standard, between the expressed symbol and some external object. To illustrate

another aspect of the subject, suppose a game of chess to be played by B with his guest A. If the two are of the same nation, their standards of interpretation — for example, as to the character of each chessman, the allowable moves, and the effect of a move — will be the same. But some nations differ from others in one or more of these respects; so that if, for example, B's national rules allowed a rook to threaten diagonally on the board, A as guest would accept and accommodate himself, as best he might, to this standard of operation. But, though this much might be conceded to B as host, in the adoption of his standards for giving meaning to his acts of moving the chessmen, yet it would remain true that his private intent or volition, as distinguished from the significance of his acts of moving, would be immaterial; so that, for example, his intent to have touched and moved a different piece, or to have placed the piece on a different square, would not be taken into consideration. So, again, if A and B engage in a shooting match, with two targets of 100 yards' and 500 yards' distance, it may be that, after the shooting, A and B will discover that they have not agreed which prize is to be associated with which target, or whether the victory at the 500-yard target is to count for more than the victory at the 100-yard target, and they may have to repeat the match after coming to a common understanding. But in no case would A think of claiming that B, who hit the 100-yard bull's-eye, could not win because he was really aiming at the 500-yard target and hit the other by mistake only; nor could A have a second trial, on missing the 500-yard target, because by mistake he shot at the 100-yard target.

A person, then, who wills to utter words is like a man placing a buoy, or moving a chessman, or shooting at a target. His will or intent or volition as to the terms of the particular utterance is one thing; his sense or meaning attached to the terms actually uttered is a different thing. Whatever may be the rules for the former element of his act, the rules for the latter element are independent of them.

1. Standard of Interpretation.

§ 2461. **General Principle; Four Standards.** — **Popular, Local, Mutual, Individual.** The standard of interpretation, which forms the first part of the inquiry (*ante*, § 2458), is the association between words and objects considered with reference to the persons fixing that association. It has already been noted (*ante*, § 2458), that the possible standards fall roughly into four classes, — the standard of the community, or *popular* standard, meaning the common and normal sense of words; the *local* standard, including the special usages of a religious sect, a body of traders, an alien population, or a local dialect; the *mutual* standard, covering those meanings which are peculiar to both or all the parties to a transaction, but shared in common by them; and the *individual* standard of one party to an act, as different from that of the other party or parties, if any. These standards, from the

first-mentioned to the fourth, increase in intension (as the logicians have it), while they decrease in extension. The possible meanings are more and more; for the local and the mutual and the individual standards each add to the one or a few normal meanings; while the number of persons involved in each standard becomes fewer.

The main question is, of course, whether one or more of these standards is exclusive of the others, or whether they are all available at the same time. The answer is, first, that, in general, they are all available coincidentally; and, secondly, that where the transaction involves more than one party, the standard must be common to all.

In the first place, then, *all the standards are provisional only*, and therefore *each may in turn be resorted to* for help. The search is for the sense of a word or phrase as used, and the object is therefore to find the standard actually employed by the party. Now, as a member of the community, he presumably uses words in the normal sense of the community; this standard will therefore be *prima facie* accepted. But if it appears that, as a resident of a special village, he used the sense of that village, then this local standard may be substituted for the other. Still further, if it appears that the parties to a specific contract have a special mutual sense, or that a testator has a special individual sense, the mutual or the individual standard may replace the normal or the local standard. Thus for any particular word or phrase one standard, provisionally applicable, may be finally replaced by another; and for a given document, its various parts may be interpreted by different standards. The single condition is that before the standard *prima facie* applicable can be replaced, *it must be made to appear probable that the party was actually using the other standard*. No one standard, then, is absolute and essential.

In the second place, *no person taking part in a transaction can invoke a standard which is not at least common to all parties*.¹ For example, the contract of a person dealing with a wheat broker and using words in the normal sense cannot be judged by the usage of the wheat trade, unless that standard appears to have been adopted by him as well as by the other party. Or a person issuing a negotiable instrument, and understanding its terms in a mutual sense with the payee, cannot expect to enforce it against a holder for value without notice. So, too, in a purely bilateral transaction, the private sense of one party cannot be imposed upon the other party. The standard, then, must at least be common to all parties to the transaction, and here the nature of the transaction in the substantive law will control.

Before following the application of this general principle, however, it is necessary to dispose of a supposed rule which, if valid, would seriously qualify the first part of the principle above stated; namely, the rule against "disturbing a clear meaning," — in other words, a rule which forbids de-

¹ Compare the theory as stated by Mr. Justice Holmes, in *The Theory of Legal Interpretation*, 12 Harv. L. Rev. 417 ("Each party to a contract has notice that the other will

understand his words according to the usage of the normal speaker of English under the circumstances and therefore cannot complain if his words are taken in that sense").

parting from the normal standard even where it can be proved to have been not the standard actually employed.

§ 2462. Rule against "Disturbing a Clear Meaning," or, Forbidding Explanation except of Ambiguities; History and General Principle. The history of the law of interpretation is the history of a progress from a stiff and superstitious formalism to a flexible rationalism. The marked features of primitive formalism have been already noticed in other aspects (*ante*, § 2405). The word of a man is in itself almost a magic formula. The wrong word produces its evil effects in spite of the good will of the party; without the right word, nothing will move, however plainly he seek to express himself.¹ When the brother of Ali Baba forgot the word "sesame," he was powerless to open the door of safety. This inherent potency of words was primitive minds, as it now is for children, no mere fairy tale, but a reality of life. These notions come down into Coke's time shorn of their first crudeness. But they explain nevertheless the scholastic technicality of those later days. A word was still a fixed symbol. Its meaning was something inherent and objective, not subjective and personal. A man who wrote a document dealt with words as he might deal with a blunderbuss or a carpenter's tool. They had their uses; and he must understand and choose the proper word for the purpose in hand, just as he must take the risk of not handling the gun or the adze in the proper fashion. "*Rerum enim vocabula immutabilia sunt, homines mutabilia,*" sufficiently illustrates the attitude of the times.²

This attitude was of course, from the point of view of intellectual development, bound to change gradually. But progress was retarded, in the English judicial world, by three circumstances (with others) particular to that sphere. One of these was the prejudice (for such it may be termed) in favor of the legal heir, — an instinct naturally strong in a nation whose greatest and most explanatory fact was its dependence upon landed wealth and a system of primogeniture. When a will was to be construed, its effective interpretation was no great matter of concern to the judges, for they would rather than not that its provisions should fail. Until the middle of the 1500s, there was not even liberty to alienate land at all by will;³ and, for long after this period, the will, as an instrument of disinheritance, continued to be judicially disparaged.⁴ Thus in one way, through the lack of a liberal and sympathetic search for testators' meanings, the spirit of rational interpretation was hindered. Another circumstance was the tendency of the judges to keep the construction of writings out of the jury's hands and reserve it for themselves; for, though as a practice this dated far enough back, still it came to be justified consciously, and was thought to be a safeguard against the

¹ Compare the passages in Brunner and Heusler, cited *ante*, §§ 2426, 2456.

² This is from Dig. XXXIII, 10, 7, § 2, *de sup. leg.*; but appears transmogrified by Coke as "*nomina sunt mutabilia, res autem immobiles*" (6 Co. Rep. 65 a).

³ St. 32 H. VIII, quoted *ante*, § 2454.

⁴ 1599, Wild's Case, 6 Co. Rep. 16 b; 1814,

Doe v. Dring, 2 M. & S. 448, 454 (L. C. J. Ellenborough, construing "all my effects" to signify only personalty: "The rule of law is peremptory that the heir shall not be disinherited, unless by plain and cogent inference arising from the words of the will"; though "such a decision may and perhaps will disappoint" the testator's intention).

fate of a deed with the jury, "who might construe or refine upon it at pleasure."⁵ Still a third consideration was the practice and the interests of conveyancers. This branch of the profession had accumulated a store of esoteric learning, which labelled each word and phrase with its traditional meaning. This learning would lose half of its mystery and its value if the rigidity of these terms should disappear. The instinct was to treasure the shibboleths of conveyancing; and the pressure of this body of practitioners against any liberality of interpretation must have been heavy.⁶

At the period of the end of the 1700s, then, there is found in the law a settled tradition, bolstered up in artificial survival by considerations such as the above, that the words of a legal document inherently possess a fixed and unalterable meaning. The law had prescribed it. No man, in a document, could think himself entitled to mean what he pleased. Some of the judicial utterances seem now obstinate enough in their blindness:

1554, *Brook, J.*, in *Throckmerton v. Tracy*, Plowd. 160 (after hearing Saunders lay down three rules for deeds, of which the third was: "The words shall be construed according to the intent of the parties, and not otherwise," he proceeds to repudiate this heresy in the following ingenuous utterance): "The party ought to direct his meaning according to the law, and not the law according to his meaning; for if a man should bend the law to the intent of the party, rather than the intent of the party to the law, this would be the way to introduce barbarousness and ignorance and to destroy all learning and diligence. For if a man was assured that whatever words he made use of, his meaning only should be considered, he would be very careless about the choice of his words, and it would be the source of infinite confusion and uncertainty to explain what was his meaning."

This notion was barely beginning to give way by the end of the 1700s. Interpretation by local usage, for example, to-day the plainest case of legitimate deviation from the normal standard, was still but making its way.⁷ The individual usage of a testator was in the eyes even of Hardwicke and Thurlow, and of course of Kenyon and Eldon (those reactionaries and mainstays

⁵ *Ante*, § 2426; and the following, said in 1736, of parol evidence to construe deeds and wills: "A distinction has been taken between evidence that may be offered (1) to a jury and (2) to inform the conscience of the Court [of equity], namely that in the first case no such evidence should be admitted, because the jury might be inveigled thereby, but that in the second it could do no hurt" (Bacon's *Abridgment*, II, 309).

⁶ 1821, L. C. Eldon, in *Smith v. Doe*, 2 B. & R. 473, 599 ("The greatest men who have sat in Westminster Hall, I am persuaded, in many instances, if matters had been *res integra*, would have pronounced decisions very different from those which they thought proper to adopt, if they had not taken notice of the practice of conveyancers as authority"); Lord Redesdale, *ib.* 612 ("I do conceive it is of the utmost importance that your lordships should guide your judgment by that criterion, whenever it can be applied; for otherwise, my lords, all property must be in hazard").

⁷ 1592, *Wing v. Earle*, Cro. El. 267 ("If one sells land and is obliged that it contain 20 acres, this shall be according to the law, and not according to the custom of the country"); 1692, *Lethulier's Case*, 2 Salk. 443 ("warranted to depart with convoy" must be construed according to the usage among merchants"; but Holt, C. J., was *contra*, for "we take notice of the laws of merchants that are general, not of those that are particular usages"). In 1795, in *Withnell v. Gartman*, 6 T. R. 388, 395, 397, it was argued, though unsuccessfully, that "no usage can be let in to explain a private deed"; but in the same year it was laid down by Lawrence, J., in *St. Cross v. Walden*, 6 T. R. 338, 344, interpreting the term "quarters of wheat," that "when a word is used having a legal meaning, it must be understood to be used in its legal acceptation"; here a bushel was by statute prescribed to contain 8 gallons, but a local measure contained 9 gallons.

of conservatism), heretical enough.⁹ One of the judicial contemporaries of the great Tory Chancellor was strongly of opinion that to seek a testator's actual meaning would be "a very dangerous rule to go by, because it would be to say that the same words should vary in construction."⁹ As late as 1821 the Chief Justice of the Common Pleas conceded frankly that "if not in a majority of wills, yet certainly in a great number, the construction is contrary to the probable intent."¹⁰ And yet to give effect to a more flexible principle was to threaten the "landmarks of property," as the Bar was repeatedly warned.¹¹

But the law of England was merely passing through the same stages as the law of Rome.¹² It was impossible that it could remain perpetually immovable in the old ruts. And so it emerged into the 1800s with a growing spirit of liberality which could not help conceding something, yet was hampered by the stern tradition. It now conceded that the sense of words is not fixed by rules of law; that the extreme of the old rule had disappeared. But it insisted that when the meaning is "plain" — that is, plain by the standard of the community and of the ordinary reader —, no deviation can be permitted. That is, it preserved the old theory to the extent of legally fixing the meaning for the party, however wrongly, unless the wrongness was glaringly plain on the face of the case:

1833-43, *Tindal, C. J.*, in *Attorney-General v. Shore*, 11 Sim. 592, 615: "The general rule I take to be, that where the words of any written instrument are free from ambiguity in themselves, and where external circumstances do not create any doubt or difficulty as to the proper application of those words to claimants under the instrument, or the subject-matter to which the instrument relates, such instrument is always to be construed according to the strict, plain, common meaning of the words themselves; and that, in such case, evidence *dehors* the instrument, for the purpose of explaining it according to the surmised or alleged intention of the parties to the instrument, is utterly inadmissible. If it were otherwise, no lawyer would be safe in advising upon the construction of a written instrument, nor any party in taking under it; for the ablest advice might be controlled, and the clearest title undermined, if, at some future period, parol evidence of the particular meaning which the party affixed to his words, or of his secret intention in making the

⁹ *Ante* 1726, Gilbert, Evidence, 80 ("for the operation and effect of a contract cannot be determined but by the rules of law; . . . and without such stated rules in every society, no man could be certain of any property, for then the sense of the contract must be at the mercy of the judge or jury, who might construe or refine upon it at pleasure"); 1749, L. C. Hardwicke, in *Goodinge v. Goodinge*, 1 Ves. Sr. 231 ("though it has been allowed to ascertain the person or thing, as where two were of the same name, yet not to show that the testator meant to use general words in this or that particular sense"); 1784, L. C. Thurlow, in *Shelburne v. Inchiquin*, 1 Bro. P. C. 338, 342 ("If the words themselves are intelligible, there is no instance where parol evidence has been admitted to explain them into a more vulgar sense. . . . If words have in themselves a positive precise sense, I have no idea of its being possible to change them"); 1793, L. C. J. Kenyon, in *Lane*

v. Stanhope, 6 T. R. 345, 354 ("Where certain words have obtained a precise technical meaning, we ought not to give them a different meaning; that would be, as Lord King and other judges have said, removing landmarks").

¹⁰ *Le Blanc, J.*, in *Doe v. Dring*, 2 M. & S. 448, 455 (1814).

¹¹ *Dallas, C. J.*, in *Pocock v. Lincoln*, 3 B. & B. 27, 46. "On one occasion the counsel asserted that it was the duty of the Court to find out the meaning of the testator. 'My duty, sir, to find out his meaning!' exclaimed Lord Alvanley, 'Suppose the will had contained only these words, "Futum funnidos tantaraboo"; am I to find out the meaning of his gibberish?" (Law and Lawyers, II, 74).

¹² *Le Blanc, J.*, in *Doe v. Lyford*, 4 M. & S. 550, 556 (1816); *Kenyon, L. C. J.*, in *Lane v. Stanhope*, *supra*

¹³ The same . . . very is seen in Dig. XXXIII, 10, 7, 2, *de sup. leg.*

instrument, or of the objects he meant to take benefit under it, might be set up to contradict or vary the plain language of the instrument itself. The true interpretation, however, of every instrument being manifestly that which will make the instrument speak the intention of the party at the time it was made, it has always been considered as an exception, or, perhaps, to speak more precisely, not so much an exception from, as a corollary to, the general rule above stated, that, where any doubt arises upon the true sense and meaning of the words themselves, or any difficulty as to their application under the surrounding circumstances, the sense and meaning of the language may be investigated and ascertained by evidence *dehors* the instrument itself; for both reason and common sense agree, that by no other means can the language of the instrument be made to speak the real mind of the party. Such investigation does, of necessity, take place in the interpretation of instruments written in a foreign language; in the case of ancient instruments where, by the lapse of time and change of manners, the words have acquired, in the present age, a different meaning from that which they bore when originally employed; in cases where terms of art or science occur; in mercantile contracts, which, in many instances, use a peculiar language, employed by those only who are conversant in trade and commerce; and in other instances in which the words, besides their general common meaning, have acquired, by custom or otherwise, a well-known peculiar, idiomatic meaning, in the particular country in which the party using them was dwelling, or in the particular society of which he formed a member, and in which he passed his life. . . . But I conceive the exception to be strictly limited to cases of the description above given, and to evidence of the nature above detailed."

1802, Lord *Chelmsford*, in *Beacon L. & F. Ass. Co.*, 1 Moore P. C. n. s. 73, 98: "In order to construe a term in a written instrument where it is used in a sense differing from its ordinary meaning, evidence is admissible to prove the peculiar sense in which the parties understood the word; but it is not admissible to contradict or vary what is plain."

1871, *Malins, V. C.*, in *Kilvert's Trusts*, L. R. 12 Eq. 183, 186: "There is one rule without exception in construing a will, — which is that wherever a bequest, whether made to a person or a charity, is perfect and unequivocal in all its parts, no parol evidence is admissible to explain it."

1839, *Catron, J.*, in *Bradley v. Steam Packet Co.*, 13 Pet. 89, 105: "To controvert an instrument's construction by oral proof of the objects of the contracting parties and the purposes of the contract would lead to the dangerous result of construing every writing not by its face, not by the language employed, but by matters extrinsic, variant in each case, as human testimony should make it."

1891, *Holmes, J.*, in *Goode v. Riley*, 153 Mass. 585, 28 N. E. 228: "You cannot prove a mere private convention between the two parties to give language a different meaning from its common one. It would open too great risks, if evidence were admissible to show that when they said five hundred feet they agreed it should mean one hundred inches, or that Bunker Hill Monument should signify the Old South Church. An artificial construction cannot be given to plain words by express agreement."¹³

Such is the rule still surviving to us, in many Courts, from the old formalism, namely, the rule that you cannot *disturb a plain meaning*.

As to this position, the answer, of course, must consider both theory and policy. (1) That the *theory* of it is unsound, ought not to be doubted. There can be, in the nature of things, no absoluteness of standard in interpretation. An advanced communism might conceivably bring men to such a level of intellectual uniformity that their thoughts would be expressed in invariably identical symbols. But till that day comes, the varieties of indi-

¹³ The learned justice later repeated his Law Review 417, 420 (The Theory of Legal view, in 1899, in an acute essay, in 12 Harvard Interpretation).

vidual expression and sense must be unquenchable. So long as men are allowed to grant and contract freely, and so long as the law undertakes to carry out those acts by enforcement, just so long must the standard of interpretation continue to be mobile, subjective, and individual. Mr. Justice Brook once thought it "barbarous" that a man should be "assured that whatever words he made use of, his meaning only should be considered." But as the law of to-day has broken with his premise, so it must break with his conclusion. The ordinary standard, or "plain meaning," is simply the meaning of the people who did *not* write the document. The fallacy consists in assuming that there is or ever can be some one real or absolute meaning. In truth, there can be only *some person's* meaning; and that person, whose meaning the law is seeking, is the writer of the document:

1696, *John Locke*, Letter to the Bishop of Worcester (Works, IV, 85): "Your lordship says, 'Peter, James, and John are all true and real men.' Answer: Without donht, *supposing* them to be 'men,' they are true and real men, *i. e.* supposing the name of that species belongs to them. And so three bobaques are all true and real bobaques, supposing the name of that species of animals belongs to them. For I beseech your lordship to consider, whether in your way of arguing, by naming them Peter, James, and John, names familiar to us, as appropriated to individuals of the species 'man,' your lordship does not at first *suppose* them 'men' and then very safely ask, whether they be not all true and real 'men'? But if I should ask your lordship, whether Weweena, Chuckerey, and Cousheda, were true and real men or no? your lordship would not be able to tell me, until I have pointed out to your lordship the individuals called by those names. . . . Your lordship, in your fore-cited words, says, 'here lies the true idea of a person'; and in the foregoing discourse speaks of 'nature,' as if it were some steady, established being, to which one certain precise idea necessarily belongs to make it a true idea: whereas, my lord, in the way of ideas, I begin at the other end, and think that the word 'person' in itself signifies nothing; and so, no idea belonging to it, nothing can be said to be the true idea of it. But as soon as the common use of any language has appropriated it to any idea, then that is the true idea of a 'person,' and so of 'nature.' But because the propriety of language, *i. e.* the precise idea that every word stands for, is not always exactly known, but is often disputed, there is no other way for him that uses a word that is in dispute, but to define what *he* signifies by it; and then the dispute can be no longer verbal, hut must necessarily be about the idea which he tells us he puts it for."

1827, *Jeremy Bentham*, Rationale of Judicial Evidence, h. IX, pt. VI, o. IV (Bowring's ed., vol. VII, p. 556, note): "The refusal to put upon the words used by a man in penning a deed or a will the meaning which it is all the while acknowledged he put upon them himself, is an enormity, an act of barefaced injustice, unknown everywhere hut in English jurisprudence. It is, in fact, making for a man a will that he never made; a practice exactly upon a par (impunity excepted) with forgery. Lawyers putting upon it their own sense? Yes, *their own sense*. But which of all possible senses is *their own sense*? They are as far from agreeing with one another, or each with himself, as with the body of the people. In evident reason and common justice, no one will ought to be taken as a rule for any other: no more than the evidence in one cause is a rule for the evidence to different facts in another cause."

(2) As to the argument of *policy*, the case is somewhat different. There is much to be said for the traditional rule, — though not all that is said is sound. For example, Chief Justice Tindal, in his apprehensions that under any other rule "no lawyer would be safe in advising upon the construction of

a written instrument, nor any party in taking under it,"¹⁴ apparently assumes that under the traditional rule an ideal facility and certainty of interpretation can be had. He retires (in Professor Thayer's words) "into that lawyer's Paradise, where all words have a fixed, precisely ascertained meaning, and where, if the writer has been careful, a lawyer having a document referred to him may sit in his chair, inspect the text, and answer all questions without raising his eyes. Men have dreamed of attaining for their solemn muniments of title such an absolute security." But it is a dream of the impossible; and the dominance of either the old or the new rule will make little practical difference in the certainty of a given instrument. In the very case of *Lady Hewley's Charities*, for which Chief Justice Tindal laid down his rule of exclusion, even the admitted data were so voluminous and complex that the excluded material was comparatively a trifle. The real strength of the argument is rather found in the practical statement of Mr. Justice Holmes¹⁴ that "it would open too great risks [*i. e.* of incredible pretences] if evidence were admissible to show that when they said 'five hundred feet' they agreed that it should mean one hundred inches, or that 'Bunker Hill Monument' should signify the Old South Church." Now the interesting feature of this illustration is that in important instances the very opposite fact is daily and hourly illustrated, — in the private cipher-codes of commercial houses. By these agreements words *are* employed in a sense totally alien, and sometimes exactly opposite, to the ordinary meaning. In one of the printed cable codes now in use, for example, "Innovate" is made to mean "Do this only as a last resort"; and "Invective" is made to mean "We all unite in sending you our heartiest congratulations"! No doubt some brokers who are particularly apprehensive of the interception of their messages are accustomed to agree that "buy" shall mean "do not buy." There are, then, abundant instances in which not only there is no "great risk," but there is an absolute necessity, of accepting proof of these private conventions; and these instances shatter the whole argument for the rule as a rule. The fallacy of the person who declared that "He was open to conviction, but he would like to meet the person who could convince him," is here reversed; for the judicial attitude thus illustrated is that "We are not open to conviction, because we are afraid that somebody will sometimes convince us." The truth is that whatever virtue and strength lies in the argument for the antique rule leads not to a fixed rule of law, but only to a general maxim of prudent discretion. In the felicitous alliteration of that great judge, Lord Justice Bowen, it is "not so much a canon of construction as a counsel of caution."¹⁵ The distinguished Master of the Rolls, Sir George Jessel, once declared to counsel that "nobody could convince him that black [selvedge] was white"; and yet the Court of Appeals reversed his judgment because they were after all convinced of that precise proposition.¹⁶ To say that it

¹⁴ Quoted *supra*.

¹⁵ 1890, *Re Jodrell*, L. R. 44 Ch. D. 590; quoted *infra*.

¹⁶ 1880, *Mitchell v. Henry*, cited *post*, § 2463.

would be difficult to convince him, and upon the evidence to fail to be convinced, would have been a rational attitude. But that is very different from an arbitrary rule declaring *a priori* that the judicial mind is legally not open to conviction.

There is, then, neither in theory nor in policy any basis for an absolute rule declaring that when a word has a "plain meaning," *i. e.* by the popular standard, neither the local nor the mutual nor the individual standard can be substituted. Such a rule is still maintained by many utterances like those above quoted. But its vogue is disappearing. Before examining the state of the decisions on the subject, it is worth while to notice the utterances of judges who have plainly championed the modern and more liberal rule:

1854, *Coleridge, J.*, in *Brown v. Byrne*, 3 E. & B. 708: "Neither, in the construction of a contract among merchants, tradesmen, or others, will the evidence [of a local usage] be excused because the words are in their ordinary meaning unambiguous; for the principle of admission is that words perfectly unambiguous in their ordinary meaning are used by the contractors in a different sense from that. What words more plain than 'a thousand,' 'a week,' 'a day'? Yet the cases are familiar in which 'a thousand' has been held to mean 'twelve hundred,' 'a week' 'a week only during the theatrical season,' 'a day' 'a working day.'"

1860, *Blackburn, J.*, in *Myers v. Sari*, 3 E. & E. 306 (admitting trade usage): "I do not think that it is necessary, in order to render such evidence admissible, that there should be any ambiguity on the face of the phrase which has to be construed. . . . I take to be the true rule of law upon the subject that when it is shown that a term or phrase in a written contract bears a peculiar meaning in the trade or business to which the instrument relates, that meaning is *prima facie* to be attributed to it; unless upon the construction of the whole contract enough appears, either from express words or by necessary implication, to show that the parties did not intend that meaning to prevail. The consequence is that every individual case must be decided on its own grounds."

1890, *Lindley, L. J.*, in *Re Jodrell*, L. R. 44 Ch. D. 590, 609, 614: "I do not propose to deal with decided cases at all. It may be that there were expressions in the documents then before the Court which made the judges come to conclusions which I cannot arrive at when I come to look at the will and codicils with which I have to deal. I do not consider that a decision which is more or less at variance with other cases is wrong because it is so at variance. Cases of construction are useful when they lay down canons or rules of construction, and they are useful when they put an interpretation on common forms — whether in deeds, wills, or mercantile documents. They may be valuable guides; but when I am told that because something occurs in one will I am to give a precisely similar effect to a similar expression occurring in another will dealing with a different property and in another context, I object altogether to do it. The only principle that I know of is that which has been expressed before. Look at the words, avail yourself of such evidence as is legitimately admissible, and see what the testator has said, and expound it as best you can with reference to what is legitimately before you." *Bowen, L. J.*: "It seems to me that the only weight one can give to such language [as the so-called rule against disturbing a clear meaning] is to treat it not so much as a canon of construction as a counsel of caution, to warn you in dealing with such cases not to give way to guesses or mere speculation as to the probabilities of an intention, but to act only on such evidence as can lead a reasonable man to a distinct conclusion. But I protest, that as soon as you see upon the will, read by the light of such extrinsic circumstances as you may survey, what the true construction is, and what the true intention expressed by the testator is, then your journey is performed. You require no more counsellors to assist you; and after once arriving at the journey's end, to pause in giving effect to the true interpretation because,

forth, the language has not been framed according to some measure or standard of correct expression, which is supposed to be imposed by judges out of regard for social or other reasons, appears to me to be using the language of such learned judges, not as laying down canons for construing a will, but as justifications for misconstruing it. As soon as you once arrive at your journey's end, you have no more to do than to give effect to the true construction as you see it." 17

1890, *Doe, C. J.*, in *Tilton v. American Bible Society*, 60 N. H. 377, 382 (dealing with a bequest to "the Bible Society"): "The question is not whether a plea of misnomer of a party is sustained by proof, nor whether there is a variance between the evidence and the name of a third person set forth in pleading. The question is not by what name any Bible society was known to others, but which one of several Bible societies was intended by the testator. . . . Evidence showing what name was given to a Bible society in its charter, what name it used or recognized as its own, and by what name or names it was known to others, tends to prove a name by which the legatee might have been known to the testator, and a name which he might have used in his will to express his intention. But the society intended by him, and identified by competent evidence, is the legatee, by whatever name described in the will, and notwithstanding any other name or names by which it may have been invariably or usually known to others. . . . A person known to a testator as A. B., and to all others as C. D., may take a legacy given to A. B."

§ 2463. **Same: Application of the Rule to Wills, Deeds, Contracts, etc.** The traditional rule is found in application almost side by side with the liberal rule. The former is nowadays perhaps less frequently enforced in England. In the United States it is often invoked under the guise that no peculiar and individual meaning can be shown unless there is an "ambiguity." There are nevertheless abundant instances of the liberal rule's recognition.

(1) In *wills*, the traditional rule has found application chiefly to proper names of places and persons and to such terms as "estate" and "money." 1

17 1902, *Miles v. Wilson*, 1 Ch. 138, 142 (approving the similar language of L. C. Halsbury in *Re Jodrell*).
 1 *England*: 1816, *Doe v. Chichester*, 4 Dow 65, 93 (devise of "my estate of Ashton," Ashton being a parish; the testator had inherited from his mother and his father different properties, that from his mother lying chiefly in Ashton parish and also in others, and that from his father in Youlston; the testimony of his steward and others that the testator "used in speaking of his property which he had derived from his father to call it his Youlston estate, and that in describing the estate derived by him from his mother he used to designate that by the general name of his Ashton estate," and certain accounts tendered to him, entitled "J. Cleave's account for Ashton estate," including properties in other parishes than Ashton, were excluded); 1820, *Cholmondeley v. Clinton*, 2 Jac. & W. 1, 76, 81, 111 (limitation "to the use of the right heirs of S. R. forever"; held to be ambiguous, as applicable equally to right heirs at the time of the remainder created or at the time of its taking effect, and therefore to permit resort to other indications, in the deed or the circumstances, of the grantor's meaning; careful opinion by Plumer, M. R.); 1847, *Reynolds v. Whelan*, 16 L. J. Ch. 434 (bequest to "W. R.,

one of my farming men"; there were two persons named W. R., one an ordinary farming servant, recently employed, the other a man of all work, forty years in the testator's service; K. Bruce, V. C., held that the latter could be accurately described as a "farming man" and took the bequest; otherwise, if he could not be so described); 1854, *Mostyn v. Mostyn*, 5 H. L. C. 154 (there were five children, R. H. M., J. H. M., S. J. M., T. M., and M. M. D.; after bequests to "R. M." and "J. H. M.," there was a bequest over to "S. M., J. M., and M. D., all of them late of Calcott Hall"; held that the name "J. M." could not be applied to the fourth child T. M.; no clear principle stated); *United States*: 1877, *Dunham v. Averill*, 45 Conn. 61 (bequest to the "American and Foreign Bible Society"; there was a society so named and also an American Bible Society; declarations of intent to give to the former, which was called by him by the name in the will, excluded); 1843, *Tucker v. Seaman's Aid Society*, 7 Metc. 188 (bequest to "the Seaman's Aid Society"; in fact there was in Boston a "Seaman's Aid Society" and a "Seaman's Friend Society"; the circumstances that the testator was well acquainted with the latter and was ignorant of the former, and that he had used the term "Seaman's Aid Society"

A special form of it occurs for words having in the law of inheritance a precise meaning, such as "child" or "son." In Coke's day, the rule had been that a devise to a "son" named could be taken by a bastard, if the person had been reputed by that name.² Later, the rule seemed to form that whenever a word of relationship was used, the law's meaning could be overthrown when a different sense clearly appeared from the will and when there were no persons who corresponded exactly to the law's meaning. The individual opinions of Lord Justice Bowen and others have in later times practically repudiated these two qualifications; but the English decisions cannot be said to have fully accepted this result; they must at any rate be viewed as a developing series, and not as a consistent whole.³

on the honest representation of one B., the draftsman, who knew only of the former and who gave its name to the testator on the erroneous supposition that the testator had the former society in mind, were held insufficient to give the bequest to the latter; the Seaman's Friend Society "cannot take, because the name and description are not those by which they have ever acted or been known or designated; and because the Seaman's Aid Society is the one precisely named and described in the will"; this ruling is erroneous, but may be accounted for by the apparent reliance of the Friend Society claimant on the declarations of intention, which were as such clearly inadmissible); 1864, *American Bible Society v. Pratt*, 9 All. 109 (bequest of deposit in the "Dedham Bank"; there existed a Dedham Bank and a Dedham Institution for Savings, the latter commonly known as the Dedham Savings Bank; that the testator had a deposit in the latter, excluded; the ruling markedly illustrates the impropriety of the supposed rule); 1814, *Mann v. Maun*, 1 John. Ch. 231, 236 (bequest of all the rest of the "moneys," held to mean cash only, and not notes, bonds, and mortgages).

² 1607, *Sir Moyle Finch's Case*, 6 Co. Rep. 65a ("If a grant be made to a bastard by the surname of him who, as is supposed, begot him, it is good, if he be known by such name; so if a remainder be limited 'Rich. filio Rich. Marwood,' it is good although he be a bastard, if in vulgar reputation and knowledge he be known by such a name"); 1737, *Rivers' Case*, 1 Atk. 410 (devise to "his two sons Charles and James R.," though illegitimate, they were given the estate; "anything that amounts to a *designatio personae* is sufficient").

³ *England*: 1778, *Green v. Howard*, 1 Bro. C. C. 31 (L. C. Thurlow, refusing to apply a bequest to "my own relations" to include second cousins: "The sense of the words, as fixed by legal authority, is not to be altered by the language held on any occasion by the testator, or by his behavior"); 1800, *Cartwright v. Vaudry*, 5 Ves. 530 (a testator had four daughters; one of them was illegitimate, but at the time this was known to none but himself; L. C. Loughborough declined to include her under a devise to "children," though he had "no doubt of the intention"; the special circumstances made this ruling an outrage on the name of

justice); 1812, *Wilkinson v. Adam*, 1 Ves. & B. 422, 457; 1818, *Beachcroft v. Beachcroft*, 1 Madd. Ch. 430 (good opinion by V. C. Plumer); 1831, *Fraser v. Pigott*, 1 Younge 354; 1836, *Blackwell v. Bull*, 1 Keen 176, 181 (Langdale, M. R.: "The word 'family' is capable of so many applications that if any one particular construction were attributed to it in wills, the intention of testators would be more frequently defeated than carried into effect"); 1870, *Grant v. Grant*, L. R. 5 C. P. 727 (devise to "my nephew, J. G.;" there were two relations of that name, one the son of a brother, the other of a wife's brother, and the term "nephew" was held not to be necessarily restricted to the former class of persons); 1873, *Hill v. Crook*, L. R. 6 E. & I. App. 265, 282 (general principle approved; the gift was here applied to illegitimate children, because the terms of the will were held to describe them as such; the absurdity of the doubt in this case was that the parties had been formally married, but the wife was a deceased wife's sister and the union technically illegal); 1873, *Dorin v. Dorin*, L. R. 7 E. & I. App. 569 (power to a woman to dispose of property "amongst our children"; the testator had two illegitimate children by her, then married her, made this will the day after the marriage, had no other children, and treated these two as his; held, that "children" was to be interpreted as "legitimate children" and could not be applied to the above children; a ruling which shames common sense, and, to the perversity of the English law denying legitimation by subsequent marriage, adds the harshness of preventing the parent from supplying by will the deficiencies of the law); 1878, *Ellis v. Honstonn*, L. R. 10 Ch. D. 236, 240 (Malins, V. C., applied the rule, summing up the authorities; only where no legitimate children appear can illegitimate ones take under the term "children"; as to *Dorin v. Dorin*, *supra*, he admitted that "in common with most persons, it is a result which anybody may regret"); 1887, *Re Horner*, L. R. 37 id. 695 (bequest to "my sister Charlotte, the wife of Thomas Horner," and after her death "amongst her children"; C. was only cohabiting with T. H., as the testator knew; held that "children" signified the illegitimate children of C.; "you are to ascertain the sense in which the testator used the words which you find there"); 1890, *Re Jodrell*, L. R. 44 id. 590

The liberal rule, on the other hand, has been applied even to the extreme of principle, and the results show how practical and just it can be.⁴ Moreover, in its application to words of relationship, it would seem to be the commoner one to-day in the United States.⁵

(bequest to "relatives," held to include "all those the testator had before treated as relatives," whether legitimate or not; "you may put yourself as much as you can into his position, and diving so into the mind of the person who has made the instrument"; quoted *ante*, § 1362); 1894, *Re Fish*, 2 Ch. 83 (gift to his "niece Eliza Waterhouse"; there was no niece E. W., but there was a legitimate and an illegitimate grandniece, each named E. W.; no evidence to show testator's meaning was admitted, and the clause was applied to the legitimate E. W. as the one nearest described; the opinion shows insufficient acquaintance with the precedents and is wholly unavailing); 1902, *Miles v. Wilson*, 1 Ch. 138, 142 (cited *ante*, § 2462). *Canada*: 1849, *Doe v. Taylor*, 1 All. 525, 534 ("my grandson"); *United States*: 1829, *Gardner v. Heyer*, 2 Paige 11 (bequests to the testator's children; he had only illegitimate children; held that, there being no legitimate children, the term could be applied under the circumstances to the illegitimate ones); 1895, *Flora v. Anderson*, 67 Fed. 182, 186 ("issue," not allowed to be interpreted to include illegitimate issue).

⁴ *England*: 1791, *Parsons v. Parsons*, 1 Ves. Jr. 366 (annuity to a brother "Edward P.," and then to his children; at the date of the will, a brother Samuel P. alone survived, with children, but a brother Edward P. had already died without children; since the "testator had been in the habit of calling his brother Samuel by the name of 'Edward' and 'Ned,'" the annuity was given to Samuel); 1801, *Druce v. Denison*, 6 Ves. Jr. 385 (bequest of "my personal estate"; a paper drawn up by him at the time, indicating that he included in that term certain choses in action of his wife, was admitted by L. C. Eldon); 1825, *Doe v. Jersey*, 3 B. & C. 870 (devise of "all that my Briton Ferry estate"; held that these words "denote a property or estate known to the testatrix by the name of her B. F. estate, and not an estate locally situate in a parish or township of B. F.," and that for determining its scope the stewards' accounts, rendered to the testatrix, of the lands therein entered as "B. F. estate" should be considered); 1841-1848, *Blundell v. Gladstone*, 11 Sim. 467; on appeal, 1 H. L. C. 778, 1 Phillips 279 (to "the second son of Edward Weld, of Lulworth"; there was no such person as E. W. of L., but J. W. was in possession of L., and there had been a brother E. W.; J. W. had two sons, E. J. W., commonly called E. W., and T. W.; held, that on the evidence the description should be applied to the second son of J. W. and not the second son of E. J. W.); *Patteson, J.*: "It was contended . . . that where one person, and one only, fully and accurately answers the whole description, the Court is bound to apply the will to that person. Such may be construed to be a general rule of law and of construction, . . . but it has exceptions"; 1844, *Lee v. Pain*,

4 Hare 301, 351 (1. a bequest to "Mrs. and Miss Bowden, of H., widow and daughter of the late Rev. Mr. Bowden"; there were no such persons as ordinarily known; but there were Mrs. Washbourne, formerly Miss Bowden, and her daughter, Miss Washburne, and the testatrix "had been repeatedly known, when speaking of the claimants, to call them by the name of Bowden, and on the mistake being pointed out, she acknowledged it"; the legacy was given to Mrs. and Miss W.; 2. a bequest to "Miss Sarah Jameson, of Clapham Common"; there was a Mrs. S. J. of that place, and also a daughter named Frances Anne J., who after the testatrix's death married Mr. Winter; the testatrix knew both mother and daughter; the legacy was given to the daughter); 1847, *Ryall v. Hannum*, 16 Beav. 536 (bequest to "Elizabeth Abbott, a natural daughter of Elizabeth Abbott, of the parish of G., single woman, and who formerly lived in my service"; this was given to the natural son John of a certain Elizabeth Abbott, who had by marriage another name at the time of the will, on proof that the father of the child was reputed to be the testator's son, that the testator had not heard that it was a daughter, and that he had shown an interest in it); *United States*: 1883, *Smith v. Kimball*, 62 N. H. 606 (bequest to the "Meredith Institution," given to the Kimball Union Academy of Meriden, on proof that the testator's relatives had gone to that school, that he had shown great interest, and that he had said, at the time of execution, that the Meredith Institution was at Meriden; see the quotation *ante*, § 2462); 1820, *Thomas v. Stevens*, 4 John. Ch. 607 (bequest to "Cornelia Thompson" given to "Caroline Thomas," on proof that the claimant was a favorite of the testatrix, and "was the person intended," and that no person named Cornelia Thompson had made claim); 1790, *Powell v. Biddle*, 3 Dall. 70 (bequest to a friend "Samuel Powell (son of Samuel Powell, of the city of Philadelphia, carpenter"); on proof that a person named William Powell was the son of the testator's deceased daughter by one Samuel Powell a carpenter, that he was well known to the testator, and that "the testator usually, by mistake or by way of nickname, called him Samuel," the bequest was given to William, though the same carpenter had also a son named Samuel, the son of a second wife and not acquainted with the testator).

⁵ 1902, *Kohl v. Frederick*, 115 Ia. 517, 88 N. W. 1055 ("inherit," shown to be used in a non-legal sense); 1891, *Robb's Estate*, 37 S. C. 19, 28, 39, 16 S. E. 241 (devise to "such persons as shall be entitled under the law"; illegitimacy prevented the inheritance by certain related persons; declarations of the testator, speaking of sisters and nieces, received, as showing his usage of the terms in the will).

(2) In *deeds* and *contracts*, the traditional rule finds constant and dominant application in excluding the mutual standard, *i. e.* the agreement of the *parties themselves* upon a special sense for their words.⁶ It has been sometimes, in early cases, allowed to exclude even the local standard, *i. e.* the *usage of a trade or locality*.⁷

The liberal rule, on the other hand, is to-day conceded, practically everywhere, to permit resort in any case to the *usage of a trade or locality*, no matter how plain the apparent sense of the word to the ordinary reader; and

⁶ *England*: 1827, *Taylor v. Briggs*, 2 C. & P. 525 (the question being whether "cotton in bales" meant an ordinary bag or a cubical compass, the local usage was admitted, but not "what was said at the time" between the parties; *Abbott, C. J.*: "That sort of evidence is of too dangerous a nature to be relied on"); 1847, *Caine v. Horsfall*, 2 C. & K. 349 (contract between a merchant and a captain in the African trade to pay the latter "8 per cent on the net proceeds of the homeward cargo"; the plaintiff claiming that the defendant should not deduct bad debts in reckoning net proceeds, *Rolfe, B.*, ruled that "evidence might be admissible to prove their meaning, not in this particular contract, but in all mercantile dealings or to show that they have a different meaning when used in the African trade"); *Canada*: 1893, *Troop v. Union Ins. Co.*, 32 N. Br. 135, 140 (marine policy); *United States*: 1895, *Balfour v. Fresno C. & I. Co.*, 109 Cal. 231, 41 Pac. 876 (general principle applied to a contract); 1900, *Adams v. Turner*, 73 Conn. 38, 48 Atl. 247 ("new and useful improvements," in a patent contract, not allowed to be shown by mutual understanding to include later inventions); 1897, *Harrison v. Tate*, 100 Ga. 383, 28 S. E. 237 (notes for title to land; the parties' construction excluded, because no ambiguity appeared); 1901, *Ralya v. Atkins*, 137 Ind. 331, 61 N. E. 726 (contract for the sale of a patent; collecting the authorities; the parties' construction is admissible if the terms are ambiguous); 1893, *Hamill v. Woods*, 94 Ia. 248, 62 N. W. 735 ("When the language of a guarantee is not so clear as to indicate its meaning conclusively, parol evidence is admissible to show the circumstances . . . to the end that the intent of the parties to it may prevail"; collecting the authorities); 1891, *Goode v. Riley*, 153 Mass. 585, 28 N. E. 228 (quoted *ante*, § 2462); 1893, *Reynolds v. Boston Rubber Co.*, 160 id. 240, 245, 35 N. E. 877 ("When the description of granted premises is clear, extrinsic evidence is not admissible to control it; but when it is uncertain, such evidence may be resorted to, and the acts of adjoining owners showing a practical construction adopted and acted upon are of great weight"); 1899, *Violette v. Rice*, 173 id. 82, 53 N. E. 144 (evidence of a particular sense of words by particular parties, not admitted, to determine the sense of the word "services" in a theatrical contract); 1900, *Menage v. Rosenthal*, 175 id. 358, 56 N. E. 579 (parties' conduct or admissions, receivable only when the meaning of the contract is doubtful); 1890, *Hartford I. M. Co. v. Cambria M. Co.*, 80 Mich. 491, 45

N. W. 351 (mining location involving the "east half" and "west half" of a lot; "the circumstances of the case held not to alter the regular meaning of "half" from its signification of quantity merely, there being "no possible ambiguity about these descriptions"); 1897, *Brown v. Schiappacasse*, 115 id. 47, 72 N. W. 1096 (lease with license; circumstances not received to show that the lease was incidental only to the license); 1895, *Armstrong v. Granite Co.*, 147 N. Y. 495, 42 N. E. 186 (that the parties used the term "minerals and ores" in a limited sense, not admitted, except for the purpose of reforming the instrument); 1902, *Uihlein v. Matthews*, 172 id. 154, 64 N. E. 792 (intention of the parties to a quit-claim deed not to release a party-wall restriction established by a prior deed, not allowed to be shown; *Bartlett, J. diss.*); 1900, *Abraham v. R. Co.*, 37 Or. 495, 60 Pac. 899 (conveyance "for all legitimate railroad purposes"; parties' understanding that this included the purpose of a hotel or eating-house, excused); 1898, *First National Bank of Nashville v. R. Co.*, — Tenn. —, 46 S. W. 312 (promise to use bonds to pay "for the floating debt secured by pledge of income bonds"; that the promisor used these words as applying to certain holders of the debt, excluding others, not admitted); 1897, *Barber v. R. Co.*, 164 U. S. 83, 17 Sup. 468 (circumstances may be consulted "to explain ambiguities of description," but not "to control the construction or extent of devices therein"); 1902, *Dennis v. Slyfield*, 54 C. C. A. 520, 117 Fed. 474 (an option to ship "any or all of this lumber," not allowed to be made an obligation to ship all of it, by the parties' understanding); 1903, *Ocean S. S. Co. v. Aetna Ins. Co.*, 121 Fed. 862 (applied to marine insurance contracts); 1896, *Owen v. Henderson*, 16 Wash. 39, 47 Pac. 215 (the "west half" of a lot; a special alignment, as shown by former transactions of the parties, excused). Compare the cases cited *post*, § 2465.

⁷ 1856, *Sigworth v. McIntyre*, 18 Ill. 126, 129; 1834, *Allen v. Kingsbury*, 18 Pick. 238 (deed calling for a boundary "to an oak-tree marked, thence on the heirs of J. K. to another oak-tree marked"; the commissioners' practice to follow a curved line conforming to the contour of the land and marked by monuments, excused; "evidence of usage is never to be received to overturn the clear words of a deed"; 1807, *Winthrop v. Ins. Co.*, 2 Wash. C. C. 7, 10 ("usage can only be resorted to where the law is doubtful and unsettled"); and the early English cases cited *ante*, § 2462.

some of the extreme instances are persuasive to demonstrate the fallacy of ignoring the purely relative meaning of words and the injustice of attempting to enforce a supposed rigid standard.⁹ Furthermore, the notion, so frequently observed in the interpretation of wills, that the ordinary legal definition of a word cannot be superseded, is seldom insisted upon in the face of commercial usage.⁹ Yet the liberal rule is seldom so far conceded as to allow the parties' special mutual sense to be considered;¹⁰ perhaps the

⁹ *England*: 1832, *Smith v. Wilson*, 3 B. & Ad. 728 (covenant is a lease of a rabbit warren, "that at the expiration of the term they the plaintiffs would leave on the warren 10,000 rabbits or conies, the defendant paying 60/ per thousand for the same, and for any more than that number at that rate, the number to be estimated by two indifferent persons"; breach, that the plaintiff left 19,300 rabbits, but the defendant would not pay for them; it appeared that the appraiser's estimate was 1600 dozen, and the defendant was allowed to prove that by the customary meaning of the locality, "the term 'thousand,' as applied to rabbits, meant '100 dozen'"); 1836, *Bold v. Rayner*, 1 M. & W. 346 (sale of goods on shipboard; the sale notes interchanged by the parties read, the one "from the Speedy or Charlotte," the other "ex Speedy and Charlotte"; the Speedy was lost, but the Charlotte arrived; a usage that, where two vessels are named, the goods may be delivered from either at seller's option was admitted; counsel objected that by the said note both must arrive; Parke, B.: "Yes, if you read it strictly and; but the evidence was that custom reads it or"; L. C. B. Abinger: "The Court must look at each contract, and say whether in its whole spirit and meaning and did not mean or in the understanding of the parties"); 1846, *Grant v. Maddox*, 15 Id. 737 (theatrical engagement for "three years at a salary of 5, 6, and 7 pounds per week in those years respectively"; the professional usage that "actors were never paid during the time of vacation," admitted as interpreting the term "years"); 1860, *Myers v. Sari*, 3 E. & E. 306 (building contract, providing for a "weekly account of the work done"; trade usage admitted to show that "weekly account" was restricted to a particular part of the work, even though "the words have a plain general meaning"; quoted *ante*, § 2462); 1880, *Mitchell v. Henry*, L. R. 15 Ch. D. 181, 24 Sol. J. 690 (trademark infringement; the plaintiff's registered description named a worsted having a "white selvage"; part of the warp being a "dark gray or black mohair," the goods had a dark appearance, and Jessel, M. R., declaring "that is a black selvage and not a white selvage," and that "no amount of evidence would convince him that black was white," declined to give effect to the plaintiff's testimony that the plaintiff's selvage "was what was perfectly well known in the trade as a white selvage"; on appeal, this was reversed, on the ground that "the question is not whether the selvage is white, but whether it is what the trade know as a white selvage"); *United States*: 1895, *Leavitt v. Keunicott*, 157 Ill. 235, 41 N. E. 737 (a theatrical contract employing "at a weekly salary of \$40 per week"; usage admitted to show that "per week" signified the weeks of the theatrical season only, not of the calendar year); 1898, *McChesney v. Chicago*, 173 Id. 75, 50 N. E. 191 ("Sec. 23, 36, 14," interpreted by usage to mean "range 36, township 14"); 1896, *Coniter Mfg. Co. v. Grocery Co.*, 97 Ia. 616, 66 N. W. 875 ("prices guaranteed against market price to date of shipment"; usage admitted, even though the words were not apparently obscure or technical); 1896, *Brody v. Chittenden*, 108 Id. 524, 76 N. W. 1009 (whether certain jewelers' tools etc., were included under a mortgage of "furniture"; usage of the trade allowed); 1666, *Com. v. Hobbs*, 140 Mass. 443, 5 N. E. 158 ("The fact that the white arsenic was colored with lamp-black was immaterial; it still remained the substance known as white arsenic, though no longer white in appearance"); 1697, *Brown v. Doyle*, 69 Minn. 543, 72 N. W. 614 (warranty of a horse as "sure foal-getter"; evidence of the usual percentage of foal-getting from "sure foal-getters," received; here, 60 per cent); 1691, *Farnam v. R. Co.*, 66 N. H. 569, 29 Atl. 541 (authority for "noiseless steam motor"; technical application of that term to motors not operating without certain noise, held admissible); 1843, *Hinton v. Locke*, 5 Hill N. Y. 437 (contract to pay 12s. per day for labor; trade usage admitted to show that "day" signified "ten hours"); 1691, *Reed v. Tacoma Ass'n*, 2 Wash. 198, 26 Pac. 322 (deed running a line "west"; the custom of the government surveyors, who had surveyed this land, to run lines not due west, but a little north of west, was admitted to show the meaning of "west").

¹⁰ 1668, *Thorington v. Smith*, 6 Wall. 1 (a contract to pay in "dollars" may be construed on the facts to mean dollars of the unlawful Confederate Government); 1898, *Higgins v. Cal. P. & A. Co.*, 120 Cal. 629, 52 Pac. 1080 (a contract to pay "fifty cents per ton for each and every gross ton" of asphaltum, etc., the statute providing that "twenty hundred weight constitute a ton," the trial Court found that the parties used "gross ton" as meaning 2240 pounds; good opinion by Temple, J.).

For examples of the earlier contrary rule in the 1700s, see *ante*, § 2462.

¹¹ 1790, *Calverley v. Williams*, 1 Ves. Sr. 210 (auction sale of "the lands in the possession of Groombridge"; the buyer, having taken the seller's schedule and tallied the land described in it, completed the purchase; but it was then discovered that seven acres more were in fact "in the possession of G."; held, that "the understanding of these parties applied to the lands

only settled instances are those of a secret cipher,¹¹ and of the designation of a party to a deed by a surname misused or misspelled according to the ordinary standard.¹² The reason for this hesitation is twofold, and is appreciable enough. In the first place, the existence of a special trade usage is much more credible and more definitely provable than a special usage of the parties to a specific transaction; the use of a regular cipher-code is almost the only instance of a tangible usage of the latter sort. In the second place, the parties' mutual "understanding" as to the sense of particular words or phrases is perilously akin to an "understanding" that certain terms not written shall prevail in place of the written terms, and this would be plainly a violation of the rule, already considered (*ante*, §§ 2430, 2442), against "varying the terms of the writing." Hence a judicial tendency to confuse the two rules. But neither of these is a sufficient reason for erroneously stating the present principle (*ante*, § 2462). Rather let the principle be acknowledged that the sense to be enforced is the special sense, if any, which the parties have fixed upon; but let there be the most convincing proof that they have distinctly and mutually so agreed, and let this process of interpreting their actual words not be made a cloak for evading the other rule against substituting their extrinsic for their written terms.

It may be added that the same considerations often apply to interpretation by the special usage of a *trade* or *locality*. So far as this usage merely interprets a particular word or phrase existing in the document, the present principle permits this (as indicated above). But so far as the usage endeavors to intrude into the document, or set up in rivalry with it, additional terms, it may violate the other rule against varying the written terms (*ante*, § 2440). The precedents, therefore, under that and the present rule are sometimes hard to distinguish.

§ 2464. **Usage of Trade or Locality, when to apply.** The usage of a trade or locality or sect or dialect being always eligible to supersede the ordinary or popular sense of words (*ante*, § 2463), it remains merely a question for the par-

specifically described" in the schedule, and that the buyer therefore was not entitled to the seven acres). Cases *contra* are cited *supra*, note 6.

For instances where the parties' understanding is allowed, there being an "ambiguity," see *post*, § 2465.

¹¹ N. Br. St. 1881, c. 14, § 3 (a telegraphic word or term agreed upon "as meaning between them some other word" etc., or as having "any other than the ordinary or apparent meaning," shall be taken "to be the word" etc. so agreed); 1899, Penn Tobacco Co. v. Lemay, 109 Ga. 428, 434 S. E. 679 ("O. K." in a contract, allowed to be explained, because the parties agreed "these letters should have definite meaning as between themselves"); 1902, Powers v. Com., — Ky. —, 70 S. W. 644 (military officer's telegram, "all right," allowed to be shown by him to have a special meaning according to a secret code previously agreed upon).

¹² 1896, Hicks v. Ivey, 99 Ga. 648, 26 S. E.

68 (a grant to "Pulling"; deed from "Pullen"; the identity of persons allowed to be shown); 1895, De Cordova v. Korte, 7 N. M. 678, 41 Pac. 526 (that the grantee's name in a deed, being "H. K.," was used to indicate a partnership doing business under that name, allowed to be shown); 1815, Jackson v. Hart, 12 John. 77, 84 (a State land patent being in issue, "parol evidence would be admissible to prove that 'George Houseman' and 'George Hosmer' are the same person; but certainly it is not explaining a latent ambiguity to prove that a grant to 'George Houseman,' a real person, was intended for another person of the name of 'George Hosmer'"); 1893, Marmet Co. v. Archibald, 37 W. Va. 778, 788, 17 S. E. 299 (corporation contracting by an assumed name); and additional instances cited *post*, § 2529 (presumption of identity of person from identity of name).

Compare the doctrine as to a *bill* or *note* in a fictitious or wrong name: cases cited in Ames' Cases on Bills and Notes, I, 347, note; ib. 428, note.

ticular case whether the parties have in fact spoken according to that standard. Where all the parties are members of the same trade or other circle of persons, little difficulty can arise; the only requirement is that the special sense alleged should be in fact a usage, or settled habit of expression, and not merely the expression of a few persons or of casual occasions.¹ But when one of the parties is not a member of the trade or other circle, his acceptance of the standard must be made to appear. For this purpose, his *actual knowledge* of the particular sense as applicable to the transaction would suffice; otherwise it must appear to be so generally known in the community that his actual individual knowledge of it may be inferred.² The application of the general principle will then be a mere question of the probabilities of meaning for each case.³ Where the usage is not that of a trade, but of a *locality*, the form of it may be common reputation⁴ or commonly-used documents.⁵ When *initials* or other abbreviations are to be interpreted, the local usage or repute is of course receivable,⁶ even for electoral ballots;⁷ though

¹ For the mode of proving usage, see note 9, *infra*.

² 1863, *Russian Steam-Nav. T. Co. v. Silva*, 13 C. B. n. s. 610, 617 ("where the performance has reference to a particular trade, [it] necessarily involves an obligation on the party to make himself acquainted by due inquiry with the usages of that trade"); 1881, *Holt v. Collyer*, L. R. 16 Ch. D. 718, 721 ("beerhouse" as used in an ordinary lease, not interpreted by trade meaning); 1896, *Wheelwright v. Dyal*, 99 Ga. 247, 25 S. E. 170 (lumber trade usage held not broad enough); 1872, *Howard v. Ins. Co.* 109 Mass. 385 (warranty in a New York policy not to load above a certain quantity of "coal" at Cardiff; certain "patent fuel" having been so loaded, held that the usage not to include it under the term "coal" must be "known beyond Cardiff, and known so generally that the parties may fairly be presumed to have made their contract in view of its existence"); 1896, *Eaton v. Gladwell*, 108 Mich. 678, 66 N. W. 596 (excluding a custom among carpenters not so general as to be probably known to the opponent); 1872, *Walls v. Bailey*, 49 N. Y. 463, 473 (collecting the cases); 1895, *Armstrong v. Granite Co.*, 147 Id. 495, 42 N. E. 186 (excluding usage as to the meaning of "minerals" "about there," i. e. in the C. valley, as not a settled one for the region); 1895, *Rickerson v. Ins. Co.*, 149 Id. 307, 43 N. E. 856 (insurance of premises "No. 160 Mott St." containing two buildings; custom to describe a rear building specifically when intended, rejected); 1864, *Lowe v. Lebrman*, 15 Oh. St. 179, 185 (good opinion by Welch, J.); 1899, *Shores Lumber Co. v. Stitt*, 102 Wis. 450, 78 N. W. 563 (actual knowledge is not necessary).

³ The following rulings will illustrate the application: 1811, *Uhde v. Walters*, 2 Camp. 16 (policy of insurance to any port "in the Baltic"; evidence admitted of the nautical and mercantile understanding to include the Gulf of Finland in the Baltic, though geographers name them as distinct); 1836, *Clayton v. Gregson*, 5 A. & E. 302 ("level" in a mining contract); 1903, *Rastetter v. Reynolds*, 160 Ind. 133, 66

N. E. 612 (contract for elm strips of specified dimensions; a usage to determine measurements at the time of sawing, held binding); 1900, *Wood v. Allen*, 111 Ia. 97, 82 N. W. 451 ("dry goods"); 1857, *Ford v. Tirrell*, 9 Gray 401 (contract to build a stone wall at 11 cents a foot; to determine whether the inner or the outer face should be taken as the basis, usage was considered); 1896, *St. Paul & M. Trust Co. v. Harrison*, 64 Minn. 300, 66 N. W. 980 ("breeder" in a stallion-warranty); 1898, *Cambers v. Lowry*, 21 Mont. 478, 54 Pac. 816 (mining usage employed to interpret a lease); 1899, *Halsey v. Adams*, 63 N. J. L. 330, 43 Atl. 708 (trade meaning of "rednce" in an insurance contract); 1872, *Walls v. Bailey*, 49 N. Y. 463, 468 (contract for plastering at a price "per square yard"; local usage admitted to determine whether "yard" included space actually plastered or total superficial area of walls including windows and doors); 1864, *Lowe v. Lehman*, 15 Oh. St. 179, 184 (contract to furnish brick at \$6.25 "per thousand"; whether this signified the number furnished or used or the like, allowed to be shown by trade usage); 1870, *Hearn v. Ins. Co.*, 3 Cliff. 318 ("at and from the port," in a marine insurance policy).

⁴ 1895, *Sullivan v. Collins*, 20 Colo. 528, 39 Pac. 334 (the fact that certain property described in a tax list was well known by that description and in common understanding applied to specific property, admitted).

⁵ 1894, *Haulon v. R. Co.*, 40 Nebr. 52, 58, 58 N. W. 590 (maps in accepted use by community at time of deed, received to interpret an uncertain line).

⁶ 1897, *Smith v. Brackett*, 69 Conn. 492, 38 Atl. 57 (insolvency docket); 1898, *State v. Howard*, 91 Me. 396, 40 Atl. 65 (record of taxpayers; "R. D. M. L.," etc., explainable by interpretation); 1897, *Maurin v. Lyon*, 69 Minn. 257, 72 N. W. 72 (technical abbreviations of the wheat trade); 1898, *State v. White*, 70 Vt. 225, 39 Atl. 1085 (record of tax-payers; "R. L. D." and "\$25," interpreted by usage of office).

⁷ 1879, *Clark v. Board*, 126 Mass. 282, 286 (the application of ballot-names, by interpreta-

here the real doubt, if any, apparently involves the question whether in point of form (*ante*, § 2454) the terms of the vote or other act have been sufficiently embodied in writing.

Whether a usage, instead of interpreting the document's words, introduces additional terms into the transaction and thereby violates the rule against *varying a written transaction*, is a different question (*ante*, § 2440), as also the question of *implied contract* whether a usage has been so adopted as to form a term of the transaction.⁸ So, too, the question must be distinguished whether and when *expert opinion* may be availed of to prove the technical meaning of a word (*ante*, § 1955).⁹

§ 2465. **Parties' Mutual Understanding; Identifying a Description.** There is no reason, in the nature of things, why the individual parties to a transaction may not employ words in a particular sense, irrespective of the ordinary or popular sense; because what we are seeking, in interpretation, is their actual standard, and the popular standard is merely taken provisionally, as presumably theirs (*ante*, § 2461). It can thus be, in theory, only a question of fact in each case whether the parties *were* using a special mutual sense. But in practice two rules intervene to obstruct the simple application of this principle. One is the rule against varying the terms of a contract by setting up other terms in competition with it (*ante*, §§ 2430, 2442). This rule makes it often difficult to accept the parties' understanding as a source of interpreting the written words without virtually substituting extrinsic terms.¹ The other is the supposed rule against disturbing a "plain meaning" by any other meaning, or, as sometimes phrased, against using extrinsic evidence unless the terms are ambiguous. This rule, as affecting the present sort of data, has already been considered (*ante*, § 2363); and its policy, though unsound, is often deemed controlling. But, assuming these two rules to be not obstructive in a particular case, the general principle has full sway:

tion, to particular persons, as when the initial only is thereon marked, may be made by the proper tribunal, but not by a board of ministerial election officers); 1868, *People v. Cicott*, 16 Mich. 283, 308, 309, 317 (*contra*, on the first point; but *Christiancy, J.*, and *Cooley, C. J.*, approve the orthodox rule; "it has the merit of harmonizing with the rules applied to other written instruments, which I think is no slight recommendation; it is always objectionable and mischievous to lay down different rules for classes of cases which all come within the same reasons"). Compare the application of the Opinion rule, *ante*, § 1967.

⁸ The following ruling illustrates the distinction: 1892, *Richmond & D. R. Co. v. Hissong*, 97 Ala. 187, 190, 13 So. 209 (custom of brakemen in coupling, as varying from a rule of contract; not available unless acted on by both so as to alter the contract).

⁹ For other rules as to the *mode of evidencing a usage*, see *ante*, §§ 379, 1954 (number and kind of instances) and § 2053 (number of witnesses).

¹ The following rulings illustrate the dis-

inction: 1840, *Doe v. Webster*, 4 Perry & D. 270, 274 (deed of land "with the appurtenances"; a certain lot was an appurtenance, but the original offer of sale had expressly excepted it; the purchaser's admissions, after the sale, that he had not bought it were excluded; "this evidence went to contradict the deed, not to apply the words of it to any particular thing"); 1872, *McCormick v. Huse*, 66 Ill. 319; 1876, *Black v. Bachelder*, 120 Mass. 171 (advertising contract, "payable as convenient"; an understanding that this signified "payable after sales made through the circulation of the advertisement," excluded, as a "construction of the contract in direct violation of its terms"); 1903, *Trustees v. Jessup*, 173 N. Y., 84, 65 N. E. 949 (contract to make "a roadway"; "the parties' understanding that the roadway should be of wooden plers, not a solid embankment, excluded).

Similarly, the parties' understanding cannot avail to evade the effect of an obligation in point of law: 1843, *Brockett v. Bartholomew*, 6 Metc. 396 (whether certain payments were applicable only to the rent of premises).

1868, *Wells, J.*, in *Stoops v. Smith*, 100 Mass. 63 (the defendant having agreed to pay the plaintiff "for inserting business card in 200 copies of his advertising chart," the defendant, refusing to pay, offered to show that the chart, as understood between them, meant a chart of cloth, to be posted up in two hundred public places near Worcester, and that no chart had been so made and posted): "The purpose of all such evidence is, to ascertain in what sense the parties themselves used the ambiguous terms in the writing which sets forth their contract. If the previous negotiations make it manifest in what sense they understood and used those terms, they furnish the best definition to be applied in the interpretation of the contract itself. The effect must be limited to definition of the terms used, and identification of the subject-matter. If so limited, it makes no difference that the language of the negotiations relates to the future, and consists in positive engagements on the part of the other party to the contract. Their effect depends, not upon their promissory obligation, but upon the aid they afford in the interpretation of the contract in suit. They are not the less effective for the purposes of explanation and definition because they purport to carry the force of obligation. The contract in suit may illustrate this principle in a point that is not in dispute. The defendant agrees to pay fifty dollars 'for inserting business card,' etc. In applying this stipulation, if the defendant had a business card distinctively known and recognized as such, there would be no difficulty in giving effect to the contract. But the identification of that card would involve the whole principle of admitting parol evidence for the interpretation and application of written contracts to the subject-matter. It could be done only by the aid of parol testimony. Suppose he had several business cards, differing in form and contents, but one was selected and agreed upon for the purpose at the time the contract was signed; or that one had been prepared specially for the purpose. Clearly parol testimony would be competent to identify the card so selected or prepared, and to prove that the parties assented to and adopted it as the card to which the contract would apply. Suppose, thirdly, that no such card had been selected or prepared, but its form, contents and style had been described verbally and assented to, and the plaintiff had agreed to insert it as so described. Such evidence may be resorted to, not for the promise it contains, but for the aid it affords in fixing the meaning and applying the general language of the written contract. The same considerations render the evidence offered by the defendant competent for similar purposes. The term 'his advertising chart' requires to be practically applied. The representations of the plaintiff are in the nature of a description of the vehicle by which the publication of the business card was to be effected; and his account of the disposition he proposed to make of the charts was a description of the extent and the sense in which it was to be an 'advertising chart.'"

The application of the principle has long been seen in the interpretation of descriptions in deeds,³ because there is there always some concrete and

² See also a good opinion by Barbour, J., in *Bradley v. Steam Packet Co.* (1839), 13 Pet. 89, 101-103.

³ *Eng.*: 1787, *Buller, J.*, in *Doe v. Burt*, 1 T. R. 701, 704 ("Where there is a conveyance in general terms of all that acre called Blackacre, everything which belongs to Blackacre passes with it. . . . But whether parcel or not of the thing demised is always matter of evidence"); *Can.*: 1849, *Doe v. Pitt*, 1 All. N. Br. 385 ("all those certain pieces of marsh land"); *U. S.*: 1896, *Derrick v. Sams*, 98 Ga. 397, 25 S. E. 509 ("land purchased by H. of D." identified by evidence); 1893, *Thompson v. Smith*, 96 Mich. 258, 267, 55 N. W. 866 (mortgage of "block B"; that the mortgagor told the mortgagee that certain lands were not to be included was excluded; but other deeds etc., were admitted to show their usage as to the term

"block B"); 1895, *Calloway v. Henderson*, 130 Mo. 77, 32 S. W. 34 (a farm described as "the farm known as the property of the late G. R.," allowed to be identified); 1896, *Diggs v. Kirtz*, 132 id. 250, 33 S. W. 815 ("lot No. 312"; no boundaries named and no plot referred to; oral agreement as to boundaries, admitted); 1897, *Axford v. Meeks*, 59 N. J. L. 502, 36 Atl. 1036 ("my place at Riverside," interpreted by considering the facts of the "place"); 1816, *Jackson v. Goes*, 13 John. 518, 524 ("The identity of the grantee, as well as of the thing granted, must generally speaking partake more or less of a latent ambiguity, explainable by testimony dehors the grant. It cannot be that this inquiry is restricted to the single case of ambiguity occasioned by there appearing to be two persons bearing the name of the patentee"); 1839, *Fish v. Hubbard*, 21 Wend. 651 ("A location on

local object, fully known to the parties but unknown to the Court, and in every such case it is obvious that "the words used must be translated into things and facts";⁴ the parties to the deed almost always use terms of description which are peculiar to themselves.

But the universal application of the principle to *contracts and other documents* has also gradually been perceived. There is no transaction whatever in which, for some idea or other, the parties do not use words in a sense of their own. Having themselves locked up the idea in the words, themselves must furnish the key to unlock it. The antiquated notion (*post*, § 2470) that a document must be construed solely within its four corners, no matter how puzzling the problem, served for a time to retard the full appreciation of sound doctrine. But it was well settled by the middle of the 1800s in England; the case of *Macdonald v. Longbottom*, in which "your wool" was to be interpreted, served to mark the period of full conviction.⁵ In the United States the principle has also received ample sanction and illustration.⁶

application of the description of parcels must always be made by evidence *aliunde*"); 1897, *Salmer v. Lathrop*, 10 S. D. 218, 72 N. W. 570 (facts to identify a grantee "I. C. McDowell" with one "Thomas C. McDowell," admitted).

⁴ Holmes, J., in *Doherty v. Hill*, 144 Mass. 468, 11 N. E. 581.

⁵ 1778, *Cooke v. Booth*, Cowp. 819 (whether a clause "under the same rents and covenants" should be construed inclusive or exclusive of the clause of renewal; Aston, J.: "As there have been four successive renewals, the lessor himself has put his own construction upon the covenant, and therefore is bound by it"); 1816, *Birch v. Depeyster*, 1 Stark. 210 (contract mentioning a captain's "privilege"; conversation between the parties beforehand, admitted "to show in which sense it was used on the present occasion"); 1821, *Smith v. Doe*, 2 B. & B. 473, 597 (marriage settlement containing a power to make leases which should include "a power of re-entry for non-payment of the rent"; the issue was whether leases made in alleged pursuance of the settlement were valid, their powers of re-entry being not absolute, but conditional on extension of time for payment and on inability to distrain; held, by a majority, that the usual and accustomed form of the leases of that estate could be considered in construing the clause in the settlement); 1839, *Doe v. Benjamin*, 9 A. & E. 644, 652 (whether a document agreeing to "take a lease" was a mere agreement or a present lease; Coleridge, J.: "The Courts have come to some inconsistent conclusions in cases of this kind; but from the main body of them the principle results that we must look to the intention of the parties, and that by considering the terms of the particular instrument, with reference, I agree, to the state of facts existing at the time"); 1846, *Smith v. Jeffries*, 15 M. & W. 561 (sale of "60 tons of ware potatoes"; there were two qualities, "Regent's wares" and "kidney wares," and the seller offered to deliver the latter; the parties' express understanding that "Regent's wares" were signified was excluded;

this case really rests on a misapplication of the principle of § 2466, *post*); 1859, *Macdonald v. Longbottom*, 28 L. J. Q. B. 297, 1 E. & E. 977 (purchase of "your wool"; a prior conversation admitted to interpret this phrase as used by the parties; L. C. J. Campbell: "Where there is a contract for the sale of a specific subject-matter, oral evidence may be received, for the purpose of showing what that subject-matter was, of every fact within the knowledge of the parties before and at the time of the contract"); 1859, *Symonds v. Lloyd*, 6 C. B. n. s. 691, 696 ("In order to ascertain the intention of the parties, it is necessary to look to that which was the subject of the communication at the time or which was afterwards done"); 1859, *Mumford v. Gething*, 7 C. B. n. s. 305, 321 (contract "in consideration of my entering your employ"; the circumstances and understanding of the parties were received, showing that the employee was already a clerk in the employer's warehouse and had now additionally been employed as salesman to take the Midland district, and that "your employ" thus applied to the latter service only; Erle, C. J.: "[It was admissible] for the purpose of showing the circumstances under which such wide words were used, and of applying them according to the intention of the parties"); 1900, *Bank of New Zealand v. Simpson*, App. Cas. 182 (*Macdonald v. Longbottom* approved); 1902, *Re Huxtable*, 2 Ch. 793 (bequest of 4000*l.* to C., "for the charitable purposes agreed upon between us"; testatrix' agreement with C., admitted to define the charitable purposes; though not to establish that the income alone was to be given to such purposes).

⁶ Compare the cases cited *supra*, note 1; 1895, *Solary v. Webster*, 35 Fla. 363, 17 So. 646 (bond reciting the settlement of previous claims; identification of the claims, permitted); 1896, *Maynard v. Render*, 95 Ga. 652, 23 S. E. 194 ("cords" of wood; mutual understanding of the length of a cord, admitted); 1899, *Kentucky Cit. B. & L. Ass'n v. Laurence*, 106 Ky. 88, 49

§ 2466. **Individual Party's Meaning; (1) Deeds and Contracts.** When a person takes part in a bilateral act — *i. e.* a transaction in which other persons share — he must accept a common standard; he cannot claim to enforce his individual standard of meaning (*ante*, § 2461). The other party or parties are entitled to charge him with the common standard. This was long ago discussed and worked out as a general principle of casuistry:

1785, Dr. William Paley, Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy, b. III, pt. I, c. V, "Promises": "Temures promised the garrison of Sebastia, that if they would surrender, no blood should be shed. The garrison surrendered; and Temures buried them all

S. W. 1059 (agreement to assume liabilities of a company "as shown by their books"; evidence received to show what "books" were meant); 1896, New England D. M. & W. Co. v. Standard Worsted Co., 165 Mass. 328, 43 N. E. 112 (though by the statute the goods sold must be designated in the memorandum, the interpretation of such a phrase as "2000 lbs. F. C." is merely an application of the words to a specific object, and may be shown by the understanding of the parties); 1897, Clark v. Lowe, 113 Mich. 352, 71 N. W. 638 (guarantee of an undivided third of indebtedness; agreement as to the exact amount, admitted); 1895, Pfeifer v. Ins. Co., 62 Minn. 536, 64 N. W. 1018 (indorsement cancelling a policy on two horses, so as to "cover one horse only"; evidence admitted as to which horse was actually understood); 1896, Ripon College v. Brown, — id. —, 68 N. W. 837 (deed subject to certain mortgages "which . . . agrees to assume"; the ambiguous "which" interpreted by the parties' understanding); 1902, Gill v. Ferrin, 71 N. H. 421, 52 Atl. 558 (circumstances of the parties, admitted to show their meaning by the word "incumbrances" in a warranty-deed); 1894, Streppone v. Lennon, 143 N. Y. 626, 37 N. E. 638 (agreement to "do hrick-work"; usage and the parties' language, admitted to show whether this meant to include providing the hricks); 1895, Brady v. Cassidy, 145 id. 171, 39 N. E. 814 (goods on hand, interpreted by the parties' understanding); 1896, Lupton v. Lupton, 117 N. C. 30, 23 S. E. 184 ("one-half of boat" in a sale; circumstances identifying the boat, admitted); 1857, Barnhart v. Riddle, 29 Pa. 92, 97 ("Courts take the language employed and apply it to the surrounding circumstances, exactly as they believe the parties applied it"); 1898, Cooper v. Potts, 185 id. 115, 39 Atl. 824 (assignment of "all money due or to become due by M"; parties' understanding as to claims covered, received); 1902, Murray v. Northwestern R. Co., 64 S. C. 520, 42 S. E. 617 (contract to erect a "freight and passenger depot"; circumstances considered for determining the mutual meaning); 1877, Reed v. Ins. Co., 95 U. S. 23 (insurance of a vessel, "the risk to be suspended while vessel is at Baker's Island loading"; held, that "a reference to the actual condition of things at the time, as they appeared to the parties themselves," was allowable in interpreting these words, and that their sense included the case of being at the Island with the purpose of loading, though before the loading had actually begun); 1893, Lonergan v. Buford, 148 id. 581, 588, 13 Sup. 664 (contract reserving "2000 steers heretofore sold"; the previous contract of sale admitted to identify them); 1896, Sanders v. Munson, 20 C. C. A. 581, 74 Fed. 649 (shipping contract; "about April 10th"; parties' prior conduct, admitted); 1898, The Barnstable, 84 Fed. 895 (agreement to pay "the insurance on the vessel"; that the sense of this, as covering all kinds of risks, was communicated to the maker by the broker beforehand, admitted); 1901, American Bonding & T. Co. v. Takahashi, 49 C. C. A. 267, 111 Fed. 125 (contract for payment of money to a certain person as "trustee"; attendant negotiations considered, to interpret and apply the term); 1902, Sun P. & P. Ass'n v. Edwards, 51 id. 279, 113 Fed. 445 (contract to employ in a printing establishment; prior conversations admitted to interpret "what kind of a printing establishment was contemplated by the contract"); 1896, Bartels v. Brain, 13 Utah 162, 44 Pac. 715 (a lease exempting from injury by "reasonable use"; declarations of the parties admitted to show what uses were understood); 1898, Brown v. Markland, 16 id. 360, 52 Pac. 597 (conveyance of mining property subject to claims; circumstances resorted to for interpreting); 1895, Coffrin v. Cole, 67 Vt. 226, 31 Atl. 313 (a conveyance of "all right" possessed by the grantor, interpreted by the facts); 1896, Richardson v. Bank, 94 Va. 130, 26 S. E. 413 (a receipt for property "left" by H., explained by the circumstances); 1897, Anderson v. Jarrett, 43 W. Va. 246, 27 S. E. 348 ("the old fence between" F. and S.; Brannon, J.: "You have a right to use oral evidence to apply this bill [reciting the agreement], like a deed, physically to the ground"); 1897, Waldheim v. Miller, 97 Wis. 300, 72 N. W. 869 (guaranty of "account of B."; evidence that this meant a future account only, admitted). The following illustrates an occasional aberration: 1896, Holman v. Whitaker, 119 N. C. 113, 25 S. E. 793 (mortgage of a "one-horse wagon"; the mortgagor had four such; evidence that the mortgagor was working for the mortgagor and driving such a wagon of the latter's, and did not know that he had others, excluded). Distinguish such a case as the following: 1889, Fudge v. Payne, 86 Va. 306, 309, 10 S. E. 7 (sale of lands "generally known as 'the loop'"; *semble*, a mutual understanding, different from the "generally known" sense would not be enforced; this is an instance of the parties having themselves expressly excluded their own sense of the words).

alive. Now Temures fulfilled the promise in one sense, and in the sense too in which he intended it at the time; but not in the sense in which the garrison of Sebastia actually received it, nor in the sense in which Temures himself knew that the garrison received it; which last sense, according to our rule, was the sense in which he was in conscience bound to have performed it."

The principle is applicable, not only to *deeds* and *contracts*,¹ but also to all bilateral transactions, including *notices* and *demands*,² — though not of notices having a purely individual significance,³ to which rather the principle for wills (*post*, § 2467) would apply.

There is, however, a qualification to be made. The person using words is to be treated from the point of view of the reasonable man, not only in determining the actual tenor of his act (*ante*, § 2413), but also in interpreting it. As a reasonable man, he must be charged with knowing that the standard to be applied is the mutual one, because he has willed to take part in a bilateral transaction. As a reasonable man, however, he may have good reason to believe that the specific mutual meaning — *i. e.* of the other party as well as himself — is one thing, whereas in fact it is a different thing. The common instance is that of a *name corresponding to two objects*, one of which is signified by the one party and the other by the other party. Here each party is entitled to be charged with only that sense of the word which under the circumstances he had good reason to believe was employed by the other party. As in the "Peerless" case,⁴ if the seller is ignorant that there is a second "Peerless," and could not reasonably be expected to know it, he is entitled to be charged with the "Peerless" in his own sense; and so of the other party; and thus, the senses of promise and consideration being different, the contract fails. But if the seller had known of the second "Peerless"

¹ 1897, *Gamble v. Mfg. Co.*, 50 Nehr. 463, 69 N. W. 960 (holding that a business-habit of an individual must be actually made known to the other party); 1896, *Rickerson v. Ins. Co.*, 149 N. Y. 307, 43 N. E. 856 (promises "known as 160 Mott St." insured; it contained two buildings; the insurer's testimony that he intended to insure only one, correctly rejected; but the Court did not point out that such intention would have been admissible if it had represented the mutual understanding); 1903, *Butte & B. C. M. Co. v. Montana O. P. Co.*, 58 C. C. A. 634, 121 Fed. 524 ("tailings," in a mining contract); 1897, *Anderson v. Jarrett*, 43 W. Va. 246, 27 S. E. 348 ("the old fence" between F. and S., agreed upon as a line; the defendant's interpretation as to which "old fence" was excluded). Other instances are cited *ante*, §§ 1967, 1971, in connection with the application of the Opinion rule to proof of a party's intent.

² 1837, *Lawless v. Grogan*, 1 Dru. & Walsh 53, 64 (L. C. Plinnet: "When a notice is relied upon for the purpose of forfeiture, . . . [it must appear] that the intention of the landlord to insist on the forfeiture, and the information as to the facts which were peculiarly within the knowledge of the landlord, were fully brought home to the tenant"); 1877, *Locke v. R. Co.*, 46 Ia. 109, 111 (whether the plaintiff conductor

was negligent in running the train over a weak bridge; the sense of a notice received by him from the superintendent was held to be, not that which the latter meant, but "what did the dispatch mean when read by the conductor in the light of the surrounding circumstances").

³ 1803, *Holsten v. Jumpson*, 4 Esp. 139 (trover for household furniture, taken by the defendant on execution against the plaintiff's mother, and claimed by the plaintiff as her own; the defendant having put in a written demand by the mother for all the articles "belonging to her which had been seized," the plaintiff was allowed to show that this demand "was made of the effects of the mother herself, and were not those for which the action was brought").

⁴ 1864, *Raffles v. Wichelhaus*, 2 H. & C. 906 (the plaintiff sold to the defendant cotton to arrive "ex Peerless from Bombay"; the defendant refusing to accept, it appeared that there were two ships Peerless from Bombay, the plaintiff meaning the one to sail in December and the defendant the one to sail in October, and neither apparently knew that the other meant a different ship; a plea by the defendant alleging that the defendant meant the October ship, and that no cotton was delivered from that ship, was held good). Compare the explanation of this case in Holmes, *Common Law*, 309.

and also known that the buyer was aware of it, he might be charged with a sale of that cargo, if in fact the buyer was using that sense. The general principle of reasonable consequences (*ante*, § 2413) governs the interpretation of this class of cases.⁵

§ 2467. *Individual Party's Meaning; (2) Wills.* A unilateral act may be interpreted by the individual standard of the actor (*ante*, § 2461); that is, after resorting to the ordinary sense of words, and the local sense of words, for provisional assistance, we are still entitled to supplant all these by the individual usage, if it appears to have been different from the others. The will is the typical and almost the only instance of a unilateral act. The sense of the testator is therefore to be the ultimate criterion of interpretation:

1870, *Blackburn, J.*, in *Grant v. Grant*, L. R. 5 C. P. 727, 729 (quoting a passage from his own treatise on Sales): "The principles of the rules of law regulating the admissibility of extrinsic evidence to aid the construction of wills, and of contracts required to be in writing, seem to be the same. But, in applying them, it seems necessary to bear in mind that there is a distinction between the two classes of instruments. The will is the language of the testator, soliloquizing, if one may use the phrase, and the Court in construing his language may properly take into account all that he knew at the time, in order to see in what sense the words were used."

This principle is to-day universally conceded.¹ Only two particulars need to be noted as corollaries in its application. (a) The sense of the words must be sought in a usage or *habit* of the testator, for it would be impossible to attempt to ascertain the momentary or casual meanings which might have occurred to him. Hence, although all the circumstances and utterances of

⁵ Examples are as follows: *Eng.*: 1846, Alderson, B., in *Smith v. Jeffries*, 15 M. & W. 561 ("If I buy 60 tons of potatoes, surely the seller may deliver me kidney [i. e. one of several grades] potatoes"); 1900, Polck v. Williams, App. Cas. 176 (cipher cablegram; where a message is fairly ambiguous, the party seeking to charge the other one fails, because the former cannot show his interpretation to be the only reasonable one); *U. S.*: 1869, Kyle v. Kavanagh, 103 Mass. 356 (contract for the sale of land "in Waltham on Prospect Street"; there being two Prospect streets in Waltham, and each party signifying a different one, the buyer was held not bound); 1895, Stoddard Mfg. Co. v. Miller, 107 Mich. 51, 64 N. W. 948 (an order reading "Please ship me wone rits stele weel for a drill Two square feet;ng shafts. 4 ten hoe drills also some note hianks for drills"; the sender was allowed to show that he meant "shafts for 10-hoe drills"); 1832, Hazard v. Ins. Co. 1 Sumner 218 (in a marine insurance policy the parties lived respectively in Boston and New York, and the term "coppered ship" had a different meaning in the two places); Story, J., ruled that if neither party knew of the difference of sense of the word in the other place, neither would be bound, and that the jury were to determine the fact).

¹ 1856, Kell v. Charmer, 23 Beav. 195 (bequest "to my son W. the sum of i. x. x.; to my son R. C. the sum of o. x. x."; the testa-

tor having "in the course of his business used certain private marks or symbols to denote prices or sums of money," this usage was resorted to, and showed that the sums of 100l. and 200l. were signified); 1808, Leigh v. Leigh, 15 Ves. Jr. 92 (devise of a remainder to "the first and nearest of my kindred, being male and of my name and blood"; upon a consideration of all the circumstances, including the remainder of the will, it was held that this description was not meant to apply to a next of kin who had by license changed his name from "Smith" to "Leigh"); 1829, Gohlet v. Beechy, 3 Sim. 24 (a sculptor bequeathed all his "marbles, busts, and models" to P. D. and B.; by a codicil he bequeathed his "tools in the shop, bankers, mod tools for carving," to the plaintiff; the models were valuable, the tools for modelling were not; Shadwell, V. C., held "mod" to mean "models," upon the testimony of a sculptor that he "understood it to be a contraction of the word 'models,'" and of three sculptors that "in their opinion the testator by the word 'mod' meant 'models'"); 1903, Reformed Presb. Church v. McMillan, 31 Wash. 643, 72 Pac. 502 (bequest to the "Society for Disabled Ministers of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Illinois," given to the "Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, General Synod," which had a fund for disabled ministers). Numerous additional examples are collected *ante*, § 2463.

the testator may be searched (*post*, § 2470), as forming a mass of data in which the habit will appear, yet no one utterance can be emphasized as the sole and decisive embodiment of his usage.² (b) The *time* of the usage must be the time of the will's final sanction: for the will is in fact a standing expression from the date of its formal execution to the date of the testator's death without revoking it;³ hence a broad range of search. But where a will is in effect left with blanks at the time of execution, any subsequent document is virtually an addition of terms to the will, not an interpretation of existing terms, and hence, if not formally executed, cannot be considered.⁴

But three other rules, which constantly operate to obscure the full application of this principle, must be distinguished. (1) The rule against disturbing a *plain meaning* (*ante*, §§ 2462-2463), so far as it is recognized, will of course prevent the resort to the testator's individual meaning.⁵ (2) The rule against *express declarations of intention* (*post*, § 2471) operates to limit the sources of investigation to some extent. (3) The ignoring of the rule

² 1850, *Doe v. Hubbard*, 15 Q. B. 227, 248 (devise of "all those two cottages or tenements, the one occupied by my son J. H., the other occupied by my granddaughter"; there were two cottages which had been subdivided into five residences, two of them only occupied by the persons mentioned; the scrivener's testimony as to "what the testator said about the two cottages" was excluded; L. C. J. Campbell: "This was not confined to an inquiry into the meaning which the testator usually affixed to the expression 'his two cottages,' but was calculated to bring out an answer, which could not be admissible evidence, with regard to his intentions in making the will, irrespective of the language of the will itself"). Compare the principle of the rule *post*, § 2471, against declarations of intention.

³ 1871, *Castle v. Fox*, L. R. 11 Eq. 542, 550 (devise of "all my mansion and estate called Cleeve Court"; the testator had bought additional lands, appurtenant thereto, between the execution of the will and his death, and these were held to pass; Malins, V. C.: "The question is, not what was known by that name when he made his will, but what was known by that name and treated by him as coming under that description at any time during his life; . . . [the Wills Act] enacts that every will shall be construed, with reference to the real and personal estate comprised in it, as if it had been executed immediately before the death of the testator, unless a contrary intention should appear").

⁴ 1844, *Clayton v. Nugent*, 13 M. & W. 200 (will containing a list of devisees indicated by the letters K, L, M, N, etc., and stating that a "key and index to initials is in my desk"; the will was dated 1820, and a key dated 1828 and found in the desk, was excluded). Compare *Kell v. Charmer*, *supra*, note 1.

⁵ That rule was the foundation of some of the opinions in the case of *Lady Hewley's Charities*, though it was not involved; 1833-1843,

Attorney-General v. Shore, also on appeal *s. v. Shore v. Wilson*, 7 Sim. 309, note, 11 id. 592, 615, 5 Cl. & F. 355 (*Lady Hewley*, a Presbyterian, in 1704, deeded to charities for the assistance of "poor and godly preachers of Christ's holy gospel," etc.; the trustees having become Unitarians at a later period, a bill was filed to remove them and order the trust's administration for the benefit of persons described in the deed; for this purpose evidence of the founder's personal belief on points of theology was excluded, by apparently all the judges, but evidence of the theological tenets of the sect to which she belonged, and of the usage of that sect, was admitted, by a majority of the judges; the case as a whole is an extreme example of poor judicial treatment; for the opinions though lengthy are obscure, and such is their confusion and indefiniteness of views that the decision settled no principle, and even its actual tenor has been variously stated by commentators). A similar question was presented in the following case: 1885, *Hinckley v. Thatcher*, 139 Mass. 477, 480, 1 N. E. 840 (bequest to "the Authorized Agents of the Home and Foreign Missionary Societies"; testator's religious opinions, as involved in "his acts in connection with churches and religious societies and the usages of those churches and societies," considered; whether they could have been considered, apart from such acts and usages, not decided). In neither of the foregoing cases should there have been any hesitation: Compare the following case: 1835, *Attorney-General v. Pearson*, 7 Sim. 290, 308 (grant of land, in 1701-1726, for a meeting-house, by Presbyterians, for "the worship and service of God"; the trustees and the majority of the congregation having later ceased to be Trinitarian in belief, a bill to restrain the use of the land for non-Trinitarian tenets was brought, asking a decree of inquiry as to the tenets of the founders, for interpreting the terms of the trust, and the "tenets in general" of the founders were considered, by Shadwell, V. C.).

falsa demonstratio non nocet (*post*, § 2476) sometimes prevents the testator's meaning from being fully enforced.

2. Sources of Interpretation.

§ 2470. General Principle: All Extrinsic Circumstances may be Considered.

It was a part of the stiff formalism of earlier interpretation, not only that the law should fix the meaning of words and phrases (*ante*, § 2462), but also that all aids to the meaning must be found in the document itself. It is the document that "speaks," and if the document does not speak for itself, we cannot make other things speak instead of it,—such was the notion. The purely relative nature of words—their necessary association with external objects—was as yet not conceived. They were tangible tools, which must do their own work or remain ineffective. The writing fixed the will of the writer, and to look away from the writing was suggestive only of deviation and uncertainty. "The construction of wills," says Lord Coke,¹ "ought to be collected from the words of the will in writing, and not by any averment [*i. e.* circumstances] of evidence out of it," and then he recurs to the old apprehension (*ante*, § 2462) of uncertainty for legal advisers and landed estates, "for it would be full of great inconvenience that none should know by the written words of a will what construction to make or advice to give, but it should be controlled by collateral averments out of the will." A hundred years later, Lord Holt,² a conservative by nature, protests in like strain against the newer spirit: "If we once travel into the affairs of the testator, and leave the will, we shall not know the mind of the testator by his words, but by his circumstances; so that if you go to a lawyer, he shall not know how to expound it. Men's rights will be very precarious upon such construction. We must not depart from the will to find the meaning of it in things out of it." Holt was here dissenting, and his extreme ideas were already becoming obsolete. But even after another century had passed, and the antiquated notions had been thoroughly discredited, the echo of conservatism is heard in Lord Eldon's remark that, "generally speaking, you must construe instruments by what is found within their four corners."³

The stages of progress may be marked off somewhat as follows: (1) Even in Coke's time it was conceded that in case of an equivocation (*post*, § 2472) or double-meaning description, outside data could be sought, because "no inconvenience can arise if an averment [of extrinsic data] in such case be taken; for he who sees such will cannot be deceived by any secret invisible averment, for he ought at his peril to inquire."⁴ This was at first the sole specific exception.

¹ 1591, Lord Cheyney's Case, 5 Co. Rep. 68 a.

² 1702, *Cole v. Rawlinson*, 1 Salk. 234, 2 Ld. Raym. 831.

³ 1821, *Smith v. Doe*, 2 B. & B. 473, 602. So, too, in 1801, *Rooke, J.*, in *Coker v. Guy*, 2 B. & P. 565, 569: "Every agreement must receive its construction from its own terms, without the introduction of any evidence dehors

the instrument, unless there be some latent ambiguity."

⁴ Lord Cheyney's Case, *supra*. In 1708, in *Strode v. Russell*, 3 Ch. Rep. 169, Lord Cowper put it that "where the words stand in equilibrium and are so doubtful that they may be taken one way or the other, there it is proper to have evidence read to explain them."

(2) Little by little it began to be seen that there might be other necessary instances of resort to "things extrinsic" (in Lord Holt's phrase). Lord Cowper and Lord Hardwicke were breakers of new ground in this respect.⁶ Their work was continued by Lord Thurlow, whose ruling in *Fonnereau v. Poyntz* was considered a dangerous innovation; it not only cost himself much intellectual perturbation, but was for some time afterwards regarded by many as discreditable to his reputation, and was explained away as imperfectly reported.⁷ As late as the beginning of the 1800s there were judges who still thought that the only proper exception was an equivocation,⁷ and there was a reactionary ruling which refused to recognize even that much relaxation for a sealed instrument.⁸ But in general, by that time, the weight of opinion conceded what Lord Thurlow had laid down, not that only for an equivocation, but also for any real and insurmountable uncertainty of meaning, resort to extrinsic circumstances for light was permissible.⁹ The commonest case, of course, was that in which the words of the document turned out not precisely or naturally to fit any external object over which the testator had disposal; and consolation was here obtained, for the apparent stretching of principle, by a plausible play upon words: "If you go to parol evidence to raise the ambiguity, you cannot well refuse it to explain such ambiguity."¹⁰ This conjuring phrase, which appears again and again in a defensive spirit, helped to liberalize the practice, and thus to prepare the way for a broader

⁶ 1749, Lord Hardwicke in *Goodinge v. Goodinge*, 1 Ves. Sr. 231 ("That rule is laid down much too large by Holt; for in several cases it is admitted it must be allowed, — namely, where the description or thing is uncertain (not only where two of the same name), it must be admitted to show that the testator knew such a person and used to call her by a nickname"). But even he was unwilling to advance rapidly, and he once criticised his predecessor, Lord Cowper, who had occasionally generalized too liberally; "I was never satisfied with this rule of Lord Cowper's, of admitting parol evidence in doubtful cases" (*Ulrich v. Litchfield*, 2 Atk. 372).

⁷ 1785, *Fonnereau v. Poyntz*, 1 Bro. C. C. 472 (bequest of "the sum of 500*l.* stock in long annuities"; this expression would ordinarily signify an income of 500*l.* per year; but L. C. Thurlow allowed the value of the estate to be considered, whence it appeared that she had only 120*l.* a year long annuities, and the bequest was therefore held to mean 500*l.* capital laid out in such stock; the ruling was treated as an inroad upon the rule "which will not admit of an instrument being construed *aliunde*," and which prescribes that "where the words used by a testator are sensible, they must be taken as they stand"; "the only question is, how to preserve the law, and yet to decide according to the intention of the testatrix," and was justified by Lord Thurlow "because the words she had used in the description are upon the whole of the context uncertain"). There were by this time some sufficient precedents for such a statement

of the rule, — for example, in 1750, *Hampshire v. Pierce*, 2 Ves. 216, by Strange, M. R.

⁸ 1816, *Doe v. Chichester*, 4 Dow 65, 93 (Gibbs, C. J.: "The Courts of law have been jealous of the admission of extrinsic evidence to explain the intention of a testator; and I know of only one case in which it is permitted, that is, where an ambiguity is introduced by extrinsic circumstances").

⁹ 1821, *Doe v. Benson*, 4 B. & Ald. 598 (lease by parol from "Lady-day"; the local usage to signify "old Lady-day," instead of the new or legal Lady-day, i. e. March 25, was admitted; but *Doe v. Lea*, 11 East 312, was approved, because "there the letting was by deed, which is a solemn instrument, and therefore parol evidence was inadmissible to explain the expression 'Lady-day' there used, even supposing that it was equivocal").

¹⁰ 1822, *Plumer, M. R.*, in *Colpoys v. Colpoys*, Jacob 451, 456 ("The admission of extrinsic circumstances to govern the construction of a written instrument is in all cases an exception to the general rule of law, which excludes everything *dehors* the instrument. . . . It must be the case of an ambiguity which cannot otherwise be removed, and which may by these means be clearly and satisfactorily explained").

¹¹ L. C. Thurlow, in *Shelburne v. Inchiquin*, 1 Bro. C. C. 338, 341; *Plumer, M. R.*, *ubi supra*, declaring that "where there is a latent ambiguity raised by extrinsic circumstances, it may be got rid of in the same manner." Bacon had already resorted to this phrase in his *Maxim* (XXV) on Ambiguities; "*nam quod ex facto oritur ambiguum verificatione facti tollitur.*"

principle. Meantime the same progress and conflict was reflected in the judicial opinions in the United States.¹¹

(3) The truth had finally to be recognized that words always need interpretation; that the process of interpretation inherently and invariably means the ascertainment of the association between words and external objects; and that this makes inevitable a free resort to extrinsic matters for applying and enforcing the document. "Words *must* be translated into things and facts."¹² Instead of the fallacious notion that "there should be interpretation only when it is needed,"¹³ the fact is that there must always be interpretation.¹⁴ Perhaps the range of search need not be extensive, and perhaps the application of the document will be apparent at the first view; but there must always be a travelling out of the document, a comparison of its words with people and things. The deed must be applied "physically to the ground."¹⁵ Perhaps the standard of interpretation will limit our search; perhaps the obligation (as some Courts maintain) to enforce the ordinary standard as against the mutual or the individual standard (*ante*, § 2462), or to enforce the mutual as against the individual standard (*ante*, § 2466), will render certain data immaterial. But these restrictions are independent of the present principle. Once freed from the primitive formalism which views the document as a self-contained and self-operative formula, we can fully appreciate the modern principle that the words of a document are never anything but indices to extrinsic things, and that therefore all the circumstances must be considered which go to make clear the sense of the words,—that is, their associations with things. In the field of wills, where there is none but the individual standard of meaning to be considered, this principle is seen in unrestricted operation; and its full sanction has often been judicially avowed:

1831, Sir James Wigram, V. C., *Extrinsic Evidence in Aid of the Interpretation of Wills*, Proposition V: "For the purpose of determining the object of a testator's bounty, or the subject of disposition, or the quantity of interest intended to be given by his will, a Court may inquire into every *material* fact relating to the person who claims to be interested under the will, and to the property which is claimed as the subject of disposition, and to the circumstances of the testator and of his family and affairs, for the purpose of enabling the Court to identify the person or thing intended by the testator, or to determine the quantity of interest he has given by his will. The same (it is conceived) is true

¹¹ 1839, *Bradley v. Steam Packet Co.*, 13 Pet. 89, 99 (question as to the length of validity of a contract "for the use of the steamboat Franklin, until the Sydney is placed on the route to Potomac Creek"; the circumstances preceding the contract were admitted; Barbour, J.: "The rule which admits extrinsic evidence for the purpose of applying a written contract to its proper subject matter extends beyond the mere designation of the thing on which the contract operates, and embraces within its scope the circumstances under which the contract concerning the thing was made, when without the aid of such extrinsic evidence such application of the written contract to its proper subject matter could not be made"; four judges dissenting).

¹² Holmes, J., quoted *ante*, § 2465.

¹³ Quoted *ante*, § 2458.

¹⁴ 1835, *Cotteridge, J.*, in *Doe v. Holtom*, 4 A. & E. 76, 82 ("Some extrinsic evidence is necessary for the explanation of every will; if the word 'Blackacre' be used, there must be evidence to show that the field in question is Blackacre"); 1892, *Jenne, J.*, in *Faton v. Ormerod*, 66 Law T. Rep. 381 ("Parol evidence of existing facts and circumstances outside the will is admissible, and in truth is in every case necessarily, though informally, admitted in order to apply the terms of the will to that to which they are intended to refer").

¹⁵ *Brannon, J.*, in *Anderson v. Jarrett*, cited *ante*, § 2465.

of every other disputed point, respecting which it can be shown that a knowledge of extrinsic facts can, in any way, be made ancillary to the right interpretation of a testator's words."

1833, *Parks, J.*, in *Doe v. Martin*, 4 B. & Ad. 770, 785: "It may be laid down as a general rule that all facts relating to the subject matter and object of the devise . . . are admissible to aid in ascertaining what is meant by the words used in the will."

1842, *Sugden, L. C.*, in *Attorney-General v. Drummond*, 1 Dr. & W. 356 (interpreting a deed containing the words "Christian" and "Protestant dissenter"): "The Court is at liberty to inquire into all the surrounding circumstances which may have acted upon the minds of the persons by whom the deed or will (it matters not whether it was one or the other) was executed. . . . The Court therefore has not merely a right, but it is its duty to inquire into the surrounding circumstances, before it can approach the construction of the instrument itself."

1886, *Blackburn, J.*, in *Allgood v. Blake*, L. R. 8 Exch. 160: "The general rule is that in construing a will the Court is entitled to put itself in the position of the testator, and to consider all material facts and circumstances known to the testator with reference to which he is to be taken to have used the words in the will, and then to declare what is the intention [*i. e.* sense] evidenced by the words used, with reference to those facts and circumstances which were (or ought to have been) in the mind of the testator when he used those words. As said in *Wigram on Extrinsic Evidence*, 'The question in expounding a will is, not what the testator meant — as distinguished from what his words express, — but simply, what is the meaning of his words.' But we think that the meaning of words varies according to the circumstances of and concerning which they are used."

1898, Professor *James Bradley Thayer*, *Preliminary Treatise on Evidence*, 445: "It had become possible for *Wigram* to lay it solidly down, over seventy years ago, that, with the exception of direct statements of intention, no extrinsic fact, relevant to any legitimate question arising in the interpretation of writings and admissible under the general rules of evidence, could be shut out."

It remains now to notice whatever qualifications there may be of this general principle.

§ 2471. **Exception for Declarations of Intention.** When the search is made for data which will exhibit the sense in which a word is used in a particular writing, not only the external objects (property, persons, localities, and the like) will assist, but also the *other utterances of the party* as embodying his usage. Just as a collation of various passages in the epistles of Paul will serve to expound his sense of the word "faith," so a collation of any person's utterances is useful and necessary for determining the sense of his words in a particular document, — as in *Doe v. Jersey*,¹ where the sense of the words "my Briton Ferry estate" was ascertained by examining the testator's rental-books, in which were entered under that name the lands which he so termed. This kind of data is common and natural enough; but it is worth while emphasizing that among the "circumstances" to be investigated are included, not only the corporal objects surrounding the party, but also his utterances, written and oral, as applied to those objects.

Among this latter class, however, there is one forbidden variety, namely, *expressions of intention* dealing with the subject of the document. For example, if there is a devise to "Benjamin Franklin, of Boston, my nephew,"

¹ Cited *ante*, § 2463, note 4.

and there is no nephew but one John Franklin, a letter of the testator to that nephew, declaring an intent to devise to him his property, would not be considered. This rule has never been questioned.² What is the reason for it? The reason is certainly not to be found in any prohibitory rule of evidence, for such declarations are admissible under the Hearsay exception (*ante*, §§ 1725, 1735). Nor is it that these declarations are not useful, for together with others they would certainly help to throw light on the question whether (as in the above example) the name "Benjamin Franklin" was by the testator habitually applied to designate the nephew. The true reason is found in another rule, already considered, — the rule which prohibits setting up any extrinsic utterance to compete with and overthrow the words of a document which solely embodies the transaction (*ante*, § 2425). The effect of that rule is to deny any legal effect to just such declarations.³ It is true that where the act is required by statute to be in written form — as, a will — there is the additional reason that the oral utterance would fail to fulfil that formality.⁴ But, even without such a statutory requirement, the other rule would be adequate to prohibit. When a transaction has been even voluntarily embodied in a single document, no other utterance of intent or will on the same subject can be given legal effect. Hence, such a declaration is excluded from consideration even in the process of interpretation, not because it would not for that purpose be useful, but because it would be improper for the other purpose. There being two conceivable purposes for which it could be used, the one proper, the latter improper, it is excluded because of the fear that the latter would dominate and that the temptation to abuse would be too strong. This conclusion might have been declined; and certainly the rule as it stands does not obey the principle (*ante*, § 13) that a fact relevant for one purpose but not for another may still be received for the former. Nevertheless, the rule is intelligible and its policy rational. It rests on an attempt to insure an observance of the Integration rule (*ante*, § 2452) even at the cost of losing some useful data for the process of Interpretation.⁵ This explanation of it was long ago made clear in the following passage:

1860, Mr. F. M. Nichols, *Extrinsic Evidence in the Interpretation of Wills*, Juridical Society Papers, II, 352: "There is a kind of evidence to which both of these reasons [securing certainty of title and preventing fraudulent proof], and the analogy of the law requiring the will to be in writing, must strongly apply; I mean, of course, the species

² It may be noted that, through the loose meaning of "intention," a judge who is referring only to the present exception appears sometimes to be contradicting the general principle of § 2470, *ante*; e. g., Woods, J., in *Patch v. White*, 117 U. S. 210, 6 Snp. 617 (1886): "If there is any proposition settled in the law of wills, it is that extrinsic evidence is inadmissible to show the [sc. declarations of] intention of the testator, unless it be necessary to explain a latent ambiguity."

³ 1850, Patteson, J., in *Doe v. Hubbard*, 15 Q. B. 227, 243 (such declarations "would in

truth have established a verbal will contrary to the written words").

⁴ 1565, Brett v. Rigdon, Plowd. 340 ("No will is within the statute but that which is in writing, which is as much as to say that all which is effectual and to the purpose must be in writing, without seeking aid of words not written").

⁵ Professor Thayer has said (*Preliminary Treatise on Evidence*, 444) that "while it partakes of the character of both [a rule of construction and a rule of interpretation], it must hold its place as a rule of evidence." But this statement hardly represents its true foundation.

of evidence which we have called direct evidence of intention; and which, if admitted, would consist for the most part of declarations and informal written memoranda of the testator, and of instructions given by him to the persons employed in the preparation of the formal instrument. Evidence so nearly allied in character to that furnished by the will itself, presents an aspect of rivalry to the will, which raises a prejudice against its reception. It may be fairly presumed to be the intention of the author that the solemn instrument, in its complete and final form, should supersede and extinguish all the informal and deliberative expressions of intention which preceded or accompanied its making. Again, evidence of this kind presents peculiar facilities to fraud. It may be easily imagined or invented, and when fraudulently produced is difficult of detection. If a witness swears that a deceased testator, in a private interview, explained to him the sense in which he wished some clause of his will to be understood, such evidence, however false, cannot possibly be disproved. The same policy of the law which precludes such evidence from directly governing the rights of the parties ought, it may be argued, to prevent it from indirectly influencing those rights by means of interpretation. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that testimony of this kind presents the most obvious, and possibly in some cases the only satisfactory, means of ascertaining the true meaning of an ambiguous or obscure expression. The practice of our own law has, nevertheless, made us familiar with its exclusion in all but some exceptional cases; and it can scarcely be said that this prohibition leads to any great inconvenience or hardship."

The application of the rule is a matter of little difficulty. In its ordinary form, for wills, what it does is to exclude the fact that the draftsman made a *mistake*, i. e. it prevents the testator's oral or written instructions, or other expressions of intent, from being set up to overthrow or replace the words of the will.⁶ In short, it excludes everything that would be excluded by the rule of Integration already considered (*ante*, §§ 2425-2447). Its difficulties, if any, arise only under its exceptions.

§ 2472. *Same*: (1) *Exception for Equivocation, or Latent Ambiguity.* The foregoing exception to the general rule has itself an exception, namely, that declarations of intention, though ordinarily excluded from consideration, are receivable to assist in *interpreting an equivocation*, — that is, a term which, upon application to external objects, is found to fit two or more of them equally. This rule dates at least as far back, in recognition, as Lord Coke's time; the only difference being that it was then the sole permissive exception to a general prohibitory rule against looking at any extrinsic circumstances (as noticed *ante*, § 2470), while now it is a permissive exception to a prohibitory rule which is itself an exception (*ante*, § 2471) to a general permissive rule.

⁶ 1832, *Miller v. Travers*, 8 Bing. 244 (devise of estates "in the county of Limerick and in the city of Limerick"; the testator had no estate in that county, but considerable estates in the County of Clare; his draft will, containing the words "counties of Clare and Limerick," and the scrivener's mistake in changing this, were not allowed to be proved; "the only mode of proving the intention of the testator is by setting up the draft of the will against the executed will itself," and this would be improper); 1896, *Jackson v. Alsop*, 67 Conn. 249, 34 Atl. 1106 (the words of a devise being unambiguous, expressions of intention were excluded); 1896,

Defreese v. Lake, 109 Mich. 415, 67 N. W. 505 (the expressed intention of the testator, excluded for construing the kind of estate given); 1896, *Emery v. Haven*, 67 N. H. 503, 35 Atl. 940 (whether a wife's will was intended by her to be an execution of a power left her by her husband; an express subsequent written statement that it was not, excluded); 1814, *Jackson v. Sill*, 11 John. 201 (devise "to my wife the farm I now occupy"; declaration of intent not admitted to show that this included seven acres actually occupied by S. under a lease); 1896, *Fuller v. Weaver*, 175 Pa. 182, 34 Atl. 634 (a deed-description of premises).

§§ 2400-2478] INTERPRETATION; STATEMENTS OF INTENTION. § 2472

The reason for the present exception to that exception is plain enough. The original prohibitory exception is based on the risk of allowing an extrinsic utterance of intent to come into competition with the terms of the document on the same subject, and perhaps to prevail against them (*ante*, § 2471). Now in the case of an equivocation this risk does not exist. Since the term of the document describes equally two objects, and since it was used to designate one only, there can be no competition with the words of the document by declarations which merely expand and make more specific those words. The sense of the words can be interpreted without restriction, because the data offered cannot be used for any purpose but that of interpretation. Hence the reason for the original prohibitory rule falls away, and the general principle of interpretation resumes its full range:

1836, *Parke, B.*, in *Doe v. Needs*, 2 M. & W. 129: "The characteristic of all these cases is that the words of the will do describe the object or subject intended; and the evidence of the declarations of the testator has not the effect of varying the instrument in any way whatever; it only enables the Court to reject one of the subjects or objects to which the description in the will applies, and to determine which of the two the devisor understood to be signified by the description which he used in the will."¹

The typical illustration of the present exception is found in the much-quoted passage of Lord Coke:

1591, *The Lord Cheyney's Case*, 5 Co. Rep. 68 a: devise to his son H. and the heirs of his body, and then to T. C. and the heirs male of his body, on condition "that he or they or any of them" shall not alienate; proof by witnesses that it was "the intent and meaning of the testator" to include under "he or they" his son H., as well as T. C., was excluded; "he should not be received to such averment out of the will"; "but if a man has two sons, both baptized by the name of John, and conceiving that the elder, who had been long absent, is dead, devises his land by his will in writing to his son John generally, and in truth the elder is living, — in this case the younger son may in pleading or in evidence allege the devise to him, and if it be denied, he may produce witnesses to prove his father's intent, that he thought the other to be dead, or that he at the time of the will named his son John the younger, and the writer left out the addition of the younger."

This exception finds frequent application. The only point of controversy which it may present is whether a particular term is on the facts an equivocation, *i. e.* whether, in applying it to external objects, the two (or more) which appear to correspond must *precisely* fit the description in the document, in order to invoke this exception. Here there is room for either strict or liberal construction; and the rulings do not differ except in exemplifying one or the other attitude. It may be added that the exception is applicable not only to *wills*,² but also to *deeds* and *contracts*; but in the latter kinds of

¹ So also: 1833, *Parke, J.*, in *Richardson v. Watson*, 4 B. & Ad. 787, 800 ("Such evidence is admissible to show, not what the testator intended, but what he understood to be signified by the words used in the will").

² *England*: 1750, *Hampshire v. Pierce*, 2 Ves. 216 (bequest of 100l. to "the four children

of my late cousin E. B.," and of 300l. to "the children of my late cousin E. B.," in fact, E. B. had six children, two by one husband P., and four by another husband B.; evidence that "the testatrix meant the four children by the last husband B." was admitted to interpret the former bequest, but not the latter; the former

documents, since the standard of interpretation must be a mutual one (*ante*, § 2466), it is naturally less frequent to find a mutual declaration of intention available for the purpose.³

It is the subject of the present exception which Lord Bacon designated by his much-abused term "latent ambiguity." He also terms it by its more specific name "equivocation," but, with the exception of a single application (*post*, § 2474), the two were to him synonymous. By the standard of his time, this was the only exception for which any extrinsic circumstances

being ambiguous, but not the latter); 1750, *Jones v. Newman*, 1 W. Bl. 60 (devise to "John Ciner of Calcot"; there appearing to be two persons, father and son, of that name, "parol evidence that the testatrix intended to leave it to J. C. the son" was admitted); 1820, *Doe v. Westlake*, 4 B. & Ald. 57 (gifts to a brother Thomas W., to the daughter of a brother Richard, and then a devise to "Matthew W., my brother, and to Simon W., my brother's son"); each of the three brothers had a son Simon; declarations of the testator that he intended the devise for Simon the son of Richard were excluded; but this seems erroneous, for "my brother" was not exclusively applicable to Matthew, even on the face of the will); 1836, *Doe v. Needs*, 2 M. & W. 129 (devise to "George Gord, the son of Gord"; there were two Gord's, John and George, each having a son George, and each of these sons was elsewhere explicitly named in the will; the deviser's declarations of intention were admitted); 1840, *Doe v. Allen*, 12 A. & E. 451 (devise to "John A., the grandson of my said brother Thomas," the property to be charged with payments to "each and every the brothers and sisters of the said John A."; there were two grandsons of Thomas named John; one had three brothers and four sisters, the other had one brother and one sister, at the time of the will's making; the testatrix' declarations of intention were admitted, on the ground that the statement of the numbers of brothers and sisters was "not part of the description of the devisee"; but the correct ground would have been that the statement, though certainly part of the description, did not imply the present existence of plural brothers and sisters but included equally a person who might thereafter have more than one of each); 1870, *Grant v. Grant*, L. R. 5 C. P. 727 (devise to "my nephew Joseph Grant"; there were two relations of that name, one being the son of the testator's brother, the other the son of his wife's brother, the testator being ignorant of the former's existence and being in the habit of terming the latter his nephew; declarations of intention were offered, but were expressly not passed upon, the Court having doubts; but these doubts were unnecessary); 1877, *Re Woiverton Mortgaged Estates*, L. R. 7 Ch. D. 197 (bequest to be void upon marriage with "Thomas Fisher, of Bridge Street, Bath"; there was at the time in Bridge Street a Thomas Fisher, married, and his son Henry Tom Fisher, unmarried and "often at his father's house"; the legatee having married the latter, evidence of the testator's intention

was admitted as for an ambiguity, because "there appear to be practically two Thomas Fishers living in Bridge Street"); *United States*: 1882, *Chambers v. Watson*, 60 Ia. 339, 14 N. W. 356 (devise of "60 acres, Se 25, toon 7; 40 acres, se 24, toon C," not naming any range; the testator's declarations at the time of execution, admitted); 1884, *Bodman v. American Tract Society*, 9 All. 447 (bequest to "the American Tract Society"; there being two societies of that name, the testator's intention, as proved by the draftsman, was admitted); 1895, *Schlottman v. Hoffman*, 73 Miss. 186, 16 So. 693 (figures in a will which might mean \$5.00 or \$500, allowed to be explained by the testatrix' instructions); 1879, *Bartlett v. Remington*, 59 N. H. 364 (bequest "in trust for Sarah," shown to be intended for Sarah Sauroe); 1880, *Tilton v. American Bible Society*, 60 Id. 377 (bequest to "the Bible Society"; claims being made by the New Hampshire Bible Society and the American Bible Society, it was treated as a latent ambiguity).

³ Not all of these rulings distinctly declare declarations of intention admissible; a clear appreciation of the distinction between "intention," or meaning, and declarations of intention, is indeed often wanting: 1893, *Halliday v. Hess*, 147 Ill. 588, 35 N. E. 390 (deed describing land by bounds, and terming it "section 5"; there being in the county several sections 5 in the various townships, "parol evidence" was admitted); 1894, *Tewksbury v. Howard*, 138 Ind. 105, 37 N. E. 355 (deed describing land as the S. E. $\frac{1}{4}$ of S. 36, T. 25, R. 11, without county or State mentioned; parol evidence admitted); 1854, *Sargent v. Adams*, 3 Gray 72, 79 (lease of "the Adams House"; issue whether it passed the five stores in the building so known; held, a latent ambiguity, upon which the intention of the parties could be resorted to); 1897, *Illinois C. R. Co. v. Le Blanc*, 74 Miss. 650, 21 So. 760 ("fractional 38 acres in said S. E. $\frac{1}{4}$ of N. E. $\frac{1}{4}$, assessed to J. J. Carter"; other deeds, etc., admitted to identify the section, township, and range in which Carter owned 38 acres); 1898, *Ladnier v. Ladnier*, 75 Id. 777, 23 So. 430 (deed omitting State and county of land in description; extrinsic facts admitted). The following case is therefore erroneous: 1901, *Mudd v. Dillon*, 166 Mo. 110, 65 S. W. 973 (deed of "80 acres of the E. $\frac{1}{4}$ of the N. E. of Sec. 13," not mentioning any township or range; held, a patent ambiguity, void for uncertainty, and not admissible by parol; the opinion is apparently ignorant of the principle applicable).

whatever could be consulted (*ante*, § 2470). When he allowed, in case of equivocation, an averment (*i. e.* extrinsic proof) of "intention," he was plainly using this word as signifying "meaning" or "sense," and not as specifically confined to "declarations of intention." Nevertheless, as the scope of interpretation expanded, and the use of words changed, his exposition came to fit in well enough with the modern exception to the exception against declarations of intention. It has thus served as a frequent authority; and though it has rightly been termed an "unprofitable subtlety,"⁴ and has unnecessarily confused the subject with artificial distinctions, its tenor must be kept in mind, as explaining much in modern opinions:

*Circa 1597, Sir Francis Bacon, Maxims, rule XXV (Works, Spedding's ed., 1861, vol. XIV, p. 273): "There be two sorts of ambiguities of words; the one is *ambiguitas patens* and the other is *ambiguitas latens*. *Patens* is that which appears to be ambiguous upon the deed or instrument; *latens* is that which seemeth certain and without ambiguity for anything that appeareth upon the deed or instrument, but there is some collateral matter out of the deed that breedeth the ambiguity. *Ambiguitas patens* is never holpen by averment, and the reason is, because the law will not couple and mingle matter of specialty, which is of the higher account, with matter of averment, which is of inferior account in law; for that were to make all deeds hollow and subject to averments, and so, in effect, that to pass without deed, which the law appointeth shall not pass but by deed. Therefore if a man give land to I. D. et I. S. *heredibus*, and do not limit to whether of their heirs, it shall not be supplied by averment to whether of them the intention was the inheritance should be limited. . . . But if it be *ambiguitas latens*, then otherwise it is. As I grant my manor of S. to I. F. and his heirs, here appeareth no ambiguity at all upon the deed; but if the truth be that I have the manors both of South S. and North S., this ambiguity is matter in fact; and therefore it shall be holpen by averment, whether of them it was that the parties intended should pass. . . . Another sort of *ambiguitas latens* is correlative unto this: for this ambiguity spoken of before is, when one name and appellation doth denominate divers things; and the second is, when the same thing is called by divers names. As, if I give lands to Christ-Church in Oxford, and the name of the corporation is *Ecclesia Christi in Universitate Oxford*, this shall be holpen by averment, because there appears no ambiguity in the words: for the variance is matter in fact. But the averment shall not be of the intention, because it does not stand with the words. For in the case of equivocation the general intent includes both the special, and therefore stands with the words: but so it is not in variance; and therefore the averment must be a matter that doth induce a certainty, and not of intention; as to say that the precinct of 'Oxford' and of 'the University of Oxford' is one and the same, and not to say that the intention of the parties was that the grant should be to Christ Church in the University of Oxford."*

§ 2473. **Same: Blanks and Latent Ambiguities.** A document may be void for intrinsic indefiniteness of terms (*ante*, § 2407); or it may be, though definite, impossible to enforce extrinsically, because there are no objects existing upon which its terms can operate. These are simple principles, well established in their sphere; but in concrete application both of them require discrimination from the foregoing principle concerning equivocations.

(1) Is a *blank space* an equivocation? It certainly fits two or more objects equally; and where it represents merely an insufficient term in an at-

⁴ Thayer, Preliminary Treatise on Evidence, 424; the learned author examines the history of Bacon's maxim at pp. 425, 471.

tempted description it may be treated as an equivocation; because the writer has fixed upon an object, but his words do not carry the description far enough. On the other hand, where a blank space represents a failure to make a final expression of will, the act is incomplete; to supply declarations of intention would be to set up a rival will; there can be no interpretation, for there is nothing to interpret. It therefore depends on the particular document whether a blank space is an equivocation.¹

(2) Where the words and phrases of a document are *in themselves indeterminate* (as where a devise is made of "one of my seven houses"), there is again a case of failure to make a final expression of will; the actor has failed to make his selection, and his act is incomplete. On the general principle of legal acts (*ante*, § 2407), the document is (in the part in question) ineffective and void for uncertainty. This is Lord Bacon's *ambiguitas patens*; ² it cannot be interpreted, for there is nothing to interpret.³ But the terms may in effect indicate a final expression of will by leaving to some other person an *election* to take whichever object he wishes, — as in a devise of "any one of my seven houses"; here there is certainty of expression, and the act of another person is made a condition precedent.⁴ Where the words are

¹ *Eng.*: 1741, *Baylis v. Attorney-General*, 2 Atk. 239 (bequest "to the ward of Bread Street, according to Mr. — his will"; "parol evidence of the intention of the testator, where there is only a blank," excluded); 1790, *Hunt v. Hort*, 3 Prec. Ch. 311 ("my other pictures to become the property of Lady —"; L. C. Thurlow declined to "supply a blank by parol evidence"); 1799, *Price v. Page*, 4 Ves. Jr. 679 (bequest to "Price the son of — Price"; declarations of intent to give to a particular Price, admitted; "this is only that the testator did not know the Christian name"); 1877, *De Rosas' Goods*, L. R. 2 P. D. 66 (an executor named as "Perceval of Brighton, Esq., the father"; applied to William Perceval Boxall, who answered the description); *U. S.*: 1897, *Marske v. Willard*, 169 Ill. 276, 48 N. E. 290 (lease of "lot No. — in assessor's subdivision of Whiting's block No. 8"; the identity of the lot provable by parol, since "it is perfectly clear from the lease, considered within itself, that certain particular premises had been selected by the parties"); 1902, *Engelthaler v. Engelthaler*, 196 Ill. 230, 63 N. E. 669 (the will devised a homestead to the testator's wife for life, and further devised it after her death without naming any person; evidence of the testator's intention to devise it to his son F. E. was excluded).

The following curious case, which seems to belong here, should be compared with the citations in § 2467, *ante*: 1897, *Dennis v. Holsapple*, 148 Ind. 297, 47 N. E. 631 ("Whoever shall take good care of me, and maintain, nurse, clothe, and furnish me [etc.] . . . during the time of my life yet when I shall need the same, shall have all of my property," etc.; a letter of the testatrix to H., calling her to come and care for the testatrix and referring to the above provision in her will, admitted to show the testatrix' intention).

² See the quotation *ante*, § 2472. This is the problem satirized in Alexander Pope's Report of the Case of Stradling v. Styles, wherein it appeared that the testator had bequeathed "all my black and white horses" and the question was whether his six pied horses passed (*Works, Elwin & Cornthorpe's ed.*, X, 430).

³ 1802, *Doe v. Joinville*, 3 East 172 (devise to "my brother and sister's family"; held void for uncertainty); 1901, *Hanna v. Palmer*, 194 Ill. 41, 61 N. E. 1051 (deed granting a part of the "west half of the northeast quarter . . . containing one acre more or less," held void for uncertainty); 1896, *Wilkins v. Jones*, 119 N. C. 98, 25 S. E. 789 (description of land in a deed, held not too vague).

So, too, a case of apparent equivocation may, after declarations of intention are considered, turn out to be a case of failure to make a definite choice; 1833, *Richardson v. Watson*, 4 B. & Ad. 787 (devise of "the close in K. aforesaid now in the occupation of the said J. W."; the declarations of intention showed that the testator supposed that he had but one such close, but in fact he had two; the devise held void for uncertainty, and not subject to election).

So, too, the terms may be void for repugnancy, or one repugnant term may override the other: 1839, *Saunderson v. Piper*, 5 Bing. N. C. 425 (a bill of exchange read "two hundred pounds," and in the place for figures, "£245"; held, as against the acceptor, that his declarations indicating an intention to accept for £245 were inadmissible, on the theory of patent ambiguity, and that the verdict should be for £200; *Coitman, J.*, diss.); and cases cited *post*, § 2477, note 8.

⁴ Bacon, *Maxim XXV* (in a part of the passage not quoted *supra*); 1900, *Re Chandle*, 2 Ch. 620.

on the face of the document not final, but the extrinsic facts happen to make them certain — as where the devise is to "one of the children of A," and A has but one child —, the terms would seem to be void for uncertainty, whether the devisor knew the facts or not.⁶

(3) Where the terms of the document are definite, but the extrinsic facts make them *impossible of execution* — as where a devise is of "my house on Cedar street," and in fact the testator has no such house —, the act is again void, — not however for lack of finality in expression, but merely for impossibility of enforcement.⁶

(4) Where the terms of a document contain an *erroneous description*, and under the principle of *falsa demonstratio (post, § 2476)* some part of it can be ignored as non-essential, the remainder may still become too vague and thus be void for uncertainty, on the principle of (2) above; for example, where a devise is made of "the house No. 19 Cedar street," and there is no house at No. 19 Cedar street, but only at No. 13 Cedar street, it might be possible to ignore the number as non-essential, but what remains would then be too uncertain, "the house on Cedar street"; whereas if there had been an additional term of description, "the house which my son lives in at No. 19 Cedar street," the remainder, ignoring the number, would have been sufficiently definite.⁷

§ 2474. **Same:** (2) **Exception for Erroneous Description.** Does the exception for equivocations extend also to misdescriptions? For example, a devise is made to "J. S., eldest son of R. S." and there are two persons, each of whom fulfils one part but not the whole of the description, one person being the eldest son of R. S., though not named J., and the other being a son of R. S. and named J., but not the eldest son; are declarations of intention proper to consider? There are among the earlier rulings some which can be wrested into precedents upon this point.¹ But the attitude towards inter-

⁶ Wigram, *Extrinsic Evidence*, § 79, suggests the contrary solution, where the testator knows the facts; "it is the form of expression only, not the intention, which is ambiguous." The following case shows the distinction between this and equivocation. 1887, *Phelan v. Slattery*, 19 L. R. Ir. 177 (bequest to "my nephew," there being at least five such persons; the testator's instructions to his solicitor, admitted, because "the description is alike applicable to not only T. D. but to one or more other nephews").

⁶ 1818, *Beaumont v. Field*, 3 Chitty 275 (deed of all the lands "now in the occupation of the widow K. and son"; at the time no lands were so occupied, the widow K. having been dead two years; held, that a verdict refusing to enforce the deed for uncertainty was good); 1834, *King v. Badeley*, 3 Myl. & K. 417 (devise over in case "certain contingent property" should vest in his children; there being no contingent interests in the children, the testator's declarations of his meaning were excluded).

⁷ Examples of this are given in §§ 2476, 2477, *post*.

¹ Bacon's Maxim (quoted *ante*, § 2472) seems at first sight to deal with it, in the concluding passage, but his notion is really a distinct one. Omitting some intervening cases, the course of rulings in the half-century before *Miller v. Travers* was as follows: 1790, *Baugh v. Read*, 1 Ves. Jr. 256 (similar to *Selwood v. Mildmay*, *infra*, the actual stock here being not so much as described; per L. C. Thurlow: "where a testator uses certain words which *prima facie* give a clear account, the same fact that enables you to prove that there is a latent ambiguity enables you to prove what was his intention"); 1792, *Delmore v. Robello*, 1 Ves. Jr. 412 (bequest to "all the children of his two sisters Reyne and Estrella"; before the date of the will, a sister named Reyne had become a nun and lived at Genoa, and another sister Rebecca living at Leghorn, with Estrella, had children; declarations of intention that he meant to provide for the children of his sisters at Leghorn were excluded, on the theory that this was not a latent ambiguity); 1796, *Thomas v. Thomas*, 6 T. R. 671 (devise "to my granddaughter Mary Thomas of Leeschiloyd in Merther parish"; one M. T.

pretation by extrinsic circumstances was down to the end of the 1700s so different from the modern attitude (*ante*, § 2470), and the rule for equivocations then held a relation to the rest of the law so different from its present one (*ante*, § 2472), that it is hardly possible to build up any doctrine to-day from the earlier rulings. However, in 1932, in the much-considered case of *Miller v. Travers*, the doctrine was plainly laid down that such a second exception existed:

1892, *Tindal, C. J.*, in *Miller v. Travers*, 8 Bing. 244: "The cases to which this construction [*Ambiguitas verborum latens verificationes suppletur*] applies will be found to range themselves into two separate classes. . . . The first class is, where the description of the thing devised, or of the devisee, is clear upon the face of the will; but upon the death of the testator it is found, that there are more than one estate or subject-matter of devise, or more than one person whose description follows out and fills the words used in the will. As where the testator devises his manor of Dale, and at his death it is found that he has two manors of that name, South Dale and North Dale; or where a man devises to his son John, and he has two sons of that name. In each of these cases respectively parol evidence is admissible to show which manor was intended to pass and which son was intended to take. The other class of cases is that in which the description contained in the will of the thing intended to be devised, or of the person who is intended to take, is true in part, but not true in every particular. As where an estate is devised called A., and is described as in the occupation of B., and it is found, that though there is an estate called A., yet the whole is not in B.'s occupation; or where an estate is devised to a person whose surname or Christian name is mistaken; or whose description is imperfect or inaccurate; in which latter class of cases parol evidence is admissible to show what estate was intended to pass, and who was the devisee intended to take, provided there is sufficient indication of intention appearing on the face of the will to justify the application of the evidence."

Such being the language of the opinion in *Miller v. Travers* — a ruling which appears neither then nor subsequently to have met with anything but approval —, it was a singular fate which led to the repeal of the second part of the rule by the citation of the authority of the very case itself. An eagle pierced with an arrow winged by its own pinion, — such was the treatment of

was in fact only a great granddaughter and lived in another parish, and one Elinor Evans, elsewhere named in the will, was a granddaughter and lived in M. parish; though the devise was ultimately held void for uncertainty, yet declarations of the testator were admitted, made on reading the will, that there was a mistake in the name but there was no need to rectify it, as the place of abode would suffice to describe the devisee; the jury found that no such mistake in fact had been made); 1797, *Selwood v. Mildmay*, 3 Ves. Jr. 306 (bequest of "part of my stock in the 4 per cent. annuities of the Bank of England"; the testator had sold his 4 per cents and at the time of execution owned only "long" annuities; the attorney's testimony was received that the testator's instructions were based on the wording of a former will executed before selling the 4 per cents); 1797, *Walpole v. Cholmondeley*, 7 T. R. 134, 145 (the testator made a will in 1752, and another in 1756, and a third by codicil in 1776; in the third he confirmed "his last will and testament dated Nov.

25, 1752"; it was offered to be shown by the scrivener of the third will that upon asking for the testator's prior will the testator referred him to M., who produced that of 1752; that the codicil of 1776 was then drafted by the scrivener in the belief that the will of 1752 was the last one, and that the recital of its date was not read over to the testator, etc., etc.; this was excluded, on the ground that there was no latent ambiguity); 1815, *Stockdale v. Bushby*, 19 Ves. Jr. 351 (bequest to "my namesake Thomas S., the second son of my brother J. S., over and above his equal share with his brothers, 1000 l."; there was no son Thomas, but the second son was William, and was given the legacy; the testator's declarations of intention to give the second son 1000l. more than the others being admitted); 1821, *Still v. Hoste*, 6 Madd. 192 (bequest to "Sophia Still, daughter of P. S."; there were two daughters, neither of them named Sophia; the scrivener's testimony to the testator's instructions and a mistake in copying them was admitted).

Miller v. Travers in the closely ensuing case of Doe v. Hiscocks.³ The latter ruling rested, of course, on some misconception of the former one, — though how this could arise is incomprehensible. Doe v. Hiscocks was thereafter followed almost implicitly,⁴ and may be said to represent the law of England to-day;⁵ though some judges have expressed their dissatisfaction with the result.⁶ In the United States, the question has seldom been raised, and no distinct rule can be predicated,⁶ — chiefly because of the frequent ignoring of the distinction between "intention" or meaning, as a general canon of interpretation, and "declarations of intention" as a specific subject of exception.

That the principle of the exception should include this class of cases can hardly be doubted. The description applies in part only to each object, and yet one of the two (or more) is obviously signified; there is no danger in receiving declarations of intention, because the precise words of the document cannot be literally applied in any event, and there is thus no competition between the words and the extrinsic utterance; it is simply a question which words shall be ignored as the un-essential part of the description:

³ 1839, Doe v. Hiscocks, 5 M. & W. 363 (devise to "my grandson John H., eldest son of the said John H."); in fact, there were two sons, Simon, the oldest by a first marriage, and John, the oldest by a second marriage; held that this was not an equivocation, but a misdescription, since J. fulfilled the name but not the relationship, and S. vice versa, and that the testator's instructions and declarations were not admissible; several cases being cited as concededly opposed to this view, it was added that "these cases seem to us at variance with the decision in Miller v. Travers, which is a decision entitled to great weight," and "we are prepared on this point, the point in judgment in Miller v. Travers, to adhere to the authority of that case". The facts excluded in Miller v. Travers have been already noted (*ante*, § 2471, n. 6). The error in Doe v. Hiscocks consisted in not perceiving that the facts excluded in Miller v. Travers had been there offered for a very different purpose from that of the facts offered in Doe v. Hiscocks; the opinion excluding the facts in Miller v. Travers expressly sanctioned the purpose sought by the offer in Doe v. Hiscocks.

⁴ 1846, Lindgren v. Lindgren, 9 Beav. 358 (similar to Selwood v. Mildmay, *supra*, n. 1; the latter held not to have been overruled by Miller v. Travers or Doe v. Hiscocks); 1853, Bernasconi v. Atkinson, 10 Hare 345 (devise to "my first cousin Vincent B., the son of my late uncle Peter B."; there existed a George Vincent B., son of another uncle Joseph B., and a Frederick B., son of the uncle Peter B.; the former visited the testator, but the latter did not; the Court considered the circumstances and habits of the persons, to ascertain the essential part of the description, but would not consider declarations of intent; following Doe v. Hiscocks); 1860, Drake v. Drake, 8 H. L. C. 172 (a description fitting two persons, each in part only; the testator's instructions to the draftsman, excluded); 1874, Charter v. Charter, L. R. 7 H. L. 364 (the

facts are stated *post*, § 2477; declarations of intention were conceded by all the judges to be inadmissible, on the authority of Doe v. Hiscocks, Bernasconi v. Atkinson, and Drake v. Drake, though Lord Selborne added, "why the law should be so, . . . when evidence of the same kind is admitted in what Lord Bacon describes as cases of equivocation, I am not sure that I clearly understand").

⁵ 1894, Chappell's Goods, Froh. 98 ("declarations of the testator . . . are probably not admissible").

⁶ 1874, Lord Selborne, in Drake v. Drake, *supra*; 1877, Hannen, J., in De Rosaz's Goods, L. R. 2 P. D. 66, 71.

⁷ 1887, Decker v. Decker, 121 Ill. 341, 12 N. E. 750 (quoting with approval the above language of Tindal, C. J.); 1889, Ehrman v. Hopkins, 57 Miss. 192 (devise of "property deeded to B. by Knox," with a description of bounds, etc., and afterwards a devise of the testator's "present home by this will devised"; the former description in one point, and the phrase "present home," applied to a lot deeded by one French, the home being partly on each, and the testator living in the part on the F. lot; declarations of intention were excluded); 1897, Gordon v. Burris, 141 Mo. 602, 43 S. W. 642 (bequest to "Lucy May Gordon, granddaughter"; there was a granddaughter Mary Jane Gordon; evidence received of a conversation between the testatrix and the scrivener in which the former insisted that a granddaughter named May was intended); 1902, Willard v. Darrah, 168 id. 660, 68 S. W. 1023 (quoted *supra*); 1899, Van Nostrand v. Board, 59 N. J. Eq. 19, 44 Atl. 472 (bequest to "the Domestic Missionary Society," given to the "Board of Domestic Missions of the Reformed Church in America," on consideration of testator's membership in that church, his habitual use of "the Domestic Missionary Society" in referring to that Board, and his expressed intent; treated as an equivocation).

1902, *Brace, P. J.*, in *Willard v. Darrak*, 108 Mo. 660, 68 S. W. 1023 (the devise was to "my well-beloved nephews J. and W. W.;" the testator had two grandnephews so named and also two grandsons so named, the latter being his intimates and the former being personally unknown to him; evidence of his repeated declarations that he had bought this land for them and that he had instructed the scrivener in their favor was admitted). "The devise is 'to my well-beloved nephews John and William Willard'; and it is found from the indirect parol evidence that there are two sets of brothers, each named John and William Willard, — the plaintiff and his brother, 'well-beloved' grandsons of the testator, and two grandnephews, not 'well beloved' of him, and having no legal or moral claim on his bounty. As to each of these sets of brothers the description contained in the will is partly correct and partly incorrect. It is correct as to the Christian and surname of each set. It is correct as to neither in the superadded description of relationship to the testator, as the word "nephew," *simpliciter*, cannot be held to include grandnephews and the inapplicability in this case is re-enforced by the word 'beloved' prefixed thereto. So that the description in the will, when it comes to be applied to those only who can possibly have been intended, is just as equivocal in point of fact as if these additional words of description had been omitted, as in the first case supposed. The description of the persons is partly correct and partly incorrect, leaving something equivocal. The description does not apply precisely to either of these two sets of brothers, but it is morally and legally certain that it was intended to apply to one or the other, thus bringing the case within the rule established by the second class of cases, in which direct or extrinsic parol evidence, including expressions of intention, is admissible. Such evidence was therefore admissible in this case, in order to solve a latent ambiguity produced by extrinsic evidence in the application of the terms of the will to the objects of the testator's bounty, to prevent the fourth clause of the will from perishing, and obviate a partial intestacy of the testator. Its effect is not to establish an intention different in essence from that expressed in the will, but to let in light by which that intention, rendered obscure by outside circumstances, may be more clearly discerned, and the will of the testator, in its entire scope, effectuated according to his true intent and meaning."

§ 2475. **Same: (3) Exception for "Rebutting an Equity" (Legacies, Advancements, and Disinheritance).** Wherever in the interpretation of a will, a certain term or legal effect is implied by a general rule of law (and not as a matter of inference from the specific words or phrases of a particular will), the source of such an implication is something external to the will; therefore the reason for excluding declarations of intention (*ante*, § 2471) — namely, their rivalry with the words of the will, and the risk of their abuse — falls away, and the declarations may be considered. For example, when a testator names an executor, the rule of presumption, that the residue of personalty is by implication bequeathed to him, is a general and artificial rule independent of the particular will. So, too, the counter-presumption that a specific legacy to the executor negatives the implication of a bequest of the residue. Hence, if the rule is to be merely a presumption — *i. e.* if a contrary intent may be established —, the ascertainment of the actual intent may include all useful data, including the testator's circumstances and declarations:

1821, *Plumer, V. C.*, in *Hurst v. Beach*, 5 Madd. 351: "Where the Court raises the presumption against the intention of a double gift, by reason that the sums and the motive are the same in both instruments, it will receive evidence that the testator actually intended the double gift he has expressed; in like manner, evidence is received to repel the presumption raised against the executor's title to the residue from the circumstance of a

§§ 2400-2476] INTERPRETATION; STATEMENTS OF INTENTION. § 2476

legacy given to him; and to repel the presumption that a portion [for a child] is satisfied by a legacy."

Accordingly such has long been the practice in dealing with the artificial rules as to a bequest of the residue to an executor,¹ a gift of advancement to a child² or a husband,³ and is capable of application to any general and artificial rule of inference as distinguished from a specific inference founded on a particular document.⁴

In more recent times an analogous situation has come to be presented under that class of statutes which requires that a child's intestate share be distributed to him, in spite of a testamentary disposal to other persons, unless it is made to appear that the child was "*intentionally omitted*" from the will. Here the rule of the statute is again merely one of presumption, artificially raised for all wills, independently of a particular document, and corresponding precisely (though reversely in tenor) to the rule which took the residue from the next of kin and gave it to the executor, unless a contrary intent appeared. Hence, unless the statute expressly requires the intent to be ascertained from the will alone,⁵ the testator's declarations may be considered with the other data.⁶

§ 2476. *Falsa Demonstratio non nocet*; General Principle. It is not necessary, and it is not humanly possible, for the symbols of description, which we call words, to describe in every detail the objects designated by the symbols. The notion that a description is a complete enumeration is an instinctive fallacy which must be got rid of before interpretation can be properly attempted (*ante*, § 2458). For example, a devise of "the house owned by me at No. 19 Cedar Street, Millville, Massachusetts," is obviously a mere shorthand indication of some simple but essential attributes of the house. How many stories, rooms, doors, windows, closets, has it? What is the color of paper on the respective walls, the kind of wood in the floors, the number of steps on each stair-flight, the pattern of the window frames? These and a hundred

¹ 1723, *Rachfield v. Careless*, 2 P. Wms. 158; 1734, *Brown v. Selwin*, Cas. t. Talbot, 242; 1791, *Nonrse v. Finch*, 2 Ves. Sr. 344, 357; 1794, *Clen-nell v. Lewthwhite*, 2 Ves. Jr. 465, 644. The earlier doctrine about executors was changed by St. 1 W. IV, c. 40. Compare the following: 1816, *Langham v. Sanford*, 2 Meriv. 6; 1891, *Re Applebee*, 3 Ch. 422, 428.

² 1790, *Ellison v. Cookson*, 2 Ves. Sr. 100, 107; 1897, *Finch v. Garrett*, 102 Ia. 381, 71 N. W. 429; 1894, *Palmer v. Culbertson*, 143 N. Y. 213, 38 N. E. 199.

³ 1790, *Clinton v. Hooper*, 2 Ves. Sr. 173, 181.

⁴ Compare the following: 1897, *Wentworth v. Read*, 166 Ill. 139, 46 N. E. 777 (intent to charge legacies on realty; no extrinsic declarations admissible); 1898, *Ingersoll v. Hopkins*, 170 Mass. 401, 49 N. E. 623 (will in contemplation of marriage; extrinsic facts excluded; St. 1892, c. 118, construed).

⁵ As in Michigan: 1898, *Carpenter v. Snow*, 117 Mich. 492, 76 N. W. 78.

⁶ 1897, *Hawhe v. R. Co.*, 165 Ill. 561, 46 N. E.

240; 1899, *Re O'Connor*, 21 R. I. 465, 44 Atl. 591; 1899, *Coulam v. Doull*, 133 U. S. 216, 231, 10 Sup. 253 ("Since under the statute that evidence opens up a question as to the testator's intention which but for the statute could not have arisen, and which by the statute is not required to be determined by the will, we cannot perceive why the disposal of it should be so limited"; applying the Colorado statute, and examining prior cases); 1896, *Atwood's Estate*, 14 Utah 1, 45 Pac. 1036. *Contra*: 1895, *Re Salmon's Estate*, 107 Cal. 614, 40 Pac. 1030.

Distinguish the following question, arising under such a statute: 1898, *Callaghan's Estate*, 119 Cal. 571, 51 Pac. 860 (will leaving property in A. to grandchildren; the Code, § 1307, would allow them to have an equal share if in the will the testator had "omitted to provide" for them; to show that they had in effect been omitted, evidence that the testatrix did not own or claim any property in A. at the time of making the will, excluded, because there was an express provision).

other details would go to fill out the description. Without them, it is imperfect, in an absolute sense. Yet no one would insist that the devise was void for uncertainty, for lack of the addition of these details. Why? Because the features mentioned do happen to suffice to fulfil the purpose of interpretation, namely, to enable us to find the object designated, and to select it with fair certainty from others. Certainty, in other words, is a relative term; it signifies that the few terms employed are the essential ones for the purpose. Had they not been in themselves sufficient, we might even have looked at extrinsic declarations of intention (*ante*, § 2472).

Conversely, then, an *excessive* description is not inherently fatal, if the essential terms of it can be ascertained. A devise of "my yellow house at No. 19 Cedar Street" may lead us to a white house at that place; and if we can surely believe, under all the circumstances, that the street number of the house, not the color of the paint, is the essential term, we are to apply the devise to that house. Just as we found that the omitted terms were not essential to applying the description, so we may find that some of the inserted terms are not essential. Each description of a single object must be conceived of as a single utterance, — just as one cipher cable word may represent a message of forty words. We are doing it no violence by ignoring the non-essential terms; for neither the omission nor the insertion of non-essential terms alters its essence as a whole. By conceiving clearly the singleness of each description as a symbol of a single object, we appreciate that the imperfections of either omission or insertion do not destroy its character as a single effort at the designation of a single object. And so we come to the maxim *Falsa demonstratio non nocet*.

The practical problem in a particular case of course is to ascertain which specific term is the essential one. But the important point of principle is that the process of ascertaining it, and then of ignoring the others in the application of the description, is entirely consistent with the general process of interpretation. Ever since the time of Bacon (to go no further back) this has been understood and accepted:

Circa 1597, Sir Francis Bacon, Maxims of the Law, XXIV (Works, Spedding's ed., vol. XIV, p. 267): "Præsentia corporis tollit errorem nominis, et veritas nominis tollit errorem demonstrationis. There be three degrees of certainty, — presence; name; and demonstration or reference: whereof the presence, the law holdeth of greatest dignity; the name, in the second degree; and the demonstration or reference, in the lowest; and always error or falsity in the less worthy shall not control nor frustrate sufficient certainty and verity in the more worthy. And therefore if I give a horse to I. D. being present, and say unto him, I. S. take this; this is a good gift, notwithstanding I call him by a wrong name; but so had it not been if I had delivered the horse to a stranger to the use of I. S. where I meant I. D. So if I say unto I. S., Here I give you my ring with the ruby, and deliver it with my hand, and the ring bear a diamond and no ruby; this is a good gift notwithstanding I named it amiss. . . . Now, for the second part of this rule, touching the name and the reference; for the explaining thereof it must be noted what things sound in name or in demonstration, and what things sound in demonstration or addition; as first, in lands the greatest certainty is, where the land hath a proper name and cognizance; as, 'the manor of Dale,' 'Grandfield,' etc.: the next is equal to that, when the land is set forth by

bounds and abuttals, as 'a close of pasture abutting on the east part upon Emsden Wood, on the south upon, etc.' . . . Therefore if I grant my close called Dale, in the parish of Hurst, in the county of Southampton; and the parish likewise extendeth into the county of Berkshire, and the whole close of Dale lieth in the county of Berkshire; yet because the parcel is specially named, the falsity of the addition hurteth not; and yet this addition did sound in name; but, as was said, it was less worthy than a proper name."

1861, *Caton, C. J., in Myers v. Ladd*, 26 Ill. 415, 417: "If I give a bill of sale of my black horses, and describe them as being now in my barn, I shall not avoid it by showing that the horses were in the pasture or on the road. The description of the horses being sufficient to enable witnesses acquainted with my stock to identify them, the locality specified would be rejected as surplusage. Nor is this rule confined to personal property. It is equally applicable to real estate. If I sell an estate, and describe it as my dwelling house in which I now reside, situate in the city of Ottawa, I shall not avoid the deed by showing that my residence was outside the city limits. So if a deed describe lands by its correct numbers, and further describe it as being situated in a wrong county, the latter is rejected. The rule is, that where there are two descriptions in a deed, the one, as it were, superadded to the other, and one description being complete and sufficient of itself, and the other, which is subordinate and superadded, is incorrect, the incorrect description, or feature or circumstance of the description, is rejected as surplusage, and the complete and correct description is allowed to stand alone."

In applying the principle there is no inherent difficulty. The process consists in looking at all the circumstances (*ante*, § 2470) that can throw light on the sense of the words of description and their relative essentiality; and the terms thus found to be the essential ones are applied, unless they are too uncertain (*ante*, § 2473) and therefore void. But the superficial bearing of other rules has tended often to create confusion, and to obstruct the full operation of the present one:

(1) The supposed rule against *disturbing a "plain meaning"* (*ante*, § 2462). When the present rule is to be applied, a part of the description being found erroneous but non-essential, three situations may be distinguished. First, only one object may be eligible to answer the description; this is the common case (illustrated above by Bacon's examples), about which no difficulty can arise. Secondly, two or more objects may be eligible, the description being in one part imperfect for one, in another part for the other; this is a frequent case, and the rule is equally well settled.¹ Thirdly, two or more objects may be eligible, one of which perfectly answers the description, the others imperfectly in some respects. Now in this situation the rule against disturbing a plain meaning (if such a rule be recognized) will of course oblige us to apply the description to the first object, even though it could be made to appear that a part of the description was non-essential and that the essential terms of it were actually used to designate one of the other objects. So far, then, as such a rule is recognized, it prevents the due operation of the present principle.²

(2) The rule against overthrowing the terms of a document by reason of a

¹ The only question here is whether declarations of intention may be considered: *ante*, § 2474.

² The cases are collected *ante*, § 2462; see especially *Tucker v. Seaman's Aid Society*, Mass.

mistake (*ante*, § 2421), or, what is the same thing, by declarations of a contrary intention (*ante*, § 2471), is a legitimate one, and must be observed. Hence, if a devise is of "my white house at No. 19 Cedar Street," and it is proposed to show that the word "white" was by mistake inserted for "green," this proposal must be rejected as improper. Now, in many of the instances of this sort,³ that has been the form of the proposal, and the Court's necessary rejection of it has therefore seemed to be a discountenancing of the present principle that *falsa demonstratio non nocet*. By approaching the problem from the wrong point of view, the party has prevented the document from being rightly dealt with. The words cannot be overthrown from within (as it were), by attacking the terms of the document; but, taking them as they are, they can be interpreted from without, and the imperfect surplusage of description will not prevent the application of its essential terms. Hence, in such cases as above, if the attempt is made to interpret the description by looking at the testator's circumstances, and if the circumstances are that he had one house only on Cedar Street, that it was numbered 19, and that it was in former days painted white, we may then be willing to conclude that the color-term in the description is entirely subordinate and non-essential, and that the now green house at No. 19 Cedar Street is the identical object which the testator was attempting to describe in the words "my white house at No. 19 Cedar Street." In so doing, we make no assumptions whatever as to how the word "white" came into the will, whether by a draftsman's mistake or otherwise; we merely interpret what is found in the document, and we conclude that the description as a whole was used of a particular house. The occasionally improper method of approaching the problem, then, explains most of the rulings in which the present principle seems to be inoperative.

(3) When, in applying the present principle, the imperfect surplusage is ignored, the remainder must of course be sufficiently definite to be capable of application; else it would be void for uncertainty (*ante*, § 2473). The question, then, often arises whether, in a will, a term may be implied which would be necessary, and also sufficient, to remove that uncertainty. For example, in a devise of "a four-story house at No. 19 Cedar Street," it may appear that the testator owns no house at No. 19, but does own a four-story house at No. 219 on that street; assuming, then, that the house-number is non-essential, the remaining terms are "a four-story house on Cedar Street"; but this is obviously by its vagueness incapable of application. Now it may be assumed that the testator would not have devised a house not owned (or believed by him to be owned) by himself;⁴ but the fact remains that the terms of a will are merely "a" four-story house. Is there, then, any stretch of reasoning by which, though not directly inserting the words "owned by me," we may construe the word "a" or "house" as signifying "one of mine," or the like? This is the point of controversy on which many rulings turn; and the general

³ Particularly in *Kartz v. Hibner*, Ill., cited *post*, § 2477.

⁴ In Roman custom, on the contrary, this indirect mode of gift was not uncommon: *Just.*

Instit. II, 20, 4: "Non solum autem testatoris vel heredis res, sed et aliena legari potest; ita ut heres cogatur redimere eam et præstare, vel, si non potest redimere, astimationem dare."

opinion is that no such implication is permissible. Such rulings, however, do not involve any doubt of the principle *falsa demonstratio non nocet*; they merely decline to imply into the will, for the purpose of being interpreted, words which are not there.

§ 2477. *Same: Application to Deeds and Wills.* (a) In its application to deeds of land, the foregoing principle has long been recognized without hesitation; and numerous presumptive canons of interpretation have been formed, as to the prevalence of monuments over distances, and the like, for those parts of a description which deal particularly with the metes and bounds. The principle is also frequently exemplified in other kinds of descriptive terms.¹ Probably the reason why there has not here been the confusion which has marked some of the testamentary cases is that, with deeds, no one would ordinarily think of proposing to overturn its words on the ground of individual mistake, the standard necessarily being a mutual one (*ante*, § 2466); and thus the problem is usually approached from the proper point of view.² The principle is of course equally applicable to contracts³ and all bilateral transactions.

¹ 1898, *Cowan v. Truefitt*, 2 Ch. 551 (deed of rooms on 2d floor of Nos. 13 and 14, Old Bond St., with free ingress "through the staircase and passage of No. 13"; there was a staircase in No. 14 but none in No. 13; held that the words "of No. 13" might be rejected as *falsa demonstratio*, and the deed made effectual by the only staircase); 1897, *Gordon v. Kitrell*, — *Miss.* —, 21 Bo. 922 (an assessment of "east fractional section 12, township 6, range 6, W." and a deed of "lot 6, McLeod's subdivision, west side of river, section 12, township 6, range 6, W."; identity of the two parcels shown); 1844, *Hathaway v. Power*, 6 Hill N. Y. 453 (a deed of "all that certain tract or parcel of land situate in township number 11 in the third range of townships, . . . it being 160 acres of land, in lot number 14," held to convey all of lot 14, though it contained 185 acres; "the number of acres . . . can only be regarded as an attempted designation of quantity which turns out to be erroneous"); 1896, *Higdon v. Rice*, 119 N. C. 623, 36 S. E. 256 (example of erroneous courses, distances, etc., applied); 1896, *Davidson v. Shaler's Heirs*, 1b. 582, 26 S. E. 340 (to locate a chestnut-tree corner, evidence of the one actually marked, admitted, although the description "a chestnut, S. E. corner of G. W.'s lot" became erroneous, and read "N. E. corner, etc."); 1900, *Wiseman v. Green*, 127 *id.* 288, 37 S. E. 273 (Furches, J.: "The deed contains the following calls: 'Beginning on the southeast bank of Toe river, two rods below the mill house, and runs west, north, east, and south, to the beginning, so as to include the mill and site and two acres of land, it being and including the land sold as the excess of the homestead of A. Wiseman.' It appears from the survey and the evidence in the case that the land contained in the calls of this deed does not include the saw mill, nor the grist mill, nor the mill site. But, if the first call 'west' is reversed, and read 'east,' instead of 'west,' the description in the deed, 'beginning on the southeast bank of

the Toe river, two rods below the mill house,' will include both the saw and grist mill and mill site. . . . It seems to us that common sense, justice, law, and the precedents of this Court sustain the ruling of the Court, and the finding of the jury that 'west' was a mistake, and should have been written 'east.' This being so, the Court does not change the deed, but only puts a legal construction upon it, which creates no new rights, nor does it affect the rights of others"); 1900, *Silliman v. Whitmer*, 196 Pa. 363, 46 Atl. 489 (deed describing land erroneously as to county, admitted); 1895, *Scates v. Henderson*, 44 S. C. 548, 22 S. E. 724 (where the fourth side of a lot was said to be bounded by a lot owned by C. H. C., and this, on being shown incorrect, was rejected, and a lot owned by K. and F. taken as boundary); 1858, *Fancher v. DeMontegre*, 1 Head 40 (deed-land described as "Grant No. 4795 to J. R."; that the grant was really No. 4794 to T. B. E., held immaterial, the land being otherwise sufficiently identified); 1892, *Rushton v. Hallett*, 8 Utah 277, 30 Pac. 1014 (deed reserving "the street heretofore deeded to said city"; a street had been laid off but not deeded; the description was applied to that street, the error being "matter of description only").

For cases involving the use of an erroneous surname of a person, see *ante*, § 2465.

² The following case illustrates how a Court may be misled in this way: 1899, *Donahoo v. Johnson*, 113 Ala. 126, 21 So. 70, 2 D. 888 (deed; described by a line "to a stake at the northwest corner," etc.; the fact that there was a stake at the northeast corner but none at the northwest corner, and that the word "northwest" had by mistake been inserted instead of "northeast," excluded).

³ 1891, *New York Life Ins. Co. v. Aitkin*, 125 N. Y. 661, 36 N. E. 732 (D. and his wife mortgaged to the plaintiff; then D. conveyed to G., who covenanted to pay the mortgage; then

(b) Many early English rulings upon *wills* recognize the principle, and some of them show a surprising approximation to the modern attitude;⁴ in the cases of later times there seems to have been a consistent observance of the principle.⁵ But in the rulings in the United States there has occurred, in

G. and his wife conveyed to the defendant, who covenanted to pay "a certain mortgage made and executed by the party of the first part to the N. Y. Life Ins. Co. bearing date the 3d day of December, 1868, to secure the sum of \$4000"; the defendant being charged with the mortgage made by D. and his wife, the description in the defendant's covenant was applied under the circumstances to D.'s mortgage, in spite of the error of describing it as G.'s).

⁴ 1607, *Sir Moyle Finch's Case*, 6 Co. Rep. 65 b (a deed held good, for "although the grantor's christian name was mistaken, yet forasmuch as there was a sufficient certainty to ascertain the name of the grantor, *sc.* Abbot of W., for that reason the grant was adjudged good; for in this lease it is true *nihil facit error nominis cum de corpore constat*; but otherwise it is of a writ"); 1629, *Chamberlaine v. Turner*, Cro. Car. 129 (devise of "the house or tenement wherein W. N. dwelleth, called The White Swan, in Old street"; it appeared that W. N. occupied only the entry and three rooms, while other persons occupied the remainder; the devise was held to pass the entire house); 1636, *Blagne v. Goid*, Cro. Car. 447, 473 (devise of a house "called the Corner-House, in Andover, in the tenure of B. and H."; in fact the corner-house was not in H.'s tenure, but the adjoining house was; held, that the corner-house passed; "and the addition 'in tenura H.', although it be not in his tenure and is a mistake, yet it is not surplusage, and although false, shall not vitiate the devise").

⁵ 1723, *Beaumont v. Fell*, 2 P. Wms. 141 (bequest of 500*l.* to "Catherine Earnley"; Gertrude Yardley claimed it, and the facts were that the testator had usually called her "Gatty" and of course would pronounce her surname "Yarnley," that he spoke so low that the draftsman could hardly understand, and finally that he had declared that he would do well for her in his will; the Master of the Rolls declared that this would not have been considered, for a devise of land, but being a chattel bequest "makes it a different case," even "after making the statute of frauds, provided there is a will in writing"); 1749, *Door v. Geary*, 1 Ves. Sr. 255 (bequest to the wife of "£700 capital East India stock in which he was then interested, possessed of, or intitled unto"; he had no East India stock, but had in his name £700 of Bank stock which had belonged to the wife; L. C. Hardwicke applied the bequest to the latter; "why is this a greater mistake than the devise of a black, having only a white horse, where the word 'black' should be rejected?"); 1784, *Thomas v. Steward*, 7 T. R. 140, note (devise to "Thomas Thomas, eldest son of Thomas Thomas of Chatham"; there was an eldest son Thomas, dead before the making of the will, and a second son Richard; on hearing evidence of the circumstances as known to the testatrix,

a verdict was given for Richard); 1812, *Garvey v. Hihbert*, 19 Ves. Jr. 125 (bequest to "the three children of D. D., the sum of 600*l.* each"; D. D. had four children, all born before the date of the will; and the bequest was applied to all; "the ground on which the Court has proceeded is that it is a mere slip in expression; the meaning is all children, or all servants; and the Court conceiving the intention to be to give to each child so much, strikes out the specified number"); 1813, *Goodtitle v. Southern*, 1 M. & S. 299 (devise of "all that my farm, lands, and hereditaments called Trogues-farm, situate within the parish of Darley in the county of Derby, now in the occupation of A. Clay"; two of the closes of Trogues-farm were not in the occupation of Clay, but were held to pass; "the defective description of the occupation will not alter the devise"); 1820, *Doe v. Hinthwaite*, 3 B. & Aid. 632 (devise to "G. H. eldest son of J. H.," and in default, etc., to "S. H. second son of J. H.," and in default, etc., to "J. H. third son of J. H.," and in default, etc., to "C. H. youngest son of J. H.," in fact, S. H. was the third son, and J. H. was the second son; issue directed to ascertain whether the name or the relative age of the devisees was the essential part of the description); 1844, *Newboit v. Pryce*, 14 Sim. 354 (bequest to "John N., second son of Rev. W. S. N., vicar of S.," there was a W. R. N., vicar of S., and he had three sons, G. D. N., R. H. N., and John P. N., the last being the third; the bequest was given to John P. N.; and the fact of the testatrix' "habit of calling one of the sons by the name of John" was held admissible); 1844, *Lee v. Pain*, 4 Hare 201, 249 (bequest to "the three sisters of the late Miss J. S.," she had four sisters surviving; Wigram, V. C., held that "where a legacy is given to the three children of A, A having four, five, or any larger number of children at the date of the will, the Court will reject the word 'three' upon the presumption of mistake, and all the children of A will be entitled"); 1853, *Bernasconi v. Atkinson*, 10 id. 345 (cited *ante*, § 2474); 1856, *The Clergy Society, 2 K. & J. 615* (bequest to "The Clergy Society . . . in London"; several societies considered, but none found to be the precise probable objects of the testatrix' words; the money therefore distributed by the Court upon its own scheme *cy pres*); 1874, *Charter v. Charter*, L. R. 7 H. L. 364 (appointment of "my son Forster Charter, as the executor," and devise of "all my messuages" to him, he to allow maintenance to the testator's wife "as long as they reside together in the same house"; the circumstances were that an elder son, William Forster C., and a younger son, Charles C., survived, and that the former had had disputes with his father and lived 100 miles away, and was known as "William," while the latter lived in his father's house on intimate terms; the

a few jurisdictions, more or less apparent confusion of precedents, due chiefly to one or another of the three considerations already noted (*ante*, § 2476). In particular, the case of *Kurtz v. Hibner*, in Illinois, has been the centre of much discussion, and serves well enough to illustrate both the principle and the misunderstandings about it.⁶ On the whole, a sound result is reached in the great majority of rulings.⁷

probate to William Forster having been revoked, this decree was sustained by an evenly divided vote, one half of the law lords apparently believing that the term of description "resides in the same house" was essential and prevailed over the name).

⁶ 1870, *Kurtz v. Hibner*, 35 Ill. 514 (devise to E. of the "W. $\frac{1}{4}$ of the S. W. $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sect. 32, T. 33, R. 10, containing 80 acres," and to J. of the "S. $\frac{1}{4}$ of the E. $\frac{1}{4}$ of the S. $\frac{1}{4}$ Sect. 31, in T. 35, R. 10, containing 40 acres"; the circumstances were excluded that the testator owned no 80-acre tract in S. 32, but did own such in S. 33, and that he owned a 40-acre tract in S. 32, but — presumably — not in S. 33, and that E. had been long in occupation of the 80-acre tract under a promise to devise it, and further that the draftsman of the will had by mistake inserted 32 for 33, and 31 for 32; the Court's ruling was clearly right, as excluding declarations of intent and the mistaken drafting, on the principle of §§ 2421, 2471, *ante*; and the opinion intimates that, had the will contained any other term of description identifying it, as in *Riggs v. Myers*, Mo., "my estate" or the like, the case could have been treated as one of misdescription and the erroneous term omitted; the opinion having been criticised by Redfield, C. J., the editor, in a note in 10 Am. Law Reg. v. s. 93, it was defended by Caton, J., not the writer of the opinion, in lb. 353, and was justified expressly on the above-named ground, that "if in this case the word 'my' had been used, instead of 'the,' in connection with the description, then indeed there would have been something in the will to construe, . . . an additional description by which the Court might have determined the subject of the devise after having eliminated '32'; . . . the fundamental error of the editor consists in his assuming that necessarily the testator designed to devise land to which he had a present existing title"; the ruling in *Kurtz v. Hibner*, thus explained, therefore stands for two propositions, (1) that if a description does not fit any object exactly, the circumstances may be considered and any part of the description which appears erroneous and nonessential may be ignored; (2) that, in settling what is the description to be taken for this purpose, the words "being my property" cannot be read into the will by implication; on the first point, all the later cases in Illinois, except apparently *Bishop v. Morgan*, are in accord; on the second point, they all assume the same doctrine, but seem not expressly to meet the question; see further a comment by Julius Rosenthal, Esq., in the *Chicago Legal News*, Mar. 18, 1871).

⁷ *Illinois*: 1876, *Bishop v. Morgan*, 82 Ill. 351 (devise of "S. E. $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sect. 10, . . . contain-

ing 40 acres more or less," the testator really owning only the S. E. $\frac{1}{4}$ of the N. E. $\frac{1}{4}$; the fact of his ownership of the latter, excluded, on the supposed authority of *Kurtz v. Hibner*; *Dickey, J.*, and *Sheldon, C. J.*, diss., on the ground that the clause "containing 40 acres" applied a sufficient description; the dissent is clearly correct); 1878, *Emmert v. Hayes*, 89 id. 16 (devise of "my estate of 195 acres in T. 3, etc.," the testator not owning anything in the section named; this fact was admitted and the devise applied; "where there are two descriptions, one superadded to the other, and one description being complete and sufficient of itself and the other, subordinate and superadded, incorrect, the incorrect feature is rejected as surplusage"; this ruling follows out the implication of *Kurtz v. Hibner*; the above language is reproduced from the opinion in *Myers v. Ladd*, Ill., quoted *ante*, § 2476); 1885, *Bowen v. Allen*, 113 id. 53 (devise of "my house and lot in the town of P., Ill., the north $\frac{1}{2}$ part of lot 19 block no. 10, railroad addition"; held, that if the fact appeared that the testatrix owned no house and lot in lot 19, but did own one in lot 12, the description would be applied; "in *Kurtz v. Hibner*, had the will described the property as his farm in the township and he had held no other in the township, then a different result would have been reached"); 1887, *Decker v. Decker*, 121 id. 341, 12 N. E. 750 (devise of "my real estate," including "20 acres off the W. $\frac{1}{4}$ of the N. E. $\frac{1}{4}$ of the N. E. $\frac{1}{4}$ of S. 33, T. 18, R. 11," the testator really owning only the N. W. $\frac{1}{4}$ of the N. E. $\frac{1}{4}$; doctrine of the two preceding cases followed, in applying the description, treating the erroneous part as immaterial); 1892, *Bingel v. Volz*, 142 id. 214, 31 N. E. 15 (devise of "70 acres off the S. side of the N. $\frac{1}{4}$ of the N. W. $\frac{1}{4}$ of S. 16, T. 5, R. 6," the testator really owning only the S. W. $\frac{1}{4}$, not the N. W. $\frac{1}{4}$; this fact, and the error of the draftsman in not following the instructions, excluded; though "if the description, after rejecting the repugnant element, were sufficient to describe accurately the land, it might be adopted"; practically following *Kurtz v. Hibner* exactly, and not inconsistent with the three immediately foregoing cases; the error of the opinion consists in expressly reviving the authority of *Bishop v. Morgan*, which had practically been overruled by the three cases succeeding it); *Indiana*: 1865, *Cleveland v. Spillman*, 25 Ind. 95 (devise of "my land, being the S. $\frac{1}{4}$ of the N. E. $\frac{1}{4}$, T. 36, R. 3, S. 12," but the testator owned only the N. W. $\frac{1}{4}$; the devise was applied to that land, by treating the erroneous part of the description as immaterial); 1881, *Judy v. Gilbert*, 77 id. 96 (devise of "N. E. $\frac{1}{4}$ of the S. E. $\frac{1}{4}$ of T. 29, R. 37, S. 11"; but the testator owned only the N. E. $\frac{1}{4}$ of the

From the foregoing class of cases should be distinguished those in which an insufficient description (as in a deed naming a section, without range or

S. W. $\frac{1}{4}$; the mistake of the draftsman, not allowed to be shown); 1885, *Funk v. Davis*, 103 id. 281, 2 N. E. 739 (devise of "N. W. $\frac{1}{4}$ of T. 27, R. 28, S. 3," the testator owning only the N. E. $\frac{1}{4}$; there being in the will no words such as "my land," the devise was not applied to the N. E. $\frac{1}{4}$; *Judy v. Gilbert* followed, but on correcter reasoning; *Cleveland v. Spillman* distinguished on the above ground); 1889, *Sturgis v. Work*, 122 id. 134, 22 N. E. 996 (devise of the "W. $\frac{1}{4}$ of the S. W. $\frac{1}{4}$, etc.," the testator owning only the N. E. $\frac{1}{4}$; the fact of this ownership excluded; the correct principle was conceded, but no other sufficient descriptive item was found, and the words "being my property" were refused to be implied); 1895, *Rook v. Wilson*, 142 id. 24, 41 N. E. 311 ("My real estate, to wit, the S. E. $\frac{1}{4}$ of the S. E. $\frac{1}{4}$ " of a certain section; the only land owned by the testator was the N. E. $\frac{1}{4}$ of the S. E. $\frac{1}{4}$; these facts were considered and the description applied to the latter piece); 1897, *Hartwig v. Schiefer*, 147 id. 64, 42 N. E. 471, 46 N. E. 75 ("my life insurance policy amounting to \$1000"; there was only one policy, payable to the wife, and, if dead, to her children; the wife was dead; facts admitted to identify it as having been treated by him as his, though running to his children); 1899, *Whiteman v. Whiteman*, 152 id. 263, 53 N. E. 225 (will reciting a former will of Oct. 18, 1890, and purporting to be a codicil thereto; the fact that no such former will existed, except one of Feb. 1890, destroyed after being incorporated in the codicil, admitted, on the theory of "latent ambiguity"); *Iowa*: 1873, *Fitzpatrick v. Fitzpatrick*, 36 Ia. 674 (devise of "W. $\frac{1}{4}$ of the N. E. $\frac{1}{4}$ of S. 23 in T. M. township," the testator owning only the E. $\frac{1}{4}$; declarations of intention excluded; "in all the cases . . . the language of the will, after rejecting the false description, has been sufficient to show what property or person was intended; . . . we cannot presume that the testator intended to assert his ownership of the thing bequeathed"; *Eckford v. Eckford*, *infra*, seems to ignore the tendency of the first quotation above); 1887, *Christy v. Badger*, 72 id. 581, 34 N. W. 427 (devise of "a small farm in Wayne Co., Ia., near the Missouri line"; rule of *Fitzpatrick v. Fitzpatrick*, *supra*, followed); 1887, *Covert v. Sebern*, 73 id. 564, 35 N. W. 636 (devise to "my stepson H. S. Covert"; there was only a stepson named John Harvey C.; the mistake of the scrivener allowed to be proved, to identify the devisee); 1892, *Eckford v. Eckford*, 91 id. 54, 58 N. W. 1093 (devise of "S. E. $\frac{1}{4}$ of T. 14, R. 98, S. 17," in a will beginning "I own the following estate"; the testator in fact owning only the S. W. $\frac{1}{4}$ in that section; held, that to omit the erroneous item of description was here impossible, because "there must be a sufficient general description in the will to lead to an identification after the particular description is written out"; the ruling is unsound in its application of the principle); *Kansas*: 1898, *Wilson v. Stevens*, 59 Kan. 771, 51 Pac. 903 ((1) a will giving to a

child Ollie; the fact was received that a daughter Viola was called Ollie in the family; (2) a will giving to a child "Florence Stevens," living "at Wichita"; the fact was received that there was a son living south of Wichita, and that the son's name Alonzo might have been the word understood by the scrivener as "Florence"); 1900, *Zirkle v. Leonard*, 61 id. 636, 60 Pac. 316 ("All the land I now have in the N. W. $\frac{1}{4}$ of S. 20, T. 13, R. 17, containing about 72 acres"; he owned only in the S. W. $\frac{1}{4}$; the description was applied to the latter); *Missouri*: 1855, *Riggs v. Myers*, 20 Mo. 997 (devise of "my estate," naming "the S. W. $\frac{1}{4}$ of S. 4, in T. 60, of R. 38, in Holt Co., Mo., with the privilege of using the water of the Big Spring"; the facts being that the testator owned no land in T. 60, but did own quarter-sections in T. 59, the land in T. 59 was given, being sufficiently identified by the terms "my estate" and "Big Spring"); 1897, *Gordon v. Bnriss*, 141 id. 602, 43 S. W. 642 (bequest to "Lucy May Gordon, granddaughter"; the fact was received that there was a granddaughter Mary Jane G., called "May" by the testatrix); *New Hampshire*: 1855, *Winkley v. Kaime*, 32 N. H. 268 (devise of "36 acres more or less in lot 37 in the 2d division in Barnstead," the testator really owning only lot 97; the description was applied to the latter; "by rejecting the words and figures 'in lot 37,' it will stand '36 acres in the 2d division in B., being the same I purchased of J. P.'"); 1883, *Smith v. Kimball*, 62 id. 606 (cited *ante*, § 2462); *New Jersey*: 1899, *Congregational Home Missionary Soc. v. Van Arsdale*, — N. J. Eq. —, 42 Atl. 1047 (plaintiff allowed to take a bequest to the "Home Missionary Society of America"); 1900, *Kerrigan v. Conelly*, — id. —, 46 Atl. 227 (bequest to "Woodstock College in Howard Co., Md.," applied to W. College in Baltimore Co., there being no other W. College in Maryland); *Pennsylvania*: 1903, *Amberson's Estate*, 204 Pa. 397, 54 Atl. 484 (bequest to "the Foreign Missionary Society," held to signify "the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church"); *United States*: 1886, *Patch v. White*, 117 U. S. 210, 6 Sup. 617, 710 (will "touching worldly estates wherewith it has pleased Almighty God to bless me in this life," and disposing "of the same" by a devise of "lot no. 6, in square 403," with improvements, in Washington; the testator owned lot 3 in square 406, but not lot 6 in square 403, and the former had improvements, but the latter not, and all his other lots were otherwise disposed of in the will; held, a case of false description, so that the lot could be identified by omitting the erroneous numbers; four judges diss.); *Virginia*: 1897, *Wildberger v. Cheek's Ex'r*, 94 Va. 517, 27 S. E. 441 ("all the residue . . . among all my nieces and nephews; they are the following"; naming several, but omitting some; the testator's feelings towards the omitted ones, received to see whether the "all" should be regarded, or the enumeration); *Washington*: 1899, *Gorkow's Estate*, 20 Wash. 563,

township) creates an equivocation (*ante*, § 2472); those in which the misdescription suffices merely to deprive of the right to the remedy of specific performance; and those in which the misdescription arises on the face of the document, through inconsistencies or uncertainties which require to be reconciled or qualified as between each other.⁵

§ 2478. **Sundry Rules; Interpretation of Statutes.** (1) In the course of judicial experience, numerous *presumptive rules* have naturally developed themselves, concerning the probable meaning of various words, phrases, and grammatical constructions. They are in effect definitions of that ordinary usage of language which, by the general principle (*ante*, § 2461), is always the first to be applied, as representing the probable usage of the writer. These specific rules vary with the nature of the document and the transaction. In a complete treatise on Interpretation, they would find a place; but they are not included in the present purview.

(2) A *statute* is an act of expression by a legislative body; and, as a legal act, it presents the same problems as to intention, integration, form, and interpretation, as other legal acts. In general, the foregoing principles and problems recur, *mutatis mutandis*;¹ but the subject cannot be dealt with in the present survey.²

58 Pac. 385 (bequest to "Otto, the child of Martha K.," held to apply to Arthur K.); *West Virginia*: 1896, *Ross' Ex'r v. Kiger*, 42 W. Va. 402, 26 S. E. 193 (bequest to "the M. E. Church school situated in Buckhannon"; also to "the M. E. Church Foreign Missionary Society"; the facts were admitted, (1) as to the first, there being no such-named institution in B., but one known as the "West Virginia Conference Seminary at B.," that the testatrix had frequently given money to the latter, that it was controlled by Methodist Episcopalians and was often spoken of as "the Methodist school at B.," and that there was no other Methodist school there; (2) as to the second, there being no such-named society, but one known as the "Missionary Society of the M. E. Church," that the testatrix was a member of the M. E. Church and had contributed to its support); *Wisconsin*: 1878, *Sherwood v. Sherwood*, 45 Wis. 357 (devise of "lot 9 in block 20 in Oshkosh"; the correct principle conceded, but here, there being no other words "being my land," or the like, in the will, the devise was ineffective; otherwise,

if the will had said "my lot 9," or "the lot which I purchased of B.,").
⁵ *E. g.*: 1833, *Doe v. Galloway*, 5 B. & Ad. 43 (deed of "all that part of the park called or known by the name of Blenheim or Woodstock Park, situate and being in the county of Oxford, and now in the occupation of Richard Smallbones, in a direct line across the said park etc."); held, that the land passing was not merely the part in the occupation of R. S.); 1895, *Laasing v. James*, 107 Cal. 348, 40 Pac. 534 (where the terms of a covenant were contradictory, evidence of a mistake in not striking out one of them was considered). Compare the rule as to applying the written part of a policy when it conflicts with the printed part; *e. g.*: 1845, *Alsager v. St. Katherine's Dock Co.*, 14 M. & W. 794; 1839, *Sanderson v. Piper*, 5 Bing. N. C. 425 (cited *ante*, § 2473, note 3).
¹ This is illustrated in *Enclich, Interpretation of Statutes*, 1888, §§ 28-30, 357-371, 507-510.
² The question of the conclusiveness of the enrolled copy of a statute has been dealt with *ante*, § 1350.

BOOK II: BY WHOM EVIDENCE MUST BE PRESENTED
(BURDEN OF PROOF, AND PRESUMPTIONS).

TITLE I: GENERAL THEORY.

CHAPTER LXXXVI.

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| <p>§ 2483. Production of Evidence by the Parties.
 § 2484. Evidence sought by the Judge <i>ex mero motu</i>; Questions to Witnesses by the Judge.
 § 2485. Burden of Proof: (1) First Meaning: Risk of Non-persuasion of the Jury.
 § 2486. Same: Test for this Burden: Negative and Affirmative Allegations; Facts peculiarly within a Party's Knowledge.
 § 2487. Burden of Proof: (2) Second Meaning: Duty of Producing Evidence to the Judge.
 § 2488. Same: Test for this Burden.
 § 2489. Shifting the Burden of Proof.
 § 2490. Presumptions; Legal Effect of a Presumption.
 § 2491. Same: Presumptions of Law and Presumptions of Fact.</p> | <p>§ 2492. Same: Conclusive Presumption.
 § 2493. Same: Conflicting Presumptions; Counter Presumptions.
 § 2494. Same: <i>Prima facie</i> Evidence; Sufficient Evidence for the Jury; Scintilla of Evidence.
 § 2495. Same: Direction of a Verdict, Motion for a Nonsuit, and Demurrer to Evidence.
 § 2496. Same: Waiver of Motion by subsequent Introduction of Evidence.
 § 2497. Measure of Persuasion; (1) Proof beyond a Reasonable Doubt; Rule for Criminal Cases.
 § 2498. Same: (2) Proof by Preponderance of Evidence; Rule for Civil Cases.</p> |
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§ 2483. **Production of Evidence by the Parties.** The apportionment of the task of producing evidence is one of the most characteristic features of the Anglo-American system. It is placed wholly upon the parties to the litigation; it is not required or expected of the judge. In this respect the emphasis is in contrast to the Continental system. Whether the political notions of self-help, self-government, and *laissez faire* have ultimately here a common source and analogy would be an interesting question. The Anglo-American feature shows itself, in other aspects, in its frequent relegation of the judge to the position of an umpire (*ante*, § 1845), in its abstinence from rules for preferred kinds of witnesses (*ante*, § 1286), and in its reliance upon cross-examination by the opponent (*ante*, § 1367). The Continental feature shows itself in its exaltation of the trial judge's function (as *Untersuchungsrichter* or *juge d'instruction*), and in its multiplication of artificial rules of measurement for aiding the judge in estimating the evidence (*ante*, § 2032, *post*, § 2490). Certainly the vital importance of the burden of proof means something very different for the parties, in our system of procedure, from its meaning in the other. It is this feature, together with that of the jury, which is responsible for the peculiar double aspect of the burden of proof (*post*, § 2487).

§ 2484. **Evidence sought by the Judge *ex mero motu*; Questions to Witnesses by the Judge.** So extreme has been the emphasis upon this feature of the production of proof, that even the judge's right to call forth evidence

has been at times questioned by the Bar. That he has no burden of doing so is plain in the law; but that he has no right to cause the evidence produced by the parties to be supplemented, where he believes this necessary, has never been conceded, — and never will be, so long as the Bench retains a true conception of its constitutional function and a due sense of self-respect:

1794, Mr. *Edmund Burke*, Report of Committee on Warren Hastings' Trial, 31 *Pari. Hist.* 348: "It is the duty of the Judge to receive every offer of evidence, apparently material, suggested to him, though the parties themselves through negligence, ignorance, or corrupt collusion, should not bring it forward. A judge is not placed in that high situation merely as a passive instrument of parties. He has a duty of his own, independent of them, and that duty is to investigate the truth."

1894, Lord *Esher*, M. R., in *Coulson v. Disborough*, 2 Q. B. 316, 318: "If there be a person whom neither party to an action chooses to call as a witness, and the judge thinks that that person is able to elucidate the truth, the judge in my opinion, is himself entitled to call him; and I cannot agree that such a course has never been taken by a judge before."

The trial judge, then, may call a witness not called by the parties,¹ or may consult any source of information on topics subject to judicial notice,² or may put additional questions to a witness called by the parties,³ — without derogating from the general principle that the risk and burden of producing evidence is upon the parties themselves.

§ 2485. Burden of Proof; (1) First Meaning: Risk of Non-Persuasion of the Jury. Since, then, the risk and burden of producing evidence falls upon the parties themselves, how is it to be apportioned between them? In short, which party has the "burden of proof"?¹

In every attempt to explain the principles of the law as to burden of proof and presumption, two things at least present themselves for consideration, — the general process, logical and legal, involved in determining the parties by whom evidence is to be produced, and the significance and usage of various terms employed and the incidental problems of each part of the process. The difficulties of such an attempt, almost insuperable,² arise not so much from the intrinsic complication or uncertainty of the situation as from the lamentable ambiguity of phrase and confusion of terminology under which

¹ 1894, *Coulson v. Disborough*, 2 Q. B. 316 (quoted *supra*); 1886, *Selph v. State*, 22 Fla. 537, 548 (a judge may "of his own accord, when the interests of justice demand it," call and examine witnesses; the word "not" is apparently omitted by error in the printed opinion); 1852, *Hoskins v. State*, 11 Ga. 92, 97 (the trial judge's right of "directing the necessary proofs to be adduced," conceded); 1898, *Fullerton v. For-dyce*, 144 Mo. 519, 44 S. W. 1053 (here, a physician who had made an examination under order of Court previously made on motion). So, too, where he sits without a jury: 1833, *Ba-dische A. & S. Fabrik v. Levinstein*, L. R. 24 Ch. D. 156, 167 (under Ord. 56, Rules of 1833, quoted *ante*, § 1874).

² *Id.*, § 256^c

³ 1877, *Sparks v. State*, 59 Ala. 82, 87 (distinction drawn between the right to propound

questions openly to a witness and the impropriety of privately consulting a witness to discover or suggest further testimony); 1884, *Littleton v. Clayton*, 77 *Id.* 571, 575; and cases cited *ante*, § 784.

¹ For an acute and comprehensive examination of the subject of this chapter, see chapters 8 and 9 in Professor Thayer's Preliminary Treatise on Evidence, the publication of which may truly be regarded as epoch-making. Professor Austin Abbott's article in the *University Law Review*, II, 59, is also enlightening.

² The following remark will be thought singular, in view of the condition of the precedents on this subject: "Every student of the law fully understands the exact import of the phrase 'burden of proof'" (1897, *State v. Thornton*, 10 S. D. 349, 73 N. W. 196).

our law has so long suffered. At the outset, then, it will be more satisfactory to analyze the logical and legal situation considered in itself and independently of the various usages and terms that chiefly cause the confusion.

(1) *Burden of Proof; Risk of Non-persuasion.* Whenever A and B are at issue upon any subject of controversy (not necessarily legal), and M is to take action between them, and their desire is, hence, respectively to persuade M as to their contention, it is clear that the situation of the two, as regards its advantages and risks, will be very different. Suppose that A has property in which he would like to have M invest money, and that B is opposed to having M invest money; M will invest in A's property if he can learn that it is a profitable object, and not otherwise. Here it is seen that the advantage is with B, and the disadvantage with A; for unless A succeeds in persuading M up to the point of action, A will fail and B will remain victorious; the burden of proof, or, in other words, the risk of non-persuasion, is upon A. This does not mean that B is absolutely safe though he does nothing, for he cannot tell how much it will require to persuade M; a very little argument from A might suffice; or, if M is of a rashly speculative tendency, the mere mention of the proposition by A might without more effect M's action; so that it may be safer in any case for B to say what he can on his side of the question; and thus in fact he, as well as A, has more or less risk, in the sense that there are always chances of A's persuading M, no matter how trifling his evidence and argument. But nevertheless the risk is really upon A, in the sense that if M, after all said and done, remains in doubt, and therefore fails to pass to the point of action, it is A that loses and B that succeeds; because it is A who wishes the action taken and needed as a prerequisite to accomplish the persuasion of M. The risk of non-persuasion, therefore, *i. e.* the risk of M's non-action because of doubt, may properly be said to be upon A. This is the situation common to all cases of attempted persuasion, whether in the market, the home, or the forum. So far as mere logic is concerned, it is perhaps questionable whether there is much importance in the doctrine of burden of proof as affecting persons in controversy.³ The removal of the burden is not in itself a matter of logical necessity. It is the *desire to have action taken* that is important. In the affairs of life there is a penalty for not sustaining the burden of proof, — *i. e.* not persuading M beyond the doubting point, — namely, that M will not take the desired action, to which his persuasion is a prerequisite.

Thus, in practical affairs generally, the burden of proof (in the sense of risk of non-persuasion) signifies that upon a person desiring action from M will fall the penalty of M's non-action unless M can be persuaded beyond

³ "In Logic, then, when we speak of the burden of proof, we are not speaking of some merely artificial law, with artificial penalties attached to it. . . . No penalty follows the misplacement of the burden of proof, except the natural consequence that the assertion remains untested, and the audience therefore (if inquiring) unconvinced. . . . There is no 'obligation'

on any one to prove an assertion, — other than any wish he may feel to set an inquiring mind at rest or to avoid the imputation of empty boasting. It is a natural law alone with which we are here concerned, — the law that an unsupported assertion may, for all that appears, be either true or false" (Professor Alfred Sidgwick, *Fallacies*, 163).

the doubting-point as to the truth of the propositions prerequisite to his action. What, then, is the difference, if any, between this risk of non-persuasion in affairs at large and the same risk in litigation? In litigation, the penalty is of course different; the action which is desired of M is the verdict of the jury, the decree, order, or finding of the judge, or some other appropriate action of the tribunal. But so also the action differs in other affairs, according as M is an investor with money to lend, or an employer with a position to fill, or a friend with a favor to grant. Is there no other and more radical difference? The radical difference in litigation, as distinguished from practical affairs at large, is as to the *mode of determining the propositions of persuasion which are a prerequisite to M's action*. In affairs at large, these are determined solely by M's notion of the proper grounds for his action, — depending thus on the circumstances of the situation as judged by M. In litigation, these prerequisites are determined, first and broadly, by the *substantive law*, which fixes the groups of data that enter into legal relations and constitute rights and duties, and, secondly and more in detail, by the *laws of pleading and procedure*, which further group and subdivide these larger groups of data, and assign one or another sub-group to this or that party as prerequisites of the tribunal's action in his favor. Thus, if A were endeavoring to persuade M to assist him with money because M's brother B had cruelly assaulted and beaten A, M might conceivably exact of A that the latter first prove to him — *i. e.* persuade him — not merely that B had beaten A, but further that B had not done this in self-defence or by A's consent or in ejecting A from B's premises or otherwise for some reason, legally justifiable or not. In a legal tribunal, on the other hand, the substantive law will define and limit, in the first place, the reasons to be regarded as justifiable, and will thus narrow the total of facts that can in any event be involved; and, in the second place, the law of pleading will further subdivide and apportion these facts. It will inform A that he need persuade the tribunal of two facts only, namely, that A was beaten and it was B who beat him;⁴ and that, upon persuading the tribunal of these facts, its action will be taken in his favor, and A's risk of the tribunal's non-action will thereupon cease. It will inform B that at this point the risk of non-action will turn upon him, in the sense that he needs the tribunal's action in order to relieve himself from the consequences of its previous action, and that this action (by way of reversing its provisional action in A's favor) will depend upon his persuading the tribunal as to certain specified facts by way of excuse or justification. Perhaps the same law of pleading may further apportion to A a third set of facts to be the subject of a replication, in case B succeeds in obtaining action in his favor on his plea.

But the groupings defined by the substantive law and the further subdivision by the law of pleading do not necessarily end the process of apportionment by law. Even within a single pleading there are instances in which

⁴ Assuming, of course, that there is no controversy as to whether inadvertence or the like is a proper subject for the general issue or for an affirmative plea.

the burden of proof (in the sense of a risk of non-persuasion) may be taken from the pleader desiring action and placed upon the opponent. In criminal cases, for example, though there is no affirmative pleading for the defence, it is put upon the defendant, in some jurisdictions, to prove the excuse of self-defence; in many jurisdictions in which payment need not be affirmatively pleaded to a contract-claim, the burden of proving payment is nevertheless put upon the debtor; and so in many other instances. The difference of effect between an apportionment under this method and an apportionment by requiring a pleading is merely that, in the latter method, all questions of burden of proof might conceivably be disposed of before trial or the entering into evidence;⁶ while by the other method the apportionment is not made until the trial proper has begun. The other method is less simple in the handling; but it has come more into vogue under the loose modes of pleading current in modern times in many jurisdictions.⁶

§ 2486. *Same; Test for this Burden; Negative and Affirmative Allegations; Facts peculiarly within a Party's Knowledge.* The characteristic, then, of the burden of proof (in the sense of a risk of non-persuasion) in legal controversies is that the law divides the process into stages, and apportions definitely to each party the specific facts which will in turn fall to him as the prerequisites of obtaining action in his favor by the tribunal. It is this apportionment which forms the important element of controversy for legal purposes. Each party wishes to know of what facts he has the risk of non-persuasion. By what considerations, then, is this apportionment determined? Is there any single principle or rule which will solve all cases and afford a general test for ascertaining the incidence of this risk? By no means. It is often said that the burden is upon the *party having the affirmative allegation*.¹ But this is not an invariable test, nor even always a significant circumstance; the burden is often on one who has a negative assertion to prove;² a common instance is that of a promisee alleging non-performance of a contract. It is sometimes said that it is upon the party to whose case the fact is essential. This is correct enough, but it merely advances the inquiry one step; we must then ask whether there is any general principle which determines to what party's case a fact is essential.

The truth is that there is not and cannot be any one general solvent for all cases. It is merely a question of policy and fairness based on experience in

⁶ Though in practice not usually at the present time; see Langdell's *Discovery under the Judicature Acts*, Harvard Law Review, XI, 157, 205.

¹ The result is that what were properly questions of pleading are often discussed in terms of the burden of proof; e. g. 1896, *Hopson v. Caswell*, 13 Tex. Civ. App. 492, 36 S. W. 312 (indexed under "Burden of Proof"; it is said, of a plea in abatement, "the burden of sustaining the plea was upon the defendant"); 1896, *Goodell's Ex'rs v. Gibbons*, 91 Va. 608, 22 S. E. 504 (where the question of pleading affirmatively the statute of limitations is discussed indiffer-

ently in terms of pleading and of burden of proof).

² 1842, *Greenleaf*, Evidence, § 74; Ga. Code 1895, § 5160 (on the party "asserting or affirming a fact and to the existence of whose case or defense the proof of such fact is essential"); 1898, *People v. Boo Doo Hong*, 122 Cal. 606, 55 Pac. 402 (unlawful practice of medicine; the burden placed on the defendant to show a license; citing *Greenleaf*).

³ E. g., *Carmel N. G. & I. Co. v. Small*, 150 Ind. 427, 50 N. E. 476 (action to recover money from an officer not legally elected).

the different situations. Thus, in most actions of tort there are many possible justifying circumstances, — self-defence, leave and license, *volenti non fit injuria*, and the like; but it would be both unfair and contrary to experience to assume that one of them was probably present, and to require the plaintiff to disprove the existence of each one of them; so that the plaintiff is put to prove merely the nature of his harm, and the defendant's share in causing it; and the other circumstances, which would if they existed leave him without a claim, are put upon the defendant to prove. Nevertheless, in malicious prosecution, on the one hand, the facts as to the defendant's good faith and probable cause, which might otherwise have been set down for the defendant to show in excuse (as the analogous facts in an action for defamation are reserved for a plea of privilege), are here put upon the plaintiff, who is required to prove their non-existence; because as a matter of experience and fairness this seems to be the wiser apportionment. So, on the other hand, in an action for defamation ("false words," in the old nomenclature), it might have been supposed on other analogies that to the plaintiff it would fall to prove the falsity of the defendant's utterance; yet as a matter of fairness, it has in fact been put upon the defendant to prove the truth of his utterance. Thus, no one principle will serve in torts as a guiding rule for the various cases. In criminal cases, the innovation, in some jurisdictions, of putting upon the accused the burden of proving his insanity has apparently also been based on an experience in the abuses of the contrary practice. In claims based on written instruments, experience has led in most jurisdictions to a statutory provision, requiring the execution by the defendant to be specially traversed or else taken for admitted, — a step which stops short of changing the burden of proof, but well illustrates the considerations affecting its incidence. The controversy whether a plaintiff in tort should be required to prove his own carefulness, or the defendant should be required to prove the plaintiff's carelessness, has depended in part on experience as to a plaintiff being commonly careful or careless, in part on the fairness of putting the burden on one or the other, and this in part on the consideration which of the parties has the means of proof more available.

This last consideration has often been advanced as a special test for solving a limited class of cases, *i. e.* the burden of proving a fact is said to be put on the *party who presumably has peculiar knowledge* enabling him to prove its falsity if it is false.² But this consideration furnishes no working rule; if it did, then the plaintiff in an action for defamation charging him to be living in adultery should be required to prove that he is lawfully married. This consideration, after all, merely takes its place among other considerations of fairness and experience as one to be kept in mind in apportioning the burden of proof in a specific case.

There is, then, no one principle, or set of harmonious principles, which afford a sure and universal test for the solution of a given case. The logic of the situation does not demand such a test; it would be useless to attempt

² 1842, Greenleaf, Evidence, § 79; 1896, Lehman v. Knapp, — Ala. —, 20 So. 674.
3525

to discover or to invent one; and the state of the law does not justify us in saying that it has accepted any. There are merely specific rules for specific cases, resting for their ultimate reasons upon broad and undefined reasons of experience and fairness.

§ 2487. *Burden of Proof; (2) Second Meaning; Duty of producing Evidence to the Judge.* So far as concerns the principles examined above, the matter may have come before any kind of tribunal. The inquiry peculiarly concerns the procedure in legal controversies; but the settlement of it was not affected by the nature of the tribunal. The tribunal might be a judge, or a jury, or both, so far as regards apportioning the risk of non-persuasion. Nothing has been said, or need be, about a distinction between judge and jury. But we come now to a peculiar set of rules which have their source in the bipartite constitution of the common-law tribunal. Apart from the distinction of functions between judge and jury, these rules need have had no existence. They owe their existence chiefly to the historic and unquestioned control of the judge over the jury, and to the partial and dependent position of the jury as a member of the tribunal whose functions come into play only within certain limits.¹ The treatment of the situation, and the operation of the rules, can best be comprehended by keeping this consideration in mind, namely, that the *opportunity to decide finally upon the evidential material that may be offered does not fall to the jury as a matter of course*; that each party must first with his evidence pass the gauntlet of the judge; and that the judge, as a part of his function in administering the law, is to keep the jury within the bounds of reasonable action. In short, in order to get to the jury on the issue, and bring into play the other burden of proof (in the sense of the risk of non-persuasion of the jury), both parties alike *must first satisfy the judge that they have a quantity of evidence fit to be considered by the jury, and to form a reasonable basis for the verdict.* This duty of satisfying the judge is peculiar in its operation, because if it is not fulfilled, the party in default loses, by order of the judge, and the jury is not given an opportunity to debate and form conclusions as if the issue were open to them. It operates somewhat as follows:²

(a) The party having the risk of non-persuasion (under the pleadings or other rules) is naturally the one upon whom first falls this duty of going forward with evidence; because, since he wishes to have the jury act for him, and since without any legal evidence at all they could properly take no action, there is no need for the opponent to adduce evidence; and this duty thus falls first upon the proponent (a term convenient for designating the party having the risk of non-persuasion). This duty, however, though determined in the first instance by the burden of proof in the sense of the risk of non-persuasion (*ante*, § 2485), is a distinct one, for it is a *duty towards the judge*, and the judge rules against the party if it is not satisfied; there is as yet no opportunity to get to the jury and ask if they are persuaded. The judge, then,

¹ *Post*, § 2550; Thayer, *Preliminary Treatise*, c. 5.

² See on this part of the subject a useful article by the late Professor Austin Abbott, en-

titled "Two Burdens of Proof," in the *Harvard Law Review*, VI, 125, and his article cited *ante*, § 2485.

requires that at least enough evidence be put in to be worth considering by the jury.³

(b) Suppose, then, that the proponent has satisfied this duty towards the judge, and that the judge has ruled that sufficient evidence has been introduced. The duty has then ended. Up to that point the proponent was liable to a ruling of law from the judge which would put an end to his case. After passing this point he is now *before the jury*, bearing only his risk of non-persuasion (*ante*, § 2485). There is now no duty on either party, with reference to any rule of law in the hands of the judge, to produce evidence. Either party may introduce it, and doubtless both parties will do so; but there is nothing that requires either to do so under penalty of a ruling of law against him. The proponent, however, still has his burden of proof in the sense of the risk of non-persuasion of the jury; *i. e.* should the jury be in doubt after hearing the evidence of the proponent, either with or without evidence from the opponent, the proponent fails to obtain their verdict upon that issue, and the opponent remains successful. In this second stage of the trial, with the evidence before the jury, the only burden operating is that which concerns the jury, — the risk of non-persuasion; and not that which concerns the judge, — the duty of producing evidence.

(c) Suppose, however, that the proponent is able to go further and to adduce evidence which if believed would make it beyond reason to repudiate the proponent's claim, — evidence such that the jury, acting as reasonable men, must be persuaded and must render a verdict on that issue for the proponent. Here the proponent has now put himself in the same position that was occupied by the opponent at the opening of the trial, *i. e.* unless the opponent now offers evidence against the claim and thus changes the situation, the jury should not be allowed to render a verdict against reason, — a verdict which would later have to be set aside as against evidence. The matter is thus *in the hands of the judge again*, as having the supervisory control of the proof; and he may now, as applying a rule of law, *require the opponent to produce evidence*, under penalty of losing the case by direction of the judge. Thus, a duty of producing evidence, under this penalty for default, has now arisen for the opponent. It arises for the same reasons, is measured by the same tests, and has the same consequences as the duty of production which was formerly upon the proponent. There are, however, two ways in which it may be invoked by the judge, differing widely in terms and in appearance, but essentially the same in principle. (c') In the ordinary case, this overwhelming mass of evidence, bearing down for the proponent, will be made up of a variety of complicated data, differing in every new trial and not to be tested by any set formulas. The judge's ruling will be based on a survey of this mass of evidence as a whole; and it will direct the jury on that issue to render a verdict on that *mass of evidence* for the proponent. The propriety of this has sometimes been doubted by Courts who do not believe the process to be precisely analogous to that of directing a nonsuit for the proponent or

³ The detailed rules for determining this sufficiency of evidence are examined *post*, §§ 2494, 2495.

of enforcing a presumption, as shortly to be explained (*post*, § 2495); but the better authority gives ample recognition to this process. (c'') Another mode under which this process is carried out employs the aid of a fixed rule of law, *i. e.* a presumption, applicable to inferences from specific evidence to specific facts forming part of the issue, rather than to the general mass of evidence bearing on the proposition in issue. If it is a part of the proponent's case, for example, to prove that a person is deceased, and he has offered evidence that the person has been absent, unheard from, for seven years or more, and there is no other evidence on the subject, then the proponent may ask that the jury be directed, if they believe this fact of absence, to take as true the proposition that the person is deceased; if that, moreover, were the only proposition at issue, then the direction would be to find a verdict for the proponent if this fact of absence were believed. The result is the same as in the preceding form of the process (c'), *i. e.* the opponent loses as a matter of law, in default of evidence to the contrary; in other words, the presumption creates for the opponent a duty of producing evidence, in default of which he loses as a matter of legal ruling, the matter not being open for the jury, and the risk of non-persuasion, which applies only to the jury's deliberations, having ceased to affect the proponent. This particular form of the process, however (c''), happens to have become known as a "presumption." The term "presumption" has been the subject of much confused usage. The particular ambiguity which we need here to guard against is the confusion between the inference itself — *i. e.* the propriety of making the inference from the evidence to the *factum probandum*⁴ — and the effect of the inference in the hands of the judge. So far as "presumption" means anything for the present purpose, it signifies a ruling as to the duty of producing evidence. "The essential character and operation of presumptions, so far as the law of evidence is concerned, is in all cases the same, whether they be called by one name or the other; that is to say, they throw upon the party against whom they work the duty of going forward with the evidence; and this operation is all their effect, regarded merely in their character as presumptions."⁵

(d) Keeping in mind, then, that a presumption signifies a ruling of law, and that to this extent the matter is in the judge's hands and not the jury's, what is the effect upon the legal situation of the opponent if he does respond to this duty and comes forward with other evidence against the fact presumed? When he has thus fulfilled his duty under the ruling of law, he puts himself out of the hands of the judge and his ruling, and finds himself back again in the hands of the jury. He is precisely where the proponent was in the first place when he fulfilled the duty, then his, of producing evidence and succeeded in getting from the judge to the jury. The case is now open again as to that specific issue, *i. e.* free from any liability to a ruling of law against either side, and is before the jury, where the original proponent (as ever, when the issue is open

⁴ This is one of the earlier uses of "presumption"; it is in effect an equivalent of "inference" (*ante*, §§ 25, 28). Such are Coke's "presumptions, whereof there be three sorts, *vis.*, violent, probable, and light or temerary" (Co. Litt. 6, 5). This is what is usually meant by "presumption of fact" (*post*, §§ 2490, 2491).

⁵ Thayer, *ubi supra*, 330.

to the jury) has the burden of proof in the sense of the risk of non-persuasion of the jury. The important thing is that there is now *no longer in force any ruling of law by the judge* requiring the jury to find according to the presumption. "All is then turned into an ordinary question of evidence, and the two or three general facts presupposed in the rule of presumption take their place with the rest, and operate, with their own natural force, as a part of the total mass of probative matter. . . . The main point to observe is that the rule of presumption has vanished;"⁸ because its function was as a legal rule to settle the matter only provisionally, and to cast upon the opponent the duty of producing evidence, and this duty and this legal rule he has satisfied.⁹

(c) Are there any further stages in this possible shifting of the duty of producing evidence? It is conceivable that the proponent may be unable to invoke other presumptions, though this is not common. He may not be able to go further than to produce evidence sufficient to remove the presumption. May he not only get the issue opened before the jury again, but also go further and raise what may be termed a *counter-presumption* in his favor, so that the proponent will find himself in his original position at the opening of the trial, namely, subject to the duty of producing sufficient evidence to go to the jury, under penalty, in case of default, of suffering a ruling against him by the judge as a matter of law? This result is possible in principle, and there are instances of it, though rare. For example, a plaintiff, in an action for the burning of his property by the defendant railway-company's negligence, created a presumption of negligence by showing the setting of the fire by sparks from the defendant's locomotive; the duty of producing evidence was thus put upon the defendant, who not only removed it, producing evidence sufficient to go to the jury, but by showing the proper construction, equipment, and inspection of the locomotive was held to have raised a presumption that it had not been negligent, and thus to be entitled to a ruling by the judge against the plaintiff, taking the case from the jury.¹⁰

The important practical distinction between these two senses of "burden of proof" is this: The *risk of non-persuasion* operates when the case has come into the hands of the jury, while the *duty of producing evidence* implies a liability to a ruling by the judge disposing of the issue without leaving the question open to the jury's deliberations.¹¹

⁸ Thayer, *ubi supra*, 246.

⁹ The following passage from Professor Abbott's article, already mentioned, will serve to illustrate the general situation involved in this duty of producing evidence: "To use a homely illustration, a civil jury trial may be compared to a game of shuffle-board. The first and nearest to the player is the field of mere scintillas; if the plaintiff's evidence halts there, he is lost. The next, or middle, field is that of balancing probabilities: if his evidence reaches and rests there, he gets to the jury; but they alone can decide the case, and they may decide it either way, or may disagree. The third and last field is that of legal conclusion: if his evidence can be pushed into that division, he is entitled to

his victory at the hands of the judge, and the jury cannot draw it into doubt; but before the judge can do so, the defendant has a right to give evidence, and that evidence may bring the plaintiff's evidence back into doubt again, and leave the case in the field of balancing probabilities."

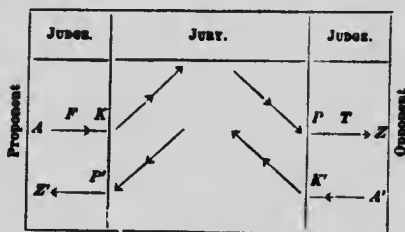
¹⁰ 1895, *Menomenie R. S. & D. Co. v. R. Co.*, 91 Wis. 447, 65 N. W. 176; the opinion particularly distinguishes previous cases in which the defendant had merely removed the presumption against him by evidence sufficient to go to the jury, but had not raised a counter-presumption requiring a ruling of the judge in his favor.

¹¹ The various possible stages in the foregoing process may be illustrated by a diagram; the

§ 2488. **Same: Tests for ascertaining this Burden.** The term "burden of proof" is used commonly as applying equally to the two preceding kinds of situations, and often is applied in both senses in the same judicial opinion. Apart, therefore, from the difficulty of some of the problems of law germane to each situation, peculiar confusion is added by the unfortunate ambiguity of the terms of discussion. There is at this day a fairly widespread acceptance and understanding, in judicial utterances, of the distinction between the two things themselves, the risk of non-persuasion of the jury, and the duty of going forward with evidence sufficient to satisfy the ruling of the judge. The law which regulates respectively this risk and this duty is in most respects either generally settled or is the subject of local differences of decision whose lines of dispute are not difficult to discern. The main source of difficulty lies in the interchangeable use of the term "burden of proof," which forces the judges from time to time to distinguish, explain, and even repudiate former judicial utterances employing analogous language but dealing with distinct situations; and thus there is an appearance (and to some extent, a reality) of confusion in the precedents on the subject.

As to the tests for determining this second burden of proof, it has already been pointed out that (a) for the one burden (the risk of non-persuasion of the jury) the substantive law and the pleadings, primarily, serve to do this, and, subsidiarily, a rule of practice, within the stage of a single pleading, may

particular usefulness of the graphic method being that it shows in small compass the relation of the stages and the vital distinction between the judge's and the jury's situation for the two kinds of burdens:



Let A = the starting-point of the proponent having the risk of non-persuasion on a given issue;

A' = the starting-point of the opponent on the issue;

Z = the point of complete persuasion or proof for the proponent;

Z' = the corresponding point for the opponent. The proponent then finds, as soon as he begins his production of evidence, that at any point between A and K he is subject to a ruling of the judge defeating him for lack of sufficient evidence. After reaching K , and obtaining a judicial ruling in his favor as to sufficiency of evidence, he is now free from his duty of producing evidence to the judge, and has only his risk of non-persuasion of the jury. But he may

be able to reach with his evidence the point P , and invoke again the control of the judge, thus shifting to the opponent the duty of producing evidence. This may be done either by some general rule of presumption that is applicable, or by a specific ruling of the judge upon the mass of evidence adduced. If the duty is thus created for the opponent, he starts from point A' to sustain it. Until he has by some evidence reached point K' , he is liable to a judicial ruling defeating him on that issue. If he can reach point K' , the duty and liability of satisfying the judge disappears, and he is in the field of the jury again. Here, however, the risk of non-persuasion of the jury is still, as before, upon the proponent for that issue; but neither party has any duty to satisfy the judge. Further, however, the opponent may succeed in reaching point P' , at which the judge, either by a general rule of counter-presumption or by a specific ruling on the mass of evidence, will order a verdict for the opponent, unless the proponent comes forward with more evidence. Thus the proponent again has the liability to produce some evidence, and must again attain point K , in order to come into the field of the jury once more. The process, however, seldom reaches these advanced stages.

If the parties cease all production of evidence while the case is between points K and P or K' and P' , i. e. when the risk of non-persuasion of the jury comes to be the only and final stage, there are rules for the jury's guidance, namely, the rules for preponderance of evidence and reasonable doubt (*post*, §§ 2497, 2498).

further apportion the burden; but this apportionment depends ultimately on broad considerations of policy, and, for individual instances, there is nothing to do but ascertain the rule, if any, that has been judicially determined for that particular class of cases. (b) For the other burden (the duty of going forward with evidence to satisfy the judge) there is always, at the outset, such a duty for the party having the first burden, or risk of non-persuasion, until by some rule of law (either by a specific ruling of the judge upon the particular evidence, or by the aid of an appropriate presumption, or by matter judicially noticed) this line is passed. Then comes the stage in which there is no such duty of law for either party (although, if the proponent has invoked some presumption, this stage is immediately passed over). Then, either by a ruling on the general mass of evidence, or by the aid of some applicable presumption, the duty of law arises anew for the opponent. Finally, it may supposably, by similar modes, be later re-created for the proponent. There is therefore no one test, of any real significance, for determining the incidence of this duty; at the outset the test is furnished by ascertaining who has the burden of proof, in the sense of the risk of non-persuasion of the jury, under the pleadings or other rules declaring what *facta probanda* are the ultimate facts of each party's case; a little later, the test is whether the proponent has by a ruling of the judge (based on the sufficiency of the evidence, or a presumption, or a fact judicially noticed) fulfilled this duty; later on, it will be whether the proponent, by a ruling of the judge upon a presumption or the evidence as a whole, has created a duty for the opponent; and still later, whether, for the purposes of the judge's ruling, the opponent has satisfied this duty. It has been suggested¹ that "the test ought in strict accuracy to be expressed thus, namely: which party would be successful if no evidence at all, or no more evidence (as the case may be), were given?" But it is obvious that this is not a test, in any sense of being a useful mode for ascertaining the unknown from the known; it is simply defining and re-stating in other words the effect of this duty of producing evidence; it says "the burden of proof, in this sense, means that the party liable to it will lose as a matter of judicial ruling if no evidence or no more evidence is given by him"; and this does not solve the main problem of determining in a given case which is the party thus liable to these consequences.

§ 2489. *Shifting the Burden of Proof.* (a) The *first burden* above described — the risk of non-persuasion of the jury — *never shifts*, since no fixed rule of law can be said to shift. The law of pleading, or, within the stage of a given pleading, some further rule of practice, fixes beforehand the issuable facts respectively apportioned to the case of each party; each party may know beforehand, from these rules, what facts will be a part of his case, so far as concerns the ultimate risk of non-persuasion. He will know from these rules that such facts, whenever the time comes, will be his to prove, and not the other party's; and that they will not be sometimes his and sometimes the other's, or possibly his and possibly the other's. The other

¹ 1849, *Best, Evidence*, § 263.

party and himself will of course have their turns in proving their respective *facta probanda* (though under a strict system of pleading these turns of proof will be more clearly fixed before trial, and may occur at different stages and not the same stage of the cause); and the putting-in of evidence may therefore "shift" in the sense that each will take his turn in proving the respective propositions apportioned to him. But the burden does not "shift" in any real sense; for each may once for all ascertain beforehand from rules of law the *facta probanda* apportioned to him, and this apportionment will always remain as thus fixed, to whatever stage the cause may progress.

(b) The *second kind of burden*, however — the duty of producing evidence to satisfy the judge, — *does have* this characteristic referred to as a "*shifting*." It is the same kind of duty for both parties, but it may rest (within the same stage of pleading and upon the same issue and during one burden of the first sort) at one time upon one party and at another time upon the other. Moreover, neither party can ascertain absolutely beforehand at what time it will come upon him¹ or cease to be upon him, or by what evidence it will be removed or created, — except so far as a presumption has by a rule of law been laid down as determining the effect attached to certain facts. Moreover, in a distinctive sense, this kind of burden "shifts" and the other does not, in that during the unchanged prevalence of the first kind of burden for one party, the second kind may be shared in turn by one and the other, though the first — the risk of non-persuasion of the jury, should the case be left in their hands — has not come to an end.²

§ 2490. *Presumptions; Legal Effect of a Presumption.* The whole situation is complicated, quite apart from any ambiguity of terms, by the operation of presumptions upon specific fragments of the issue under a single pleading, in combination with the established practice of leaving to the jury for a general verdict the whole of the issues under a pleading. For example, suppose that the whole of the plaintiff's case and the whole proposition as to which he has the burden of proof in the first sense and the whole of the issue under the pleadings is that A is dead without heirs; suppose that the plaintiff has offered testimony that A has been for seven years absent from home and unheard from, and that there is also testimony in contradiction of these facts from the defendant and also testimony from both sides as to the existence of heirs. Here it is obvious that the case is not in the hands of the judge to order a verdict for the plaintiff, first, because the death of the plaintiff, assuming the presumption from absence to determine this, is not the only proposition essential to the plaintiff's case, and, secondly, because he cannot pass upon the truth of the plaintiff's contradicted testimony as to absence and therefore it cannot then be known whether the fact exists on which the presumption operates; and thus the case is still in appearance in the hands of the jury.

¹ Except that it comes first upon the proponent having the burden of proof in the former sense.

² The following opinion explains the distinction: 1884, Zollars, J., in *Carver v. Carver*, 97 Ind. 497, 510.

Nevertheless, the matter is still in the hands of the judge (in theory of law, at least) as much as it ever was; that is to say, the presumption or rule of law still operates, so that the fact of absence for seven years unheard from is to be taken, by a rule of law independent of the jury's belief, as equivalent to death, in the absence of any explanatory facts to the contrary from the defendant. This rule of law is still applied, notwithstanding the additional elements in the case; for the judge will instruct the jury that if they find the fact of absence for seven years unheard from, and find no explanatory facts to account for it, then by a rule of law they are to take for true the fact of death, and are to reckon upon it accordingly in making up their verdict upon the whole issue. The situation here is even simpler than it is in perhaps the majority of issues in litigation; so that the theoretical effect of presumptions as legal rulings affecting the duty of producing evidence tends to be lost sight of, in that the issue does go to the jury and the case of the opponent of the presumption is apparently not brought to an end by a ruling of the judge. Nevertheless, in theory this legal effect is merely postponed, and will have due place if the jury understands the instructions and does its duty.¹

§ 2491. **Same: Presumptions of Law and of Fact.** The distinction between presumptions "of law" and presumptions "of fact" is in truth the difference between things that are in reality presumptions (in the sense explained above) and things that are not presumptions at all. A presumption, as already noticed, is in its characteristic feature a rule of law laid down by the judge, and attaching to one evidentiary fact certain consequences as to the duty of production of other evidence by the opponent. It is based, in policy, upon the probative strength, as a matter of reasoning and inference, of the evidentiary fact; but the presumption is not the fact itself, nor the inference itself, but the legal consequence attached to it. But, the legal consequence being removed, the inference, as a matter of reasoning, may still remain; and a "presumption of fact," in the usual sense, is merely an improper term for the rational potency, or probative value, of the evidentiary fact, regarded as not having this necessary legal consequence. "They are, in truth, but mere arguments," and "depend upon their own natural force and efficacy in generating belief or conviction in the mind."¹ They have no significance so far as affects the duty of one or the other party to produce evidence, because there is no rule of law attached to them, and the jury may give to them whatever force or weight it thinks best, — just as it may to other evi-

¹ 1903, Walker, J., in *Cogdell v. R. Co.*, 132 N. C. 852, 44 S. E. 618: "The Court was requested to charge that there was a presumption that the deceased had exercised care, which the Court refused to give, but charged the jury that there was an inference that due care was exercised. The presumption has a technical force or weight, and the jury, in the absence of sufficient proof to overcome it, should find according to the presumption; but, in the case of a mere inference, there is no technical force at-

tached to it. The jury, in the case of an inference, are at liberty to find the ultimate fact one way or the other as they may be impressed by the testimony. In the one case the law draws a conclusion from the state of the pleadings and evidence, and in the other case the jury draw it. An inference is nothing more than a permissible deduction from the evidence, while a presumption is compulsory and cannot be disregarded by the jury."

¹ Greenleaf, Evidence, § 44.

dence. There may be a preliminary question whether the evidence is relevant and admissible as having any probative value at all; but, once it is admitted, the probative strength of the evidence is for the jury to consider. So long as the law attaches no legal consequences in the way of a duty upon the opponent to come forward with contrary evidence, there is no propriety in applying the term "presumption" to such facts, however great their probative significance. The employment here of the term "presumption" is due simply to historical usage, by which "presumption" was originally a term equivalent, in one sense, to "inference";² and the distinction between presumptions of fact and of law was a mere borrowing of misapplied Continental terms.³ There is in truth but one kind of presumption; and the term "presumption of fact" should be discarded as useless and confusing.

Nevertheless, it must be kept in mind that the peculiar effect of a presumption "of law" (that is, the real presumption) is merely to invoke a rule of law compelling the jury to reach the conclusion *in the absence of evidence to the contrary* from the opponent. If the opponent does offer evidence to the contrary (sufficient to satisfy the judge's requirement of some evidence), the presumption disappears as a rule of law, and the case is in the jury's hands free from any rule:

1771, *R. v. Almon*, 5 Burr. 2686, 2688 (purchase of a libel imprinted with the defendant's name and bought in his shop); Lord Mansfield: "This being *prima facie* evidence of a publication by the master himself, it stands good till answered by him; and if not answered at all, it thereby becomes conclusive so far as to be sufficient to convict him. . . . [It] must stand till contradicted or explained or exculpated by some other evidence, and if not contradicted, explained, or exculpated, would be in point of evidence sufficient or tantamount to conclusive. . . . If it be sufficient in point of law, and the juryman believes it [*i. e.* the fact of purchase], he is bound in conscience to give his verdict according to it"; Mr. Justice Aston "laid down the same maxim as being fully and clearly established, 'that *prima facie* evidence (if believed) is binding till contrary evidence be produced.'" ⁴

It is therefore a fallacy to attribute (as do some judges) an artificial probative force to a presumption, increasing for the jury the weight of the facts, even when the opponent has come forward with some evidence *to the contrary*.⁵ For example, if death be the issue, and the fact of absence for seven years unheard from be conceded, but the opponent offers evidence that the absentee, before leaving, proclaimed his intention of staying away for ten years, until a prosecution for crime was barred, this satisfies the opponent's duty of pro-

² *Ante*, §§ 25, 38; compare the passage from Coke, cited *ante*, § 2487, n. 4; so Abbott, C. J., as late as 1820, in *R. v. Burdett*, 4 B. & Ald. 161: "A presumption of any fact is properly an inferring of that fact from other facts that are known; it is an act of reasoning." Compare Professor Thayer's account (p. 317 ff.) of the progress in various instances from the mere suggestion of such inferences to the creation of rules of law attached to them. The following case shows the word in the correct sense: 1810, *Davis v. Curry*, 2 Bibb 233, 239 ("Two questions are presented by this case; first, whether color and possession afford such a presumption of slavery

as to throw the burthen of proof upon the person claiming right to freedom").

³ See Thayer, *ubi supra*, p. 343.

⁴ 1846, *Smith v. Asbell*, 2 Strobb. 141, 147 ("Presumptions . . . are artificial rules which have a legal effect independent of any belief, and stand in the place of proof until the contrary be shown").

⁵ 1899, *Sturdevant's Appeal*, 71 Conn. 392, 42 Atl. 70 (where such language to the jury is justified as necessary to explain the case to a jury); 1900, *Johnson v. Johnson*, 187 Ill. 86, 58 N. E. 237.

ducing evidence, removing the rule of law; and when the case goes to the jury, they are at liberty to give any probative force they think fit to the fact of absence for seven years unheard from. It is not weighed down with any artificial additional probative effect; they may estimate it for just such intrinsic effect as it seems to have under all the circumstances.⁶ This much is a plain consequence in our mode of jury trial; and the fallacy has arisen through attempting to follow the ancient Continental phraseology, which grew up under the quantitative system of evidence (*ante*, § 2032) fixing artificial rules for the judge's measurement of proof.

§ 2492. **Same: Conclusive Presumptions.** In strictness, there cannot be such a thing as a "conclusive presumption." Wherever from one fact another is conclusively presumed, in the sense that the opponent is absolutely precluded from showing by any evidence that the second fact does not exist, the rule really provides that, where the first fact is shown to exist, the second fact's existence is wholly immaterial for the purpose of the proponent's case;¹ and to provide this is to make a rule of substantive law, and not a rule apportioning the burden of persuading as to certain propositions or varying the duty of coming forward with evidence.² The term has no place in the principles of evidence (although the history of a "conclusive presumption" often includes a genuine presumption as its earlier stage³), and should be discarded.

§ 2493. **Same: Conflicting Presumptions; Counter-Presumptions.** Presumptions are sometimes spoken of as "*conflicting*." But, in the sense above examined, presumptions do not conflict. The evidentiary facts, free from any rule of law as to the duty of producing evidence, may tend to opposite inferences, which may be said to conflict. But the rule of law which prescribes this duty of production either is or is not at a given time

⁶ 1901, Sharpe, J., in *Alabama G. S. R. Co. v. Taylor*, 129 Ala. 238, 29 So. 673 (repudiating as instruction that the jury must find negligence if the fire was set by the defendant's locomotive: "In actions of this kind the communication of fire to the property of another by an engine of a defendant railroad company is, when nothing appears to the contrary, presumed to have been the result of negligence on the part of the defendant. The presumption so arising is not a conclusive one, so as to preclude the defendant to rebut it; nor does it take the place of actual evidence of negligence further than to cast upon the defendant the burden of showing by evidence that at the time of the occurrence it was in the exercise of ordinary care in respect to the construction, equipment, and management of the engine. When, by proof, it has so repelled the presumption, the burden shifts to the plaintiff, who must go forward anew with actual evidence to disprove that of the defendant, either directly or inferentially, by showing that a carefully constructed, equipped, and managed engine would not have set fire to the property. When there is no evidence of negligence other than that supplied by the presumption referred to,

and the presumption has been, to its full extent, repelled by undiscredited evidence, the jury should find for the defendant, if they believe the evidence, and the Court should so charge, if requested in writing to do so"); 1878, Baker, J., in *Graves v. Colwell*, 90 Ill. 612, 616 ("[When contrary evidence has been introduced and the conflicting evidence is being weighed by the jury], in this latter process the presumption of law loses all that it had of mere arbitrary power, and must necessarily be regarded only from the standpoint of logic and reason, and valned and given effect only as it has evidential character").

¹ 1870, Willard, A. J., in *State v. Platt*, 2 S. C. 150, 154 ("Where several independent acts are required to be performed in order to accomplish a given result, to say that proof of the performance of one of them shall be admitted as conclusive proof of the performance of the other, is to say in effect that one alone is really requisite").

² The various uses of the term have been examined in detail *ante*, §§ 1345-1354 (conclusive testimonial preferences).

³ *Post*, § 2522.

upon a given party. If it is, and he removes it by producing contrary evidence, then that presumption, as a rule of law, is satisfied and disappears; he may then by his evidence succeed in creating another presumption which now puts the same duty upon the other party, who may in turn be able to dispose of it satisfactorily. But the same duty cannot at the same time exist for both parties, and thus in strictness the presumptions raising the duty cannot conflict. There may be successive shiftings of the duty, by means of presumptions successively invoked by each; but it is not the one presumption that overturns the other, for the mere introduction of sufficient evidence would have the same effect in stopping the operation of the presumption as a rule of law. This shifting of the duty of production of evidence, by reason of the successive invocation of different presumptions, may create a complicated situation difficult to work out; but it can more properly be spoken of as a case of successive presumptions than of conflicting presumptions; and the ultimate key to the situation is very often found by ascertaining the incidence of the burden of proof in the other sense, *i. e.* the ultimate risk of non-persuasion.¹

A *counter-presumption* is merely that presumption which is available for the opponent when he has not only fulfilled the duty of producing evidence against a presumption, but has gone further and evidenced additional facts which create a new presumption in his favor, and thus restored to the original proponent the duty of producing evidence. This situation is of rare occurrence.²

§ 2494. **Same: Prima Facie Evidence; Sufficient Evidence for the Jury; Scintilla of Evidence.** The term "*prima facie* evidence" or "*prima facie* case" is used in two senses, and it is often difficult to detect which of these is intended in the passage in hand. (1) In discussing presumptions, the term "*prima facie*" is sometimes used as *equivalent to the notion of a presumption*, even in the strict sense of a ruling of the judge putting upon the opponent the duty of producing evidence.¹ In other words, the term is thus applied to the stage of the case already noted in a preceding section (*ante*, § 2487) as (*c'*) and (*c''*), namely, where the proponent, having the burden of proving the issue (*i. e.* the risk of non-persuasion of the jury), has not only removed by sufficient evidence the duty of producing evidence to get past the judge to the jury, but has gone further, and, either by means of a presumption or by a general mass of strong evidence, has entitled himself

¹ Compare the presumption of innocence (*post*, § 2511) and the presumption of marriage (*post*, §§ 2505, 2506), which furnish the chief field for "conflicting" presumptions. Some good instances of these situations are worked out by Professor Thayer, *ubi supra*, pp. 348-350.

² Compare the example cited *ante*, § 2487, note 8.

¹ *E. g.*: 1883, Bowen, L. J., in *Abraath v. R. Co.*, L. R. 11 Q. B. D. 440, 455, 32 W. R. 50, 53 ("If he [the plaintiff] makes a *prima facie* case, and nothing is done by the other side to answer it, the defendant fails"); 1810, Mans-

field, C. J., in *Banbury Peerage Case*, 1 Sim. & St. 153 ("In every case in which there is *prima facie* evidence of any right existing in any person, the *onus probandi* is always upon the person or party calling such right in question"); 1849, Best, *Evidence*, § 273 ("The burden of proof is shifted . . . by every species of evidence strong enough to establish a *prima facie* case against a party"); 1895, *State v. Sattley*, 131 Mo. 461, 33 S. W. 41 ("the *prima facie* case is sufficient and conclusive, unless rebutted by the other evidence in the case").

to a ruling that the opponent should fail if he does nothing more in the way of producing evidence. Though this usage for the term is less usual, and being ambiguous, is objectionable, yet it serves to subsume under one name the similar legal effects (*c'*) and (*c''*) produced by a specific presumption or by a ruling on the mass of evidence in the particular case.

(2) But the phrase "*prima facie*" is also, and clearly enough, found used in a very different sense, representing the stage already noted (*ante*, § 2487) as (*a*), namely, where the proponent, having the first duty of producing some evidence in order to pass the judge to the jury, has fulfilled that duty, satisfied the judge, and may properly claim that the jury be allowed to consider his case. This sufficiency of evidence to go to the jury (the significance of which is that the proponent is no longer liable to a nonsuit or to the direction of the verdict for the opponent) is also often referred to as a *prima facie* case.² In this sense the phrase is used to emphasize the insufficiency of evidence which is indeed admissible, so far as the various rules of evidence might have excluded it, but yet, being all the evidence offered by the proponent, is not enough in quantity to be worth submitting to the jury.³ The difference between the two senses of the term is practically of the greatest consequence; for, in the latter sense, it means merely that the proponent is safe in having relieved himself of his duty of going forward, while in the former sense it signifies that he has further succeeded in creating it anew for his opponent.⁴ Some of the chief occasions of its use, and therefore of an unfortunate obscurity in the significance of the rulings, are in the proof of execution of attested documents,⁵ or of the identity of the person signing them,⁶ or of the authentication of ancient writings,⁷ where it is often difficult to determine whether the effect of the ruling is merely that the document may be read or amounts to directing the jury to take it for genuine.⁸

² For example: 1832, *Story, J.*, in *Crane v. Morris*, 6 Pet. 598, 621 (referring to evidence of a deed: "Whenever evidence is offered to the jury which is in its nature *prima facie* proof, . . . whatever just influence it may derive from that character, the jury have a right to give it; . . . the law has submitted it to them to decide for themselves"). In the following Irish case, the obscurity of the legal phrase was brought out by a question from an intelligent juror: 1848, *R. v. O'Doherty*, 6 State Tr. N. S. 831, 873 (Pennesther, B., charging the jury, in a prosecution for publishing an article with seditious intent: "The publishing them is certainly *prima facie* evidence against him, as being the registered proprietor [of the newspaper]"; a juror: "There is a difference of opinion among the jurors; some hold that, from your lordship stating there being *prima facie* evidence of the prisoner's guilt, we should at once go to find him guilty; others receiving the phrase thus, that your lordship did not mean to convey that it was sufficient [to require that finding]"; Pennesther, B.: "I did not mean, gentlemen, to direct you or tell you that in point of law, because he was the publisher and proprietor of the paper, he therefore necessarily knew the con-

tents. I did not mean to convey that. But I told you that it was evidence that he did know the contents, and that you were to form your judgment upon the whole of the case, reading the documents and the evidence").

³ As in *Benoit v. R. Co.*, 154 N. Y. 223, 48 N. E. 524 (1897), where it was ruled, the plaintiff having to show the defendant's *scienter* of a horse's unmanageable disposition, that a single instance of its having run away, though admissible evidence, was not sufficient evidence to go to the jury.

⁴ The following opinion notices the distinction: 1876, *Cushing, C. J.*, in *King v. Hopkins*, 57 N. H. 334, 359.

⁵ *Post*, § 2520.

⁶ *Post*, § 2529.

⁷ *Post*, § 2521.

⁸ The following case has been greatly responsible for the confusion of usage; its language is of no service nowadays: 1820, *E. v. Burdett*, 3 B. & Aid. 717-758 (arguments of counsel); 4 id. 95-183 (opinions of the judges); *Best and Hoiroyd, JJ.*, use the term "presumptive evidence" as equivalent to "circumstantial evidence," and their ruling is merely that there was sufficient of it to go to the jury; *Bayley, J.*, held that

The question is thus presented, in determining this sufficiency of evidence to go to the jury, whether there are any detailed tests to control or to guide the judge in his ruling. The ruling will, in truth, depend entirely on the nature of the evidence offered in the case in hand; and it is seldom possible that a ruling can serve as a precedent. It has been ruled, for instance, that to show a *scienter* of a horse's unmanageable disposition, a single instance of its having run away is, though admissible, not sufficient evidence for the jury;⁹ mere identity of name has been thought both sufficient and insufficient evidence of identity of person;¹⁰ but even these can hardly be taken as fixed precedents. There is no virtue in any form of words. There was an old phrase that a "mere scintilla of evidence" was sufficient;¹¹ but this has been abandoned by most Courts.¹² Other varieties of phrasing have sometimes been attempted.¹³ In some Courts it is said that the test for the ruling is the same as it would be on a motion after verdict to set aside the verdict as being against the overwhelming weight of evidence.¹⁴ Even if this were so,

"in order to warrant a presumption, a *prima facie* case must at least be made out," meaning the same as above, but on the facts he thought that there was not here sufficient evidence, adding "if they did draw that presumption, they acted, not upon justifiable inference, but upon unwarrantable conjecture"; Abbott, C. J., used the same meanings; "a presumption of any fact is, properly, an inferring of that fact from other facts that are known; it is an act of reasoning; . . . if the [jury's] conclusion is a reasonable inference from the premises, we ought not to disturb their verdict".

⁹ 1897, *Benoit v. R. Co.*, 154 N. Y. 223, 48 N. E. 524. So also: 1899, *Creamer v. McIlvain*, 89 Md. 343, 43 Atl. 936 (like *Benoit v. R. Co.*); 1899, *Weigand v. Refining Co.*, 189 Pa. 248, 42 Atl. 132 (one former kick by a mule, not sufficient evidence of viciousness, on the facts).

¹⁰ *Post*, § 2529.

¹¹ The phrase is mentioned, to be repudiated, in the 1800s: 1857, *Toomey v. R. Co.*, 3 C. B. N. s. 146, 150; 1857, *Wheelton v. Hardiaty*, 3 E. & B. 232, 262, 277; 1863, *Ryder v. Wombwell*, L. R. 4 Exch. 32; but it is difficult to find any prior time when it was ever a recognized test in England.

¹² 1898, *James v. Crockett*, 34 N. Br. 540, 548; 1887, *Bartelott v. International Bank*, 119 Ill. 259, 269, 9 N. E. 398; 1898, *Offutt v. Expos. Co.*, 175 Ill. 472, 51 N. E. 650 (scintilla rule disapproved; evidence "tending to prove" suffices; *Bartelott* case approved); 1899, *Laidlaw v. Sage*, 158 N. Y. 73, 52 N. E. 679; 1900, *Schoepfin v. Coffey*, 162 Ill. 12, 56 N. E. 502; 1901, *Cogleil v. R. Co.*, 129 N. C. 398, 40 S. E. 202; 1873, *Philadelphia & R. R. Co. v. Yeager*, 73 Pa. 121, 124; 1876, *Commissioners of Marion Co. v. Clark*, 94 U. S. 278, 284; 1897, *Taft, J.*, in *Ewing v. Goode*, 78 Fed. 442 ("The preliminary question for the Court to settle in this case, therefore, is whether there is any evidence sufficient in law to sustain a verdict that defendant was unskillful or negligent, and that his want of skill or care caused injury. in the

Courts of this and other States the rule is that if the party having the burden of proof offer a mere scintilla of evidence to support each necessary element of his case, however overwhelming the evidence to the contrary, the Court must submit the issue thus made to the jury, with the power to set aside the verdict, if found against the weight of the evidence. In the Federal Courts this is not the rule. According to their practice, if the party having the burden submits only a scintilla of evidence to sustain it, the Court, instead of going through the useless form of submitting the issue to the jury, and correcting error, if made, by setting aside the verdict, may in the first instance direct the jury to return a verdict for the defendant. Hence our inquiry is: Does the case now submitted show more than a scintilla of evidence tending to show want of skill or care by defendant, or injury caused thereby?"; 1903, *New York C. & H. R. Co. v. Difendaffer*, — C. C. A. —, 125 Fed. 393 (*Marion County v. Clark* followed). There is a collection of authorities for various jurisdictions in *Thompson on Trials*, §§ 2246 ff. The opinion of Brannon, J., in *Ketterman v. R. Co.*, 48 W. Va. 608, 37 S. E. 683 (1900) is a valuable one.

¹³ 1893, *Catlett v. R. Co.*, 57 Ark. 461, 468, 21 S. W. 1042 ("evidence legally sufficient to warrant a verdict"); 1893, *Ohio & M. R. Co. v. Dunn*, 138 Ind. 18, 27, 36 N. E. 702, 37 N. E. 546 ("evidence from which when undisputed" a finding would be justified); 1897, *State v. Couper*, 32 Or. 212, 49 Pac. 959 (either "no competent evidence at all bearing upon the subject," or "so weak that a verdict against the defendant would necessarily be attributable to passion, prejudice, or partiality"); 1898, *Joske v. Irvine*, 91 Tex. 574, 44 S. W. 1059 (must be more than to raise "a mere surmise or suspicion"); 1900, *Ketterman v. R. Co.*, 48 W. Va. 608, 37 S. E. 683.

¹⁴ 1874, *Brett, J.*, in *Bridges v. R. Co.*, L. R. 7 H. L. 213; 1894, *Fornes v. Wright*, 91 Ia. 392, 59 N. W. 51; 1893, *Market & F. N.*

it would not afford any more concrete and tangible guide. But it seems unsound,¹⁵ on principle, to assert such an identity, for two reasons, — in the first place, because the mass of evidence in the two situations is very different (for after verdict the defendant's evidence has to be considered with the rest), and in the next place, because the setting aside of a verdict leads merely to a new trial, while the ruling of insufficiency leads usually to the direction of a verdict for the opponent (*post*, § 2495), and therefore a total quantity of the proponent's evidence which would justify the former might be more than would justify the latter.¹⁶ Perhaps the best statement of the question is this: "[The proposition] cannot merely be, Is there evidence? . . . The proposition seems to me to be this: Are there facts in evidence which if unanswered would justify men of ordinary reason and fairness in affirming the question which the plaintiff is bound to maintain?"¹⁷

§ 2495. *Same*: Direction of a Verdict, Motion for a Nonsuit, and Demurrer to Evidence. It remains to ask what shall be the form and effect of this ruling of the judge that the proponent's evidence is insufficient to go to the jury? It is commonly said that he "ought to withdraw the question from the jury, and direct a nonsuit or a verdict for the defendant if the onus is on the plaintiff, or direct a verdict for the plaintiff if the onus is on the defendant,"¹ *i. e.* decide against the proponent having the risk of non-persuasion on that particular issue, whether he be plaintiff or defendant. There are, however, three distinct forms of ruling, which raise different questions.

1. The *nonsuit*, which has several other applications, may be employed for the present purpose. Its marked feature is that it does not lead to a judgment against the proponent, and (in England) that the proponent's consent is necessary. But the local rules for nonsuit have been so widely varied by modern statutes and practice that generalizations are hardly possible as to its service for the present purpose.²

Bank v. Sargent, 35 Me. 349, 351, 27 Atl. 192; 1893, Haines v. Trust Co., 56 N. J. L. 312, 814, 28 Atl. 796; 1893, Holland v. Kindregan, 155 Pa. 156, 160, 25 Atl. 1077 (scintilla rule); 1893, Evans v. Chamberlain, 40 S. C. 104, 106, 18 S. E. 213 ("any pertinent evidence"); 1887, Northern Pa. R. Co. v. Bank, 123 U. S. 727, 733, 8 Snp. 266; 1893, Elliott v. R. Co., 150 id. 245, 246, 14 Sup. 85; 1892, Monroe v. Ins. Co., 3 C. C. A. 280, 52 Fed. 777; 1893, Colorado C. C. M. Co. v. Turck, 4 id. 313, 54 Fed. 262; 1894, Laclède F. B. M. Co. v. Hartford Co., 9 id. 1, 60 Fed. 351 (not merely if "some evidence"); 1896, Mount Adams & E. P. I. R. Co. v. Lowery, 20 id. 596, 74 Fed. 463 (containing a full survey of cases).

¹⁵ *Accord*: 1899, Series v. Serles, 85 Or. 289, 57 Pac. 634 (citing cases); 1897, Wright v. Express Co., 80 Fed. 85. See a useful article in the Western Reserve Law Journal for October, 1898.

¹⁶ 1862, Chapman, J., in Denny v. Williams, 5 All. 1, 5; 1871, Brooks v. Somerville, 106 Mass. 271, 275 (approving Denny v. Williams).

¹⁷ 1874, Brett, J., in Bridges v. R. Co., L. R. 7 H. L. 213.

Other examples of rulings are as follows: 1900, Granby v. Ménard, 31 Can. Snp. 14; 1895, Howard v. State, 108 Ala. 571, 18 So. 813; 1891, Ambler v. Whipple, 139 Ill. 311, 822, 28 N. E. 841; 1902, Kansas C. F. S. & M. R. Co. v. Perry, 65 Kan. 792, 70 Pac. 870; 1897, Fitzgerald v. R. Co., 154 N. Y. 263, 48 N. E. 514; 1897, State v. Satterfield, 121 N. C. 558, 28 S. E. 491.

Distinguish here the questions whether the evidence is sufficient under the present rule and whether it is sufficient under the rule of *conditional relevancy* (*ante*, § 1871); on this point, compare Reed v. Clark, 47 Cal. 194, 200 (1873).

¹ 1878, Lord Blackburn, in Dublin, *etc.* R. Co. v. Slattery, L. R. 3 App. Cas. 1155.

² The following opinions are useful for the orthodox theory: 1853, Willard, J., in People v. Cook, 8 N. Y. 67, 74; 1892, Magruder, C. J., in Joliet A. & N. R. Co. v. Velie, 140 Ill. 59, 23 N. E. 706. The following cases illustrate some of the considerations that may enter:

2. The *direction of a verdict* is the appropriate and most usual form of the ruling.³ Two main questions here arise: (a) Is there any reason why an order directing a verdict for insufficiency of evidence may not be made *in favor of the opponent* (i. e. usually, the defendant)? (b) Is there any reason against making it *in favor of the proponent* (i. e. usually, the plaintiff)?

(a) It is almost universally conceded that the direction of a verdict *for the opponent* is in general a proper form of ruling. That much, and no less, is the very thing that is signified by this part of the judge's function in the trial.⁴ In making the decision, however, the truth of the proponent's testimony must be assumed;⁵ for only the jury could have the right to decide to the contrary upon that material. Moreover, the sufficiency of evidence which will defeat such a motion may be found in the opponent's own evidence (which he himself cannot gainsay),⁶ just as the insufficiency of facts which will justify such a direction may be found in the opponent's evidence, provided it is undisputed.⁷

(b) That a verdict may also be directed *for the proponent* is accepted by the majority of Courts, though it is more plausibly open to dispute.⁸ The usual situation is that of a plaintiff, who has produced a mass of evidence sufficient to throw upon the defendant the liability of producing some evidence to the contrary, and if this duty is not sustained, it is the judge's function to make the decision (*ante*, § 2487). The only objection here can be that the judge must not reach his decision by assuming the plaintiff's testimony to be true (because that is the jury's province); yet where the testimony is undisputed, or where in some other way that assumption is unnecessary, this objection disappears. A less common situation is that of a defendant having an affirmative plea (for example, payment of a note, or contributory negligence in personal injury); but here also a verdict may be ordered for the defendant, provided the result can be reached upon undisputed testimony of the defendant, or upon testimony of the plaintiff, which

1898, *Williams v. R. Co.*, 155 N. Y. 153, 49 N. E. 672 (where the testimony at a second trial was so different that it appeared to be manufactured to suit the decision in the former appeal, a non-suit was held improper); 1896, *Foakett & B. Co. v. Swayne*, 70 Conn. 74, 38 Atl. 893 (applied to a cause tried by a judge without a jury).

³ This has an equivalent, in some of the Southern States and elsewhere, in a *motion to exclude all of the evidence*, — an anomalous and misleading term.

⁴ The leading case is usually regarded to be *Commissioners of Marion Co. v. Clark*, 94 U. S. 273, 284 (1876; opinion by Clifford, J.).

The contrary rule in a few States is based on some misapprehension of the jury's function; e. g.: 1868, *Littlejohn v. Fowler*, 8 Coldw. Tenn. 284, 288; 1898, *Gannon v. Gaslight Co.*, 145 Mo. 502, 46 S. W. 968; 1903, *Dalton v. Poplar Bluff*, 173 id. 89, 72 S. W. 1068. This fallacy is dealt with in the following opinions: 1896, *Norris v. Clinkscales*, 47 S. C. 448, 25

S. E. 797; 1900, *Kotterman v. R. Co.*, 48 W. Va. 606, 37 S. E. 653.

⁵ 1885, *Meadows v. Ins. Co.*, 67 Ia. 57, 24 N. W. 591.

⁶ 1898, *Gagnon v. Dana*, 69 N. H. 264, 39 Atl. 982.

⁷ 1900, *Lonzer v. R. Co.*, 196 Pa. 610, 46 Atl. 937.

⁸ 1899, *Brown v. Drake*, 109 Ga. 179, 34 S. F. 309; 1900, *Marshall v. J. Gross C. Co.*, 184 Ill. 421, 56 N. E. 807; 1853, *People v. Cook*, 8 N. Y. 67, 74; 1890, *Delaware L. & W. R. Co. v. Converse*, 139 U. S. 469, 472, 11 Sup. 569; 1894, *Unlon P. R. Co. v. McDonald*, 152 id. 232, 284, 14 Sup. 619; 1903, *Leach v. Burr*, 183 id. 510, 23 Sup. 393 ("the power of a Court to direct a verdict for one party or the other is undoubted"). *Contra*: 1897, *Anniston National Bank v. Committee*, 121 N. C. 109, 28 S. E. 134; 1897, *Eller v. Church*, ib. 269, 28 S. E. 364. Perhaps *Neal v. R. Co.*, N. C., *infra*, displaces these.

the latter must concede to be true.⁹ It is maintained by most Courts that in a *criminal case* there can be no direction of a verdict for the prosecution;¹⁰ and this conclusion is supposed (but erroneously) to follow from the rule of persuasion beyond a reasonable doubt (*post*, § 2497).

3. The *demurrer to evidence* is a form of raising an objection of law, which has a history of its own in its original use.¹¹ But the term and the form came to be used, in some American jurisdictions, as the practical equivalent for the foregoing process,—the motion to direct a verdict for insufficiency of evidence. The chief effect of this has been to introduce a certain confusion into the rulings which deal with the subject of waiver, now to be noticed.

§ 2496. **Same: Waiver of Motion by Subsequent Introduction of Evidence.** When an opponent, at the close of the proponent's case in chief, has made a motion asking in effect for the direction of a verdict, how is the opponent's situation affected by his subsequent conduct, with respect to a *waiver* of the motion? (1) In the first place, the opponent cannot claim a ruling by the judge, as a matter of right, if he makes the motion at the close of the proponent's case in chief *without then resting his own case*. At that point, he is only invoking the Court's discretion; not until the entire evidence is closed may he demand a ruling as of right.¹ (2) In the next place, it follows that the opponent *waives no right by going on to put in his own evidence* after the judge's refusal to rule against the proponent for insufficiency of evidence at the close of the proponent's case in chief. The opponent *may therefore renew the motion* at the close of the whole case on both sides, and is entitled to the benefit of the ruling, if in his favor at that time.² (3) Conversely, however, he cannot take advantage of the judge's *original erroneous refusal* to direct a verdict for insufficiency at the time of the first motion, if he does *not renew* the motion at the close of all the evidence, or if at the time of the

⁹ 1900, *Neal v. R. Co.*, 126 N. C. 634, 36 S. E. 117 (contributory negligence; Douglas and Clark, J.J., *diss.*); this case therefore qualifies the following ruling: 1898, *Cable v. R. Co.*, 122 *id.* 892, 900, 29 S. E. 377 (contributory negligence). The following cases illustrate the distinction: 1900, *Haven v. Mo. R. Co.*, 155 Mo. 316, 55 S. W. 1035 (case of contributory negligence not taken from the jury where plaintiff and another witness testified to facts which if true sustained her case); 1896, *American Exchange Bank v. N. Y. B. & P. Co.*, 148 N. Y. 698, 43 N. E. 168 (where the person having the burden proves his facts by a cross-examination of the opponent's witness, the judge may direct the issue to be found for the former, because the only question that can arise is that of the credibility of the witness, and the opponent cannot dispute that).

¹⁰ 1899, *People v. Warren*, 122 Mich. 504, 81 N. W. 360 (collecting cases); 1895, *Sparf v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 51, 177, 15 Snp. 273. *Contra*: 1873, *Com. v. Magee*, Pa., 12 Cox Cr. 549. Compare the following: 1897, *Agnew v. U. S.*, 165 U. S. 36, 50, 17 Sup. 35 ("In criminal

cases, the burden of establishing guilt rests on the prosecution from the beginning to the end of the trial. But when a *prima facie* case has been made out, as conviction follows unless it be rebutted, the necessity of adducing evidence then devolves on the accused"); 1902, *McKnight v. U. S.*, 54 C. C. A. 358, 115 Fed. 972; 1902, *U. S. v. German*, 115 Fed. 987; and the cases cited *post*, §§ 2501, 2512-2514.

¹¹ 1793, *Gibson v. Hunter*, 2 H. Bl. 187; 1873, *Trout v. R. Co.*, 23 Gratt. 619; Thayer, *Preliminary Treatise*, 234.

¹ 1892, *Columbia & P. S. R. Co. v. Hawthorne*, 14 U. S. 202, 12 Sup. 591.

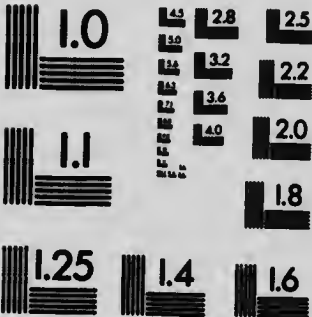
² 1889, *Weber v. Kansas City C. R. Co.*, 100 Mo. 194, 12 S. W. 804, 13 S. W. 587.

In a few States this right of the opponent to proceed to introduce his own evidence, after the motion refused, was formerly denied, probably on the analogy of a demurrer to evidence; but this has usually been changed by statute; *e. g.*, *Barabasz v. Kabat*, Md., *infra*; 1896, *State v. Groves*, 119 N. C. 822, 824, 25 S. E. 819; 1898, *Purnell v. R. Co.*, 122 *id.* 832, 835, 29 S. E. 953; compare N. C. St. 1899, c. 131.



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final motion the ruling *correctly refuses* to order a verdict for insufficiency; ³ the Court is at that time entitled to decide upon a survey of the whole evidence; and this survey naturally renders any prior error immaterial. This is sometimes put upon the ground of waiver; but it is rather a necessary consequence of the discretionary nature and limited scope of the first ruling.

§ 2497. *Measure of Persuasion*: (1) *Proof beyond a Reasonable Doubt*; *Rule for Criminal Cases*. After the tribunal having the function of deciding upon facts, *i. e.* the jury, has retired to reach and frame its decision, a question arises as to the nature or degree of its persuasion. Here, it is to be noticed, we are no longer concerned with the incidence of the duty or burden of proof as between the parties to the cause, but merely with the tribunal's own duty and conduct as to its *standard of persuasion*.

Now the logical notion involved in the situation is that the tribunal must be persuaded to believe the affirmation of the burden-bearer before it can be asked to act as desired, but that this persuasion or conviction in the mind of the tribunal may have more than one degree or quality of positiveness; and an attempt is made by the law to define the degree of positiveness of persuasion which must exist in order to justify action in the shape of a verdict for the burden-bearer. The attempt to define these qualities of persuasion has great difficulties; and many useless refinements and wordy quibbles have marked the countless and more or less unsuccessful attempts.

In *criminal cases* a rule has grown up that the persuasion must be *beyond a reasonable doubt*.¹ This precise distinction seems to have had its origin no earlier than the end of the 1700s, and to have been applied at first only in capital cases, and by no means in a fixed phrase, but in various tentative forms. "A clear impression," "upon clear grounds," "satisfied," are the earlier phrases; and then "rational doubt," "rational and well-grounded doubt," "beyond the probability of doubt," and "reasonable doubt" come into use. Then, in Mr. Starkie's classical treatise, "moral certainty, to the exclusion of all reasonable doubt," is given vogue.² From time to time, various ill-advised efforts have been made to define more in detail this elusive and undefinable state of mind. One that has received frequent sanction and has been quoted

¹ 1892, *Joliet A. & N. R. Co. v. Velie*, 140 Ill. 59, 63, 28 N. E. 1086; 1893, *Ames & Frost Co. v. Strachurski*, 145 id. 192, 195, 34 N. E. 43; 1900, *Barabasz v. Kabat*, 91 Md. 53, 46 Atl. 337 (good opinion by Pearce, J.); 1901, *New York P. & N. R. Co. v. Jones*, 94 id. 24, 50 Atl. 422; 1889, *Weber v. Kansas City C. R. Co., Mo., supra*; 1903, *Klockeubrink v. R. Co.*, 172 id. 678, 72 S. W. 900; 1902, *Sigua Iron Co. v. Brown*, 171 N. Y. 488, 64 N. E. 194; 1892, *Columbia & P. S. R. Co. v. Hawthorne*, U. S., *supra*; 1894, *Union Pacific R. Co. v. Daniels*, 152 id. 684, 687, 14 Sup. 756; 1902, *McCrea v. Parsons*, 50 C. C. A. 612, 112 Fed. 917; 1903, *Walton v. Wild Goose M. & T. Co.*, 60 C. C. A. 155, 123 Fed. 209. *Contra*: 1898, *Purnell v. R. Co.*, 122 N. C. 832, 29 S. E. 953

(construing a statute; the original error may be reviewed).

In Illinois, there is a local question whether the motion to direct a verdict must be *in writing*, under a statute requiring instructions to the jury to be *in writing*: 1893, *Ames & Frost Co. v. Strachurski, supra* (undecided); but it is plain that the two are different things.

² In Georgia alone, it seems, this test does not obtain: Ga. Code 1895, § 5145, Cr. C. § 987 (in criminal cases "a greater strength of mental conviction" than preponderance of testimony is necessary).

³ For the historical data above summarized, see an article by Judge May of Boston, in the *American Law Review*, X, 642, 656, the author of the treatise on Criminal Law, and Tbayer's *Preliminary Treatise*, pp. 551-558.

innumerable times is that of Chief Justice Shaw of Massachusetts, on the trial of Dr. Webster for the murder of Mr. Parkman: ³ "[Reasonable doubt] is that state of the case, which, after the entire comparison and consideration of all the evidence, leaves the minds of jurors in that condition that they cannot say they feel an abiding conviction, to a moral certainty, of the truth of the charge. . . . The evidence must establish the truth of the fact to a reasonable and moral certainty, — a certainty that convinces and directs the understanding, and satisfies the reason and judgment. . . . This we take to be proof beyond a reasonable doubt."

Many others, in varying forms, convey the same notion in more or less well-chosen words; and each Court has its stores of precedents of instructions approved and disapproved.⁴ Nevertheless, when anything more than a

³ 1850, *Com. v. Webster*, 5 Cusb. 295, 320. Another is this: 1875, Gray, C. J., in *Com. v. Costley*, 118 Mass. 1; "Proof 'beyond a reasonable doubt' is not beyond all possible or imaginary doubt, but such proof as precludes every reasonable hypothesis, except that which it tends to support. It is proof to a 'moral certainty,' as distinguished from an absolute certainty. As applied to a judicial trial for crime, the two phrases are synonymous and equivalent; each has been used by eminent judges to explain the other, and each signifies such proof as satisfies the judgment and consciences of the jury, as reasonable men, and applying their reason to the evidence before them, that the crime charged has been committed by the defendant, and so satisfies them as to leave no other reasonable conclusion possible."

⁴ The following list represents almost all the jurisdictions; from Alabama is given the material of two or three years' rulings, merely to illustrate what a futile grist of profuse jargon is permitted by some Courts to be ground out annually in the name of truth and justice: 1895, *Jackson v. State*, 106 Ala. 12, 17 So. 333; *Thomas v. State*, ib. 19, 17 So. 460; *Bonner v. State*, 107 id. 97, 18 So. 226; *Howard v. State*, 108 id. 571, 18 So. 813; 1896, *Peazler v. State*, 110 id. 11, 20 So. 363; *Allen v. State*, 111 id. 80, 20 So. 490; *Barnes v. State*, ib. 56, 20 So. 565; *Crawford v. State*, 113 id. 661, 21 So. 214; 1897, *Mitchell v. State*, 114 id. 1, 22 So. 71; *Yarbrong v. State*, 115 id. 92, 22 So. 534; *Pickens v. State*, ib. 42, 22 So. 551; *Newell v. State*, ib. 54, 22 So. 572; *Koch v. State*, ib. 99, 22 So. 471; 1898, *Bryant v. State*, 116 id. 445, 23 So. 40; *Titus v. State*, 117 id. 16, 23 So. 77; *Bones v. State*, ib. 138, 23 So. 138; *Walker v. State*, ib. 42, 23 So. 149; *Burks v. State*, ib. 140, 23 So. 530; *Nicholson v. State*, ib. 82, 23 So. 792; *Dennis v. State*, 118 id. 72, 23 So. 1002; 1895, *Jones v. State*, 61 Ark. 88, 32 S. W. 81; 1896, *Lewis v. State*, 62 id. 494, 36 S. W. 689; 1897, *People v. White*, 116 Cal. 17, 47 Pac. 771; *People v. Asbmead*, 118 id. 508, 50 Pac. 681; *People v. Hubert*, 119 id. 216, 51 Pac. 329; 1896, *Boykin v. People*, 22 Colo. 496, 45 Pac. 419; 1898, *Gantling v. State*, 40 Fla. 237, 23 So. 857; 1896, *Hayne v. State*, 99 Ga. 212, 25 S. E. 307; 1896, *Burney v. State*, 100 id. 65, 25 S. E. 911; 1897, *Campbell v. State*, ib. 267, 28 S. E. 71; 1898, *Spalding v. People*, 172 Ill. 49, 49 N. E. 993; 1897, *Reynolds v. State*, 147 Ind. 3, 46 N. E. 31; 1897, *Hauk v. State*, 148 id. 238, 46 N. E. 127; 1898, *Shields v. State*, 149 id. 395, 49 N. E. 351; 1898, *McIntosh v. State*, 151 id. 251, 51 N. E. 354; 1897, *State v. Van Tassel*, 103 Ia. 6, 72 N. W. 497; 1897, *State v. Debolt*, 104 id. 105, 73 N. W. 499; 1898, *State v. Marshall*, 105 id. 38, 74 N. W. 763; 1899, *State v. Novak*, 109 id. 717, 79 N. W. 465; 1898, *Stevens v. Com.* — Ky. —, 45 S. W. 76; 1898, *State v. Bazile*, 50 La. An. 21, 23 So. 8; 1898, *People v. Swartz*, 118 Mich. 292, 76 N. W. 491; 1896, *Webb v. State*, 73 Miss. 456, 19 So. 238; 1896, *Cherry v. State*, — id. —, 20 So. 887; 1897, *Powers v. State*, 74 id. 779, 21 So. 657; 1898, *Lipscomb v. State*, 75 id. 559, 23 So. 210; *Herman v. State*, ib. 340, 22 So. 872; 1896, *State v. Blue*, 136 Mo. 41, 37 S. W. 796; *State v. Goforth*, ib. 111, 37 S. W. 801; 1898, *State v. Duncan*, 142 id. 456, 44 S. W. 263; 1899, *State v. Garrison*, 147 id. 548, 49 S. W. 508; 1895, *State v. Gleim*, 17 Mont. 17, 41 Pac. 998; 1898, *State v. Clancy*, 20 id. 498, 52 Pac. 267; 1895, *Collins v. State*, 46 Nebr. 37, 64 N. W. 432; 1896, *Barney v. State*, 49 id. 515, 68 N. W. 636; 1897, *Davis v. State*, 51 id. 301, 70 N. W. 984; 1897, *Morgan v. State*, 51 id. 672, 71 N. W. 788; 1897, *Johnson v. State*, 53 id. 103, 73 N. W. 463; 1898, *Carrall v. State*, ib. 431, 73 N. W. 939; *Whitney v. State*, ib. 287, 78 N. W. 696; *Bartley v. State*, ib. 310, 73 N. W. 744; *Maxfield v. State*, 55 id. 44, 74 N. W. 401; 1898, *State v. Mandich*, 24 Nev. 336, 54 Pac. 516; 1896, *Terr. v. Lermo*, 8 N. M. 566, 46 Pac. 16; *Terr. v. Padilla*, ib. 510, 46 Pac. 346; 1897, *People v. Barker*, 153 N. Y. 111, 47 N. E. 31; 1896, *State v. Rogers*, 119 N. C. 793, 26 S. E. 142; 1903, *State v. Wilcox*, 182 id. 1120, 44 S. E. 625; 1898, *Patzwald v. U. S.*, 7 Okl. 232, 54 Pac. 458; 1897, *State v. Aughtry*, 49 S. C. 285, 26 S. E. 619; 1895, *Isaac v. U. S.*, 159 U. S. 487, 16 Sup. 51; 1897, *State v. Cusbing*, 17 Wash. 544, 50 Pac. 512; 1896, *Emery v. State*, 92 Wis. 146, 65 N. W. 848; *Frank v. State*, 94 id. 211, 68 N. W. 657; 1897, *Hoffman v. State*, 97 id. 576,

simple caution and a brief definition is given, the matter tends to become one of mere words, and the actual effect upon the jury, instead of being enlightenment, is rather confusion, or, at the least, a continued incomprehension. In practice, these detailed amplifications of the doctrine have usually degenerated into a mere tool for counsel who desire to entrap an unwary judge into forgetfulness of some obscure precedent, or to save a cause for a new trial by quibbling, on appeal, over the verbal propriety of a form of words uttered or declined to be uttered by the judge. "No man can measure with a rule he does not understand; neither can juries determine by rules obscure in themselves and made yet more obscure by attempted definition."⁵ The effort to perpetuate and develop these unserviceable definitions is a useless one, and serves to-day chiefly to aid the purposes of the tactician. It should be wholly abandoned.⁶ Yet its defence has been attempted by an able judge:

1899, *Marshall, J.*, in *Buel v. State*, 104 Wis. 132, 80 N. W. 78: "Much discussion is found in the adjudged cases as to whether any attempt to explain it does not tend to confuse rather than to enlighten the jury. It is said that scholastic attempts to explain the meaning of such words, which are more easily understood than explained, are liable to lead such men as commonly make up our juries to think that the ordinary processes of reasoning, by which they are accustomed to come to conclusions in the ordinary affairs of life, are not suitable to the jury room in a criminal case, but that some other process of reasoning is to be adopted which they are to gather from the language of the trial judge, and that they are thereby really weakened in their ability to come to a just conclusion; that it would be better to leave them to exercise their own intelligence in regard to language so plain that it is not easy to make it plainer by explanation. Mr. Justice Newman said, in *Hoffman v. State*:⁷ 'It needs be a skilful definer who will make the meaning of the term ("beyond a reasonable doubt") more clear by the multiplication of words,' while the writer expressed the view, in *Emery v. State*,⁸ that the due administration of justice in many cases requires a careful explanation of the term to be given to the jury, and that without it justice is liable at times, through ignorance, to be defeated, and the efficacy of the law to protect society, and its administration by courts, discredited. In *State v. Sauer*,⁹ Mitchell, J., expressed the opinion that 'most attempts at explaining the meaning of a "reasonable doubt" are made by the use of expressions that themselves need explanation more than the term sought to be explained by them, and that the better way is to omit such attempts, but that if such attempts be indulged in it would be better to adopt those definitions that have received general approval by Courts.' In *People v. Stubenvoll*,¹⁰ Champlin, J., speaking for all the members of the Court, said: 'We do not think that the phrase "reasonable doubt" is of such unknown or uncommon signification that an exposition by the trial judge is called for. Language that is within the comprehension of persons of ordinary intelligence can seldom be made plainer by further defining or refining. All persons who possess the qualifications for jurors know that a doubt of the guilt of the accused, honestly entertained, is a reasonable doubt.' In *Judge*

73 N. W. 52; 1899, *Emery v. State*, 101 id. 627, 78 N. W. 145.

⁵ Judge May, in the article above cited, which contains some just remarks upon the doctrine.

⁶ The following is a model treatment of the subject: 1901, *Lenert v. State*, — Tex. Cr. —, 63 S. W. 563 ("The jury sent word to the Court . . . that they desired an additional charge upon the meaning of 'reasonable doubt.' . . . Thereupon the Court told the jury verbally 'that the two words "reasonable doubt" were words of common use, and the jury could under-

stand them as easily as the Court, and the Court had a reasonable doubt as to whether or not he could under the law charge them as to their meaning.' We see no error in this action of the trial Court calculated to injure the rights of the appellants").

⁷ 97 Wis. 576, 73 N. W. 52.

⁸ 101 Wis. 627, 78 N. W. 145.

⁹ 28 Minn. 438, 38 N. W. 355; this was one of the great judicial minds of the passing generation.

¹⁰ 62 Mich. 329, 28 N. W. 883.

Thompson's work on Trials,¹¹ it is said that 'all the definitions are little more than metaphysical paraphrases of an expression invented by the common-law judges for the very reason that it was capable of being understood and applied by men in the jury box.' Many more instances might be given were judges of appellate Courts and text writers have discouraged all attempts at explanation of what is a reasonable doubt, from the standpoint of a juror. Nevertheless the fact remains that trial judges, at least in important criminal trials, generally take great pains to explain the term so that the commonest understanding can grasp its meaning. The practice in that regard has grown up from frequent observations of the necessity of it. It is considered here that it is proper in all cases to make a careful explanation of the term, and that where the prosecution relies wholly on circumstantial evidence it is the better practice to do so, taking the utmost care, however, to use only expressions that have been approved, particularly by this Court."

It is generally and properly said that this measure of reasonable doubt need not be applied to the specific detailed facts, but only to the *whole issue*; ¹² and herein is given opportunity for much vain argument whether the strands of a cable or the links of a chain furnish the better simile for testing the measure of persuasion.

§ 2498. **Same: Proof by Preponderance of Evidence; Rule for Civil Cases.** In *civil cases* it should be enough to say that the extreme caution and the unusual positiveness of persuasion required in criminal cases do not obtain. But it is customary to go further, and here also to attempt to define in words the quality of persuasion necessary. It is said to be that state of mind in which there is felt to be a "preponderance of evidence" in favor of the demandant's proposition. Here, too, moreover, this simple and suggestive phrase has not been allowed to suffice; and in many precedents sundry other phrases — "satisfied," "convinced," and the like — have been put forward as equivalents, and their propriety as a form of words discussed and sanctioned or disapproved, with much waste of judicial time.¹

But the chief topic of controversy has been whether in certain civil cases the measure of persuasion for *criminal cases* should be applied. Policy sug-

¹¹ II, § 2469.
¹² 1893, *Jamison v. People*, 145 Ill. 357, 380, 34 N. E. 486; 1896, *Keating v. People*, 160 id. 480, 43 N. E. 724; 1897, *Williams v. People*, 166 id. 132, 46 N. E. 749; 1899, *Kossakowski v. People*, 177 id. 53, 563 N. E. 115; 1902, *Henry v. People*, 198 id. 162, 65 N. E. 120; 1897, *Hinshaw v. State*, 147 Ind. 334, 47 N. E. 158; 1895, *State v. Gleim*, 17 Mont. 17, 41 Pac. 998; 1897, *Morgan v. State*, 51 Nebr. 672, 71 N. W. 788; 1903, *Horn v. State*, — Wyo. —, 73 Pac. 705 (good opinion by Potter, J.).
Contra: 1899, *State v. Cohen*, 108 Ia. 208, 78 N. W. 857; 1902, *State v. Flemming*, 130 N. C. 683, 41 S. E. 549; 1900, *State v. Young*, 9 N. D. 165, 82 N. W. 420.

The general rule for reasonable doubt ought to apply equally to *misdemeanors*: 1894, *Vandeverter v. State*, 38 Nebr. 592, 595, 57 N. W. 397.

¹ 1896, *O'Connor M. & M. Co. v. Dickson*, 112 Ala. 304, 20 So. 413; 1896, *American Oak Extr. Co. v. Ryan*, ib. 337, 20 So. 644; 1897, *Alabama M. R. Co. v. Marcus*, 115 id. 389, 22

So. 135; 1897, *Louisville & N. R. Co. v. Hill*, ib. 334, 22 So. 163; 1898, *Morrow v. Campbell*, 118 id. 330, 24 So. 852 ("clear and convincing proof," not required); 1898, *Moore v. Heineke*, 119 id. 627, 24 So. 374; 1896, *Murphy v. Waterhouse*, 113 Cal. 467, 45 Pac. 866 ("convince the minds" of the jury, held improper); 1898, *Sams A. C. Co. v. League*, 25 Colo. 129, 54 Pac. 642; C. Code 1895, §§ 5144, 5145 (phrase defined); 1896, *Taylor v. Felsing*, 164 Ill. 331, 45 N. E. 161 (not a "clear preponderance"); 1896, *French v. Day*, 89 Me. 441, 36 Atl. 908 ("clear preponderance and convincing proof," held too strong, as understood by "the common mind"); 1898, *Sanborn v. Gerald*, 91 id. 366, 40 Atl. 67; 1898, *First National Bank of Omaha v. Goodman*, 55 Nebr. 409, 75 N. W. 846; 1896, *Moore v. Stone*, — Tex. Civ. App. —, 36 S. W. 909 ("by a preponderance of proof to your reasonable satisfaction," held improper); 1898, *Sigafus v. Porter*, 28 C. C. A. 443, 84 Fed. 430; 1898, *Cnrran v. Stange Co.*, 98 Wis. 598, 74 N. W. 377; 1898, *Knopke v. Ins. Co.*, 99 id. 289, 74 N. W. 795.

gests that the latter test should be strictly confined to its original field, and that there ought to be no attempt to employ it in any civil case.² Nevertheless, the effort has been made (though usually without success) to introduce it in certain sorts of civil cases where an analogy seems to obtain. (1) It is sometimes said that, in general, wherever in a civil case a *criminal act is charged* as a part of the case, the rule for criminal cases should apply; but this has been generally repudiated.³ (2) Nor is such a doctrine better established for individual kinds of cases. It does not apply to an action for a *statutory penalty*;⁴ nor to a plea of truth to an action for a *defamatory charge of crime*;⁵ nor to a plea of *arson* by the insurer in an action on a policy of fire insurance;⁶ nor in *disbarment* proceedings;⁷ nor in an action for *support* charging the defendant as the father of a *bastard*;⁸ nor in an action for *seduction*,⁹ nor a proceeding for *divorce* on the ground of adultery;¹⁰ nor in proceedings for *contempt*¹¹ or for an *injunction*.¹² But a stricter standard, in some such phrase as "clear and convincing proof," is commonly applied to measure the necessary persuasion for a charge of *fraud*;¹³ for the existence and contents of a *lost will*;¹⁴ for an *agreement to bequeath by will*;¹⁵ for *mutual mistake* sufficient to justify *reformation of an instrument*;¹⁶ and for a few related classes of cases.¹⁷

² Compare Judge May's article, above cited, in which the rule for civil cases is judiciously discussed.

³ 1897, *Brown v. Tourtelotte*, 24 Colo. 204, 50 Pac. 195 (forgery); 1894, *Grimes v. Hilliary*, 150 Ill. 141, 146, 36 N. E. 977 (left undecided; though previous rulings in this State had adopted the criminal rule; prior decisions apparently doubted; but the criminal rule held not applicable to a defendant's malicious destruction of a note, the malice not being essential to recovery); 1897, *Nebraska Nat'l B'k v. Johnson*, 51 Nebr. 546, 71 N. W. 294 (action to recover the proceeds of money stolen by the defendant).

⁴ 1900, *Campbell v. Burus*, 94 Me. 127, 46 Atl. 812; 1891, *Sparta v. Lewis*, 91 Tenn. 370, 374, 23 S. W. 182 (municipal ordinance forbidding battery).

⁵ 1898, *Hearne v. DeYoung*, 119 Cal. 670, 52 Pac. 150; 1893, *Atlanta Journal v. Mayson*, 92 Ga. 640, 18 S. E. 1010; *Ind. Rev. St.* 1897, § 378; 1872, *Ellis v. Buzzell*, 60 Me. 209, 213 (leading case); 1897, *Finley v. Widner*, 112 Mich. 230, 70 N. W. 433. The supposed doctrine *contra* is criticised by Judge May in 10 Amer. Law Rev. 642.

⁶ 1895, *Blackburu v. Ina. Co.*, 116 N. C. 821, 21 S. E. 922; 1898, *First National Bank v. Commercial Assn. Co.*, 33 Or. 43, 52 Pac. 1050. *Contra*: 1852, *Darling v. Banks*, 14 Ill. 46; 1856, *McConnells v. Ina. Co.*, 18 id. 228. The *contra* cases are criticised by Judge May in 10 Amer. Law Rev. 642.

⁷ 1899, *Re Wellcome*, 23 Mont. 450, 59 Pac. 445. *Contra*: 1900, *Re Evans*, 22 Utah 366, 62 Pac. 913.

⁸ 1900, *Bell v. State*, 124 Ala. 6-, 27 So. 414; 1872, *People v. Christman*, 66 Ill. 162; 1870,

Knowles v. Scribner, 57 Me. 495 (leading case); 1893, *Dnkehart v. Caughman*, 36 Nebr. 412, 414, 54 N. W. 680.

⁹ 1894, *Nelson v. Pierce*, 18 R. I. 539, 23 Atl. 806.

¹⁰ 1898, *Lenning v. Lenning*, 176 Ill. 180, 52 N. E. 46; 1896, *Lindley v. Lindley*, 68 Vt. 421, 35 Atl. 349.

¹¹ 1896, *Drakeford v. Adams*, 98 Ga. 722, 25 S. E. 833 (proceedings by a receiver for contempt for not turning over moneys).

¹² 1895, *State v. Collins*, — N. H. —, 44 Atl. 495 (injunction against a liquor- nuisance).

¹³ 1897, *Kansas M. O. M. Ina. Co. v. Rammelsberg*, 58 Kan. 531, 50 Pac. 446 (requiring something more than a mere preponderance); 1900, *Conner v. Groh*, 90 Md. 674, 45 Atl. 1024 ("convincing," not merely preponderating); 1896, *Laloue v. U. S.*, 164 U. S. 255, 17 Snp. 74 (pension application); 1897, *U. S. v. American Bell Tel. Co.*, 167 id. 224, 17 Sup. 809 ("clear, unequivocal, and convincing"; revocation of a patent for fraud); 1897, *Dohmen Co. v. Niagara F. Ina. Co.*, 96 Wis. 33, 71 N. W. 69 ("clear and satisfactory evidence"). *Contra*: 1897, *Nelms v. Steiner*, 113 Ala. 562, 22 So. 435 (overruling *Claffin Co. v. Rodenberg*, 101 id. 213, 13 So. 272).

¹⁴ The cases are collected *ante*, §§ 2052, 2106.

¹⁵ 1875, *Mundy v. Foster*, 31 Mich. 313, 322 ("should be proved in the clearest manner and the evidence ought to be above suspicion").

¹⁶ 1871, *Stockbridge Iron Co. v. Hndson Iron Co.*, 107 Mass. 290, 317; 1900, *Seitz Brewing Co. v. Ayres*, 60 N. J. Eq. 190, 46 Atl. 535; 1892, *Southard v. Curley*, 134 N. Y. 148, 31 N. E. 330 (collecting many forms of phrasing).

¹⁷ 1901, *Rowe v. Hiberuia S. & L. Soc.*, 134 Cal. 403, 66 Pac. 569 (identifying separate prop-

The application of the phrase "preponderance of evidence" is apt to lead the judicial discussion close to the danger line of the fallacious quantitative or numerical theory of testimony (*ante*, § 2033).¹⁹ Although that theory has been generally repudiated in our law, yet there is often a lurking recurrence to it in the statement that an uncontradicted witness must be believed,¹⁹ *i. e.* his testimony constitutes *per se* a preponderance. The unsoundness of this conception has already been noticed (*ante*, §§ 1013, 2033, 2034).²⁰

erty acquired after marriage); 1903, *Gritten v. Dickerson*, 202 Ill. 372, 86 N. E. 1090 (impeaching a notary's certificate of acknowledgment; see other cases cited *ante*, § 1347, 1352); 1899, *Seymour v. Alkire*, 47 W. Va. 302, 34 S. E. 953 ("clear, convincing, beyond reasonable controversy," required for correcting a mistake in a decree).

¹⁹ *E. g.*: 1902, *West Chicago S. R. Co. v. Lieserowitz*, 197 Ill. 607, 64 N. E. 718; 1898, *People v. Tuczkewitz*, 149 N. Y. 240, 43 N. E. 849 (though not in a criminal case).

²⁰ 1890, *Quock Ting v. U. S.*, 140 U. S. 420, 11 Sup. 734 ("Undoubtedly, as a general rule, positive testimony as to a particular fact, uncontradicted by any one, should control the

decision of the Court; but that rule admits of many exceptions"); 1902, *Ray, J.*, in *U. S. v. Lee Hnen*, 118 Fed. 442, 457 ("The general rule is that uncontradicted evidence, free from inherent improbability, when given by disinterested witnesses, and in no way discredited, is conclusive"; yet in the very same opinion the Court inconsistently but correctly says: "It is impossible to prescribe any fixed rule by which the credibility of the witness is to be tested or which shall bind the conscience of the Court as to the conclusiveness of the evidence in a given case").

²⁰ For the relative value of *circumstantial* and *testimonial* evidence, see *ante*, § 26.

TITLE II: BURDENS AND PRESUMPTIONS IN SPECIFIC ISSUES.

CHAPTER LXXXVII.

- § 2499. Introductory.
 § 2500. Sanity: (1) Testamentary and other Civil Causes; Suicide.
 § 2501. Same: (2) Criminal Causes.
 § 2502. Undue Influence and Fraud: (1) Testamentary Execution.
 § 2503. Same: (2) Confidential Relations of Grantee or Beneficiary.
 § 2504. Same: (3) Fraudulent Conveyances against Creditors.
 § 2505. Marriage: (1) Consent, from Cohabitation or Ceremony.
 § 2506. Same: (2) Capacity, as affected by Intervening Death, Divorce, or Marriage.
 § 2507. Negligence and Accident: (1) Contributory Negligence.
 § 2508. Same: (2) Loss by a Bailee.
 § 2509. Same: (3) Defective Machines, Vehicles, and Apparatus.
 § 2510. Same: (4) Death by Violence.
 § 2511. Crimes: (1) Innocence, Malice, Intent, etc.
 § 2512. Same: (2) Self-Defence, Alih. *ibi*.
 § 2513. Same: (3) Possession of Stolen Goods.
 § 2514. Same: (4) Capacity (Infancy, Intoxication, Coverture).
 § 2515. Ownership: (1) Possession of Land and Personalty.
 § 2516. Same: (2) Possession of Negotiable Instrument.
 § 2517. Payment: (1) Lapse of Time.
 § 2518. Same: (2) Possession of Instrument or Receipt.
 § 2519. Execution and Contents of Documents: (1) Letters and Telegrams.
 § 2520. Same: (2) Execution of Deeds (Delivery, Date, Seal, Consideration).
 § 2521. Same: (3) Ancient Documents.
 § 2522. Same: (4) Lost Grant; Lost Documents in General.
 § 2523. Same: (5) Will (Execution and Revocation).
 § 2524. Same: (6) Spoliation or Suppression of Documents.
 § 2525. Same: (7) Alteration of Documents.
 § 2526. Gifts (Wife's Separate Estate, Child's Advancement, Child's Services).
 § 2527. Legitimacy.
 § 2528. Chastity; Child-bearing.
 § 2529. Identity of Person (from Name, etc.).
 § 2530. Continuity: (1) in general (Ownership, Possession, Residence, Insanity, etc.).
 § 2531. Same: Life and Death.
 § 2532. Same: Survivorship.
 § 2533. Seaworthiness.
 § 2534. Regularity; (1) Performance of Official Duty and Regularity of Proceedings.
 § 2535. Same: (2) Appointment and Authority of Officers, Incorporation.
 § 2536. Similarity of Foreign Law.
 § 2537. Contracts.
 § 2538. Statute of Limitations.
 § 2539. Malicious Prosecution.
 § 2540. Sundry Presumptions and Burdens.

§ 2499. Introductory.¹ In applying the foregoing principles to the different kinds of propositions presented for proof in litigation, it will be found that the rulings are constantly ambiguous in the language, in dealing with the three chief questions arising under those principles. Sometimes the ruling involves the first "burden of proof," *i. e.* the *risk of non-persuasion of the jury* (*ante*, § 2485); this is, in strictness and usually, a question of Pleading rather than of Evidence. Sometimes the ruling involves the second "burden of proof," the *duty of producing evidence to the judge*, in its initial aspect, *i. e.* whether there is *sufficient evidence* to satisfy that duty and enable the party to go to the jury (*ante*, § 2494). Sometimes it involves the same burden in its ulterior aspect, *i. e.* whether there is a *presumption*, which *shifts*

¹ EXPLANATORY NOTE. In this Chapter, the preceding one, and the three ensuing ones, no attempt has been made to secure all the authorities, for the reasons already stated in the Preface. The subjects are on the border line between Evidence and Procedure, and would require constant excursus into the latter field;

most of the rulings on the topics of the present Chapter turn on minute and voluminous details of the particular case, and the judicial language is often ambiguous and dangerous to state concisely; some years of additional labor would be required for a complete presentation of the material.

the duty to the opponent to come forward with evidence (*ante*, § 2487). Any topic of proof may give rise to all three of these questions; and it is often impossible to determine which effect the ruling is intended to have, except after a detailed analysis of the whole opinion, — and sometimes not even then. Moreover, many rulings, though using the language of presumptions, do not mean to do anything more than declare the admissibility of circumstantial evidence (*ante*, § 2491). This difficulty of interpretation must be kept in mind in any consideration of the precedents.

§ 2500. **Sanity: (1) Testamentary and other Civil Causes; Suicide.** (a) It seems to be generally conceded that the burden of proof as to a testator's sanity is on the proponent of the will,¹ in the sense that, when the case goes to the jury, he has the risk of non-persuasion; the testator's sanity is a fact essential to the proponent's claim. But there is a difference of views as to the duty of going forward with evidence. According to one view, the evidence of execution with due formalities, introduced by the proponent, may suffice to raise a presumption of sanity, so as to require the opponent to introduce evidence of insanity. By another view, the evidence of execution does not raise this presumption, and the proponent therefore has the duty of coming forward, as in any other case, with some evidence (it may be but slight) of his *factum probandum*, *i. e.* sanity.²

¹ Except in Indiana.

² The subject is further complicated, in many jurisdictions, by the variety of modes of trial for a will's validity, and by the presumptive effect sometimes given to the preliminary finding, on a later contest in the nature of an appeal, in a chancery or a jury court, as also by the *prima facie* effect occasionally given to the oath of the attesting witnesses: *Eng.*: 1857, *Suttou v. Sadler*, 3 C. B. N. s. 87 (leading case); *Can.*: 1893, *Doe v. Gilbert*, 22 N. Br. 576, 581; 1890, *Harrison's Will*, 30 id. 164, 184; 1890, *Doe v. Savoy*, lb. 227, 231; 1856, *Brocklebank's Will*, 2 *Morris Newf.* 88, 92; *Conn.*: 1893, *Barber's Appeal*, 63 *Conn.* 393, 27 *Atl.* 973 (evidence of execution shifts the burden to the contestant; subject, however, to the peculiarity that the attesting witnesses must be called by the proponent and asked as to capacity); *Ill.*: 1894, *Taylor v. Pegram*, 151 *Ill.* 106, 113, 37 N. E. 837 (the burden is on the contestant, provided the attesting witnesses have spoken to capacity); 1897, *Harp v. Parr*, 168 *Id.* 459, 48 N. E. 113 (the introduction of proper subscribing-witness testimony to execution is sufficient to shift the burden; here one subscribing witness and the scrivener were called, and a certificate of testimony at the probate was presented); 1898, *Slingloff v. Bruner*, 174 *Id.* 561, 51 N. E. 285; 1893, *Egbers v. Egbers*, 177 *Id.* 82, 52 N. E. 285 (bill to set aside probate; the burden of non-persuasion is said to be on the complainant-contestants, and yet the first duty of production to be on the will's proponents; the opinion is confused); 1899, *Entwistle v. Meikle*, 180 *Id.* 9, 54 N. E. 217; 1900, *Johnson v. Johnson*, 187 *Id.* 86, 58 N. E. 237 (the *prima facie* case made

out by the attesting witnesses' testimony does not fail when one of the witnesses is impeached; "credible," under the statute, meaning merely "competent"); 1901, *Huggins v. Drury*, 192 *Id.* 528, 61 N. E. 652; 1901, *Thompson v. Bennett*, 194 *Id.* 57, 62 N. E. 321; 1903, *Esker v. Baker*, 202 *Id.* 595, 67 N. E. 410 (approving *Egbers v. Egbers*); *Ind.*: 1896, *Blough v. Parry*, 144 *Ind.* 463, 43 N. E. 562 (treating *Kenworthy v. Williams*, 5 *Id.* 375, as overruled, and disapproving the dictum in *Durham v. Smith*, 120 *Id.* 465; the burden is on the contestant, but may shift); 1896, *Yonng v. Miller*, 145 *Id.* 652, 44 N. E. 754 (the contestant has the burden of establishing insanity; monomansia, if shown, raises a presumption of general incapacity and makes a "*prima facie* case"; but when the evidence is closed on both sides, the contestant still has the risk of establishing incapacity, and an instruction requiring a preponderance of evidence from the contestee is erroneous); 1898, *Roller v. Kling*, 150 *Id.* 159, 49 N. E. 943 (action to set aside a probated will; the burden of convincing the jury by preponderance of evidence is on the applicant, though evidence of prior persistent insanity may raise a presumption in his favor); 1901, *Morell v. Morell*, 157 *Id.* 179, 60 N. E. 1092; *Ky.*: 1893, *Johnson v. Stevens*, 95 *Ky.* 128, 23 S. W. 957; *La.*: 1894, *Bey's Succession*, 46 *La. An.* 773, 787, 15 *So.* 297; *Mass.*: 1854, *Crowninshield v. Crowninshield*, 2 *Gray* 524 (leading case); 1902, *Richardson v. Bly*, 181 *Mass.* 97, 63 N. E. 3; *Mich.*: 1892, *Prentis v. Bates*, 88 *Mich.* 567, 50 N. W. 637, 93 *Id.* 234, 53 N. W. 153, 17 *L. R. A.* 494 (leading case); 1896, *Moriarty v. Moriarty*, 108 *Id.* 249, 65 N. W. 964; *Miss.*: 1896, *Sheehan v.*

(b) For *deeds*, however, it is common to find the fact of insanity treated in the nature of an affirmative plea of avoidance, placing the ultimate risk of non-persuasion on the contestant, though the duty to produce evidence may shift.³

(c) *Suicide* is generally conceded to be a circumstance from which (with others) insanity may be inferred (*ante*, § 228); but it ought not to create a presumption or shift the duty of producing evidence, though the judicial language is here sometimes ambiguous.⁴

§ 2501. *Same*: (2) **Criminal Causes.** In proving the commission of a *crime*, the criminal intent being material, the accused's sanity is, by the orthodox view, a part of the case of the prosecution; and the burden of proving it, in the sense of the risk of non-persuasion (*ante*, § 2485), is on the prosecution; the measure of persuasion required being, as in other elements of a crime, persuasion beyond a reasonable doubt (*ante*, § 2497); and, as an incident of this view, the general presumption of sanity suffices for the prosecution's duty to produce evidence, and the duty of producing evidence of insanity is thrown upon the accused. A variation of this view, held by a few Courts, fixes a mere preponderance of evidence as the measure of persuasion required, instead of persuasion beyond a reasonable doubt. But another view, based on judicial experience in dealing with the issue of insanity in criminal trials, and adopted by an increasing number of Courts, is that the accused has the burden of proving insanity, in the sense that he has the risk of persuading the jury to that effect, at least by a preponderance of evidence, and also, of course, has the duty of producing evidence.¹

Kearney, — Miss. — , 21 So. 46 ("Now, when the proponent of a will offers the will and the record of its probate, a presumption is thereby raised that the alleged testator had testamentary capacity, and this presumption satisfies the burden of proof in that respect; and the contestant must fail unless he overcomes this by proof on his part. But there is no shifting of the burden of proof, properly understood"); *Mo.*: 1892, *Maddox v. Maddox*, 114 Mo. 85, 46, 21 S. W. 499; 1897, *Gordon v. Burris*, 141 id. 602, 43 S. W. 642 (after proof of execution, the contestant must produce "substantial evidence" of the invalidating ground in order to get to the jury); 1898, *Fulbright v. Perry Co.*, 145 id. 432, 46 S. W. 955 (proponent raises a presumption of sanity by testimony to execution and by that of the subscribing witnesses to sanity); *Nebr.*: 1896, *Murray v. Hennessey*, 48 Nebr. 608, 67 N. W. 470 (the burden of establishing capacity rests on the proponent of the will for probate, and also a preliminary duty to offer some evidence of this; after opposing evidence, the general burden of establishing remains on the proponent); *N. H.*: 1894, *Patten v. Cilley*, 67 N. H. 520, 42 Atl. 47 (burden of non-persuasion is on the executor, no matter how specific the issues, and carries the right to close in argument); *N. Y.*: 1862, *Delafield v. Parish*, 25 N. Y. 9, 29, 73, 97; *Or.*: 1903, *Mendenhall's Will*, 43 Or. 542, 73 Pac. 1033; *U. S.*: 1903, *Leach v.*

Burr, 188 U. S. 510, 23 Sup. 393; *Va.*: 1903, *Gray v. Rumrill*, — Va. — , 44 S. E. 697; *Wash.*: 1902, *Higgins v. Netherby*, 30 Wash. 239, 70 Pac. 489.

³ 1867, *Myat v. Walker*, 44 Ill. 485; 1896, *Taylor v. Buttrick*, 165 Mass. 547, 43 N. E. 507; 1893, *Jones v. Jones*, 137 N. Y. 610, 612, 33 N. E. 479; 1898, *Artrip v. Rasmake*, 96 Va. 277; 31 S. E. 4, 1903, *Eakin v. Hawkins*, 52 W. Va. 124, 43 S. E. 211.

⁴ Compare the following: 1838, *Duffield v. Morris*, 2 Harringt. 375, 382 ("it stands as a fact, together with all the other acts of the deceased's life," but creates no presumption); 1897, *Grand Lodge v. Wisting*, 168 Ill. 408, 48 N. E. 59 ("the act of self-destruction, the manner and mode thereof, and all attending circumstances" may be considered); 1901, *Brashears v. Orme*, 93 Md. 442, 19 Atl. 620; 1901, *Modern Woodmen v. Kozak*, 63 Nebr. 146, 88 N. W. 248; 1893, *Connecticut M. L. Ins. Co. v. Akens*, 150 U. S. 468, 475, 14 Sup. 155 (death by self-destruction being shown, the plaintiff is "entitled to the benefit of the presumption that a sane man would not commit suicide"); 1875, *Hathaway's Adm'r v. Ins. Co.*, 48 Vt. 336, 353 (admissible); 1894, *Bachmeyer v. M. R. F. L. Assoc.*, 87 Wis. 325, 340, 58 N. W. 399. Cases are collected in a note to 59 Am. Dec. 496.

¹ These different views are represented re-

§ 2502. *Undue Influence and Fraud; (1) Testamentary Execution.* In the proof of *undue influence*, negating the capacity of a *testator*, there is a difference of judicial opinion, as in the case of insanity (*ante*, § 2500), but here it goes back to the main burden of persuasion; *i. e.* by one opinion, the voluntariness of the testator's act is a part of the proponent's case, and with the jury he has the risk of non-persuasion; by the other view, the fact of undue influence is treated as in the nature of a defensive plea of the contestant, and therefore to be proved as a part of his case.¹

§ 2503. *Same: (2) Confidential Relations of Grantee or Other Beneficiary.* Where the grantee or other beneficiary of a deed or will is a person who has maintained intimate relations with the grantor or testator, or has drafted or

spectively in the following cases, although their language is not always precise:

(1) *First view*: 1896, *Jones v. People*, 28 Colo. 276, 7 Pac. 375 (the duty of going forward is on the defendant, but the general burden of persuasion is on the State); 1897, *State v. Lee*, 69 Conn. 186, 37 Atl. 75; 1892, *Armstrong v. State*, 30 Fla. 170, 196, 11 So. 613; 1896, *Ford v. State*, 78 Miss. 784, 19 So. 665 (but the Court says the sanity-presumption suffices if the defendant does not offer, not "any testimony," but "sufficient to raise a reasonable doubt"); 1898, *Coffey v. State*, — id. —, 24 So. 315; 1898, *Snider v. State*, 56 Nebr. 309, 76 N. W. 574 (presumption of sanity ceases when any evidence to the contrary is offered); 1892, *Fankner v. Terr.*, 6 N. M. 464, 36 Pac. 905 (burden of persuasion is on the prosecution, but of producing evidence on the defendant); 1895, *Davis v. U. S.*, 160 U. S. 469, 16 Snp. 353 (leading opinion, by Harlan, J.: "Strictly speaking, the burden of proof, as those words are understood in criminal law, is never upon the accused to establish his innocence, or to disprove the facts necessary to establish the crime for which he is indicted. It is on the prosecution from the beginning to the end of the trial, and applies to every element necessary to constitute the crime. Given to the prosecution, where the defense is insanity, the benefit in the way of proof of the presumption in favor of sanity, the vital question, from the time a plea of not guilty is entered until the return of the verdict, is whether, upon all the evidence, by whatever side adduced, guilt is established beyond reasonable doubt. If the whole evidence, including that supplied by the presumption of sanity, does not exclude beyond reasonable doubt the hypothesis of insanity, of which some proof is adduced, the accused is entitled to an acquittal of the specific offense charged").

(2) *Second view*: 1896, *Nino v. People*, — N. Y. —, 43 N. E. 853; 1897, *People v. Koerner*, 154 id. 355, 48 N. E. 730.

(3) *Third view*: 1893, *People v. Bemmerly*, 98 Cal. 299, 304, 83 Pac. 263; 1897, *People v. Allender*, 117 id. 81, 48 Pac. 1014; 1898, *People v. Barthleiman*, 120 id. 7, 52 Pac. 112; 1855, *Graham v. Com.*, 16 B. Monr. 587 (leading opinion, by Stites, J.); 1895, *Phelps v. Com.*,

— id. —, 32 S. W. 470; 1898, *Portwood v. Com.*, 104 id. 496, 47 S. W. 339; 1897, *State v. Scott*, 49 La. An. 253, 21 So. 271, *Breaux, J.*, *dis.* (overruling prior precedents, in which the defendant had been required to prove beyond a reasonable doubt); 1896, *Genz v. State*, 58 N. J. —, 482, 34 Atl. 816; 1897, *Clawson v. State*, 59 id. 434, 36 Atl. 886; 1898, *Winters v. State*, 61 id. 613, 41 Atl. 220; 1896, *Kelch v. State*, 55 Oh. St. 146, 45 N. E. 6 (same); disapproving a charge which required the jury to be "satisfied" of the insanity, and treating this as requiring more than a mere "preponderance" making insanity probable but leaving it open to doubt); 1895, *Com. v. Berchline*, — Pa. —, 32 Atl. 110; 1892, *King v. State*, 91 Tenn. 617, 647, 20 S. W. 169.

Compare also the following: 1897, *Scheerer v. Agee*, 113 Ala. 383, 21 So. 79; 1897, *Ryder v. State*, 100 Ga. 528, 28 S. E. 246; 1903, *State v. Shuff*, — Ida. —, 72 Pac. 664; 1892, *Hornish v. People*, 142 Ill. 620, 626, 32 N. E. 677; 1896, *State v. Wright*, 134 Mo. 404, 85 S. W. 1145; 1896, *State v. Lewis*, 136 id. 84, 37 S. W. 807; *State v. Bell*, *ib.* 120, 87 S. W. 823.

¹ The following cases represent both views: 1838, *Barry v. Butlin*, 2 Moore P. C. 480; 1896, *McLellan's Estate*, 28 N. Sc. 226; 1892, *Bulger v. Ross*, 98 Ala. 267, 271; 1903, *Latour's Estate*, 140 Cal. 414, 73 Pac. 1070; 1901, *Mallow v. Walker*, 115 Ia. 238, 88 N. W. 452; 1902, *Marshall v. Hanby*, *ib.* 318, 88 N. W. 801; 1897, *King v. King*, — Ky. —, 42 S. W. 347; 1897, *Bueh v. Delano*, 113 Mich. 321, 71 N. W. 628 (repudiating the language in *Maynard v. Vinton*, 29 id. 139, 26 N. W. 401, and *Severance v. Severance*, 50 id. 417, 52 N. W. 292); 1896, *Sheehan v. Kearney*, — Miss. —, 21 So. 41 (*Whitfield, J.*: "It is not only necessary that the testator shall have testamentary capacity, but that capacity shall be exercised freely and voluntarily. If either its existence or the freedom of its exercise is wanting, the instrument is not the alleged testator's will. Both are essential parts of the proponent's case. The issue is single, — will or no will"); 1896, *Morton v. Heidorn*, 135 Mo. 608, 37 S. W. 504; 1897, *McFadin v. Catron*, 138 id. 197, 38 S. W. 932; 1898, *Salter v. Ely*, 56 N. J. L. 357, 39 Atl. 365.

advised the terms of the instrument, a presumption of undue influence or of fraud on the part of the beneficiary has often been applied. But it is not possible to say that any single circumstance or group of facts is the invariable mark of such a presumption, or that there is any uniform rule capable of application apart from the facts of each case.¹

§ 2504. **Same: (3) Fraudulent Conveyances against Creditors.** Conveyances by debtors are attended by circumstances which are often said to raise a presumption of an intent to defraud creditors; but here the distinction between circumstances constituting *per se* a fraud under the substantive law and circumstances merely evidential of fraud makes the subject inseparable from the whole law of fraudulent conveyances. It is to be noted that at least three distinct presumptions may be involved: (a) the presumption of the grantee's title, from his possession (*post*, § 2515), (b) the presumption of the debtor's fraudulent intent, from his retention of possession,¹ and (c) the presumption of the buyer's good faith, from his payment of value.²

§ 2505. **Marriage; (1) Consent, from Cohabitation or Ceremony.** The conduct of a man and a woman as husband and wife, *i. e.* their "habite" or cohabitation, together with their local repute as married, are not only admissible in evidence (*ante*, §§ 268, 1602, 2083), but also are regarded as sufficient to create a presumption that a marriage took place, — whether by mere consent or by ceremony, according as the local law requires.¹

¹ Cases illustrating the various situations are as follows: *Eng.*: 1838, *Barry v. Butlin*, 2 Moore P. C. 480 (leading case); 1894, *Tyrrell v. Panton*, Prob. 151 (commenting on *Barry v. Butlin*); *Can.*: 1893, *Adams v. McBeath*, 3 Br. C. 513; 1884, *McEwan v. Miine*, 5 Out. 100; 1901, *Collins v. Kilroy*, 1 Ont. L. R. 503; *U. S.*: 1891, *Little v. Knox*, 96 Ala. 179, 11 So. 443 (attorney purchasing from an estate managed by him); 1892, *Garrett v. Hefflin*, 98 id. 615, 618, 18 So. 326 (residuary legatee who wrote the will himself); 1898, *Coghill v. Kennedy*, 119 id. 641, 24 So. 459 (drafter of a will); 1901, *McQueen v. Wilson*, 131 id. 606, 31 So. 94; 1903, *Harraway v. Harraway*, 136 id. 499, 34 So. 836 (husband and wife); 1890, *Richmond's Appeal*, 59 Conn. 226, 22 Atl. 82 (will); 1901, *Lewis v. McGrath*, 191 Ill. 401, 61 N. E. 135 (gift); 1901, *Blanchard v. Blanchard*, ib. 450, 61 N. E. 481 (deed); 1902, *Michael v. Marshall*, 201 id. 70, 68 N. E. 273 (will); 1896, *Teegarden v. Lewis*, 145 Ind. 98, 44 N. E. 9 (action by an administrator for money of the deceased received as a gift, through undue influence, by the defendants, his daughter and son-in-law, by whom he was supported and with whom he lived; held, that "one who challenges the mental capacity of a testator or donor has the burden of establishing the absence of the particular capacity in issue," and that though ordinarily a presumption of undue influence would be created in the plaintiff's favor by a fiduciary position of the defendants, yet the caretaking by a child of the parent does not create that presumption, and did not here, although the father was aged, feeble, and of unsound

mind); 1898, *Slayback v. Witt*, 151 id. 376, 50 N. E. 389 (parent and child; this relation ordinarily overturns the presumption); 1901, *Good v. Zook*, 116 Ia. 582, 88 N. W. 376 (clerical adviser); 1893, *Hill v. Miller*, 50 Kan. 659, 663, 32 Pac. 354 (a brother in fiduciary relations with aged and infirm grantor); 1897, *Bush v. Delano*, 113 Mich. 321, 71 N. W. 628 (the burden of persuasion is on the contestant, but the legatee's drawing of the will shifts the duty of going forward); 1862, *Delafield v. Parish*, 25 N. Y. 9, 35 (will); 1893, *Barnard v. Gautz*, 140 id. 249, 256, 35 N. E. 490 (deed of an aged woman to a son and son-in-law); 1898, *Ten Eyck v. Whitbeck*, 156 id. 341, 50 N. E. 963 (deed); 1901, *Doheny v. Lacy*, 168 id. 213, 61 N. E. 255; 1898, *Barney's Will*, 70 Vt. 352, 40 Atl. 1027 (confidential relations by a beneficiary drawing the will and excluding "near, needy, and deserving relatives"; the burden on the beneficiary-proponent to disprove undue influence).

² 1898, *Gilmore v. Swisher*, 59 Kan. 172, 53 Pac. 426; 1893, *First National Bank v. Lowrey*, 36 Nebr. 290, 293, 54 N. W. 568; 1886, *Bindley v. Martin*, 28 W. Va. 778, 789. Compare § 1086, *ante*.

³ 1895, *Peterson Co. v. Steiner*, 108 Ala. 629, 18 So. 688; 1893, *Treusch v. Ottenburg*, 4 C. C. A. 629, 54 Fed. 867.

The opinion of *Pigott, J.*, in *Finch v. Kent*, 24 Mont. 268, 61 Pac. 653 (1900), contains a useful analysis.

⁴ The cases already cited in the sections above noted almost all declare this; the following also emphasize the rule of presumption:

(2) Where one of the parties to a cohabitation was at its inception incapable (for example, by existing coverture) of a valid marriage, and the impediment is subsequently removed, and the parties continue to cohabit, in a jurisdiction where a ceremonial marriage is not required, the *renewal of marriage co-vent* as husband and wife may be presumed; although there has been occasionally an unjust and quibbling hesitation in some Courts, based on refinements of speculation as to the party's knowledge of the removal of the impediment, and the like.²

(3) Where a *ceremonial marriage* is essential, the performance of the ceremony with the appearances of validity may create a presumption as to the lawfulness of the form, the authority of the celebrant, the issuance of a license, and the like; although here much may turn on the circumstances of each case and the additional evidence offered or available.³

§ 2506. *Same*: (2) *Capacity, as affected by Intervening Death, Divorce, or Marriage.* Supposing a party to a marriage to appear to have been a party to a former marriage with another person, the validity of the later marriage will depend upon whether the prior marriage had been in the meantime somehow dissolved, or whether it was itself void; this will raise the question, for example, whether there has been a death or divorce intervening, or whether the other party to the prior marriage was incapable. In thus determining the validity of the later marriage, will one or another of the above facts be presumed to have existed, so as to throw upon the opponent of the later marriage the burden of producing evidence (or even the risk of non-persuasion) of the non-existence of those facts? In issues of bigamy and of legitimacy, there is a special temptation thus to aid the later marriage. The situation may be additionally complicated by the invocation of the so-called presumption of innocence (*post*, § 2511) and of the presumptions of death or of life

1876, *De Thoren v. Attorney-General*, L. R. 1 App. Cas. 686; 1898, *Moore v. Heineke*, 119 Ala. 627, 24 So. 374 (presumption here removed by a subsequent separation); Cal. C. C. P. 1872, § 1963, par. 30; 1903, *Ferrall v. State*, Fla. —, 84 So. 220; 1896, *Griffeth v. Griffeth*, 102 Ill. 368, 44 N. E. 820; 1853, *Nossaman v. Nossaman*, 4 Ind. 648, 651 (presumption rebutted by the absence of a record of license in the proper office, such a record being required); 1843, *Young v. Foster*, 14 N. H. 114; 1897, *Stevens v. Stevens*, 56 N. J. Eq. 488, 38 Atl. 460; 1850, *Clayton v. Wardell*, 4 N. Y. 230; 1897, *Durning v. Hastings*, 133 Pa. 210, 38 Atl. 627; 1902, *Rhode Island H. T. Co. v. Thorndike*, 24 R. I. 105, 52 Atl. 873; 1896, *State v. Sherwood*, 68 Vt. 414, 35 Atl. 352 (to show a previous marriage, relied upon to show a later one no bigamy, the presumption was not applied).

² Some of the cases on both sides are as follows: 1867, *The Breadalbane Case* (*Campbell v. Campbell*), L. R. 1 Sc. App. 182 (leading case); 1876, *De Thoren v. Attorney-General*, L. R. 1 App. Cas. 686; 1898, *Poole v. People*, 24 Colo. 510, 52 Pac. 1025; 1876, *Blanchard v. Lambert*, 43 Ia. 228; 1894, *Barnes v.*

Barnes, 90 id. 282, 57 N. W. 351; 1898, *Reel v. Moseley*, 76 Miss. 1, 23 So. 451; 1890, *Collins v. Voorhees*, 47 N. J. Eq. 315, 556, 20 Atl. 676, 22 Atl. 1054 (leading case); 1899, *Atlantic C. R. Co. v. Goodin*, 62 N. J. L. 394, 42 Atl. 333; 1902, *Adger v. Ackerman*, 52 C. C. A. 568, 115 Fed. 124, 129 (*Breadalbane Case* followed).

³ With the following, compare the cases cited *ante*, § 1644 (certificate of marriage), *ante*, § 2085 (proof by eye-witnesses), and *post*, § 2535 (presumption of office): 1849, *Piers v. Piers*, 2 H. L. C. 331; 1817, *Warner v. Com.*, 2 Va. Cas. 95 (good opinion); 1897, *Lanctot v. State*, 98 Wis. 136, 73 N. W. 575.

In still other issues a rule of presumption relating to marriage may be recognized: 1861, *Erakine v. Davis*, 25 Ill. 251, 256 (ejectment, by one showing a deed from H. C., said to be a *feme sole*; proof of her singleness, held sufficient to raise a presumption of continuance, not overcome by proof of coverture six years later; obscure); 1893, *Sturbridge v. Franklin*, 160 Mass. 149, 35 N. E. 609 (necessaries furnished to wife; plaintiff must prove not only the marriage but also the separation without fault of the wife). Compare the citations *ante*, § 382, note 7.

(*post*, § 2531). Whether the successive shiftings of the burdens should be worked out with mathematical nicety according to the various presumptions applicable, or whether all should be merged in a general presumption in favor of the later marriage, is a knotty question; and no successful generalization is yet accepted.¹ But it may be noted that the peculiar force of a presumption as merely affecting the opponent's duty to produce some evidence (*ante*, § 2490) is not always observed in the judicial discussion of the problem.

§ 2507. **Negligence and Accident; (1) Contributory Negligence.** The fact of contributory negligence, sufficient in law to defeat a plaintiff, is regarded by the orthodox rule as a part of the defendant's burden (or risk of non-persuasion), except in a few important jurisdictions; like so many other instances of that burden, however, this is in reality a question of pleading (*ante*, § 2485). Yet even by the orthodox rule, the second burden, or duty of producing evidence, may be shifted by facts which raise a presumption of negligence, and these facts may appear (*ante*, §§ 2489, 2490) from the testimony adduced by the plaintiff himself, or even from the allegations of his declaration, especially under the modern looseness of pleading. Hence it happens that even in the jurisdictions maintaining the orthodox rule, the burden is sometimes said to be upon the plaintiff in certain exceptional cases of the above sort, — the distinction between the two burdens not being strictly observed.¹

¹ Some of the more complicated and interesting cases are as follows: 1848, *Lapsley v. Grierson*, 1 H. L. C. 498; 1881, *R. v. Willshire*, L. R. 6 Q. B. D. 366; 1891, *Banks v. State*, 96 Ala. 78, 11 So. 404 (adultery of a woman; after the defendant's proof of a formal marriage to the man, it is for the prosecution to show his prior marriage and her knowledge); 1896, *Hunter v. Hunter*, 111 Cal. 261, 43 Pac. 756 (the defendant married M. in 1858, being then a minor; was taken away after a few days by her parents; on July 3, 1862, married the plaintiff; in 1883 heard that M. was living, and procured in 1894 a judgment by default annulling the marriage with M.; in 1894 brought suit afterwards dismissed an action against the now plaintiff to have the second marriage declared void; in the present suit for the same purpose by the plaintiff (the judgment of divorce and the defendant's action against the plaintiff being held not to be conclusive as to the fact of M.'s being her lawful husband at the time of the second marriage), held, that as the second marriage during M.'s coverture involved a crime or wrong, the burden was upon the plaintiff to show that the first marriage had not been ended in 1862 by M.'s death or divorce); 1892, *Erwin v. English*, 61 Conn. 502, 23 Atl. 753; 1893, *Schmisseur v. Beatrice*, 147 Ill. 210, 35 N. E. 525 (bill for partition; issue whether defendants were legitimate children of N. B., by M. H., married in 1876; N. B. had in 1872 married B. A., and had separated, B. A. being alive in 1876; held, that the second marriage raised a presumption of divorce from the first; and that the petitioner's evidence sustained their burden and

restored it to respondent to give evidence of the divorce); 1903, *Potter v. Clepp*, 203 id. 592, 68 N. E. 81 (collecting the Illinois cases); 1874, *Squire v. State*, 46 Ind. 459 (bigamy); 1895, *Wenning v. Teuple*, 144 id. 189, 41 N. E. 600; 1876, *Blanchard v. Lambert*, 43 Ia. 228; 1895, *Leach v. Hall*, 95 id. 611, 64 N. W. 791; 1903, *Cauley v. Mitchell*, — id. —, 96 N. W. 725; 1859, *Harrison v. Lincoln*, 48 Me. 205; 1881, *Hyde Park v. Canton*, 130 Mass. 505; 1890, *State v. Plym*, 43 Minn. 385, 45 N. W. 848 (bigamy; whether there was a duty for the prosecution directly to evidence the first wife's continued life; leading opinion, by Mitchell, J.); 1901, *Alabama & V. R. Co. v. Beardsley*, 79 Miss. 417, 30 So. 660; 1898, *Rash's Estate*, 21 Mont. 170, 53 Pac. 312 (action for a widow's share of an estate; the plaintiff married the intestate in 1858, left him in 1864, married X in 1872; the intestate married Y in 1894, and died in 1895; the last marriage was presumed legal, and the plaintiff required to prove it illegal by showing that no prior divorce existed); 1899, *Reynolds v. State*, 58 Nehr. 49, 78 N. W. 483 (bigamy; the defendant married F. in 1895 and C. in 1897; F. was previously married to P.; held, no presumption of law as to the innocence of F. and therefore as to P.'s death); 1900, *Palmer v. Palmer*, 162 N. Y. 130, 56 N. E. 501; 1899, *Moore v. Moore*, 102 Tenn. 148, 52 S. W. 778.

² Some of the illustrative cases under both rules are as follows: 1886, *Wakelin v. London & S. W. R. Co.*, L. R. 12 App. Cas. 41 (orthodox rule); 1894, *Morrow v. Canadian P. R. Co.*, 21 Ont. App. 149 (orthodox rule); 1898,

§ 2508. Same: (2) **Loss by a Bailee.** Where goods have been committed to a bailee, and have either been lost or been returned in a damaged condition, and the bailee's liability depends upon his negligence, the fact of negligence may be presumed, placing on the bailee at least the duty of producing evidence of some other cause of loss or injury; but the application of this presumption cannot be said to have received definite phrasing for the different kinds of bailees.¹ Where the bailee is a common carrier, acting

Southern P. R. Co. v. Tomlinson, — Ariz. —, 33 Pac. 710 (orthodox rule); 1877, Railroad Co. v. Kenney, 58 Ga. 485, 489 (Bleckley, C. J.: "Concerning one class of cases, viz. that class in which, as in the instance before us, the injured party shared directly in the act which resulted in his own wounding, the rule as to the burden of proof is as follows: After proving the fact and degree of the injury, if the plaintiff will show himself not to blame, the law then presumes, until the contrary appears, that the company was to blame; or if he will show, on the other hand, that the company was to blame, the law then presumes, until the contrary appears, that he was not to blame. So that in order to make a *prima facie* case, and change the onus, he need not go further than to show by evidence one or the other of these two propositions, — either that he was not to blame, or that the company was. The company, taking at this stage the burden of reply, can defend successfully by disproving either proposition"); 1895, Johnston v. R. Co., 95 id. 685, 22 S. E. 694; 1891, North Chicago St. R. Co. v. Louis, 138 Ill. 9, 27 N. E. 451 (burden is on the plaintiff); 1893, Cincinnati I. St. L. & C. R. Co. v. Grames, 136 Ind. 39, 42, 34 N. E. 714 (burden is on the plaintiff); 1895, Engler v. R. Co., 142 id. 618, 42 N. E. 219; 1895, Baltimore Traction Co. v. Appel, 80 Md. 603, 31 Atl. 965 (orthodox rule); 1861, Gahagan v. R. Co., 1 All. 187 (burden is on the plaintiff); 1893, Lillstrom v. R. Co., 53 Minn. 464, 468, 55 N. W. 624 (same); 1894, Union S. Co. v. Conoyer, 41 Neb. 117, 625, 59 N. W. 950 (same); 1896, Onverson v. Grafton, 5 N. D. 281, 65 N. W. 677 (same); 1893, Baker v. Gas Co., 157 Pa. 593, 601, 27 Atl. 789 (same); 1896, Stewart v. Nashville, 96 Tenn. 50, 33 S. W. 613 (same); except that "whenever plaintiff's own case, or the evidence of the defendant or of both, raises a presumption of negligence on his part, the burden of repelling it is at once placed on him"; as here, where the plaintiff was blind and unattended and knew of the dangerous place; good opinion by Beard, J., on the policy of the rule); 1895, Gulf, C. & S. F. R. Co. v. Shieder, 88 Tex. 162, 30 S. W. 904 (Denman, J.: "To the general rule imposing upon the defendant the burden of proof on the issue of contributory negligence there appear to be, in the very nature of things, two well-defined exceptions: First, Where the legal effect of the facts stated in the petition is such as to establish *prima facie* negligence on the part of plaintiff as a matter of law, then he must plead and prove such other facts as will rebut such legal pre-

sumption. The plain reason is that by pleading facts which, as a matter of law, establish his contributory negligence, he has made a *prima facie* defense to his cause of action which will be accepted as true against him, both on demurrer and as evidence on the trial, unless he pleads and proves such other facts and circumstances that the Court cannot, as a matter of law, hold him guilty of contributory negligence. When he has done this, he has made a case which must be submitted to the jury. For instance, if plaintiff's petition shows that he was injured by defendant's cars while on the track, under circumstances which in law would make him a trespasser *prima facie*, then the law would raise a presumption of contributory negligence against him, for which his petition would be bad on demurrer; and it would be necessary for him to plead some fact or circumstance rebutting such presumption, — such as that he was, after going upon the track, stricken down by some providential cause, — in order to save his petition, and on the trial the burden would be upon him to establish such cause. Second, When the undisputed evidence adduced on the trial establishes *prima facie* as a matter of law contributory negligence on the part of plaintiff, then the burden of proof is upon him to show facts from which the jury upon the whole case may find him free from negligence; otherwise the Court may instruct a verdict for defendant, there being no issue of fact for the jury"); 1893, Washington & G. R. Co. v. Harmon's Adm'r, 147 U. S. 571, 580, 13 Sup. 557 (burden on the defendant remains the same, though the plaintiff's evidence may disclose facts tending to help the defendant's burden); 1893, Texas & P. R. Co. v. Volk, 151 Id. 78, 78, 14 Snp. 239; 1893, The Charles L. Jeffrey, 5 C. C. A. 246, 55 Fed. 685 (in admiralty, the burden is on the plaintiff); 1893, Welsh v. Argyle, 85 Wis. 307, 311, 55 N. W. 412 (orthodox rule).

¹ In the following illustrations, it will be seen that there may be a further variance as to successive shiftings of the burden: 1896, Higman v. Camody, 112 Ala. 267, 20 So. 480 (after the bailor shows the loss, the bailee must show *vis major* or the like, and then the bailor must show a negligence in not avoiding the *vis major*); 1898, First Nat'l Bank of B. v. First Nat'l Bank of N., 116 id. 520, 22 So. 976 (loss of certificates left with a bank; showing the loss raises a presumption of negligence); 1822, Nicholls v. Rosand, 11 Mart. La. o. s. 190; 1897, Buswell v. Fuller, 89 Me. 600, 36 Atl. 1059 (the risk of non-persuasion is on the bailor to show culpable loss, but proof of demand and

under the customary exemptions as to *vis major* and the like, or under express contractual exemptions, it is generally conceded that the carrier has even the first burden (or risk of non-persuasion) of establishing the fact constituting the exemption;² but this involves the analogy of the contract-rule (*post*, § 2537).

§ 2509. **Same: (3) Defective Machines, Vehicles, and Apparatus.** With the vast increase, in modern times, of the use of powerful machinery, harmless in normal operation, but capable of serious human injury if not constructed or managed in a specific mode, the question has come to be increasingly common whether the fact of the occurrence of an injury (unfortunately now termed "accident," by inveterate misuse) is to be regarded as raising a presumption of culpability on the part of the owner or manager of the apparatus. "*Res ipsa loquitur*" is the phrase appealed to as symbolizing the argument for such a presumption. In England, a rule of that sort has for a generation been conceded to exist, for some classes of cases at least.¹ In the United States, the presumption has spread rapidly, although with much looseness of phrase and indefiniteness of scope; as against a common carrier, the presumption against a bailee (*ante*; § 2508) has perhaps helped to confirm the rule where injury to goods or passengers is involved.² What its final

refusal without explanation of the loss shifts to the bailee the duty of producing evidence); 1897, *Knights v. Piella*, 111 Mich. 9, 69 N. W. 92 (the risk of non-persuasion is on the bailor throughout; but proof of failure to deliver shifts to the bailee the duty of offering evidence); 1897, *Davis v. Printing Co.*, 70 Minn. 95, 72 N. W. 814 (book-plates); 1898, *Donlan v. Clark*, 23 Nev. 203, 45 Pac. 1; 1871, *Collins v. Bennett*, 46 N. Y. 490 (horse); 1900, *Hildebrand v. Carroll*, 106 Wis. 324, 82 N. W. 145.

² 1895, *Shea v. R. Co.*, 63 Minn. 228, 65 N. W. 458 (the carrier must show no negligence, although the loss occurred from an excepted cause); 1893, *The Beeche Dene*, 5 C. C. A. 207, 55 Fed. 525 (bill of lading with exceptions; vessel labeled for damage to cargo; vessel-owner must prove the case to be within an exception, after the fact of damage is shown); 1897, *The Majestic*, 166 U. S. 375, 17 Snp. 597 (the carrier must show *vis major*).

¹ *Eng.*: 1863, *Byrne v. Boadle*, 2 H. & C. 722 (passer-by injured by a barrel falling from a shop-window; Pollock, C. B.: "There are many accidents from which no presumption of negligence can arise"; but on the facts the occurrence was held "*prima facie* evidence of negligence"); 1865, *Scott v. London & St. K. Docks Co.*, 3 H. & C. 596 (injury to a passer-by, from the falling of goods from a crane; Erle, C. J.: "There must be reasonable evidence of negligence; but where the thing is shown to be under the management of the defendant or his servants, and the accident is such as in the ordinary course of things does not happen if those who have the management use proper care, it affords reasonable evidence, in the absence of explanation by the defendants, that the accident arose from want of care"; Black-

burn, J.: "Is not the fact of the accident sufficient evidence to call upon the defendants to prove that there was no negligence?"); 1870, *Kearney v. London E. & S. C. R. Co.*, L. R. 5 Q. B. 411, 6 ld. 759 (injury to a passer-by from the fall of a brick from a bridge; it was held "incumbent on the defendants to give evidence rebutting the inference"; but perhaps the actual decision was merely that the fact was "some evidence to go to the jury"). *Can.*: 1892, *Dnbé v. R.*, 3 Exch. Can. 147, 151 (railway accident).

² Some of the cases are as follows: *Ark.*: 1893, *Arkansas Tel. Co. v. Ratteree*, 57 Ark. 429, 435, 21 S. W. 1059 (falling of a telephone wire so as to frighten a horse); *Cal.*: 1892, *Bush v. Barnett*, 96 Cal. 202, 204, 31 Pac. 2 (common carrier); 1893, *Dixon v. Platts*, 98 ld. 384, 388, 33 Pac. 268 (falling of a workman's chisel from a scaffold); 1895, *Judson v. Giant Powder Co.*, 107 id. 549, 40 Pac. 1020 (powder explosion; cases cited fully); 1901, *Foerst v. Kelso*, 131 ld. 376, 63 Pac. 681 (street railway); 1903, *Kahn v. Triest-Rosenberg Cap. Co.*, 139 id. 340, 73 Pac. 164 (boiler explosion); *Conn.*: 1895, *Donovan v. R. Co.*, 65 Conn. 201, 32 Atl. 352; *Ga.*: 1898, *Augusta South R. Co. v. McDade*, 105 Ga. 134, 31 S. E. 420; 1903, *Chenall v. Palmer B. Co.*, 117 ld. 106, 43 S. E. 443 (fall of a brick arch; leading opinion, by Lamar, J.); *Ill.*: 1901, *Springer v. Ford*, 189 Ill. 430, 59 N. E. 953 (breaking of a passenger-elevator appliance); 1903, *Chicago City R. Co. v. Carroll*, 206 id. 318, 68 N. E. 1087 (passenger on a street railway); *Ia.*: 1897, *Faust v. R. Co.*, 104 Ia. 241, 73 N. W. 623 (owner riding with his stock; ordinarily there is no presumption, but where he rode in another car, it was enough to show that the destroying fire

accepted shape will be can hardly be predicted. But the following considerations ought to limit it: (1) The apparatus must be such that in the ordinary instance no injurious operation is to be expected unless from a careless construction, inspection, or user; (2) Both inspection and user must have been at the time of the injury in the control of the party charged; (3) The injurious occurrence or condition must have happened irrespective of any voluntary action at the time by the party injured. It may be added that the particular force and justice of the presumption, regarded as a rule throwing upon the party charged the duty of producing evidence, consists in the circumstance that the chief evidence of the true cause, whether culpable or innocent, is practically accessible to him but inaccessible to the injured person.

In some jurisdictions there is a rule of substantive law to be distinguished for some classes of injuries. For example, the setting of fire to adjacent property by the emission of sparks from a railway locomotive may be deemed to raise a presumption, by the present rule (either under statute or by judicial decision); but it may also be made *per se* a cause of action, irrespective

was not caused by himself); *Kan.*: 1900, *St. Louis & S. F. R. Co. v. Burrows*, 62 *Kan.* 89, 61 *Pac.* 439 (passenger); *Ky.*: 1902, *Davis v. Paducah R. & L. Co.*, — *Ky.* —, 68 *S. W.* 140; *La.*: 1902, *LeBlanc v. Sweet*, 107 *La.* 355, 81 *So.* 766 (passenger); *Me.*: 1851, *Church v. Cherryfield*, 33 *Me.* 460 (highway-defect); *Md.*: 1894, *Howser v. R. Co.*, 80 *Md.* 146, 80 *Atl.* 906 (passer-by injured by the fall of ties from a freight-car; leading case; useful opinions by Roberts, J., and by McSherry, J., diss.); *Mass.*: 1894, *Ugla v. R. Co.*, 160 *Mass.* 851, 35 *N. E.* 1126 (breaking of ear and gey used by electric railway); 1894, *Carmody v. Gaslight Co.*, 162 *id.* 589, 39 *N. E.* 184; 1903, *Wadsworth v. R. Co.*, 182 *id.* 572, 66 *N. E.* 421 (sawdust falling from an elevated railway structure); 1903, *Cassady v. Old Colony St. R. Co.*, — *Mass.* —, 68 *N. E.* 10 (explosion of electric railroad fuse); *Mo.*: 1895, *Och v. R. Co.*, 130 *Mo.* 27, 81 *S. W.* 962 (passenger; useful opinion); *Nebr.*: 1893, *Union P. R. Co. v. Porter*, 38 *Nebr.* 226, 235, 56 *N. W.* 808 (here a statute makes the carrier absolutely liable for injury to a passenger, irrespective of the former's negligence); 1895, *Spears v. R. Co.*, 48 *id.* 720, 62 *N. W.* 68 (finding a person dead on the railroad); 1896, *Lincoln R. Co. v. Cox*, 48 *id.* 807, 67 *N. W.* 740; 1899, *Chicago R. I. P. R. Co. v. Young*, 58 *id.* 678, 79 *N. W.* 556 (passenger); *N. J.*: 1894, *Excelsior Co. v. Sweet*, 57 *N. J. L.* 224, 30 *Atl.* 553; 1897, *Trenton P. R. Co. v. Cooper*, 60 *id.* 219, 37 *Atl.* 730 (escape of electricity from street-railway rails); 1898, *Newark E. L., & P. Co. v. Ruddy*, 62 *id.* 505, 41 *Atl.* 712 (broken wire in highway); *N. Y.*: 1901, *Griffen v. Manice*, 166 *N. Y.* 188, 59 *N. E.* 925 (passenger-elevator accident by the falling of the weights); *N. C.*: 1894, *Haynes v. Gas Co.*, 114 *N. C.* 203, 207, 19 *S. E.* 344 (guy-wire of electric light, hanging from a tree and charged from a trolley-wire); *Oh.*: 1896, *Pennsylvania Co. v. McCann*, 54 *Oh.* 10, 42 *N. E.* 768 (under statute); *Or.*: 1902, *Chaperson v. Electric Co.*, 41 *Or.* 89, 67 *Pac.* 928 (contact with an electric wire); *Pa.*: 1892, *Herstine v. R. Co.*, 151 *Pa.* 244, 252, 25 *Atl.* 104 (shock by careless coupling); 1893, *Fleming v. R. Co.*, 158 *id.* 180, 27 *Atl.* 858 (rock falling on a train); 1895, *Shafer v. Lacoock*, 168 *id.* 497, 82 *Atl.* 44; 1897, *O'Connor v. Traction Co.*, 18^c 444, 86 *Atl.* 866; 1899, *Alexander v. Steel Co.*, 189 *id.* 582, 42 *Atl.* 286 (workman on a scaffolding); 1902, *Baron v. Reading Iron Co.*, 202 *id.* 274, 51 *Atl.* 979 (boiler explosion); *S. C.*: 1899, *Steele v. R. Co.*, 55 *S. C.* 889, 33 *S. E.* 509 (passenger); *S. D.*: 1894, *Saunders v. R. Co.*, 6 *S. D.* 40, 60 *N. W.* 148; *Tenn.*: 1898, *Mitchell v. N. C. & St. L. R. Co.*, 100 *Tenn.* 329, 45 *S. W.* 337 (blowing a whistle); *Tex.*: 1894, *Mexican C. R. Co. v. Lanricella*, 87 *Tex.* 277, 28 *S. W.* 277; 1895, *Gulf, C. & S. F. R. Co. v. Shieder*, 88 *Tex.* 152, 30 *S. W.* 902; *U. S.*: 1897, *Pittsburg & W. R. Co. v. Thompson*, 27 *C. C. A.* 833, 82 *Fed.* 720 (Ohio statute applied, regarding defective railway care); 1897, *The Joseph B. Thomas*, 81 *Fed.* 578 (injury at a ship's hatchway); 1902, *Bradford Glycerine Co. v. Kizer*, 51 *C. C. A.* 524, 113 *Fed.* 894 (explosion of nitroglycerine); *W. Va.*: 1897, *Snyder v. Electr. Co.*, 43 *W. Va.* 661, 28 *S. E.* 733 (falling of a wire); *Wis.*: 1889, *Koenig v. Arcadia*, 75 *Wis.* 62, 67, 43 *N. W.* 734 ("there can be no proof so conclusive that the hole was a dangerous defect as that it did actually cause injury"; this is unsound; whether it was the cause may be the disputed question); 1884, *Cummings v. Furnace Co.*, 60 *id.* 603, 18 *N. W.* 742, 20 *N. W.* 665 (highway); 1898, *Carroll v. C. B. & R. Co.*, 99 *id.* 399, 75 *N. W.* 176 (applying the Cummings case rule to the fall of a window).

of actual negligence;³ and the course of legislation in the different jurisdictions has to be discriminated.⁴ So, too, the killing of live-stock by a railroad train has been the subject of statutory rules.⁵

§ 2510. **Same: (4) Death by Violence.** Where a person is found dead by violent injury, two questions of presumption as to his conduct may be raised. (a) If the death has been caused (for example) by a railway train, may it be presumed, where no other circumstances appear, that he was *exercising due care* at the time of the injury?¹ This presumption will be of most consequence in those jurisdictions (*ante*, § 2507) which place on the plaintiff the first burden of proof (risk of non-persuasion) as to contributory negligence. (b) If death by any cause but suicide or extreme negligence has been *insured* against, where is the burden of proof as to the accidental nature of death? Here, on the contract-principle (*post*, § 2537), it would seem that the first burden of proof (risk of non-persuasion) is on the insurer to show the excepted cause.²

§ 2511. **Crimes: (1) Innocence, Malice, Intent, etc.** (a) The "*presumption of innocence*" is a term which has been the subject of two special fallacies, namely, (1) that it is a genuine addition to the number of presumptions, and (2) that it is *per se* evidence. 1. As to the first of these fallacies, it is to be noted that the "*presumption of innocence*" is in truth merely another form of expression for a part of the accepted rule for the burden of proof in criminal cases, *i. e.* the rule that it is for the prosecution to adduce evidence (*ante*, § 2487), and to produce persuasion beyond a reasonable doubt (*ante*,

³ That such statutes are constitutional is noticed *ante*, § 1354. For the rule as to the admissibility of *other fires*, see *ante*, § 454.

⁴ Some of the illustrations are as follows: *Ala.*: 1896, *Louisville & N. R. Co. v. Malone*, 109 *Ala.* 509, 20 *So.* 33; 1902, *Louisville & N. R. Co. v. Marburg L. Co.*, 132 *id.* 520, 32 *So.* 745; *Conn.* Gen. St. 1887, § 1096 (injury by locomotive fire; communication of fire by locomotive is *prima facie* evidence of negligence); *Ga.*: 1892, *East Tennessee V. & G. R. Co. v. Hoskers*, 90 *Ga.* 11, 15 *S. E.* 828 (under Code § 3033); 1892, *East Tennessee V. & G. R. Co. v. Hall*, *ib.* 17, 16 *S. E.* 91 (same); 1897, *Gainesville J. & S. R. Co. v. Edmondson*, 101 *id.* 747, 29 *S. E.* 213 (that the fire was set by the defendant must first be proved); *Ill.*: 1903, *Cleveland C. C. & St. L. R. Co. v. Hornsby*, 202 *Ill.* 138, 66 *N. E.* 1052 (applying Rev. St. c. 114, § 123); *Ia.*: 1897, *Hemmi v. R. Co.*, 102 *Ia.* 25, 70 *N. W.* 746; *Minn.*: 1895, *Solum v. R. Co.*, 63 *Minn.* 233, 65 *N. W.* 443; *N. C.*: 1898, *Hygienic P. I. M. Co. v. R. Co.*, 122 *N. C.* 861, 29 *S. E.* 575; 1902, *Raleigh Hosiery Co. v. R. Co.*, 131 *id.* 238, 42 *S. E.* 602; *N. D.*: 1897, *Mathews v. R. Co.*, 7 *N. D.* 81, 72 *N. W.* 1085; 1899, *McTavish v. R. Co.*, 8 *id.* 333, 79 *N. W.* 448 (in spite of the overthrow of the presumption by evidence of proper construction, the fact of repeated fires may suffice for going to the jury); *Tex.*: 1899, *Gulf C. & S. F. R. Co. v. Johnson*, 92 *Tex.* 591, 50 *S. W.* 568; *U. S.*: 1900, *McCullen v. C. & N. W. R. Co.*, 41 *C. C. A.*

365, 101 *Fed.* 66; 1900, *Garrett v. Southern R. Co.*, *ib.* 237, 101 *Fed.* 102; *Va.*: 1896, *Patteson v. R. Co.*, 94 *Va.* 16, 26 *S. E.* 398 (repudiating *Bernard v. R. Co.*, 85 *id.* 792); 1897, *Kimball v. Borden*, 95 *id.* 203, 28 *S. E.* 207.

⁵ 1892, *Birmingham M. R. Co. v. Harris*, 98 *Ala.* 326, 330, 13 *So.* 877 (analyzing preceding rulings and the statutory changes); 1895, *Savannah F. & W. R. Co. v. McConnell*, 94 *Ga.* 352, 21 *S. E.* 568; *N. C. Code* 1883, § 2326 (killing or injury of live-stock by railroad engines or cars, raises a presumption of negligence).

For the question whether a presumption applies in the case of an *injured employee*, see the following cases: 1892, *Hoozier Stone Co. v. McCain*, 133 *Ind.* 231, 237, 31 *N. E.* 956; 1898, *Hesse v. C. S. & H. R. Co.*, 58 *Oh.* 167, 50 *N. E.* 354; 1897, *Peirce v. Kille*, 26 *C. C. A.* 201, 80 *Fed.* 865.

¹ The following illustrate the question: 1886, *Wakelin v. London & S. W. R. Co.*, *L. R.* 12 *App. Cas.* 41; *Cal. C. C. P.* 1872, § 1963, par. 4 (it is presumed "that a person takes ordinary care of his own concerns"); 1903, *Cogdell v. E. Co.*, 132 *N. C.* 852, 44 *S. E.* 618; 1896, *Sullivan v. R. Co.*, 175 *Pa.* 361, 34 *Atl.* 798; 1903, *Baltimore & P. R. Co. v. Landrigan*, 191 *U. S.* 461, 24 *Sup.* 187. Compare the doctrine of *judicial notice by the jury* (*post*, § 2570), where a related question arises.

² 1900, *Jenkin v. Ins. Co.*, 131 *Cal.* 121, 63 *Pac.* 180; 1893, *Sutherland v. Ins. Co.*, 87 *Ia.* 505, 508, 54 *N. W.* 453; 1894, *Keene v. Acc. Ass.*, 161 *Mass.* 149, 150, 86 *N. E.* 891.

§ 2497). As to this latter part, the measure of persuasion, the "presumption" says nothing. As to the former part, the "presumption" implies what the other rule says, namely, that the accused (like every other person on whom the burden of proof does not lie) may remain inactive and secure, until the prosecution has taken up its burden and produced evidence and effected persuasion; *i. e.*, to say in this case, as in any other, that the opponent of a claim or charge is presumed not to be guilty is to say in another form that the proponent of the claim or charge must evidence it. But in a criminal case the term does convey a special and perhaps useful hint, over and above the other form of the rule about the burden of proof, in that it cautions the jury to put away from their minds all the suspicion that arises from the arrest, the indictment, and the arraignment, and to reach their conclusion solely from the legal evidence adduced. In other words, the rule about burden of proof requires the prosecution by evidence to convince the jury of the accused's guilt; while the presumption of innocence, too, requires this, but conveys for the jury a special and additional caution (which is perhaps only an implied corollary to the other) to consider, in the material for their belief, *nothing but the evidence, i. e.*, no surmises based on the present situation of the accused, — a caution particularly needed in criminal cases.¹ So far, then, as the "presumption of innocence" adds anything, it is merely a warning not to treat certain things improperly as evidence. 2. As to the second fallacy, it seems to have been mainly propagated by the passage of Professor Greenleaf,² declaring that "this legal presumption of innocence is to be regarded by the jury, in every case, as *matter of evidence*, to the benefit of which the party is entitled." But it cannot be regarded as "matter of evidence." No presumption can be evidence; it is a rule about the duty of producing evidence (*ante*, § 2490). This is, in itself, only a matter of the theory of presumptions, and to that extent may be regarded as a mere question of words, — of the way of phrasing a rule upon the substance of which there is no dispute. But when this erroneous theory is made the ground for ordering new trials because of the mere wording of a judge's instruction to a jury, the erroneous theory is capable of causing serious harm to the administration of justice.³

¹ 1877, *Scintilla Juris*, 28: "The truth is that, although the law pays a prisoner the compliment of supposing him to be wrongly accused, it nevertheless knows very well that the probabilities are in favor of the prosecutor's accusation being well founded. . . . Those who think thus [that a prisoner is more likely to be acquitted than a civil defendant, because of the reasonable-doubt rule] have failed to notice that it is more important to a man to look innocent than to be *prima facie* thought so. No [civil] defendant is brought through a hole in the floor; he is not surrounded by a barrier, nor guarded by a keeper of thieves; he is not made to stand up alone while his actions are being judged; and his latest address is not presumably the jail of his county." Compare Stephen, *History of the Criminal Law*, 1, 397.

² Evidence, § 34.

³ A glaring instance of this fault is to be found in the decision of *Coffin v. U. S.*, 156 U. S. 432, 162 *id.* 664, 15 *Sup.* 394, 16 *Sup.* 943 (1896), where the opinion of the Court, proceeding upon the above phrase of Greenleaf as a leading authority, declares this "presumption" to be "evidence in favor of the accused." This opinion received apparent sanction in the later case of *Allen v. U. S.*, 164 *id.* 492, 7 *Sup.* 154 (1896). But in *Agnew v. U. S.*, 165 *id.* 36, 51, 17 *Sup.* 235 (1897), its particularly objectionable sentence declaring that "legal presumptions are treated as evidence" is referred to as "having a tendency to mislead"; in this case the trial Court had refused to give an offered instruction copying that sentence, and the refusal was held proper; so that the *Agnew* decision may perhaps be taken as a recantation to this extent of the unfortunate heresy put forward in the *Coffin*

(b) The various acts constituting the outward part of a crime are sometimes said to constitute a presumption of *malice* or *criminal intent*. But most of these instances are to-day understood to be either "conclusive presumptions," *i. e.* rules of substantive law defining the criminal act (*ante*, § 2492), or else mere inferences of fact (*ant.*, § 2491) not affecting the accused with a duty to produce evidence.⁴

§ 2512. *Same*: (2) *Self-defence, Alibi, etc.* It is generally said that in criminal prosecutions the burden of proof is on the prosecution for all the facts that are material to the crime; so that, whether or not a particular fact is one which would in a civil action be of the nature of an affirmative excuse, it is nevertheless in a criminal prosecution a part of the burden (in both senses) for the prosecution. The absence of any affirmative pleadings by the accused, and the general policy of caution in favor of accused persons, seem to have been the theoretical and practical reasons for this result. Nevertheless, some inroads have of recent times been made upon this ortho-

case. It is to be observed that the opinion in the *Agnew* case (in 1897) was published subsequently to a notable lecture on the Presumption of Innocence, apropos of the *Coffin* case, delivered by Professor Thayer, at Yale University (in 1896), in which the history of the presumption was carefully examined, its meaning acutely expounded, and the fallacies of the opinion in the *Coffin* case exposed in detail; this lecture was reprinted in the learned lecturer's Preliminary Treatise on Evidence (1898), Appendix B, p. 551.

The fallacy of *Coffin v. U. S.* is substantially repudiated in the following cases: 1899, *State v. Soper*, 148 Mo. 217, 49 S. W. 1007 (there is not a "two-ply presumption" in favor of one who is charged with wife-murder; repudiating *State v. Leabo*, 84 id. 168); 1900, *State v. Keunedy*, 154 id. 263, 55 S. W. 293 (refusal to instruct on the presumption of innocence is not error where an instruction on reasonable doubt has been adequately given); 1896, *People v. Ostrander*, 110 Mich. 60, 67 N. W. 1079 (similar). The common phrase about the presumption of innocence is illustrated in the following cases: 1898, *Bryant v. State*, 116 Ala. 445, 23 So. 40; 1897, *People v. Winthrop*, 118 Cal. 85, 50 Pac. 390; 1899, *Emery v. State*, 101 Wis. 627, 78 N. W. 145. The following series of rulings shows the influence of the *Coffin* case: 1898, *Bartley v. State*, 53 Nebr. 310, 73 N. W. 744 (the phrase sanctioned; but an instruction omitting it is not held erroneous); 1898, *Bartley v. State*, 55 id. 294, 75 N. W. 832 (the *Coffin* case noted; question left undecided); 1899, *McVey v. State*, 57 id. 471, 77 N. W. 1111 (following *Bartley v. State*).

If a legitimate presumption is raised, so as to create a duty for the accused to produce some evidence to the contrary, and he does not do so, there is no reason why the jury may not be required to find according to the presumption (*ante*, § 2495); *e. g.*, 1897, *Agnew v. U. S.*, 165 U. S. 36, 17 Sup. 235 (fraudulent intent presumed from false accounts, in the absence of evidence to the contrary sufficient to raise a reasonable doubt). But if the

accused does adduce some evidence, and thus the case comes into the hands of the jury free from the presumption, the rule about persuasion beyond a reasonable doubt (*ante*, § 2497) is in force throughout for measuring their belief, and they must be so persuaded, in spite of the rule of presumption; this is sometimes incorrectly expressed by saying that the presumption of innocence overcomes presumptions against the accused: 1903, *Walton v. State*, — Ark. —, 75 S. W. 1 (seduction; chastity being presumed, "the presumption of innocence of the defendant overcomes the presumption of chastity"); 1896, *People v. Sanders*, 114 Cal. 216, 46 Pac. 153 (overcoming the presumption of regularity of official acts); 1897, *Dunlop v. U. S.*, 165 U. S. 486, 17 Sup. 375 (the rule does not apply where the other presumption "constitutes a link in the chain of evidence against the defendant"). Other examples are found under the presumption about marriage (*ante*, § 2506).

* Cases illustrating a presumption of *malice* from the use of a deadly weapon: 1892, *Gilbert v. State*, 90 Ga. 691, 16 S. E. 652; 1878, *Farris v. Com.*, 14 Bush 362, 868; 1845, *Com. v. York*, 9 Metc. 93, 103; 1855, *Com. v. Hawkins*, 3 Gray 463 (leading opinion, by Shaw, C. J.); 1893, *People v. Wolf*, 95 Mich. 625, 630, 55 N. W. 357; 1898, *Herman v. State*, 75 Miss. 340, 22 So. 872; 1896, *Territory v. Lucero*, — N. M. —, 46 Pac. 18; 1876, *Thomas v. People*, 67 N. Y. 218, 224; 1892, *State v. Whitson*, 111 N. C. 695, 699, 16 S. E. 332; 1873, *State v. Patterson*, 45 Vt. 308. Cases illustrating a presumption of felonious intent from the taking of goods: 1902, *Long v. State*, — Fla. —, 32 So. 870; 1898, *State v. Judd*, 20 Mont. 420, 51 Pac. 1033. These and analogous rules can only be disentangled by a detailed consideration of the substantive law of the crime in question.

There is no real presumption of guilt from *night*; compare the cases cited *ante*, § 276, and the following: 1899, *Smith v. State*, 106 Ga. 673, 32 S. E. 851; 1898, *State v. Adler*, 146 Mo. 18, 47 S. W. 794.

dox principle, and in many jurisdictions it is accepted that the burden of proof may for certain sorts of facts be upon the accused. Certainly, the second burden, *i. e.* the duty of producing some evidence (*ante*, § 2487), ought in many instances to be upon the accused. The absence of affirmative pleadings in defence is no insuperable objection to such a result. The judicial experience with certain issues on criminal trials has seemed to justify such exceptions; and the fixing of a particular fact on this or that party as a part of his case is in general only a question of sound policy as based on experience (*ante*, § 2486).

(a) A few Courts seem in general to place on the accused some sort of burden of proof for any fact in the nature of *excuse* or *mitigation*.¹ (b) A few Courts seem to place upon the accused the burden of showing that he acted in *self-defence*.² (c) It is generally conceded that the accused does not have the burden of proving an *alibi*.³ (d) In sundry other instances, a naturally affirmative defence is sometimes apportioned to the accused's burden.⁴

¹ For example: 1899, *Brown v. State*, 62 N. J. L. 666, 42 Atl. 811 (risk of non-persuasion of guilt is always on the prosecution, but the defendant has a duty to produce evidence of any justification; the opinion is not entirely clear); 1897, *State v. Byrd*, 121 N. C. 684, 28 S. E. 353 (burden is on the defendant to show excuse or mitigation). *Contra*, to some extent: 1898, *Appleton v. People*, 171 Ill. 473, 49 N. E. 708 (under Cr. Code § 155, it is not necessary for a defendant to "satisfactorily establish his defence"); 1898, *Herman v. State*, 75 Miss. 340, 22 So. 872 (the burden of proving an excuse is not on the defendant).

² The judicial language is seldom entirely clear as to the nature of the burden. The following cases illustrate both views: 1892, *Roden v. State*, 97 Ala. 54, 57, 12 So. 419 (assault with intent; the burden is on the defendant); 1898, *Bouldeu v. State*, 102 id. 78, 83, 15 So. 841 (similar); 1895, *Dent v. State*, 105 id. 14, 17 So. 84 (the burden is on the prosecution); 1896, *Scheerer v. Ages*, 113 id. 383, 21 So. 79 (the risk of non-persuasion beyond reasonable doubt is on the prosecution); 1898, *People v. Milner*, 122 Cal. 171, 54 Pac. 833 (the burden is on the defendant); 1898, *State v. Shea*, 104 Ia. 724, 74 N. W. 687 (the burden is on the prosecution, nor has the defendant a duty of producing evidence); 1899, *Tucker v. State*, 89 Md. 471, 43 Atl. 778 (the burden is on the defendant to persuade by a preponderance); 1897, *Strother v. State*, 74 Miss. 447, 21 So. 147 (the burden is on the prosecution); 1897, *King v. State*, ib. 576, 21 So. 235 (same); 1894, *Gravelly v. State*, 38 Nehr. 871, 57 N. W. 751 (the burden is on the prosecution, without shifting); 1894, *State v. Barringer*, 114 N. C. 840, 19 S. E. 275 (the defendant must prove it "to the satisfaction of the jury"); 1895, *Ccm. v. Mika*, 171 Pa. 273, 33 Atl. 65 (if a killing by the defendant is proved, the prosecution has the burden of raising it to the first degree, and the defence that of reducing it below the second degree); 1899,

State v. Yokum, 11 S. D. 544, 79 N. W. 835 (the burden is on the defendant); 1903, *Rutherford v. Foster*, 60 C. C. A. 129, 125 Fed. 187 (in a civil case, the burden is on the defendant); 1894, *Vance v. Com.*, — Va. —, 19 S. E. 785; 1894, *Myers v. Com.*, 90 Id. 705, 19 S. E. 881; 1895, *State v. Zeigler*, 40 W. Va. 593, 21 S. E. 763 (doubtful).

³ 1896, *Town v. State*, 111 Ala. 1, 20 So. 598 (the defendant must produce evidence, but the prosecution has the risk of non-persuasion beyond reasonable doubt); 1897, *Pickens v. State*, 115 Id. 42, 22 So. 551; *James v. State*, ih. 83, 22 So. 565; 1898, *Schultz v. Terr.*, — Ariz. —, 52 Pac. 352 (the defendant has no burden); 1898, *People v. Roberts*, 122 Cal. 877, 55 Pac. 187 (the burden is on the prosecution); 1899, *People v. Winters*, 125 id. 825, 57 Pac. 1067 (the defendant must introduce evidence, but need not persuade by preponderance); 1897, *McNamara v. People*, 24 Colo. 61, 48 Pac. 541 (the burden is on the prosecution); 1897, *State v. Ardoin*, 49 La. Au. 1145, 22 So. 620 (similar); 1895, *State v. Harvey*, 181 Mo. 339, 32 S. W. 1110 (similar); 1899, *State v. Spotted Hawk*, 22 Mont. 33, 55 Pac. 1026 (the duty of production, but not the risk of non-persuasion, is on the defendant); 1897, *Beck v. State*, 51 Nehr. 106, 70 N. W. 498 (the defendant need not persuade by a preponderance); 1898, *Peyton v. State*, 54 Id. 188, 74 N. W. 597 (burden of proof remains on prosecution throughout); 1896, *Borrego v. Territory*, 8 N. M. 446, 46 Pac. 349 (the defendant need not persuade by a preponderance); 1897, *Wright v. Terr.*, 5 Okl. 78, 47 Pac. 1069 (the burden is on the prosecution); 1897, *State v. Thornton*, 10 S. D. 349, 73 N. W. 196 (the defendant has the duty of producing evidence; but the prosecution's case must still be made out to the jury beyond a reasonable doubt).

⁴ For example, in the *illegal sale of liquor*, the defendant must prove a *license*: 1896, *Hornberger v. State*, 47 Nehr. 40, 66 N. W. 23; 1897, *Durfee v. State*, 53 Id. 214, 73 N. W. 676 (the

§ 2513. Same: (3) Possession of Stolen Goods. One of the most troublesome and fruitless controversies has been whether under certain circumstances the accused's possession of stolen goods raises a presumption that he was the thief. It had long been customary in England to use the language of presumptions for such a situation;¹ but whether the language was intended merely to mean that the specific fact alone was sufficient evidence on which the jury *might* reach a conviction if they desired (*ante*, § 2494), or whether it meant that the specific fact alone created a presumption, *i. e.* placed on the accused a duty of producing evidence, so that if he failed to do so (that is, to offer any "explanation") the jury *must* convict (*ante*, § 2490), was seldom made clear. This obscurity has continued in the judicial rulings in the United States;² but among the numerous precedents most seem to repudiate any rule of presumption in the strict sense.³

mere possession, irrespective of explanation, raises a presumption of guilt, and shifts the "burden . . . to establish" lawful possession); 1898, *Parker v. State*, 61 N. J. L. 308, 39 Atl. 651; 1897, *State v. Shelton*, 18 Wash. 590, 48 Pac. 258. In some cases, the burden is clearly stated to be merely the second kind, *i. e.* the duty of producing evidence: 1897, *State v. Lee*, 69 Conn. 186, 37 Atl. 75 (under a statute making an abortion criminal, unless necessary to save life, the necessity must be evidenced by the defendant).

¹ 1836, *R. v. Cockin*, 2 Lew. Cr. C. 235, and note by the Reporter; 1845, *R. v. Dredge*, 1 Cox Cr. 235; 1854, *R. v. Burton*, Deare. Cr. C. 282; 1860, *R. v. Harris*, 8 Cox Cr. 333; 1866, *R. v. Exall*, 4 F. & F. 925 (leading case); 1878, *R. v. Hughes*, 1 Cox Cr. 223.

² 1902, *Veaver, J.*, in *State v. Brady*, — Ia. —, 91 N. W. 801: "The use of the terms 'presumption of guilt' and 'prima facie evidence of guilt' with reference to the possession of stolen goods has perhaps been too long indulged in by Courts and text-writers to be condemned; but we cannot resist the conclusion that, when so employed, these expressions are unfortunate, and often misleading. In a civil proceeding, when a plaintiff makes a *prima facie* case, the burden is shifted, and, in the absence of any countershewing, he is entitled to recover as a matter of law. This rule is understood by the average intelligent layman as well as by those learned in the law; and when, in a criminal case, an instruction is given that the showing of a specific fact is *prima facie* evidence of guilt, jurors may very naturally conclude that the establishment of such fact has the effect to cast upon defendant the burden of proving his innocence of the charge against him. . . . 'Presumptions' of guilt and '*prima facie*' cases of guilt in the trial of a party charged with crime mean no more than that from the proof of certain facts the jury will be warranted in convicting the accused of the offense with which he is charged."

³ The following cases illustrate the bearings of the question in most jurisdictions; compare the cases cited *ante*, § 152; *Ala.*: 1898, *Bryant*

v. State, 116 Ala. 445, 23 So. 40; 1899, *Hale v. State*, 122 id. 85, 26 So. 236; 1902, *Smith v. State*, 133 id. 145, 31 So. 806; *Ariz.*: 1901, *Taylor v. Terr.*, — Ariz. — 64 Pac. 423; *Cal.*: 1898, *People v. Luchetti*, 119 Cal. 501, 51 Pac. 707 (an explanation entitles the matter to be left to the jury); 1901, *People v. Jay*, 135 id. xix, 66 Pac. 864; 1902, *People v. Wilson*, lb. 331, 67 Pac. 322; *Colo.*: 1897, *Brooke v. People*, 23 Colo. 375, 48 Pac. 502 (the defendant must explain, but not as a rule of going forward; and the prosecution's general burden remains); 1899, *Van Straten v. People*, 26 id. 184, 56 Pac. 905; *Fla.*: 1895, *Leslie v. State*, 35 Fla. 171, 17 So. 555; 1899, *Williams v. State*, 40 id. 480, 25 So. 143; *Ga.*: 1892, *Cornwall v. State*, 91 Ga. 277, 281, 18 S. E. 154; 1895, *Brooks v. State*, 96 id. 353, 23 S. E. 413; 1898, *Davidson v. State*, 104 id. 761, 30 S. E. 946; 1898, *Jones v. State*, 105 id. 649, 31 S. E. 574; 1898, *Sharpe v. State*, lb. 588, 31 S. E. 541; 1901, *Turner v. State*, 114 id. 45, 39 S. E. 863; *Ida.*: 1901, *State v. Sanford*, — Ida. —, 67 Pac. 492; *Ill.*: 1896, *Keating v. People*, 160 Ill. 480, 43 N. E. 724; 1902, *Williams v. People*, 196 id. 173, 63 N. E. 681; 1903, *Watts v. People*, 204 id. 233, 66 N. E. 563; *Ind.*: 1866, *Doan v. State*, 26 Ind. 495 (it is not his failure to explain "where it is in his power to do so," because if he was able to explain innocently, though he did not choose to, by hypothesis he is not guilty; but his ability to explain if he were innocent and his then failure); 1897, *Pfan v. State*, 148 id. 539, 47 N. E. 926; 1898, *Campbell v. State*, 150 id. 74, 49 N. E. 905 (it is a "strong presumption of fact," *i. e.* in the absence of satisfactory explanation, "the jury were legally bound to find him guilty"; but the Court erroneously declares that a "strong presumption of fact" would have the same effect as a rebuttable presumption of law; the preceding authorities reviewed); *Ind. T.*: 1896, *Oxier v. U. S.*, 1 Ind. T. 85, 38 S. W. 331; *Ia.*: 1895, *State v. LaGrange*, 94 Ia. 60, 62 N. W. 664; 1899, *State v. Miner*, 107 id. 656, 78 N. W. 679; 1903, *State v. Williams*, 120 id. 36, 94 N. W. 255; 1903, *State v. King*, — id. —, 96 N. W. 712; *Kan.*: 1894, *State v. Hoffman*, 53 Kan. 700, 708, 37 Pac. 138 ("if

If no rule of presumption is to be accepted, specific limitations are hardly of any consequence, for the sufficiency of the evidence to go to the jury will usually depend on the variant circumstances of each case. But the following considerations have been emphasized, from the point of view of a definite rule: (a) The possession must be *unexplained* by any innocent origin; (b) the possession must be fairly *recent*; (c) and the possession must be *exclusive*.⁶ Furthermore, if there is any rule at all, it is generally conceded to apply also on a charge of *knowing receipt* of stolen goods,⁷ and of *burglary* or the like.⁸

In many additional instances, by statute, a rule of presumption or of "*prima facie* evidence" has been declared against persons found in possession of forbidden articles, such as game or liquor;⁹ but these rules involve closely the substantive law of the respective crimes.

unexplained, may be sufficient"); 1899, *State v. Powell*, 61 Id. 81, 53 Pac. 968; 1902, *State v. Herron*, 64 Id. 363, 67 Pac. 861; *La.*: 1898, *State v. Kelley*, 50 La. An. 597, 23 So. 548 (possession of recently stolen property, not accounted for, raises the presumption); *Mass.*: 1869, *Com. v. Bell*, 102 Mass. 165; 1875, *Com. v. Randall*, 119 Id. 107; *Mo.*: 1897, *State v. Wilson*, 137 Mo. 592, 89 S. W. 80; *Nev.*: 1898, *State v. Mandich*, 24 Nev. 386, 54 Pac. 516; *N. D.*: 1900, *State v. Rosencrans*, 9 N. D. 163, 82 N. W. 422; *Okl.*: 1897, *Johnson v. Terr.*, 5 Okl. 695, 50 Pac. 90; 1898, *Donthitt v. Terr.*, 7 Id. 55, 54 Pac. 312 (it is "a circumstance" only); *Or.*: 1896, *State v. Pomeroy*, 80 Or. 16, 46 Pac. 797 (it depends on "the character of the property, the nature of the possession, and its proximity in time with the theft"); *U. S.*: 1901, *Consiline v. U. S.*, 50 C. C. A. 272, 112 Fed. 842; *Vt.*: 1898, *State v. Peach*, 70 Vt. 283, 40 Atl. 782 (unexplained possession may be considered); *Wash.*: 1898, *State v. Walters*, 7 Wash. 246, 287, 34 Pac. 938, 1098 (no presumption; but the Court whimsically treat a charge calling such possession "a criminating circumstance tending to show" guilt as if it laid down a rule of law; this is strange distortion of words); 1902, *State v. Bliss*, 27 Id. 463, 68 Pac. 87; *Wyo.*: 1903, *Younger v. State*, — Wyo. —, 73 Pac. 551.

⁶ This is noted in many of the cases *supra*.
⁷ 1836, *R. v. Cockin*, 2 Lew. Cr. C. 285 (sacks stolen in February were found in the defendant's possession some twenty days after; Coleridge, J.: "If I was now to lose my watch, and in a few minutes it was to be found on the person of one of you, it would afford the strongest ground for presuming that you had stolen it. But if a month hence it were to be found in your possession, the presumption of your having stolen it would be greatly weakened; because stolen property usually passes through many hands"); 1845, *R. v. Hall*, 1 Cox Cr. 231 (possession of a shirt, six months after it was missed; Pollock, C. B., and Coleridge, J.: "There is a certain period after which I should think it very unfair to assume theft from mere possession, even where the property is proved *abundante* to have been stolen"); 1898, *State v. Foulk*, 59 Kan. 775, 52 Pac. 864.

⁸ 1896, *Moncrief v. State*, 99 Ga. 295, 25 S. E. 735 (the possession of the house must be exclusive); 1892, *State v. Owsley*, 111 Mo. 450, 455, 20 S. W. 194 (goods found in a house of the defendant's wife where he did not live; not sufficient). Compare the following: 1900, *Sparks v. State*, 111 Ga. 830, 35 S. E. 654 (what constitutes possession, examined).

⁹ 1864, *R. v. Langmead*, Leigh & C. 427 (Blackburn, J.: "I should have said that recent possession was evidence either of stealing or receiving according to circumstances. . . . When it has been shown that property has been stolen and has been found recently after its loss in the possession of the prisoner, he is called upon to account for having it, and, on his failing to do so, the jury may very well infer that his possession was dishonest, and that he was either the thief or the receiver, according to the circumstances"); 1899, *State v. Guild*, 149 Mo. 870, 50 S. W. 909 (overruling *State v. Bulla*, 89 Id. 595, 1 S. W. 764).

¹⁰ 1898, *Roberson v. State*, 40 Fla. 509, 24 So. 474 (if a breaking and entering at the time of taking is shown); 1899, *Lester v. State*, 106 Ga. 371, 32 S. E. 335 (admissible, if the fact of breaking and entering is first shown); 1902, *State v. Brady* — *Id.* —, 91 N. W. 801 (burglary; local rulings reviewed); 1902, *State v. Brundige*, 118 Id. 92, 91 N. W. 920 (breaking and entering with intent to steal); 1903, *State v. Swift*, 120 Id. 8, 94 N. W. 269; 1893, *State v. Moore*, 117 Mo. 595, 404, 22 S. W. 1086; 1898, *State v. Hodges*, 144 Id. 50, 45 S. W. 1098 (forged articles); 1902, *State v. Yandle*, 166 Id. 589, 66 S. W. 532; 1897, *Johnson v. Terr.*, 5 Okl. 695, 50 Pac. 90; 1896, *Wilson v. U. S.*, 162 U. S. 613, 16 Sup. 895 (fruits of any crime; here money and clothes of the deceased); 1900, *Henderson v. Com.*, 98 Va. 794, 34 S. E. 881. Compare the following: 1894, *People v. Hart*, 10 Utah 204, 207, 87 Pac. 880 (mere recent possession with no other circumstance, insufficient, on a charge of burglary; misapplying the rule of § 2278, *ante*, that failure to testify creates no inference); 1897, *Kibler v. Com.*, 94 Va. 804, 26 S. E. 858 (no presumption from possession of the fruits of a crime).

¹¹ *E. g.*: *Mass. Pub. St. 1882, c. 94, § 4* (possession of timber with the marks cut out, etc.,

§ 2514. **Same: (4) Capacity (Infancy, Intoxication, Coverture).** Capacity is naturally a part of the first burden of proof for the prosecution, although the second burden might well be aided, in the appropriate classes of cases, by a presumption of capacity (*ante*, § 2487). For *infancy*, the so-called conclusive presumption of incapacity of criminal intent under the age of seven is of course genuinely a rule of substantive law that the infant "cannot be guilty of felony," as Blackstone correctly puts it.¹ The rule that incapacity is presumed between the ages of seven and fourteen, for sundry crimes,² and for rape in particular,³ is more correctly stated as a presumption of capacity above the age of fourteen. For *insanity*, the incidence of the burden has already been considered (*ante*, § 2501). For *intoxication*, no doubt the second burden (of producing some evidence) is on the accused;⁴ though the first burden (or risk of non-persuasion) remains on the prosecution.⁵ For *coverture*, the coercion of the husband, which in Blackstone's correct phrase may be "an excuse for criminal misconduct" of the wife, may be presumed from the husband's presence; this then creates for the prosecution a duty of adducing evidence of the wife's willing participation; the risk of non-persuasion remaining throughout upon the prosecution.⁶

§ 2515. **Ownership; (1) Possession of Land and Personalty.** Where title to land becomes material, the fact of present possession alone may serve to create a presumption of ownership;¹ the emphasis being on the occupation, or appearance of ownership, and not on the documentary sources of claim;² and the rule serving merely to shift to the opponent the second burden, or duty of producing some evidence to the contrary.³ The same rule serves in

raises a presumption of the possessor's unlawful cutting). For instances of the *admissibility* of this class of evidence, see *ante*, §§ 149, 153, 154.

¹ Commentaries, III, 23. For rape and kindred crimes, the age of fourteen was taken: 1839, *R. v. Phillips*, 5 C. & P. 736; 1839, *R. v. Jordan*, 9 id. 118; but a distinction may be made as to assault with intent: 1824, *Com. v. Green*, 2 Pick. 380.

² 1848, *State v. Goin*, 9 *Humph.* 174.

³ 1893, *Sutton v. People*, 145 Ill. 279, 286, 84 N. E. 420 (rape; defendant must offer evidence that he is under 14 years of age).

⁴ 1894, *State v. Hill*, 46 La. An. 27, 14 So. 294.

⁵ 1898, *Davis v. State*, 54 *Nebr.* 177, 74 N. W. 599 (burden of proof remains on prosecution throughout).

⁶ 1886, *Com. v. Flaherty*, 140 *Mass.* 454, 5 N. E. 258; 1887, *Com. v. Hill*, 145 id. 305, 307, 14 N. E. 124; 1891, *State v. MaFoo*, 110 *Mo.* 7, 19 S. W. 222; 1880, *Goldstein v. People*, 82 N. Y. 231; 1886, *Franklin's Adm'r's Appeal*, 115 Pa. 534, 538, 6 *Atl.* 70.

¹ The inference rests on the general principle of Relevancy examined *ante*, § 148. To the following cases, add those cited *ante*, § 1789, where this presumption comes into play: *Cal. C. C. P.* 1872, § 1963, par. 11, 12 (it is presumed "that things which a person possesses are owned by him," and "that a person is the owner of prop-

erty, from exercising acts of ownership over it, or from common reputation of his ownership"); 1903, *Cahill v. Cahill*, 75 *Conn.* 522, 54 *Atl.* 201 (land); 1898, *Teas v. St. Albans*, 88 *W. Va.* 1, 22, 17 S. E. 400 (land); *Sedgwick & Wait, Trial of Title to Land*, § 717.

Distinguish the presumption of a *lost grant* from long-continued possession (*post*, § 2522).

² 1897, *Hewes v. Glos*, 170 *Ill.* 436, 48 N. E. 922 (deed from grantor, without possession by grantor or grantee, raises no presumption of ownership); 1899, *Glos v. Hney*, 181 id. 149, 54 N. E. 905 (similar); 1895, *Newcastle v. Haywood*, 68 N. H. 179, 44 *Atl.* 182 (similar).

³ This is connected with other rules of substantive law, such as the rule that in ejectment the claimant must recover on the strength of his own title and not the weakness of his opponent's.

There are also occasional rules as to the shifting of the second burden in evidencing the various elements under an *adversus possession*: 1842, *Brown v. King*, 5 *Metc.* 178 (writ of entry; a title by disseisin being set up, held, that mere possession by the claimant did not suffice to put the burden of proof on the titular owner to show that possession to be permissive; the burden of showing adverseness was on the claimant throughout); 1894, *Skinner v. Skinner*, 38 *Nebr.* 766, 768, 57 N. W. 534 (the exclusive possession of land with the titular owner's knowledge may create a presumption of his permission); 1866,

the evidencing of ownership of personalty, particularly in cases of larceny or robbery, where a real dispute of ownership is rare.⁴

§ 2516. *Same*: (2) *Possession of Negotiable Instrument*. Subject to some discriminations, the same presumption may be applied to the possession of a negotiable instrument, especially to one indorsed 'in blank or to bearer.'¹

§ 2517. *Payment*: (1) *Lapse of Time*. The discharge of a claim by payment is often said to be presumed after a lapse of time depending on the circumstances of the particular case; the inference being based on the principle of Relevancy already examined (*ante*, § 159). But the multiplied statutes of limitation have reduced the occasions for invoking any other rule, and it is not frequent that a real rule of presumption is intended to be laid down.¹

§ 2518. *Same*: (2) *Possession of Instrument or Receipt*. A receipt is only an ordinary admission of payment, and is therefore not conclusive (*ante*, § 2432); but it is of course the strongest evidence, and some Courts seem to give it the force of a real presumption.¹ The obligor's possession of the instrument after maturity is usually said to raise a presumption of payment;

Leport v. Todd, 32 N. J. L. 124 (a plaintiff in ejectment resting on adverse possession has the burden of showing that a possession originally permissive became adverse).

⁴ Add some of the cases cited *ante*, § 1739: 1396, *People v. Oldham*, 111 Cal. 648, 44 Pac. 312 (robbery or larceny); 1901, *Howard v. People*, 193 Ill. 615, 61 N. E. 1016 (robbery); 1867, *Sullivan v. Goldman*, 19 La. An. 12 (presumption of plaintiff's continued ownership of a horse, held not overturned by presumption of ownership from defendant's possession); 1866, *Vining v. Baker*, 53 Me. 544 (trover); 1851, *Magee v. Scott*, 9 Cush. 148; 1865, *Carrier v. Gale*, 9 All. 522; 1892, *Com. v. Blanchette*, 157 Mass. 436, 439, 32 N. E. 658 (obtaining goods by false pretences); 1900, *Liscomh v. R. Co.*, 70 N. H. 312, 48 Atl. 284 (gift of decedent); 1877, *Rawley v. Brown*, 71 N. Y. 35 (replevin).

For the application of this rule to property in possession of husband or wife, see the following cases: 1898, *Farwell v. Cramer*, 36 Nebr. 61, 66, 56 N. W. 718; 1886, *Kingsbury v. Davidson*, 112 Pa. 383, 4 Atl. 33.

Sometimes a reverse presumption may be invoked, of possession from ownership: 1896, *Edgeworth v. Wood*, 58 N. J. L. 463, 33 Atl. 940 (that a wagon was owned by defendant shows *prima facie* that his servant was in control).

¹ The following cases illustrate the scope of the rule: 1894, *National Bank v. Emmitt*, 52 Kan. 608, 35 Pac. 213; 1897, *Jones v. Jones*, 102 Ky. 450, 43 S. W. 412 (rule not applied to an indorsed note held adversely to the payee's representatives); 1901, *Battersbee v. Calkins*, 128 Mich. 569, 87 N. W. 760; 1898, *Saunders v. Bates*, 54 Nebr. 209, 74 N. W. 578; 1898, *New England L. & T. Co. v. Robinson*, 56 Id. 50, 76 N. W. 415; 1893, *Halsted v. Colvin*, 51 N. J. Eq. 387, 398, 26 Atl. 928.

¹ Examples of the use of such a term are as follows: 1786, *Oswald v. Leigh*, 1 T. R. 270

(the defendant showed that he "had an estate in the plaintiff's neighborhood, and was constant and regular in all his payments"); 1829, *Sellen v. Norman*, 4 C. & P. 30 (presumption of wages paid, "if a servant has left a considerable time"); 1864, *McCormick v. Evans*, 33 Ill. 328 (after twenty years; here, money due under a contract to convey); 1879, *Locke v. Caldwell*, 91 Id. 417, 421 (presumption not raised for a mortgage debt, where the statutory time of limitation had not run); 1898, *Hollenbeck v. Ristina*, 105 Ia. 483, 75 N. W. 355 (account stated); 1877, *Jarvis v. Albro*, 67 Me. 310, 313 (mortgage); 1894, *Cox v. Brower*, 114 N. C. 422, 423, 19 S. E. 365 (legacies; nor is it material that the legatees were non-residents, the domestic Courts being open to them); 1897, *Young v. Doherty*, 183 Pa. 179, 35 Atl. 587 (action on a note; the plaintiff's failure to mention it in the defendant's testator's lifetime, though "given to boasting of his means and the people in his debt," and his failure to bring suit on it, not received to show a presumable payment); 1898, *Devereux's Estate*, 184 Id. 429, 39 Atl. 225 (the insolvency of the debtor alone does not rebut the presumption); 1893, *King v. King*, 90 Va. 177, 17 S. E. 894 (after twenty-seven years, a tender being originally made, and the parties living near each other).

¹ 1897, *Ramsdell v. Clark*, 20 Mont. 103, 49 Pac. 591; 1872, *Gnyette v. Bolton*, 46 Vt. 228, 234. *Contra*: 1897, *Terryberry v. Woods*, 69 Vt. 94, 37 Atl. 246 (on a plea of payment, proof of a receipt does not shift the duty of going forward).

Such a presumption is sometimes applied to include prior installments of the same obligation. Cal. C. C. P. 1872, § 1963, par. 10 (it is presumed "that former rent or installments have been paid when a receipt for later is produced"); 1853, *Hodgdon v. Wright*, 36 Me. 326, 336, *semble*; 1823, *Brewer v. Knapp*, 1 Pick. 337.

the inference being based on the principle of Relevancy already considered (*ante*, § 156); but there are various limitations laid down, in particular, concerning the obligor's opportunity of surreptitious access to the obligee's papers.⁹

§ 2519. **Execution and Contents of Document: (1) Letters and Telegrams.** The act of writing a letter or sending a telegram, and the addressee's receipt of the letter or telegram, give rise to questions both of the admissibility and the sufficiency of evidence. The same evidence is also sometimes said to raise a presumption. It is probable that no real presumption is meant to be predicated in the majority of these instances. For example, the receipt by Doe of an answer, through the mail or the telegraph, to his prior communication to Roe, is usually treated as sufficient evidence of Roe's *authorship* of the answer (*ante*, §§ 2153, 2154); and the mailing or depositing of Doe's letter or telegram to Roe is usually treated as sufficient evidence of Roe's receipt of it (*ante*, § 95); but it is seldom, except in the latter class of cases, that a burden of proof is deemed to be affected.¹

§ 2520. **Same: (2) Execution of Deeds (Delivery, Date, Seal, Consideration).** (a) In view of the importance, in early times, of the formality of *delivery* for a deed (*ante*, §§ 2405, 2408, 2426), it was natural that the evi-

⁹ With the following examples compare the cases cited *ante*, § 156: 1816, *Gibbon v. Featherstonhaugh*, 1 Stark. 225 (drawee's possession of a bill, held to be sufficient evidence); 1816, *Brembridge v. Osborn*, ib. 874 (possession of a note, said to "turn the scale"); 1816, *Shepherd v. Currie*, ib. 454 (possession of an order to deliver goods to bearer, held to shift the burden); 1894, *Excelsior Mfg. Co. v. Owens*, 58 Ark. 556, 563, 25 S. W. 868 (presumption applied to a note possessed after maturity); Cal. C. C. P. 1872, § 1963, par. 9, 13 (it is presumed "that an obligation delivered up to the debtor has been paid," and "that a person in possession of an order on himself for the payment of money, or the delivery of a thing, has paid the money or delivered the thing accordingly"); 1894, *Grimes v. Hilliary*, 150 Ill. 141, 149, 86 N. E. 977 (maker having access to payee's papers as member of the family; no presumption); 1898, *Erhart v. Dietrich*, 118 Mo. 418, 423, 24 S. W. 128 (son taking care of demented payee-father; presumption not applied); 1898, *Smith v. Gardner*, 36 Nebr. 741, 55 N. W. 245 (maker's possession of a note does not raise a presumption, but is merely sufficient evidence); 1832, *Alford v. Baker*, 9 Wend. 323 (like *Shepherd v. Currie*, *supra*); 1898, *Poston v. Jones*, 122 N. C. 536, 29 S. E. 951 (presumption applied to a note); 1902, *Vann v. Edwards*, 130 id. 70, 40 S. E. 853 (bond found after the death of the payee's administrator in the maker's possession, presumed paid); 1893, *Collins v. Lynch*, 157 Pa. 246, 256, 27 Atl. 721 (joint occupation of land by husband and wife; presumption not applied); 1899, *Wilkinson's Est.*, 192 id. 117, 43 Atl. 466 (check and note of deceased husband found in a wife's possession; that she was executrix, held

to raise no presumption that she had taken them from his possession after death and therefore that they were paid); 1898, *Bates v. Cain's Estate*, 70 Vt. 144, 40 Atl. 36 (possession of a note by a joint promisor is not presumptive of sole payment by him); 1893, *First National Bank v. Harris*, 7 Wash. 139, 143, 34 Pac. 466 (presumption applied to a maker's possession of a note after its last late circulation).

¹ The cases are collected in the places above cited. Compare also § 2135, *ante* (authentication as a rule of presumption). The following cases illustrate the judicial looseness of language: 1828, *McCourry v. Suydam*, 10 N. J. L. 246 (mailing a notice of trial raises a presumption and "stands for proof" of service; but an affidavit of non-receipt "destroys the presumption"); 1897, *State v. Howell*, — id. —, 38 Atl. 748 (notice of claim; the above language quoted, with the extraordinary addition: "Of course, if there is such a presumption as is assumed, it is one of fact for the jury," and then declining to hold that a refusal to charge such a presumption is erroneous, but recommending attention to "the foregoing deliverance in this Court"; if they had recommended a page from the Sibylline books, they could not have left the trial judge in greater perplexity); 1899, *Fairfield P. Co. v. Ins. Co.*, — Pa. —, 44 Atl. 317 (presumption of receipt ordinarily from the mailing of a letter; but the opinion inconsistently says that (1) there is no presumption except for notices of commercial paper, and (2) there is no presumption for a notice of insurance loss, if there is rebutting evidence; is there then a presumption, or no presumption, where there is no rebutting evidence?).

dence of it should be strictly insisted on.¹ But there came gradually to be conceded some sort of rule of sufficiency or presumption, based on evidence of the signing only;² the inference being based on principles of Relevancy already considered (*ante*, §§ 92, 102). But the diminished importance of delivery as a formality has also been marked by other rules, more genuinely rules of Presumption, and resting on a somewhat different principle of Relevancy (*ante*, §§ 148, 157); the *grantee's possession* may raise a presumption of delivery,³ and the *registration* of the deed may also raise it.⁴

(b) The *date of the signing* may be presumed from the purporting date of the document,⁵ as also the date of the *delivery*;⁶ though this might not always be made a rule of presumption.

(c) The *official seal* on a document is not only evidence of the authenticity of the seal and the authority of the person affixing it, but is commonly held to create a presumption of these facts (*ante*, §§ 2161-2169), and sometimes even an *official signature* alone is given the same effect (*ante*, § 2167). Whether a *certified copy* of an official or registered document can raise a presumption that the original bore a seal is a question which has led to difference of judicial opinion (*ante*, § 2108).

(d) Whether a *negotiable instrument* raises a presumption of a *consideration*,⁷ and whether a subsequent *recorded deed* raises a presumption of *purchase for value without notice* of a prior unrecorded deed,⁸ are questions which are inextricably entangled with the substantive law.

§ 2521. Same: (3) Ancient Documents. The authentic execution of a

¹ *Ante*, 1726, Gilbert, Evidence, 99 ("unless the delivery be proved, there is no perfect proof of the deed, and there is no proof of the delivery but by a witness who saw the delivery").

² 1792, Grellier v. Neale, Peake 146 (proof of handwriting raises a presumption of sealing and delivery); 1840, Burling v. Paterson, 9 C. & P. 570, 573 (the witness could recollect seeing the signing only; an inference of sealing and delivery was allowed). This was applied also to an act of criminal publication: 1859, R. v. Lovett, 3 State Tr. 1177, 1181 (seditious libel; proof of handwriting is presumptive evidence of publication). Conversely, a *forging* may be presumed from an uttering: 1899, State v. Williams, 152 Mo. 115, 53 S. W. 424.

³ Compare with the following the cases cited *ante*, § 157: 1898, Campbell v. Carnth, 32 Fla. 264, 271, 18 So. 452; 1896, Rohr v. Alexander, 57 Kan. 381, 46 Pac. 699; 1897, Jones v. N. Y. L. Ins. Co., 168 Mass. 66, 47 N. E. 92 (life insurance policy found among the intestate's papers, evidence of valid delivery). *Contra*: 1897, Berge v. U. S., 168 U. S. 66, 18 Sup. 4 (possession of papers of grant by a grantee, held not to raise a presumption of delivery by the official having authority to grant).

⁴ 1897, Davis v. Improvement Co., 118 Cal. 45, 50 Pac. 7; 1901, Egan v. Horrigan, 96 Me. 46, 51 Atl. 246. Compare the cases cited *ante*, § 1654 (admissibility of the registry of a deed); the substantive law, and statutory regulations, are here much involved.

So, too, the registration may raise a presumption of *execution generally*; compare the cases cited *ante*, §§ 1661, 1676, with the following: 1898, Anderson v. Outhbert, 103 Ga. 767, 30 S. E. 244; 1898, Flynn v. Sullivan, 91 Mo. 355, 40 Atl. 136.

⁵ 1834, Smith v. Battens, 1 Moo. & R. 341; 1834, Hunt v. Massey, 5 B. & Ad. 902; 1837, Goodtitle v. Milburn, 2 M. & W. 553; 1838, Sinclair v. Baggaley, 4 id. 312 (leading opinion); 1840, Anderson v. Weston, 6 Bing. N. C. 800; (Cal. C. C. P. 1872, § 1963, par. 23 (it is presumed "that a writing is truly dated"); 1898, McFarlane v. Loudon, 99 Wis. 620, 75 N. W. 391. Compare the rule for *indorsements of payment* as statements against interest (*ante*, § 1466).

⁶ 1898, Conley v. Finn, 171 Mass. 70, 50 N. E. 460 (though acknowledged later); 1895, Kendrick v. Deliinger, 117 N. C. 491, 23 S. E. 438; 1878, Smiths v. Shoemaker, 17 Wall. 630, 637 (rule held not applicable to a letter whose admissibility depended on its actual date of delivery).

⁷ 1881, Ames' Cases on Bills & Notes, 11, 641, note 2; 1887, Perley v. Perley, 144 Mass. 104, 10 N. E. 726. The presumption of *consideration* from a seal is of course only a rule of substantive law: 1895, Ames, Specialty Contracts and Equitable Defences, Harvard Law Review, 1X, 49; 1901, Harriman, Contracts, 2d ed., § 142.

⁸ 1897, Gratz v. Land v. R. I. Co., 27 C. C. A. 805, 82 Fed. 381.

specific document produced is also to be evidenced by the antiquity and custody of the document. With certain conditions, this is universally regarded as sufficient evidence for the jury (*ante*, §§ 2137-2146); and the language of presumption is also frequently applied by Courts to the same group of circumstances.¹

§ 2522. *Same*: (4) *Lost Grant; Lost Documents in general*. (a) When a specific document not produced is offered to be proved by copy, the fact of *loss* may be evidenced in various ways, and occasionally the force of a presumption is attributed to some of them (*ante*, § 1196).

(b) When a *title to land* is to be proved, the *execution, contents, and loss* of the appropriate document of grant may be presumed from certain circumstances; the inference resting on a principle of Relevancy already considered (*ante*, §§ 148, 157). Those circumstances are the long-continued *possession* of the land (or an appurtenant right) by a party claiming as owner, the non-claim of possible opponents, and such other varying circumstances of the particular case as increase the probability of an origin of grant for the situation as a whole.¹ The situation is in essence the same as that for which the statutes of limitation have been provided. But these statutes did not wholly obviate the occasion for such a presumption, partly because they were at first limited in the scope of rights barred by them and were extended only by gradual stages, and partly because their originally lengthy periods still left room for a presumption based on a shorter period of possession. For appurtenant rights (such as easements or fisheries), and rights transferable at common law by deed of grant without livery, this presumption had formerly a great vogue; and it remained supplementary to statutes of limitation. But the systematic extension of the principle of acquisition by limitation, the reduction of the required possession to short periods, and (in the United States) the practice of compulsory registration of deeds of conveyance, have left little scope for the presumption. How far it had progressed as a rule of presumption is not always clear; in some opinions it appears as merely a rule of sufficiency of evidence for the jury (*ante*, § 2494), in others it is a genuine presumption (*ante*, § 2490), and in still others it is apparently a rule of substantive law equivalent to a statute of limitation. Its bearings in a given jurisdiction are more or less dependent on the analogies of the local statutes.²

¹ The cases are collected at the place above cited.

² 1818, Johnson, J., in *Howell v. House*, 2 Mill Const. 80, 85 ("It has been shown that a title may be presumed from length of possession alone; and why? Because it is improbable that a man of common sense and prudence would set down upon and improve lands to which he had no title, and more so that he who was the rightful owner would quietly stand by and see such a wrong done to himself").

³ The following cases will illustrate its treatment by different Courts: *Eng.*: 1774, *Eldridge v. Knott*, Cowp. 214, Mansfield, L. C. J.; 1799, *Roe v. Beade*, 8 T. R. 118 (conveyance of a trust estate); 1829, *Doe v. Cooke*, 6 Bing. 174

(surrender of a term); 1867, *Bryant v. Foot*, L. R. 6 Q. B. 161 (customary marriage fee; leading opinions, by Blackburn, J., and Cockburn, C. J.); 1903, *Brocklebank v. Thompson*, 2 Ch. 344, 350; *Can.*: 1879, *Pugsley v. Ring*, 2 Pugs. & B. 303, 316; *U. S.*: 1899, *Gage v. Eddy*, 179 Ill. 492, 53 N. E. 1008; 1830, *Melvin v. Whiting*, 10 Pick. 294 (fishery); 1839, *Valentine v. Piper*, 22 Pick. 85, 93 (shore land; leading opinion by Shaw, C. J.); 1867, *Nichols v. Boston*, 98 Mass. 39, 41 (shore land); 1892, *Claffin v. R. Co.*, 157 *id.* 489, 499, 32 N. E. 659 (easement to cross a railway); 1894, *Brown v. Oldham*, 123 Mo. 621, 630, 27 S. W. 409; 1844, *New Boston v. Dumbarton*, 15 N. H. 201 (town charter); 1879, *State v. Wright*, 41 N. J. L.

§ 2523. **Same:** (5) **Will (Execution and Revocation).** (a) The execution of a will may be evidenced by the testimonial assertion of the attestors, implied from their signatures, even when they themselves cannot be brought to the stand (*ante*, §§ 1511, 1512). This is often spoken of as a presumption, though probably no more than a rule of sufficiency of evidence is intended.¹

(b) The revocation of a will by destruction may be inferred, on a principle of Relevancy already considered (*ante*, § 160), from the fact that it once existed but cannot be found at the testator's death. Whether this circumstance, with or without others, should create a rule of presumption, or of sufficiency of evidence, has been much debated.² Other inferences, or rules of presumption, concerning an implied intention to revoke, are closely connected with the substantive law of revocation.³

§ 2524. **Same:** (6) **Spoliation or Suppression of Documents.** The opponent's spoliation or suppression of evidential facts (*ante*, § 278), and particularly of a document (*ante*, § 291), has always been conceded to be a circumstance against him, and in the case of a document, to be some evidence that its contents are as alleged by the first party. But that a rule of presumption can be predicated is perhaps doubtful.¹

§ 2525. **Same:** (7) **Alteration of Documents.** It used to be sometimes said that an alteration (*i. e.*, by erasure or interlineation), if apparent on the face of an instrument, placed on the offering party the burden of explanation by evidence. It was also (but inconsistently) said by some that the alteration was to be presumed innocent, *i. e.* made before execution, unless particular circumstances of suspicion were apparent. For wills, again, it was sometimes maintained that, by exception, alterations should be presumed to have been made after execution. But the modern tendency is to avoid stating the problem in the form of such rules with exceptions, and, in particular, to abandon the so-called presumption against fraud and in favor of innocence, by which the alteration of a deed is presumed to have been made before execution; and to raise no genuine presumption in that regard (*ante*, § 2485). The

478 (tax exemption); 1875, *Carter v. Tinicum Fishing Co.*, 77 Pa. 310, 315 (fishery); 1818, *Howell v. House*, 2 Mill Const. 80, 85 ("I know of no rule which has been established in this State fixing the minimum"); 1820, *Duncan v. Beard*, 2 N. & McC. 400, 406; 1849, *Stockdale v. Young*, 3 Strobb. 501 (land); 1860, *Marr's Heirs v. Gilliam*, 1 Coldw. 488, 501 (pointing out the distinction between this rule and a statute of limitations); 1893, *Dunn v. Eaton*, 92 Tenn. 743, 753, 23 S. W. 163; 1822, *Ricard v. Williams*, 7 Wheat. 59, 109 (opinion by Story, J.); 1859, *Townsend v. Downer's Adm'r*, 32 Vt. 183, 191, 204 (leading opinion, by Aldis, J.).

¹ The cases are collected at the place above cited.

² The following cases illustrate the different views: 1858, *Brown v. Brown*, 8 E. & B. 876; 1868, *Sprigg v. Sprigg*, L. R. 1 P. & D. 608; 1900, *Allan v. Morrison*, App. Cas. 604; 1901, *Scott v. Maddox*, 113 Ga. 795, 39 S. E. 500; 1886, *Re Page*, 118 Ill. 576, 580, 8 N. E. 852;

1895, *Boyle v. Boyle*, 158 id. 228, 233, 42 N. E. 140; 1903, *Hamilton v. Crowe*, — Mo. —, 75 S. W. 399; 1903, *Williams v. Miles*, — Nebr. —, 94 N. W. 705; 1830, *Betts v. Jackson*, 6 Wend. 173 (leading opinion, by Walworth, C.); 1903, *McElroy v. Phink*, — Tex. —, 76 S. W. 753; and a note to *Re Augur* (1899), 9 Yale Law Journal 259.

³ For the mode of proof of a lost will, see *ante*, §§ 2052, 2106.

⁴ The cases are collected in the places above cited. The following illustrate the use of language of presumption: 1895, *Fox v. Mining Co.*, 108 Cal. 369, 41 Pac. 308 (the method of a trespasser's dealing with ore wrongfully mined was held not to be such as to raise this presumption against him so as to entitle the plaintiff to reckon the value by a particular standard); 1857, *Thompson v. Thompson*, 9 Ind. 323, 331 (presumption not conclusive); 1856, *Hunt v. Collins*, 4 Ia. 56, 62; 1898, *Hay v. Peterson*, 6 Wyo. 419, 45 Pac. 1073 (books of account).

first burden would thus be determined by the pleadings; and the question would usually go to the jury, upon all the evidence, whether the party claiming a specific tenor for the document has proved his case; although the second burden (*ante*, § 2487), *i. e.*, of producing evidence, might be shifted by particular circumstances, under the ruling of the judge as to a sufficiency of evidence or a presumption.¹

¹ The following cases illustrate the rules; the older forms of statement are now seldom found; for the older law, now generally modified or abolished, that any material alteration of an instrument, by any person whatever, after its execution, made the instrument void, see the exhaustive citations in Professor Williston's article, *Discharge of Contracts by Alteration*, 1904, *Harv. L. Rev.*, XVIII, 105; *England*: 1818, *Johnson v. Duke of Marlborough*, 2 Stark. 313 (date of a bill of exchange); 1844-6, *Cooper v. Bockett*, 4 Moore P. C. 419, 449 (will; leading opinion, by Lord Brougham); 1851, *Doe v. Catmore*, 16 Q. B. 745 (deed); 1851, *Doe v. Palmer*, *ib.* 747, 755 (will); 1851, *Simmons v. Rndall*, 1 Sim. N. S. 115 (will); 1860, *Williams v. Ashton*, 1 Johns. & Hem. 115 (will; good opinion by Page-Wood, V. C.); 1868, *Cadge's Goods*, L. R. 1 P. & D. 543 (will); *Canada*: 1874, *Doe v. Daniel*, 15 N. Br. 372 (will); 1893, *Re Lawson*, 25 N. Sc. 454 (will); 1870, *Northwood v. Keating*, 17 Grant U. C. 347, 18 id. 643 (mortgage); 1899, *Graystock v. Barnhart*, 26 Ont. App. 545 (registered deed); *United States*: *Ala.*: 1898, *Ward v. Cheney*, 117 Ala. 238, 22 So. 996 (assignment used by the plaintiff to show title; whether interlineations were apparent and suspicions were sufficiently explained, held a question for the trial Court); *Cal.*: C. C. P. 1872, § 1982 ("The party producing a writing as genuine which has been altered, or appears to have been altered, after its execution, in a part material to the question in dispute, must account for the appearance or alteration. He may show that the alteration was made by another, without his concurrence, or was made by the consent of the parties affected by it, or otherwise properly or innocently made, or that the alteration did not change the meaning or language of the instrument. If he do this, he may give the writing in evidence, but not otherwise"); *Colo.*: C. C. P. 1891, § 357; *Conn.*: 1872, *Hayden v. Goodnow*, 39 Conn. 164 (the party producing does not necessarily account for alterations; each case depends on its own circumstances); *D. C.*: 1894, *Peugh v. Mitchell*, 3 D. C. App. 321 (action to annul a deed for alteration, the material alterations being in a different hand and ink; not presumed made before execution); *Ga.*: 1892, *Bedgood v. McLain*, 89 Ga. 793, 796, 15 S. E. 670 (defendant claiming under sheriff's deed interlined by the sheriff; presumed to exist before execution); 1893, *Westmoreland v. Westmoreland*, 92 id. 233 (deed offered to show color of title; alterations presumed prior to execution, on the facts); 1896, *Winkles v. Gnetter*, 98 id. 472, 25 S. E. 527 (Code § 3835 applied); 1903, *Heard v. Tappan*, 116 id. 930, 43 S. E. 375; *Haw.*: 1890, *Kahai v. Kamai*, 8 Haw. 694; *Ida.*: 1897, *Mulkey v. Long*, 5 Ida. 213, 47 Pac. 949 (held sufficient to show that the alteration in a note had not been made since it came into the offeror's hands); *Ill.*: 1899, *Catlin Coal Co. v. Lloyd*, 180 Ill. 398, 54 N. E. 214 (deed offered in a chain of title; no presumption of date as to time of alterations; the question is one of fact, and the party producing the instrument being called upon to explain; precedents reviewed); 1901, *Merritt v. Boyden*, 191 id. 136, 60 N. E. 907; *Ia.*: 1890, *Hagan v. Merchants' Ins. Co.*, 81 Ia. 321, 46 N. W. 1114 (action on an insurance policy; held that the mere fact of alteration furnished no presumption as to the time of making it or the authority for it, and that the burden of producing evidence that it was made after delivery was on the defendant); 1895, *McGee v. Allison*, 94 id. 527, 63 N. W. 823 (the burden is on the party attacking the instrument); 1903, *Rambousek v. Supreme Council*, 119 id. 263, 93 N. W. 277; *Mass.*: 1840, *Davis v. Jenney*, 1 Metc. 221 (bill of exchange); 1850, *Wilde v. Arnaby*, 6 Cnsh. 314 (contract of guarantee); 1856, *Ely v. Ely*, 6 Gray 439 (mortgage; good opinion by Dewey, J.); *Mich.*: 1873, *Comstock v. Smith*, 26 Mich. 306 (deed; good opinion by Graves, J.); *Mo.*: 1896, *Kelly v. Thuey*, 143 Mo. 422, 45 S. W. 300 (specific performance of an agreement to sell land; burden placed on the plaintiff); *Nebr.*: 1894, *Courcamp v. Weber*, 39 Nebr. 533, 537, 58 N. W. 187 (foreclosure with a note bearing material alterations; plaintiff required to show their authenticity); 1896, *Stough v. Ogden*, 49 id. 291, 68 N. W. 516 (the question is "in the end, one of fact for the jury, upon all of the evidence adduced"; here, an action on a note according to the altered form); 1903, *Brown v. Kennedy*, — id. —, 93 N. W. 1073; *Nev.* Gen. St. 1885, § 3450; *N. H.*: 1840, *Hills v. Barnes*, 11 N. H. 395 (note); *N. J.*: 1871, *Hunt v. Gray*, 35 N. J. L. 227 (the mere fact that a writing of contract shows a change does not of itself create a presumption of alteration after execution); 1802, *Ward v. Wilcox*, 64 N. J. Eq. 303, 51 Atl. 1094 (will; the burden is on the contestant); *N. Y.*: 1884, *Crossman v. Crossman*, 95 N. Y. 145 (will); *Pa.*: 1893, *Nesbitt v. Turner*, 155 Pa. 429, 436, 26 Atl. 750 (action against a woman as bond-surety; the date was altered from time during coverture to time after coverture; the burden placed on the plaintiff to show alteration before execution); *S. D.*: 1897, *Moddie v. Breiland*, 9 S. D. 506, 70 N. W. 637 (after proof of signature, the duty of producing evidence that the alteration was before delivery rests on the maker, and, *semble*, also the burden of persuasion); 1897, *Foley*

§ 2526. *Gifts and Trusts (Wife's Separate Estate, Child's Advancement, Child's Services, etc.)*. The pecuniary transactions between members of a family are sometimes made the subject of presumptions, based on the probable motive and intent. It can hardly be said that these rules are uniform, or are universally recognized. Examples of them are the presumption of a *gift* (instead of a trust) of separate estate handed by a wife to her husband;¹ of an *advancement* (in anticipation of succession after death) in a transfer from a parent to a child;² of a gift, or mere performance of duty, in *services rendered by a child* to a parent;³ of *community-ownership* of property acquired during marriage;⁴ of *intent to defraud creditors* in a transfer to a wife by an insolvent husband;⁵ and of *fraudulent concealment* by a husband in an ante-nuptial agreement *barring dower*.⁶

§ 2527. *Legitimacy*. That a child born of a married woman during wedlock is presumed to be the child of her then husband is uniformly conceded. The only doubt has been whether and how far this presumption is conclusive; *i. e.*, to what extent it is a fixed rule of substantive law defining the legal quality of legitimacy. Here there have been stages of doctrine.¹ At the outset of the law, it appears to have allowed no dispute, except by the fact

Wadsworth Co. v. Solomon, *ib.* 511, 70 N. W. 639 (apparently the same, but putting it that the alteration—here in a contract—is presumed to be made before execution, unless there are circumstances of suspicion; opinion by a different judge); *Tex.*: 1896, *House v. Robertson*, — *Tex.* —, 84 S. W. 640 (alteration in a deed, presumed to be before execution, under Civ. Stats. § 2257); *U. S.*: 1826, *U. S. v. Amedy*, 11 Wheat. 392, 408 (certified copy of an act of incorporation); 1896, *Rosenberg v. Jett*, 72 Fed. 90 (bill to foreclose a mortgage; claim of homestead set up; the burden placed on the defendant to show that the words "and homestead," interlined in the mortgage, were inserted after execution); *Utah*: *Rev. St.* 1898, § 8411; *Va.*: 1902, *Consumers' Ice Co. v. Jennings*, 100 Va. 719, 42 S. E. 879 (contract); *Wash.*: 1893, *Wolfman v. Bell*, 6 Wash. 84, 82 Pac. 1017 (action on a note; no presumption or burden prescribed); 1893, *Yakima N. Bank v. Knipe*, *ib.* 848, 33 Pac. 834 (action on a note bearing an alteration; received, the defendant to show change since execution); 1900, *Blewett v. Bash*, 22 *id.* 536, 61 Pac. 770; *Wis.*: 1896, *Klatt v. Lumber Co.*, 92 Wis. 622, 68 N. W. 791 (the possibility of alteration of a document since original signing does not exclude it; compare § 2134, *ante*); 1897, *Rollins v. Humphrey*, 98 *id.* 66, 73 N. W. 831 (alteration held not suspicious); 1899, *Maldaner v. Smith*, 102 *id.* 30, 78 N. W. 140 (action by the assignee of a mortgage to foreclose; "or order" was interlined in the deed; presumption of innocence applied).

¹ 1893, *Clark v. Patterson*, 158 Mass. 388, 391, 33 N. E. 589 (bonds); 1892, *Bennett v. Bennett*, 87 W. Va. 396, 406, 16 S. E. 638.

² 1892, *Culp v. Wilson*, 133 Ind. 294, 296, 32 N. E. 928 (conveyance); 1894, *Phillips v. Phillips*, 90 Ia. 541, 543, 58 N. W. 879; 1895,

West v. Beck, 95 *id.* 520, 64 N. W. 599 (paying a son's debt); 1897, *Finch v. Garrett*, 102 *id.* 381, 71 N. W. 428 (deed). So, also, in a transfer to a nominal purchaser for a consideration paid by a near relative: *Ames, Cases on Trusts*, 1st ed., 276-286, 293.

³ 1893, *Donahue v. Donahue*, 53 Minn. 560, 55 N. W. 602; 1898, *Klopp v. Martin*, 55 Nebr. 554, 76 N. W. 168; 1892, *Ulrich v. Ulrich*, 136 N. Y. 120, 123, 32 N. E. 606.

⁴ 1896, *Boody's Estate*, 113 Cal. 682, 45 Pac. 859 (with a requirement for clear evidence to countervail).

⁵ 1898, *Stockslager v. M. L. & S. Institution*, 87 Md. 232, 89 Atl. 742.

⁶ 1897, *Hessick v. Hessick*, 169 Ill. 466, 48 N. E. 712 (bill for partition by heirs, making the widow a defendant and alleging an ante-nuptial agreement as barring dower, etc.; held, that on proof by the defendant that the sum accepted was disproportionately small, the presumption of fraudulent concealment is raised, and the husband must show knowledge by the wife of his estate's extent).

The large subject of *resulting trusts*, presumed where a transfer is made without consideration, under certain circumstances (*Ames, Cases on Trusts*, 1st ed., 262, 291), belongs also in this place.

¹ These have been carefully examined, for England, in an exhaustive treatise by Sir H. Nicolas (1836), on *Adulterine Bastardy*; Mr. Hubback has also considered them in his treatise (1840) on *Succession*, part II, c. 5, and Mr. Hargrave, in his *Note* 189 to *Coke* on *Littleton*.

The best opinions on the policy of the — are those of Lord Erskine, in the *Banbury Peerage Case*, *infra* (at pp. 466, 470), and of Martin, J., in *Matthews' Estate*, N. Y., *infra*.

of the husband's absence "beyond the four seas" of England during the appropriate period: but after a gradual relaxation during five centuries the conclusive feature has in English law been almost entirely removed, so that it seems now to occur only when actual intercourse of the husband has been established; *i. e.*, the fact of "non-access" may always be disputed.² In the United States, the Courts have probably not all reduced the rule to this attenuated form.³

§ 2528. *Chastity; Child-bearing.* It is sometimes said that there is a presumption of *chastity*, or of chaste character.¹ But commonly in such cases the result is really determined by the incidence of the first burden of proof (*ante*, § 2485); for example, it falls to a party impeaching a witness' or complainant's character for chastity to prove the unchastity, and it falls to a party alleging the seduction of a woman of chaste character to prove that character.²

There is in the law of real property a rule by which, for the purpose of dealing with estates of remainder and the like, a woman past some limit of age (usually fifty years or more), is regarded as *incapable of bearing children*, or before that age will not be considered as incapable; it is often spoken of as a conclusive presumption; but no fixed age is taken as the standard.³

¹ The following are the leading modern English cases: 1810, *Banbury Peerage Case*, in App. to *LeMarchant's Gardner Peerage Case*, 435, 489; 1825, *Gardner Peerage Case*, *Le Marchant's Rep.* 232; 1827, *Morris v. Davies*, 3 C. & P. 215, 217; 1903, *Gordon v. Gordon*, P. 141 (the passage from *Nicolas* approved, and said "to represent accurately the law").

² Besides the following cases, compare the rules of evidence as to the parentage of a *bastard* (*ante*, §§ 137, 166, 2063); a collection of cases is made in a note to 56 *American Decisions* 451: 1892, *Bullock v. Knox*, 96 Ala. 195, 198, 11 So. 339 (white wife and husband, child a mulatto; legitimacy may be questioned); Cal. C. C. P. 1872, § 1963, par. 31; 1859, *Baker v. Baker*, 13 Cal. 37, 99; 1902, *Mills' Estate*, 187 *id.* 296, 70 Pac. 91; 1833, *Hopkins v. Chung Wa*, 4 Haw. 650; 1889, *Orthwein v. Thomas*, 127 Ill. 554, 562, 21 N. E. 430; 1902, *Bethany Hospital Co. v. Hale*, 64 Kan. 367, 67 Pac. 848; 1895, *Scanlon v. Walsh*, 81 Md. 118, 31 Atl. 498; 1897, *Babeke v. Baer*, 115 Mich. 328, 73 N. W. 242 (action against B. for the seduction of plaintiff, who married B. before the child was born; B.'s admission of his paternity, received); 1839, *Randolph v. Easton*, 23 Pick. 242, 243; 1897, *Matthews' Estate*, 153 N. Y. 443, 47 N. E. 901 (decree of Surrogate's Court as to "children" entitled to share; H. S. having been proved a child, the burden was upon those opposing her interest to show illegitimacy); 1899, *Bell v. Terr.*, 8 Okl. 75, 56 Pac. 853 (non-access must be proved by "distinct, strong, satisfactory, and conclusive evidence"); 1891, *Robb's Estate*, 37 S. C. 19, 33, 16 S. E. 241 (recognition by parents, with other facts, may after lapse of time raise the presumption without specific evidence of marriage); 1902, *Adger*

v. Ackerman, 52 C. C. A. 568, 115 Fed. 124; 1903, *Bnnel v. O'Day*, 125 Fed. 303; 1886, *Pittsford v. Chittenden*, 58 Vt. 49, 52.

In Louisiana, the rule has an independent history: 1895, *McNeely v. McNeely*, 47 La. An. 1321, 17 So. 928 (holding that the provision of Code Arts. 188, 191, allowing the presumption of legitimacy to be contested where the child is born 300 days after separation, merely fixes the extreme period which must elapse before the presumption becomes disputable at all; and for children born later it is essential for the disputability that suit be brought; so that if the parent dies without beginning suit the presumption continues indisputable).

³ 1894, *Bradshaw v. People*, 153 Ill. 156, 38 N. E. 652; 1895, *State v. Banerkerper*, 95 Ia. 562, 34 N. W. 609; 1873, *Peoples v. Brewster*, 27 Mich. 134, 138. *Contra*: 1901, *Harvey v. Ter.*, 11 Okl. 156, 65 Pac. 837.

⁴ Compare the rules of evidence applicable where chastity becomes material (*ante*, §§ 75, 79, 205-213, 924, 2061).

⁵ 1864, *Groves v. Groves*, 9 L. T. R. N. S. 583; 1881, *Re Taylor's Trustees*, 21 *id.* 795 (here fifty-two years, and during twenty-four a widow); 1871, *Re Widdows' Trusts*, L. R. 11 Eq. 405 (a widow of fifty-five years four months, and a spinster of fifty-three years nine months); 1872, *Re Millner's Estate*, L. R. 14 Eq. 245 (a wife of forty-nine years nine months, never having borne children, married twenty-six years, presumed childless by that marriage); 1876, *Maden v. Taylor*, 45 L. J. Ch. 569, 573 (a spinster over sixty); 1881, *Davidson v. Kimpton*, 18 Ch. D. 218, 217 (a spinster of fifty-four years); 1898, *Re Hocking*, 2 Ch. 567; 1901, *Re White*, 1 Ch. 570. 1903, *Ricards v. Safe Deposit & T. Co.*, — 55 Atl. 384 (incapacity of child-bearing,

§ 2529. *Identity of Person (from Name, etc.)*. In regard to the supposed presumption of *identity of person from identity of name*, three things are to be premised. (a) "A concordance in name alone is always some evidence of identity; and it is not correct to say with the books that, besides proof of the facts in relation to the persons named, their identity must be shown, implying that the agreement of name goes for nothing; whereas it is always a considerable step towards that conclusion."¹ (b) In the greater number of cases the ruling is merely that identity of name, with or without other evidence, is or is not sufficient evidence to go to the jury or sufficient to support a verdict, on the general principle of sustaining the duty of producing evidence (*ante*, § 2494). The oddness of the name, the size of the district and length of the time within which the persons are shown to have coexisted, and other circumstances, affect this result differently in different cases. (c) Often a genuine presumption is enforced by the Courts, in the sense that the duty of producing evidence to the contrary is thrown upon the opponent (*ante*, § 2487). But these rulings cannot be said to attach a presumption to a definite and constant set of facts; they apply the presumption upon the circumstances of the particular case.

It is thus necessary, in ascertaining the state of the law in a given jurisdiction, to examine the facts in each case. There is, moreover, some difference in the strictness with which the evidence of identity is treated for different sorts of documents or persons. There was perhaps a greater traditional strictness shown in dealing with the identity of a person named as the signer of an *answer* or *affidavit* in chancery,² or as the object of a *conviction* for

not allowed to be investigated, on the ground that "it would be exceedingly unsafe to permit property-rights to depend upon so precarious a basis"; "the single fact to which the law looks is death"; 1883, *Apgar's Case*, 37 N. J. Eq. 502 (collecting the cases in a note).

¹ 1840, *Hubback, Succession*, 444. This principle of Relevancy has already been considered (*ante*, §§ 411-413); other instances are found under the Hearsay rule (*ante*, §§ 1494, 1791).

² *England*: 1701, *Hurly's Trial*, 14 How. St. Tr. 433 (the deposition of a witness Carty before L. C. J. Pyne was offered, but its authenticity was denied: "Court: Calaghan Carty, pray were you examined before any of the judges as to that matter? Carty: No, my lord, never in my life. Sol.-Gen.: Never in his life. There is no proving it but by my lord chief-justice, and to prove that this is the man; for a man may come in the name of another person and swear, and the man he personates know nothing of the matter. Court: . . . If the person does not own it now, it must be proved upon him"); 1729, *Anon.*, 3 Mod. 116 (perjury; whether the return of commissioners in chancery that the person named made oath is sufficient with other evidence of identity; the Court was divided); 1761, *R. v. Morris*, 1 Leach 3d ed. 60 (evidence of the handwriting of the answer being the defendant's; with proof of the *jurat*, sufficient); 1809, *Salter v. Turner*, 2 Camp. 87 (an answer

in chancery purporting to be signed by the person charged, sufficient); 1812, *Lady Dartmouth v. Roberts*, 16 East, 334, 340 (an answer in chancery in a suit between other parties; Le Blanc, J.: "It seems that no line of distinction is drawn except in criminal proceedings, or in those which are in their nature criminal, as the case of an action for malicious prosecution; in other cases it is sufficient to produce an examined copy of the answer without proving the handwriting of the party"); 1813, *Hodgkinson v. Willis*, 3 Camp. 401 (answer in chancery; "some evidence of the identity" was required, but nothing as to handwriting, etc.); 1817, *Heuvel v. Lyon*, 1 B. & Ald. 185 (Ellenborough, L. C. J., receiving *prima facie* an answer sworn in another suit by one Charles Lyon, alleged to be the present defendant: "It is said that the evidence wants a further link to connect it with the defendant, and that it ought to be shown that the Charles Lyon in the answer is the present litigant. I do not know any way by which that circumstance can be supplied, but by the description in the answer itself, which tallies in almost every particular. Still, however, it may be shewn that he is not the same person. The question then is, whether public convenience requires that the proof should be given by the plaintiff or the defendant; and I rather think that public convenience is in favour of the admissibility of this proof. . . . Such appears to

crime,³ or as a party to a marriage evidenced by a register or certificate.⁴ But where an identity of names is found in *deeds, letters, negotiable instruments, or the like, or in tracing title from ancestors and grantors,*⁵ the Courts

have been the the general practice, except in criminal cases"); 1823, *Studdy v. Sanders*, 2 Dowl. & R. 347 (answer in chancery, offered by copy, the names of the signer and the defendants apparently corresponding; no further proof of identity needed; following *Hennell v. Lyon*); 1824, *Burnand v. Nerot*, 1 C. & P. 578 (an office copy of an answer in chancery rejected, on the trial of an issue in the Common Pleas ordered by the Vice-Chancellor; because the office copy does not prove the identity of the party); *Ireland*: 1847, *Garvin v. Carroll*, 10 Ir. L. R. 323, 830 (affidavit in Chancery by "John Garvin"; the name with other evidence, held sufficient, even when offered by copy); *United States*: 1796, *Ellmore v. Mills*, 1 Hayw. 359 (deposition; John Archelaus Elmore and John Ellmore, presumed the same person).

³ Compare the statutes cited *ante*, § 1270, which sometimes include this point: *England*: 1843, *R. v. Tissington*, 1 Cox Cr. 51 (a certificate of former conviction of one G. L. being offered against the defendant, the circumstance that the defendant was in the jail during the exact term mentioned was held not sufficient); 1858, *R. v. Levy*, 8 id. 73 (identity of the defendant with a person alleged to have been convicted of an offence; identity in all particulars of the magistrate's certificate of conviction of that person and of the warrant of commitment, by the same magistrates, under which the defendant was held, admitted); *United States*: 1882, *People v. Rolfe*, 61 Cal. 540, 543 ("Frank H. Rolfe" shown to be a person formerly convicted as "Frank Rollins"); 1897, *Bayha v. Munford*, 58 Kan. 445, 49 Pac. 601 ("ordinarily" in a record of conviction, identity of name suffices); 1885, *State v. McGuire*, 87 Mo. 642 (former conviction of crime; sameness of name is *prima facie* sufficient); 1896, *Eisert v. Lytle*, 172 Pa. 356, 83 Atl. 572 (the issue being whether a witness had been sent to the penitentiary for a certain offence from a certain county, evidence was received that a person of the same name had been sent for the same offence, that the witness "was missing for about a year" thereafter, and that he was the only one of that name in the region).

⁴ Compare the cases on the admissibility of such documents (*ante*, §§ 1644, 1677) and the rule for proof by eye-witnesses (*ante*, § 2082); *England*: 1718, *Draycott v. Talbot*, 3 Bro. P. C. 564, 567 (register-entries of a marriage being shown, the mere correspondence of names must be followed by other evidence of identity, etc., to show marriage); 1779, *Birt v. Barlow*, 1 Doug. 171 (if a register-entry is used, as being the hearsay testimony of the celebrant, some evidence of identity of the persons named in it and the parties in the cause must be additionally offered; but "whatever is sufficient to satisfy a jury is good evidence of this," as the payment of the bell-ringers by these parties,

their presence at a wedding-dinner, the identity of their handwriting, the woman being thereafter called by the man's name, etc.); 1784, *Hemmings v. Smith*, 4 id. 83 (to show that the woman debauched by the defendant was the plaintiff's wife, the fact that fourteen years before a marriage had been celebrated between the plaintiff and a certain woman, and that she was still living with him as wife five years before, was held sufficient to go to the jury); 1830, *R. v. Drake*, 1 Lew. Cr. C. 116, 125 ("on an indictment for bigamy, proof must be given that the person who the prisoner is alleged to have married was in fact such person"); 1848, *Parke, B.*, in *Sayer v. Glossop*, 2 Exch. 409, 411 ("James Glossop"; name held sufficient); 1878, *R. v. Weaver*, L. R. 2 C. C. R. 85 (child named "Jane Watkins" in a birth-register; the name and other circumstances, sufficient to identify); *United States*: 1831, *Wedgwood's Case*, 8 Greenl. 75 (adultery; besides the certificate of marriage of the person named, other evidence of identity is necessary); 1882, *People v. Broughton*, 49 Mich. 339, 13 N. W. 621 ("possibly not sufficient by itself in a criminal case"); 1886, *Durfee v. Abbott*, 61 id. 471, 475, 28 N. W. 521 (baptism record; other evidence is necessary); 1871, *Morrissey v. Ferry Co.*, 47 Mo. 521, 525 (identity of the plaintiff with a person whose birth-entry was offered; identity must be established); 1875, *State v. Moore*, 61 id. 276, 278 (marriage; sameness of name of the woman married and the woman in court, sufficient); 1838, *State v. Wallace*, 9 N. H. 515 (adultery; other evidence is necessary).

⁵ Compare the principles for authentication of documents (*ante*, §§ 2150, 2156); this question is usually presented in that relation:

ENGLAND: 1800, *Barber v. Holmes*, 8 Esp. 190 (to show J. H. living, the occurrence of a J. H. on the muster-roll of a frigate "proves nothing as to the fact of whether J. H. whose name is there found" was the one in issue); 1813, *Smith v. Fuge*, 3 Camp. 456 (shipping-register purporting to be granted on F.'s oath as owner; rejected, because identity of the oath-taker was not shown); 1814, *Middleton v. Sandford*, 4 id. 84 (the attesting witness knew only that a person calling himself T. S. had signed; held, "some evidence of identity was indispensably necessary"); 1816, *Hughes v. Wilson*, 1 Stark. 179 (entry in a custom-house book of a copy of a bill said to have been made by the plaintiff, not received without evidence to show that it was "made or presented" by him or his agent); 1817, *Nelson v. Whittall*, 1 B. & Ald. 19 (to prove execution, identity of name, with the fact that defendant was present in the room at the time, was held sufficient); 1824, *Bulkeley v. Butler*, 2 B. & C. 434 (to prove the genuineness of an indorsement by "Edward Shanahan" of a bill payable to such a person, evidence that it

are more frequently found enforcing a genuine presumption. Beyond this no

was indorsed by a person calling himself E. S., bringing the bill, and presenting a letter of introduction for E. S. signed by proper persons, was held sufficient to go to the jury; 1833, *Whitlocke v. Musgrove*, 1 Cr. & M. 522 (Bayley, B.: "I quite agree that it is not necessary to prove the handwriting of the defendant; but if you do not prove that, you must prove something else to connect the party sued with the instrument. . . . In most cases you can either show some acknowledgment, or prove that the party from his residence or other circumstance answers the description on the face of the note, or you can establish the identity of the party in some other mode"); 1838, *Corfield v. Parsons*, 1 Cr. & M. 730 (to prove that certain statements were the defendant's, the fact that a clerk went to the plaintiff's residence and had the conversation with a person in a dressing-gown who opened the door, was held not erroneously rejected; evidence being given, in opposition, that the plaintiff was then out of town and that his brother also lived there part of the time and wore a dressing-gown); 1889, *Warren v. Anderson*, 8 Scott 384 ("J. C. Anderson" as acceptor of a bill; evidence that a person calling himself "Sir J. C. A., Bart." had entered his name as "J. C. A." at a banking-house, of a similarity of handwriting, and of the drawing of checks so signed, held sufficient to go to the jury); 1841, *Simpson v. Dinsmore*, 9 M. & W. 47 (to identify an apothecary's license, the fact that the plaintiff was in that business, bearing the same surname and christian name, was held sufficient for the jury); 1841, *Jones v. Jones*, ib. 75 (mere coincidence of the name "Hugh Jones," held not sufficient to charge the defendant as maker of a note, where the name "Hugh Jones" was a common one in the region; *semble*, that the additional coincidence of residence would have sufficed; and that, if the name had not been common in the neighborhood, the coincidence of name alone would have sufficed); 1841, *Green-shields v. Crawford*, ib. 314 (to identify "C. B. Crawford," an acceptor of a bill directed to "Charles Banner Crawford, East India House," the fact of the signature being that of a person of that description, without any further evidence to connect it with the present defendant, was held sufficient); 1842, *Smith v. Henderson*, ib. 798 (action against W. H., a pilot; a man rose in Court who answered to the name of H., and was a pilot on board the ship in question; held sufficient to justify a finding of identity); Parke, B.: "Similarity of name and residence, or similarity of name and trade, will do"; 1843, *Sewall v. Evans*, 4 Q. B. 626, 632 (Lord Denman, L. C. J.: "In cases where no particular circumstance tends to raise a question as to the party being the same, even identity of name is something from which an inference may be drawn. If the name were only John Smith, which is of very frequent occurrence, there might not be much ground for drawing the conclusion"; *Williams, J.*: "That it is a person of the same name is some evidence till another

party is pointed out who might have been the acceptor"); 1844, *R. v. Dalmas*, 1 Cox Cr. C. 96 (conversations between the deceased and one alleged to be the defendant were received, after "a correspondence in dress and in general appearance" had been shown); 1844, *R. v. O'Connell*, ib. 405 (to prove against "C. G. Duffy, late of the Rathmines," an admission in writing of the authorship of a newspaper signed by "C. G. Duffy of the Rathmines and Trinity-street," it was held that "some evidence of identity must be given"; but under St. 6 & 7 Wm. IV, c. 76, § 8, concerning newspaper publishers, the admission was subsequently held receivable without such proof).

CANADA: *Man.*: 1894, *Simpson v. Stewart*, 10 Manit. 176, 181 (grantee and testator); *Ont.*: 1859, *Wilson v. Thorpe*, 18 U. C. Q. B. 443 (affidavit in malicious arrest); 1861, *Nicholson v. Burkholder*, 21 id. 108 (grantor and grantee); 1870, *Brown v. Livingstone*, 29 id. 520 (grantee and ancestor); 1878, *Wallbridge v. Jones*, 33 id. 613 (grantee and ancestor); 1875, *Gallivan v. O'Donnell*, 86 id. 250 (same).

UNITED STATES: *Ark.*: 1899, *Driver v. Lanier*, 66 Ark. 126, 49 S. W. 816 ("Felix R. Lanier," in two actions, presumed the same person); *Cal.*: C. C. P. 1872, § 1963, par. 25 ("identity of person from identity of name" is presumed); 1897, *Lee v. Murphy*, 119 Cal. 364, 51 Pac. 549 (mortgagee and notary, "W. H. Lee," in the same county, presumed the same); 1900, *Woolsey v. Williams*, 128 id. 552, 61 Pac. 670 ("William Frederick Williams"; two persons presumed the same, on the facts); *D. C.*: 1893, *Scott v. Hyde*, 21 D. C. 581, 535 (grantee and ancestor; John Willis, presumed the same, there being no evidence of another person); 1902, *Craudall v. Lynch*, 20 D. C. App. 74, 84 (deeds); *Ga.*: Code 1895, § 5178 ("concordance of name alone" is some evidence of identity); 1883, *Mullery v. Hamilton*, 71 Ga. 720 (identity of a legatee said to have survived the testatrix; sameness of name, his conversation and knowledge of family affairs, etc., held sufficient under the circumstances); 1890, *Swicard v. Hooks*, 85 id. 580, 11 S. E. 863 (deed); *Ill.*: 1864, *Brown v. Metz*, 33 Ill. 339 (identity of name of grantor and succeeding grantee; identity of person presumed); 1884, *Heacock v. Lnbukee*, 108 id. 641 (a plaintiff relying on a title established in a former suit; identity shown by a correspondence of all the other features of the suits except that the name of the plaintiff was "Lubeke" instead of "Luhukee"); *Ind.*: 1883, *Aultman v. Timm*, 93 Ind. 158 (identity of a maker of a note and an intestate whose property the defendants had received; correspondence of name held *prima facie* sufficient); 1896, *Mode v. Beasley*, 143 id. 306, 42 N. E. 727 (the presumption not held to apply where J. S. testified that he had not signed a petition which bore his name, but two or three thousand in all had signed and they were not so classified as to "reduce the probability of any persons of the same name"); *Ia.*: 1889, *Gilman v. Sheets*, 78

general rules or tendencies seem traceable; except that where the two persons

Ia. 499, 502, 43 N. W. 299 (identity of name of grantee and next grantor, *prima facie* sufficient); Ky.: 1808, *Nicholas v. Lansdale*, Litt. Sel. C. 21 (to show the identity of S. N., a plaintiff, said to be dead, the fact of the death of one S. N. who had sailed from Baltimore and died in Madagascar, was held insufficient); 1847, *Cobb v. Haynes*, 5 B. Monr. 187, 198 (William Haynes, defendant and surety on a bond, presumed the same on the facts); 1820, *Cates v. Loftus*, 8 A. K. Marsh. 202 (two land-certificates in the same name; identity presumed); *Mass.*: 1862, *Webber v. Davis*, 5 All. 393, 396 (magistrate's surname with initials of the first names, sufficient); 1899, *United States N. Bank v. Venner*, 172 *Mass.* 449, 52 N. E. 543 ("United States National Bank" and "United States National Bank of New York, N. Y.," sufficiently shown the same); 1899, *Dolan v. M. R. F. Life Ass'n*, 173 id. 197, 53 N. E. 398 (identity of name, with description of person, *prima facie* evidence of identity of person); *Mich.*: 1881, *Campbell v. Wallace*, 46 *Mich.* 320, 9 N. W. 432 (foreign judgment; identity of names sufficient); *Minn.*: 1886, *State v. Sannerud*, 38 *Minn.* 229, 86 N. W. 447 ("Bert Sannerud" and "Bernt Sannerud," in a liquor license, sufficient evidence on the facts); *Mo.*: 1833, *Birch v. Rogers*, 8 *Mo.* 227 (assignment of a note; "Charles E. Rogers" and "C. R. Rogers," some evidence of identity); 1853, *Flournoy v. Warden*, 17 id. 485, 441 (title-deeds of "John Smith"; sameness of names sufficient to go to the jury, and sufficient to create a presumption, *semble*, if no evidence is opposed; the mere fact that there is another person of the same name in the region does not prevent the question from going to the jury); 1853, *Gitt v. Watson*, 18 id. 274, 276 (title-documents; sameness of names puts on the opponent the duty of "showing" that they are not the same); 1885, *Long v. McDow*, 87 id. 197, 202 (grantee and ancestor, "Ira Nash" and "H. San Ari," presumed the same on the facts); *Nebr.*: 1892, *Rupert v. Penner*, 35 *Nebr.* 587, 594, 53 N. W. 598 ("Arch. T. Finn" and "Architald T. Finn," in a deed, presumed the same); *N. H.*: 1849, *Jones v. Parker*, 20 *N. H.* 31 (action on a contract; there were two persons of the name of the promisor; the correspondence of the defendant's name, and other circumstances, held sufficient to "put the burden on the defendant" and sustain a verdict for the plaintiff); 1854, *Mooers v. Bunker*, 29 id. 420, 432 (title; "a jury is not at liberty to presume that a person of even so peculiar a name as Timothy Mooers is the same person as a man of the same name"); *New Jersey*: 1849, *West v. State*, 22 *N. J. L.* 212, 238 (whether a witness' name was forged; testimony that the "C. S." was not the writing of a certain C. S., received, its weight depending on the subsequent evidence of identity); 1899, *Green v. Heritage*, 63 id. 455, 43 *Atl.* 698 (judgment debtor, presumed the same); *New York*: 1816, *Jackson v. Goes*, 13 *John.* 518 (land-patent to "Peter Schultze," said to be the plaintiff

lessor; the sameness of name taken as *prima facie* evidence of identity of person, *semble*; evidence admitted to show that the patent was really given to another than the plaintiff's lessor); 1825, *Jackson v. King*, 5 *Cow.* 237 (land-patent to "William Appel," said to be the ancestor of the plaintiff's lessor; *per Curiam*: "I have never known a case where a plaintiff having the name of a patentee or grantee was required to go farther than the production of his deed or patent"; the defendant having "the burthen of disproving" identity; *semble*, that to show the existence of another person of the same name would lift the defendant's burden of going forward); 1828, *Jackson v. Cody*, 9 id. 140, 148 (land-patentee "William Patterson" and grantor "William Petterson," presumed the same, no other person of the same name and description being shown to exist; so also for "John Blanchard"; but an intimation is made that mere identity of name creates a presumption, which stands till another person of that name is shown not only to have existed but to have been the patentee); 1830, *Jackson v. Christman*, 4 *Wend.* 278, 283 (an obligor of a bond and a subscribing witness, of the same name, not presumed identical); 1838, *Kimball v. Davis*, 19 id. 437, 442 ("Francis Legge," patentee and grantor, presumed the same); 1839, *Cunningham v. Bank*, 21 id. 561, *semble* (here the name was "S. A. Cunningham" in New York City, and the defendant was Samuel A. Cunningham of that place; the lack of other persons of the name must be shown); 1840, *Brown v. Kimball*, 25 id. 259 (same as *Kimball v. Davis*, *supra*, on error from the Supreme Court; judgment reversed, 11 to 9, apparently on the ground that while the sameness of name raises a presumption, yet suspicious circumstances about the documents, or other evidence, may remove the presumption, and that in this case there was not sufficient evidence of identity to sustain the burden of proof); 1858, *Hatcher v. Rocheleau*, 18 *N. Y.* 87, 92 ("Joseph Rocheleau," defendant in the case and in a foreign judgment, presumed the same person, in the absence of evidence of two such persons); *Or.*: *C. C. P.* 1892, § 776, par. 25 (like *Cal. C. C. P.* § 1963, par. 25); *Pa.*: 1845, *Sailor v. Hertzogg*, 2 *Pa. St.* 182 ("Jacob Sailor," said to be the defendant's grantor; *Gibson, C. J.*: "Identity of name is ordinarily, but not always, *prima facie* evidence of personal identity"; and because of the lapse of time, and in spite of the oddness of the name, he required "some preliminary evidence, however small," for going to the jury); 1854, *Balbec v. Donaldson*, 2 *Pa.* 459 ("Mrs. Eliza Braceland," said to be the plaintiff's mother-in-law; case given to the jury with additional evidence, and no rule laid down); 1865, *Philadelphia v. Miller*, 49 *Pa. St.* 440, 448 (evidence for the identity of assessed land); 1868, *Burford v. McCune*, 53 id. 427, 431 ("Patrick O'Neil" and "R. P. O'Neil" as grantee and grantor; the identity held not sufficiently evidenced to go to the jury); 1867, *Lyman v.*

of the same name are *father and son*, the name is commonly presumed to have been used of the father.⁶

The identity of *objects or persons* from clothes, features, marks, and the like, may become the subject of a real presumption, though rarely. What is usually signified is either that the evidence is on the whole sufficient to go to the jury (*ante*, § 2494), or that specific facts are admissible.⁷

§ 2530. Continuity: (1) in general (*Ownership, Possession, Residence, Insanity, etc.*). It is often said that when a person, or object, or relation, or

Philadelphia, 56 Id. 488, 499, 503 (like Philadelphia v. Miller); 1868, Glass v. Gilbert, 58 Id. 266, 290 (same); the question how uncertain a description must be to avoid an assessment is the main one in these preceding three cases); 1871, McConeghy v. Kirk, 68 Id. 200 ("John J. Kirk" as indorser of a note to "J. J. Kirk"; and the correspondence held *prima facie* evidence of identity); 1871, Brotherlins v. Hammond, 69 Id. 128, 133 ("Daniel Kladder" and "Daniel Kritler"; the identity not sufficiently evidenced to go to the jury); 1884, Sitler v. Gehr, 105 Id. 577, 601 ("Conrad Gehr," claimed as identical with the defendant's ancestor in 1789; the rule in Sailor v. Hertzog, *supra*, approved; here the lapse of time was held to require additional evidence before going to the jury); 1895, Mason F. J. Co. v. Paine, 166 Id. 352, 31 Atl. 98 (one uttering an admission must be identified); R. I.: 1852, Kinney v. Flynn, 2 R. I. 319 ("Bridget Flynn," said to be the defendant's wife; mere sameness of name not sufficient to show that the person was unavailable through interest); 1897, Liscomb v. Eldredge, 20 Id. 335, 38 Atl. 1052 ("Harriet Richmond Eldredge," presumed identical with "Harriet R. Eldredge"); U. S.: 1892, Tausig's Ex'r v. Glenn, 2 C. C. A. 314, 51 Fed. 381 (identity of a stock subscriber); Vt.: 1857, Bogue v. Bigelow, 29 Vt. 179, 182 ("Aaron I. Bogue," said to be the plaintiff's ancestor "Aaron Jordan Bogue"; Redfield, C. J.: "In tracing titles . . . it is always regarded as *prima facie* evidence of identity, while in cases involving charges of crime . . . some further proof is required"); 1873, Cross v. Martin, 46 Id. 14, 18 (grantee and grantor, E. G., but living in different States and thirty years apart; "parties in successive deeds constituting a chain of title, of the same name, are presumptively the same person"); Va.: 1847, Pollard v. Lively, 4 Gratt. 73, 76 ("Benjamin Pollard," grantee and ancestor, presumed the same; evidence of the existence of two persons, received in rebuttal); W. Va.: 1897, Sweetland v. Porter, 43 W. Va. 189, 27 S. E. 352 ("John S. Sweetland" and "J. S. Sweetland," presumed the same); Wis.: 1902, Sandberg v. State, 113 Wis. 578, 89 N. W. 505 ("probably neither rule is universal").

* 184v, Stebbing v. Spicer, 8 C. B. 827 (promissory note payable to J. H., and indorsed by J. H. to the plaintiff; plea, that J. H. did not indorse it; there were two persons, father and son, of that name; the indorsement was by the son; upon the question whether the real payee was the father or the son, held that the

defendant could employ the presumption that it was the father, and the plaintiff had the burden of giving evidence that it was the son, but that there was some evidence to go to the jury upon that point); 1878, Graves v. Colwell, 90 Ill. 612, 615 (ejectment by one claiming through T. C. Sr. against one claiming through T. C. Jr., the grantee in the deed being described as T. C.; held, that the presumption gave the plaintiff a *prima facie* case, that the defendant had removed it by counter-evidence, and that the case was properly before the jury, but in their doubt the legal presumption should prevail); 1838, State v. Vitum, 9 N. H. 519 (indictment for adultery with L. W.; the father presumed). Similarly, the following rule has been declared: 1873, Cross v. Martin, 46 Vt. 14, 18 (grantor and grantee of a deed, E. G., and E. G., Jr., presumed to be father and son).

† The following are not all genuinely rulings of presumption: 1858, R. v. Britton, 1 F. & F. 354, Watson, B. (highway robbery; correspondence of boot-impresions, being "the main evidence," held not sufficient); 1853, Campbell v. State, 28 Ala. 44, 43, 68 (that shoes taken from the feet of the horse ridden by the defendant on the morning of the killing "seemed to fit in every particular" the tracks near the place of killing, admitted); 1867, Com. v. Bentley, 97 Mass. 552 (identity of a bottle of liquor sent and a bottle received and testified to; similarity as to size, wrappings, seal, label, and time of sending, held sufficiently shown to authenticate the bottle testified to); 1876, Com. v. Tolliver, 119 Id. 312, 316 (identity of bank bills charged as stolen; partial correspondence with bills found on the defendant, held sufficient to go to the jury); 1883, Com. v. Nefua, 135 Id. 534 (in authenticating a cipher-letter alleged to have been written by the defendant, the fact that his cipher-key fitted it, and that it contained expressions peculiar to the defendant and his situation, were regarded as sufficient); 1889, Com. v. Finnerty, 148 Id. 165, 19 N. E. 215 (authenticating beer-bottles found in a yard as the defendant's; similarity of marks to those of bottles within her building, and absence of liquor in adjacent houses, sufficient); 1895, People v. Cleveland, 107 Mich. 367, 65 N. W. 216 (the condition and doings of one of three robbers, of whom defendant was alleged to be one, after the robbery, admitted as a means of identifying the defendant).

The rules of admissibility of evidence of identity have been already considered (*ante*, §§ 410-416).

state of things, is shown to have existed at a given time, its continuance is presumed. In reality, however, a genuine rule of presumption is seldom found; the rulings usually declare merely that certain facts are admissible,¹ or that they are sufficient evidence for the jury's finding (*ante*, § 2494).²

§ 2531. **Same: (2) Life and Death.** It is not possible to say that there is a genuine presumption of *life*, with a uniform application. The state of the pleadings will show whose duty it is to prove life at a certain time; and upon his showing life at a preceding time, the Court will usually leave it to the jury to say whether he has proved his case, but may sometimes apply a genuine presumption, shifting the duty of producing evidence, upon the circumstances of the particular case.¹

¹ The rulings plainly of this sort are placed under the various topics of Relevancy (*ante*, §§ 51-464).

² The following are instances under different subjects:

Ownership (compare § 382, *ante*): 1894, *Brown v. Castellaw*, 83 Fla. 204, 214, 14 So. 822 (title by tax-deed, presumed to continue two years later); 1898, *Coleman & Burden Co. v. Rice*, 105 Ga. 163, 81 S. E. 424 (title sometime previous to a judgment, presumed to continue); 1901, *State v. Dexter*, 115 Ia. 678, 87 N. W. 417 (personalty; ownership not presumed at an earlier time); 1893, *Lind v. Lind*, 53 Minn. 48, 54 N. W. 934 (ownership of land in 1874, presumed to continue to death in 1883); 1893, *Chapman v. Taylor*, 186 N. Y. 663, 32 N. E. 1063 (ownership of bonds, presumed to continue from 1881).

Possession (compare § 382, *ante*): 1893, *Hollingsworth v. Walker*, 98 Ala. 543, 13 So. 6 (possession of land, presumed to continue during a gap of two years).

Authority (compare § 877, *ante*): 1898, *Hensel v. Maas*, 94 Mich. 563, 563, 54 N. W. 381 (authority as agent to sell land six months before, presumed to continue).

Insanity (compare §§ 233, 1671, *ante*): 1895, *People v. Schmitt*, 106 Cal. 48, 39 Pac. 204 (different phrasings cited); 1892, *Armstrong v. State*, 30 Fla. 170, 204, 11 So. 618 (permanent insanity, presumed to continue); 1894, *Taylor v. Pegram*, 151 Ill. 106, 119, 87 N. E. 837 (similar); 1903, *Kirsher v. Kirsher*, 120 Ia. 837, 94 N. W. 346; 1896, *Rodgers v. Rodgers*, 56 Kan. 483, 43 Pac. 779 (the presumption of insanity from an adjudication for commitment in 1883, held overthrown in 1886 by the other evidence); 1815, *Lessee v. Hoge*, 1 Pet. 183 (general insanity, presumed to continue).

Residence (compare §§ 89, 94, 377, 382, *ante*): 1893, *Botna V. S. Bank v. Silver C. Bank*, 87 Ia. 479, 54 N. W. 472 (residence presumed to continue; here, for nine days); 1872, *Ripley v. Hebron*, 60 Me. 379, 398 (in establishing a continuous residence of a pauper for five years, as legally required, an interval of some weeks' absence appeared; held, that the burden of explaining this absence remained on the party alleging the settlement); 1841, *Kilburn v. Bennett*, 3 Metc. 199 (assumpsit for

taxes; residence before the assessment date being shown, it was the defendant's duty to show a removal before the date arrived); 1893, *Price v. Price*, 156 Pa. 617, 626, 27 Atl. 291 (domicile presumed to continue fifteen years till death); 1877, *Rixford v. Millar*, 49 Vt. 319 (plea of Statute of Limitations; reply, non-residence of defendant; evidence offered of non-residence at the time of origin of the cause of action; the duty held to fall on the defendant to show cessation of non-residence).

Sundry instances (compare § 437, *ante*): 1840, *Scales v. Key*, 11 A. & E. 819, 822 (a custom of election shown to exist in 1689, presumed in law to continue, there being no evidence to the contrary); Cal. C. C. P. 1872, § 1963, par. 82 (it is presumed "that a thing once proved to exist continues as long as is usual with a thing of that nature"); 1863, *Murphy v. Orr*, 32 Ill. 489 (a decree of chancery presumed to continue in force, until shown to be overturned); 1898, *McCraw v. McGraw*, 171 Mass. 146, 80 N. E. 526 (divorce; confirmed habits of intoxication five years before, presumed to continue); 1848, *Mullen v. Pryor*, 12 Mo. 307 (action by an indorsee against an indorser, alleging insolvency of the maker of the note; upon a showing of insolvency at maturity, the presumption of continuance applied).

¹ 1802, *Wilson v. Hodges*, 2 East 313 (death of a debtor before return of the *capias*: Ellenborough, L. C. J., said that "where the issue is upon the life or death of a person once shown to be living, the proof of the fact lies on the party who asserts the death"); 1869, *Phené's Trusts*, L. R. 5 Ch. D. 139 (whether N. P. M., a legatee, had survived the testator, F. P., so as to be entitled to share in the estate; F. P. died on Jan. 5, 1861, and N. P. M. was last heard of in New York on June 16, 1860; held that the burden of proving N. P. M.'s life on Jan. 5, 1861, was on his representative, and was here not unstained); 1867, *Whiting v. Nichol*, 46 Ill. 230 (instructive case; apparently sanctioning a real presumption); 1900, *Chicago & Alton R. Co. v. Keegan*, 185 id. 70, 56 N. E. 1088 (deed by E., of June 15, 1865, under power of attorney from A. dated April 3, 1860; A. presumed to have been alive at the former date); 1844, *Gilleland v. Martin*, 3 McLean, 490 (declaring a real presumption upon proof of life within seven years).

But there is a genuine presumption, of long standing and of universal acceptance, to aid proof of death. It is generally said to arise from the fact of the person's continuous absence from home, for seven years, unheard of by the persons who would naturally have received news from the absentee. The phrasings differ, however; sometimes the absence is stated to be from the jurisdiction; sometimes the element of non-receipt of news is not noticed;² moreover, the practice is not uniform in defining the precise point, or combination of facts, at which the burden of producing evidence shifts to the opponent. But the general presumption is unquestioned.³ The rule of the

² As in some of the statutes *infra*.

³ The early history of the presumption is given in Thayer's Preliminary Treatise, §19. England: 1763, *Rowa v. Hasland*, 1 W. Bl. 404, Lord Mansfield, C. J. (ejectment; to prove a branch of a family to be extinct, evidence was received, as to a person alive sixty years before, that he "has not been heard of for many years"; which would be sufficient "to pnt the opposita party upon proof that he still exists"); 1802, *Bailey v. Hammond*, 7 Vas. Jr. 590 (bequest of money on the death of a brother, who had not been heard of for twenty years; bequest paid over); 1805, *Doe v. Jesson*, 6 East 86, 84 (ejectment; the plaintiff's lessor claimed under a deceased brother; she was required by law to enter within ten years of his death and the removal of her disability; he was last heard from in 1778; the presumption of death applied in 1785; her disability ceased in 1793; thus an ejectment in 1804 was too late; but it was apparently not held necessary for the jury to apply the presumption; the case at most decides that the burden of conviction, not the duty of going forward, was on the lessor; there was "fair ground for the jury to presume" death after seven years from being last heard of, in the absence of later evidence of life); 1821, *Doe v. Deakin*, 4 B. & Ald. 433 (ejectment; T., born in 1759, had been absent from his relatives from 1787 to 1804, when he returned and shortly departed again; since then he had not been seen in the neighborhood; the jury were told that this was "prima facie evidence from which they might presume T.'s death"; the defendant contended "that this was not even prima facie evidence"; *per Curiam*: "The evidence unanswerd was sufficient to found a presumption of T.'s death," approving the seven-year presumption laid down in *Doe v. Jesson*; 1844, *Watson v. England*, 14 Sim. 28 (a young person abroad, not presumed dead after seven years); 1844, *Dowley v. Winfield*, ib. 277 (presumption in a similar case, apparently enforced); 1877, *Prudential Assurance Co. v. Edmonds*, L. R. 2 App. Cas. 487 (presumption applied; the element as to "not being heard from," examined).

United States: Ark. Stats. 1894, § 2903 (absence "for five years successively" raises a presumption); Cal. C. C. P. 1872, § 1963, par. 26 (it is presumed "that a person not heard from in seven years is dead"); 1897, *Posey v. Hanson*, 10 D. C. App. 97, 506; Del. Rev. St. 1893, c. 82, § 6 (on "absence from the State" for

seven years together, and no evident proof be made of his life in any inquest," "he shall be accounted dead"); 1898, *Watson v. Adams*, 108 Ga. 733, 30 S. E. 574; 1867, *Whiting v. Nicholl*, 46 Ill. 230 (dower); 1897, *Hitz v. Algreen*, 170 Id. 60, 48 N. E. 1068 (mere absence is not sufficient; diligent inquiry at the last place of residence and among those likely to hear from him is necessary); 1897, *Hoyt v. Beach*, 104 Ia. 257, 73 N. W. 493; Ky. Stats. 1899, § 1639 (the fact of a resident's leaving the State and not returning for seven successive years, raises a presumption of death; compare id. § 1609); 1900, *Mutual B. L. I. Co. v. Martin*, 108 Ky. 11, 56 S. W. 694 (the seven years dates from the last hearing from the person); 1831, *King v. Fowier*, 11 Pick. 302 (writ of right, one claiming under S. K. procured deeds from one of the six children of S. K., and offered evidence that the other five had not been heard of for over seventy years; the jury were instructed that the plaintiff was "entitled to recover"; held, that "the legal result was such as the jury have found," "especially as there was no evidence to rebut that evidence," on the part of the defendant); 1840, *Loring v. Steineman*, 1 Metc. 204, 211 (administration of an estate); 1881, *Bowditch v. Jordan*, 131 Mass. 321 (a plaintiff proving title through D.; evidence that D. sailed for foreign parts in 1840, and nothing had since been heard of the vessel, "justified and required the inference of her death"); *Miss. Annot. Code* 1892, § 1737; 1896, *Manley v. Patterson*, 73 Miss. 417, 19 So. 236 (rule held not to apply to children of seven years and under who were under the control of adults and had not volition as to their movements); Mo. Rev. St. 1899, §§ 265, 3144; N. Y. C. C. P. 1877, § 841 (remaining without the United States, or absenting himself anywhere, for seven years together, is sufficient); N. D. Rev. C. 1895, § 5701; 1897, *Francis v. Francis*, 180 Pa. 644, 37 Atl. 120 (W. had gone to live in a colony in Patagonia, and was there heard from in 1876, but not since; held, that no absence from his last known domicile was shown, and thus a party claiming that his wife in Pennsylvania in 1884 was single, at the time of making a will, had raised no presumption); S. D. Stats. 1899, § 6543; 1903, *Latham v. Tombs*, — Tex. Civ. App. —, 73 S. W. 1060 (absence of news is essential); 1894, *Scott v. McNeal*, 154 U. S. 34, 41 (here the presumption was not allowed to prevent the overthrow of a probate decree based on it, where the

presumption, however, extends merely to the *fact of death* from and after the end of the period; it is not understood to specify anything further,— for example, the *time of death* within that period,⁶ or the *celibate or childless* condition of the person at the time.⁶

On similar considerations of experience, the *loss of a ship*, in insurance cases or the like, may become the subject of a presumption or a *prima facie* ruling, after a long absence from port without news.⁶ Moreover, there is a distinct presumption of death from *lapse of lifetime*,— not reducible to a fixed period, but exempt from any requirement as to absence from home or lack of news.⁷

supposed deceased afterwards returned alive); 1802, *Fidelity Mutual L. Ass'n v. Mettler*, 185 id. 308, 23 Sup. 692; Va. Code 1887, § 2378 (the departure from the State and failure to return within seven successive years, by a person residing in the State, raises a presumption of death); W. Va. Code 1891, c. 130, § 44 (like the Virginia statute); 1898, *Boggs v. Harper*, 45 W. Va. 564, 31 S. E. 943; 1900, *Wisconsin Trust Co. v. Wisconsin M. & F. I. Co. Bank*, 105 Wis. 464, 81 N. W. 342.

⁶ 1837, *Nepan v. Knight*, 2 M. & W. 694 (ejectment, for property held by long adverse possession, the plaintiff claiming under M. K.; the question being whether the plaintiff's lessor had begun the action, under St. 3 & 4 W. IV, c. 27, within twenty years since his right accrued, *i. e.* since the death of M. K., it was held that the plaintiff had the burden of evidencing this; M. K. having gone to America in 1806 or 1807, and being last heard from by a letter received in May, 1807, and the suit having been begun on Jan. 18, 1834, less than seventeen years later, it was held that there was no presumption that M. K. died not before the end of the seven years, or died at any specific time; and that the plaintiff's burden had therefore not been sustained); 1880, *Corbishley's Trusts*, L. R. 14 Ch. D. 846; 1902, *Re Benjamin*, 1 Ch. 723; 1848, *Doe v. Strong*, 4 U. C. Q. B. 510, 518, 8 id. 291 (good opinions); 1897, *Schanh v. Griffin*, 84 Md. 657, 35 Atl. 443 (property went by S.'s will in remainder to his four children; one of them C., married K., and had a son, who disappeared in 1831, C. dying in 1838; C.'s administrator was sued by the other three children for her share, their inheritance depending on whether her son predeceased her; held, that the burden of showing his predecease rested on the plaintiffs, a part of whose case it was; that the seven years' presumption had not begun to operate; and that, thus there was no aid to be had from it in determining that the son had died at any particular time, so that the duty of producing evidence of survival did not shift to the defendant); 1878, *Davis v. Briggs*, 97 U. S. 628, 634 (leading opinion, by Harlan, J.).

So, also, in an action for death by wrongful act, the burden of showing the death to have been within the statutory period is said to be on the claimant: 1903, *Poff v. N. E. Tel. & Teleg. Co.*, — N. H. —, 55 Atl. 891.

⁶ 1812, *Doe v. Griffin*, 15 East 293 (eject-

ment; the plaintiff's lessor, who claimed through the same collateral ancestor as the defendant, was held to have the burden of proving that the ancestor had died without issue, but was held to have placed upon the defendant the duty of going forward by evidence that the ancestor had never been heard of as married); 1897, *Still v. Hatto*, 48 S. C. 415, 26 S. E. 719 (no presumption that a man, unmarried when last heard from, died childless).

⁶ 1777, *Green v. Brown*, 3 Str. 1199 (insurance; a ship sailing to America in 1739 had never been heard from; the defendant objected "that as captures and seizures were excepted" from the policy, "it lay upon the assured to prove the loss happened in the particular manner declared on," *i. e.* by foundering; but "the Chief Justice said it would be unreasonable to expect certain evidence of such a loss," and left it to the jury); 1809, *Twemlow v. Oswin*, 2 Camp. 85 (insurance; a ship sailing from Liverpool April 14, 1807, to the Gulf of St. Lawrence and thence to Hayti; evidence that she had not been heard from up to March 1, 1809, was admitted, but held not sufficient); 1815, *Watson v. King*, 1 Stark. 121 (trover; a ship carrying M., one of the owners, last seen in a hurricane on March 7, 1814, near Jamaica, sailing from England; several others of the fleet foundered, and this one had never been heard from up to Dec. 14, 1815; Ellenborough, L. C. J., told the jury "it might be assumed that at that time M. was dead; but that it was for their consideration whether he was dead on the 8th of June, 1814," when his share of the ship was sold); 1816, *Honstman v. Thornton*, Holt N. P. 242 (insurance; a ship leaving Havana in August, 1815, bound to Holland or Flanders; up to Easter, 1816, she had not been heard from; Gibbs, C. J., "There is no fixed rule of law upon this subject"; and he left the case to the jury, expressing an opinion that the ship was lost); 1826, *Koster v. Reed*, 6 B. & C. 19 (insurance; a ship sailing from Leghorn to Lisbon in April, 1821; evidence that she never arrived; held, that the fact that she had been rumored of as foundered was equivalent to "never having been heard of," and that in any case there was sufficient evidence to go to the jury).

⁷ 1901, *Young v. Shulenberg*, 165 N. Y. 385, 59 N. E. 135 (a person acknowledging a deed in 1817, presumed dead).

In evidencing the *lack of news*, under the

§ 2532. *Same: Survivorship.* Where two or more persons have perished in the same calamity, there is no presumption of law that either survived the other, or that all perished at the same time.¹ The burden of proving that one survived another will commonly be on any claimant for whom that fact is essential to his own chain of title.² If there is evidence, from the age, sex, or physical condition of the persons who perished, or from the nature of the accident and the manner of death of the parties, which tends to show that some one did in fact survive the others, the whole question is one of fact, to be decided in each case by the jury, according to the incidence of the first burden of proof (*ante*, § 2485); but without any rule of presumption.

But in escaping the artificial rules prescribed by the Continental law, and by a few of our own Codes,³ our Courts have left many difficulties unsolved, and have created new artificialities capable of doing inordinate violence to a testator's intentions. For example, the supposed logic which has sometimes permitted the identical devisees of two co-perishing testators to be, after all, judicially deprived of the estate is as unnecessary in legal principle as it is shocking to good sense;⁴ and a fairer solution for this frequent problem is a present desideratum in the law.⁵

§ 2533. *Seaworthiness.* In actions on insurance policies, the insurer will usually have the first burden of proof (*ante*, § 2485) of the unseaworthiness of the vessel, though the circumstances of the loss may afford *prima facie* evidence (*ante*, § 2494), or even raise a presumption, of the fact of unseaworthiness.¹ Yet there may be issues in which the vessel-owner will have the first burden of proof of seaworthiness.²

above rules, the use of rumors or reports, or their absence, is not a violation of the *Hearsay rule*: 1858, *State v. Wentworth*, 37 N. H. 217 (the fact that on inquiry no one in a certain neighborhood knew of a man whose existence was material); and cases cited *ante*, § 1789; the doubt expressed in *Nehring v. McMurrian*, 1900, 94 Tex. 45, 57 S. W. 948, was unnecessary.

¹ 1860, *Wing v. Angrave*, 8 H. L. C. 183; 1866, *Hartshorn v. Wilkins*, 6 N. Sc. 276; 1902, *Middake v. Balder*, 198 Ill. 590, 64 N. E. 1002 (collecting cases); 1897, *Schanb v. Griffin*, 84 Md. 557, 36 Atl. 448; 1878, *Newell v. Nichols*, 75 N. Y. 78; 1897, *Re Wilbor*, 20 R. I. 126, 87 Atl. 634, 51 L. R. A. 863; 1908, *Young Women's Christian Home v. French*, 187 U. S. 401, 23 Sup. 184.

² The various classes of cases, and the special modifications of principle, have been elaborately treated by Professor C. B. Whittier, in an article which makes further examination of them here unnecessary: "Problems of Survivorship," 1904, *Green Bag*, XVI, 237; the precedents are there fully collected.

³ *E. g.*, Cal. C. C. P. 1872, § 1963, par. 40.

⁴ As in *Wing v. Angrave* and *Newell v. Nichols*, *supra*. The decision in *Young Women's Christian Home v. French*, *supra*, is a com-

mendable instance of a refusal to accept such a result.

⁵ In view of these sinister possibilities of judicial decision, and of the contingencies created by the transmarine voyage annually taken by thousands of families, it may be suggested that the only safe form of will, for a married pair having identical testamentary wishes, must consist in a devise to a trustee, in trust, first, to accumulate the income for six months, next, to transfer the estate to the wife (or husband) if living at the expiration of the six months, and next, if not then appearing to be living, to the desired secondary devisees.

¹ 1878, *Pickup v. Thames Ins. Co.*, L. R. 3 Q. B. D. 594 (insurance policy; a direction to the jury that a speedy return to port would shift the burden of proof by raising a presumption, held improper; "as a matter of reasoning and inference" only, the jury might so conclude); 1900, *Allan v. Morrison*, App. Cas. 362; 1898, *Broadnax v. R. Co.*, 157 Pa. 140, 150, 27 Atl. 412 (the burden of persuasion is on the party affirming unseaworthiness; speedy return to port, etc., raises a presumption thereof).

² 1894, *The Edwin I. Morrison*, 158 U. S. 199, 210, 14 Sup. 823 (action for goods lost, on a warranty of seaworthiness; the burden is on the owner to prove seaworthiness).

§ 2534. **Regularity:** (1) **Performance of Official Duty and Regularity of Proceedings.** The general experience that a rule of official duty, or a requirement of legal conditions, is fulfilled by those upon whom it is incumbent, has given rise occasionally to a presumption of due performance. This presumption is more often mentioned than enforced; and its scope as a real presumption is indefinite and hardly capable of reduction to rules. It may be said that most of the instances of its application are found attended by several conditions; first, that the matter is more or less in the past, and incapable of easily procured evidence; secondly, that it involves a mere formality, or detail of required procedure, in the routine of a litigation or of a public officer's action; next, that it involves to some extent the security of apparently vested rights, so that the presumption will serve to prevent an unwholesome uncertainty; and, finally, that the circumstances of the particular case add some element of probability.¹

The same principle has sometimes been extended to acts which ought to have been done by a *private person* in the course of business;² but this seems unlikely to be common. Furthermore, it has been often extended to include the *truth of an official certificate* or other assertion;³ but although

¹ The following are illustrations: Cal. C. C. P. 1872, § 1963, par. 15; 1893, *American M. Co. v. Hill*, 92 Ga. 297, 18 S. E. 425 (a verdict as the foundation of a judgment, the minutes being lost; regularity presumed); 1840, *Eyman v. People*, 6 Ill. 4, 8 (use and recognition of a highway; presumed duly laid out); 1840, *Nealy v. Brown*, ib. 10, 13 (same); 1875, *Goldie v. McDonald*, 78 Id. 605, 607 (defendant's residence in the county, as affecting service of process, presumed); 1827, *Hathaway v. Clark*, 5 Pick. 490 (notice of adjudication of insanity, not presumed, the record of it being lacking and the papers apparently entire); 1893, *State v. Lord*, 118 Mo. 1, 23 S. W. 764 (regularity of an indictment, presumed); 1894, *State v. Hoyt*, 123 Id. 348, 355, 27 S. W. 382 (correctness of a tax-bill, presumed); 1895, *State v. David*, 131 Id. 380, 33 S. W. 28 (coroner's mode of taking a deposition; regularity presumed); 1896, *Green v. Barker*, 47 Nebr. 934, 66 N. W. 1632 (chairman of a city board of trustees; his duty as to matters preceding a conveyance, presumed done); 1826, *Bishop v. Cone*, 3 N. H. 513, 516 (legality of a town meeting, presumed); 1895, *Fisher v. Kaufman*, 170 Pa. 444, 33 Atl. 137 (correctness of an old survey in a land-office, presumed); 1895, *Altoona v. Bowman*, 171 Id. 307, 33 Atl. 187 (a requirement that municipal ordinances shall not be passed to enactment on the day of introduction or reporting; regularity not presumed); 1896, *Harkrader v. Carroll*, 76 Fed. 474 (proceedings of the land-office in issuing a patent, presumed); 1901, *New River Mineral Co. v. Roanoke C. & C. Co.*, 49 C. C. A. 78, 110 Fed. 343 (that an undated sheriff's return was made within the due period, presumed).

The regularity of a *tax-title* has been a frequent field of controversy under this presumption, depending more or less on the requirements

of the local statute: 1894, *Clarke v. Mead*, 102 Cal. 517, 519, 36 Pac. 862 (tax-deed; presumption made by statutes of regularity of steps in prior proceeding); 1826, *Waldron v. Tuttle*, 3 N. H. 340, 344 ("Very few of those sales have been found to be legal; the presumption is in fact against their validity; . . . in all cases enough of the proceedings should be shown to render it not improbable that the proceedings may have been regular," and this, with possession, may suffice); 1889, *Blackwell, Tax Titles*, 5th ed., §§ 1098, 1140.

² 1802, *Ellenborough, L. C. J.*, in *Williams v. E. I. Co.*, 3 East 199 ("Where any act is required to be done on the one part, so that the party neglecting it would be guilty of a criminal neglect of duty in not having done it, the law presumes the affirmative, and throws the burthen of proving the contrary—that is, in such case, of proving a negative—on the other side"; here, in an action by a ship-owner against a charterer for placing an explosive on board without notice, the burden was placed on the plaintiff to show the defendant's failure to give notice).

³ 1885, *Patterson v. Collier*, 75 Ga. 419, 428 (an executive certificate that a person is not justice of the peace is "conclusive," "without rebutting evidence"); 1898, *Peyton v. Morgan Park*, 172 Ill. 102, 49 N. E. 1002 (the commissioners' certificate of benefit under Rev. St. 1874, c. 24, § 147, raises a presumption); 1896, *Albany Co. S. Bank v. McCarty*, 149 N. Y. 71, 43 N. E. 427 (a certificate of acknowledgment creates a presumption, under C. C. P. § 935, when nothing more is offered, of the truth of the facts stated; when disputed by evidence, the jury is to decide; here the question was whether the deeds were in fact signed or executed; the opinion collects the cases); 1898, *Rogers v. Pell*, 154 Id. 518, 49 N. E. 75 (a certificate of acknowl-

this consideration serves in part to justify for such statements the exception to the Hearsay rule (*ante*, § 1630), it is only occasionally (as in a certificate of acknowledgment) that the force of a real presumption can be expected.

§ 2535. **Same: (2) Appointment and Authority of Officers; Incorporation.** There is a rule of substantive law that for some legal purposes a *de facto* incumbency of a public office suffices; the *de jure* appointment would then not be in issue. But supposing that it is, the rule of evidence, requiring production of documentary originals (*ante*, § 1178), would call for the original document of appointment; unless, under that rule, an exception can be found for them. Such an exception, for reasons already noticed (*ante*, § 1228), is recognized for many classes of cases.¹

Assuming, then, that the *de jure* incumbency of office by a particular person is to be shown, and that the document of appointment need not be produced, there may then come into play a well recognized presumption of incumbency, based on the person's prior *notorious action* as such officer. In strictness, there are here two elements, the course of action and its notoriety;² but the former alone is commonly mentioned. For *public officers*, the scope of the presumption depends more or less on the issue of substantive law involved, because other evidence may be demanded where the title to the office is the essence of the controversy; moreover, the rule of the sufficiency in substantive law of a *de facto* incumbency (above noted) tends to be confused with the present evidential rule of presumption.³ Occasionally the rule is

edgment, on the fact of its venue, goes to the jury "against evidence in rebuttal, whatever it may be"; 1903, *Pine Tree L. Co. v. Fargo*, — N. D. —, 96 N. W. 357 (a city treasurer's credit of assessment-receipts, presumed correct). Compare the cases cited *ante*, §§ 1347-1344 (conclusive documents) and §§ 1630-1684 (admissibility of official documents), where the statutes often declare such a rule for those documents.

¹ 1789, *R. v. Gordon*, 2 Leach 3d ed. 581 (murder of a constable; production of the appointment not needed); 1805, *Kirwan v. Cockburn*, 5 Esp. 233 (appointment in the army; the commission itself should be produced); 1883, *James v. State*, 41 Ark. 451, 453 (road-overseer; production not required); 1881, *Hall v. Bishop*, 78 Ind. 370, 372 (deputy auditor and assessor; production not required); 1899, *State v. Haskins*, 109 Ia. 656, 80 N. W. 1063 (production not required).

² The latter is nearly the same as using a reputation of appointment (*ante*, § 1626); the former rests on a principle of Relevancy (*ante*, § 272).

³ Examples are as follows: *England*: 1791, *Berryman v. Wise*, 4 T. R. 366 (action of elander by an attorney); 1796, *Cross v. Kaye*, 6 id. 663 (attorney as defendant); 1826, *Pearce v. Whale*, 5 B. & C. 38 (attorney suing for services); 1833, *Butler v. Ford*, 1 Cr. & M. 662, 669 (police officers); 1835, *Cannell v. Curtis*, 2 Bing. N. C. 228 (assistant overseer of a parish); 1836, *M'Gahey v. Allstou*, 2 M. & W. 206 (vestry-clerk's

action on a bond); 1845, *Doe v. Young*, 8 Q. B. 63 (commissioners of land-tax; Coleridge, J.: "It is an admitted point that acting in an office is proof of being officer. . . . The inference may be carried upwards as well as downwards"; L. C. J.: "If it was within a reasonable time of the act done, that is sufficient"); 1846, *Doe v. Barnes*, ib. 1037, 1042 (church-wardens and overseers of a parish; Patteson, J.: "The fact [of acting] does not of itself prove any title, but only that the person fills the office"; but Denman, L. C. J., and Williams, J., rather take the view that the course of action indicates a title); *United States*: *Ark.*: 1859, *State v. Strooper*, 20 Ark. 202 (road-overseer indicted); 1866, *Hardage v. Coffman*, 24 id. 256 (trover; plea of taking while army-officer; notorious action as such, sufficient); *Cal. C. C. P.* 1872, § 1963, par. 14; 1903, *Monterey v. Jacks*, 139 Cal. 542, 73 Pac. 436 (city trustees); *Ga.*: 1857, *Allen v. State*, 21 Ga. 217, 219 (constable); Code 1895, § 5168 (an "officer *de facto* may be proved by his acts," without producing his appointment); *Ill.*: 1883, *Golden v. Bressler*, 105 Ill. 419, 428 (trustees of a bank appointed by the Governor); *Ia.*: 1855, *Gonrley v. Hankins*, 2 Ia. 75, 77 (as between third persons, a *de facto* showing suffices); 1870, *Londegan v. Hammer*, 30 id. 508, 515 (justice of the peace); *Kan.*: 1889, *State v. Crowder*, 41 Kan. 101, 112, 21 Pac. 208 (government detective); *La.*: 1847, *Planters' Bank v. Bass*, 2 La. An. 430, 437; *Me.*: 1852, *Hutchings v. Van Bokkelen*, 34 Me. 126, 132 (arrest by a lieutenant

applied to prove a *private authority*,⁴ but usually only in connection with the authentication of documents (*ante*, § 2124). By an extension of the principle the due *incorporation* of a company is often presumed from its course of action as such, together (in some cases) with a notoriety or repute;⁵ and the statutory admissibility of reputation alone (*ante*, § 1625) would probably be deemed also to create the force of a presumption.

It may be added that many instances, in which this presumption might be brought into question, are otherwise disposed of through the rule of *authentication of documents under seal*, presuming the incumbency of the sealing

ant); 1867, *New Portland v. Kingfield*, 55 id. 172, 174 (overseers of the poor, furnishing pauper-supplies); *Mass.*: 1862, *Webber v. Davis*, 5 All. 393, 396 (magistrate); 1871, *Com. v. Kane*, 108 *Mass.* 423 (indictment for assault upon a police officer); 1893, *Com. v. Wright*, 158 id. 149, 157, 33 N. E. 82 (illegal resistance to the police; the person's own testimony to his office, without evidence of public acting; undecided); *Mich.*: 1843, *Scott v. D. Y. M. Society*, 1 Doug. 119, 152 (reputation and acting, sufficient; here, of judges); *Mo.*: 1837, *Hart v. Robinett*, 5 Mo. 11, 16 (constable and deputy; acting is sufficient); 1858, *Eads v. Woodbridge*, 27 id. 251 (district school trustee; acting is sufficient); 1885, *State v. Holcomb*, 86 id. 371, 377 (murder of a policeman; action and recognition are efficient); 1890, *State v. Findley*, 101 id. 217, 222, 14 S. W. 185 (tax-collector; acting is efficient); *N. H.*: 1872, *State v. Roberts*, 52 N. H. 492, 495 (collector of taxes); *N. J.*: 1798, *Gratz v. Wilson*, 6 N. J. L. 419, 420 (judge of the Federal Supreme Court); *N. Y.*: 1830, *Wilcox v. Smith*, 5 *Wend.* 231, 234 (constable; "there must be some color of an election or appointment, or an exercise of the office, and an acquiescence on the part of the public for a length of time which would afford a strong presumption of at least a colorable election or appointment"); 1831, *Ring v. Grout*, 7 id. 841, 844 (repute and conduct; applied to school-trustees; the repute being as to the *de facto* and not the *de jure* exercise of office); 1832, *McCoy v. Curtice*, 9 id. 17 (same); *N. C.*: 1844, *Burke v. Elliott*, 4 *Ired.* 355, 359 (besides the *de facto* exercise, there must be "at least some colorable election and induction into office *ab origine*, or so long an exercise of the office and acquiescence therein of the public authorities as to afford to the individual citizen a presumption strong" of appointment; here, a constable); *Tenn.*: 1809, *State v. Manley*, 1 *Overt.* 438 (acting is sufficient, except where the officer justifies or swears as such); *Tex.*: 1902, *De Lucenay v. State*, — *Tex. Cr.* —, 68 S. W. 796 (county judge); *U. S.*: 1819, *Sawyer v. Steele*, 3 *Wash. C. C.* 464, 468 (officers of a revenue cutter, suing for penalty; acting as such is efficient); 1821, *Jacob v. U. S.*, 1 *Brockenb.* 520, 523 ("acting notoriously" suffices; here, a revenue collector); 1827, *Bank v. Dandridge*, 12 *Wheat.* 64, 70 (cashier of the U. S. Bank, acting and recognized as such, assumed to be properly appointed); 1830, *Ronkendorff v. Taylor*, 4 *Pet.* 349, 359 (assessors; action under

authority is sufficient); *Vt.*: 1827, *Adams v. Jackson*, 2 *Aik.* 145 (constable); 1856, *State v. Abbey*, 29 *Vt.* 60, 64 (justice performing a marriage); 1862, *Briggs v. Taylor*, 35 id. 57, 67 (deputy sheriff); 1898, *State v. Taylor*, — id. —, 39 *Atl.* 447 (constable making an arrest).

⁴ 1837, *Campbell v. Bank*, 2 *Ill.* 423 (authority of an attorney to give a supersedeas bond); 1871, *Druse v. Wheeler*, 22 *Mich.* 439, 444 (trustees of a church, in an action for trespass). *Contra*: 1853, *Bryan v. Walton*, 14 *Ga.* 185, 192 (not applicable to a private trust, *e. g.* a guardian); 1857, *Gilbert v. Boyd*, 25 *Mo.* 27, *semble* (private trustees; rule not applicable).

The following ruling perhaps belongs here: 1898, *Baxter v. Camp*, 71 *Conn.* 245, 41 *Atl.* 803 (whether the defendant's cancellation of his signature to a contract was authorized; his admission of the cancellation, held not to put on him the duty of producing evidence of authority).

⁵ Compare the cases on *judicial notice* of charters (*post*, § 2575); *Del.*: *Rev. St.* 1893, c. 107, § 12 (bank's incorporation, provable in criminal proceedings by reputation or by the issuance of notes as a bank); *Ill.*: 1858, *President, etc. of Mendota v. Thompson*, 20 *Ill.* 197 (here a peculiarly strict rule; the production of the charter, and proof of acts done under and in conformity with it, suffices); 1884, *Louisville N. A. & C. R. Co. v. Shires*, 108 id. 617, 625 (similar); *Rev. St.* 1874, c. 38, § 486, *St.* 1889, June 3 (user is to be *prima facie* evidence of corporate existence, in criminal prosecutions); *Mass.*: 1876, *Merchants' National Bank v. Gendon Co.*, 120 *Mass.* 97 (banking corporation, in an action on a note); *N. H.*: *Pub. St.* 1891, c. 274, § 7 (offences involving counterfeit bank-notes; currency of the notes, "or other proof," is sufficient to show the bank's establishment); *Tenn.*: 1900, *State v. Missio*, 105 *Tenn.* 218, 58 S. W. 216 (larceny; example of the doctrine of the sufficiency in substantive law of a *de facto* corporation); *U. S.*: 1827, *Bank of U. S. v. Dandridge*, 12 *Wheat.* 64, 71, per *Story, J.*; *Vt.*: 1834, *Barnes v. District*, 6 *Vt.* 388, 393 (organization of a school district, proved by action as such and reputation); *Wash.*: 1893, *Yakima Nat'l Bank v. Knipe*, 6 *Wash.* 348, 350, 33 *Pac.* 884 (national bank).

The incumbency of a *corporate officer* will sometimes be noticed: 1870, *State v. Cleaveland*, 6 *Nov.* 181, 185 (forgery); 1827, *Bank of U. S. v. Dandridge*, 12 *Wheat.* 64, 70, per *Story, J.*

officer (*ante*, §§ 2161-2169), and by the doctrine of *judicial notice of public officers* (*post*, § 2576).³

§ 2536. *Similarity of Foreign Law.* Whether a foreign rule of law is to be adopted as applicable to any part of the litigation before the Court, depends upon principles of substantive law. Supposing the foreign rule to control, then it is to be noted, with reference to ascertaining the terms of the foreign rule, that the Court does not know it judicially,¹ and that it must therefore be proved like any *factum probandum*,² and that in aid of such proof a presumption may within certain limits be resorted to. (1) If it is the law of a State possessing the English common law as the foundation of its system, in particular, *one of the United States*, it is generally said to be presumed to be the same as that of the forum;³ even if it involves the existence of a statutory enactment, the same rule is often applied,⁴ though many Courts draw a distinction here and confine the presumption to the common or judicially-declared law.⁵ (2) If the *foreign State* is not one whose system is

³ For the rule of presumption as to the incumbency of the *celebrant of a marriage*, see *ante*, § 2505; the question is complicated by two additional ones, namely, whether a *de facto* clergyman sufficed at common law, and whether the opponent by his conduct has admitted the legality of the celebrant's appointment.

¹ *Post*, § 2573.

² Whether to the Court or to the jury is another question (*post*, § 2553).

³ *Ga.*: 1895, *Pattillo v. Alexander*, 96 *Ga.* 60, 22 *S. E.* 646 ("as to such matters concerning which there is no such recognized variance . . . as will afford a basis for judicial cognizance of such difference"; here the nature of an indorser's contract); *Id.*: 1896, *Goodwin v. Assurance Soc.*, 97 *Id.* 226, 66 *N. W.* 157; *Nebr.*: 1894, *Fitzgerald v. F. & M. C. Co.*, 41 *Nebr.* 374, 472 (rate of interest); 1897, *East Omaha St. R. Co. v. Godola*, 50 *id.* 906, 70 *N. W.* 491; 1902, *People's Building L. & S. Ass'n v. Backus*, — *id.* —, 89 *N. W.* 315 (usury); 1903, *Staunchfield v. Jutter*, — *id.* —, 96 *N. W.* 642 (waste by mortgagee of property); *Pa.*: 1896, *Musser v. Stanffer*, 178 *Pa.* 99, 35 *Atl.* 709; *S. D.*: 1897, *Morris v. Hubbard*, 10 *S. D.* 259, 72 *N. W.* 894; *Tex.*: 1895, *Tempel v. Hunter*, 89 *Tex.* 69, 33 *S. W.* 222.

Sometimes the rule is applied even to the law of Louisiana: 1868, *Simma v. Express Co.*, 38 *Ga.* 129, 132.

⁴ *Cal.*: 1895, *Cavallaro v. R. Co.*, 110 *Cal.* 348, 42 *Pac.* 918; *Ga.*: 1903, *Wells v. Greas*, — *Ga.* —, 45 *S. E.* 418 (warranty of a chattel's quality; the sale being made in Wisconsin, and the Georgia Code sanctioning an implied warranty, it was held that, even supposing that the common law did not imply such a warranty, yet "the legal presumption is that the *lex loci* is the same as our own"); *Id.*: 1903, *Barringer v. Ryder*, 119 *Id.* 121, 98 *N. W.* 56 (dower rule); *Kan.*: 1901, *Woolcott v. Case*, 63 *Kan.* 35, 64 *Pac.* 965; 1903, *Poll v. Hicks*, 67 *id.* 191, 72 *Pac.* 847 (Ohio judgment; Ohio statute presumed the same, as to a supersedeas bond);

1903, *Heim B. Co. v. Gimber*, *ib.* 834, 72 *Pac.* 859 (contributory negligence, while injured in Missouri; neither decision nor statute of Missouri judicially noticed, *i. e.* they were presumed to be the same); *Mo.*: 1898, *Burgess v. Tel. Co.*, — *Mo.* —, 46 *S. W.* 794; *Nebr.*: 1893, *Scroggin v. McClelland*, 37 *Nebr.* 644, 646, 56 *N. W.* 208 (period of limitation); 1899, *Fisher v. Donovan*, 57 *id.* 361, 77 *N. W.* 778 (law of beneficiary corporations); *Pa.*: 1903, *Adams Paper Co. v. Cassard*, 206 *Pa.* 179, 55 *Atl.* 949 (contract of a wife made in New York; the contract being void by statute if made in Pennsylvania, "the Court will presume the wife's disability is the same in New York as here"); *Wis.*: 1903, *Second Nat'l Bank v. Herman and Smith*, 113 *Wis.* 18, 94 *N. W.* 664 (sufficiency of notice of dishonor).

The apparent ruling in New Jersey (1902, *Coler v. Tacoma R. Co.*, 64 *N. J. Eq.* 117, 53 *Atl.* 680; 1903, *Dittman v. Distilling Co.*, *ib.* 537, 54 *Atl.* 570) that a statute of another State will be presumed the same is really a ruling that a corporation chartered in one State may exercise its powers in another State unless the other State expressly prohibits it, and hence the burden of proving this exceptional prohibition is on the party who would profit by it.

⁵ *Ala.*: 1897, *Louisville & N. R. Co. v. Williams*, 113 *Ala.* 403, 20 *So.* 938; 1899, *Birmingham Waterworks Co. v. Hume*, 121 *id.* 168, 25 *So.* 806; *Ark.*: 1893, *Brown v. Wright*, 58 *Ark.* 20, 22 *S. W.* 1022 (but the unwritten law is not presumed to be the same where the common law of England was not the foundation of jurisprudence, as in Texas); *Ga.*: 1898, *Pattillo v. Alexander*, 96 *Ga.* 60, 30 *S. E.* 644; *Ill.*: 1893, *Miller v. Wilson*, 146 *Ill.* 523, 531, 34 *N. E.* 1111 (statute of frauds, not presumed); 1899, *Schlee v. Guckenheimer*, 179 *id.* 593, 54 *N. E.* 302 (assumpsit on contract made in Ohio, but legal in Illinois; presumed valid as at common law in Ohio); *La.*: 1895, *Roehl v. Porteous*, 47 *La. An.* 1582, 18 *So.* 545; *Mass.*: 1894, *Kelley v. Kelley*, 161 *Mass.* 111, 112, 36 *N. E.*

founded on the common law the presumption will probably not be made, unless the principle involved is one of the law merchant common to civilized countries.⁵ It has been suggested that in reality there is no presumption, and that the true process is merely that of refusing to recognize a presumption that the foreign State has a different law;⁷ and no doubt this will sufficiently describe the situation in many cases; but the ordinary mode of stating the question seems correct enough in most instances. The proper phrasing depends upon the state of the burden of proof in the case in hand; though the doctrine of judicial notice of law (*post*, § 2573) tends to be here confused.

§ 2537. **Contracts.** In evidencing the issues of fact arising under a contract right or liability, the first burden of proof (*ante*, § 2485) is almost always determined by the rules of pleading, or is directly deducible therefrom; the chief class of questions here, the *performance of a condition*, is included plainly, in common law tradition, within the sphere of pleading;¹ though in more recent times, under looser methods of procedure, the relaxation of boundaries between affirmative and negative pleas has tended to obscure the old landmarks of discussion. So, too, under the second burden of proof (*ante*, §§ 2487, 2494), so far as there are rules of *prima facie* sufficiency or of presumption, relieving or shifting the duty of producing evidence, they seldom concern facts peculiar to the domain of contracts alone; and any of the preceding presumptions may become applicable.²

§ 2538. **Statute of Limitations.** The first burden of proof (*ante*, § 2485), affecting the loss of a right by limitation, was at common law usually placed upon the plaintiff, *i. e.* to show that the period of limitation had not elapsed

837 (divorce jurisdiction); *Minn.*: 1898, *Par-doe v. Merritt*, 75 *Minn.* 12, 77 *N. W.* 552; *N. Y.*: 1894, *Vanderpoel v. Gorman*, 140 *N. Y.* 563, 568, 35 *N. E.* 932 (assignment by corporation); 1898, *First National Bank v. Broadway N. Bank*, 156 *id.* 459, 51 *N. E.* 398 (statutory change in another State not presumed); *S. D.*: 1898, *Meur v. R. Co.*, 11 *S. D.* 94, 75 *N. W.* 823; *Tex.*: 1899, *Blethen v. Bonner*, 93 *Tex.* 141, 53 *S. W.* 1016 (*semble*); *Vt.*: 1897, *State v. Shattuck*, 69 *Vt.* 403, 38 *Atl.* 81.

⁵ Compare with the following some of the cases cited *supra*, notes 3-5, on the law of Texas and Louisiana: 1899, *Aslanian v. Dostmian*, 174 *Mass.* 328, 54 *N. E.* 845 (common law merchant, if it applies in Turkey, must be shown to do so, by the party wishing to prove it); 1901, *Mexican C. R. Co. v. Glover*, 46 *C. C. A.* 334, 107 *Fed.* 356 (Mexican law as to employers' liability, presumed the same as that of Texas). The presumption of *continuance* (*ante*, § 2530) is sometimes here invoked: 1880, *Hynes v. McDermott*, 82 *N. Y.* 43, 57 (whether the law of France, as proved for 1862, would be presumed to continue until 1871, not decided).

⁷ 1893, *Corson, P. J.*, in *Meur v. R. Co.*, 11 *S. D.* 94, 75 *N. W.* 823. Compare Story, *Conflict of Laws*, 8th ed., 1883, § 637, note by Professor Bigelow.

² The following are examples of the com-

moner problems of this sort: *Warranties or conditions in an insurance policy*: 1902, *Hennessey v. Ins. Co.*, 74 *Conn.* 699, 52 *Atl.* 490; 1903, *Supreme Text v. Stensland*, 206 *Ill.* 124, 68 *N. E.* 1098 (life); 1896, *Penn. M. L. Ins. Co. v. M. S. B. & T. Co.*, 19 *C. C. A.* 286, 72 *Fed.* 418, 441 (the burden is on the insurer to show materiality and fraudulent intent of a false representation; nor does knowledge of the falsity of the same representation in another policy raise a presumption as to knowledge on this occasion); *Exemptions in a bailee's contract*: *ante*, § 2508; *Reservations in a deed*: 1897, *Harman v. Stearns*, 95 *Va.* 58, 27 *S. E.* 601 (deed with reservations; the claimant must prove that the land claimed is not within the reservations).

² The following are some of the rare instances: *Shipper's assent to the terms of a bill of lading received*: 1896, *Chicago & N. W. R. Co. v. Simon*, 160 *Ill.* 648, 43 *N. E.* 596 (the carrier must show that limitations of his common-law liability are brought to the shipper's notice); 1866, *Boorman v. Express Co.*, 21 *Wis.* 152, 158 (delivery to the shipper raises a presumption of assent); *Partnership books*: 1897, *Wilson v. Potter*, — *Ky.* —, 42 *S. W.* 836 (partnership books are presumed correct; and in attacking them the specific items must be pointed out beforehand).

between the accrual of his right and the institution of his suit;¹ this seems to have been due to the peculiar wording of the earliest statutes, whose analogies were afterwards repeated. But the more natural and just view is to treat the fact as one of defeasance, like a release, and thus to place on the opponent the burden of establishing it; this is the result accepted in probably most jurisdictions to-day, either by statute² or at common law;³ in any event, it is in strictness a question of the law of pleading, not of evidence. Where the plaintiff's declaration exhibits in itself the lapse of the barring period, a further question arises (not necessarily dependent on the rule for burden of proof) as to the mode of taking advantage of this admission; in some cases a demurrer, or its equivalent, may suffice;⁴ in a jurisdiction where the burden is on the defendant, it would be proper to raise thereby a presumption in his favor, shifting to the plaintiff the duty of producing evidence of some exception;⁵ though here again the rules of pleading should furnish the proper mode of determination.

§ 2539. **Malicious Prosecution.** In an action for malicious prosecution, the plaintiff is anomalously required to plead and to prove facts which are otherwise regarded as matters of excuse or privilege, *i. e.* the termination of the prior proceeding in his favor, the lack of probable cause for it, and the malice;¹ this being prescribed for him by the rules of pleading. In the course of sustaining this first burden (*ante*, § 2485), he may sometimes avail himself of rules of presumption or *prima facie* sufficiency (*ante*, §§ 2487, 2497) or be met by counter-presumptions for the defendant; for example, by a rule that the magistrate's discharge,² or the suffering of a nonsuit,³ is *prima facie* evidence, or raises a presumption, of lack of probable cause, or that the defendant's receipt of advice from counsel is sufficient evidence of probable cause. But in these and other instances the rule is frequently intended to be one of substantive law, *i. e.* that the fact in question is or is not *per se* probable cause; and the details of substantive law thus become inextricably mingled with the rules of presumption.

§ 2540. **Sundry Burdens and Presumptions.** In sundry multifarious cases, more or less casual, rules of presumption have been recognized;¹ and experi-

¹ 1817, *Hurst v. Parker*, 1 B. & Ald. 92 (trespass to a mine); 1837, *Nepean v. Knight*, 2 M. & W. 894 ("the onus is also cast on the lessor of the plaintiff of showing that he has commenced his action within twenty years after his right of entry accrued"); 1897, *Leigh v. Evans*, 64 Ark. 26, 41 S. W. 427 (administrator's account); 1897, *Graham v. O'Bryan*, 120 N. C. 463, 27 S. E. 122.

² Cal. C. P. 1872, § 458; 1896, *Thomas v. Glendinning*, 13 Utah 47, 44 Pac. 652 (under Comp. L. 1888, § 3244).

³ 1895, *Goodell's Ex'rs v. Gibbons*, 91 Va. 608, 22 S. E. 504; Wood on Limitations, 1901, 3d ed., by Gould, § 7.

⁴ 1879, *Hutchinson v. Hutchinson*, 34 Ark. 164 (provided also the facts in the complaint negative any ground of avoidance); 1876, *People v. Herr*, 81 Ill. 125 (but not in an action on

a penal statute); 1895, *Fulton v. Northern Ill. College*, 158 id. 333, 336, 42 N. E. 138; 1879, *Lewis v. Alexander*, 51 Tex. 578, 588.

⁵ 1879, *Hines v. Potts*, 56 Miss. 346, 352; 1895, *Gross v. Disney*, 95 Tenn. 592, 32 S. W. 632; Wood on Limitations, *ubi supra*.

¹ 1883, *Abrath v. Northeastern R. Co.*, L. R. 11 Q. B. D. 440; 1858, *Barron v. Mason*, 31 Vt. 189 (leading opinion, by Redfield, C. J.).

² *Contra*: 1860, *Israel v. Brooks*, 23 Ill. 526 [575]; *accord*: 1893, *Barhight v. Tammany*, 158 Pa. 545, 28 Atl. 135.

³ 1902, *Cohn v. Sidel*, 71 N. H. 558, 53 Atl. 800 (collecting the cases *pro* and *con*).

⁴ The following are illustrations: 1897, *Kansas City, F. S. & M. R. Co. v. Becker*, 63 Ark. 477, 39 S. W. 358 (a common employment of plaintiff and the defendant's servant having been shown, a presumption arises that they were fel-

once will doubtless and justly continue to develop new ones. The various burdens of proof of the first class fall properly within the domain of the rules of pleading (*ante*, § 2486).

low-servants); 1895, *Levy v. Chicago N. Bank*, 158 Ill. 88, 42 N. E. 129 (when things are done on the same day, they are presumed to have been done at the same time); 1897, *Crane v. People*, 168 id. 395, 48 N. E. 54 (Rev. St. c. 38, § 12, relating to adultery, applied); 1896, *Mutual Life Ins. Co. v. Wiswell*, 56 Kan. 765, 44 Pac. 996 (the taking of morphine by the insured's own hand does not create a presumption of suicide, and the burden of proof to show suicide remains on the insurer); 1848, *Brown v. Burnham*, 28 Me. 38 (procedure in taking a deposition); 1839, *Randolph v. Easton*, 23 Pick. 242 (a pauper woman's settlement in E. being shown, the defendants showed a marriage; held, that the burden was still upon them to show that the husband had a settlement elsewhere than at E., and not on the plaintiffs to show that he was

settled at E.); 1896, *State v. Mitchell*, 119 N. C. 784, 25 S. E. 783; *State v. Rogers*, ib. 793, 26 S. E. 142 (the sworn examination of a bastard's mother raises a presumption); *Cook v. Quirkin*, ib. 13, 25 S. E. 715 (payment admitted by payee; application of it to other lawful debts alleged in defence; the duty to produce evidence is on the payee); 1897, *Foster v. Crawford*, 80 Fed. 961 (levy of execution on sufficient assets raises a presumption of satisfaction); 1901, *U. S. v. Chun Hoy*, 50 C. C. A. 57, 111 Fed. 899 (under St. May 5, 1892, § 3, a Chinese person has the burden of showing his right to remain in the United States); 1895, *Witz v. Fite*, 91 Va. 446, 23 S. E. 171 (where a higher security is given for the same debt, there is a presumption of merger).

BOOK III: TO WHOM EVIDENCE MUST BE PRESENTED (LAW AND FACT; JUDGE AND JURY).¹

CHAPTER LXXXVIII.

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| § 2549. Functions of Judge and Jury; General Principles. | § 2555. Facts Judicially noticed; Trial by Inspection; <i>Nul Tiel</i> Record. |
| § 2550. Admissibility of Evidence. | § 2556. Construction of Documents. |
| § 2551. Sufficiency of Evidence. | § 2557. Criminal Intent. |
| § 2552. Negligence. | § 2558. Foreign Law. |
| § 2553. Reasonableness. | § 2559. Local Law. |
| § 2554. Same: Malicious Prosecution. | |

§ 2549. **Functions of Judge and Jury; General Principles.** As a part of the larger procedure of jury trial, the question arises, To whom must evidence be presented for persuasion? To the judge, or to the jury? Before examining the answer to this question, certain principles, superficially related, must be discriminated. (a) *The judge's control over the burden of proof.* As a part of the rules regulating the burden of proof, the party on whom rests for the time being the duty of coming forward with evidence may be required to offer not merely any evidence whatever, but a sufficient amount to be worth considering, before he is regarded as satisfying this rule; in other words, he cannot go to the jury unless his evidence is sufficient, by this test; and it is the judge that applies the test. In this sense, then, the judge may be called upon to rule whether the evidence is sufficient, *i. e.* sufficient to go to the jury; if it is, they then solely determine whether it is sufficient, *i. e.* to convince them. This has been already examined (*ante*, §§ 2487, 2494). (b) *The judge's discretion*, or final determination of a question either of fact or of law (*ante*, § 16). The ruling of a trial Court on preliminary questions of fact relating to admissibility is often held to be not subject to review, *i. e.* the trial Court is said to have "discretion"; the instances have been mentioned under the various heads of evidence. (c) *The judge's application of a rule defining the legal consequences of a fact.* So far as the substantive law gives certain facts *per se* a legal consequence (as when it makes, for example, the consultation of counsel *per se* sufficient for good faith, in an action for malicious prosecution), the judge applies the rule, and the case is in this respect beyond the control of the jury. This principle becomes especially important in issues of negligence (*post*, § 2552). (d) Finally, the present subject, *i. e.* the respective functions of judge and jury, in the ultimate decision of the different issues that arise; upon this apportionment of function depends the question, To whom is the evidence to be regarded as offered by the parties?

¹ EXPLANATORY NOTE. The explanations made *ante*, § 2499, note 1, apply to this Chapter also.

Taking up the last question, then, we find it usually said that *questions of fact are for the jury*; or in the Latin phrase employed by Coke,² *Ad questionem facti non respondent iudices, ad questionem juris non respondent juratores*. But this cannot be taken as a trustworthy guide to the solution of any particular controversy on the subject:

1898, Professor James Bradley Thayer, Preliminary Treatise on Evidence, 185, 202: "Courts pass upon a vast number of questions of fact that do not get on the record or form any part of the issue. Courts existed before juries; juries came in to perform only their own special office; and the Courts have always continued to retain a multitude of functions which they exercised before ever juries were heard of, in ascertaining whether disputed things be true. In other words, there is not, and never was, any such thing in jury trials as an allotment of all questions of fact to the jury. The jury simply decides some questions of fact. . . . The allotment to the jury of matters of fact, even in the strict sense of fact which is in issue, is not exact. The judges have always answered a multitude of questions of ultimate fact, or facts which form part of the issue."³

It is therefore of little service to seek for guidance as to the limits of these questions by defining "law" and "fact"; the inquiry is rather as to the kinds of questions of fact which are to be determined by the judge. Moreover, this inquiry in effect concerns the respective division of functions between judge and jury, — a larger subject, and one not so much a part of the law of evidence as of the law of trial-procedure in general; and the matter is thus complicated by other inquiries as to the general powers of the judge in supervising and controlling the jury, — inquiries which must be distinguished from the specific one whether the evidence on a certain point is to be addressed to the judge or to the jury as the functionary immediately concerned with its determination. It is here possible only to indicate the trend of some of the main subjects of controversy or difficulty.

§ 2550. **Admissibility of Evidence.** The admissibility of a given piece of evidence is for the judge to determine. This general principle is not disputed; its application to the various kinds of evidence — qualifications of witnesses, absence of a hearsay deponent, voluntariness of a confession, condition of a dying declarant, and so on — has already been considered under the various heads of evidence. It follows that, so far as the admissibility in law depends on some incidental question of fact — the absence of a deponent from the jurisdiction, the use of threats to obtain a confession, the sanity of a witness, and the like — this also is for the judge to determine, before he admits the evidence to the jury.¹ This principle, one of the foundation-stones of our

² 1613-14, *Isaack v. Clark*, Rolle, I, 132, 2 Bnlstr. 314.

³ On the whole subject of this chapter, the reader should consult the masterly historical and analytical survey by Professor Thayer, in his Preliminary Treatise, c. 5, pp. 183-262; or his *Law and Fact in Jury Trials*, Harvard Law Review, IV, 147.

¹ 1843, *Bartlett v. Smith*, 11 M. & W. 483 (whether a document is inadmissible through default of stamps; leading case); 1847, *Doe v. Davies*, 10 Q. B. 314, 323; 1881, *Fairbank v. Hnghson*, 58 Cal. 314 (qualifications of an

expert); 1855, *Miller v. Metzger*, 16 Ill. 390, 393 (necessity of calling an attesting witness); 1888, *Com. v. Robinson*, 146 Mass. 571, 16 N. E. 452 (leading opinion, by C. Allen, J.); 1877, *Holly v. State*, 55 Miss. 424, 430 ("It may in short be stated as a universal rule that the Court always decides whether there has been any evidence upon a particular point, when there exists a legal necessity to produce such evidence in order to warrant the introduction of evidence upon some other point; to this extent the Court decides questions of fact"; here said of an overt act, preceding evidence of

law, has countless applications under the various rules of admissibility.³ In more recent times, however, a heterodox practice has appeared, in places, of leaving some questions of admissibility to the jury.⁴ No doubt the judge, after admitting evidence, leaves it to the jury to give it what weight they think fit, for they are the triers of the credibility and persuasive sufficiency of all evidence which is admitted for their consideration (*post*, § 2551). But to leave the fact to them, to be rejected or accepted according to some legal definition, and not according to its intrinsic value to their minds, is to commit a grave blunder. It is an error of policy (as well as a deviation from orthodox principle) for several reasons; in the first place, it is a needless abdication of the judicial function, — of which humility we have already too much; furthermore, it adds another to the exceptions to the general rules; and finally, it cumbers the jury with legal definitions and offers an additional opportunity for quibbling over the tenor of the instructions.

In the appurtenant corollaries of this function of the judge, it may be noted that he may of course *hear evidence on both sides* for determining the facts on which the rule of admissibility turns;⁴ that during this process the *jury may be retired out of hearing*;⁵ and that the judge's determination on this question ought to be *final*, beyond review by appeal, and is so by the wholesome rule of a few Courts.⁶

§ 2551. **Sufficiency of Evidence.** When evidential facts are once admitted by the judge, their individual and total weight or probative value is for the jury. This signifies, first, that there are no rules of law to bind them on the subject, though Courts occasionally attempt to formulate some,¹ and, secondly, that the judge's own view of the weight of the evidence is not to be stated to the jury; though the latter rule (which obtains by Constitution or

the deceased's threats); 1898, *Semple v. Callery*, 184 Pa. 65, 39 Atl. 6 (good faith of a release of interest).

³ The detailed applications of it are more conveniently considered under the various rules; in particular, compare the following places: *ante*, § 487 (testimonial qualifications in general), § 497 (insanity of a witness), § 508 (infancy), § 561 (expertness), § 587 (interest), § 861 (confessions), § 1192 (production of documentary originals), § 1385 (cross-examination), § 1451 (dying declaration), § 1820 (capacity to take an oath), § 1883 (order of evidence), § 2020 (genuineness of handwriting-specimens), § 2060 (accomplice's corroboration), §§ 2271, 2322 (privilege).

⁴ 1877, *Hartford F. Ins. Co. v. Reynolds*, 36 Mich. 502, 504 (the trial Court allowed to leave to the jury to exclude communications if they believed that the relation of legal adviser existed; "It does not properly belong to a judge to decide upon the truth of matters which have come out during the examination of witnesses who conflict"); 1856, *Bartlett v. Hoyt*, 33 N. H. 151, 165 ("whether a witness is interested upon this or that given state of facts is a question of law for the Court; whether the facts exist as claimed by one party or the other is a question of fact, which, when presented in

the form of the preliminary inquiry as to the competency of witness, may be determined by the Court, or, in the exercise of their discretion, by the jury"). Other examples may be seen in the various passages cited *supra*, note 2, especially in §§ 487, 497, 587, 861, 1385, 1451.

⁴ 1852, *Parke, B.*, in *Cleave v. Jones*, 7 Exch. 421, 425; and cases cited *ante*, § 497 (insanity), § 861 (confessions), § 1385 (cross-examination).

⁵ 1893, *State v. Shaffer*, 23 Or. 555, 558, 32 Pac. 545 (dying declarations); and cases cited *ante*, §§ 861, 1451, 1808.

⁶ 1844, *Foster v. Mackay*, 7 Metc. 531, 537; 1888, *Com. v. Robinson*, 146 Mass. 571, 16 N. E. 452; and cases cited *ante*, §§ 16, 496, 507, 561, 862, 1194, 1312.

The rule of *reasonable doubt* (*ante*, § 2497) has here no possible application; though such a notion has been advanced: 1898, *Lipecomb v. State*, 75 Miss. 559, 23 So. 210 (the facts must be proved to the judge beyond reasonable doubt; said here as to dying declarations, but the majority do not entirely agree on the doctrine); *contra*: 1888, *Com. v. Robinson*, Mass., *supra*.

¹ This question has been considered *ante*, §§ 29, 1013, 2053, 2034, 2498, in various aspects.

statute in almost every State, but not in the Federal Courts²) is an unfortunate departure from the orthodox common-law rule, and has done much to introduce fruitless quibbles and to impair the general efficiency of jury trial as an instrument of justice.

§ 2552. *Negligence.* The application of the general principle (*ante*, § 2549) suffers a few apparent or real exceptions in certain kinds of issues; and in particular, in an issue of negligence.

When the question is whether a person has been guilty of *negligence, i. e.* whether he has used due care under the circumstances, or has acted as a prudent man would have acted, or whatever the form of phrase may be, the evidence is to be addressed to the jury, as upon other issues, because the question is for them to determine. But from this rule must be distinguished three kinds of judicial utterances, closely connected in practice, and superficially though not in truth involving an inconsistency with this principle or a limitation of it. (a) Where for the kind of case in hand a definite *rule of law*, more precise and concrete, has been framed for determining the effect of the person's conduct, this rule of law may, in the hands of the judge, conclude the question, and it may cease to be a question of fact for the jury to the extent that the rule of law applies. Thus, a defendant's conduct in carrying a loaded gun on his shoulder in a city street may be ruled by the Court to be "negligence *per se*," or, in a common phrase, he may be held to have acted "at peril" of answering for the harmful consequences; so that the question of fact for the jury is merely whether he carried the gun in that way, and the question whether he acted with due care ceases to be a question for them, because it is covered by a specific and concrete rule of law. Similar rules are constantly laid down for various situations, — leaving a horse unhitched in a street, running a train at a speed in excess of a statutory limit, storing gunpowder in a populous quarter, and the like. So, also, a concrete rule of this sort may be laid down for a plaintiff whose contributory negligence is pleaded, and it may be ruled that his conduct in thrusting his head out of a railway car-window, or in failing to stop, look, and listen at a railway crossing, is "negligence *per se*." Whether such a rule should be laid down is a question of the detailed substantive law appropriate to the situation; and, wherever such a rule of law appears, the matter ceases, as of course, to that extent, to be a question of fact for the jury.¹ (b) In pursuance of the rules regarding the burden of producing evidence, and of the judicial function thus called into play (*ante*, §§ 2487, 2494), it is in every case for the Court to say whether there was *sufficient evidence to go* to the jury; and so also in a case of negligence. Thus the Court has constantly, in revising the results of a trial, to ask whether there was any evidence of negligence proper to be left to a jury;

² 1886, *Vicksburg R. Co. v. Putnam*, 118 U. S. 545, 553, 7 Sup. 1. The veteran Chief Justice Ruffin, in *State v. Moses*, 2 Dev. 452, 458 (1830), comments on this degenerate rule with his usual keenness; it seems to have

originated in his State. Compare the remarks in Thayer's Preliminary Treatise, 188.

¹ The nature of such rules is explained in Holmes, *Common Law*, 150, 152; and in an article on *An Analysis of Tort Relations*, *Harvard Law Review*, VIII, 389.

and occasionally a more detailed test is attempted for thus exercising this power of revision and determining whether the party has fulfilled the duty of producing sufficient evidence.³ (c) Another form of utterance, sometimes and properly treated⁴ as another way of phrasing the preceding principle, but often treated as if independent of it and as if forming an exception to the first general principle above stated, is that the question of negligence goes to the jury *unless the facts are undisputed and fair-minded or reasonable men could draw but one inference from them.*⁵ So far as this phrase (almost universally used, in one form or another) is intended to mean that the Court would, if the above condition were fulfilled, either declare the evidence of negligence insufficient to go to the jury (if that were the Court's interpretation of the conduct), or set aside, as against the weight of evidence, a verdict finding no negligence and order a new trial or even cause a new verdict to be entered (if that were the Court's interpretation), the phrase is in effect only a more detailed statement of the test to be adopted by the Court in its supervisory right, just alluded to, to say whether there is or is not sufficient evidence for the jury or whether a verdict is or is not against the weight of evidence (*ante*, § 2494). But so far as the phrase is intended to mean that, if the specified condition is fulfilled, the Court will take the question into its own hands and say, as a matter of fact to be decided by the Court itself, that there was or was not negligence, upon facts undisputed and inferences alone conceivable,⁶ then the result seems to be in effect an exception to the general principle first above stated, *i. e.* it defines an excepted case in which the question of negligence is to be determined, for that litigation, by the judge and not by the jury. It is often difficult to ascertain what is the precise nature of the principle involved in this phrasing.⁶

§ 2553. *Reasonableness.* There are many situations in which the issue of *reasonableness* of conduct presents itself; and in general it is recognized as an issue of fact for the jury.¹ There has been a more or less definite change

¹ See the citations in the next notes.

² *E. g.*: 1874, per Brett, J., in *Bridges v. R. Co.*, L. R. 7 H. L. 213.

³ This is sometimes expressed in the disjunctive, *i. e.* facts undisputed or open to one inference only.

⁴ *E. g.*: 1897, *Brawley, J.*, in *Patton v. R. Co.*, 27 C. C. A. 287, 82 Fed. 979.

⁵ The following will serve as illustrations: 1877, *Metropolitan R. Co. v. Jackson*, L. R. 3 App. Cas. 193; 1878, *Dublin, etc. R. Co. v. Slattery*, ib. 1155; 1886, *Metropolitan R. Co. v. Wright*, 11 id. 152; 1893, *Herbert v. R. Co.*, 121 Cal. 227, 53 Pac. 651; 1899, *Terre Haute & I. R. Co. v. Voelker*, 129 Ill. 540, 22 N. E. 20; 1896, *Stroble v. New Albany*, 144 Ind. 695, 42 N. E. 806; 1897, *Young v. R. Co.*, 148 id. 54, 47 N. E. 142; 1903, *Biumenthal v. R. Co.*, 97 Me. 255, 54 Atl. 747; 1895, *Spears v. R. Co.*, 43 Nebr. 720, 62 N. W. 68; 1897, *Goldsboro v. R. Co.*, 60 N. J. L. 49, 37 Atl. 433; 1880, *Stackus v. R. Co.*, 79 N. Y. 464; 1896, *Tillett v. R. Co.*, 118 N. C. 1031, 24 S. E.

111; 1897, *White v. R. Co.*, 121 id. 464, 27 S. E. 1002; 1898, *Ward v. Odell Mfg. Co.*, 123 id. 248, 31 S. E. 495; 1893, *Gates v. R. Co.*, 154 Pa. 566, 572, 26 Atl. 598 (omitting the second clause); 1898, *Boyle v. Mahanoy City*, 187 id. 1, 40 Atl. 1093; 1888, *Kane v. R. Co.*, 128 U. S. 91, 9 Sup. 16; 1891, *Delaware L. & W. R. Co. v. Converse*, 139 id. 469, 11 Sup. 569; 1893, *Washington & G. R. Co. v. Harmon's Adm'r*, 147 id. 571, 580, 13 Snp. 557; 1893, *Richmond & D. R. Co. v. Powers*, 149 id. 43, 45, 13 Snp. 748; 1893, *Gardner v. M. C. R. Co.*, 150 id. 349, 361, 14 Sup. 140; 1893, *Northern P. R. Co. v. Peterson*, 5 C. C. A. 338, 55 Fed. 940; 1897, *Pyle v. Clark*, 25 id. 190, 79 Fed. 744; 1892, *Hanley v. Huntington*, 37 W. Va. 378, 16 S. E. 807; 1893, *Salladay v. Dodgeville*, 85 Wis. 318, 328, 55 N. W. 696 (omitting the first clause); 1893, *Hart v. R. Co.*, 86 id. 483, 490, 57 N. W. 91 (omitting the second clause); 1897, *Morrison v. Madison*, 98 id. 452, 71 N. W. 882.

⁶ 1894, *Gerdes v. Iron & F. Co.*, 124 Mo.

from an earlier attitude of the Courts, when such questions were usually treated as questions of law, in the sense that the judge determined whether the conduct under all the circumstances was reasonable, or gave instructions to be applied by the jury to the facts that might be found by them; and instances of this older treatment are to be found to-day.² Moreover, an intermediate form appears, reserving the question for the judge where the facts are undisputed.³ But from these real variations in the attitude toward the present subject are to be distinguished the instances of the Court's resort to the two other principles already noted in speaking of the question of negligence; (a) the question may, by the development of the substantive law, have ceased to be a broad and open one of reasonableness and have become reduced to detailed and concrete rules of thumb,—as in several instances in the law of negotiable instruments;⁴ here there is a rule of law, more or less definite, and the jury are to that extent limited in their inquiry; (b) the Court's supervisory right, upon the present issue as upon others, to declare that there is not evidence sufficient to go to a jury or that a verdict is against evidence (*ante*, § 2494), may be exercised by ordering a nonsuit or setting aside a verdict, without denying the general question to be one of fact for the jury.

§ 2554. *Same: Malicious Prosecution.* The question whether a defendant in a case of *malicious prosecution* or *false arrest* had "reasonable and probable cause" for the suit or arrest, although it may be in the broader sense a question of fact, has nevertheless been retained in the hands of the Court as a matter for its determination.¹ The Court should properly instruct the jury "in the concrete and not in the abstract," by instructions adapted to cover the possible findings of fact.² It is sometimes said that the question is for the judge if the facts are undisputed and are open to but one inference;³ but this fails to recognize the right of the judge, even

347, 25 S. W. 557 (obstructions to highway by merchandise for an unreasonable time); 1896, *Chesterfield v. Ratiiff*, — S. C. —, 30 S. E. 593 (discharging firearms "without a reasonable excuse"); 1897, *White v. Pease*, 15 Utah 170, 49 Pac. 416 (delivery of goods within a reasonable time under a sale in hand of creditors).

¹ 1824, *Facey v. Hurdon*, 3 B. & C. 213 (reasonable time; hours left to the jury); 1832, *Melish v. Rawdon*, 9 Bing. 416 (Tindal, C. J.: "whether there has been, in any particular case, reasonable diligence used, or whether unreasonable delay has occurred, is a mixed question of law and fact, to be decided by the jury, acting under the direction of the judge, upon the particular circumstances of each case"); 1843, *Burton v. Griffiths*, 11 M. & W. 817 (reasonable time; here left to the jury); 1810, *Chesapeake Ins. Co. v. Starke*, 6 Cr. 268, 278 (whether an abandonment of a vessel was within a reasonable time is for the jury under the Court's direction); 1894, *Joyner v. Roberts*, 114 N. C. 389, 392, 19 S. E. 645 (whether a register of deeds made reasonable inquiry as to age before giving a marriage license is for the Court).

² 1896, *Comer v. Way*, 107 Ala. 300, 19 So. 966 (time); 1892, *Earnshaw v. U. S.*, 146 U. S. 60, 67, 13 Sup. 14 (notice); 1896, *American Surety Co. v. Pauly*, 18 C. C. A. 544, 72 Fed. 470 (time of sending notice).

³ So, too, in other subjects; e. g.: 1868, *Ryder v. Wombwell*, L. R. 4 Exch. 32 (necessaries for an infant).

⁴ 1841, *Panton v. Williams*, 2 Q. B. 169; 1870, *Lister v. Perryman*, L. R. 4 H. L. 521; 1894, *Olsen v. Lantulum*, 32 N. Br. 526; 1896, *Kirk v. Garrett*, 84 Md. 333, 35 Atl. 1089; 1898, *White v. McQueen*, 96 Mich. 249, 254, 55 N. W. 843 (facts conceded; taken from the jury); 1893-94, *Filer v. Smith*, lb. 347, 102 id. 98, 55 N. W. 999, 60 N. W. 297; 1897, *Hess v. Oregon G. B. Co.*, 31 Or. 503, 49 Pac. 803; 1892, *Mahaffey v. Byers*, 151 Pa. 92, 96, 25 Atl. 93; 1893, *Sanders v. Palmer*, 5 C. C. A. 77, 55 Fed. 217.

⁵ *Hess v. Bank*, *supra*.

⁶ 1895, *Diers v. Mallion*, 46 Nebr. 121, 64 N. W. 722; 1891, *Wass v. Stephens*, 128 N. Y. 123, 28 N. E. 21.

where the facts are disputed, to submit instructions appropriate to the possible findings.⁴

§ 2555. *Facts Judicially noticed; Trial by Inspection; Nul Tiel Record.*
 (a) On such matters as the Court notices judicially (*post*, § 2567), it would seem that the judge's ruling does not determine the matter, and the jury need not take it from him as a decided point, unless it concern something that would otherwise not come to them as matter of fact.

(b) There was once recognized a form of trial *by inspection*, i. e. by the judge's own observation of the fact in court.¹ But this is rather to be considered as a survival, in distorted form, of some of the earlier methods of proof prevailing before jury-trial;² and no recognition would probably be given to it to-day,³ except in the ensuing instance.

(c) A *judicial record*, when its existence in a certain tenor is denied, was said to be tried *by inspection* of the judge, on production of the alleged original record before him; and the plea of *nul tiel record* was coextensive with this class of cases.⁴ A foreign judgment, however, being evidenced by copy only, fell without this rule.⁵

§ 2556. *Construction of Documents.* The construction of all *written instruments* belongs to the Court.¹ It may become necessary to hear evidence of the surrounding circumstances that fill out the meaning of the words, as well as of any local or commercial meanings attached to particular words by usage (*ante*, §§ 2461-2478); and the ascertainment of this is for the jury.²

¹ 1804, *Schattgen v. Hoinback*, 149 Ill. 646, 652, 36 N. E. 969 (if there are disputed facts, it is to be submitted under instructions).

² 1768, *Blackstone*, III, 331 ("Trial by inspection . . . [is when the issue] being evidently the object of sense, the judges of the Court, upon the testimony of their own senses, shall decide the point in dispute; . . . when the fact from its nature must be evident to the Court, either from ocular demonstration or other irrefragable proof, there the law departs from its usual resort, the verdict of twelve men, and relies on the judgment of the Court alone"; the instances given being non-age of an infant, life and identity of a party alleged to be dead, idiosyncy on appeal to the chancellor, mayhem, and a date as appearing in the almanac; so for non-age: *Co. Litt.* 380 b).

³ *Thayer*, *Preliminary Treatise*, 19-24.

⁴ 1831, *Morton v. Fairbanks*, 11 Pick. 363, 370 (whether certain things were shingles or mere chips; "it was ruled that, as the point was clear upon inspection, it was to be decided by the Court"; ruling held improper). One of the rare instances is the following, which however falls rather under the principle for documents (*post*, § 2556): 1836, *Cromwell v. Tate's Ex'r*, 7 Leigh 301, 303 ("the existence or non-existence of the seal [on a deed] is to be ascertained by an appeal to the senses; and when that is the case, the judges of the Court shall decide"; citing *Blackstone*).

⁵ 1628, *Co. Litt.* 260 a ("If such a record be alleged, and it be pleaded that there is no such

record, it shall be tried only by itself"); 1768, *Blackstone*, *Commentaries*, III, 330 ("Where a matter of record is pleaded in any action — as, a fine, a judgment, or the like — and the opposite party pleads *nul tiel record*, . . . the trial therefore of this issue is merely by the record; . . . it shall not receive any trial by witness, jury, or otherwise, but only by itself"); *accord*: 1824, *State v. Graton*, 3 Hawks 187; 1824, *State v. Isham*, *ib.* 185; 1833, *Adams v. Betz*, 1 Watts 425, 427.

⁶ 1778, *Walker v. Wiltier*, 1 Doug. 1, 7, per *Buller*, J. ("It is to be tried by the country . . . and not by the Court"); 1804, *Collins v. Mathew*, 5 East 473; 1820, *Baldwin v. Hale*, 17 John. 272.

The exception for judgments of another of the United States "proved the rule": 1818, *Mills v. Duryee*, 7 Cr. 481, 485 (under the constitutional clause requiring full faith for a judgment of another of the United States, *nul tiel record* becomes the proper plea of denial; "it may be proved in the manner prescribed by the Act, and such proof is of as high a nature as an inspection by the Court of its own record"; *Johnson*, J., *diss.*); *accord*: 1823, *Hall v. Williams*, 6 Pick. 232, 237 (useful opinion); *contra*: 1835, *Carter v. Wilson*, 1 Dev. & B. 362.

⁷ 1806, *Stammers v. Dixon*, 7 East 200, 209; 1868, *Lyle v. Richards*, L. R. 1 H. L. 222, 241; 1873, *Betts v. Venning*, 14 N. Br. 267, 270; 1889, *Hamilton v. Ins. Co.*, 136 U. S. 242, 255, 10 Supp. 845.

⁸ 1803, *State v. Brown*, 171 Mo. 477, 71

But, subject to the amplification or precision of the meaning thus ascertained, it is the duty of the jury to take the construction of the instrument from the Court.³ Where a contract is entirely oral, or partly in writing and partly oral, it is usually said that its terms, if disputed, are to be tried by the jury as a question of fact, subject to instructions as to the legal effect of the words.⁴

§ 2557. *Criminal Intent.* In the definition of crime, certain more detailed rules have from time to time been laid down, as rules of law, defining the nature of malice and of the other states of mind that are to be taken as constituting that criminal intent which is one of the elements of the offence. So far as limited by these rules, the question of intent ceases to be one of fact and is one of law.¹ A chief controversy, which in the course of this development brought into competition and collision the respective functions of judge and jury, was the question whether, in a criminal prosecution for *libel*, the malicious or seditious intent was an inference of law to be made from the words published and the averments and innuendoes, as found by the jury and spread upon the record, or whether it remained as an inference of fact to be found by the jury. The practice of the English judges in the eighteenth century had not been entirely consistent in maintaining the former view,² and the latter view was finally after much popular agitation sanctioned by the Legislature.³

S. W. 1031 ("the interpretation of writings is always for the Court except when they are ambiguous"); 1898, *Ricketts v. Rogers*, 53 Nebr. 477, 73 N. W. 946; 1894, *Meeks v. Willard*, 57 N. J. L. 22, 25, 29 Atl. 318; 1879, *West v. Smith*, 101 U. S. 263, 270 (whether a letter amounted to an admission; "where the effect of the instrument depends not merely on its construction and meaning, but upon collateral facts and circumstances, the inferences of fact to be drawn from the paper must be left to the jury"); 1898, *M'Namee v. Hunt*, 30 C. C. A. 553, 87 Fed. 298; 1903, *Rankin v. Fidelity Ins. T. & S. D. Co.*, 189 U. S. 242, 23 Snp. 553 ("Although [the question of] the construction of written instruments is one for the Court, [yet] where the case turns upon the proper conclusions to be drawn from a series of letters, particularly of a commercial character, taken in connection with other facts and circumstances, it is one which is properly referred to a jury").

³ 1839, *Hutchinson v. Bowker*, 5 M. & W. 535, 541 (meaning of the words "fine barley" and "good barley"; Parke, B.: "The law I take to be this, that it is the duty of the Court to construe all written instruments; if there are peculiar expressions used in it, which have in particular places or trades a known meaning attached to them, it is for the jury to say what the meaning of these expressions was, but for the Court to decide what the meaning of the contract was"); 1845, *Alderson, B.*, in *Robertson v. Showler*, 13 M. & W. 609, 612 ("The jury are only to find facts, and leave the Court to judge of their meaning").

⁴ 1896, *Nash v. Claassen*, 163 Ill. 409, 45

N. E. 277 (a document forming part of a series of acts alleged to indicate an agency-relation); 1893, *Enreka F. Co. v. B. C. S. & R. Co.*, 78 Md. 179, 188, 27 Atl. 1035; 1896, *Gassett v. Glazier*, 165 Mass. 473, 43 N. E. 193 ("where a contract is to be gathered from talk between the parties, and especially from talk on more than one occasion, the question what the contract was, if controverted, must usually be tried by the jury as a question of fact"); 1891, *Spragins v. White*, 108 N. C. 449, 13 S. E. 171 (absolute or conditional effect of an oral agreement to deliver).

For the practice in determining the meaning of a *libel*, see *Capital & Counties Bank v. Henty*, L. R. 7 App. Cas. 741 (1882).

¹ Distinguish here such legal definitions of "malice," etc., from ordinary presumptions affecting the production of evidence (*ante*, § 2511).

² The arguments and opinions in the great Trial of the Dean of St. Asaph's, 21 How. St. Tr. 946, 968, 978, 1039, 3 T. R. 428 (in which Erskine was of counsel for the defendant, and Lord Mansfield delivered the opinion), contain the data on both sides; the answer of the Judges to the Lords, in 1789, 22 How. St. Tr. 296, 301, finally dealt with the matter.

³ 1792, St. 32 G. III, c. 60, known as Fox's Libel Act. For the law in the United States, see *Thompson on Trials*, § 2025; 1885, *Shaw, C. J.*, in *Com. v. Anthes*, 5 Gray 185 (giving the history in England); 1902, *Jones v. Murray*, 167 Mo. 25, 66 S. W. 981. Distinguish here, also, however, the question (*ante*, § 2494) whether in a civil case there is any evidence

§ 2558. *Foreign Law.* In only a few instances has it been thought that a matter of the sort strictly termed "law" should be left with the jury for determination. It is more generally held that a *foreign law* is a matter of "fact," i. e. its existence is to be determined by the jury. But the better view is that it should be proved to the judge, who is decidedly the more appropriate person to determine it.¹

§ 2559. *Local Law.* The doctrine has obtained in a few jurisdictions that the jury, in dealing with the *local law* applicable to the case, have a legal right to repudiate the instructions of the judge and to determine the law for themselves;¹ but this ill-advised doctrine, defiant of the fundamentals of law, has only a narrow acceptance.

upon which a jury might find a libel: 1882, *Capital & Counties Bank v. Henty*, L. R. 7 App. Cas. 741.

¹ The decisions seldom lay down either rule absolutely, owing in part to the desire to retain the principle of the Court's construction of documents (*ante*, § 2556) while recognizing the jury's function of crediting the evidence; but there is no necessity for here conceding anything to the latter; with the following rulings compare those cited *post*, § 2573 (judicial notice of foreign law), and *ante*, §§ 1271, 1953 (expert testimony to foreign law): 1868, *Kline v. Baker*, 99 Mass. 253 (foreign law is matter of fact, except for the construction and effect of a written document forming the entire evidence); 1887, *Gibson v. Ina. Co.*, 144 id. 81, 10 N. E. 729 (same); 1898, *Hancock Nat'l Bank v. Ellis*, 172 id. 39, 51 N. E. 207 (a question of law when consisting entirely of statutes or decisions; of fact, where decisions are conflicting or inferences of fact are to be drawn); 1901, *Cook v. Bartlett*, 179 id. 76, 61 N. E. 266 (the tenor of the law is a question of fact, but the construction of the language in statutes and decisions not conflicting is for the Court); 1857, *Charlotte v. Chouteau*, 25 Mo. 465, 473 (for the Court, so far as it is a statute, or decisions, experts, or writers resorted to for interpretation; but perhaps for the jury

where it is merely unwritten); 1862, *Charlotte v. Chouteau*, 33 id. 194, 200, 201 (unwritten law proved to the jury; English decisions, etc., read to them); 1852, *Pickard v. Bailey*, 26 N. H. 152, 169 (for the Court, where merely preliminary to the legality of a document); 1902, *Mexican N. R. Co. v. Slater*, 53 C. C. A. 239, 115 Fed. 593, 606 (expert testimony to the construction of a foreign statute, held to be "addressed to the judge to aid him in his rulings"); 1888, *Lycoming Ins. Co. v. Wright*, 60 Vt. 522, 12 Atl. 103.

¹ For the jurisdictions in which this view is taken, see *Thompson on Trials*, §§ 2132-2148; for a vindication of its orthodoxy and an examination of the rule in the various jurisdictions, see the opinion of Gray, J., in *Sparf v. U. S.* (1895), 156 U. S. 51, 110, 15 Sup. 273; for an examination of its probable origin, see *Thayer, Preliminary Treatise*, 253; leading opinions are the following: 1838, *Best, C. J.*, in *Levi v. Mylne*, 4 Bing. 189, 195; 1835, *Story, J.*, in *U. S. v. Battiste*, 2 Smm. 243; 1848, *Shaw, C. J.*, in *Com. v. Porter*, 10 Metc. 263; 1869, *Doe, J.*, in *State v. Hodge*, 50 N. H. 510, 523; 1902, *Hamerly, J.*, in *State v. Gannou*, 75 Conn. 206, 52 Atl. 727; and the earlier authorities are collected in *Mr. Hargrave's note* 276 to *Co. Lit.* 155 b.

BOOK IV: OF WHAT PROPOSITIONS NO EVIDENCE NEED BE PRESENTED.

TITLE I: JUDICIAL NOTICE.

CHAPTER LXXXIX.

1. General Principles.

- § 2565. Theory of Judicial Notice.
- § 2566. Anomalous Meanings.
- § 2567. Effect of Judicial Notice; (1) not Conclusive.
- § 2568. Same: (2) Notice must be requested; Pleading a Statute.
- § 2569. Same: (3) Judge's Private Knowledge; Judge may Investigate.
- § 2570. Judicial Notice by the Jury's own Knowledge.

2. Specific Facts Noticed.

- § 2572. Laws: (1) Domestic Statutes and Ordinances.
- § 2573. Same: (2) Foreign Law.

- § 2574. Political Facts: (1) International Affairs; Seals of State.
- § 2575. Same: (2) Domestic Political Organization; Boundaries, Capitals, etc.
- § 2576. Same: (3) Domestic Officials, their Identity and Authority; Genuineness of Official Documents.
- § 2577. Same: (4) Official Acts; Elections, Census, Legislative Proceedings, etc.
- § 2578. Judicial Proceedings: (1) Officers and Rules of Court.
- § 2579. Same: (2) Records of Proceedings.
- § 2580. Notorious Miscellaneous Facts: (1) Commerce, Industry, History, Natural Science, etc.
- § 2581. Same: (2) Times and Distances.
- § 2582. Same: (3) Meaning of Words; Names of Intoxicating Liquors.

1. General Principles.

§ 2565. **Theory of Judicial Notice.**¹ Of the propositions involved in the pleadings, or relevant thereto, proof by evidence may be dispensed with in two situations: (1) where the opponent by a solemn or infra-judicial admission has waived dispute, and (2) where the Court is justified by general considerations in assuming the truth of the proposition without requiring evidence from the party. The former is considered under the head of Judicial Admissions (*post*, §§ 2588-2596). The latter is the process most commonly meant by the term Judicial Notice.

There are various senses in which the term Judicial Notice is used. In the orthodox sense above noted, it signifies that there are certain *facta probanda* (*ante*, § 2), or propositions in a party's case, as to which he will not be required to offer evidence; these will be taken for true by the tribunal without the need of evidence. This general principle of Judicial Notice is simple and natural enough. As to the scope of such facts, they include (1) matters which are so notorious that the production of evidence would be unnecessary; (2) matters which the judicial function supposes the judge to be acquainted with, either actually or in theory; (3) sundry matters not exactly included under either of these heads; they are subject for the most part to the consideration that though they are neither actually notorious nor

¹ The most learned discussion of the subject, Thayer's Preliminary Treatise on the Law of Evidence, c. 7.

bound to be judicially known, yet they would be capable of such instant and unquestionable demonstration, if desired, that no party would think of imposing a falsity on the tribunal in the face of an intelligent adversary. It is hardly feasible, however, in enumerating these matters, to follow strictly this or any other classification.

§ 2566. *Anomalous Meanings of the Term Judicial Notice.* The term Judicial Notice has many applications, distinct from those peculiar to the present purpose. Some of these are traditional, and therefore perhaps not to be termed incorrect; others are merely loose ways of naming some process or rule already properly known under another name. The essential thing is to distinguish these applications from the chief one, here involved, *i. e.* the acceptance of a matter as proved without requiring the party to offer evidence of it.

(1) A usage extending far back in our annals is to apply the term where the question is whether a certain pleading, or a certain *averment in a pleading*, or greater particularity of averment, is necessary.¹ (2) Whether a Court, for the purposes of ordering a new trial or otherwise, may give effect to a *matter capable of being judicially noticed* — *i. e.* assumed without evidence — but not referred to in the record,² or falsely alleged in the pleading,³ is a question of the power and duty of the Court; but this term has been applied to it. (3) Whether a Court will take judicial notice of the *existence of a foreign State* is really a question whether, as a matter of substantive law and judicial functions, a foreign State will in domestic Courts be treated as existing only so far as the Executive so treats it; here it is conceded that the Executive's recognition is the determining element.⁴ (4) *Certain rules of evidence*, usually

¹ Thayer, *ubi supra*, pp. 281-286; 1899, *Nichols v. Bardwell Lodge*, 105 Ky. 168, 48 S. W. 426, 1091 (under C. C. P. § 119 and Rev. St. c. 35, § 1); 1897, *Wikel v. Board*, 120 N. C. 451, 27 S. E. 117 (declaring unnecessary a supplemental plea alleging the repeal of an act); 1897, *Douglas v. K. & M. R. Co.*, 44 W. Va. 267, 28 S. E. 705 (holding it unnecessary to allege the defendant to be a corporation).

In such cases, a ruling that no averment is necessary would usually imply a judicial notice of the fact if it were averred in pleading, and in the ensuing topics are instances of this; but it does not follow that a ruling requiring an averment implies that the fact would not be noticed if duly averred.

² Thayer, *ubi supra*, pp. 283, 288; 1897, *Steenerson v. R. Co.*, 69 Minn. 353, 72 N. W. 713 (the Supreme Court, reviewing a finding of the Railroad Commission as to reasonable rates, conceded some weight to the experience of the Commission; Canty, J.: "[The Commission] should be thoroughly familiar with the many financial and economic problems which enter into the business of constructing and operating railroads. How is a judge, who is not supposed to have any of this special learning or experience, and could not take judicial notice of it if he had it, to review the decision of commissioners, who should have it and should act upon

it? It seems to us that such a judge is not fit to act in such a matter. . . . We see no way of disposing of this question except to hold that on appeal from the commission the Courts should, to the best of their ability, take judicial notice of all such technical learning, knowledge, and information of a general character as should be known and understood by the commission").

³ 1828, *Taylor v. Barclay*, 2 Sim. 213 (where a pleading alleged that a certain government was recognized by H. M. government, and the Court treated this as incorrect; "notwithstanding there is this averment in the bill [demurred to], I am bound to take the fact as it really exists, and not as it is averred to be"); 1897, *People v. Oakland Water-Front Co.*, 118 Cal. 234, 50 Pac. 305 (declaration alleging title in certain lands; demurrer; a statute incorporating a city declared its title to lands alleged in the declaration as the plaintiff's; the Court took "judicial notice" that this allegation was incorrect; but either it was a question of law, in which case a demurrer does not admit propositions of law, or it was a question whether certain statutory boundaries inclosed the plaintiff's private land, in which case the ruling seems wrong as a matter of judicial notice).

⁴ *England*: 1894, *Mighell v. Sultan of Johore*, 1 Q. B. 149, 158 (certificate of the Secretary of State for Colonies as to defendant's being an in-

known under other names, are frequently referred to in terms of judicial notice. Thus, the admissibility of *almanacs* is mainly a question whether an exception to the Hearsay rule can be made in their favor;⁵ but a Court occasionally makes this exception by saying that the almanac is to be judicially noticed; although the term is properly applicable only where the Court declares the day of the month, or other fact, not to need evidence,⁶ and then consults the book to inform itself; the practical difference being that in the former case it goes to the jury, but in the latter not.⁷ Again, it has been said that judicial notice will be taken of the correctness of the *photographic process*;⁸ which is merely another way of saying that properly verified photographs are admissible evidence.⁹ In the same way, to take notice that "mere pasturage upon these western lands is very slight evidence of possession,"¹⁰ is to measure evidence; and the so-called judicial notice of certain *seals*¹¹ is merely a rule that the production of something purporting to be a seal shall be in these cases sufficient evidence of genuineness to go to the jury or shall suffice to raise a presumption of genuineness. Whether a Court will take judicial notice of the contents of *legislative proceedings* may be properly a question of the present sort;¹² but the same form of expression is also occasionally used where the real inquiry is whether, as evidence of the statute's terms, or of its passage, the journals are to be preferred to the official certifi-

dependent sovereign power; "this letter is conclusive"); 1900, *Foster v. Globe Venture Synd.*, 1 Ch. 811 (boundary of a foreign State); in *Taylor v. Barclay*, *supra*, note 3, it was decided merely that the allegation in a declaration that a certain foreign State was recognized as such by the King could be found untrue by reference to the Foreign Office; in *Yrisarri v. Clement*, 1825, 2 C. & P. 223, 225 ("If a foreign State is recognized by this country, it is not necessary to prove that it is an existing State; but if it is not so recognized, such proof becomes necessary"), the latter clause seems misleading; *United States*: the doctrine of the following cases is that a foreign State will or will not be so considered by the Court according as it is or is not recognized by the Executive: 1817, *U. S. v. Hutchings*, 2 Wheel. Cr. C. 543; 1808, *Rose v. Himely*, 4 Cr. 241, 272; 1818, *Gelston v. Hoyt*, 3 Wheat. 246, 324; 1821, *The Nueva Anna*, 6 id. 193; 1839, *Williams v. Suffolk Ins. Co.*, 13 Pet. 415, 421; 1852, *Kennett v. Chambers*, 14 How. 38, 51; 1889, *Re Baiz*, 135 U. S. 403, 431, 10 Sup. 854; 1890, *Jones v. U. S.*, 137 id. 202, 212, 11 Sup. 80 (conclusive); 1897, *Underhill v. Hernandez*, 168 id. 250, 18 Sup. 83; 1891, *U. S. v. Trumbull*, 48 Fed. 99, 104; 1893, *The Itata*, 56 id. 505, 510; *Story on the Constitution*, II, §§ 1566, 1567. In *U. S. v. Palmer*, 3 Wheat. 610, 634 (1818), the ruling seems merely to concede (and properly) that a defendant denying a piratical intent may plead the authority of a revolutionary government having a colorable existence, in which case its actual recognition is immaterial.

⁵ *Ante*, § 1698.

⁶ *Post*, § 2581, where instances are collected.

⁷ The following instances show the correct

treatment: 1792, *Attorney-General v. Cast-plate Glass Co.*, *post*, § 2569; 1898, *Louisville & N. R. Co. v. Brinckerhoff*, 119 Ala. 606, 24 So. 893 (here the Court intimated that an almanac, offered to show the time of sunset, was not improperly excluded, as there was no need of evidence).

So also *mortality tables* are sometimes said to be judicially noticed: 1894, *Lincoln v. Power*, 151 U. S. 436, 441, 14 Sup. 367 (notice taken of *Carlisle Tables*, in estimating length of life, whether offered in evidence or not); although in strictness they are evidence admissible under an exception to the Hearsay rule (*ante*, § 1698); the following case shows the correct treatment: 1901, *Western & A. R. Co. v. Hyer*, 113 Ga. 776, 39 S. E. 446 (on exceptions, a statement in the brief of evidence that a mortality table was introduced does not authorize the Court to notice it, though it is stated to have been published in a volume of official reports; *Simmons, C. J.*, and *Lewis, J.*, diss.); furthermore, it seems equally incorrect to notice the duration of life without some evidence from tables or the like, but this was done in *Nelson v. Bradford L. & W. Co.*, 75 Conn. 546, 54 Atl. 303 (1903).

Again, certain official *interest tables* are sometimes made evidence by statute (*ante*, § 1672); but this does not signify that they are to be judicially noticed: 1896, *Camp v. Randie*, 61 Ala. 240, 2 So. 287.

⁸ 1874, *Uddersook v. Com.*, 76 Pa. 340, 352.

⁹ *Ante*, § 792.

¹⁰ 1897, *Whitney v. U. S.*, 167 U. S. 529, 546, 17 Sup. 857.

¹¹ *Ante*, §§ 2161-2169.

¹² *Post*, § 2577.

cate appended to the enrolled act.¹² (5) Other loose applications of the term, sometimes dealing with matters of substantive law,¹⁴ sometimes with matters of procedure, will occasionally be found. It is unfortunate that the phrase should be so often loosely employed, especially as the legitimate doctrine "is an instrument of great capacity in the hands of a competent judge, and is not nearly as much used, in the region of practice and evidence, as it should be."¹⁵

§ 2567. *Effect of Judicial Notice*; (1) *not Conclusive*. (a) That a matter is judicially noticed means merely that it is taken as true without the offering of evidence by the party who should ordinarily have done so. But the *opponent is not prevented from disputing* the matter by evidence, if he believes it disputable.¹ It is true that occasionally a Court is found declaring a thing judicially noticed and at the same time refusing to listen to evidence to the contrary;² but usually this is in truth laying down a new rule of substantive law by declaring certain facts immaterial; whenever a Court forbids the production of evidence, it removes the subject from the realm of the law of evidence properly so called.

(b) The process of taking judicial notice often may imply incidentally a ruling as to the respective functions of judge and *jury*. Does it signify that the settlement of the matter rests with the judge and not with the jury, that the jury are to accept the fact from the judge, and that so far as any further investigation is concerned, it is for the judge alone? Such is the view sometimes found, in decisions³ as well as statutes.⁴ Yet it seems rather that the jury are not concluded: that the process of notice is intended chiefly for expedition of proof; and since the fact is disputable by the opponent (*supra*, par. *w*), it remains possible for the jury to negative it. In those

¹² *Ante*, § 1350.

¹⁴ *E. g.*: 1896, *Southern R. Co. v. Covenia*, 100 Ga. 46, 29 S. E. 219 (the declaration in an action for loss of a child's services alleged the services specifically, and gave the age of the child as 1 year, 8 months, and 10 days; the Court took "judicial cognizance of the fact that a child of this tender age is incapable of rendering such services" as justify recovery).

¹⁵ Thayer, *ubi supra*, p. 309.

¹ 1896, *People v. Mayes*, 113 Cal. 618, 45 Pac. 860; and this seems implied throughout, particularly by the doctrine of § 2569, *post*.

Since judicial notice is an expedient for hastening the trial and eliminating superfluities, it would be proper to prevent the party in whose favor the fact is noticed from offering evidence of it: 1898, *State v. Chingren*, 105 Ia. 169, 74 N. W. 946 (that it is customary to mark up the price of land to be sold, not noticed).

³ *E. g.*: 1889, *Com. v. Marzynski*, 149 Mass. 68, 72, 21 N. E. 228 (indictment for illegally selling cigars on Sunday; "the Court has judicial knowledge of the meaning of common words, and may well rule that guns and pistols are not drugs or medicines, and may exclude the opinions of witnesses who offer to testify that they are").

⁴ *Conn.*: the first case is presumably now not law; 1841, *l. v. Bulkley*, 14 Conn. 362, 387 (conflicting decisions in another State, submitted to the jury); 1843, *Hale v. N. J. S. N. Co.*, 15 id. 539, 549 (by statute, reports of decisions in other States are to be judicially noticed; a Court therefore may hold the law to be as therein decided without submitting it to the jury); 1847, *Lockwood v. Crawford*, 18 id. 361, 370 (same); 1897, *State v. Main*, 69 id. 123, 37 Atl. 80 (excluding from the jury's consideration certain evidence as to a contagious tree-disease; leading opinion, by Baldwin, J.); *Minn.*: 1893, *Thomson-Houston El. Co. v. Palmer*, 52 Minn. 174, 177, 53 N. W. 1137 (proof of foreign law; official copies of decisions of foreign Court not received, the question being for the Court).

⁵ *Alaska C. Cr. P.* 1900, § 156 (like Or. Annot. C. 1892, § 1374); *C. C. P.* § 233 (like *ih.* § 242); *Cal. C. C. P.* 1872, § 2102 (whenever the knowledge of the Court is by this code made evidence of a fact, the Court is to declare such knowledge to the jury, who are bound to accept it"); *Or. Annot. C.* 1892, § 242 (like *Cal. C. C. P.* § 2102, adding, "as conclusive"); § 1374 (same); *Utah Rev. St.* 1898, § 3479 (like *Cal. C. C. P.* § 2102).

classes of facts, however, in which the judge has the function of decision and not the jury (*ante*, §§ 2549-2559), it would be true, so far as any such facts were capable of notice, that the judge's determination is exclusive; but this would not be by virtue of the doctrine of judicial notice.⁵

§ 2568. *Same*: (2) *Notice must be requested; Pleading a Statute.* Judicial notice being a dispensation of one party from producing evidence, it would seem that the party must, in point of form, make a request for it.¹ Upon this request, the Court is bound, it is sometimes said, to declare the fact noticed,² or at least to make that investigation (*post*, § 2569) which it deems necessary. No doubt, in most instances, the rule of law has the plain consequence of compelling the judge to declare the dispensation; not to do so would be to err, precisely as under any other rule of law. But it must not be supposed that this is universally true; the decisions demonstrate that there are numerous topics, near the line of doubt in their feature of notoriety, of which the Court may, but not must, take notice. No definite distinction is recognized; but it is plain that many of the rulings merely authorize the Court to notice a fact, without requiring it.³

§ 2569. *Same*: (3) *Judge's Private Knowledge; Judge may Investigate.* (a) There is a real but elusive line between the judge's *personal knowledge* as a private man and his knowledge as a judge. The latter does not necessarily include the former; as a judge, indeed, he may have to ignore what he knows as a man, and contrariwise.¹ The dilemma sometimes thus presented has given rise to much discussion over extreme cases, — particularly the celebrated problem once put by a King of England, whether a judge could lawfully respite a convicted person whom he personally knew to be innocent.² But it

⁵ Thus most of the above rulings in n. 3 are referable rather to the doctrine (*ante*, § 2558) that foreign law should be evidenced to the Court.

¹ 1902, *Amundson v. Wilson*, 11 N. D. 193, 91 N. W. 37.

Distinguish the question (*ante*, § 2566) whether the party must have *pleaded the fact*; this arises frequently for the case of a *statute*; e. g., 1898, *Nichols v. Bardwell Lodge*, 105 Ky. 168, 48 S. W. 426, 1091.

² 1899, *State v. Magers*, 35 Or. 520, 57 Pac. 197 (time of sunset).

³ E. g.: 1889, *Hunter v. N. Y. O. & W. R. Co.*, 116 N. Y. 615, 621, 23 N. E. 9 ("Courts are not bound to take judicial notice of matters of fact. Whether they will do so or not depends on the nature of the subject, the issue involved, and the apparent justice of the case"); 1902, *Re Osborne*, 52 C. C. A. 595, 115 Fed. 1 (a court's own records; the Court is not obliged to notice them).

¹ The following joke of Lord Eldon's illustrates this: 1782 (?), Lord Eldon, in *Twiss' Life*, I, 130: "We had an amusing case at York. Stakes for a race had been deposited in the hands of one party, to be paid to the owner of the horse that won; but then there was a condition that each horse was to be ridden by a 'gentleman'; and it was disputed whether the horse that did win was ridden by a 'gentleman'

or not. This action was to ascertain this point. . . . Well, we had a great deal of evidence, and then we came to the summing up of the judge, who addressed the jury in these words: 'Gentlemen of the jury, when I see you in the box, I call you "gentlemen," for I know you are such; custom has authorized me; and from your office there I know you are entitled to be called "gentlemen." But, out of that box, I do not know what may be deemed the requisites that constitute a "gentleman"; therefore I can give you no direction.' The jury returned a verdict that he was not a 'gentleman.' Well, the next morning he challenged both Law and me, who were conducting the cause against him, for saying that he was no gentleman; we sent him this answer, that we could not think of fighting one who was pronounced by a solemn verdict of twelve of his countrymen to be no gentleman."

² 1406, Y. B. 7 H. IV, 41, pl. 5 (in arguing a question as to the duty of the Court not to have rendered a certain judgment, counsel put this case: "Sir, let us put the case that one man kills another in your presence, you observing it, and another who is not guilty is indicted before you and is found guilty so as to incur the penalty of death; you ought to respite the judgment against him, for you are knowing to the contrary, and should make further report to the King, to give him pardon; no more should

is now well enough understood that there is here no impracticable dilemma. If the judge, as a man and an observer, has any personal knowledge, he may (and sometimes morally must) utilize it by taking the stand as a witness and telling in that capacity what he knows (*ante*, § 1909); this solves the dilemma without either injuring justice or violating principle.³ It is therefore plainly accepted that the judge is not to use from the bench, under the guise of judicial knowledge, that which he knows only as an individual observer.⁴ The former is in truth "known" to him merely in the peculiar sense that it is known and notorious to all men, and the dilemma is only the result of using the term "knowledge" in two senses. Where to draw the line between knowledge by notoriety and knowledge by personal observation may sometimes be difficult, but the principle is plain.

(b) But the subjects of knowledge which raise the foregoing problem are obviously those "facts," in the ordinary sense, which are ascertainable by personal observation; belonging as they do to the jury's ultimate determination, it is obvious that the judge must in their regard be merely an ordinary witness to the jurors. There are, however, facts of "law" which are for the judge's own ultimate determination, — such as the tenor of foreign or local law (*ante*, §§ 2558, 2559) and the meaning of a document (*ante*, § 2556).

you give judgment in this case, before causing those to appear by whose hands the King was paid"; Gascoigne, C. J.: "Once the King himself asked of me the very case that you have put, and asked me what was the law, and I told him just as you say it, and he was well pleased that the law was so"; 1578, Plowden's Commentaries, Partridge v. Strange, Plowd. 83 (mentioning, in Saunders' argument, the case in 7 H. IV with apparent approval); 1588, Coke, as counsel in Marriot v. Pascal, 1 Leon. 159, 161 (re-stating the case from the Year-book: "The judge he ought not to carry himself according to his private knowledge which he hath of the said fact, *scil.* to acquit the prisoner, but all that he can do is to respite judgment"; it may be noted that Coke mistranslates the word *veiant* in the original, and the story has been sometimes mistold, through him).

Professor Thayer (Preliminary Treatise, 291) has an interesting note on the earlier literature of this problem.

³ 1696, Sir John Fenwick's Trial, before the House of Commons, 13 How. St. Tr. 663, 667 (Mr. Hawles, Sol. General, on Mr. Newport having cited the above story of Gascoigne: "It is said, though a judge do think in his conscience a person guilty, yet he ought not to make use of that private knowledge; and a case was quoted out of Henry IV. But I think that judge might have behaved himself something better than he did; and sure I am, now he would be blamed. I do not say that a judge upon his private knowledge ought to judge; he ought not. But if a judge knows anything whereby the prisoner might be convicted or acquitted (not generally known), then I do say he ought to be called from the place where he sate, and go to the bar and give evidence of his knowledge; and so the judge in Henry IV's time ought to

have done, and not to have suffered the prisoner to have been convicted and then get a pardon for him; for a pardon will not always 'o the business").

⁴ 1851, Fox v. State, 9 Ga. 373, 376 (refusing a continuance; the judge's personal knowledge of a witness' lack of credit, held improper to be used; good opinion, by Nisbet, J.); 1854, State v. Edwards, 19 Mo. 675, 676 (conviction of a witness before the same judge in another county; notice not taken); 1809, Rosekrans v. Antwerp, 4 John. 239 (a statute forbade an appearance by attorney in a justice's court, unless the party was prevented by sickness or by absence from the county, of which proof was to be made; "the justice cannot act from his own knowledge and call that knowledge proof"); 1870, State v. Horn, 43 Vt. 20, 23 (marriage certificate by a justice in another domestic State; judge's own knowledge of law of that State not to be used); 1900, Shafer v. Ean Claire, 105 Wis. 239, 81 N. W. 409 (a witness to a bridge's bad condition was excluded by the trial judge, because the offer was "contrary to what I know to be the fact from my own personal knowledge"; held erroneous).

Occasionally, however, this is allowed to slip in: 1880, Wisconsin Central R. Co. v. Cornell Univ., 49 Wis. 162, 164 (condemnation of right of way; the trial judge's "great familiarity with that portion of the State," considered in not reversing the judgment); 1881, Halaska v. Cotzhansen, 52 id. 624, 9 N. W. 401 (action for services as counsel, tried before a judge; the judge's observation of the services as he "saw and knew" them, allowed to be used). The following statute is peculiar: Conn. Gen. St. 1887, § 689 (justice of peace's "personal knowledge" of commission of offences of drunkenness, etc., sufficient).

Since these are to be decided by the judge, he is at liberty to *investigate the facts* for himself, in addition to receiving the evidence which the parties may offer. This is done, however, not by virtue of the doctrine of judicial notice, but by virtue of the judge's exclusive function, as against the jury, to try the fact (*ante*, § 2549). These investigations are frequently to be observed in rulings upon the recognition of a foreign State,⁵ the tenor of foreign law,⁶ and the meaning of words.⁷

(c) Finally, there is a process of *investigation* by the judge *prior to a ruling of judicial notice upon a question of fact* determinable by the jury. For example, when the Court is asked to dispense the party from evidencing the fact that the Mississippi joins the Missouri above the city of St. Louis, or that the first of January, 1904, fell on a Friday, *i. e.* to take judicial notice of these facts, he may resort to a map or a calendar, before making the ruling. This process is common enough;⁸ but it is distinct from the two preceding ones. It is not a search for evidence to establish the fact; because the fact is plainly of a kind within the province of the jury, not of the judge. Nor is it a contribution of personal testimony, for the judge does not know it by his own observation, nor need he take the stand to testify. It is merely an occasional measure, taken in discretion, to satisfy the judge that he is justified in making the desired ruling for dispensing with evidence. He perceives that the fact probably cannot need evidence; he merely seeks to define the precise tenor of the fact about which he will make his ruling. The fact will still be in theory disputable before the jury (*ante*, § 2567); the judicial investigation is made, not in order to establish the fact in their stead, but to make a ruling dispensing one party from offering to them evidence the fact. This process, moreover, though permissible, is not compulsory upon the judge,⁹ inasmuch as judicial notice at large is itself more or less optional (*ante*, § 2568).

⁵ 1823, *Taylor v. Barclay*, 2 Sim. 213 ("In consequence of the arguments in this case, I have had communication with the Foreign Office, and I am authorized to state that the Federal Republic of Central America has not been recognized"); 1900, *Foster v. Globe Venture Synd.*, 1 Ch. 811 (boundaries of a foreign State); 1897, *Underhill v. Hernandez*, 168 U. S. 250, 18 Snp. 83 (the Court may consult the Department of State for information as to the Executive recognition of a foreign civil war and *de facto* government, and may find the fact upon such information).

⁶ 1898, *Barranger v. Baum*, 103 Ga. 465, 30 S. E. 524 (extradition); 1903, *Weils v. Greas*, — id. —, 45 S. E. 418 (law of another of the United States); and cases cited *ante*, § 2567, note 3.

⁷ 1789, *Answer of the Judges to the House of Lords*, 22 How. St. Tr. 302 (judges may resort to grammars and lexicons); 1792, *Eyre, C. B.*, in *Attorney-General v. Cast-plate Glass Co.*, 1 Anstr. 39, 44 ("On demurrer, a judge may well inform himself from dictionaries or books on the particular subject concerning the meaning of any word. If he does so at nisi

prius, and shews them to the jury, they are not to be considered as evidence, but only as the grounds on which the judge has formed his opinion"); 1902, *Hilton v. Raylance*, 25 Utah 129, 69 Pac. 660 (certain works on the Mormon religion having been excluded in the trial below, the Court held that it was entitled to refer to them nevertheless, as a matter of judicial knowledge, "to ascertain the particular meaning" of the Mormon doctrine of "sealing"); and instances cited *ante*, § 2556 (construction of documents) and §§ 1699, 1700 (dictionaries, etc., in evidence).

⁸ 1896, *People v. Mayes*, 113 Cal. 618, 45 Pac. 861 ("he is authorized to avail himself of any source of information which he may deem authentic, either by inquiring of others, or by the examination of books, or by receiving the testimony of witnesses"); and many instances *passim*, *post*, §§ 2572-2582.

⁹ *E. g.*: 1853, *Littlehale v. Dix*, 11 Cush. 364 (magistrate's certificate that a deponent lived more than thirty miles from the place of trial, and no contrary evidence; the Court held not bound to learn what the distance was).

§ 2570. *Judicial Notice by the Jury's Own Knowledge.* In general, the jury may in modern times act only upon evidence properly laid before them in the course of the trial. But so far as the matter in question is one upon which men in general have a common fund of experience and knowledge, through data notoriously accepted by all, the analogy of judicial notice obtains to some extent, and the jury are allowed to resort to this information in making up their minds. This doctrine, of course, has several aspects. From the point of view of the jury's duty, it appears as an exception to the rule that they must act only upon what is presented to them at the trial. From the point of view of the Hearsay rule, it may also be thought of as a partial exception to that.¹ But additionally it must be considered from the present point of view, for it authorizes the party to ask the *jury to refer to their general knowledge* upon the matter in question, and thus in effect and to that extent makes it unnecessary for the party to offer such evidence.

But the scope of this doctrine is narrow; it is strictly limited to a few matters of elemental experience in human nature, commercial affairs, and every-day life.² Thus, the natural instincts of human conduct, with reference to care or negligence at the time of danger, may be considered,³ the dangerousness of smoking a pipe in a barn near the straw,⁴ the conditions affecting the

¹ *Ante*, § 1900 (jurors having personal knowledge must take the stand and state it publicly as witnesses subject to cross-examination). Distinguish, however, the propriety of knowledge acquired at a view (*ante*, § 1168).

² In the palmy days of special juries (Thayer, *Preliminary Treatise*, pp. 94-97) this class of facts must obviously have been of broad range. But their gradual disuse seems to have been marked by a judicial inclination to disparage a resort to even that special knowledge for which they were first sought: 1836, *R. v. Rosser*, 6 C. & P. 648 (value of a watch; Vaughan, J.: "Any knowledge you may have on the subject you may use; some of you perhaps may be in the trade"; Parke, B.: "If a gentleman is in the trade, he must be sworn as a witness. That general knowledge which any man can bring to the subject may be used without; but if it depends on any knowledge of the trade, the gentleman must be sworn").

³ With the following cases, compare the presumption of carelessness (*ante*, § 2510): 1874, *Bridges v. R. Co.*, L. R. 7 II. L. 213 (Pollock, B.: "It appears to me that the jurors were entitled to assume that *prima facie* the deceased would conduct himself with ordinary prudence and discretion"); 1902, *Chicago & E. L. R. Co. v. Beaver*, 119 Ill. 34, 65 N. E. 144 (jury may consider the natural instinct to preserve life and avoid danger); 1894, *Hopkinson v. Knapp Co.*, 92 Ia. 328, 60 N. W. 653 (jury may consider the natural instinct to avoid danger); 1899, *Ellis v. Leonard*, 107 Id. 487, 78 N. W. 246 (the natural instinct of self-preservation from danger is not to be considered, if the plaintiff himself testifies); 1885, *Chase v. Maine Central R. Co.*, 77 Me. 262 (death by a train; the jury having

been instructed that they might consider their knowledge of "the habits of thought and mind and the natural instincts of men" to preserve themselves from injury, held, that on the facts the idea was "presented too prominently"); 1896, *Manning v. R. Co.*, 166 Mass. 230, 44 N. E. 135 (injury by the fall of a trolley; to the objection that there was no evidence of negligence, it was said "the jury were at liberty to say, from their experience as men of the world, that under such circumstances such an accident commonly does not happen, unless the stick is carelessly handled; that it is in the power of the holder to see that he does not submit it to such a strain as to make it possible that it should be torn from his hands; and to infer from those general propositions of experience that there was negligence in the particular case"); 1897, *Lamoureux v. R. Co.*, 169 Id. 338, 47 N. E. 1009 (ordinary conduct at a railroad crossing may be noticed); 1899, *Leary v. Fitchburg R. Co.*, 173 Id. 373, 53 N. E. 817, *semble* ("common experience" as to the mode of alighting from cars, proper to be considered); 1890, *Huntress v. R. Co.*, 66 N. H. 185, 34 Atl. 154 (Doe, C. J.: "When there is no evidence of insanity, intoxication, or suicidal purpose, and no evidence on the question of his care, except the instinct provided for the preservation of animal life, it may be inferred from this circumstantial proof that, for some reason consistent with ordinary care and freedom from fault on his part, his attempt to cross was due to his inadequate understanding of the risk").

⁴ 1898, *Lillibridge v. McCann*, 117 Mich. 84, 75 N. W. 288 (fire set in a barn by smoking a pipe in the straw; no evidence of dangerousness needed).

various kinds of values,⁶ the intoxicating nature of a certain liquor,⁶ and even (though this illustrates how local conditions may affect the application) that a game played with bone-counters was played for money;⁷ but such a matter of private and variable belief as the character of a particular witness cannot be so taken into consideration by the jury.⁸ The range of such general knowledge is not precisely definable;⁹ but in these days when too much

⁶ With the following cases compare those cited *ante*, § 1169 (jury's knowledge acquired at a view): 1881, *Green v. Chicago*, 87 Ill. 370, 372 (jury's "own knowledge of values" may be considered); 1898, *Springfield C. R. Co. v. Hoeffner*, 175 id. 634, 61 N. E. 884 (damages for personal injuries; general knowledge allowed to be used); 1900, *Rock Island & E. I. R. Co. v. Gordon*, 184 id. 456, 56 N. E. 810 (value of land; "your own general knowledge of matters and affairs," being struck from the instruction, was held to be mere surplusage); 1893, *Chicago K. & W. R. Co. v. Parsons*, 51 Kan. 406, 410, 32 Pac. 1089 (personal knowledge as to value of land is not to be considered); 1834, *Parks v. Boston*, 15 Pick. 198, 209 (eminent domain; in judging damages, the jury should "take counsel of their own experience and knowledge of like subjects"); 1839, *Murdock v. Sumner*, 22 id. 156 (value of goods converted); *Shaw, C. J.*: "The jury may properly exercise their own judgment and apply their own knowledge and experience in regard to the general subject of inquiry"; 1868, *Bradford v. Cnnard Co.*, 147 Mass. 55, 16 N. E. 719, *semble* ("common experience" is usable in finding values); 1902, *De Gray v. N. Y. & N. J. Telephone Co.*, 68 N. J. L. 454, 33 Atl. 200 (jurors' experience as to the detriment of telephone structures to the value of property, not allowed to be considered); 1881, *Head v. Hargrave*, 105 U. S. 45, 49 ("their own general knowledge and ideas" are available in weighing expert testimony to value); 1818, *Cummings v. Com.*, 2 Va. Cas. 128 (larceny of a bank-note; the defendant's passing it off in payment relieved from any further evidence of value); 1864, *Washburn v. R. Co.*, 59 Wis. 364, 371, 18 N. W. 326 (land damages; the jury may use their general knowledge of "the elements affecting the assessment," but their verdict must be supported by the testimony; leading opinion, by Lyon, J.).

⁷ 1854, *Com. v. Peckham*, 2 Gray 514.

⁸ 1840, *Stevens v. State*, 3 Ark. 88 (gambling; though there was no evidence that the play was for value, yet the jury was allowed to use its "experience" to infer that the bone-counters represented money).

⁹ 1895, *Jenney Electric Co. v. Branham*, 145 Ind. 314, 41 N. E. 448 (jurors may use general experience in judging of witnesses' credibility; good opinion, by Hackney, J.); 1854, *Schmidt v. Ins. Co.*, 1 Gray 529 (jurors may act on information which may "fairly be supposed to be within the common knowledge of all the jurors"; but "any particular knowledge of any facts, such as respecting the general infamous character of any of the defendant's witnesses, . . . not being open to comment on the part of the defendant's counsel or to instruction

on the part of the Court, but which was in possession merely of some one or more, but not the whole of the jury, could not fairly be taken into view by the jury"); 1878, *Wharton v. State*, 45 Tex. 2, 4 (the jury asked the trial judge: "Can we judge a witness just by what he says on the stand, and not by what we know of him privately?" held, that the answer should have been in the affirmative); 1895, *Johnson v. R. Co.*, 91 Wis. 233, 64 N. W. 753 (the jury's knowledge of character of a particular witness is not to be used).

In *Georgia*, this result was at first not accepted: 1861, *Anderson v. Tribble*, 66 Ga. 585, 589 (a charge that a witness' character for veracity, if they knew it, might be considered, was approved); 1881, *Head v. Bridges*, 67 id. 227, 237 (same; the ruling defended in an able opinion by Crawford, J.); 1884, *Howard v. State*, 73 id. 83 (same ruling); 1892, *Chattanooga R. & C. R. Co. v. Owen*, 90 id. 285, 284, 15 S. E. 853 (preceding cases overruled; similar charge disapproved); 1894, *Collins v. State*, 94 id. 394, 19 S. E. 243 (same).

In *South Carolina* the earlier theory of a jury's knowledge long persisted: 1834, *M'Kain v. Love*, 2 Hill 506 (the jury may act, "in some degree, from their own knowledge of the character of the parties and their witnesses; it is for this reason that the jurors are drawn from the vicinage").

⁹ The following illustrate its further scope: 1852, *Houston v. State*, 13 Ark. 88 (larceny of a horse; though there was no evidence of its value, the jury's "knowledge and experience" was held to justify inferences that the defendant would not have borrowed it, as alleged, if valueless, etc.); 1834, *Parks v. Boston*, 15 Pick. 198, 199, 209 (a fact personally known must be testified to; but this does not include the knowledge obtained by a view, nor the common experience of judicial notice); 1896, *McGarraban v. R. Co.* 171 Mass. 211, 50 N. E. 610 (the jury may employ "their knowledge and experience of affairs"); 1897, *Illinois Central R. Co. v. Greaves*, 75 Miss. 560, 22 So. 792 (principle acknowledged; but a general instruction, without specifying the matter so to be known, was held improper); 1898, *Wills v. Lance*, 28 Or. 371, 43 Pac. 487 (whether a meteorological wind-record should be believed, against numerous eye-witnesses; jurors may use "such general practical knowledge as they may have upon the subject").

The following ruling would probably not be accepted to-day: 1816, *R. v. Sutton*, 4 M. & S. 532, 537, 542 (riots against weaving machines; the judge told the jury that they might refer to their personal knowledge of the riotous acts; held not improper, because he "did not advise

emphasis is placed, in the selection of jurors, on the blankness of their mental tablets, there can be no harm in the liberal application of the present principle. As a natural part of its doctrine, of course, these matters may be referred to by counsel in their arguments.¹⁰

2. *Specific Facts Noticed.*

§ 2572. *Laws: (1) Domestic Statutes and Ordinances.* A Court may be expected to dispense with evidence of the law of its own sovereignty; for it must be credited with a knowledge of it, or at least with the most competent knowledge where to search for it. No evidence of it need therefore be offered; and the counsel's reference during a trial to the text, or a copy, of the statute, for informing the judge, must be regarded as a judicial license to counsel to employ that evidence which the judge (*ante*, § 2569) would in theory seek for himself.¹

There are, however, certain natural limitations, by which Courts customarily abdicate their responsibility of knowing or of seeking for themselves:

(a) In the first place, the doctrine applies in strictness to *public or general statutes* of the Legislature only.² But the distinction between a public or general act and a *private or special act* is, in the United States at least, not always easy to make. It may be said that a restriction of locality does not prevent an act from being public, provided the law is general in its application to persons; *e. g.*, a law regulating within certain districts the right of fishing,³ or the right of navigation,⁴ or the lumber trade,⁵ or the sale of liquor.⁶ Acts incorporating municipal corporations, even by special charter, are usually regarded as public,⁷ as also acts incorporating State banks,⁸ and acts incorporating railways by general provisions,⁹ though not by special charter.¹⁰ Moreover,

them to rely on that as a source of information on which they were to found their verdict, but only that it might make the proof more satisfactory to their minds if they knew what had passed¹¹).

¹⁰ 1895, *State v. Lingle*, 126 Mo. 523, 31 S. W. 20; 1896, *State v. Marsh*, 70 Vt. 288, 40 Atl. 337 (counsel allowed to call the jury's attention to inquest methods, etc.).

¹¹ 1840, Baron Parke, in *Frost's Trial*, *Gurney's Rep.* 168, to counsel: "For the future, it would save time if, when you founded an objection upon an Act of Parliament, you had the Act here; for, though we are supposed to keep the statutes in our heads, we do not."

For the *authentic text* of a statute, when its contents are disputed, see *ante*, § 1350 (enrolled copy preferred to legislative journals).

¹ 1900, *State v. H. & C. Turnpike Co.*, 65 N. J. L. 97, 46 Atl. 700; 1832, *Joland v. Wilkinson*, 6 Pet. 317, 319 (proceedings of the Legislature on petitions for relief by individuals, not to be noticed or read as public laws).

² 1809, *Burnham v. Webster*, 5 Mass. 266, 269.

³ 1833, *Hammond v. Inloes*, 4 Md. 138, 172.

⁴ 1832, *Pierce v. Kimball*, 9 Greenl. 54, 56.

⁵ 1855, *Levy v. State*, 6 Ind. 281, 283; 1888, *State v. Cooper*, 101 N. C. 688, 8 S. E. 134.

⁷ 1677, *Albrittin v. Huntsville*, 60 Ala. 466, 492; 1650, *Alderman v. Finley*, 10 Ark. 423, 428; 1860, *Payne v. Treadwell*, 16 Cal. 230, 232; 1678, *Doyle v. Bradford*, 90 Ill. 416 (statute applied, on special facts); 1694, *Jones v. Lake View*, 151 id. 663, 675, 36 N. E. 688; 1862, *Macey v. Titcombe*, 19 Ind. 135, 137; 1875, *Stier v. Oskaloosa*, 41 Ia. 353, 355; 1671, *Prell v. McDonald*, 7 Kan. 426, 446; 1868, *State v. Sherman*, 42 Mo. 210, 214; 1835, *Briggs v. Whipple*, 7 Vt. 15, 19; 1864, *Swain v. Comstock*, 18 Wis. 463, 468; 1901, *Davey v. Janesville*, 111 id. 626, 87 N. W. 813 (the adoption of a general charter law by a particular city, noticed, as well as amendments thereto).

⁸ 1860, *Davis v. Bank of Fulton*, 31 Ga. 69; 1862, *Gordon v. Montgomery*, 19 Ind. 110; 1855, *Bank of Newbury v. R. Co.*, 9 Rich. L. 495; 1861, *Bnell v. Warner*, 33 Vt. 570, 578.

⁹ 1861, *Heaston v. R. Co.*, 16 Ind. 275, 278.

¹⁰ 1876, *Perry v. R. Co.*, 55 Ala. 413, 426; 1839, *Ohio etc. R. Co. v. Ridge*, 5 Blackf. 78; 1872, *Atchison T. & S. F. R. Co. v. Blackshire*, 10 Kan. 477, 487. *Contra*: 1866, *Wright v. Hawkins*, 28 Tex. 452, 471.

The principle is often liberally treated—1898, *Miller v. Matthews*, 37 Md. 464, 40 Atl. 176 (notice taken of a statute chartering a company to be sole surety on official bonds). But

an act declared by the Legislature itself to be deemed a public act will be so treated;¹¹ and of course an amendment of a private act by a public one,¹² or any amendment of a public one,¹³ will be noticed. Occasionally, too, statutes require all private acts to be noticed.¹⁴

(b) The ordinances and regulations of local boards and councils are not noticed.¹⁵ The regulations of executive departments or bureaus are sometimes, but not always, noticed.¹⁶

§ 2573. Same: (2) Foreign Law. The laws of other nations and States — not being laws of the forum at all, except by casual adoption — will not be noticed.¹ But here some further discriminations are necessary:

(a) Relatively to each other, the States of the United States are independently sovereign, and for the present purpose foreign; hence their laws, equally with the laws of other nations, will not be noticed by the Courts of any one of the United States.²

in theory no private corporate charter need be noticed; 1846, *Winnepisogee Lake Co. v. Young*, 40 N. H. 490, 428 (corporate name).

¹¹ 1834, *Beaumont v. Mountain*, 10 Bing. 404; 1896, *Missouri, K. & T. R. Co. v. Colburn*, 90 Tex. 250, 38 S. W. 153; 1830, *Beaty v. Knowler*, 4 Pet. 152, 187.

¹² 1890, *Lavalle v. People*, 6 Ill. App. 157.

¹³ 1863, *Parent v. Walmsley's Admrs*, 30 Ind. 82, 86; 1879, *Belmont v. Morrill*, 69 Me. 314, 317.

¹⁴ *E. g.*: Conn. Gen. St. 1887, § 1087 ("private or special acts"); 1878, *Doyle v. Bradford*, 90 Ill. 418; 1861, *Eel River D. Ass'n v. Topp*, 18 Ind. 242.

¹⁵ 1857, *Case v. Mobile*, 30 Ala. 538 (city); 1899, *Moore v. Jonesboro*, 107 Ga. 704, 33 S. E. 435 (city); 1857, *Indianapolis & C. R. Co. v. Caldwell*, 9 Ind. 397 (county board); 1859, *Garvin v. Wells*, 8 Ia. 288 (city); 1899, *Watt v. Jones*, 60 Kan. 201, 58 Pac. 18 (city, in civil cases); 1901, *Horne v. Mehler*, — Ky. —, 64 S. W. 918 (city); 1852, *Hassard v. Municipality*, 7 La. An. 495 (city); 1895, *Shaufelter v. Baltimore*, 80 Md. 483, 31 Atl. 439 (city); 1898, *Field v. Malster*, 86 id. 891, 41 Atl. 1087; 1876, *Winona v. Burke*, 23 Minn. 254 (city); 1894, *Mooney v. Kennett*, 19 Mo. 52., 555 (city); 1877, *Porter v. Waring*, 89 N. Y. 250, 254 (city); 1898, *Stittgen v. Rundle*, 99 Wis. 78, 74 N. W. 538. But the following distinction seems sound: 1899, *Scranton v. Danenbaum*, — Ia. —, 80 N. W. 221 (a municipal Court must notice municipal ordinance).

¹⁶ 1893, *Com. v. Crane*, 158 Mass. 218, 33 N. E. 388 (internal revenue regulations as to oleomargarine, not noticed); 1895, *Campbell v. Wood*, 118 Mo. 198, 202, 22 S. W. 798 (surveyor general's instructions to deputies, noticed); 1902, *Larson v. First Nat'l Bank*, — Nebr. —, 92 N. W. 729 (regulations of the Indian bureau in the Interior Department, noticed); 1899, *U. S. v. Gumm*, 9 N. M. 811, 58 Pac. 398 (Interior Department regulations for license to cut timber, noticed); 1894, *Caha v. U. S.*, 152 U. S. 211, 221, 14 Sup. 513 (Interior Department regulations for land-office suits, noticed); 1898, *Dominici v. U. S.*, 72 Fed. 46 (Treasury

Department regulations, etc., noticed); 1893, *The Clara*, 8 C. C. A. 390, 55 Fed. 1021 (marine inspectors' regulations, not noticed); 1899, *Smith v. Shakopee*, 38 C. C. A. 617, 97 Fed. 974 (regulations of Federal lighthouse board, not noticed); 1901, *Whitney v. Spratt*, 25 Wash. 62, 64 Pac. 919 (rules and decisions of U. S. land-office, noticed).

¹ 1718, *Fremont v. Dedire*, 1 P. Wms. 429 (Holland); 1884, *Board v. Estrella*, 5 Haw. 211, 214 (law of Portugal); 1832, *Strother v. Lucas*, 6 Pet. 763, 768; 1872, *The Pawashick*, 2 Lowell 143; 1875, *Dainese v. Hale*, 91 U. S. 13, 18.

But Admiralty law, so far as in effect international and common to all, may be noticed: 1801, *Talbot v. Seaman*, 1 Cr. 1, 37 (French marine decrees as to neutral commerce, noticed as laws); 1871, *The Scotia*, 14 Wall. 170, 188; 1899, *The New York*, 175 U. S. 187, 20 Sup. 87 (Canadian statute adopting Revised International Regulations for Navigation, noticed). *Contra*: 1872, *The Pawashick*, 2 Lowell 142, *semble*.

By statute sometimes the rule is changed: *W. Va. Code* 1891, c. 13, § 4 (foreign law, "statutory or other" is to be noticed).

² In some Courts, a distinction is made between statute and common law; *Ala.*: 1869, *Insurance Co. v. Forchheimer*, 86 Ala. 541, 5 So. 870; *Ark.*: 1901, *Louisiana & N. W. R. Co. v. Phelps*, 70 Ark. 17, 65 S. W. 709 (but here a statute of 1899 changed the law); *Cal.*: 1854, *Cavender v. Guild*, 4 Cal. 250, 253; *Colo.*: 1886, *Polk v. Butterfield*, 9 Colo. 328, 12 Pac. 218; *Conn.*: 1823, *Brackett v. Norton*, 4 Conn. 517, 520; 1827, *Hempstead v. Reed*, 8 id. 480, 486; 1837, *Dyer v. Smith*, 12 id. 384, 390; 1843, *Hale v. S. N. Co.*, 15 id. 539, 549; *Fla.*: 1893, *Sammis v. Wightman*, 31 Fla. 10, 30, 12 So. 528; 1898, *Duke v. Taylor*, 37 id. 64, 19 So. 172 (here the law of organization of corporations); *Ga.*: 1868, *Simms v. Express Co.*, 38 Ga. 129; *Ill.*: 1860, *Chumasero v. Gilbert*, 24 Ill. 293; 1895, *Ferris v. Bank*, 158 id. 237, 41 N. E. 1118 (the authority of a foreign notary to administer an oath); *Ind.*: 1859, *Johuson v. Chambers*, 12 Ind. 102, 105; *Ind. T.*: 1900, *Hockett v. Alston*, — Ind. T. —, 58 S. W. 875 (law of Cherokee

(b) The Federal laws of the United States are equally the laws of each State, and hence the Courts of one of the United States notice them, whether ordinary public acts of Congress² or treaties;⁴ and they are of course noticed by the Federal Courts.⁵

(c) Since the judicial powers of the Federal Courts extend to many cases arising under the laws of the various States of the Union, such State laws are for the purpose in hand part of the law of the Federal Courts, and will therefore be noticed by them;⁶ though the Federal Supreme Court, on the somewhat scholastic theory that it cannot know on appeal what the Court below could not know, declines, on writ of error to a State Supreme Court, to notice what the latter could not notice, i. e. the law of a sister State.⁷ Extending this principle, it has been held by State Courts that in cases where appeal may be made to the Federal Courts on questions of Federal law, — e. g. the effect of a judgment in another State Court, — the law of such other State may be noticed.⁸

(d) So far as by subdivision or amalgamation the former laws of another sovereignty have to any extent become a part of the law of the forum, such former law of the other sovereignty may properly be noticed. This principle

Indian tribes in the Territory, not noticed); 1902, *Sass v. Thomas*, — id. —, 69 S. W. 893 (Chickasaw law); 1903, *Rowe v. Henderson*, — id. —, 78 S. W. 250 (suit between Chickasaw Indians concerning land in the Chickasaw Nation; the Chickasaw law not noticed); *Kan.*: 1900, *Alexandria A. & F. S. R. Co. v. Johnson*, 61 Kan. 417, 59 Pac. 1063; *La.*: 1902, *Rush v. Landers*, 107 La. 549, 32 So. 95; *Md.*: 1867, *Baltimore & O. R. Co. v. Glenn*, 38 Md. 287, 325; *Mass.*: 1868, *Kline v. Baker*, 99 Mass. 253; 1893, *Chipman v. Peabody*, 159 Id. 430, 433, 34 N. E. 563; *Minn.*: 1901, *Crandall v. R. Co.*, 83 Minn. 190, 86 N. W. 10; *Mo.*: 1857, *Charlotte v. Chouteau*, 25 Mo. 465, 473; *N. J.*: 1868, *Condit v. Blackwell*, 19 N. J. Eq. 193, 196; *N. C.*: 1857, *Hooper v. Moore*, 5 Jones L. 130, 132; *Okl.*: 1900, *Greensville N. Bank v. Evans*, 8 B. Co., 9 Okl. 353, 60 Pac. 249 (laws of Arkansas, as extended by Federal Act to Indian Territory, not noticed; leading opinion); *R. I.*: 1898, *Taylor v. Slater*, 21 R. I. 104, 41 Atl. 1001; *Tex.*: 1859, *Anderson v. Anderson*, 23 Tex. 639; *Vt.*: 1899, *Murtey v. Allen*, 71 Vt. 377, 45 Atl. 752; *Va.*: 1817, *Warner v. Com.*, 2 Va. Cas. 95, 98.

In Canada, the intercolonial laws are by statute to be noticed: Dom. St. 1893, c. 31, § 7 (specified kinds of British imperial, provincial, and colonial laws, to be noticed); B. C. Rev. St. 1897, c. 71, § 8 (like Can. St. 1893, c. 31, § 7); Man. Rev. St. 1902, c. 57, § 7 (like Can. St. 1893, c. 31, § 7, specially mentioning "this Province").

Sometimes a similar statute has done the same for noticing the laws of others of the United States: 1854, *Bates v. McCully*, 27 Miss. 584; 1895, *Lockhead v. B. S. W. & I. Co.*, 40 W. Va. 553, 21 S. E. 1031.

A statute sometimes regulates the mode of evidencing: Tenn. Code 1896, § 5586 (a statute

read in evidence in a lower Court will be noticed in a Superior Court, without transcription).

² 1873, *Morris v. Davidson*, 49 Ga. 361; 1832, *Chesapeake & O. Canal Co. v. B. & O. R. Co.* 4 G. & J. 1, 63; 1872-3, *Mims v. Swartz*, 37 Tex. 13; 1871, *Bird v. Com.* 21 Gratt. 800, 808. ³ 1860, *Carson v. Smith*, 5 Minn. 76 (Indian treaty); 1854, *Montgomery v. Deesley*, 3 Wis. 709 (Ashburton treaty).

⁴ 1850, *U. S. v. Keynes*, 9 How. 127, 147 (Louisiana treaties of cession); 1896, *Callson v. Hope*, 75 Fed. 758, 781 (the Treaty of cession of Alaska, March 30, 1867, the protocol of transfer, and the inventories and map attached).

⁵ 1835, *Owings v. Hall*, 9 Pet. 607, 824; 1868, *Liverpool & G. W. S. Co. v. Ins. Co.*, 129 U. S. 397, 445, 9 Sup. 499; 1893, *Loree v. Ahner*, 6 C. C. A. 302, 57 Fed. 159 (Pennsylvania before 1788); 1894, *Merchants Exch. Bank v. McGraw*, 8 C. C. A. 420, 59 Fed. 972 (Wisconsin); 1894, *Western & A. R. Co. v. Roberson*, 9 C. C. A. 646, 61 Fed. 592 (Georgia and Tennessee); 1901, *Barry v. Snowden*, 106 Fed. 571. *Contra*: 1898, *Wilson v. Owens*, 30 C. C. A. 257, 86 Fed. 571 (notice of the law of the Chickasaw nation in the Indian Territory, not taken).

⁶ 1865, *Hanley v. Donoghue*, 118 U. S. 1, 8 Sup. 242.

⁷ 1863, *Butcher v. Bank of Brownsville*, 2 Kan. 70 (Pennsylvania judgment); 1871, *Shotwell v. Harrison*, 22 Mich. 410, 414 (certified copy of a Massachusetts deed); 1856, *Ohio v. Hinchman*, 27 Pa. 479, 482 (Ohio judgment; leading opinion, by *Woodward, J.*); 1876, *Paine v. Schenectady Ins.*, 11 R. I. 411, 415 (New York judgment); 1900, *Trowbridge v. Spinning*, 23 Wash. 48, 52 Pac. 124 (jurisdiction of a city court of St. Louis, Mo., noticed); 1867, *Jarvis v. Robinson*, 21 Wis. 523 (Michigan judgment).

has been applied to the laws of another of the United States from which that of the forum was formed by subdivision,⁹ to the laws of Mexico,¹⁰ to the laws of the British colony of Pennsylvania,¹¹ and to the laws of England before the American Revolution; but is, of course, not applicable to the laws of England since that time.¹²

But in many instances where the law of another of the United States is involved, the *presumption of similarity* of the foreign law (*ante*, § 2536) may render assistance. The Courts have failed to work out a theory of the relation between that presumption and the present principle of judicial notice.¹³ There is much apparent inconsistency, and yet both principles have a legitimate bearing.

§ 2574. **Political Facts:** (1) **International Affairs; Seals of State.** The external political facts of international affairs, as distinguished on the one hand from the common international law (*ante*, § 2573) and on the other hand from the domestic political facts of the forum of the Court (*post*, § 2575), cannot be said to be made the subject of judicial notice.¹ In the chief instance likely to come into litigation, namely, the *existence of a particular foreign State* as independent among nations, the Court follows the action of the Executive of the forum; it recognizes that action, not as an international fact, but as a domestic political fact (*ante*, § 2566, par. 3). In another instance sometimes considered to fall under this head, namely, the *authenticity of a purporting seal* of a foreign State or judge, the process is in truth one of presuming genuine the specific seal-impression offered (*ante*, §§ 2163-2166); for although it might be possible to predicate judicial knowledge of a seal's design, it is preposterous to say that a judge can know whether a specific impress is genuine or who affixed it. Still another fact sometimes here classed, namely, the existence or effect of a *foreign judgment* is either a question of substantive law, not of evidence (*ante*, § 1347), or a question of proving the foreign record by ordinary means (*ante*, § 1681).

§ 2575. **Same:** (2) **Domestic Political Organization; Boundaries, Capitals, etc.** So far as the facts of political organization and operation of the State are determined in the law, they are judicially noticed as a part of the law (*ante*, § 2572). The chief difficulty comes in distinguishing between what is contained solely and abstractly in the law, and what depends more or less on specific official acts done under the law or upon the application of the descrip-

⁹ 1822, *Henthorn v. Doe*, 1 Blackf. 157, 161, 163 (printed statute book of Virginia judicially noticed as of a State originally sovereign in Indiana).

¹⁰ 1895, *U. S. v. Chaves*, 159 U. S. 452, 16 Sup. 57 (the laws and regulations of Mexico pertaining to land-grants made prior to the cession of 1848).

¹¹ 1893, *Loree v. Ahner*, 6 C. C. A. 302, 57 Fed. 159 (statutes of the colony of Pennsylvania and of the State under the articles of Confederation).

¹² 1888, *Liverpool & G. W. S. Co. v. Ins. Co.*, *supra*, note 5.

¹³ For a good exposition of the distinction

between noticing the domestic law, proving the foreign law, and presuming it, see *Hooper v. Moore*, 5 Jones L. 132.

¹ Except such facts as fairly fall within the principle of common notoriety (*post*, § 2580) or Executive action (*ante*, § 2566); e. g., a *state of war*: 1797, *Maclane's Trial*, 26 How. St. Tr. 797; 1805, *Dolder v. Lord Huntingfield*, 11 Ves. Jr. 283, 292 ("that France is now at war with Austria," not noticed; otherwise of being at war with England); 1814, *R. v. De Berenger*, 4 M. & S. 67, 69 (Ellenborough, L. C. J., said "there were so many statutes which spoke of a war with France that it was impossible for the judges not to take judicial notice of it").

tive terms of the law to concrete things. Courts are apt to be extremely liberal in drawing the line so as to favor judicial notice.

In regard to the *territorial descriptions* in political law — boundaries, capitals, surveys, roads, and the like —, it is difficult to make any generalization; in the liberal application of the principle, exact consistency is hardly possible.¹

¹ The following are illustrations: *Eng.*: 1721, *Fasakerley v. Wiltshire*, 1 Stra. 462, 469 (per Eyre, J.: "We must take notice of the extents of ports"); 1821, *Deybel's Case*, 4 B. & Ald. 242, 246 ("the general division of the kingdom into counties," noticed); 1842, *Brunt v. Thompson*, 2 Q. B. 789 (that a certain part of the Tower of London was within the boundary of the city of London, not noticed); 1856, *Cooke v. Wilson*, 1 C. B. n. s. 153, 163 (that the colony of Victoria is out of England, noticed); *Ala.*: 1857, *King v. Kent's Adm'r*, 29 Ala. 542, 552 (the location within the State of certain lands defined by statute, noticed); 1858, *Lewis v. Harris*, 31 id. 689 (that lands of F. Co. were held under U. S. government title, noticed); 1872, *Smith v. Flournoy's Adm'r*, 47 id. 345 (that Eufaula is a city, in Barbour Co., etc., noticed); 1898, *Water v. State*, 117 id. 189, 23 So. 28 (location of a public road in H. Co., not noticed); *Ark.*: 1895, *Independence Boulevard — Ark. —*, 30 S. W. 773 (limits of a municipality, noticed); 1900, *St. Louis Iron M. & S. R. Co. v. Cady*, 67 id. 512, 55 S. W. 929 (that "Glenwood" was in a certain county, not noticed); 1900, *St. Louis L. M. & S. R. Co. v. Magness*, 68 id. 289, 57 S. W. 933 (that a town is in a certain county, noticed); *Cal.*: 1893, *People v. Esting*, 99 Cal. 577, 34 Pac. 237 (that a certain town is within a county and is its county-seat, noticed); 1894, *Rogers v. Cady*, 104 id. 288, 38 Pac. 1 (government survey, noticed); 1895, *DeBaker v. R. Co.*, 106 id. 257, 39 Pac. 610 (the course of a river frequently mentioned in statutes, and the boundary of a city, noticed); 1895, *Schwerdtle v. Placer Co.*, 108 id. 589, 41 Pac. 449 (that certain land is within the public domain, not noticed); 1895, *Diggies v. Hartshorne*, id. 154, 41 Pac. 283 (that a mapped space is correctly located, i. e. that boundaries actually run at a given spot, not noticed); 1896, *People v. Faust*, 113 id. 172, 45 Pac. 261 (that a town is a county seat, noticed); *Conn.*: 1856, *State v. Powers*, 25 Conn. 48 (that Stouington is in New London county, noticed); *Ga.*: 1901, *Perry v. State*, 113 Ga. 936, 39 S. E. 315 (on evidence that a town is in the State, the county of its location will be noticed); *Ill.*: 1832, *Ross v. Reddick*, 2 Ill. 73 (the boundaries of a county, noticed); 1873, *Gooding v. Morgan*, 70 id. 275 (similar); 1876, *Gardner v. Eberhart*, 82 id. 316 (the subdivision of town and city property into blocks and lots, etc., noticed); 1897, *Sever v. Lyon*, 170 id. 395, 48 N. E. 926 (a homestead covering more than one lot; notice taken of the block and lot subdivision); 1898, *Gilbert v. Nat'l C. R. Co.*, 176 id. 288, 52 N. E. 22 (that an incorporated town is in a given county, noticed); 1900, *McCoy v. World's Columbian Exposition*, 186 id. 356, 57 N. E. 1043 (location of the Exposition in Chicago, noticed); 1901, *Gunning v. People*, 189 id. 165, 59 N. E. 494 (that the "Reliance Building" is located in the town of South Chicago, not noticed); *Ind.*: 1877, *Steinmetz v. Versailles & O. Turnpike Co.*, 57 Ind. 457 (that a road between two towns would lie within a county, noticed); 1877, *Murphy v. Hendricks*, ib. 593 (Congressional survey of Northwest Territory, noticed); 1897, *Board v. State*, 147 id. 476, 46 N. E. 908 (the area and boundaries of a county, noticed); *Me.*: 1855, *Ham v. Ham*, 39 Me. 263 (county lines, and the towns therein, noticed); 1863, *Martin v. Martin*, 51 id. 366 (that a town is within a certain county, noticed); 1897, *State v. Simpson*, 91 id. 83, 39 Atl. 287 (the town of Waterville, noticed to be in the county of Keunebec); *Mass.*: 1869, *Com. v. Desmond*, 133 Mass. 445 (that Suffolk county is a county of Massachusetts, noticed); 1894, *Com. v. Wheeler*, 162 id. 429, 38 N. E. 1115 (the county within which a town lay, not noticed); *Mich.*: 1864, *Cummings v. Stone*, 13 Mich. 70 (that not all of the St. Clair river is in Michigan, noticed); *Minn.*: 1888, *Quinn v. Champagne*, 38 Minn. 323, 37 N. W. 451 (the general system of governmental surveys, noticed); 1896, *Banmann v. Trust Co.*, 66 id. 227, 68 N. W. 1074 (location of a city within a given county, noticed); 1898, *Kretschmar v. Meehan*, 74 id. 211, 77 N. W. 41 (that a piece of land is in a certain county, not noticed); *Mo.*: 1894, *State v. Pennington*, 124 Mo. 388, 27 S. W. 1106 (county-seat, noticed); *N. H.*: 1860, *Wiunipisogee Lake Co. v. Young*, 40 N. H. 420, 429 (counties and towns, noticed); *N. C.*: 1896, *State v. Snow*, 117 N. C. 774, 23 S. E. 322 (county-names, noticed as such); *R. I.*: 1855, *State v. Duwelle*, 3 R. I. 127 (the boundaries of the State as claimed by it, recognized, but not the boundary *de jure*); *Tex.*: 1866, *Wright v. Hawkins*, 28 Tex. 452, 472 (county-boundaries, noticed); 1880, *Solyer v. Romanet*, 52 id. 562, 568 (that the city of Galveston is in the county of Galveston in Texas, noticed); 1896, *Hambel v. Davis*, 89 id. 256, 34 S. W. 439 (that a town is the county-seat, noticed); *Whitner v. Belknap*, ib. 273, 34 S. W. 594 (same); *U. S.*: 1824, *The Apollon*, 9 Wheat. 362, 374 ("public facts and geographical positions" are to be noticed); 1833, *Peyroux v. Howard*, 7 Pet. 324, 342 (that the port of New Orleans was within the jurisdiction, as depending on the ebb and flow of tide at that point, noticed); *Utah*: 1898, *McMaster v. Morse*, 18 Utah 21, 55 Pac. 70 (that a certain city was surveyed into lots, blocks, and streets, noticed); *Va.*: 1902, *Anderson v. Com.*, 100 Va. 860, 42 S. E. 865 (unincorporated town, not noticed); *Wis.*: 1859, *Atwater v. Schenck*, 9 Wis. 160 (the legal subdivisions of public lands, noticed).

Distinguish the question whether the fact will be noticed that there is *only one town* of a given name in existence or in a particular country:

§ 2576. **Same: (3) Domestic Officials, their Identity and Authority; Genuineness of Official Documents.** It is the law that creates certain offices, and attributes certain duties and authorities to the incumbents; but whether the incumbent at a given time and place is a specific person depends on external political action, sometimes recorded or notorious, but sometimes neither. Courts have solved this application of the principle by considerations of practical good sense and convenience; which are, however, difficult to reduce to a definite rule. All that can be said is that the incumbencies of the more important and notorious offices are judicially noticed, and that many of the lesser and local ones are not.¹

But the field for the present principle, applied without other complications, is after all limited. In the first place, the *authentication of official documents* involves usually the additional element of the presumption of genuineness of the seal or signature; this has been elsewhere dealt with (*ante*, §§ 2161-2167); the pure question of judicial notice arises here only when the signature or seal is otherwise evidenced and the incumbency of the person remains alone to be proved. Again, the *presumption of office* from a notorious acting of a person in the office (*ante*, §§ 2168, 2535) does not rest on the present principle; it is invoked only when the present principle fails to aid the purpose.

§ 2577. **Same: (4) Official Acts; Elections, Census, Legislative Proceedings, etc.** It can seldom happen that the doing of an official act can properly

1819, *Kearney v. King*, 2 B. & Ald. 301 (bill of exchange, declared on as drawn and accepted at Dublin for £542; the question being whether it was drawn for Irish or English money, the Court declined "to take judicial notice that there is only one Dublin in the world"; this was correct; but the Court should have presumed that a bill purporting to be in Dublin was in the Dublin of Ireland, on the same principle as the presumption of dating (*ante*, § 2520); this result is plain, and it is curious that the Court could not find a principle on which to reach it); 1849, *Andrews v. Hoxie*, 5 Tex. 171, 182 (promissory note payable in New Orleans; that this was in Louisiana, probably not noticed; here the proper solution was the same as in the preceding case).

¹ To the following cases add most of those cited *ante*, §§ 2163-2168, where the same principle is involved; some of the following cases belong there also, but are here placed as illustrations of the usage: 1705, *Elderton's Case*, 2 Ld. Raym. 978, 980, *semble* (the authority of certain officers as justices of the peace, noticed); 1809, *R. v. Jones*, 2 Camp. 131 (the signatures being proved, the incumbency of persons signing as lords Commissioners of the Treasury was presumed); 1855, *Ingram v. State*, 27 Ala. 17, 20 (sheriffs of the several counties, noticed); 1874, *Thielmann v. Burg*, 73 Ill. 293 (jurat of a notary public, without seal; his incumbency noticed); 1900, *Crawford v. State*, 155 Ind. 692, 57 N. E. 931 (whether a person was a deputy of the attorney-general, not noticed); 1842, *Walden v. Canfield*, 2 Rob. La. 466, 469 (Edward Living-

ston's office as Senator, etc., noticed); 1857, *Lindsey v. Attorney-General*, 33 Miss. 508, 528 (changes in the governorship, noticed); 1900, *State v. Mason*, 155 Mo. 486, 55 S. W. 636 (number of members of the Legislature, noticed); 1866, *Wells v. Jackson I. M. Co.*, 47 N. H. 235, 260 (that D. L. M. was governor in 1826, noticed); 1827, *Bennett v. State*, Mart. & Y. 133, 135 (that T. B. C. was attorney-general, noticed); 1854, *Major v. State*, 2 Sneed 11 (the incumbency of one signing as clerk of court, noticed, as being a public officer); 1847, *State v. Evans*, 8 Humph. 110 ("John P. Campbell, attorney-general"; notice taken of the district for which he was officer; also that N. B. had resigned that office before the term ended, and that J. P. C. had been appointed); 1849, *State v. Cole*, 9 id. 626 (*venire* signed "B. H. G."; notice taken that he was clerk of the issuing county); 1874, *Currey v. State*, 7 Bext. 154, 156 (that J. M. T., signing an indictment, was attorney-general, noticed); 1870, *Deweese v. Colorado Co.*, 32 Tex. 570 (that H. was Governor of the State, noticed); 1854, *York & M. R. Co. v. Winans*, 17 How. 30 (the incumbency of the acting commissioner of patents, noticed); 1899, *Smyth v. New Orleans C. & B. Co.*, 35 C. C. A. 646, 93 Fed. 899 (signature of the government secretary of the Spanish colony of Louisiana, noticed); W. Va. Code 1891, c. 130, § 3 (the signature of any domestic judge or of the governor is to be noticed); 1865, *Ward v. Heury*, 19 Wis. 76, 81 (the incumbency of a deputy marshal, not noticed).

be judicially noticed; it must usually be evidenced in the ordinary ways.¹ Perhaps an Executive *proclamation* should be noticed.² All Courts take notice, in one or another aspect, of facts concerning *public elections*,³ though this often involves rather the use of official reports as evidence (*ante*, §§ 1351, 1672). The acts of the *census* officials, in returning the data of population, are commonly said to be judicially noticed;⁴ though this is almost always a misnomer for their admissibility in evidence (*ante*, § 1671). The *proceedings* of the Legislature, as shown in its *journals*, are by some Courts noticed;⁵ but this is an artificial theory; on principle, the proceedings as contained in the journal are evidenced by a printed copy or by a certified copy (*ante*, §§ 1662, 1680, 1684).⁶

§ 2578. *Judicial Proceedings*: (1) *Officers and Rules of Court*. Under the general principle for domestic officials (*ante*, § 2576), notice is taken of the incumbency of other *officers of Courts*; although here, as there, some uncertainty exists as to the extent to which this will include the inferior and more numerous officers, particularly justices of the peace and attorneys.¹

¹ In particular, by the official's statements (*ante*, §§ 1630-1684).

² But this usually involves rather the offer of the proclamation as evidence to a fact recited (*ante*, § 1662).

³ 1897, *State v. Downs*, 148 Ind. 324, 47 N. E. 670 (that at a recent election a "Republican Ticket" was submitted, noticed); 1901, *Re Denny*, 156 id. 104, 59 N. E. 359 (number of vote cast for a constitutional amendment, noticed); 1863, *State v. Minnick*, 15 Ia. 123, 125 (that a general election was held on a certain date, and that certain officers were to be voted for, noticed); 1873, *Ellis v. Reddin*, 12 Kan. 306 (similar); 1895, *Whitman v. State*, 80 Md. 410, 31 Atl. 325 (the result of a local-option election, not noticed); 1898, *State v. Stearns*, 72 Minn. 200, 75 N. W. 210 (reference had to election returns, etc., to determine whether a proper majority voted for a law); 1896, *Jackson Co. v. Arnold*, 135 Mo. 207, 36 S. W. 662 (the date of election to be held for President of the United States, noticed); 1898, *Kokes v. State*, 55 Nebr. 691, 76 N. W. 467 (result of State and county elections, noticed); 1893, *Thomas v. Com.*, 90 Va. 92, 95, 17 S. E. 785 (that a certain district voted against licensing the sale of liquor, noticed).

⁴ 1883, *People v. Williams*, 64 Cal. 87, 91 (Federal census results); 1890, *Worcester National Bank v. Cheney*, 94 Ill. 430 (county population by the census, noticed as not being within the first class); 1898, *Huntington v. Cast*, — Ind. —, 48 N. E. 1025 (the Federal census, as determining a city's population); 1893, *State v. Braskamp*, 87 Ia. 588, 54 N. W. 532 (the population of a county as shown by the last national census); 1898, *Bennett v. Marion*, 106 id. 628, 76 N. W. 844 (population of a city by the Federal census); 1895, *State v. Marion Co. Court*, 128 Mo. 427, 30 S. W. 103 (Federal census); 1893, *Brown v. Lutz*, 36 Nebr. 527, 530, 54 N. W. 860 (that a city is of the second class as to population); 1898, *Kokes v. State*, 55 id. 691, 76 N. W. 467 (the Federal census and the State

school census); 1900, *Stratton v. Oregon City*, 35 Or. 409, 60 Pac. 905 (population of a city by the Federal census).

⁵ 1895, *State v. Hocker*, 36 Fla. 358, 18 So. 767; Ga. Code, 1895, § 5210 (legislative journals, recognized without proof); 1899, *Dane Co. v. Reindahl*, 104 Wis. 302, 80 N. W. 438. *Contra*: 1867, *Illinois C. R. Co. v. Wren*, 43 Ill. 17; 1867, *Bedard v. Hall*, 44 Id. 91; 1867, *Groh v. Cushman*, 45 id. 119, 125; 1856, *Coleman v. Dobbins*, 8 Ind. 156, 161 (the legislative journals will not be searched by the Court, but must be laid before the Court like any other record); 1864, *Burt v. R. Co.*, 31 Minn. 472, 477 (they must be put in evidence in order to overthrow the enrolled statute); 1856, *Green v. Weller*, 32 Miss. 650, 686, 711 (Smith, C. J., diss.); 1890, *Re Dnncan*, 139 U. S. 449, 457, 11 Snp. 573.

⁶ The question usually arises in determining whether the journals overthrow the enrolled act (*ante*, § 1350).

¹ 1705, *Elderton's Case*, 2 Ld. Raym. 978 (cited *ante*, § 2576); 1737, *Skipp v. Hooke*, 2 Stra. 1080 (that Sir John Willes was Chief Justice of the Common Bench; apparently not decided); 1845, *Van Sandan v. Turner*, 6 Q. B. 773, 786 (that Sir G. R. was a judge of the Court of Review in Bankruptcy; not decided); 1858, *Ex parte Peterson*, 33 Ala. 74 (resignation of a circuit judge, noticed); 1899, *McCarver v. Herzberg*, 120 Id. 523, 25 So. 3 (notice taken that T. G. W. was probate judge of P. Co.); 1898, *Clark v. Morrison*, — Ariz. —, 52 Pac. 985 (notice not taken of attorneys of a district Court not members of the Supreme Court bar); 1899, *Webb v. Kelsey*, 66 Ark. 180, 49 S. W. 819 (justice of the peace, noticed); 1892, *San Joaquin Co. v. Budd*, 96 Cal. 47, 61, 30 Pac. 967 (the acts of judges, noticed; but not the identity of a defendant having the same name as a judge); 1898, *People v. Ebanks*, 120 id. 626, 62 Pac. 1078 (notice taken that a person had ceased to be judge of a Superior Court); 1898, *State v. Travelers' Ins. Co.*, 70 Conn. 690, 40 Atl. 665

Under the general principle for domestic laws (*ante*, § 2572), notice is commonly taken of the various elements of *jurisdiction* as fixed by law,² of the *terms of Court*,³ and perhaps in general of the *rules of superior Courts*, though not those of inferior Courts.⁴

§ 2579. *Same: Records of Proceedings.* The proceedings in a Court are constituted by the record, and this record originally took its name from the judicial memory (*recordari*) which could be appealed to for recalling those prior proceedings.¹ Nevertheless, it seems to-day unreasonable, having regard to the general principle of judicial notice (*ante*, § 2565), to predicate an actual judicial knowledge of the proceedings in specific prior litigations (for they are commonly neither notorious, nor within the judge's duty of knowledge),

(whether a party is a citizen of the U. S., not noticed); 1867, *Graham v. Anderson*, 42 Ill. 514 (the justices of the peace in the county where the Court is sitting, noticed); 1895, *People v. McConnell*, 155 id. 192, 40 N. E. 608 (resignation of a circuit judge, noticed); 1895, *Ferris v. Bank*, 158 id. 237, 41 N. E. 1118 (that a person appearing as attorney is regularly licensed, noticed); 1898, *Gilbert v. Nat'l C. R. Co.*, 176 id. 288, 52 N. E. 22 (justice of the peace in the same county, noticed); 1880, *Kennedy v. Com.*, 78 Ky. 447 (that S. E. D. was a circuit judge, noticed); 1825, *Despan v. Swindler*, 3 Mart. n. s. 705 (magistrates of the parishes, noticed); 1842, *Follain v. Lefevre*, 3 Rob. La. 13 (N. J., noticed as not being the name of any associate judge of a city Court); 1824, *Ripley v. Warren*, 2 Pick. 592, 596 ("It is at least questionable whether we have any judicial knowledge of the fact" that J. M. W. was not the first justice of the Common Pleas Court); 1890, *Davis v. McEaney*, 150 Mass. 451, 43 N. E. 221 *semble* (that E. B. G. was cler. of the Police Court of H. at the time of complaint filed, not noticed); 1858, *Kilpatrick v. Com.*, 31 Pa. 198 (that neither J. R. L. nor J. A. was president of the Court of Common Pleas, noticed; leading opinion, by Strong, J.); 1900, *Barnwell v. Merion*, 58 S. C. 459, 36 S. E. 818 (that a judge was in a certain judicial circuit, that he was assigned to a certain session, that a certain day was the first day of the session, and that a county was in the circuit, noticed); 1898, *Sutton v. R. Co.*, 98 Wis. 157, 73 N. W. 993 (notice not taken that an attorney had removed from the State).

Compare the cross-references noted *ante*, § 2576.

² 1697, *Tregany v. Fletcher*, 1 Ld. Raym. 154 (that "the Exchequer in Wales is a Court," noticed); 1835, *Chitty v. Dendy*, 3 A. & E. 319, 324 ("that the County Court had no authority to give leave to plead *donhile*," noticed); 1851, *March v. Com.*, 12 B. Mour. 25 (city ordinances, as affecting the jurisdiction of a City Court, exceptionally noticed, because the case came up for review on a writ of error); 1830, *Newell v. Newton*, 10 Pick. 470 (jurisdiction of a foreign Court, not noticed on a plea of abatement for *lis pendens*; otherwise, of a Court of the same government); 1896, *Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Hyatt*, 48 Nehr. 161, 67 N. W. 8 (boundaries of a judicial district, noticed).

³ The following facts were noticed, except as otherwise noted: 1874, *Rodgers v. State*, 50 Ala. 103 (that the fall term of the Circuit Court of L. Co. begins on the fourth Monday of October and may last three weeks, etc.); 1852, *Ross v. Anstall*, 2 Cal. 183, 191 ("the times and places of holding the Courts," noticed, in particular aspects); 1877, *Dorman v. State*, 56 Ind. 454 (that a grand jury drawn for the January term was also for the preceding September term); 1877, *Spencer v. Curtis*, 57 id. 221, 227 (that the March term of a trial Court began on Mar. 1 and ended on Mar. 20); 1893, *Rogers v. Venis*, 137 id. 221, 223, 36 N. E. 841 (that the first day of the September term of a circuit Court in 1891 was Sept. 7); 1895, *Anderson v. Anderson*, 141 id. 567, 40 N. E. 131 (the time of a circuit Court term); 1858, *Kidder v. Blaisdell*, 45 Me. 461, 470 (that a session of Court before which a deposition was returnable was a Court of the proper county and State); 1859, *Fahyan v. Russell*, 38 N. H. 84 (attendance fees; the number of days of a Court's session at each term, etc.); 1894, *State v. Toland*, 36 S. C. 515, 523, 15 S. E. 599 (that the November term was the only remaining term for the year); 1870-71, *Davidson v. Peticolas*, 34 Tex. 27, 35 (that a term of the District Court was held in Victoria Co. on the third Monday of February, etc.); 1893, *Thomas v. Com.*, 90 Va. 92, 94, 17 S. E. 788 (that a June term is not a quarterly term); 1894, *Donovan v. Terr.*, 3 Wyo. 91, 2 Pac. 532 (that the first day of a term of a county Court was Sept. 17, 1883, and that a jury-drawing on that date could have taken place in that Court only).

⁴ 1845, *Van Sandan v. Turner*, 6 Q. B. 773, 784 (even assuming that the practice and rules of the long established Courts are to be noticed, held that the rules of a Court of Review in Bankruptcy, recently created by statute, would not be noticed); 1897, *Kindel v. LeBert*, 23 Colo. 385, 48 Pac. 641 (rules of a district Court, not noticed); 1897, *Coruelieson v. Foushee*, 101 Ky. 257, 40 S. W. 680 (rules of a circuit Court, not noticed); 1860, *Scott v. Scott*, 17 Md. 78, 90 (that a cause was not regularly set for hearing under the rules of a circuit Court; the rules not noticed).

⁵ *Ante*, § 2426, p. 3422, § 2450; Pollock & Maitland, *History of the English Law*, II, 666.

or to expect the Court to make its own researches into the mass of the records for the purpose of informing itself. Accordingly, it may be said generally that a Court is not by any rule bound to take notice of the tenor of any legal proceedings (other than those transacting at the moment in its presence). Indeed, this much is assumed in the conceded rules of law which require the original of a judicial record to be produced in proof, and define the exceptions by which a copy is allowed to be used instead (*ante*, §§ 1215, 1216).

However, for reasons of convenience, where controversy is unlikely and the expense of a copy would be disproportionate, Courts are often found taking notice of the tenor or effect of some part of a judicial proceeding, without requiring formal evidence. Since this dispensation is not obligatory on the part of the Court, and since it must depend more or less on the practical notoriety and certainty of the fact under the circumstances of each case, little uniformity can be seen in the instances. It is often done for a part of the record in the *same proceeding*, or in a *prior stage of the same controversy*; less often for the record of a *distinct litigation*, especially when in another Court.²

§ 2580. **Notorious Miscellaneous Facts:** (1) **Commerce, Industry, History, Natural Science, etc.** Applying the general principle (*ante*, § 2565), especially in regard to the element of notoriousness, Courts are found noticing, from time to time, a varied array of unquestionable facts, ranging throughout the data of commerce, industry, history, and natural science.¹ It is unprofit-

² 1866, *Lake Merced W. Co. v. Cowles*, 31 Cal. 215 (petition for land-condemnation; notice not to be taken of the pendency of another petition in the same Court by another party for the same land); 1894, *Leeter v. People*, 150 Ill. 408, 37 N. E. 1004, *semble* (in contempt proceedings arising out of a civil case, the record of the original cause, if properly incorporated, may be considered on appeal); 1899, *Bailey v. Kerr*, 180 id. 412, 54 N. E. 165 (application to compel execution of a deed by an assignor for benefit of creditors; notice taken of an order approving the sale); 1899, *Crawford v. Duckworth*, — Ind. T. —, 53 S. W. 465 (that the defendant had in another proceeding in a Federal Court been declared not a Cherokee citizen, noticed); 1862, *Baker v. Mygatt*, 14 La. 131, 133 (that an affidavit offered was duly executed, as known to the judge by its filing in another suit not between these parties; not noticed); 1899, *Lawless v. Stamp*, 108 id. 601, 79 N. W. 365 (recitals in a deed of a receiver appointed in another suit, not noticed); 1877, *National Bank of Monticello v. Bryant*, 13 Bush 419 (litigation over a judgment; the records of other connected suits, not noticed); 1876, *State v. Bowen*, 16 Kan. 475 (new trial, with plea of former jeopardy; the prior proceedings, noticed); 1860, *Page v. Curtis*, 15 La. An. 451 (title to slaves; an order of Court pertaining to them, noticed); 1897, *Anderson v. Cecil*, 86 Md. 490, 38 Atl. 1074 (petition for a receiver against a huyer under judicial sale; the record in the suit for sale, not noticed); 1899, *Olson Co. v. Brady*, 76 Minn. 8, 78 N. W. 864 (garnishment proceedings;

the judgment against the principal defendant, noticed); 1875, *Banks v. Barnam*, 61 Mo. 76 (specific performance of a contract; a former suit for its rescission, not noticed); 1897, *State v. Electric Co.*, 61 N. J. L. 114, 38 Atl. 818 (contempt for disregarding a stay implied in a certiorari writ; notice not taken of the writ or other proceedings in certiorari, the present proceeding being "quasi-criminal"); 1900, *State v. Bates*, 22 Utah 65, 61 Pac. 905 (proceedings in the same cause, noticed).

¹ Some of these instances, in which notice was taken, are to be accounted for by their close approximation to facts of law (*ante*, § 2572); compare also the instances of a jury's judicial notice of matters of common knowledge (*ante*, § 2570): *Eng.*: 1761, *Edie v. East India Co.*, 2 Burr. 1216, 1228 (the custom of merchants is to be noticed, so far as it is "part of the law," per *Wilmut, J.*; but here the question was whether a special usage amounted to law); 1846, *Brandao v. Barnett*, 3 C. B. 519, 530 ("The general lien of bankers is part of the law merchant, and is to be judicially noticed, — like the negotiability of bills of exchange, or the days of grace allowed for their payment. When a general usage has been judicially ascertained and established, it becomes part of the law merchant, which Courts of justice are bound to know and recognize. Such has been the invariable understanding and practice in Westminster Hall for a great many years"); 1902, *Edelstein v. Schuler*, 2 K. B. 144, 155 (negotiable character of certain bonds, in trade usage, noticed); *A'n.*: 1867, *Modawell v. Holmes*, 40 Ala. 391, 405 (depreciation of the

able, as well as impracticable, to seek to connect them by generalities and distinctions; for the notoriousness of a truth varies much with differences

currency during the war, not noticed); 1870, *Bnford v. Tucker*, 44 id. 89, 91 (that contracts were made generally, at a certain period, with reference to Confederate currency, noticed); 1898, *Mohile & O. R. Co. v. Postal T. C. Co.*, 120 id. 21, 24 So. 408 (that a telegraph line of a certain sort is a public improvement, noticed); *Cal.*: 1859, *Dutch Flat W. Co. v. Mooney*, 12 Cal. 335, *semble* (mining customs, not noticed); 1873, *Goldsmith v. Sawyer*, 46 id. 209 (rules of the San Francisco board of stock-brokers, not noticed); 1893, *Benson v. R. Co.*, 98 id. 45, 48, 32 Pac. 809 (the usual speed of trains, away from towns, noticed); 1895, *Fox v. Mining Co.*, 108 id. 369, 41 Pac. 308 (the nature of the relation between broker and customer in a certain class of transactions as shown by frequent decisions, noticed); 1898, *Scanlan v. R. Co.*, — id. —, 55 Pac. 694 (the art of menstruation as applied to railroad embankments, noticed); *Colo.*: 1874, *Sullivan v. Hense*, 2 Colo. 424, 429 (mining rules and customs, sanctioned in mass by a statute, not noticed); 1893, *Atchison T. & S. F. R. Co. v. Headland*, 18 id. 477, 483, 33 Pac. 185 (custom of separation of passenger and freight trains, noticed); *Conn.*: 1897, *State v. Main*, 69 Conn. 123, 37 Atl. 80 (that "peach yellows" was a tree-disease, of a baneful and contagious nature, noticed); 1899, *Knowiton v. R. Co.*, 72 id. 188, 44 Atl. 8 (that the railroad between New Haven and New York was opened by Jan. 1, 1849, noticed as an "historic fact"); *D. C.*: 1894, *Metropolitan R. Co. v. Snashall*, 3 D. C. App. 420, 433 (that passengers are commonly allowed to ride on the platform of a street-car, noticed); *Ga.*: 1897, *Southern R. Co. v. Hagan*, 103 Ga. 564, 29 S. E. 760 (notice not taken of the duties of a railway superintendent in a particular town); *Ill.*: 1898, *Cleveland C. C. & St. L. R. Co. v. Jenkins*, 174 Ill. 398, 51 N. E. 811 (notice taken of a railroad custom in regard to clearance-card); *Ind.*: 1867, *Neaderhouser v. State*, 28 Ind. 257, 267 (the navigability of the Ohio River, etc., noticed); 1892, *Matchett v. R. Co.*, 132 id. 334, 31 N. E. 792 (a brakeman's duties in general); *Ky.*: 1827, *Feemster v. Ringo*, 5 T. B. Monr. 336 (the value of paper of the State bank at a particular time, not noticed); *Md.*: 1894, *State v. Fox*, 79 Md. 514, 528, 29 Atl. 601 (that glanders is for human beings contagious, not noticed); *Mass.*: 1889, *Com. v. King*, 150 Mass. 221, 224, 22 N. E. 905 (that the Connecticut river at a certain place was not a navigable water under Federal jurisdiction, noticed); *St.* 1895, c. 419, § 2 (notice allowed of the methods of various specified lotteries and gambling businesses); *Mich.*: 1897, *Haines v. Gibson*, 115 Mich. 131, 73 N. W. 126 (notice not taken that certain lake navigation would be closed on April 1); *Minn.*: 1899, *Roated v. R. Co.*, 76 Minn. 123, 78 N. W. 971 (that exposure to cold is likely to cause inflammatory rheumatism, noticed); *Miss.*: 1854, *Turner v. Fish*, 28 Miss. 306, 311 (the Choctaw custom as to family headship, not noticed); *Mo.*: 1893, *Atkeson v. Lay*, 115 Mo. 538, 557, 23 S. W. 481 (that a newspaper is published in a certain county, not noticed); *Nebr.*: 1899, *Shiverick v. Gunning Co.*, 58 Nebr. 29, 78 N. W. 460 (destruction of a sign-painting of a bull; notice not taken that it was so indecent as to be a nuisance); 1901, *Erickson v. Schmill*, 62 id. 368, 87 N. W. 166 (that gestation may exceed 290 days, not noticed); 1902, *Meyers v. Menter*, 63 id. 427, 88 N. W. 662 (that potatoes, sugar-beets, and turnips are not the spontaneous product of the soil, noticed); *N. J.*: 1894, *Meyer v. Kranter*, 56 N. J. L. 696, 29 Atl. 426 (that trolley-lines had not in 1864 or 1865 superseded horse-cars, noticed); *N. Y.*: 1889, *Hunter v. New York O. & W. R. Co.*, 116 N. Y. 615, 621, 23 N. E. 9 (injury at a tunnel; that the sitting height of a man could not be four feet seven inches, noticed); 1893, *Rowland v. Miller*, 139 id. 93, 34 N. E. 765 (that the business of an undertaker in a certain locality was offensive, noticed); 1898, *Baxter v. McDonnell*, 155 id. 83, 49 N. E. 667 (the legal nature and powers of the Holy Roman Catholic Church, not noticed); *N. D.*: 1897, *Mathews v. R. Co.*, 7 N. D. 81, 72 N. W. 1065 (notice taken of a general custom to pasture on unsurveyed public lands); *Okl.*: 1898, *Goodson v. U. S.*, 7 Okl. 117, 54 Pac. 423 (that in certain Indian reservations there are no resident freeholders qualified as jurors, noticed); *Or.*: 1880, *Lewis v. McClure*, 8 Or. 273 (local customs as to irrigation, given the force of law in mass by Federal statute, not noticed); *R. I.*: 1893, *State v. South Kingston*, 18 R. I. 258, 273, 27 Atl. 606 (that many Seventh Day Baptists lived in a town S. H., and that they would not vote at an election held on Saturday, noticed); *Tenn.*: 1898, *Austin v. State*, 101 Tenn. 563, 48 S. W. 305 (that tobacco in cigarette form is deleterious for smoking, noticed; they "are inherently bad, and had only"); 1898, *Kerns v. Perry*, — id. —, 48 S. W. 724 (that certain lowlands were overflowed by freshets, noticed); *U. S.*: 1875, *Brown v. Piper*, 91 U. S. 37 (patent for a freezing mixture to preserve fish; the method used in an ice-cream freezer, noticed, as "a thing in the common knowledge and use of the people throughout the country"); 1893, *Lyon v. U. S.*, 5 C. C. A. 359, 55 Fed. 964 (the usual existence of hair along with sheep-fleece, noticed); 1897, *Railroad & Tel. Cos. v. Board*, 85 Fed. 302, 308 (notice taken of an assessors' custom to rate property at a percentage of actual value); 1898, *Von Mumm v. Wittemann*, 85 Fed. 966 (notice taken that labels of champagne, as ordinarily served from a cooler, disappear before the bottle is shown to the customer); 1899, *Smyth v. New Orleans C. & B. Co.*, 35 C. C. A. 646, 93 Fed. 899 (existence noticed, as a matter of history, of a certain ancient Spanish land-register); 1899, *Cnshman P. B. M. Co. v. Goddard*, 37 C. C. A. 221, 95 Fed. 664 (notice taken of the state of an art of manufacturing, on a matter of general interest, as shown by the Court's prior records); 1899, *United States v. Rio Grande D. & I. Co.*, 174 U. S. 690, 19 Sup. 770 (that the Rio Grande

of period and of place. It is even erroneous, in many if not in most instances, to regard them as precedents. It is the spirit and example of the rulings, rather than their precise tenor, that is to be useful in guidance.

§ 2581. *Same*: (2) *Times and Distances*. Among the common instances, under this miscellaneous class, are the facts of time or season¹ and of distance;² though here also the quality of notoriousness will naturally vary with the place and the epoch, as well as with the greater or less accuracy involved in the facts desired to be noticed.

§ 2582. *Same*: (3) *Meaning of Words; Intoxicating Liquors*. Another common class of instances, subject to the foregoing general considerations (*ante*, § 2580), is that of the meanings of words and phrases and written symbols. So far as these are notorious and unquestioned, they are constantly found noticed. Here, too, the local circumstances and the usage of the time must more than ever control the ruling. The popular familiarity with the fable of the Frozen Snake, and therefore the general understanding of the meaning of that epithet, may well be noticed in one period and community,³ yet not in another. So much of special usage in commerce, religion, and

river at a particular place ceased to be navigable, not noticed); 1900, *Austin v. Tennessee*, 179 id. 343, 21 Sup. 132 (*contra* to *Austin v. State, Tenn.*, *supra*); *Wash.*: 1896, *Mullen v. Sackett*, 14 Wash. 100, 44 Pac. 136 (that there are always taxes remaining unpaid, noticed); 1898, *Bartholomew v. Bank*, 18 id. 683, 62 Pac. 239 (notice not taken of the presence or absence of a bank in a town); 1899, *Prescott Irrig. Co. v. Flathers*, 20 id. 454, 55 Pac. 635 (that ordinary sagebrush soil needs irrigation to produce crops, noticed); 1899, *Hill Estate Co. v. Whittlesey*, 21 id. 143, 57 Pac. 345 (vestry powers in the Protestant Episcopal Church, not noticed); *W. Va.*: 1876, *Simmons v. Trumbo*, 9 W. Va. 358, 364 (that Confederate notes were currency in the South during the war, that they were but little depreciated at a certain time, and were never made legal tender by the Confederacy, noticed); *Wis.*: 1899, *Katzer v. Milwaukee*, — *Wis.* —, 79 N. W. 745 (rules of the Catholic Church, not noticed).

¹ In some of these instances, the evidential admissibility of the record of the official meteorological bureau (*ante*, § 1639), or of histories and almanacs (*ante*, §§ 1698, 1699), was the real effect of the ruling: 1705, *Harvy v. Broad*, 3 Salk. 626 (that the calendar day for a writ being returnable fell on Sunday, noticed); 1705, *Davies v. Salter*, ib. 626 (similar); 1859, *Sprovi v. Lawrence*, 35 Ala. 674, 684 (that the first Monday of August, 1853, was August 1, noticed); 1876, *Tomlinson v. Greenfield*, 31 Ark. 557 (that a crop of cotton named in a mortgage of January could not have been planted or in being at that time, noticed); 1896, *People v. Mayes*, 113 Cal. 618, 45 Pac. 860 (time of moon-rising, noticed); 1879, *State v. Morris*, 47 Conn. 179 (coincidence of days of the month and week, noticed, by refreshment of memory from the almanac); 1851, *Dawkins v. Smithwick*, 4 Fla. 158, 162 (that a day of the month fell on Sunday, noticed); 1903, *Dorough v. Equitable M. Co.*, — *Ga.* —, 45

S. E. 22 (coincidence of the days of week and month, noticed); 1866, *Dixon v. Niccolis*, 39 Ill. 372, 385 (the time of maturity of grain crops in a certain region, not noticed); 1877, *Ross v. Boswell*, 60 Ind. 235 (that the use of a farm in cropping season is more valuable than in winter, noticed); 1881, *McIntosh v. Lee*, 57 Ia. 358, 10 N. W. 595 (that March 10, 1878, was Sunday, noticed); 1853, *Sasscer v. Farmers' Bank*, 4 Md. 409, 420 (that Dec. 26 fell on Sunday, and that by commercial usage the day of payment of a note is in such cases anticipated, noticed); 1881, *Philadelphia, W. & B. R. Co. v. Lehman*, 56 id. 209, 226 (that July 28, 1878, was Sunday, noticed); 1894, *Morgan v. Burrow*, — *Miss.* —, 16 So. 432 (day of the month, noticed); 1879, *Reed v. Wilson*, 41 N. J. L. 29, 32 (that the day of a note's maturity fell on Sunday, noticed, and also the law merchant as to days of grace); 1901, *Payne v. McCormick Harvesting M. Co.*, 11 Okl. 318, 66 Pac. 287 (time of planting and harvesting annual crops, noticed).

² 1893, *Pettit v. State*, 135 Ind. 393, 34 N. E. 1118 (that East Portland, Oregon, is distant 2398 miles from Crawfordville, a place of trial in Indiana, noticed); 1893, *Mutual Ben. L. Ins. Co. v. Robison*, 7 C. C. A. 444, 58 Fed. 723 (that the distance between Duhque, Ia., and Asheville, N. C., exceeds 100 miles, noticed); 1895, *Blumenthal v. Meat Co.*, 12 Wash. 331, 41 Pac. 47 (the distance between two towns, noticed); 1876, *Siegbert v. Stiles*, 39 Wis. 533, 536 (that two towns in the State were separated only by a river and were mutually accessible across the ice, noticed).

³ 1848, *Hoare v. Silverlock*, 12 Q. B. 624 (defamation for applying to the plaintiff the "fable of the Frozen Snake"; held, that no innuendo was necessary, and that, in arrest of judgment, the jury might justly attribute a libellous sense; per Erie, J., that their well-known application in a libellous sense could be noticed).

industry, and of social life in general, is involved in the meanings of words, that no generalizations are practicable. The rulings must depend upon good sense rather than upon precedent.³

A difficult case is presented when the word in question is used in more than one notorious meaning, particularly when it has by custom come to be applied artificially or evasively to objects not strictly entitled to it. Common instances of this sort are the names of intoxicating liquors. The true solution here is rather to be found in the theory of presumptions (*ante*, § 2490); first, because judicial notice becomes inappropriate as soon as a fact is in any manner practically dubitable, and, next, because the fact really sought in many such instances is the meaning or use in a concrete instance which could not be notorious. Of various possible meanings, one may be presumed to apply. There is naturally some variance of ruling. Apart from particular local circumstances, it would seem to be proper to hold that "whiskey" or "gin" may be assumed to signify an intoxicating liquor,³ and that a liquor termed "brandy" is intoxicating,⁴ and even that "wine,"⁵ or malt or hop liquors,⁶ are intoxicating. But "beer" is a term applied to so many non-intoxicating drinks that evidence of its qualities in a given instance may well be required.⁷

³ The following are examples: 1809, *Clement v. Golding*, 2 Camp. 25 (it was held that "book" in a copyright act might apply to a single printed sheet); 1861, *Moseley's Adm'r v. Mastin*, 37 Ala. 216, 221 (that "adm'r" signified "administrator," noticed); 1893, *Edwards v. Publishing Soc.*, 99 Cal. 431, 435, 34 Pac. 126 (that "sack," in discussing electoral corruption, means a corruption-fund, noticed); 1893, *Sinnot v. Colombet*, 107 Id. 187, 40 Pac. 329 (meaning of "kindergarten" in a resolution of a school-board); 1898, *Hines v. Miller*, 122 Id. 517, 55 Pac. 401 (meaning of "shafts," "tunnels," etc., noticed); 1867, *Hill v. Bacon*, 43 Ill. 477 (that the S. E. forty of a quarter-section signified one of four forties, noticed); 1877, *Hart v. State*, 55 Ind. 599, 601 (that "hills" testified to were bank-hills, not presumed; on the theory that the Court would notice the existence of other kinds of "hills"); 1827, *Jones v. Overstreet*, 4 T. B. Monr. 547 ("money," noticed); 1838, *Com. v. Kneeland*, 20 Pick. 206, 239 (the meaning of "blasphemy," examined); 1879, *State v. Johnson*, 26 Minn. 316, 5 N. W. 982 (the orthography or pronunciation of Polish names, not noticed); 1902, *Martin v. Eagle Creek D. Co.*, 41 Or. 448, 69 Pac. 216 (technical meanings are not noticed); 1849, *U. S. v. Burns*, 5 McLean C. C. 23 ("fifty-cent pieces," etc., noticed).

The rules about *expert opinion* of the meaning of words (*ante*, § 1955) and about the use of dictionaries in evidence (*ante*, § 1699) serve to dispose of many of these questions.

⁴ 1877, *Schlicht v. State*, 56 Ind. 173, 176 (whiskey); 1854, *Com. v. Peckham*, 2 Gray 514 (gin); 1901, *Peterson v. State*, 63 Nehr. 251, 88 N. W. 549 (whiskey).

⁵ 1893, *State v. Tisdale*, 54 Minn. 105, 55 N. W. 903 (that California brandy is intoxicat-

ing, noticed); 1893, *Thomas v. Com.*, 90 Va. 92, 94, 17 S. E. 788 (that apple-brandy is intoxicating, noticed).

⁶ 1901, *Caldwell v. State*, 43 Fla. 545, 80 So. 814 (that wine is intoxicating, noticed); 1897, *Starace v. Rossi*, 69 Vt. 303, 37 Atl. 1109 (Italian "sour wine," noticed as intoxicating). Otherwise, where the description implies different ingredients: 1898, *Loid v. State*, 104 Ga. 726, 30 S. E. 949 (that home-made blackberry wine is intoxicating, not noticed).

⁷ *Contra*: 1877, *Shaw v. State*, 56 Ind. 188 (malt liquors); 1894, *People v. Rice*, 103 Mich. 350, 61 N. W. 540 ("hop pop").

Differing views have been judicially expressed, but usually declining notice: 1876, *Adler v. State*, 55 Ala. 16, 23 (that lager beer is a malt liquor, noticed); 1892, *Bell v. State*, 91 Ga. 227, 231, 18 S. E. 288 (that rice-beer is intoxicating, not noticed); 1902, *Du Vall v. Augusta*, 115 Id. 813, 42 S. E. 265 (that beer is intoxicating, not noticed); 1886, *Hansberg v. People*, 120 Ill. 21, 23, 2 N. E. 857 (similar); 1883, *Kerkow v. Baner*, 15 Nehr. 150, 153, 18 N. W. 27 (that beer is intoxicating, not noticed; except so far as defined by statute); 1901, *Peterson v. State*, 63 Id. 251, 86 N. W. 549 (that whiskey and beer are intoxicating, noticed); 1889, *Blatz v. Rohrbach*, 116 N. Y. 450, 22 N. E. 1049 (that beer is intoxicating, not noticed; *Bradley, J., diss.*); 1877, *State v. Goyette*, 11 R. I. 592 (that lager beer is a malt liquor, noticed); 1881, *State v. Beswick*, 13 Id. 211, 220 (that beer is intoxicating, not noticed); 1894, *State v. Sioux Falls Brewing Co.*, 5 S. D. 39, 45, 58 N. W. 1 (that beer is a malt or intoxicating liquor, not noticed; because there are many sorts); 1894, *State v. Church*, 6 Id. 89, 60 N. W. 145 (that lager beer is intoxicating, noticed).

TITLE II: JUDICIAL ADMISSIONS.

CHAPTER XC.

§ 2588. Theory of Judicial Admissions.
 § 2589. Distinction between Judicial Admissions, Pleadings, Demurrers to Evidence, and Estoppels.

§ 2590. Effect of Judicial Admissions: (1) Conclusive upon the Party making.
 § 2591. Same: (2) Exclusive of Evidence by the Party benefiting.

§ 2592. Same: (3) Validity as a Waiver of Unconstitutionality or other Illegality.

§ 2593. Same: (4) Effect on Subsequent Trials.

§ 2594. Form of the Admission; Who is authorized.

§ 2595. Avoiding a Continuance by Judicial Admission; Testimony of an Absent Witness of the Opponent.

§ 2596. Admissions of the Genuineness of a Document.

§ 2588. *Theory of Judicial Admissions.* An express waiver, made in court or preparatory to trial, by the party or his attorney, conceding for the purposes of the trial the truth of some alleged fact, has the effect of a confessory pleading, in that the fact is thereafter to be taken for granted; so that the one party need offer no evidence to prove it, and the other is not allowed to disprove it. This is what is commonly termed a solemn — *i. e.* ceremonial or formal — or judicial admission, and is, in truth, a substitute for evidence, in that it does away with the need for evidence.¹

This judicial admission is sharply marked off from the ordinary or quasi-admission, — which indeed does not deserve to bear the same name. The latter is merely an item of evidence, available against the party on the same theory on which a self-contradiction is available against a witness. The distinctions between the two have already been examined (*ante*, §§ 1048, 1057). It is enough to note that, as to the effect, the latter is not conclusive; while as to its form, it may be either implied or express, and need not be either written or made in open court.

§ 2589. *Distinction between Judicial Admissions, Pleadings, Demurrers to Evidence, and Estoppels.* The effect which a judicial admission produces is of course an effect shared in common with certain other legal acts. In the first place, a *pleading* may by confessing a fact place it beyond the range

¹ *Ante* 1726, Gilbert, Evidence, 103 ("The consent of the parties concerned must be sufficient and concludng evidence of the truth of such fact, for they [the jury] are only to try the truth of such facts wherein the parties differ"); 1896, *Prestwood v. Watson*, 111 Ala. 604, 20 So. 600 (Brickett, C. J.: "Agreements of this character, intelligently and deliberately made, — whether made by the parties in person, or by their attorneys or solicitors of record, — are encouraged and favored. Their purpose, generally, is to save costs, and to expedite trials, by relieving from rules of practice which in the particular case are deemed mere hindrances, or the dispensation with mere formal proof, or, as in the present case, the admission

of uncontroverted facts, of the existence of which the parties are fully cognizant"); 1855, *Com. v. Desmond*, 5 Gray 80, 82 (Thomas, J., referring to the prosecuting attorney's admission on trial that a witness was an accomplice: "Admissions made in the course of judicial proceedings are substitutes for, and dispense with, the actual proof of facts"). In Louisiana the Continental law has left its mark: *La. Rev. Civ. C. 1888*, § 2291 ("Judicial confession is the declaration which the party, or his special attorney in fact, makes in a judicial proceeding. It amounts to full proof against him who has made it. It cannot be divided against him. It cannot be revoked," unless made through error of fact, but not for error in law).

either of needing evidence or of permitting dispute; and an omission to plead in denial may have the same consequence. The distinction between a pleading and a judicial admission seems to consist in the circumstances that the latter may be made after issues joined or trial begun, and may thus counteract or diminish the effect of a pleading; that it is not a part of the required statements defining the parties' issues; and that it is therefore not subject to the rules of time, form, amendment, and the like, which govern the allegations of pleading.

Furthermore, a *demurrer to evidence*, the object of which is to raise a question of law, will like other demurrers have the effect of admitting the facts conclusively (*ante*, § 2495). It has the further common feature, frequent in a judicial admission, that it is made after issues formed and trial begun; but nevertheless it is in this respect, like a motion to arrest judgment, merely a postponed pleading.

Finally, an *estoppel* has the similar effect of concluding all dispute of the fact. But here the distinction is that the estoppel is an obligation made by a rule of substantive law, of the same general class as contracts and representations;¹ that it requires some additional act of detriment on the part of the obligee; and that it is absolute as regards the permanent legal relations of the parties, and not merely hypothetical or relative to the procedure of a particular litigation between them.

§ 2590. *Effect of Judicial Admissions*; (1) *Conclusive upon the Party making*. The vital feature of a judicial admission is universally conceded to be its conclusiveness upon the party making it, *i. e.* the prohibition of any further dispute of the fact by him, and of any use of evidence to disprove or contradict it.¹ In view, however, of the commendable purpose which leads (or ought to lead) to the voluntary making of admissions, it is always

¹ Harriman on Contracts, 2d ed., § 618.

¹ Cases cited *ante*, § 2588, and the following: 1896, *Prestwood v. Watson*, 111 Ala. 604, 20 So. 600 (Brickell, C. J.): "Such agreements are sometimes made to avoid continuances, or for some specific purpose, and, by their terms, are limited to the particular occasion or purpose, and, of course, lose all force when the occasion has passed, or the purpose has been accomplished. But if by their terms they are not limited, and are unqualified admissions of facts, the limitation is not implied, and they are receivable on any subsequent trial between the parties. And when made in open court, and reduced to writing, intended to be used, and used, as an instrument of evidence, and is without limitation as to time or occasion, it cannot be withdrawn or retracted at the mere will of either party. The presence of witnesses to prove the facts stated is waived. If the witnesses had been produced and testified, and they died, or became insane, or removed without the jurisdiction of the court, on a subsequent trial evidence of their testimony would be admissible. The admission of the facts dispensing with evidence, if it could be disregarded by either party on any subsequent trial, in the event of inability

to produce witnesses to establish them, would often convert such admissions into instruments of fraud and injury. When they are made deliberately and intelligently, in the presence of the Court, and reduced to writing, they are of the best species of evidence; and parties cannot be permitted to retract them, as they are not permitted at pleasure to retract admissions of fact made in any form. If they are made improvidently and by mistake, and the improvidence and mistake be clearly shown, the Court has a discretion to relieve from their consequences,—a discretion which should be exercised sparingly and cautiously"; 1868, *Paige v. Willet*, 38 N. Y. 28, 31 ("A party who formally and explicitly admits by his pleading that which establishes the plaintiff's right will not be suffered to deny its existence or to prove any state of facts inconsistent with that admission"); 1880, *Oscanyon v. Arms Co.*, 103 U. S. 261, 263 ("Any fact, bearing upon the issue involved, admitted by counsel, may be the ground of the Court's procedure equally as if established by the clearest proof"; here the counsel's opening statement of the issues was taken as sufficient for directing a verdict for the defendant).

and properly said that the trial Court may in discretion relieve from this consequence.³

§ 2591. *Same*: (2) *Exclusive of Evidence by the Party benefiting.* A fact that is judicially admitted needs no evidence from the party benefiting by the admission. But his evidence, if he chooses to offer it, will even be excluded;¹ first, because it is now as immaterial to the issues as though the pleadings had marked it out of the controversy (*ante*, § 2); next, because it is superfluous and merely cumbers the trial (*ante*, §§ 1863, 1904); and furthermore, because the added dramatic force which might sometimes be gained from the examination of a witness to the fact (a force, indeed, which the admission is often designed especially to obviate) is not a thing which the party can be said to be entitled to.

§ 2592. *Same*: (3) *Validity as a Waiver of Unconstitutionality or other Illegality.* The effect of an admission being to remove the fact from controversy, precisely as if no plea or demurrer had raised the issue, it follows that any fact whatever may be the subject of an admission, provided only that the fact does not require the Court to violate those rules of public policy which even a contract could not override or displace.¹ Consequently, the admission may relate to a fact proved by *evidence otherwise inadmissible* (by virtually waiving objection to it);² or to a fact which the Court might have

¹ *Prestwood v. Watson*, Ala., *supra*, note 1; *Seely v. Cole*, Oh., *post*, § 2594, note 2.

Under the Louisiana Code, quoted *ante*, § 2588, the rule may be different: 1842, *Kohn v. Marsh*, 3 Rob. La. 48, 49 (consent to an order appointing experts; opinion not clear).

² 1890, *Dean v. State*, 89 Ala. 46, 8 So. 38 (absent witness' testimony). *Contra: Me.*: 1897, *Dunning v. M. C. R. Co.*, 91 Me. 87, 39 Atl. 352 (*Savage, J.*: "It does not lie in the power of one party to prevent the introduction of relevant evidence by admitting in general terms the fact which such evidence tends to prove, if the presiding justice, in his discretion, deems it proper to receive it. Parties, as a general rule, are entitled to prove the essential facts, — to present to the jury a picture of the events relied upon. To substitute for such a picture a naked admission might have the effect to rob the evidence of much of its fair and legitimate weight"); *Mass.*: 1849, *Com. v. Miller*, 3 Cush. 243, 250 (other forged notes, to show guilty knowledge, the knowledge being admitted); 1876, *Com. v. Costello*, 120 Mass. 358, 364, 369 (an admission in Court of the fictitious nature of a name on an appeal bond); 1896, *Stetson's Will*, — *id.* —, 44 N. E. 1085 (admission of a will's execution does not prevent the calling of the subscribing witnesses as such); 1898, *Whitehead v. Lowney*, 171 Id. 431, 50 N. E. 930 (in the trial Court's discretion the evidence may be excluded).

If admitted, however, it may of course not be sufficient ground for a new trial: 1898, *Davis v. Emmons*, 32 Or. 389, 51 Pac. 652.

³ 1885, *New York, L. & W. R. Co.'s Petition*, 98 N. Y. 447, 453 (stipulation as to commissioners of valuation; *Earl, J.*: "Parties by

their stipulations . . . may stipulate away statutory, and even constitutional rights; . . . all such stipulations not unreasonable, not against good morals or sound public policy, have been and will be enforced; and generally, all stipulations made by parties for the government of their conduct or the control of their rights, in the trial of a cause or the conduct of a litigation, are enforced by the Courts. . . . So it is not true that parties cannot enter into stipulations which in some sense will bind and control the action of the Courts").

⁴ 1896, *Brady v. Nally*, 151 N. Y. 258, 45 N. E. 547, 549 (the argument that "in view of the conclusive nature of the presumption that the written agreement embraced the entire contract, the parol evidence, although received by consent, cannot overcome that presumption," rejected); 1903, *Thompson v. F. W. & R. G. R. Co.*, 31 Tex. Civ. App. 583, 73 S. W. 29 (hearsay admitted by stipulation); and the statutes for depositions (*ante*, §§ 1380, 1411) frequently assume this.

In *Shaw v. Roberts* (1818), 2 Stark. 445, *Abbott, C. J.*, acknowledged that an "admission of particular facts" was to be enforced; his further remark, that "it was the business of the Court to guard against the reception of improper evidence, independently of any admissions whatever, and it was the duty of the Court to reject illegal evidence, although the parties on both sides should agree to it," was ill-worded or ill-reported; what he meant was that one counsel's introduction of improper evidence was not such an acknowledgment of its propriety as disentitled him to object to further inquiries on that subject; i. e., the principle of curative admissibility (*ante*, § 15).

noticed as non-existent;³ or to a rule of evidence constitutionally sanctioned for the benefit of the waiving party;⁴ or to some other rule constitutionally protected, in particular, to the failure to observe the requirements for legislative proceedings in a statute's enactment.⁵ Any other result would seem to be inconsistent with the general spirit and practice of our litigation, which judicially leaves to the parties the framing of their pleadings and issues and determines no objection not expressly raised by one of them. Moreover, unless the admission is expressly rejected at the outset by the opponent, the judicial refusal to recognize it would often permit unseemly breaches of faith by counsel who have agreed to the admission.

§ 2593. Same: (4) Effect on Subsequent Trials. Whether a judicial admission continues to have effect for a subsequent part of the same proceedings, including a new trial, has been the subject of some opposition of rulings, although the orthodox English practice plainly answered in the affirmative.¹

³ *Contra*: 1897, *Attorney-General v. Rice*, 64 Mich. 388, 391, 31 N. W. 303 (admission that a mere title, with no bill, was introduced cannot avail if the Court sees the fact to be contrary).

⁴ Cases cited *post*, § 2595, note 5.

⁵ 1892, *Norman v. Kentucky Board*, 93 Ky. 537, 547, 548, 20 S. W. 901 (by demurrer; Fryor, J., diss.). *Contra*: 1873, *Happel v. Brothauer*, 70 Ill. 166 (stipulation for trial, that a statute was not constitutionally passed); 1899, *State v. Alos*, 182 Mo. 466, 54 S. W. 494 (similar); 1884, *Pratt Co. v. Stevenson*, 48 N. J. L. 173, 186, 193 (admission of lack of notice of a bill, as making an act unconstitutional, not received); 1895, *Carr v. Coke*, 118 N. C. 223, 239, 22 S. E. 18 (admission of fraud in enrolment, not received); 1901, *Commissioners v. De Rosset*, 189 Id. 275, 40 S. E. 43 (legislative journals); 1833, *Allen v. McKean*, 1 Sumner 278, 314 (Story, J.: "The people have a deep and vested interest in maintaining all the constitutional limitations upon the exercise of legislative powers; and no private arrangements between such parties can supersede them"; treating as null the acquiescence of a board of trustees in an unconstitutional act). It would seem that in such a case the Court does not have to commit itself to a ruling of unconstitutionality; it can merely ignore the statute for the case in hand. Compare the cases on the conclusiveness of enrolled statutes (*ante*, § 1350).

Judicial admissions are of course equally effective in criminal cases as in civil cases (apart from such questions as the waiver of jury trial): 1901, *Com. v. McMurray*, 198 Pa. 51, 47 Atl. 952; the contrary has been declared: 1878, *Clayton v. State*, 4 Tex. App. 515, 519; but this is carrying tenderness for criminals too far.

¹ *England*: 1832, *Elton v. Larkins*, 1 Mo. & Rob. 196 (Tindal, C. J., reserved the point, but thought that such an admission "applies to every trial which may take place by direction of the Court"); 1835, *Doe v. Bird*, 7 C. & P. 8 (receivable on a new trial, unless there was a limitation to the particular trial); 1836, *Langley v. Oxford*, 1 M. & W. 508 (debt on a bond, with a new special plea; the prior admission as

to handwriting, received, the issue as to handwriting being not altered; "the admission is to be used on the trial of the cause, whenever the trial takes place; no matter whether it be the first or the second trial"); *Canada*: 1884, *McDonald v. Murray*, 5 Ont. 559, 575 (copy agreed to be used instead of the original, admitted on a second trial, per Wilson, C. J.); *United States*: 1894, *Prestwood v. Watson*, 111 Ala. 604, 20 So. 600 (usable on a new trial; quoted *ante*, § 2590); 1873, *Perry v. Simpson*, W. M. Co., 40 Conn. 313 (admitted on a second trial; yet allowed to be disputed by denying their correctness); 1897, *Luther v. Clay*, 100 Ga. 238, 28 S. E. 48 (an agreed statement of facts used at a former trial; admissible, unless otherwise expressly provided; but conclusive only for the trial in hand); 1898, *King v. Shepard*, 105 Id. 473, 30 S. E. 624 (usable on the second trial, but not binding); 1878, *Holley v. Young*, 68 Me. 215 (the admissibility binds for a new trial, unless the judge sees fit to relieve; "it would be wiser to adopt some rule by which more admissions could be obtained, than to allow parties at their own will and pleasure to withdraw the few now made"); 1860, *Central B. Co. v. Lowell*, 15 Gray 106, 128 (an agreement for the use of cert. in computations by an expert accountant, held to apply by intention to a second trial); 1901, *Gallagher v. McBride*, 66 N. J. L. 360, 49 Atl. 582 (stipulation as to the manner of payments for property, effective on a second trial); 1885, *New York, L. & W. R. Co.'s Petition*, 98 N. Y. 447, 453 (stipulation as to commissioners of valuation, enforced for a new appraisal after an appeal reversing the original award); 1902, *Cutler v. Cutler*, 130 N. C. 1, 49 S. E. 889, *semble* (excluded on a second trial; but here the admission had been conditioned on another fact, which no longer existed); 1899, *Consolidated S. & W. Co. v. Burnham*, 8 Okl. 514, 58 Pac. 654 (agreed statement of facts, effective for a second trial); 1900, *Acme Mfg. Co. v. Reed*, 197 Pa. 359, 47 Atl. 203 (stipulation as to a deposition, not binding in a second action after a non-suit in the first); 1898, *Scaife v. Land Co.*, 23 C. C. A. 47, 90 Fed. 238 (admission in a bill of excep-

It is true that the pleadings of the parties continue to be binding (subject only to the usual rules for amendment); but the very distinction between pleadings and judicial admissions is that the latter are not subject to the fixed requirements of the former (*ante*, § 2589). On the other hand, a regard for fairness of practice indicates the opposite result; for after the case of the party benefiting by the admission has been exposed at the first trial, the party making the admission may discover that the proof of the fact would have been difficult or onerous, and by withdrawing the admission he may thus obtain a factitious advantage which the law hardly contemplates as the consequence of a new trial. Moreover, the ignorance which may have led to an ill-advised admission is no more a cause for revoking it at the second trial than at the first; and in any event the judge's discretion may grant relief (*ante*, § 2590) in the one instance as well as the other. It would seem, having regard to the voluntary and contractual nature of the act, that the duration of its effect, no less than its scope, depends, after all, on the intent of the parties; that this implied intent may vary with the circumstances; and that where no special circumstances indicate the contrary, the intention should be implied to extend the effect of the admission to all subsequent parts of substantially the same litigation between the same parties, including a new trial.² Such seems to be the general trend of the rulings.

§ 2594. **Form of the Admission; Who is Authorized.** (1) It is sometimes declared, in statute, court-rule, or decision, that all agreements between attorneys or counsel, including presumably judicial admissions, must be in writing, in order to obtain enforcement from the Courts;¹ and no doubt, for admissions made out of court, or at least prior to trial and out of court, the rigid policy of the law should look only at written admissions, even though professional honor could not suffer such a distinction. But that policy need not apply to admissions made in court, where the memory of the judge and the presence of other members of the bar could be trusted for verification in

tions in a former trial, received); 1800, *Pearl v. Allen*, 1 Tyl. 4 (admission of execution on a former trial, "when not attached to the record," insufficient).

Whether, though not binding, they are at least receivable as *ordinary admissions* (as laid down in some of the rulings above) depends on the general principles applicable to the use of pleadings as ordinary admissions (*ante*, §§ 1063-1067).

² Of course the admission would not bind between *other parties*: 1847, *Holman's Heirs v. Bank of Norfolk*, 12 Ala. 369, 408 (admission by stipulation of the present complainant's counsel in a prior suit over the same mortgage on a bill by other parties against the present complainant, held not binding here; "it would be a most alarming doctrine that an admission made by counsel in the progress of a cause was proof of the fact so admitted through all future time"); 1863, *Wilkins v. Stidger*, 22 Cal. 231, 238 (action for medical services to an injured person; defendant's attorney's admission of the

correctness of the plaintiff's bill, in an action by the defendant against the tortfeasor before arbitrators for the injury, excluded).

The following ruling seems unsound: 1867, *Thompson v. Thompson*, 9 Ind. 323, 333 (conclusiveness not given to those made "pending the suit," but only to those "made in court for the purposes of the trial").

¹ Cal. C. C. P. 1872, § 283 ("An attorney or counselor shall have authority to bind his client in any of the steps of an action or proceeding by his agreement filed with the clerk or entered upon the minutes of the court, and not otherwise"); 1878, *Holley v. Young*, 68 Me. 215 ("reduced to writing or incorporated into a record of the case"); Mass. Rev. L. 1902, c. 173, § 70 ("All agreements of attorneys relative to an action or proceeding shall be in writing").

The authentication of the attorney's signature may be aided by principles already considered (*ante*, §§ 2167, 2578).

case of misunderstanding and the oral habit of the proceedings is inconsistent with such an exception.³

(2) It is of the nature of an admission, plainly, that it be by intention an act of waiver, relating to the opponent's proof of the fact, and not merely a statement of assertion or concession, made for some independent purpose;³ in particular, a statement made for the purpose of *giving testimony* is not a judicial admission.⁴

(3) Judicial admissions are usually made by the party's *attorney or counsel*. It is settled that the general authority to conduct the trial implies the authority to make such admissions.⁵

§ 2595. **Avoiding a Continuance by Judicial Admission; Testimony of an Absent Witness of the Opponent.** When a continuance, or postponement, of the trial is applied for on the ground of the present impossibility of securing the attendance of a material witness, the granting of the application, by orthodox practice, lies in the Court's discretion, *i. e.* subject to no mandatory rules, provided certain fundamental conditions exist as to materiality, diligence, and the like. Assuming, however, that they exist, and that the Court would by them be justified in ordering the continuance, the opponent may attempt to remove these grounds for granting it, by making a judicial admission either that the witness *would if present testify* as affirmed by the applicant, or that the *tenor of the desired testimony is true*. The earlier practice

³ 1896, *Prestwood v. Watson*, 111 Ala. 604, 20 So. 600 (Brickell, C. J.: "That the agreement was not signed by the parties or by the counsel was not of importance. Their signatures were not necessary to impart to it validity. Private agreements between parties or their attorneys, relating to the proceedings in a pending cause, — agreements not made in the presence of the Court, — the rules of practice require, shall be in writing, and signed by the party to be bound thereby. The rule has never been supposed to have any application to agreements or admissions made in the presence of the Court. Upon such agreements or admissions, made verbally, every court is necessitated to act daily. The refusal to recognize and act upon them would delay the transaction of business, and entail upon counsel and parties much unnecessary labor. The purpose of the rule is to relieve such admissions or agreements from the infirmative considerations attaching to mere oral admissions of facts imputed to the one party or the other, and to avoid the unseemly wrangles, disputes, and contradictions which would ensue if they rested only in memory. Where the agreement or admission is made in the presence of the Court, it is without the purpose or reason, if not without the letter, of the rule"); 1834, *Seely v. Cole*, *Wright Oh.* 681 (an oral admission, made in court on the opponent's offer of a witness, not allowed to be retracted, unless by leave of Court). An admission made in the counsel's *statement of the case* is always treated as binding: 1895, *Lake Erie & W. R. Co. v. Rooker*, 13 Ind. App. 600, 41 N. E. 470 (the incidental statement of counsel, in opening, that he intended to prove the fact in question); 1880,

Oacanyon v. Arms Co., 103 U. S. 261, 263 (cited *ante*, § 2590). Sometimes a larger scope may be conceded: 1892, *Smith v. Whittier*, 95 Cal. 279, 287, 30 Pac. 529 (an oral stipulation, not filed or entered under C. C. P. § 283, *supra*, is nevertheless binding if it has been so acted upon that it would be inequitable to disregard it).

⁴ 1901, *Cramer v. Truitt*, 113 Ga. 967, 39 S. E. 459 (admission of attorney in private conversation with the judge out of Court, not sufficient).

⁵ 1900, *Owen v. Palmour*, 111 Ga. 365, 36 S. E. 969 (a party testifying at a former trial, the brief of evidence therein having been agreed to by counsel and approved by Court, is not estopped from testifying contrary thereto); 1898, *Smith v. Olsen*, 92 Tex. 181, 46 S. W. 631 (answer by way of discovery). *Contra*, but unsonnd, 1901, *Feary v. R. Co.*, 162 Mo. 75, 62 S. W. 452 (a statement made on the stand while testifying, held conclusive; *Valliant, J.*, diss.).

That the "*proofs of loss*," in insurance, are judicial admissions has sometimes been argued, but not with good reason (*ante*, § 1073).

The *payment of money into court* was formerly a common type of judicial admission, more allied to a pleading; it is briefly noticed *ante*, § 1061, and more fully in *Greenleaf, Evidence*, § 205; statutes and rules of court often regulate it.

⁶ Cases cited *ante*, § 1063; 1859, *Rosenbaum v. State*, 33 Ala. 361; 1847, *Greenlee v. McDowell*, 4 Ired. Eq. 481, 484.

A *change of attorneys* does not abrogate an admission originally binding: 1892, *Smith v. Whittier*, 95 Cal. 279, 289, 30 Pac. 529.

seems for a time to have left in the Court's discretion the propriety of recognizing this as sufficient to avoid the continuance. But statutes have now come, in most jurisdictions, to prescribe a rule, declaring that one or the other kind of these admissions will *per se* avoid the continuance, and (sometimes) that, conversely, an application based on specified grounds shall be granted unless one or the other of these admissions is made.¹

For the *opponent* of such an application, *i. e.* the party making the admission, the difference between the two kinds (so far as concerns the rules of evidence) is that the first kind still leaves it open to him to impeach the credit of the absent witness, just as he could that of a deponent,² except that the rule for self-contradictions raises here a special problem;³ but the second kind obviously precludes him from any impeachment of credit, since

¹ The following list is not exhaustive; typical statutes are set out in full: *Ariz. Rev. St.* 1887, §§ 752, 753; *Ark. Stats.* 1894, § 5797; *Cal. C. C. P.* 1872, § 595, as amended by *St.* 1890 ("The Court may require a moving party, where application is made on account of the absence of a material witness, to state upon affidavit the evidence which he expects to obtain; and if the adverse party thereupon admits that such evidence would be given, and that it be considered as actually given on the trial, or offered, or overruled as improper, the trial must not be postponed"); *Calo. C. C. P.* 1891, § 177; *D. C. Comp. St.* 1894, c. 55, § 120; *Ill. Rev. St.* 1845, *Rev. St.* 1874, c. 110, § 43 (in asking a continuance "on account of the absence of testimony," the party's or his agent's affidavit stating the facts expected to be proved thereby, etc., must be offered); § 44 ("if the other party will admit the affidavit in evidence, the cause shall not be continued"); § 45, *Laws* 1867, p. 157 ("When the affidavit is concerning the evidence of a witness, the party admitting such affidavit shall be held to admit only that if the absent witness were present he would testify as alleged in the affidavit, and such admission shall have no greater force or effect than if such absent witness were present and testified as alleged in the affidavit, leaving it to the party admitting such affidavit to controvert the statements contained therein, or to impeach said witness, the same as if such witness were present and examined in open court"); c. 38, § 428 a, *St.* 1885, June 26, p. 73 (on such affidavits in a criminal case, neither party shall be "required to admit the absolute truth of the matter set up in the affidavit for continuance, but only that such absent witness, if present, would testify as alleged in the affidavit; and if it is so admitted, no continuance shall be granted, but the case shall go to trial, and the party admitting the evidence shall be permitted to controvert the statements contained in such affidavit by other evidence, or to impeach such absent witness the same as if he had testified in person; provided that the Court may in its discretion require the opposite party to admit the truth absolutely of any such affidavit when, from the nature of the case, he may be of opinion that the ends of justice require it"; the act not to apply to applications at the same term of Court

when the indictment, etc., is found); *Ind. St.* 1861, *Rev. St.* 1894, § 413 (civil cases; if "the adverse party will consent that on the trial the facts shall be taken as true, if the absent evidence is written or documentary, and, in case of a witness, that he will testify to said facts as true, the trial shall not be postponed for said cause; and in such case the party against whom such evidence is used shall have the right to impeach such absent witness, as in case where the witness is present or his deposition is used"); § 1850 (criminal cases; if "the prosecuting attorney will admit the truth of the facts which the defendant in his affidavit for a continuance alleges that he can prove by the absent witness, or by the written or documentary evidence therein specified and described, the trial shall not be postponed for that cause"); § 1851 ("If the defendant will admit that the facts which the prosecutor states he expects to prove are true, the trial shall not be postponed for that cause"); *Iowa Code* 1897, § 3665 (if an application for continuance is sufficient, "the cause shall be continued, unless the adverse party will admit that the witness, if present, would testify to the facts therein stated, in which event the cause shall not be continued, but the party may read as evidence of such witness the facts held by the Court to be properly stated"); *La. St.* 1894, No. 84, *Wolff's Rev. L.* p. 277, *Code Fr.* 1894, § 466; *Mo. Rev. St.* 1899, §§ 687, 3980; *Nev. Gen. St.* 1885, § 3182; *N. M. Comp. L.* 1897, §§ 2986, 2987; *Utah Rev. St.* 1898, §§ 3133, 3712; *Wyo. Rev. St.* 1887, § 3397.

Distinguish those statutes by which a continuance is granted on condition that the applicant assent to the taking and using of *depositions of witnesses now present* for the opponent; *e. g.* *Cal. C. C. P.* 1872, § 596; *Utah Rev. St.* 1898, § 3134; these merely avoid the necessity of notice and other conditions precedent ordinarily to the use of the deposition (*ante*, §§ 1378, 1415).

² 1881, *Powers v. State*, 80 *Ind.* 77 (the truth of an absent witness' testimony admitted by the prosecution to avoid postponement; impeachment forbidden; but not in civil cases, where merely the fact of testifying is admitted); 1878, *State v. Miller*, 67 *Mo.* 604, 606 (by statute); 1878, *State v. Thomas*, 68 *id.* 605, 615. The statutes frequently declare this expressly.

³ The authorities are collected *ante*, § 1034.

the facts to be testified to are judicially admitted.⁴ But he cannot be *forced* to make either kind of admission (by an order directing the trial to proceed and receiving in evidence the applicant's statement of the testimony or the facts); for this would be to deprive the opponent of his right to cross-examination.⁵ The opponent, however, even though a defendant in a criminal case, may of course waive this right, by a *voluntary* admission of the testimony or the facts.⁶

For the *applicant*, who is refused a continuance when the opponent makes one of these admissions, the difference between the two kinds is obviously a radical one. Whether the Court should require the more stringent of the admissions, *i. e.* of the facts as established, not merely of the testimony as uttered, and should, in default of it, as a rule of law grant a continuance otherwise sufficiently grounded, has been one of the controverted questions in judicial opinion.⁷ Regarded as a matter of common-law practice or of legislative policy, it seems to rest ultimately on local experience. If either rule is found, in a particular community, to work detriment to the safety of innocent accused persons in general or of the State's justice in general, it should be abandoned. Thus far the common experience has been that the requirement of an admission of facts, not merely of testimony, has served to add a powerful weapon of chicanery to the armory of unscrupulous counsel defending hardened villains.⁸ The constitutional objection, it is true, has been raised against the use of the less stringent form of admission, *i. e.* the objection that to refuse a continuance, if the prosecution admits merely that the proposed testimony would have been given, would deprive the accused of his right (*ante*, § 2191) to compulsory process for his witnesses. In spite of the sanction given by some Courts to this objection, it seems to be totally devoid of grounds.⁹ The constitutional provision for compulsory process, as the history of that right shows, was designed merely to give equally to the accused (beyond the power of legislative change) the aid of the State's subpoena. The contrast marked by that right is that, without it, the accused must depend (as at common law) solely on his own persuasion and the witness' choice, for securing his witnesses' attendance, but that, with it, the accused, like the prosecution and like civil parties, may invoke the State's compulsive power, whatever that may avail. But the constitutional provi-

⁴ *Supra*, note 2.

⁵ *Ante*, § 1384; 1882, *Wills v. State*, 73 Ala. 362 (leading case). This would be equally true in civil cases; unless a statute prescribed a contrary rule; for no constitutional clause would prevent such a statute.

⁶ 1884, *State v. Fooks*, 65 Ia. 452, 21 N. W. 773; 1875, *U. S. v. Sacramento*, 3 Mont. 239; 1903, *State v. Mortensen*, 26 Utah 312, 73 Pac. 562, and cases cited *ante*, § 1398, note 9.

⁷ 1856, *People v. Diaz*, 6 Cal. 248; 1871, *Van Meter v. People*, 60 Ill. 168; 1866, *Wassels v. State*, 26 Ind. 30; 1855, *Trulock v. State*, 1 Ia. 515, 519; 1896, *Adkins v. Com.*, 98 Ky. 539, 3 S. W. 948 (leading case); 1902, *State v. Fairfr.*, 107 La. 624, 31 So. 101; 1887, *State v. Berkley*,

92 Mo. 41, 4 S. W. 24 (leading case); 1901, *Russell v. State*, 62 Nebr. 512, 87 N. W. 344; 1827; *People v. Vermilyea*, 7 Cow. 369, 388, 394, 399 (leading case); 1867, *DeWarren v. State*, 29 Tex. 464, 481.

Of course an admission of the truth of the facts would suffice: 1889, *Pace v. Com.*, 89 Ky. 204, 207, 12 S. W. 271 (leading case); 1857, *Browning v. State*, 33 Miss. 47, 71. *Contra*, but anomalous: 1838, *Goodman v. State*, Meigs 195.

⁸ The opinion of Grace, J., in *Adkins v. Com.*, *supra*, forcefully shows this for Kentucky. In Illinois and Indiana the same stages of experience have developed.

⁹ The opinion of Grace, J., in *Adkins v. Com.*, Ky., *supra*, best expounds this.

sion does not have anything to say about the time of holding trial; which is the only question here involved. Much less does it pledge absolutely to the accused the presence of all desired persons, or any other superhuman feat. The Constitution cannot raise witnesses from the dead, nor spirit them from beds of illness or kennels of concealment. To interpret the Constitution into any such pledge is to invent (as experience has shown) a guarantee that no determined offender shall be tried for his crime until he himself pleases. Whether the one or the other kind of admission should be required may depend on the circumstances of each community and each case; but it is impossible to regard the constitutional clause as being in any way involved.

§ 2596. *Admissions of the Genuineness of a Document.* In probably most instances where a document is material under the pleadings, or is evidentially used, its genuineness is not doubtful. Yet the proof of that genuineness may be onerous and expensive. The opponent's admissions, judicial or extrajudicial, are receivable for the purpose (*ante*, §§ 2131, 2132), and may suffice; but it is only casually and seldom that they would be available to the party desiring to make the proof; and for lack of them at common law, the usual evidence must be resorted to, however needless. It would therefore be the part of common sense to recognize the needs of the situation by some expedient for facilitating the proof. The appropriate remedy seems naturally to lie in securing some sort of judicial admission, by rule of pleading or otherwise, where the circumstances justify it. It was Bentham (as usual, one might say) who seems first to have proposed this measure.¹ Almost immediately his proposal bore fruit in one of the Hilary Rules of 1834. By this Rule the opponent was made to take the risks of paying the costs of proof, if after having a prior opportunity to satisfy himself he declined to admit judicially in writing the document's genuineness.² This rule was preserved in later English legislation,³ and furnished one of the two chief types for statutes in the United States.

The other common expedient, now in vogue in perhaps the majority of jurisdictions of the United States, takes the form of a rule of pleading,⁴ by

¹ 1827, Bentham, *Rationale of Judicial Evidence*, b. VII, c. V. (Bowring's ed., vol. VII, pp. 185-188).

² Rules of Practice, Hilary Term, 4 Wm. IV (set out in 10 Bing. 456), No. 20 ("Either party, after plea pleaded, and a reasonable time before trial, may give notice . . . of his intention to adduce in evidence certain written or printed documents; and unless the adverse party shall consent, by indorsement on such notice, within forty-eight hours, to make the admission specified," the offering party may move that the opponent show cause, and "the judge shall, if he think the application reasonable, make an order that the costs of proving any document specified in the notice, which shall be proved at the trial to the satisfaction of the judge or presiding officer, shall be paid by the party so required, whatever may be the result of the cause"; provided that the judge "may give time for inquiry or examination of the documents intended to be

offered in evidence, and give such directions for inspection and examination, and impose such terms upon the party requiring the admission, as he shall think fit"; and no costs of proving a document shall be allowed "to any party who shall have adduced the same in evidence on any trial, unless he shall have given such notice as aforesaid, and the adverse party shall have neglected or refused to make such admission" or the judge have indorsed the application as not reasonable to be granted); 1841, *Rutler v. Chapman*, 2 M. & W. 388 (Rule 20 held to apply to any document, and not merely one in the possession or power of the party seeking to offer it).

³ 1853, Report of the Commission on Common Law Procedure, I, 44; 1852, St. 15 & 16 Vict. c. 76, §§ 117-119; 1854, St. 17 & 18 Vict. c. 125, § 25; 1883, Rules of Court, Order 32, rule 2.

⁴ It is sometimes mis-called a rule of evi-

requiring a special denial on oath (either in the formal plea or in a separate affidavit) of the genuineness of the document; in default of this denial, the genuineness cannot be put in issue. This form is adapted especially to documents named in the pleadings as a foundation of the claim or defence; the other is applicable to any document whatever. In a few jurisdictions, both measures have been separately recognized; in others, the statute combines features of both.⁵

There are also occasional other expedients for applying the principles of pleading or of judicial admissions to facilitate the proof of documents, but they are of only local vogue or narrow scope.⁶ There is still room for

denial; e. g., 1867, *Joyner, J.*, in *James R. & K. Co. v. Littlejohn*, 18 Gratt. 53, 76.

⁵The following list is not exhaustive; typical statutes are set out in full: *Ala.* Code 1897, § 1891; *Ariz.* Rev. St. 1887, § 1877; *Ark.* Stats. 1894, § 2929; *Cal.* C. C. P. 1872, § 447, as amended by St. 1874 ("When an action is brought upon a written instrument, and the complaint contains a copy of such instrument, or a copy is annexed thereto, the genuineness and due execution of such instrument are deemed admitted, unless the answer denying the same be verified"); § 448 ("When the defense to an action is founded on a written instrument, and a copy thereof is contained in the answer, or is annexed thereto, the genuineness and due execution of such instrument are deemed admitted, unless the plaintiff file with the clerk, within ten days after receiving a copy of the answer, an affidavit denying the same, and serve a copy thereof on the defendant"); § 449, as amended by St. 1890 ("But the execution of the instrument mentioned in the two preceding sections is not deemed admitted by a failure to deny the same under oath, if the party desiring to controvert the same is upon demand refused an inspection of the original. Such demand must be in writing, served by copy upon the adverse party or his attorney, and filed with the papers in the case"); *Colo.* C. C. P. 1891, § 62; *Fla.* Rev. St. 1892, § 1073; *Ill.* Rev. St. 1874, c. 110, § 84, Rev. St. 1845, p. 415, § 14 ("No person shall be permitted to deny, on trial, the execution or assignment of any instrument in writing, whether sealed or not, upon which any action may have been brought, or which shall be pleaded or set up by way of defense or set-off, or is admissible under the pleadings when a copy is filed, unless the person so denying the same shall, if defendant, verify his plea by affidavit, and if plaintiff shall file his affidavit denying the execution or assignment of such instrument; provided, if the party making such denial be not the party alleged to have executed or assigned such instrument, the denial may be made on the information and belief of such party"); *Ind.* Rev. St. 1897, § 491; *Kan.* Gen. St. 1897, c. 95, § 379; *La.* C. P. 1894, § 324; *Mass.* Pub. St. 1882, c. 167, § 21, Rev. L. 1902, c. 173, § 86 ("Signatures to written instruments declared on or set forth as a cause of action, or as a ground of defence or set-off, shall be taken as admitted, unless the party sought to be charged thereby files in Court, within the time allowed for an answer, a special

denial of the genuineness thereof, and a demand that they shall be proved at the trial"); *Miss.* Annot. Code 1892, §§ 1797-1800; *Mo.* Rev. St. 1899, § 742 (for any material paper); §§ 746, 6762 (for an instrument on which pleading is founded); *Nebr.* Comp. St. 1899, § 5967; *Neu.* Gen. St. 1895, § 3557; *N. M.* Comp. L. 1897, § 2685, sub-sec. 123, §§ 2977, 2984; *N. Y.* C. C. P. 1877, § 735 ("The attorney for a party may, at any time before the trial, exhibit to the attorney for the adverse party a paper material to the action, and request a written admission of its genuineness. If the admission is not given, within four days after the request, and the paper is proved or admitted on the trial, the expenses, incurred by the party exhibiting it, in order to prove its genuineness, must be ascertained at the trial and paid by the party refusing the admission; unless it appears, to the satisfaction of the Court, that there was a good reason for the refusal"); *N. D.* Rev. C. 1895, § 5643; *Okla.* Stat. 1893, § 4257; *S. D.* Stats. 1899, § 6481; *Tex.* Rev. Civ. Stats. 1895, § 2318; *Utah* Rev. St. 1898, § 3473; *Wash.* C. & Stats. 1897, § 4048; *Wis.* Stats. 1898, §§ 4184, 4192; *Wyo.* Rev. St. 1887, § 2636.

⁶In *Minnesota*, a statute which in literal reading declares a genuine presumption of authentication (ante, §§ 2130, 2132) has been judicially construed apparently into one of the above sort: *Minn.* Gen. St. 1894, § 5751 ("Every written instrument purporting to have been signed or executed by any person shall be proof that it was so signed or executed, until the person by whom it purports to have been signed or executed shall deny the signature or execution of the same by his oath or affidavit"; except where the purporting person "shall have died previous to the requirement of such proof"); 1866, *Pennsylvania Ins. Co. v. Murphy*, 5 Minn. 36, 40 (statute applied to articles of partnership); 1862, *Turrell v. Morgan*, 7 id. 368, 372 (held not to apply to unsigned indorsements on a note); 1878, *Brayley v. Kelly*, 25 id. 160 (printed notice in plaintiff's name; genuineness not presumed); 1863, *Mast v. Matthews*, 30 id. 441, 16 N. W. 155 (the statute applies only in actions against the maker of the instrument or to defences or counterclaims against him); 1897, *Moore v. Holmes*, 68 id. 108, 70 N. W. 872 (distinguishing this rule from that which requires a specific traverse of execution in order to put execution in issue; *Canty, J.*, diss., on the ground that the signature purported to be by an

improvement and expansion. Here, as everywhere, the time has hardly come when the law can afford to consider as closed that great period of rational advance which owed its first marked impulse to the caustic preaching of Bentham.

agent, and that the authority of an agent could not be presumed); 1898, *Ferguson v. English*, 73 id. 266, 76 N. W. 22 (does not apply where the alleged signer is dead or is not a party).

In *Georgia* and in *Texas* a statute forbids the use of *dead-copies* from the registry if an affidavit denying the original's genuineness is made; but this is construed as still permitting a forgery to

be shown, even though the sworn denial is omitted (*ante*, § 1651).

In several jurisdictions there are statutes exempting from proof of deeds prior to a *common source of title*, unless the opponent makes a sworn denial; e. g., 1884, *Thatcher v. Olmstead*, 110 Ill. 26; compare *ante*, § 2132, note 6.

THE END.

TABLE OF STATUTES CITED

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[The full descriptive title of the editions of codes and compilations consulted will be found in the List of Statutory Compilations prefixed to each Volume. In the following list, the citations made in the foregoing pages from earlier codes or compilations are not represented, where they are duplicated by corresponding sections in the later editions here cited; except in a few instances, where they have historical or practical importance. All single enactments not embraced in the regular numbering of a code or compilation are here placed under the common heading of Session Laws; a session law amending a specific code-section, and printed in the later code-edition here referred to, is usually not represented in the list of Session Laws. A list of latest session laws consulted will be found prefixed to each Volume.]

ENGLAND.

<i>Statutes at Large.</i>	Section	Section	Section	Section		
Const. of Clarendon, c. 6	2360	3 Car. I, c. 4	1818	54 Geo. III, c. 144	2454	
13 Edw. I, Westm. Second, c. 31	30	13 " c. 2	2032	c. 170	488	
9 Edw. II, c. 10	2394	16 " c. 4	2250	1 & 2 Geo. IV, c. 24	2036	
3 H. IV, c. 15	2250	12 Car. II, c. 32	1816	2	" c. 22	1650
4 " c. 3	2250	13 " c. 1	2250	4	" c. 76	1644
5 " c. 8	575	13 & 14 " c. 12	2036	6	" c. 60	1163
2 H. V, c. 7	3250	29 " c. 23	1364	7	" c. 64	848, 1326, 1374, 1375
5 Rich. II, 2d sess., c. 5	2250	1 " c. 3	2454	9	" c. 14	1496
3 H. VII, c. 1	2250	2 " c. 4	2454	1 Wm. IV, c. 22	c. 54	648
25 H. VIII, c. 14	2250	3 " c. 5	2454	2 " c. 1		1374, 1380, 1411
27 " c. 19	2067, 2360	4 " c. 6	2049, 2454	3 & 4 " c. 42		1650
28 " c. 4	2032	5 " c. 7	2454	c. 49		488, 576
29 " c. 18	1650, 2426	6 " c. 8	2454	c. 82		1828
28 " c. 15	2454	7 " c. 17	2060, 2454	4 & 5 " c. 76		1828
32 " c. 1, § 1	2032	19 " c. 19	2060, 2454	6 & 7 " c. 76		2061
35 " c. 18	2463	20 " c. 20	2032	c. 86		2150, 2329
1 Ed. VI, c. 12, § 22	818, 1364, 2036, 2250	1 W. & M. c. 18, § 14	2032	c. 111		1644
5 & 6 " c. 11	618, 1364	2 " 2d sess., c. 2	2250	c. 114		196
1 & 2 P. & M. c. 8	2036	3 & 4 " c. 11	2032			575, 579, 805, 1262, 1364, 1360
c. 2	2250	6 & 7 " c. 81	1644			
c. 10	818, 1364, 2036	7 W. III, c. 3				
c. 11	2036	c. 7	575, 818, 1364, 2036, 2038, 2190			
c. 13	2036	8 & 9 " c. 26	2036	Rules of Practice, Hilary Term, 4 Wm. IV, No. 20		2596
2 & 3 " c. 10	848, 1326, 1374, 2250	1 Anne, c. 6	575, 1828, 2190	1 & 2 Vict. c. 77		1828
1 Eliz. c. 1	848, 1326, 1374, 2250	2 & 3 " c. 4	1650	c. 94		1680, 1681
5 " c. 20	1264, 2032, 2036, 2067, 2250	3 & 4 " c. 9	2451	c. 105		1828
5 " c. 9	2032	4 " c. 18	1103	c. 26		488
13 " c. 14	2301	5 & 6 " c. 18	1650	c. 30		2281
13 " c. 1	1650	6 " c. 35	1650	c. 51		2036
31 " c. 7	2036	7 " c. 20	1650	c. 22		8, 1828
31 " c. 4	2260	10 " c. 21	1650	c. 85		488, 986
35 " c. 2	575	10 " c. 18	1847, 1861	7 & 8 " c. 101		2061
43 " c. 6	2250	3 Geo. II, c. 25	1224, 1650	c. 16		1074
4 Jac. I, c. 1	575	8 " c. 6	1163	c. 112, § 1		2162
7 " c. 12	1618	9 " c. 33	1650	§ 2		2162
7 " c. 19	2237	21 Geo. III, c. 53	1644	§ 3		1684
21 " c. 27	2036	36 " c. 87	1644	c. 98		488, 577, 602
3 Car. I, c. 1	2250	32 " c. 60	1312	11 & 12 " c. 12		2036
		38 " c. 78	2657	c. 42		1374, 1375, 1406
		40 " c. 38	2150	c. 42, § 17		1329, 1413, 1667
		43 " c. 58	2036	§ 18		848, 1326, 1667
		44 " c. 59	2036	§ 19		1657
		46 " c. 77	1644	§ 27		1835
		48 " c. 37	2223, 2252, 2254			1850
		49 " c. 127	1644			

TABLE OF STATUTES.

ENGLAND (continued).		Section	38 & 39 Vict. c. 68	Section	c. 32, 188	Section
12 & 13 Vict. c. 69,	16	848		488, 677,	c. 30, 111	1674, 1680
14 & 15 "	c. 99, 14	848		2286	c. 31, 36 W.	1684
	c. 99, 1	488, 677		488,	c. 32, 38	1674
	2	488, 602,		2081	c. 73, 31	1680
	3	2216		488,	c. 74, 112	1641
	4	488, 602,		602, 2286	c. 93	2286
	5	2286		1828	c. 100, 88	2281
	6	488	c. 72, 23	2287	c. 107, 11	1674
	7	1828, 2219	c. 87	2164	c. 113, 115	1680
	8	1828, 1681,	c. 112, 19	228	c. 113, 22-33	1683
	9	2162	c. 22, 19	2215	c. 113, 14	1074
	10	2162	c. 65, 4	2081	c. 119, 47	1674
	11	6, 2162	38 & 37 "	c. 66, Rules of	c. 124, 6	2286
	12	1870	Procedure, No. 28	1280	c. 125, 84	2162
	13	1870	38 & 39 Vict. c. 77, 17	1280	c. 125, 87	1074
	14	1870	40 & 41 "	488	c. 125, 87	1074
15 & 16 "	c. 67, 6	2281	41 & 42 "	2431	c. 134, 6	2286
	c. 76, 25	1177,	42 & 43 "	c. 11, 3	c. 135, 84	2162
	54	1850		4	c. 135, 88	1411
	56	1850		6	c. 135, 88	1380
	114	1163	45 & 46 "	c. 9, 3	c. 138, 9	1411
	§§ 117-119	2286	46 & 47 "	c. 52, 17	c. 167, 61	2086
	c. 22, 42	1862	48 & 49 "	c. 60		2086
	c. 28	1377		§§ 2, 6		2086
16 & 17 "	c. 23, 1-3	488		1406, 1828		2086
	c. 23, 4	602		2044,		2086
	c. 104, 107	1847		2041,		2086
17 & 18 "	§§ 260, 263	1841	51 & 52 "	c. 46, 1, 2, 5		2086
	§ 283	1280	52 & 53 "	c. 44, 6		2086
	c. 125	1856		488, 1828,		2086
	22	900, 906	53 & 54 "	c. 71, 27	§ 590	1526
	23	1028	54 & 55 "	c. 39, 14	§ 591	848, 1526
	24	1256,	56 & 57 "	c. 23, 6	§ 594	1851
	25	1263	57 & 58 "	c. 16, 3	§ 595	1851
	26	1770,	57 & 58 "	c. 60, 229	§ 596	196
	27	2508	60 & 61 "	c. 37, first	§ 597	1880, 1411
	28	1280		schedule, 6	§ 598	2042, 2044
	29	1993,		c. 65	§ 599	2044
	30	2016	61 & 62 "	c. 26	§ 600	488, 1828,
	31	1850		488, 602,	§ 601	2081
	32	1161,		848, 906,	§ 602	1880, 1411
	33	1163,		2282, 2276	§ 603	1880, 1411
	34	1263			§ 604	1378, 1380,
	35	906			§ 605	1411
	36	2016			§ 606	1387
	37	6			§ 607	848
	38	1644			§ 608	2167
	39	6			§ 609	1330
	40	488			§ 610	241
	41	6, 584,			§ 611	2167
	42	1674			§ 612	906, 1270
	43	6, 584,			§ 613	1280
	44	1674			§ 614	2016
	45	1828			§ 615	906, 907
	46	2281			§ 616	907
	47	1074			§ 617	1263
	48	2281			§ 618	1028
	49	1270, 2016			§ 619	150
	50	906			§ 620	150
	51	906			§ 621	326
	52	906			§ 622	296
	53	2081			§ 623	1163
	54	2081			§ 624	21
	55	6, 1640,			§ 625	
	56	2277			§ 626	
	57	1411			§ 627	
	58	1375,			§ 628	
	59	1380			§ 629	
British North America Act					§ 630	
1867, 18		6			§ 631	
§§ 56, 91, 92, 94		6			§ 632	
§ 143		1680			§ 633	
31 & 32 Vict. c. 37		6			§ 634	
§ 2	1680, 1684	2281			§ 635	
c. 110, 20	2287	2281			§ 636	
c. 118, 26	2280	2280			§ 637	
		2280			§ 638	
		2287			§ 639	
		2280			§ 640	
		2280			§ 641	
		2280			§ 642	
		2280			§ 643	
		2280			§ 644	
		2280			§ 645	
		2280			§ 646	
		2280			§ 647	
		2280			§ 648	
		2280			§ 649	
		2280			§ 650	
		2280			§ 651	
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		2280			§ 658	
		2280			§ 659	
		2280			§ 660	
		2280			§ 661	
		2280			§ 662	
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		2280			§ 665	
		2280			§ 666	
		2280			§ 667	
		2280			§ 668	
		2280			§ 669	
		2280			§ 670	
		2280			§ 671	
		2280			§ 672	
		2280			§ 673	
		2280			§ 674	
		2280			§ 675	
		2280			§ 676	
		2280			§ 677	
		2280			§ 678	
		2280			§ 679	
		2280			§ 680	
		2280			§ 681	
		2280			§ 682	
		2280			§ 683	
		2280			§ 684	
		2280			§ 685	
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		2280			§ 695	
		2280			§ 696	
		2280			§ 697	
		2280			§ 698	
		2280			§ 699	
		2280			§ 700	
		2280			§ 701	
		2280			§ 702	
		2280			§ 703	
		2280			§ 704	
		2280			§ 705	
		2280			§ 706	
		2280			§ 707	
		2280			§ 708	
		2280			§ 709	
		2280			§ 710	
		2280			§ 711	
		2280			§ 712	
		2280			§ 713	
		2280			§ 714	
		2280			§ 715	
		2280			§ 716	
		2280			§ 717	
		2280			§ 718	
		2280			§ 719	
		2280			§ 720	
		2280			§ 721	
		2280			§ 722	
		2280			§ 723	
		2280			§ 724	
		2280			§ 725	
		2280			§ 726	
		2280			§ 727	
		2280			§ 728	
		2280			§ 729	
		2280			§ 730	
		2280			§ 731	
		2280			§ 732	
		2280			§ 733	
		2280			§ 734	
		2280			§ 735	
		2280			§ 736	
		2280			§ 737	
		2280			§ 738	
		2280			§ 739	
		2280			§ 740	
		2280			§ 741	
		2280			§ 742	
		2280			§ 743	
		2280			§ 744	
		2280			§ 745	
		2280			§ 746	
		2280			§ 747	
		2280			§ 748	
		2280			§ 749	
		2280			§ 750	
		2280			§ 751	
		2280			§ 752	
		2280			§ 753	
		2280			§ 754	
		2280			§ 755	
		2280			§ 756	
		2280			§ 757	
		2280			§ 758	
		2280			§ 759	
		2280			§ 760	
		2280			§ 761	
		2280			§ 762	
		2280			§ 763	
		2280			§ 764	
		2280			§ 765	
		2280			§ 766	
		2280				

ENGLAND — CANADA.

Section
1, 1680
1684
1685
1674
1680
1641
2284
2281
488
194
1674
1680
1683
1074
1674
1684
2286
2102
1411
1380
1411
1411
2281
2281
2086
2086

13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

Session Laws.
1890, c. 27, § 13
1898, c. 28
c. 24
1900, c. 46
§ 8
1901, c. 26
c. 42, § 2
1902, c. 9

BRITISH COLUMBIA.
Revised Statutes 1897.

c. 22, 26
c. 22, 122
124
124
137
58
c. 50, 27
c. 62, 20
21
c. 67, 102
228
1380, 290
1387, 291
c. 71, 4
5
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20

23
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
37
38
40
41

Section
1680
1680
2167
1684
1430, 1680
1228, 1681
1630, 1680,
1680
c
1828
1828
488, 1628,
2046
c. 71, 44
1680
c. 72, 21
c. 111, 43
c. 120, 14
c. 120, 21
c. 181, 20

Session Laws.

1890, c. 20, 78
c. 62, 22
43
59
112
158
1900, c. 8, 2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65
66
67
68
69
70
71
72
73
74
75
76
77
78
79
80
81
82
83
84
85
86
87
88
89
90
91
92
93
94
95
96
97
98
99
100

MANITOTA.
Revised Statutes 1902.

c. 6, 8
c. 11, 19
c. 15, 25
c. 21, 18
c. 26, 18
c. 30, 77
c. 34, 58
c. 38, 5
c. 38, 125
c. 40, Rule 164
178
367
392-396
408-407
408-426
422
444
465
469
470
471
480
485
486
492
496
499
523
564
581
582
594
c. 41, 5
58
59
79
c. 52, 229
c. 57, 3
4
5

Section
1290
2016
1681
1228, 1681
1676
1446
1644, 1680
1681
c. 57, 2
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14

1680
2167
2071
2162
2162
2212
1228, 1681
2281
488, 2081
488, 2085
2085
2085
2167
1228, 2086
1228, 1681
1828
1519, 1710
986, 1890

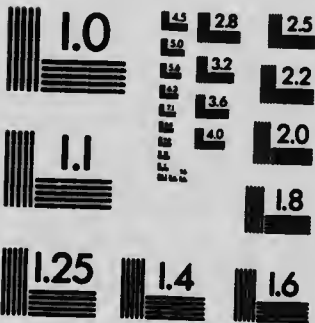
c. 62, 7
c. 63, 7
c. 71, 24
c. 76, 2
c. 80, 45
c. 98, 38
c. 101, 308
304
308
312
314
c. 104, 12
c. 111, 55
57
58
c. 116, 287
371
672
796
c. 123, 12
14
c. 128, 26
c. 121, 28
c. 124, 68
c. 128, 56
c. 128, 4
c. 128, 110
c. 140, 18
c. 141, 25
c. 142, 11
12
c. 144, 29
c. 145, 98
100
c. 146, 49
c. 147, 61
c. 148 (Real Property)
31
46
50
73
82
161

Section
488
2272
1680, 1684
1680, 1684
1680, 1684
1680
1681
1680, 1684
1228, 1680,
1683
1680
1680
1684
1680, 1681,
1680, 1681,
1682, 1686
1681
1681
1681, 1688
1228, 1686
1228, 1686
1676
1771, 1684,
1703
1828
1828
488, 2086
2162
1710
488
1680
1674
1680
1680
2286
1684
2281
1680
1680
2167
106
1680
1684
1684
1680
1674
1680
1684
488
1680
1680
1681
1674, 1680,
1684
1674, 1683
1680
1680
1674
1680
1684
1684
1684
1684
1683
1683
1684
1680
2371
2211
2211
2162
2162
1228, 1681



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CANADA.

Section
 986, 1270
 1290
 2016
 225, 1651
 2065
 2065
 1872
 1681
 1466
 1680
 1680
 1680
 1680
 1680
 144, 1680
 1160
 1519, 1683
 1828
 PRIES.
 1898.
 1680
 144, 1680
 1850, 2219
 2218
 1850, 2219
 1856
 2124
 986
 180, 1411,
 1710
 1411
 1380
 1380
 1411
 1710
 1710
 1674
 1680
 225, 1651
 225, 1651
 1680
 150
 1680
 196
 150
 498
 2124
 1669
 1669

c. 100, § 164
 c. 128, § 47
 79
 c. 158, § 18
 c. 159, § 41
 c. 163, § 3
 4
 5
 6
 7
 8
 9
 10
 11
 12
 13
 14
 15
 18
 17
 18
 19
 20
 21
 22
 23
 24
 25
 26
 27
 28
 29
 30
 31
 32
 33
 34
 35
 36
 37
 38
 41
 42
 43
 44
 45
 46
 48
 c. 167, § 8
 Section
 488
 1074
 1683
 1310
 1380, 1411
 1684
 1680, 1684
 1680, 1684
 1680, 1684
 2167
 2167
 1680
 1684
 1223, 1680,
 1683
 1874
 1639, 1680
 1690
 1647, 1681,
 2110
 1681
 1680
 2162
 1680
 1225, 1651
 1225, 1651,
 1681
 1681
 1651
 1225, 1651
 1681
 1676
 1225, 1651
 1710
 1675
 1675
 1236, 2154
 1680
 1290
 2016
 488
 488, 2065,
 2218
 488
 488, 2252
 488
 1411
 900, 907
 905
 1263
 988, 1270
 1828
 2162
 1466
 Ord. 22, R. 17
 Ord. 30, R. 1
 1061
 1856, 2218
 1858
 12-22
 1859, 2219
 2124
 Ord. 32, R. 3
 Ord. 34, R. 30
 31
 36
 Ord. 35, R. 1
 3
 3 B
 4
 10
 17
 24
 35
 Ord. 36, R. 1
 28
 Ord. 37, R. 6
 21, 445,
 1862

Section
 488
 1163
 1163
 1163
 2162
 1710
 Ord. 50, R. 3
 4
 5
 Ord. 50, R. 2
 Crown Rules 5
 Session Laws.
 St. 1866, c. 13, § 11
 St. 1902, c. 31
 488
 2281
 ONTARIO.
 Revised Statutes 1897.
 c. 9, § 158
 189
 c. 11, § 26
 53
 c. 12, § 63
 c. 28, § 47
 c. 59, § 29
 c. 60, § 141
 142
 143
 144
 148
 c. 61, § 131
 132
 133
 135
 c. 73, § 2
 3
 4
 5
 6
 7
 8
 9
 10
 11
 12
 13
 14
 16
 17
 18
 19
 20
 21
 22
 23
 24
 25
 26
 27
 28
 29
 30
 31
 32
 33
 34
 35
 36
 37
 38
 39
 40
 41
 42
 43
 44
 46
 47
 50
 51
 Ord. 50, R. 3
 4
 5
 Ord. 50, R. 2
 Crown Rules 5
 Session Laws.
 St. 1866, c. 13, § 11
 St. 1902, c. 31
 488
 2281
 ONTARIO.
 Revised Statutes 1897.
 c. 9, § 158
 189
 c. 11, § 26
 53
 c. 12, § 63
 c. 28, § 47
 c. 59, § 29
 c. 60, § 141
 142
 143
 144
 148
 c. 61, § 131
 132
 133
 135
 c. 73, § 2
 3
 4
 5
 6
 7
 8
 9
 10
 11
 12
 13
 14
 16
 17
 18
 19
 20
 21
 22
 23
 24
 25
 26
 27
 28
 29
 30
 31
 32
 33
 34
 35
 36
 37
 38
 39
 40
 41
 42
 43
 44
 46
 47
 50
 51
 1163
 1163
 1163
 2162
 1710
 1163
 2215
 2281
 1411
 2281
 1684
 1680
 1411
 1411
 1380, 1411
 1519, 1710
 1163
 1163
 1163
 1163
 488
 488
 488, 2218
 2252
 488, 2061
 488, 986,
 2276
 488
 488
 2065
 2065
 1828
 1828
 1828
 2218
 1263
 1028
 988, 1270
 900, 905,
 907
 1684
 1680, 1684
 1680, 1684
 2167
 1684
 1223, 1680,
 1683
 2375
 1639, 1680
 1680
 2167
 1681
 1225, 1651
 1675
 1875
 2162
 2167
 1681, 1859
 1681
 1859
 1225, 1651
 1225, 1651,
 1859
 1225, 1651
 1223, 1683,
 1859

Section
 1290
 2016
 1375, 1411
 1225, 1573,
 1651, 1662,
 2105, 2143
 1651
 1466
 1225, 1651
 1223, 1683
 1074
 1223, 1683
 2215
 2281
 1680
 1680
 1880
 196
 1680
 1680
 2187
 1680
 1387
 c. 73, § 54
 55
 c. 80, § 10
 c. 184, § 2
 c. 138, § 100
 c. 146, § 4
 c. 148, § 24
 c. 191, § 66
 76
 c. 207, § 40
 c. 223, § 200
 255
 334
 485
 710
 c. 245, § 101
 106
 107
 114
 c. 324, § 12
 15
 Rules of Court 1897.
 § 94
 143
 § 439-462
 § 448-452
 § 481, par. 1
 2
 3
 § 462
 § 463-477
 481
 483
 485
 482
 490
 496
 § 501-504
 505
 507
 547
 549
 570
 571
 1096
 1674
 2313
 1856, 2218
 1859, 2219
 2124
 2124
 2124
 2220
 1879, 2219
 1866, 2218
 1380, 1411,
 1710, 1856
 1280, 1411
 73
 916
 1681
 1380
 1828
 811
 1837, 1869
 1681
 1163
 1163, 1862
 445, 1163,
 1862
 Session Laws.
 1892, c. 11, § 13
 1900, c. 17, § 27
 27
 c. 26, § 7
 c. 27, § 14
 c. 49, § 30
 1902, c. 12, § 29
 c. 15
 c. 27, § 14
 c. 33, § 186
 187
 197
 198
 1680
 1680
 2215
 2281
 488
 PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND.
 Statute 1889, c. 9 (Evidence Act).
 § 3
 § 4
 488
 488

CANADA — UNITED STATES.

Section
1674
1680
1674
1674
1680
1680
1665
1680
2061
1810,
1820
1312,
1320
1681
1681
1413
2360
1328
1411
1382
1411
1411
1411
2272
488
1800
2056
488
488
2061

1225,
1678

900.

2360
1851
1873
488
488
890,
2276
488
2056
2061
2567
1326
1326
852
1837
1326
1326
1326
1326
890

678
651
651
651
239
651
881
051

0.
873
163
547
062

490	1889, 2219
630	2207
638	1710
730	1710
640	1710
644	1411
646	1382
650	1382
652	1382
653	803
656	1389
657	1382, 1411
658	1387, 1893
659	1367
660	1837
662	781, 1908
664	770
665	736
666	773
667	905, 907
668	1877, 1896,
	1898
669	923, 987, 1270
670	1023, 1263
671	64, 1104
672	1861
673	285, 1008,
	2034, 2056
674	2201, 2210
675	967, 2210,
	2223, 2252,
	2270
676	781, 2210
683	1062
684	2067
685	1883
690	1387, 1412
694	1828
695	1328
696	1828
1033	488, 906, 987
1034	488
1035	488
1036	2292
1037	2395
1038	2380
1039	1680
1040	1680

ARIZONA.

Penal Code 1887.

14	2281
361	2281
545	2281
1111, par. 3	2395
1111, par. 4	2380
1270	1326
1345	1326
1346	1837
1347	1837
1356	1326
1418	2360
1643	1873
1652	2039, 2042
1656	2065
1657	1329, 1825
1659	2044
1680	2066
1689	1163
1870	1800
2054	2207
2069	1382
2075	1389, 1411
2091	1382
2097	1389, 1411

Revised Statutes 1887.

782	1804, 1310, 1390
783	1411
789	907
929	999
931	1359
978	1387, 1893
983	1848
984	1649
997	1837
999	1837
1359	1839
1848	488
1649	488
1837	2201
1838	916
1839	1831
1843	1834
1835	1835
1836	1836
1837	1837
1839	1839
1849	1383, 1387,
1850	1412
1855	1389
1856	1411
1858	916
1858	916
1863	916
1864	488, 516
1864	488
1865	488
1866	1828
1867	1884
1868	1680
1868	1681
1870	1680, 1681
1871	1678, 1681
1872	1675, 1680
1873	1680
1874	1225, 1851,
1875	1876
1877	1681
1878	1680, 1681
1879	2896
2037	1275
2038	1660
2039	1225
2040	1665
2113	1681
2566	2050
2561	2296-2300
3144	2901
3145	2903
3184	2904
3236	2895
3248	2896
3251	2897

Revised Statutes 1901.

820	1851
2528	1856, 2218
2534	2218
2535, par. 5	2395
2535, par. 6	2380
2555	1859, 2219

Session Laws.

1859, Mar. 21, No. 52	1644, 1680
1893, Mar. 6, No. 4	1413, 1689
1895, Mar. 11, No. 20, § 8	2251
1897, No. 8, § 50	2152
1899, Mar. 16, No. 85	2380
1903, No. 25	1326, 1375,
	1387, 1413

ARKANSAS.

Constitution 1874.

Section	I. 8	2191
	II. § 8	2252
	10	1397
	14	2039
	26	1828
	9	2281
	1	1828

Statutes 1894.

721	1676
722	1225, 1651
724	1239
726	1225, 1851, 1678
756	1326
757	1326
758	1374
1895	1837
1896	1837
1907	1326
2055	2360
2072	1851
2113	2207
2117	1382
2118	1411
2224	1873
2225	1163
2230	2056
2231	2071
2511	2067
2874	1684
2875	1684
2875	1684
2875	1684
2877	1681
2878	1681
2879	1680
2880	1680
2881	1680
2882	1674, 1680
2883	1680
2884	1675
2885	1675
2886	1680
2887	2109
2888	1680, 1684
2889	1680
2890	1680
2891	1690
2892	1680
2893	1519
2894	1519
2895	1519
2896-2900	1859, 2219
2901	1859
2903	2531
2906	1625, 1684
2907	1825, 1684
2908	488
2909	488
2910	483, 2272
2911	488
2912	488
2913	488
2914	483, 2218
2915	488
2916	488
2916 (5)	2292
2917	488
2918	2395
2919	2380
2920	1828
2921	1828
2922	1828
2923	1828

TABLE OF STATUTES.

ARKANSAS (continued).

	Section		Section		Section
2924	1928	702	1326	1798	1674
2929	2596	704	1336	1829	1176
2940	2307	367	1837	1830	1176
2941	2301	868	1837	1839	2106
2954	1867	899	1326, 1349	1844	2034
2955	781, 1908	882	1332	1845	687
2957	770, 773, 914	943	2300	1847	923
2968	906, 907, 917	10..J	1851	1849	1082
2969	923, 987, 1270	1093, par. 1	1873, 2377	1850	1750
2969	1088, 1283	1099	186	1852	1480
2961	1104	1100	488, 2379	1853	1455
2962	1876, 1898	1101	483	1854	2113
2963	1837	1102	2379	1855	1913, 1225, 1930,
2964	2199	1103	488, 1008		1909, 1975
2965	1909, 1910	1108	9039	§ 1863	2025
2966	1861, 1883	1107	1339, 1625	§ 1870, par. 3	1072
2971	1710	1108	2061	par. 4	1430, 1455,
2979	1710	1110	2044		1480
2973	1411	1111	2056	par. 8	1387, 1413
2980	1411, 2307	1112	2056	par. 9	2016
2984	2182	1117	1356	par. 10	689, 1938
2985	2182	1119	1163	par. 11	1480, 1597,
2986	2182	1120	1800		1605
§ 2987 ff., 2999	1382	1204	1411	par. 12	1597
§ 3017 ff.	1383	13..	488	par. 13	1480
3022	1387, 1412	1323	488	§ 1375	2162
3023	1681	§ 1330	488, 2252, 1879		488, 1828
4498	2182	§ 1339	2272, 2376		488, 2063
§ 5778 ff.	1856	§ 1382	307		488, 2241,
5820	1873	§ 1382	1882		2292
5821	1183	§ 1345	1382	par. 3	2395
7393	2051	§ 1346	1389, 1411	par. 4	2380
7394	2051	§ 1353	1411	par. 5	2375
7404	2050	§ 1362	1389, 1411	§ 1882	488, 2292,
7414	1382, 1411				2380
7415	1310, 1390			§ 1883	1909, 1910
7416	1304, 1310,			1884	811
	1320	§ 130	2067	1893	1225, 1680
§ 7426	1411	297	1680	1900	1694
7427	1681	1207	1225, 1651	1901	1680
7445	2106	1289	2050	1902	1271, 1703
		1290	2050	1903	1352, 1662
		1293	2051	1905	1681
		1307	2475	1906	1681
		2059	1674	1907	1273, 2110,
1895, Apr. 9, No. 83	1710	2471	1639, 1680,	§ 1918	2158
1899, Feb. 28, No. 22	2239		1710	§ 1919	1680, 1684
1801, Feb. 27, No. 24	1384	§ 2484	1710	§ 1920	1651, 1680
1903, No. 81	2239			1921	1639
				1922	1681
				1923	1677, 1680,
					1681
					1239
					1639
					1292
					1597
					1188, 1230,
					1234, 1267
					1206, 1207,
					1208
					2125
					1290
					1297, 1298,
					1302
					2132, 2137,
					1300, 1301
					701
					1693, 2016
					2017, 2137
					1455, 1519,
					1639
					1519, 1521
					1676
					2373
					1188, 1225,
					1651, 1674

TABLE OF STATUTES.

COLORADO (continued).

	Section	c. 70,	30
359	1681		01
360	1861, 2156		33
361	1684	c. 71,	1
364	1862		2
366	1383		3
370	1857, 1389, 1413, 1681		4
	1680		5
422	1835		6
427	1681		7
923	1681		8
1102	1061		19
2300	1382		25
2650	1382		27
2651	1382		28
			29

Session Laws.

1891, p. 166, § 42	2281
p. 171, § 8	2281 § 131
p. 274, § 2	1239
p. 367, § 1	1684 § 132
p. 397, § 2	1680
1893, p. 73, § 1	1163 § 194
p. 90, § 1	1074 1066
p. 116, § 1	1851 1068
p. 127, § 3	488 1069
p. 239, § 16	2054 1060
p. 261, § 1	1698 1063
p. 264, § 1	2016 1064
p. 303, § 1	1062 1065
p. 420, § 15	1674 1066
p. 426, § 18	1674 1067
p. 431, § 2	1710
1894, p. 53, § 6	1226, 1651, 1674, 1680
p. 74, § 8	1674, 1680
1899, Mar. 1, c. 95	916
Apr. 6, c. 142, § 19	160
1902, Mar. 14, c. 1, § 16	1639

COLUMBIA (DISTRICT).

Compiled Statutes 1894.

c. 11, § 14	1675
c. 14, § 2	1326
c. 15, § 77	1680
c. 16, § 20	2281
	488
c. 20, § 2	1692
	4
	1411
	6
	1383
	7
	1383
	8
	1412
	11
	1383
	14
	1883, 1337, 1412
	17
	2207
	§ 18 ff.
	1680
	93
	§ 23 ff.
	1681
	24
	1690
	29
	852, 2281
	30
	1859, 2219
	31
	1859, 2219
	32
	1680, 1681
	36
	1225, 1681
	34
	1676
c. 30, § 18	1644, 1080
	2067 § 10-2
c. 55, § 120	2595
	155
	1808
c. 58, § 26	1225 § 1068
c. 70, § 17	1225
	16
	1681
	26
	1304
	2051
	1074

Section	1080	Section	1080	Section	1383
	2060		1083		1387
	2060		1084		1676
	1382, 1411		1086		1680
	488, 2218		1087	1684, 2673	1703
	488, 2252		1088		1680
	1828		1089		1680
	1828		1090		1680
	488, 516		1091		1680
	2281		1092		1680
	488, 516		1093		1680
	488, 2272		1094		1680
	1411		1095		1680
	1411		1096		1680
	1382		1097		1680
	1382		1098		1680
	1382		1099		1680
	1382		1099		1680

Code 1901.

1304, 1310,	1307
1320	1307
1304, 1310,	1500
1320, 1382	1622
	1326
	1623
	1828
	1624
	1382, 1411
	2011
	2201, 2207
	2016
	1382, 1411
	2106
	488, 2218
	2370
	488, 488
	2553
	1387, 1413
	2561
	488
	2618
	488, 987,
	1370
	2659
	488
	3788
	488
	2997
	1680, 1681
	2983
	1225, 1651,
	3076
	1681
	3108
	1859
	3107
	2380
	3117
	3190
	3190
	3436
	3445
	3898
	3980
	1925, 1651
	1680

CONNECTICUT.

Constitution 1875.

Art. I, § 9	1397, 2191, 2252
Art. IX, § 4	2039
General Statutes 1887.	
	1326
	1690
	1681
	1215, 1681
	1710
	2599
	1681
	1669
	1669
	1689
	1689
	781
	2281
	1556, 1859,
	2218, 2219
	1856, 1859,
	2219
	1856, 1859,
	2219
	2201
	1882, 1411,
	1676
	1411
	803
	1382

Session Laws.

1893, June 14, c. 198	987
1895, May 7, c. 116	1405, 1413, 1669
1897, Mar. 2, c. 16	64
June 9, c. 224	1680

DELAWARE.

Constitution 1831.

Art. I, § 7	1397, 2191, 2252
VI, § 18	1397

Revised Statutes 1893.

c. 33, § 4	1326, 1374, 1413
c. 35, § 10	1225, 1651, 1680
c. 39, § 7	1644, 1683
c. 50, § 2	1383, 1387, 1412
c. 75, § 8	2067
c. 77, § 15	1141
c. 77, § 16	1375, 1411
c. 82, § 6	2531
c. 83, § 14	1225, 1651

COLORADO — GEORGIA.

<p>1393 1397 1676 1680 2673 1703 1680 1680 1680 1680 1680 1723 1397 1676 1678 2609 488 966. 1628 916. 2218 1141 2221 2044 2272 2281 1326 1837 1674 1680 2281 2281 1674 1674 1674 1644 2281 1680 1681 2281 238 1680 1680 1680 1651 1680</p>	<p>c. 63, § 18 c. 84, § 8 7 8 c. 89, § 50 c. 97, § 16 c. 107, § 4 5 6 7 8 9 11 12 13 14 c. 108, § 5 6 7 8 c. 109, § 20</p>	<p>Section 1676 1681 1681 1681 1680 1326, 1376, 1413 488, 517 1684 1684 1684 1671 1680 1619 2535 1859, 2219 1680, 1681 1629 1828 1828 1628 1162 2058 2059 2126 2212 488, 916 488 488, 967 488 2016 488 483, 2272 1859 1674 1651 1680 1680 1680 1680 1680 3018</p>	<p>Section 1121 1122 1123 1124 1129 1132 1134 1138 1141 1142 1148 1818 1634 1798 1798 1805 1908 1867 1904 1962 1979 2026 2058 2059 2126 2221 2322 2470 2813 2814 2863 2905 2908 2909 2910 2911 2912 2912 ff. 2917 2918 3018</p>	<p>Section 2018 1848 1411 1382 803 1411 1382 1383 1681 1411 1367 1411 1628 2051 2050 1304, 1411 488, 1200 1680 1872 2064 2159 150 1844 1710 1680 488 488 1074 2360 2360 488, 2245 488 488 2039 1339 1710 1411 1382 1411 1163 1326</p>	<p>Section 3033 3281 3282 3289 3290 3291 3301 3302 3303 3610 3611 3628 2630 3772 3535 3893 3947 3063-3067 3064 3957 3961 3963 3966 4545 5144 5145 5146 5148 5150 5155 5156 5159 5160 5163 5166 5167 5168 5169 5170 5172 5173 5173 5174 5177 5178 5179 5180 5181 5182 5183 5184 5185 5186 5194 5195 5196 5198 5199 5210 5211 5212 5213 5214 5218 5219 5220 5223 5231</p>	<p>Section 2509 1304 1310, 1320 2062, 2106 1681 1681 1681 1681 2187, 2141 1660 1651 1225 1503 2528 1415 2252, 2292, 2376 1656 2216 967, 2252 1382, 1387, 1412 1367 1412 2282 2498 2497, 2498 966 2162 2137 1073 2039, 2042, 2056 64 2486 285 1174 1681 2535 1698 1914 1192 1233 1269 1180 1480 2529 1750, 1756 1455, 1487 1455 1619 1697 2137 1697 1230, 1387, 1412, 2098 493, 815, 1062 1072 2113 488 2292 2360 1684, 2577 1225, 1861, 1681, 1860, 1873 1225, 1680 1681 1680 1680 1225, 1651 1269 1660 1684</p>
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Session Laws.

<p>1859, Feb. 18 c. 598, § 1 2 3 1873, c. 550, § 10 1881, c. 636 c. 537, § 1 1897, c. 777, § 1 1895, c. 121, c. 309, § 2 1897, c. 578, § 3 1903, c. 394, § 76 128 132</p>	<p>2212 488, 916 488 488, 967 488 2016 488 483, 2272 1859 1674 1651 1680 1680 1680 1680 3018</p>	<p>2126 2321 2322 2470 2813 2814 2863 2905 2908 2909 2910 2911 2912 2912 ff. 2917 2918 3018</p>	<p>3963 3966 4545 5144 5145 5146 5148 5150 5155 5156 5159 5160 5163 5166 5167 5168 5169 5170 5172 5173 5173 5174 5177 5178 5179 5180 5181 5182 5183 5184 5185 5186 5194 5195 5196 5198 5199 5210 5211</p>
---	--	---	---

FLORIDA.

Constitution 1887.

<p>Declaration of Rights, § 5 § 11 § 12 § 23</p>	<p>1828 1397 2101 2252 2039</p>	<p>1801, c. 4029 c. 4036, § 1 § 2 1896, c. 4400 1897, c. 4552 c. 4554 1899, c. 4719, § 1 § 2 § 3 1901, c. 4950 c. 4961 §§ 2-7 c. 4966 1903, c. 5122, § 5</p>	<p>488, 2245 1828 1028 246, 488, 2252, 2272, 2276, 2277 1680 1354 2290 2290 1382 1275 1859, 1705 1705 488, 987, 1270 1669</p>	<p>5173 5173 5174 5177 5178 5179 5180 5181 5182 5183 5184 5185 5186 5194 5195 5196 5198 5199</p>
--	---	--	---	--

Revised Statutes 1892.

<p>1039 1073 1082 1087 1096 1098 1097 1101 1102 1105 1106 1107 1108 1109 1110 1111 1112 1113 1114 1115 1116 1117 1119 1120</p>	<p>1859, 2219 2596 1892 1163 488 488, 987, 1270 488, 923, 1270 900, 906 1028, 1037 1684 1684 1703 1271 1681 1681 1680 1674 1874 2162 1859, 2219 1856, 2218 484 2218 1674 1519</p>	<p>1801, c. 4029 c. 4036, § 1 § 2 1896, c. 4400 1897, c. 4552 c. 4554 1899, c. 4719, § 1 § 2 § 3 1901, c. 4950 c. 4961 §§ 2-7 c. 4966 1903, c. 5122, § 5</p>	<p>488, 2245 1828 1028 246, 488, 2252, 2272, 2276, 2277 1680 1354 2290 2290 1382 1275 1859, 1705 1705 488, 987, 1270 1669</p>	<p>5173 5173 5174 5177 5178 5179 5180 5181 5182 5183 5184 5185 5186 5194 5195 5196 5198 5199</p>
--	---	--	---	--

GEORGIA.

Constitution 1877.

<p>Art. I, § 1, par. 2 par. 5 par. 6 Code 1895.</p>	<p>2039 1397, 1851, 2191 2252 484 1005 1033 2430</p>	<p>1666 2071 1639 2067</p>	<p>par. 2 par. 3 5199 5210 5211 5212 5213 5214 5218 5219 5220 5223 5231</p>
---	--	--	---

TABLE OF STATUTES.

GEORGIA (continued).

Section	Section	Section	Section	Section
8232	1880, 1881	991	2020, 2056	1481
8233	1678	993	64	1422
8236	1223, 1883	998	1780	1423
8237	1680, 1681	1000	1420	1424
8238		1001	1330, 1287,	1425
8239	1680		1413, 2068	1426
8240	1194	1003	1072	1427
8241	2113	1004	2113	1848
8243	1907	1006	831	1849
8244	1391, 1394,	1007	831, 840, 841	1864
	1290, 1301,	1008	838	1866
	1310, 1311	1010	488, 2276	1920
	1310, 1320	1011	488, 2252	1924
8246	693		488	1953
8247	2018	par. 4	2292	
§ 8249-8254	1859, 2219	par. 3	1037	
8254	1206		1039	
8255	2200		770, 773	
8256	2200		906	
8257	1212, 2200		1021, 1028,	
8258	2206		1108	
8261	2201	§ 1265	1328	
8268	488, 935, 1828			
8269	488, 2218			
8270	488			
8271	1911, 2292,			
	2314, 2315, 2317			
8272	488			
8273	488			
8274	488			
8275	488			
8276	488			
8279	1828			
8280	1837			
8281	2210			
8282	1890			
8283	770, 778,			
	1861			
8284	736			
8285	1961, 1978			
8286	712			
8287	1978			
8288	987, 2252,			
	2292, 2375			
8289	949			
8290	905, 916			
8292	1021, 1028,			
	1035, 1108,			
	1263			
§ 8293	923, 987,			
	988, 1111,			
	1980			
8295	1006, 1013			
8296	1835			
8297	1411, 2206			
§ 8299-8301	1382			
8303	803			
8306	2206			
8318	1382, 1411			
8337	1800			
5678, Court Rule 42	1225			
5674	1239			
5691	783			
<i>Criminal Code 1895.</i>				
8	1851			
9	2252			
104	488			
114	488			
121	2281			
404	2281			
910	488, 1326			
911	1326			
945	1851			
987	2497			
989	285			

Penal Laws 1897.

Session Laws.

Session Laws.

IDAHO.

Constitution 1859.

Revised Statutes 1887.

H. WAIL.

Civil Laws 1897.

GEORGIA — ILLINOIS.

Section
 5, 907
 1028
 1293
 2167
 1290
 2016
 531
 1676
 1651
 1678
 1675
 2047
 2047
 458

3039
 196
 1387
 1326

1680

1828
 2039
 2252

2281
 1675
 1710
 1640
 2067
 1680
 1848
 1873
 1163
 2354
 1681
 1062
 2219
 1859
 1304
 1310,
 1320
 1413
 2052
 1678
 2162
 923,
 1828
 488
 2375,
 2395
 1910
 1680
 1684
 1680
 1703
 1681
 1681
 2158
 1684
 1680
 1639
 1681
 1681
 1681
 1239

5084	1839		
5090	1897, 1903		
5091	1206, 1207, 1208		
5092	2125		
5093	1290		
5094	1302		
5095	1300		
5096	1463, 1519, 1639		
5097	1678		
5098	1925, 1851, 1676		
5099	1203, 1206, 1209, 1209, 1680, 1681 2039, 2042		
6005	2201		
6037	2207		
6039	1710		
6052	1710		
6053	1392		
6061	138		
6066	1392		
6067	1392		
6099	1392		
6079	1399		
6075	1837		
6077	7, 3		
6073	734		
6079	773, 1690		
6080	900, 905, 907		
6081	1677, 1896		
6082	923, 987, 1279		
6083	1026, 1293		
6084	64, 1104		
6085	1861, 1883		
6090	2201, 2210		
6091	967, 2210, 2223, 2252		
§ 6117-6119	1383		
6121	1387, 1399		
§ 6128-6131	1828		
6308	2281		
6370	1387		
6716	2251		
6852	2251		
7356	2252		
7383	1326		
7816	1326		
7574	1837		
7575	1837		
7576	1326		
7588	1382		
7855	1673		
7861	488		
7862	486		
7867	9085		
7868	1339, 1825		
7869	2061		
7870	2044		
7871	2056		
7872	1163		
7873	1800		
8141	463		
8142	467		
8143	489, 2272		
8152	2207		
8163	1382		
8169	1389		
8182	1382		
8189	1389		
8382	1326		
<i>Session Laws.</i>			
1839, Jan. 10	1890		
1890, Feb. 10, § 2	1382		
	1382		
1891, Feb. 3, § 1	1681		
1897, Mar. 13, § 3	1706		
	1706, 1859		

Section	1899, Feb. 5, § 7	Section	2281
	Feb. 10, § 5		1411, 2206,
			2271
			12
			22
			24
			28
	Feb. 14, § 8		1367, 1412
	Feb. 16, § 9		1644, 1680
	1903, p. 222, § 7		1680
			1684
ILLINOIS.			
<i>Constitution 1870.</i>			
Art. II, § 3		1828	
§ 9		1397, 2191	
§ 10		2252	
<i>Revised Statutes 1874.</i>			
c. 3, § 56		1672, 1681	
c. 3, § 60		2065	
c. 15, § 6		1639, 1680	
c. 17, § 6		468	
c. 19, § 10		1239	
c. 24, § 68		1239, 1680	
c. 30, § 12		1680, 1684	
		1644	
		1681, 1676	
		1681	
		1375	
		1651	
		1681	
		1225, 1651, 1676	
		1225, 1681	
		1239	
		1680	
		1396	
		1680	
		967	
		5085	
		488, 2272, 2281	
		2281	
		2039	
		1326	
		1326	
		2260	
		1861	
		488, 963, 967,	
		1379, 2272	
		2296	
		2296	
		196	
		1681	
		2535	
		488, 2085	
		2061	
		2067	
		2067	
		2085	
		1163	
		488, 966,	
		967, 1270	
		488	
		1519	
		488	
		488	
		488	
		488, 916, 1856,	
		2218, 2219	
		488	
		488	
		1899	
		1684	
		1680	
		1684	
		1681	
		1689	
		1861, p. 79	
		1867, § 5, p. 134	

c. 31, § 15		Section	1225, 1683
			1681
			1273
			20
			21
			22
			23
			24
			25
			26
			27
			28
			29
			30
			33
			34
			§ 89-44
			1387, 1412, 1681
			1387
			1290
			2259, 2281
			1639, 1680
			1466
			1647
			1710
			1644, 1680
			1225, 1651
			1675, 1680
			1719
			1828
			1828
			§ 103, 1
			§ 109, 2
			1225, 1651
			1225, 1651
			1859, 2219
			2206
			2598
			2596
			2606
			2609
			1660
			1375
			1375
			1660, 1706
			1798
			1375
			205
			1299, 1706
			1706, 1859
			1680
			1239
			1239
			1680
			1684
			1275
			1680
			406
			1680
			1685, 1689
			1688, 1689
			1680
			1304
			1304
			1304
			1382, 1411
			1304, 1909
			1719, 1320
			1387, 1413
			1681
			1681
			1304
			2050
			1857

Session Laws.

TABLE OF STATUTES.

ILLINOIS (continued).

	Section	
1887, July 15	1273, 1706	513
1889, p. 112	196	514
1891, June 11, p. 208	2281	515
1892, June 17	2088	517
June 20, § 7	2281	518
1887, May 1, § 27	1676	519
§ 29	1825, 1851	520
§ 35	1825, 1851	521
July 1, p. 206, § 7	2281	522
1889, April 24	488	523
1901, May 11, § 3	488, 2088	525
1903, May 28, p. 118	1651	527

INDIANA.

Constitution 1851.

Art. I, §		
7	1828	1059
8	1828	1061
13	1397, 2191	1272
14	2258	1290
20	2039	1343

Revised Statutes 1897.

378	2498	1730
425	1382	1754
429	1382	1763
430	1382	1766
438	1411, 2206,	1878
	2371	1888
434	1411	1889
438	803	1890
441	1411	1891
449	1387	1892
450	1385	1893
451	1383	1894
454	1681	1895
455	1387, 1412	1896
453	1680, 1681	1897
454	1680	1901
455	1680, 1684	1904
457	1681	1907
458	1681	1908
459	1875, 2185	1914
471	1225, 1651,	1918
	1680	1919
	2107	2446
473	2107	2504
474	2107	2504
475	1239, 1680	2506
477	1239, 1680	2506
479	1223, 1710	2510
480	1680	2830
481	1239, 1680	2831
482	1239	2975
483	1680	3371
484	1881	3434
485	1684	3435
486	1710	3439
488	1271, 1703	3500
490	1271	3570
491	2506	3590
492	1859, 2219	3602
493	1859, 2219	3696
494	1710	4131
495	2201	4133
496	2201	4335
503	2201	4619
505	2201	4623
507	1828, 2292,	4871
	2380, 2395	4918
507 (8)	488	4971
508	811	4995
509	488	5073
510	488	5189
511	488	5285
512	488	5518

Section	Section	Section
488	5686	1223, 1687
488	5708	1223, 1687
488	5737	1680
488	5750	1925, 1651
2201	5754	1925, 1651
936, 1928	5768	1925, 1651
966, 987	6599	1674
900, 906, 907	7818	1680, 1710
1047	7849	1644, 1680
2318	7860	1925, 1651
1856	7811	1680
918	7930	1680
1062	8000	1674
1062	8018	1680
1163	8027	1674
1326, 1413	8037	2167
1387, 1413	8194	1680
1681	8324	1880
2067, 2281	8395	1926
1411	8428	1225, 1651
1275	9129	1875
1383, 1412	9218	1680
1383, 1412	9228	1680
1275		1680
2079		1630
2260		
413		2595
1731		2363
1850		2865
1861		2595
1861, p. 52		
831, 2071		7
923		1382
488		2085, 2088
1411		488
2061		1674
2039		
2281		
2281		
1639		
1873		
1800		
1183		
1681		
1681		
1710		
1304, 1310, 1320		
1310		
1681		
2062		
1387, 1413		
1680		
1680		
1651		
1225, 2143		
1225, 1651		
1074		
1680		
1674		
1684		
1874		
1684		
1680		
1680		
1223		
1680		
1874		
1674		
1680		
1674		
1680		
1674		
1680		
1674		
1680		
1680		
1680		
4603		
75		1680
245 a (Suppl. 1902)		1669, 2088
520		1326
538		1665, 1680
1298		2201
1451		1680
2080		7
2131		2281
2197		1644
2399		2281
2422		257
3007		1680
3148		1644
3285		1411
3286		1681
3536		1710
3587		2281
3593		406
3639		7
3665		2595
3700		763, 1873
3710		1163
3719		1879
3817-3819		1062
4075		2281
4567		2125
4601		488
4603		488, 966, 987

ILLINOIS — KENTUCKY.

Section
 1687
 1688
 1689
 1690
 1691
 1692
 1693
 1694
 1695
 1696
 1697
 1698
 1699
 1700
 1701
 1702
 1703
 1704
 1705
 1706
 1707
 1708
 1709
 1710
 1711
 1712
 1713
 1714
 1715
 1716
 1717
 1718
 1719
 1720
 1721
 1722
 1723
 1724
 1725
 1726
 1727
 1728
 1729
 1730
 1731
 1732
 1733
 1734
 1735
 1736
 1737
 1738
 1739
 1740
 1741
 1742
 1743
 1744
 1745
 1746
 1747
 1748
 1749
 1750
 1751
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 2084
 2085
 2086
 2087
 2088
 2089
 2090
 2091
 2092
 2093
 2094
 2095
 2096
 2097
 2098
 2099
 2100

		Section	488	Section	1873	c. 101,	48	Section	2361
			488		1873		2361		2361
			488		1888		50		1837
			488		1360		51		1266
			488		2061		110		2360
			2261, 2262		488, 2272		111		2360
			2361, 2362		488, 2276		112		2360
			2373		2061		169		1411
			1908		2064		171	1362,	1411
			2224		2071		211		1800
			987, 2261				217		488, 966, 968
			987, 1270				218		488, 2272
			993				223		1625
			2113	<i>Session Laws.</i>			224		2281
			1597, 1803	1898, c. 9, § 1	1669, 2098		226		2044
			4619	c. 108, § 1	488		226	1339,	2044
			4620	1900, c. 128, § 1	2262		226		1143
			4921				228		488
			4922				260		1600
			4923	KANSAS.			19		1304
			4924	<i>Constitution 1859.</i>			13		1310
			4929	Bill of Rights, § 7	1928		17		1661
			4930	10	1907, 2161		24		1413
			4933	13	2039		27		1681
			4934	17	2262		217		1681
			4935						966
			4936						
			4939						
			4940	<i>General Statutes 1897.</i>					
			4941	c. 27, § 141	1326		§ 5315		1851
			4942	c. 95, § 330	488, 966, 987		§ 5348		1851
			4943	1681	488				
			4944	1681	2218				
			4945	1681	488				
			4946	1681	488				
			4947	1681	2267				
			4949	1684	2201				
			4950	1680, 1684	2201				
			4951	1684	1928				
			4952	1271, 1680, 1703	1710				
			4953	1680, 1684	1411				
			4954	1859, 2219	803				
			4955	1859, 2219	1382				
			4956	1856	1382				
			4960	2207	1411				
			4961	2208	1387				
			4962	2201	1519				
			4977	1710	1596				
			4978	1710	1859, 2219				
			4979	2162	1859				
			4980	1710	1383				
			4981	1710	1383				
			4984	1411	1383				
			4987	1382	1383				
			4988	1382	1887, 1889, 1412				
			4989	1382	488, 2067				
			4993	1382	2067, 2068				
			4994	1382	1684				
			4995	1382	1225, 1651, § 213				2281
			4996	1382	1680, 2373				2271
			4997	1382	1225, 1651, 479				1676
			4998	1382	1680, 1681				1225, 1651
			4999	1382	1681				1326
			4700	1411	1681				196
			4713-4720	1883	1130				488
			4723	1887, 1389, 1412	1239				2281
			4726	2039	1680				2281
			4870	1389, 1625	2167				2044, 2281
			4944	1620	1239				2167
			5003	1620	1671, 1680				1684
			5222	1382	1684				1680, 1681
			5224	1411	1629				1680, 1683
			5226	1837	1680				1681
			5226	1837	1681				1674
			5227	1326	1710				1275
			5228	1326	1680, 1684				1681
			5267	2360	1644				1680
			5268	2360	1633, 1710				1680
			5269	2360	2061				1680
				c. 100, § 269	2281				1225, 1651, 1680, 1681

KENTUCKY — MASSACHUSETTS.

Section
2201
1909
2207
2207

1894.

2201
1411
1163
2219
2200
2200
2200
2598

2016
1856
2218
2207
2207
2124
2124
1411
1382
1382
1382
1382
1382
1382
1412
2203
2219
2200
1828
1828
488
1878
2360
2360
1413
1413
1651
1681
1681
1304
1413
1413

1681
2207
2203
488
1890,
2272,
2278
488
1681
1908
2595
1411
488
488

2252
2039

1163
1605

c. 46,	10
	11
c. 49,	46
c. 60,	2
c. 64,	4
	5
	7
c. 70,	5
c. 71,	27
c. 74,	18
	19
c. 81,	100
c. 82,	69
	82
	92
	93
	94
	97
	98
	99
	103
	104
	105
	106
	107
	108
	109
	110
	112
	113
	114
c. 87,	10
c. 95,	2
	6
c. 104,	41
c. 107,	4
	5
	6
	7
	8
	9
	14
	17
	19
	22
	27
c. 117,	1
	2
c. 120,	18
c. 132,	6
c. 133,	12
c. 134,	8
	15
	19
c. 139,	23
	7

Session Laws.

1864, c. 290	579
1881, Rules of Court, No. 48	1911
1885, c. 307	1411
1887, c. 47	1644, 1680

MARYLAND.

Constitution 1867.

Decl. of R., Art. 21	1397, 2191
	2252
	1828
	1828

Public General Laws 1888.

Art. 13, § 6	1675
18, § 6	1680

Section	1223	Art. 18, § 46
	1674	19, 22
	1680	20, 20
	488	22, 4
	1411	27, 131
	1304	32, 5
1967, 1304	33, 24	
	1681	35, 1
	1710	
	2060	
	2060	
	1466	4
	1672	5
	1163	
	935, 1828	6
488, 966, 2218		15
488, 2252		18
	916	19
	488	22
	488	25
	1828	28
	1828	31
488, 987		36
	2201	38
	1681	
	1684	
	1271, 1703	39
	1225, 1651	43
	1680	44
	1678	47
1367, 1413, 1514		48
	488	49
	1163	50
	1141	51
	1163	
	1411	52
	1382	53
	1382	54
	1382	55
	1382	56
	1382	57
	1379	58
	1411	59
	1387	60
	1383	
	1383	54, 4
	1383	73, 8
	2039	75, 80
	2039	
	318	84, 8
	2201	
	1326	93, 8
	2360	
	2201	29
	488, 1411,	54
	2252, 2272	56
	1163	119
	1326	312
	1326	321
		324
		335
		336
		337
		338
		339

Session Laws.

1837, c. 253	
1864, c. 38	
1874, c. 386	
1880, c. 318	
c. 416	
1892, c. 81	
c. 504	
1875, c. 249	
1898, c. 342	

Section	1680	1898, c. 478	Section	1680
	1674	1902, c. 495		488
	1678			
	1683			
	2281			
	1674			
	1680			
	488, 2218			
	488, 1126	Decl. of R., Art. 10		2192
	488, 2046,		12	1397, 2191,
	2061, 2272		14	2252
	916			2264
	986, 987,			
	1270			
	1290, 2016		26	2217
	1382, 1411		45	2250
	1382, 1411		47	2032
	1382, 1411		61	2250, 2360
	1382			
	1411			
1378, 1382				
	1383			
	1681	"Innkeepers"	2032, 2250	
1225, 1681,		"Presidents and Forms"	1818	
1680		"Punishment," "Jurors"	2250	
1678		"Witnesses"	1364, 2032	
1678				
1710				
1710	c. 13, § 54			1840
1684	c. 26, 15			1667
1684	c. 37, 8			1275
1684				1275
1680	c. 49, 48			1163
1225, 1275,				1183
2107	c. 51, 6			1163
1239	c. 82, 7			1851
1239	c. 94, 4			2513
1880	c. 145, § 29			1844
1680				1644
1680				2085
1680	c. 155, 3			2201
1681	c. 159, 51			1872
1681, 2110	c. 187, 28			1856
1681				1856
1681	§ 49-56			75
1710				78
1856				79
1856	c. 189, 3			406
1710				17
1382, 1411				20
1678, 1710				21
1680				24
1681				25
1681				31
1681				34
2061				43
1304				47
1304, 1310				50
1681, 1710				54
1681				82
1810, 1320,				84
1710				43
1681	c. 170, 43			1387, 1412
1881	c. 180, 2			1163
	c. 190, 13			1163
	c. 197, 15			1466
				18
				1466
	c. 201, 4			1397, 2039
1675	c. 203, 44			330
1620				57
1128	c. 212, 41			1074
2110	c. 213, 34			1413
1304	c. 214, 11			2201
1304, 1310,				1163
1320				
1310				
2286				
1664	c. 3, § 15			1680
	§ 17			2252, 2231

Revised Laws 1902.

TABLE OF STATUTES.

MASSACHUSETTS (continued).		Section	Section	Section
c. 5, § 4		1680	1290	1710
c. 11, § 262		2281	1687	1681
		2281	1680	1270
c. 13, § 57		1710	1680	2281
		1710	1684	1681
		1710	1271, 1703	1239
c. 23, § 9		1680	1837	1571
c. 29, § 20	1644, 1680	c. 191, § 51	1710	1808
c. 32, § 3		c. 198, § 6	1710	1877
c. 56, § 42			1466	1405
		c. 202, § 12	1466	1708
			2039	2129
c. 69, § 13		c. 206, § 4	2281	2333
c. 70, § 3		c. 206, § 20	1839	2365
c. 73, § 13		c. 209, § 11	1710	2371
c. 75, § 24			9044	2511
c. 76, § 26		c. 212, § 7	1326	2619
c. 78, § 4		c. 217, § 39	1413	2635
c. 82, § 16	1225, 1681		1851	2638
c. 100, § 67	1141, 2261	c. 218, § 9	2360	2692
c. 110, § 21			1851	2758
c. 111, § 46			1851	2759
c. 113, § 54			2915	1710
c. 115, § 4			2928	1680, 1681
c. 116, § 38			2932	1244, 2105
c. 119, § 13			2937	1710
c. 126, § 4			406	2963
c. 128, § 46			1671	3087
			1028	3083
c. 135, § 15			1382	3240
c. 186, § 2			1665	3242
c. 139, § 2			1674	3244
c. 146, § 15			238	3269
			1665	3272
c. 151, § 37			1432	3386
			1223	3387
			291	3394
c. 155, § 27			2452	3407
c. 162, § 10			967	3413
c. 164, § 24			2680	3427
			238	3476
			1674	3641
c. 173, § 6	1680, 2219		1876	3723
	1859, 2219		1844	3871
	29		1382	3879
	29		1680	3922
	35		1680	4032
§§ 37-43			1680	4239
§§ 57-63			4264	1680, 1710
			4377	1674, 1680
			4379	1680, 1710
			4541	1680
			4548	406
			4612	2252
			1397, 1836	1644, 1680
			2191	1680
			2039	1680
			2252	1680
			1828	1680
			5230	1680
			5273	1680
			5304	1680
			5331 d	1680, 1710
			5425	1680
			1828	1680
			96	1680
			99	488, 966, 967
			100	488, 968, 2272
			102	6007
			1674	6025
			1680	6092
			1674	6134
			1828	6140
			488	6159
			1680	6178
			1681	6181
			1681	6203
			2201	6220
			802	1223

TABLE OF STATUTES.

MINNESOTA (continued).

Table with columns for Minnesota statute numbers and sections, and a right-hand column for cross-references to other statutes. Includes sub-sections for Session Laws, Mississippi Constitution 1890, and Annotated Code 1898.

TABLE OF STATUTES.

MISSOURI (continued).

	Section	Section	Section	Section
6083	1674	1387	2302	3184
6242	1710	1431	1326	3188
6267	1674	1678	1837	3189
6284	1674	1679	1837	3190
6289	1674	1680	1326	3193
6306	1670	1692	1382, 1411	3194
6314	1714	1734	1851	3195
6323	1674	1769	2300	3206
6364	1710	1813	1851	3207
6682	1680, 1684	1910	1851	3208
6762	1680	2070	1673	3209
6789	2696	2076	488	3210
6949	1680	2077	488	3213
7600	1685	2079	2039	3214
9200	1680	2083	2079	3227
9348	1939	2084	2085	3229
9531	1680	2065	1339, 1626	3230
9556	1680	2086	2061	3232
9840	1828	2089	1626, 1684	3233
9841	1828	2097	2066	3234
9842	1828	2098	1163, 1803	3235
9918	968	2440	1900	3236
9920	918, 2218	2441	488	3237
9925	2302, 2380, 2395	2442	488	3239
9957	1228, 1651	2443	488, 968, 2272	3241
9972	2281	2464	488	3250
9066	1644	2423	2207	3266
9078	1939	2490	1382	3266, par. 34
9086	1975	2491	1389, 1411	3271
9109	1975	2504	1411	3302
9325	1640	2508	1382	3304
10026	1680	2518	1382	3350
10186	1665	2798	1389, 1411	3331
10197	1775		1326	3332
10255	1690			3342
10271	1690			3354
10348	1690			3360
10373	2281			3361
		407		1680
		1697		1681
		2244		1680, 1710
				3362
				3363
				3371
				3372
				3374
				3375
				3376
				3377
				3378
				3379
				3380
				3381
				3382
				3390
				3400
				3401
				3402
				3414
				3415
				3421
				3425
				3431
				3432
				3433
				3434
				1567, 2016
				1430, 1455, 1480
				1887, 1413
				689, 1938
				1480
				1480
				2162
				2162
				1897, p. 245
				1899, p. 145
				1901, p. 166
				488
				1651
				2281
				488
				488
				488
				488
				2292
				2395
				2390
				2375
				Art. I, § 4
				11
				19
				14
				1828
				1397, 2191
				2252
				2039

TABLE OF STATUTES.

NEVADA (continued).

4708	2281
4734	488
4929	1326, 2281
4930	1326, 2281
5012	1684

Compiled Laws 1900.

4184	1881
4234	1881
4240	1881

Session Laws.

1865, c. 403	488
1881, c. 83	488
1881, c. 84	488
1887, c. 106	1390
17	1304, 1310
19	1304, 1310
25	2062
1899, c. 35, § 1	1644
1901, c. 6	1644
1903, c. 6	1810, 1710

NEW HAMPSHIRE.

Constitution 1793.

Bill of R., Art. 12	2192
15	1397, 2191, 2252

Public Statutes 1891.

c. 15, § 5	1670
c. 16, § 3	1675
c. 26, § 8	1680
c. 27, § 18	1226
c. 43, § 44	1235
c. 56, § 17	1710
c. 57	1680
c. 61, § 7	1680, 1710
c. 104, § 9	1672
c. 112, § 25	238
c. 13, § 18	2291
c. 143, § 1	1710
c. 154, § 23	1680
c. 164, § 8	1674
c. 167, § 8	2162
c. 173, § 10	1644, 1690
c. 174, § 14	1644
c. 186, § 16	2085
c. 187, § 6	2085
c. 187, § 12	2061
c. 190, § 1	1304
c. 201, § 27	1310
c. 224, § 5	2281
9	2201
10	2201
11	1828
12	1828
13	1828
14	488, 2218
15	1850, 1859
16	916
17	488
18	488
19	488
20	488
22	1943
23	1225, 1651, 1680
24	488
25	488, 2272

c. 224, § 26	488, 267
c. 225, § 1	1411
4	1382
5	1382
7	803
11	1856
12	1411
14	1892
c. 226, § 8-5	1383
9	1215, 1387
c. 227, § 8	1672
19	1163
c. 245, § 43	2281
c. 252, § 7	1326
6	1326
9	1326
11	1837
c. 260, § 10	2281
c. 262, § 12	1326
c. 272, § 4	2056
c. 274, § 7	2535

Session Laws.

1791, Feb. 11	1141
1857, c. 1952, § 1	7
1899, c. 41	488
1901, c. 104, § 1	1851
§ 5	1851

NEW JERSEY.

Constitution 1844.

Art. I, § 4	1828
6	1397
§ 14	2039

General Statutes 1896.

Banking and Insurance	
Dept. §§ 3, 6	1680
Bar Assoc. § 5	1680
Bastards, § 16	1375
Benef. Soc. § 55	1413
Cities, § 1371	1680
§ 1484	1684
Clerks of Courts, etc.	1680, 1684
Conveyances, § 3	1680
4	2143
7	1676
15	1676
16	1225, 1651
29	1651
31	1225
36	1651
§ 50-57	1676
88	1676
90	1225, 1651
100	1676
102	2143
114	1681
115	1681
116	1681
161	1275
189	1651
194	1673
236	1681
Coroners, § 14	1326
Corporations, § 12	1680
Courts, § 77	1681
Crimes, § 153	2281
159	2281
204	2281
Criminal Procedure, § 115	2281
Dairy, etc. Products, § 40	1710

Disorderly Persons, § 18	488
Evidence, § 1	488, 267
2	488, 916
3	488, 266
4	488
5	488
6	488
7	488
8	488
9	1270
10	2252
11	2218
12	488, 1387
19	2016, 2015
20	1675
22	1684
23	1703
24	1162, 1862
25	803, 1382
30	1392
32	1392
42	1411
51	488
53	488
54	488
57	488
58	1225, 1639, 1651, 1680, 1681
59	803
60	1644
61	1680
62	1382
64	1411
65	1634
66	1382
67	1411
69	1680
73	488
75	2281
Fences, § 17	1651
Judgments, § 19	1651
Juries, § 31	1163
32	1163
35	1163
Justices' Courts, § 88	1856
§ 187	1856
190	1856
Leasehold Estate, § 8	1651
Marriage, B. & D. § 23	1644, 1680
Mortgages, § 16	1651
32	1651
55	1651
Munic. Corpor. § 6	1680
Orphans' Courts, § 8	1681
21	1681
22	1681
24	1681
140	1681
247	1681
246	1681
253	1681
Partition, § 10	1168
Poor, § 27	1681
Practice, § 157	1859, 2219
158	1859, 2219
§ 159-166	1856, 2218
163	916
183	1600
302	1681
Promissory Notes, § 12	747, 1675, 1680
Secretary of State, § 8	1680
Statutes, § 23	1684
Usury, § 3	2281
Wills, § 11	2050
12	2050
16	2050

NEVADA - NEW YORK.

Section
488
488, 987
488, 916
488, 966
488
488
488
488
1270
2262
2218
488, 1387
116, 2018
1678
1684
1703
63, 1862
202, 1382
1392
1393
1411
488
488
488
488
488
16, 1639,
90, 1681
803
1644
1680
1382
1411
1684
1382
1411
1680
488
2281
1651
1651
1163
1163
1163
1856
1856
1856
1651
4, 1680
1651
1651
1680
1681
1681
1681
1681
1168
1681
2219
2219
2218
916
988
1600
1681
1678
1680
1680
2281
2050
2059
2050

Session Laws.
1854, April 8, § 6
1884, May 9, c. 163
1898, c. 202
1898, c. 222, §§ 21-24
85
86
87
88
64
62
c. 237, 84
87
77
138
1900, c. 150, 1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
11
19
20
21
22
24
25
26
27
28
29
31
31
32
32
31
51
1901, c. 18
1902, c. 138
1903, c. 98
c. 216
c. 217
c. 247, 140
142
144
158

*New Mexico.
Compiled Laws 1897.*
54
57
120
121
122
215
220
416
447
449
792
988
998
1047
1178
1179
1422
1522
1688
1950
1982
§ 1989

Section
1890
21
2220
1878
1651
1651
2143
2143
2143
2143
2143
1851
488
1163
21
488
488
488
488
488
488
488
488
488
488
1387, 1689
2220
2016
1678
1678
1684
1888
1703
1680
1644
1163
1382
1382
1382
1382
1411
1644
1382
1651
488
1678
1856
1859
1856
1800
1800
1859
1859
1859
1680
1411
1680
1680
1680
1668, 1680
2380
1851
1897
1339
1710
1644, 1680
1680
1680
2050
2050
2050
1304, 1310, 1320,
1326, 1413
1681

Session Laws.
1901, c. 58
c. 95
New York.
Constitution 1895.
Art. I, § 3
6
Art. XIII, § 3
4
5
Code of Civil Procedure 1877.
§ 482
§ 523
§ 535
735
§§ 803-809

Section
1988, 1681
1651
1828
1828
1828
1828
2219
1848
2219
2219
2219
2596
2596
2596
2596
2596
783, 1878
488
488, 1628
488, 938
946, 987
488, 2218
2252
488
488
289, 2218
1263
1028, 1037
987, 1370
900, 906
923, 1028
1680
1680
1680
1444, 2127
1519
1656
1411
1382
1389
1383
1383
1387, 1412, 1681
1680
488, 2068
1326
1837
1681
488, 2279
468
1397, 2252
1706
1676
1225, 1681
1640, 1680
1828
2252
2281
488
2281
2398
2460
2639
2540
1680
2281
406
2596
1859, 2219

Section
838
838
830
830
831
832
833
834
836
836
836
837
838
841
845
848
847
848
849
850
852
866
867
868
869
870 H.
871
872
878
881
882
882
896
899
911
921
922
923
926
927
928
930
931
932
933
934
935
936
938
939
940
941
942
943
944
946
947
948
949
950
952
953
955
956
957
1659
1753
1865
1914
2398
2460
2639
2540
2618
2619
2620
2629
2630
838
838
1387, 1389,
1418, 1869
488
488, 987, 1370
2395
2380
2292
1411, 2202, 2380
2223, 2262
916
2531
1828
1828
1828
1828
488, 1828
2201
2373
2200
2200
2200
2200
2200
870 H.
871
872
1856
1856
1856
2220
1387
1411
1382
1382
1389
1678
1678, 1680, 1710
1678
1710
1710
1644, 1680
1213
1273
1684
1680, 1681
1680
1225, 1651, 1678
1225, 1651
1681
1681
1681
1680, 1684
1684, 1703
1681
1639, 1680
1225, 1651
1225, 1651
1225, 1651
1681
1681
1163
2067
2052
1859
1710
2281
1310
1310
1304, 1310
1310
1310, 1320
1681
1681

TABLE OF STATUTES.

NEW YORK (continued).

Table listing statute sections for New York, including years like 1861, 1862, 1867, 1868, 1869, 1870, 1871, 1881, 1882, 1891, 1898, 1901, 1909.

Code of Criminal Procedure 1881.

Table listing sections under the Code of Criminal Procedure 1881, with years ranging from 1875 to 1901.

Penal Code 1881.

Table listing sections under the Penal Code 1881, with years ranging from 1881 to 1898.

Revised Statutes.

Table listing sections under the Revised Statutes, categorized into I and II, with years ranging from 1844 to 1861.

Rules of the Supreme Court.

Table listing sections under the Rules of the Supreme Court, with years 1830, 1898, 1899.

Session Laws.

Table listing sections under Session Laws, with years ranging from 1831 to 1890.

Table listing statute sections for New York, including years like 1861, 1862, 1867, 1868, 1869, 1870, 1871, 1881, 1882, 1891, 1898, 1901, 1909.

1870, c. 291, tit. 2, § 2

Table listing statute sections for New York, including years like 1875, 1882, 1883, 1884, 1885, 1886, 1887, 1888, 1889, 1890, 1891, 1892, 1893, 1894, 1895, 1896, 1897, 1898, 1899, 1900, 1901, 1902, 1903, 1904, 1905, 1906, 1907, 1908, 1909.

Section

Table listing statute sections for New York, including years like 1874, 1876, 1880, 1881, 1882, 1883, 1884, 1885, 1886, 1887, 1888, 1889, 1890, 1891, 1892, 1893, 1894, 1895, 1896, 1897, 1898, 1899, 1900, 1901, 1902, 1903, 1904, 1905, 1906, 1907, 1908, 1909.

NORTH CAROLINA. Constitution 1875.

Table listing sections under the Constitution 1875, with years 1874, 1876, 1878, 1880, 1897, 1898, 1900, 1901.

Code 1885.

Table listing sections under the Code 1885, with years ranging from 1840 to 1901.

NEW YORK — OHIO.

Section
1999
1923
7, 1999
1981
1981

§ 3310	Section 1929	1999
§ 3311	1929	1999
§ 3302	1975	1999
§ 3765	2939	1999
<i>Session Laws.</i>		
1929-29, c. 29, § 1	1974	1999
1929, c. 159	2999	1999
1929, p. 422	498	1999
1929, c. 522	1929, 1411	1999
1929, c. 199, § 54	2921	1999
1927, p. 95	2921	1999
c. 195	2921	1999
1929, c. 121	2496	1999
NORTH DAKOTA.		
<i>Constitution 1889.</i>		
Art. I, § 4	1929	1999
§ 18	2929, 2191	1999
§ 19	2039	1999
<i>Revised Codes 1895.</i>		
70	1684	1999
294	1929, 1674, 1689	1999
469	1675, 1689	1999
470	1689	1999
1638	1689	1999
1640	150	1999
1978	1689	1999
9019	1328	1999
9099	1945	1999
2168	1689	1999
2376	1689	1999
2417	1689	1999
2730	1689, 1694	1999
2787	1644, 1689	1999
2870	2047	1999
2938	1689	1999
3044	2921	1999
3099	1672	1999
3323	1689	1999
3697	1928	1999
3644	9069	1999
3680	9061	1999
4181	1674	1999
4415	1639, 1689	1999
4423	1710	1999
5431	1973	1999
5434	1193	1999
5434	1062	1999
§ 5439-5442	2996	1999
5443	1959, 2219	1999
5444	1854	1999
5445	1854, 2216	1999
5446	1854, 2207	1999
5447	1854	1999
5448	916, 1854	1999
5449	1854	1999
5450	1854	1999
5451	1854	1999
5452	1854	1999
5453	488, 2218	1999
5454	2907	1999
5455	2901	1999
5456	2901	1999
5457	1628	1999
5458	1710	1999
5459	1411	1999
5460	803	1999
5461	1382	1999
5462	803	1999
5463	912, 1387	1999
5464	1411	1999
5465	1271, 1634, 1703	1999
5466	1681	1999
5467	1999, c. 92	1999

NORTH DAKOTA.

Constitution 1889.

Art. I, § 4
§ 18
§ 19

Revised Codes 1895.

4992	Section 1981	1999
4993	1710	1999
5094	1681	1999
5095	1681	1999
5096	1681	1999
5097	1229, 1661, 1676	1999
5098	1639	1999
5099	1639	1999
5700	1689, 1644	1999
5701	1689, 1681	1999
5702	2931	1999
5703	1999	1999
5704	21, 2375, 2950, 2999	1999
5705	2922, 2999	1999
5706	1999, 1910	1999
5707	1928	1999
5708	1383	1999
5709	1387, 1389	1999
5711	1412, 1681	1999
5862	1999	1999
5925	1904	1999
6296	1904, 1310	1999
6297	1310	1999
6298	2952	1999
6299	1320	1999
6891	2921	1999
6977	488	1999
7014	2921	1999
7140	2921	1999
7296	2921	1999
7359	2921	1999
7484	2921	1999
7711	2921	1999
7767	1393	1999
7953	1837	1999
7959	1837	1999
7961	1326	1999
8021	2930	1999
8022	2940	1999
8034	1651	1999
8062	1651	1999
6175	1973	1999
8188	488	1999
6189	488	1999
8190	488	1999
8193	488, 2373	1999
6195	2039	1999
8196	2056	1999
6197	2044	1999
6209	2061	1999
6210	1193	1999
8215	1900	1999
6216	2085	1999
8216	1339, 1625	1999
8309	2307	1999
8376	1382	1999
8383	1389, 1411	1999
8384	1411	1999
8386	1382	1999
8396	1411	1999
8397	1389	1999
<i>Revised Codes 1899.</i>		
8386 a	1290, 1320	1999
8472, par. 2	2354	1999
7985	1651	1999
<i>Session Laws.</i>		
1897, c. 110, § 3, par. 24	98	1999
	34	1999
	35	1999
	36	1999
1899, c. 175	2207	1999
1901, c. 145	1225, 1651,	1999
1909, c. 92	1676	1999
	916	1999

OHIO.

Constitution 1851.

Art. I, § 7
§ 10

Annotated Revised Statutes 1896.

§ 5	1699
§ 7	987
§ 10	1639, 1699
	1639, 1699
	1674, 1699
	1699
	987
	1699, 1699
	1699, 1699
	1674, 1699
	1699
	1375
	1375
	1375
	1699
	918
	1699
	1383
	1699
	1383
	1191
	1412, 1665
	1383
	1699
	1645
	1699
	1326
	1699
	2221
	1699, 1684
	1710
	1699
	1699, 1710
	1699
	1665, 1699
	1674, 1699
	2321
	2321
	1699
	1225, 1651
	1699
	1699
	1239, 1651
	1225, 1651
	1225, 1651
	1699
	1226, 1651
	1684
	1684
	1684
	1684
	150
	4427, par. 6
	1626
	1928
	2921
	1062
	1183
	488
	488, 2292,
	2390, 2396
	468
	1330, 1665,
	1699, 1413
	1519
	916, 2216
	1971, 1684, 1703
	1699
	2201, 2207, 2373
	2201
	1710
	1411
	803
	1382
	1382
	803
	1382
	1382
	803
	1387

TABLE OF STATUTES.

Ohio (continued).

	Section		Section	Section
6281	1411	1750	1288	580
6282	1820, 2219	1776	1290	5810
6283	1820, 2219	18 J	2064, 2261	5211
630.	1820, 2219	1904	2261	5222
6302	1820, 2219	2002	488	5223
6303	1820	2120	2261	5224
6320 a	1680	2157	2301	5225
6320 b	1680	2302	2044	5226
6320 c	1680, 1706, 2109	2321	2261	5227
6320 d	1680, 1706	2324	2261	5344
6320 e	1680, 1706	2376	1680	5340
6320 f	1680, 1706	2121	1680	5361
6320 g	1680, 1706	2158	2261	5377
6473	2281	2324	1674	5368
6415	1326	2344	2002	5366
6422	1413	2344	1644, 1680	5362
6427	488, 2007	2344	1680	5371
6466	2005	2347	1710	5375
6463	1413	4165	2003	5456
§ 5874-5876	1383	4167	1873	5130
5873	1387, 1412	4209	1143	6170
5926	1304	4210	488	488
5927	1310	4211	488	488
5928	1411	4212	488	488
5931	1281	4213	488	488
5946	1411	4212	2207	2207
5947	2166	4219	2201	2201
6055	1326	4228	2201	2201
6059	1710	4229	1820	1820
6309	1644, 1680	4234	1710	1893, c. 66, § 331
6419	1710	4236	1411	c. 68, § 11
6428	1163	4240	803	1895, c. 41, § 5
7142	1837	4242	1382	17
7206	2360	4243	1382	29
7282	1163	4244	803	c. 42
7284	488, 906, 967	4247	1387	1897, c. 2, § 25
7285	488, 2272, 2281	4250	1411	c. 23, § 14
7287	1908	4257	2506	
7293	1382, 1411	4258	1850, 2219	
7296	2061	4259	1850, 2219	
7298	2039	4260	1271, 1684, 1703	
7299	1639	4261	1681	
7300	1873	4262	1225, 1651, 1680	
		4264	1680	
		4267	1681	
		4268	1681	
		4269	1680	
		4270	1683	
		4271	1710	
		4272	1239	
		4273	1239	
		4274	1680	
		4275	2167	
		4276	1519	
		4277	1225, 1639, 520	
		4278	1651, 2372	
		4279	1382	
		4282	651	
		4284	1383	
		4284	688	
		4284	2281	
		4284	1326	
		4284	690	
		4284	1062	
		4284	2067, 2065	
		4284	1681	
		4284	1397	
		4284	2282	
		4284	1326	
		4284	1286	
		4284	2360	
		4284	2360	
		4284	1873	
		4284	488	
		4284	488	
		4284	710	
		4284	488	
		4284	488	

Revised Statutes 1903.

§ 310 227A
 § 6574 106

Session Laws.

1893, c. 66, § 331 966, 967
 c. 68, § 11 2272
 1895, c. 41, § 5 1851, 2281
 17 1851
 § 29 488
 c. 42 1275, 1690
 1897, c. 2, § 25 1225, 1651,
 1676, 1681
 c. 23, § 14 1644

OREGON.

Constitution 1859.

Art. 1, § 3 1828
 § 7 1828
 § 11 1307, 2191
 § 12 2252
 § 24 2039

Codes and General Laws 1852.

§ 196 1873
 § 197 1163
 § 201 1800
 § 242 2567
 § 220 1682
 § 231 1859, 2219
 § 234 2634
 § 251 657
 § 282 1480
 § 288 1455
 § 289 2113
 § 291 1230, 1269
 par. 2 1195
 par. 4 1225
 § 699 2025
 § 706 1597
 par. 4 1430, 1455, 1480
 par. 8 1787, 1413
 par. 9 2016
 par. 10 689, 1938
 par. 11 1480
 par. 12 1480
 § 708 2162
 § 710 488, 966,
 987, 1823

TABLE OF STATUTES.

PENNSYLVANIA (continued).

Year	Chapter	Section	Year	Chapter	Section	Year	Chapter	Section
Session Laws.			Session Laws.			Session Laws.		
1834, Pub. L. 323,	§ 153	1163	c. 244,	§ 47		1859, 2219	§ 2492	
	159	1163	c. 253,	§ 38		1680		1304, 1310,
	160	1800	c. 275,	§ 3		2039	§ 2494	1320, 1511
1851, Pub. L. 661,	§ 1	2143	c. 280,	§ 6		1339	§ 2495	1681
1852, Pub. L. 645,	§ 4	2143	c. 281,	§ 5		2061	§ 2827	1081
1887, Pub. L. 153,	§ 10	2252	c. 282,	§ 12		2251	§ 2828	1928
	271	1843	c. 287,	§ 17		1326	§ 2829	1411
1895, Pub. L. 69,	§ 1	2016	Session Laws.				§ 2870	1322
	2	2016	1902, c. 998		1392		§ 2871	1411
	3	2016	1903, c. 1100		1862		§ 2881	1382, 1411
	4	2016	c. 1110		488		§ 2884	1382, 1411
	195,	2380	SOUTH CAROLINA.				§ 2885	1290
	279,	1382	Constitution 1882.				§ 2886	1290
	387,	1432, 2061	Art. I, § 12				§ 2887	1271, 1681, 1703
1897, Pub. L. 82,	§ 1	1223, 1519	§ 13			1397, 2252	§ 2892	1681
1899, Pub. L. 41,	§ 1	488	Constitution 1895.				§ 2895	1225, 1651
	2	488	Art. I, § 17				§ 2896	1225, 1651
1901, Pub. L. 371,	§ 1	2162	§ 18				§ 2898	1290, 1318
	349,	1683	§ 22				§ 2899	1290, 1318,
	404,	987, 2281	Art. I, § 17				§ 2900	1651, 1676
1903, No. 32		488	§ 18				§ 2901	1518, 1519
RHODE ISLAND.			§ 22				§ 2902	1519
Constitution 1842.			Revised Statutes 1893.				Criminal Code 1902.	
Art. I, § 3			§ 513		§ 24			1326
§ 10			629	1680	40			1850
§ 13			2262	1680	63			580
			1397, 2191	2262	64			488, 2281
			2252	2262	178			2281
				2262	712			1326
General Laws 1896.			2332					
c. 48,	§ 3	1710	2333					
c. 49,	§ 4	1640	2334					
c. 62,	§ 11	1710	2335					
c. 82,	§ 17	1639	2341					
c. 100,	§ 16	2220	2342					
c. 102,	§ 3	1644, 1680	2345					
c. 152,	§ 4	1678, 1680	2345					
c. 176,	§ 15	1680	2352					
c. 202,	§ 15	1710	2355					
c. 208,	§ 15	2281	2355					
c. 210,	§ 14	797	2356					
	15	1310	2357					
	16	1213	2410					
c. 212,	§ 33	1681	Code of Civil Procedure 1895.					
c. 213,	§ 12	1710	§ 131		1466			
c. 220,	§ 19	1215, 1681	§ 312, par. 5		2281			
c. 228,	§ 33	1681	§ 386		1082			
c. 242,	§ 1	1710	§ 389		1859, 2219			
c. 244,	§ 1	1163	§ 390-398		1856			
	8	2201	§ 391		2218			
	16	1674	§ 399		488			
	17	1674	§ 400		488, 2218			
	20	1411	Code 1902.					
	21	1382	§ 389		1859, 2219			
	24	1382	§ 390-398		1856			
	25	1669	§ 391		488, 2218			
	27	1389, 1411	§ 396		488			
	28	1382	§ 397		488			
	32	1883, 1412	§ 398		488			
	33	1383	§ 400		488			
	35	488	§ 419		1197, 1212,			
	37	488			1213			
	38	1411	§ 891		1382			
	40	488, 987	§ 922		1382			
	41	488, 2272	§ 1670		1675			
	42	488	§ 2334		1411			
	43	1290	§ 2335		1411			
	44	2016	§ 2345		1382			
	45	1223, 1683	§ 2453		1710			
	46	1684, 1703	§ 2491		1304, 1310, 1320			

PENNSYLVANIA — TEXAS.

Section

4, 1310,
20, 1511
1681
1081
1828
1411
1382
1411
1411
02, 1411
02, 1411
1290
1290
1, 1703
1681
0, 1661
5, 1651
0, 1318
7, 1318,
1, 1676
8, 1619
1519
1693

1326
1850
580
2281
2281
1326

651
2044
1676
1676
1680
1680
2281
1676
1698

2281
2191
1828
1397
2252
2039

1680
1680
1680
1680
1326
1680
1680
1680
1684
1680
1680
1680
1680
2067
2054
1674
1680
2...3
2051
1674

5257
5258
5255
5254
5257
5259
§ 6472-6475
6481
6482
6483
6484
6485
6486
6487
6488
6489
6490
6491
6496
6497
6506
6507
6512
6514
6518
6520
6521
6522
6524
6527
6533
6534
6535
6536
6537
6538
6539
6540
6541
6542
6543
6544
6545
6546
6547
6549
6552
6570 a
6999
6903
6904
6918
7539
7624
7660
7763
7856
7960
8241
8255
8287
8301
8419
8442
8492
8493
8496
8639
8648
8649
8650
8653
8654
8655
8666

Section
1660, 1710
1639
1710
1873
1163
1661
1062
2596
1859, 2219
1856
1856, 2218
1856, 2207
1856
916, 1856
1856
916, 1856
1856
488, 2218
2207
2201
2201
1828
1710
1411
803
1382
1382
803
1387
1411
1271, 1684, 1703
1881
1710
1681
1681
1676
1225, 1661
1639
1639
1680, 1681
2531
2262, 2375
2380, 2395
2380, 2395
1909, 1910
1828
1383
1387, 1389,
1412, 1681
1660
1304, 1310, 1320
1326, 1412
2106
2281
488
2281
2281
2281
2281
2281
2281
1397
2252
1326
1326
1851
2360
2360
1851
1873
488
488
488
2066
3044
2061
1163

§ 8667
8672
8673
8666
8812
8816
8823
8832
8897
Edition 1901.
§ 6306
Session Laws.
1899, Feb. 21
1901, c. 105
1903, c. 79, § 10
c. 122
TENNESSEE.
Constitution 1870.
I, 9
Annotated Code 1896.
§ 265
347
1045
1866
2033
2065
§ 3203-3206
3518
3689
3704
3711
3748
3761
3778
3786
3793
3896
3899
3900
3904
3911
3913
3915
3920
3924
3929
3930
3931
3932
4608
5363
5364
5561
5562
5553
5554
5562
5563
5564
5565
5569
5573
5674
5675
5678
5679
5680

Section
1800
2085
1339, 1625
2307
1382
1389, 1411
1382
1389, 1411
1326
2354
1894
488
1680
488
§ 5625
§ 5626
1897, 2191, 2252
1880
1674
1674, 1680
1163
1672
1680
1675
2054
1163
1225, 1661
1225, 1661
1225, 1661
2143
1225
1225
1225
2051
2050
2050
2050
1290, 1304,
1310
1267
1681
1681
1681
1681
1681
1681
1681
1859
1678
1678
1828
1828
1828
1519
1519
1519
1519
1519
1519
1223
1651, 1680
1680
1225
1678
1681
1881

5581
5582
5583
5584
5585
5586
5587
5588
5590
5592
5593
5594
5595
5596
5597
5598
5599
5600
5601
5608
5624
5627
5628
5631
5632
5637
§ 5640-5647
5657
5671
5672
5676
5682
5684-5693
5694
5695
5696
5785
6665
6859
7017
7020
7021
7043
7048
7047
7048
7054
7067
7281
7343
7355
7356
7357
7574
7575
7576
7581

Section
1681
1683
1639
1680, 1684
1684
2673
1680
1680
1680
488
935, 1826
1909
486
488, 2336
488
488
1837
488
488, 1869, 2272
2201
1411, 1412,
2206, 2371
1411, 2206
1411, 1415,
2206
1382, 2206
2306, 2371
1411
1382
801
1382
803
1383, 1387
1383, 1387
1412
1387, 1412
1856, 1859
1197
1197
1197
2292
488
488
1326
1837
1326
2360
2251
2281
2281
1851
1851
2203
1710
1397
1382, 1411
1680, 1884
1411
1411
1411
488
Session Laws.
1784, c. 10, § 6
1789, c. 23, § 1
1809, c. 14, § 6
1819, c. 27, §§ 1-4
1887, c. 79
TEXAS.
Constitution 1876.
Art. I, § 5
§ 10
§ 22
1828
1397, 2191, 2252
2039

TABLE OF STATUTES.

TEXAS (continued).

Revised Civil Statutes 1896.		Section	Section	Section
645	1690	775	488	896
646	1678	777	488	887
1398	1878	778	1909	888
1900	1904, 1810, 1330,	779	2572	889
	1411, 1710, 3061	781	3056	890
1901		782	488	891
1903		783	3039	892
1906		788	3042	893
1907		789	1430, 1445	894
1908		790	831	895
1909		791	831, 851, 652	896
2257		793	2113	897
2271		794	1300	898
2273		796	3016	899-904
2274-2278		797	900, 905	905
2277		798	1382, 1389, 1411	906
2285		805	1389	907
2288		808	1382	908
2290		811	1411	914
2292-2298		812	1411	1033
2293		814	1413	1076
2300		817, par. 3	2354	1079
2301		841	1326	1750
2302		1029	1326	1977
2303		1049	1326	2140
2304			2165	2165
2305			2225	2225
2306			4114	4114
2307			2055	4115
2308			2085	4290
2309			2281	4291
2310			2272	4292
2311			246, 347	4547
2312			2292	4550
2313			1828	4555
2314			1626	4597
2315			4902	4902
2316			4908	4908
2319			4920	4920
2320			5351	5351
2321			5392	5392
2322			5465	5465
2323				
2324				
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2593				
2594				
2595				
2596				
2597				
2598				
2599				
2600				

TABLE OF STATUTES.

VERMONT (continued).		Section	1163	WASHINGTON.	
1924		1889	1800	<i>Constitution 1889.</i>	
1982		1837	1859	Art. I, § 6	
2216		1225, 1681	1674	9	
2222		1225, 1681	1684	11	
2310		1675	1684	22	
2333		1681	1684	§ 27	
2343		1411	1684	488, 1397,	
2362		1304	1680, 1684	1851, 2191	
2363		1310, 1320,	2167	2039	
		1511	2167	<i>Annotated Codes and Statutes</i>	
2367		1681	1225, 1851	187.	
2640		1644, 1680	1674, 1680,	§ 153	
2672		2067	1681, 2162	160	
2715		2281	1680, 1681, 2182	1680	
2716		2281	1681	180	
2898		2281	1680	1672, 1680	
2929		1680	1676, 1680, 1681	1675, 1680	
2928		1225, 1680	2218	1680	
3007		1680	2218	1680	
3008		1680	916, 2218	1865	
3025		1680	2200	1326	
3094		1680	2200, 2201	1684	
3107		1680	2200	1684	
3785		1680	1856, 2167, 2218	1684	
3957		1680	1856, 2167	1684	
3992		1680	1382, 1387	1674,	
4084		1672	1382, 1387	1630, 1880	
4089		1074	1411	1539	
4136		488	1289	1680	
4186		1680	1383	150, 1680	
4219		1674, 1890	1856	2154	
4329		1680	1859, 2219	2154	
4387		1672	1856, 1859	2154	
4476		1680	1856, 1859	1225, 1651	
4510		239	2531	2050	
4529		488	3376	1873	
4541		1820	3377	2281	
4715		2251	3679	1800, 1910	
5080		1326	3692	488	
5092		2065	3897	488, 966	
5273		2281	3899	488, 987	
		2292	3901	488	
		3942	3942	488	
		3967	3967	488	
		3968	3968	488	
		3984	3984	488	
		4091	4091	488	
		<i>Code Supplement 1898.</i>		§ 6000-6011	
		3345	488	916, 1856, 2218	
		3346	488	1856	
		3346 a	488	916, 1856	
		3347	488	1856	
		3348	488	1411	
		3349	488	1382	
		3742	488	1382, 2267	
		3896	488	1382	
		3897	488	803	
		3898	488	1411	
		3899	488	1389	
		3900	488	1387	
		4187	488	1387	
		<i>Session Laws.</i>		1387, 1412, 1681	
		1680	6045	1681	
		1411, 2371	6046	1680	
		1644	6047	1225, 1651	
		1710	1778, Bill of Rights, Art. 10	1859, 2219	
		1378	1887-8, c. 18, § 4048	2596	
		1681	1887-8, p. 763, § 1	1828	
		1411	2	1828	
		1411	3	1828	
		1378	1899-1900, c. 117, § 1	1828	
		1675	2	160	
		1675	3	1411	
		1675	1801-2, p. 799, § 1	1310, 1320	
		1675	2	1320	
		1675	3	1326	
		1675	488	1326	
		1675	488	1326	

VERMONT — WISCONSIN.

Section	Section	Section	Section	Section
6107	1681	c. 130, § 26	2900	2642
6108	1681	32	1710	2852
6113	1413	33	2167	3033
6117	2062	34	2167	3537
6120	1681	35	1882	2637
6138	1681	36	1411	3788
6682	1326	37	1389	3932
6689	1326	39	1383	4056
6708	1326, 1382, 1411	44	2531	4057
6742	2201	c. 148, § 11	2281	4058
6745	916, 1856, 2213	c. 152, § 17	488	4068
6746	916	18	488	4069
6748	488	19	488, 2272	4070
6749	1411	20	852	4071
6820	2360	e. 155, § 4	1328	4072
6825	1851	13	1837	4073
6925	1411	c. 156, § 14	1326	4074
8940	488, 516, 2380, 2395	c. 157, § 3	1851	4075
8941	488, 2272, 2376	c. 159, § 1	1411	4076
8942	831, 2071	c. 182, § 1	2201	4077
8948	1163		4078	4078
8950	488		4079	4079
7132	1339		4081	4081
7322	1680, 2085		4082	4082
7316	488, 516		1856	4083
			1859	4084
			4085	4085
			4086	4086
			4089	4089
			613	4089
			2281	4085
			1275	4096
			488, 2380	4096
			488	4096-4098
			1680	4098
			4100	4100
			4101	4101
			4102	4102
			4105	4105
			4110	4110
			1397, 2191	4113
			2252	4114
			2039	4115
			1828	4118
			4121	4121
			4125	4125
			4128	4128
			4129	4129
			4131	4131
			987, 2281	4134
			1680	4135
			1680	4136
			2371	4137
			599	4138
			1275	4139
			1680	4140
			1705	4141
			1705	4142
			1685	4143
			1880	4144
			1680	4145
			1710	4146
			1674	4147
			1680	4148
			1680	4149
			1680	4150
			569	4151
			2143	4151 a
			1874	4152
			2050	4155
			1851	4160
			1651	4161
			2046	4162
			1851	47 a 3
			2360	4164
			2380	4165
			2360	4166

Section
2207
2201
1710
1411
803
1382
1382
1382
803
1387
1411
2206
80, 2219
80, 2219
80, 2219
80, 2219
80, 2219
1856
2281
1413
1383
7, 1389,
12, 1691
1897
2360
80, 2272
01, 2207
1411
488
2041
2066
1873
1183
2295
1828
0, 1380

TABLE OF CASES

150
1229
1328
1369
1851
1851
1304,
0, 1320
1413
2052
1680
05, 907
1382
1382
1413
1851
1851
488
1669

TABLE OF CASES

[In the following Table, all titles of criminal cases in England are entered under "R. v.", even though commonly known as "Anderson's Trial" or "Case" or the like; except in those earlier reports in which it does not plainly appear whether the case was a criminal one. In the United States, similarly, criminal trials, by whatever name known, are entered under "U. S. v.", "Com. v.", "State v.", etc., according to the local term of the jurisdiction. But wherever in a ruling made on appeal a case becomes officially otherwise designated, the entry is here made by that title, e. g., "Anderson v. U. S.", "Smith's Case." Accordingly a criminal case not found in this Table under one of these titles may be discovered under the other.]

A.	Section	Section	Section
—, <i>ex parte</i>	497	Acklen's Ex'r v. Hickman	785, 745, 747, 754, 759, 762, 763
— v. Leadbetter	1181	Ackley v. Sexton	1225
Aaron v. State	832	Acklin v. McCalmont Oil Co.	1873
Abat v. Rion	1202, 1206, 1239	Acme Brewing Co. v. Central R. & B. Co.	581
Abbey v. Lill	2152	Acme Mfg. Co. v. Reed	2593
Abbey H. Ass'n v. Willard	1876	Ada Dairy Ass'n v. Mears	2410
Abbot v. Heath	688, 1731	Adae v. Zangs	736, 753, 754
v. Plumbo	1258, 1300, 1302, 1306	Adair v. Adair	1404, 1668
Abbott, <i>re</i>	2218	Adam v. Kerr	1306, 1312, 1513
v. Abbott	2011, 2016	Adams v. Arnold	896, 907
41 Mich.	1302, 1304	v. Bankart	1896
4 Sw. & Tr.	1644	v. Betz	2555
v. Coleman	2011, 2016	v. Bleakley	2336
v. Com.	107, 108, 569, 1938, 2276	v. Board	749, 1230
v. Mitchell	520	v. Brownson	1300
v. Muir	1064	v. Bubier	1225, 1651
v. People	246, 852, 1963	v. Canon	727, 728, 1364, 2032
v. Stribien	1911	v. Carlisle	65
Abbei v. Van Gelder	378, 1778	v. Coulliard	736, 747, 754
Abel v. Fitch	684	v. Davidson	1086
v. Kennedy	2349, 2354	v. Dickson	2139
v. Light	1208, 1404	v. Eames	2119
v. Potts	1706	v. Eiseffer	64
Abend v. Muelier	84, 35, 451	v. Eiwood	19
Abercrombie v. Allen	1072	v. Ferguson	1873
Abernathy v. State	1350	v. Field	2016
Abernethy v. Com.	106, 1117	v. French	1082
Abigny v. Clifton	1674	v. Harroid	772
Abington v. Duxbury	2063	v. Hlickox	1640
v. N. Bridgewater	1587	v. Ins. Co.	376, 1965
Ablard v. R. Co.	1078	v. Jackson	2535
Abie v. Shields	1031	v. Jones	2409
Abney v. Kingsland	335, 1779, 1871	v. Kelly	1237
Abraham v. R. Co.	2463	v. Lawson	73, 76, 216
Abrahams v. Bunn	529	v. Lisher	1681
Abrams v. R. Co.	455	v. Lloyd	1859, 2219, 2271
Abrath v. Northeastern R. Co.	2494, 2539	v. Lumber Co.	2154
Atshire v. Mather	928	v. McBeath	2503
v. State	1225	v. M'Millan	1065
Academy of M. Co. v. Davidson	1729	v. Morrison	1024
Acerro v. Petroni	777		
Ackland v. Pearce	1206		
		Adams v. Porter	2257
		v. Raigner	1398
		v. Russell	1390
		v. Stanyan	1582, 1688, 1592, 1665, 2144
		v. State	11 Ark. 1216
		28 Fla.	590, 792, 794, 1890
		93 Ga.	1157
		156 Ind.	905
		84 Tex. Cr.	821
		v. Swansea	1586
		v. Swift	278
		v. Thief River Falls	1158
		v. Thornton	1066
		v. Turner	2463
		v. Wadleigh	18
		v. Watkins	2442
		v. Way	1981, 2164
		v. Weaver	1416
		v. Wheeler	905
		v. Wordley	2444
		v. Wright	530, 1635, 1675
		Adams Express Co. v. Schlessinger	716, 1943
		Adams Paper Co. v. Cassard	2536
		Adamthwaite v. Synge	2158
		Addams v. Seitzinger	1457, 1490, 1466
		Addington v. Wilson	229, 762
		Addis v. Graham	1225
		Addison v. People	290, 357
		Adger v. Ackerman	2505, 2527
		Adkins v. Com.	2595
		v. Hershey	2117
		v. Williams	406
		Adie v. Sherwood	2109
		Adier v. State	2582
		Adrevens v. Mutual R. F. L. Ass'n	2338
		Advocate-General v. Hancock	1270
		Adweil v. Com.	580
		Ætna Ins. Co. v. Eastman	1129
		Ætna L. Ins. Co. v. Nexsen	1944
		Adais v. Fourdrinier	1208

TABLE OF CASES.

AFR

	Section		Section		Section
African Co. v. Parish	2260	Albert v. R. Co.	466, 904	Allegheny Co. v. Watt	2308
Agassiz v. Tramway Co.	1764	v. Twobig	1351	Alleman v. Stepp	984
Agnew v. Jobson	2395	Albert v. R. Co.	792, 2315, 2398	Allen v. Allen	
v. U. S.	2495, 2511	Alberty v. U. S.	276	Prob.	916, 1076
Agricultural Bank v.		Albion v. Herrick	1961	73 Conn.	253
Bark Jase	1062	v. Maple Lake	561, 1006	2 Overt.	1304, 1317
Agulino v. R. Co.	416, 487, 461	Albright v. State	263	v. Armstrong	1364
Ah Doon v. Smith	1800	Albright v. Corley	690	v. Blunt	95
Ah Tong v. Fruit Co.	984	v. Jones	2140	v. Colt	1074
Ahern v. McCarthy	2437	Albrittin v. Huntsville	2673	v. Duncan	1777
Alcardi v. Straag	1578	Albro v. Ins. Co.	2452	v. Hall	1490, 2063
Alken v. Gale	2326	Alcock v. Ass. Co.	96, 746, 787	v. Hancock	15
v. Kennison	377	Alcorn v. Powell	406	v. Harrison	2317
v. Kilbarne		Alden v. Goddard	2313	v. Hill	1304, 2411
27 Mo.	527, 2310	Alderman v. Finley	2672	v. Hopkins	529
v. Martin	2200, 2311	v. French	74, 1064	v. Hunter	559
v. Oil Co.	112	v. People	2304, 2327	v. Ins. Co.	770, 2307
v. People	988	Alderson v. Clay	1074	v. Killinger	1070, 1262
Aineworth v. Barry	616	Aldons v. Olverson	1066, 2235	v. Kingsbury	2463
v. Lakin	600	Aldrich v. Aldrich	2066	v. McDonald	18
v. Whiting	2312, 2319	v. Chubb	1677	v. McKay	2427
Airey v. Stapleton	2144	v. Earle	1066	v. McKean	2502
Aiscough, ex p.	2220	v. Griffith	2145	v. Maddock	2452
Aitken v. McMeckan	1931	v. Polham	458	v. Martin	1202, 1312
v. Mendenhall	1800	v. R. Co.		v. Merchants' Bank	1954
Aitkin, re	2297	67 N. H.	288	v. Mill Co.	2432
Akerley v. Haines	75	39 Or.	2063	v. Murray	1012
Akers v. Kirke	1062	v. Wetmore	1166	v. Parish	1189, 1266,
Akin v. St. Croix L. Co.	1976	Aldridge v. R. Co.	456		1676, 2143
Akins v. R. & B. Co.	456, 736	Alexander v. Alexander	1906	v. Pink	2429
Alabama F. Co. v.		v. Beadie	917	v. Potter	2447
Reynolds	1066	v. Byron	1877	v. R. Co.	1951, 1976
Alabama G. S. R. Co.		v. Campbell	2132, 2159	v. Rand	893
v. Clark	454	v. Conlter	1205, 1209	v. Read	1678
v. Collier	457	v. Foreman	1216, 1267	v. Root	2312
v. Hall	1951, 1977	v. Gibson	897	v. Roostain	1624, 1800
v. Hawk	1750	v. Gonid	1086	v. Seyfried	786
v. Hill	2220	v. Grand Lodge	2108	v. Smith	1064
v. Johnston	455, 940	v. Hlandby	1957	v. State	
v. Linn	1976	v. Humber	2356	60 Ala.	492, 932
v. Taylor	2491	v. Kaiser	1021	72 Ala.	1781
Alabama Midland R. Co.		v. Mahon	1063	78 Ala.	1781
v. Guilford	1067	v. Smoot	1556	111 Ala.	2497
Alabama Mineral R. Co.		v. State	581	38 Fla.	246
v. Jones	1951	v. Steel Co.	2509	21 Ga.	1195, 2535
v. Marcus	2498	v. Thomas	2354	74 Ga.	2060
Alabama Nat'l Bank v.		v. U. S.	140, 2294, 2298	8 Hnmph.	705, 709
Chattanooga D. & S.		v. Vye	278, 697, 1006,	62 Miss.	1840
Co.	2166		1185, 2016	10 Oh. St.	580, 987,
Alabama State L. Co.		v. White	1302		2066
v. Kyle	1212, 2122	Alexandria A. & F. S.		v. Thaxter	2164
Alabama & F. R. Co.		R. Co. v. Johnson	2573	v. Trimble	786, 747, 1304
v. Burkett	1943	Alfonso v. U. S.	718, 719, 1943	v. U. S.	
Alabama & V. R. Co.		Alfred v. Anthony	1326	28 Ct. Cl.	1384
v. Beardsley	2506	Alger v. Andrews	1083	115 Fed.	987
v. Ins. Co.	455, 456	v. Castle	1021	150 U. S.	21
v. Sol Fried Co.	754	v. Turner	2313	164 U. S.	276, 278,
Alan v. Jourdan	2047	Alivon v. Furnival	1219, 1233,		2511
Alameda M. Co. v. Wil-			1271	v. Vincennes	1651, 1676
liams	1080	Allain v. Whitaker	1675	v. Voje	569
Alban v. Pritchett	2232	Allaire v. Allaire	1511	v. Watson	1684
Albany C. S. Bank v.		Allan v. McTavish	2143	Allen's Appeal	568
McCarty	2534	v. Morrison	2523, 2533	Allend v. R. Co.	2124
Albany C. S. Inst. v.		v. Tap	1858	Allensworth v. Coleman	406,
Burdick	2416	Allard v. R. Co.	456		1971
Albaugh v. James	613	Allay v. Hutchings	906	Allesbrook v. Roach	1904, 2002
Albers Commission Co.		Allbright v. Governor	1672	Allgood v. Blake	2470
v. Sessel	18	v. Hannah	1640, 2336	Allhusen v. Labonchere	916,
Albert v. Ins. Co.	1078	Allegheny v. Nelson	1463, 1466		2268

Section	Section	Section	Section
2908	Allin v. Hiecock	1216	American Express Co. v. Lankford
984	v. Millison	821	1 Ind. T.
	v. Whittemore	1028	2 Ind. T.
016, 1076	Allis v. Day	715, 1944	93 Fed.
253	Allison v. Barrow	2536	American Fire Ins. Co. v. Hason
304, 1317	v. Com.	1460	v. Landfare
1364	v. Horning	392	American Gas & V. M. Co. v. Wood
95	v. Little	1225, 1311, 2145	American Life Ins. Co. v. Rosenagle
1074	v. Matthieu	321	413, 564, 1106, 1213, 1644, 2109, 2167
1777	v. Parkinson	715	American M. Co. v. Hill
490, 2063	v. People	2354	American Mgo. Co. v. Mouse River L. S. Co.
15	v. Robinson	1681	American Oak Extr. Co. v. Ryan
2317	v. U. S.	111, 247	American Steamship Co. v. Landreth
304, 2411	Allison's Dev. v. Allison's Heirs	3106	American Surety Co. v. Pauly
529	Allison's Estate	1312	Ames v. Hoy
689	Allman v. Owen	1698	v. McCamber
770, 2307	Allmendinger v. Melle	1846	v. Phelps
970, 1362	Allport v. Meek	1094	v. R. Co.
2463	Allred v. Elliott	1312	Ames' Succession
18	Almon v. Law	907	Ames' Will, re
2427	Almy v. Church	2145	Ames Ironworks v. Pulley Co.
2502	v. Reed	1192	Ames M. Co. v. Kimball S. S. Co.
2462	Ainer v. George	2429	Ames & Frost Co. v. Strachurski
302, 1312	Alpaugh's Will	1511	Amey v. Long
1954	Alpin v. Morton	406	Amherst v. Hollis
2432	Aisabrooks v. State	396	Amherst Bank v. Root
39, 1256,	Aisager v. St. Katherine's Dock Co.	2477	Amick v. Young
776, 2143	Aisover v. Minneapolis & S. L. R. Co.	1750	Amidon v. Hosley
2429	Aisop v. Bowtrell	1645, 1674, 1917	Amis v. Marks
2447	Alston v. Alston	1467, 1492, 1605	Ammons v. Dwyer v. State
51, 1976	v. State		Amor v. Stoeckels
803	109 Ala.	2271	Amory v. Fellowes
1678	41 Tex.	852, 1329	v. Melrose
2312	v. Taylor	1456, 2164	Amos v. State
34, 1800	Alt v. Fig Syrup Co.	715, 1944	96 Ala.
788	Altham v. Anglesca	1174, 1404, 1406	123 Ala.
1664	Altham's Case	2426	Amoskeag Co. v. Head
402, 932	Althouse v. Jamestown	1280	463, 1864
1781	Altoona v. Bowman	2534	Amperse v. Fleckenstein
1781	Alvarez v. State	2079	Amsby v. Dickhouse
2497	Alverson v. Bell	18	Amsteln v. Gardner
246	Alves v. Bunbury	1681	Amstell v. Alexander
96, 2535	v. Hodgson	1271	Amundson v. Wilson
2060	Alvord v. Alvord	1938, 2212	2450, 2568
705, 709	v. Baker	2518	Anaconda C. M. Co. v. District Court
1840	v. Collin	736, 747	v. Henze
30, 987,	Alward v. Oaks	958, 1042	Anchor Line v. Dater
2056	Amberson's Estate	2477	3673
2164	Ambler v. Whipple	2404	
37, 1304	American Accident Co. v. Fidler	568, 1988	
1384	American Bible Society v. Pratt	2463	
987	v. Price	1938	
21	American Bonding & T. Co. v. Takahashi	2465	
76, 278,	American Exchange N. Bank v. First N. Bank	1381	
2511	v. N. Y. B. & P. Co.	2495	
1, 1676	American Express Co. v. Haggard	93	
569			
1684			
568			
2124			
406,			
1971			
4, 2002			
2470			
916,			
2288			

TABLE OF CASES.

AND

	Section	Section	Section
Andre v. State	206	Anon.	1 Bulstr.
Andrew v. Fleming	1778		3 C. & P.
v. Keenan	1226		4 C. & P.
v. Ledam	2260		5 C. & P.
Andrews v. Andrews	2007		2 Chitty
v. Askey	166, 210, 1023, 1061		Comb.
v. Black	1308		5 Cox Cr.
v. Cons.	1760		Dyer, 132 a
v. Davison	1226, 1061		" 288 a
v. Frya	2273		" 29 b
v. Haydan's Adm'r	2016		6 East
v. Hoxie	2576		Gilbert
v. Jones	794		Godb.
v. Marshall	2167		575, 1364, 1406
v. Mining Co.	1070		1 Hill S. C.
v. Palmir	1402		73, 74, 618, 928, 967, 987, 1112, 1840, 1842, 1985
v. People	1862, 2071		Jankins
v. R. Co.			1193
99 Ala.	461		T. Jones
14 Ind.	2007		2036
96 Wis.	840, 461		1 Leach Cr. L.
v. Simms	2303		1821
v. Solomon	2300		1 Leon.
v. State			1165
134 Ala.	247		1 Law. Cr. C. 101
118 Ga.	18, 20, 198, 987		" 322
v. Youmans	1164		Lib. Ass.
Andrus v. Blazard	2444		576
v. Foster	2414		Loft
Aneals v. Stata	953		1645
Angell v. Angell	1832		1 Ld Raym.
v. Duka	2425, 2442		291, 1177, 1263, 1658
v. Rosenbury	224, 655, 1264, 1623		M. & M.
Angelo v. People	2272		1258
Angier v. Ash	321, 334		McNally
Anglesy v. Hathartou	380, 1696		1981
Angling v. State	821, 853		8 Mass.
Angus v. Smith	1029		2308
Anheuser-Busch B. Ass'n v. Hutmachar	1236, 1800		37 Miss.
Ankersmit v. Tuch	1878		133, 200, 662, 987
Annapolis & E. R. Co. v. Gantt	455, 456		58 Miss.
Annesley v. Anglesca	166, 272, 278, 280, 1009, 1013, 1130, 1164, 1361, 1362, 1364, 1431, 1487, 1605, 2214, 2230, 2291, 2294, 2298, 2310		1 Mod.
Annis v. People	1111		2 Mod.
Anniston C. L. Co. v. Edmondson	2106		3 Mod.
Anniston National Bank v. Committee	2405		6 Mod.
Anon.			9 Mod.
35 Ala.	2220		11 Mod.
89 Ala.	2220		12 Mod.
1 Ambi.	735, 787		345
2 And.	818		" 007
5 B. & Ald.	2043		4 Mo. L. Mag.
Brooka's Abr.	2036		1298
1 Brownl.	2227, 2235, 2239		Pa. Col. Cas.
2 Brownl.	2250		53
			Pl. Abr.
			1837
			Rolle's Abr.
			1373
			2 Salk.
			563
			" 665
			" 691
			3 Salk.
			1845
			Skin.
			174
			" 404
			220, 2207, 2308, 2394
			24 Sol. J.
			2372
			1 Stra.
			2232
			1 Vern. 60
			2250, 2257
			" 263
			2 Ves. & B.
			986, 1982
			12 Vin. Abr.
			1670
			5 West. L. J.
			1911
			1 P. Wms.
			1316
			v. Anon.
			2063
			v. Moor
			73, 74
			Ansley v. Malkie
			1680, 1681
			Anson r. Dwight
			1948
			v. Evans
			283
			v. People
			318
			Ansonia v. Cooper
			1369
			3674
			Section
			Answer of the Judges
			2 How. St. Tr. and
			2 Co. Inst.
			2022, 2250
			22 How. St. Tr.
			551, 661, 1699, 1902, 2458, 2557, 2569
			Anthony v. Chapman
			1651
			v. Grand
			64
			R. Co.
			1640
			v. State
			Zia., 32 No. 1877,
			2056,
			2075
			Ida., 55 Pac.
			1809
			Maigs
			1398
			v. Stephens
			73, 74
			v. Stinson
			1554
			Apache Co. v. Barth
			2167
			Apel v. Kelsey
			1661
			Appar's Case
			2529
			Apollon, The
			2575
			Apperson v. Ingram
			1678
			Appiabea, re
			2475
			Appley v. Brock
			689, 1938
			v. Secord
			1244
			Applegat v. Applegata
			v. Lexington & C.
			C. M. Co.
			2130, 2141
			Appleton v. Boyd
			2222
			v. Braybrook
			5, 1677, 1681
			v. People
			2512
			v. Stata
			1755
			Apthorp v. Fyres
			1417
			Arbon v. Fussell
			2011, 2016
			Arbuckle v. Templeton
			286, 1453, 2308
			Arcangel v. Thompson
			2162
			Archar, re
			2393
			v. Halthcock
			2063, 2065
			v. Hooper
			1253
			v. R. Co.
			702, 794
			v. U. S.
			2006, 2020
			Arcia v. State
			621
			Arderry v. Com.
			1388
			Ardesco Oil Co. v. Gilson
			561, 571
			Arents v. R. Co.
			1605, 1909
			Argabright v. State
			1874
			Arkadelphia Lumber Co.
			v. Arkadelphia
			1684
			Arkansas M. R. Co.
			v. Griffith
			1608, 1644
			Arkansas River P. Co.
			v. Hobbs
			1158, 2220
			Arkansas Tel. Co. v. Ratterce
			2500
			Armagost v. Rising
			344
			Armendais v. Stillman
			681
			Armit v. R. Co.
			1750
			Armington v. Stelle
			2436
			Armitage v. State
			1205
			Armory v. Delamine
			285, 291
			Armour v. Ross
			719
			Armstrong v. Ackley
			252, 1719
			v. Advance T. Co.
			2153
			v. Armstrong
			2067
			v. Burrows
			787
			v. Canada A. R. Co.
			1750
			v. Granite Co.
			2403, 2464

Section

23, 2350
161, 661,
9, 1913,
8, 2557,
2609
1651
64
1640
7, 2050,
2073
1809
1398
73, 74
1554
2167
1651
2529
2575
1678
2475
9, 1938
1244
2090
0, 2141
2222
7, 1681
2512
1755
1417
1, 2016
288,
0, 2308
2162
2363
3, 2085
1253
02, 794
3, 2020
621
1388
561,
571
5, 1090
1874
1684
0, 1044
2, 2220
2509
344
681
1750
2436
1205
5, 291
719
1719
2153
2067
787
1750
2464

Section
 Armstrong v. Hewitt 2189
 v. Huffstutler 1089
 v. Lewis 2123
 v. People 2022
 v. R. Co. 571, 1951
 v. State 1988, 2501,
 80 Fla. 2530
 21 Oh. St. 1677
 33 Tex. Cr. 1018
 v. U. S. 564, 1084
 Armstrong's Lessees v.
 Timmons 406, 1195
 Arn v. Matthews 909
 Arnd v. Amling 1820
 Arnegard v. Arnegard 1085
 Arnett v. Com. 2236
 v. Griffin 747
 Arnold v. Arnold 2433
 v. Arnold's Estate 1817,
 v. Bell 1779
 v. Caldwell 1055
 v. Chesebrough's Ex'r 2083
 v. Fruit Co. 401
 v. Gorr 2141
 v. Higgins 1271
 v. McNeill 520
 v. Norton 251
 v. Nye 987
 v. Pawtuxet V. W. Co. 1859
 v. Smith 1244
 v. State 53 Ga. 2065
 5 Wyo. 905
 v. The Bishop 1639
 v. White 581
 Arnot v. People 1938
 Arrington v. Fleming 461
 Arrott v. Pratt 1859
 Arrowood v. R. Co. 791
 Arthur v. Arthur 701
 v. Broadnax 2088
 v. Gayle 1083
 v. Wells 2117
 Artope v. Goodall 1955
 Artrip v. Rasnake 2500
 Artz v. R. Co. 15, 911, 914,
 1890, 1893
 Aryman v. Marshall-
 town 1719
 Ash v. Ash 2350
 v. Patton 1561
 v. Prunier 1730
 v. State 2090
 Ashcraft v. Chapman 2165
 v. Com. Ky., 60 S. W. 987
 Ky., 68 S. W. 280,
 987, 1018
 v. De Armond 233, 1621,
 1958
 Ashe v. De Rosset 736
 5 Jones 93
 8 Jones 93
 Asher v. Terr. 1270, 2277
 Ashford v. Thornton 9
 Ashland v. Marlborough 568,
 1722

Section
 Ashley v. Ashley 2446
 v. Root 1084
 v. West 1083
 Ashley Wire Co. v. Ill.
 Steel Co. 95
 Ashmead v. Colby 1821
 Ashmore v. Hardy 1256, 1301
 Ashton v. Ashton 1 Vera.
 11 S. D. 2210
 Ashworth v. Kittredge 1096
 v. Roberts 1700
 Aske v. R. Co. 2232
 Askea v. State 2058, 2236
 Askew v. People 1021, 1852,
 v. Reynolds 1086, 1779
 v. Steiner 1801
 Aslanian v. Postumian 2536
 Aspinwall, ex. v. Chisholm 2319
 Aspy v. Botkins 2220, 2384,
 2386
 Assignees of S. v. Boucher 1474
 Astley v. Astley 238
 Astor v. Ins. Co. 1047
 Atchison v. Everitt 1818
 Atchison v. King 1909
 Atchison R. Co. v. U. S.
 Atchison, T. & S. F. R.
 Co. v. Bayes 2254
 v. Blackshire 2572
 v. Campbell 456
 v. Cattle Co. 1078
 v. Feehan 1087, 1263
 v. Frazier 688, 1722
 v. Healdland 2586
 v. Hult 714
 v. Logan 1750
 v. Osborn 58 Kan. 456, 747,
 1078
 64 Kan 1404
 v. Philippe 1878
 v. Potter 1063
 v. Retford 283
 v. Ryan 1698
 v. Thui 2220
 Atchison & N. R. Co. v.
 Harper 463
 Atherfold v. Beard 2373
 Atherton v. Defreze 2113
 Athlone Peerage 1644
 Atkeson v. Lay 2580
 Atkins v. Anderson 1388
 v. Hatton 2139
 v. Humphreys 1388
 v. Lewis 2109
 v. Meredith 1208
 v. Palmer 811
 v. Seeley 1547
 v. State 60 Ala. 1910
 16 Ark. 109, 111, 247,
 396, 761, 1021,
 1329, 1667
 69 Ga. 2098
 Atkins' Examination 1395
 3475

Section
 Atkinson v. Atkinson 916
 v. Burt 1552
 v. Morris 1736
 v. Nash 1414
 v. R. Co. 463
 v. Smith 1890
 Atlanta C. N. R. Co. v.
 Bagwell 461, 568
 v. Bates 199, 283
 Atlanta Journal v. May-
 son 2408
 Atlanta K. & N. R. Co. v.
 Strickland 1129
 Atlanta R. & P. Co. v.
 Monk 1008
 Atlanta St. R. Co. v.
 Walker 566, 1719
 Atlanta & C. A. R. Co.
 v. Gravit 1404
 Atlanta & S. R. Co. v.
 Randall 1405
 Atlanta & W. P. R. Co.
 v. Venable 45 Ga. 1387
 67 Ga. 1388
 Atlantic Ave. R. Co. v.
 Van Dyke 1951
 Atlantic C. R. Co. v.
 Goodin 2505
 Atlantic & B. R. Co. v.
 Reynolds 1616
 Atlantic & D. R. Co. v.
 Rieger 1897
 Atlantic & G. W. R. Co.
 v. Campbell 1943
 Attarberry v. Knox 2268
 Attila, The 1051
 Attix v. Minnesota S. Co. 792
 Attorney-General v. ———
 v. Barstow 1351
 v. Bond 1040
 v. Bradlaugh 1817
 v. Briant 2374, 2394
 v. Brown 2268
 v. Buipt 1842
 v. Cast Plate Glass
 Co. 2506, 2509
 v. Chambers 1893
 v. Coventry 1858
 v. Davison 1373
 v. Dean & Canons 291
 v. Drohan 1351
 v. Drummond 2470
 v. Emerson 1859
 v. Gaskill 1856
 v. Green 1163
 v. Hitchcock 104, 497, 953,
 962, 979, 1002,
 1005, 1020, 1022,
 1864
 v. Joy 1375
 v. Köhler 1501,
 v. Le Merchant 4, 1177,
 1180, 1194,
 1208, 1209
 v. Lucas 2256
 v. McQuade 2215
 v. Mico 2250
 v. Nethercote 787

TABLE OF CASES.

ATT

	Section		Section		Section
Attorney-General v. New-castle upon Tyne Co.	1859	Anstin v. State		Backus v. Ames	661
v. Parnter	1933	101 Tenn.	2580	v. Barber	1806
v. Pearson	2467	v. Tennessee	2580	Bacon v. Charlton	1718, 1722
v. Radloff	64, 2257, 2269, 2871	v. Thomson	2126	v. Frisbie	2321
v. Rice	1360, 2692	v. Willes	528, 1302	v. Harrington	1141
v. Shore	2462, 2467	Austin & N. W. R. Co. v. Cluck	2220	v. State	2066
v. Theakstone	1684	Austine v. People	836, 852, 1267	v. Towne	75, 258, 259, 1416
v. Tomkins	1219	Austrian v. Springer	1263	v. U. S.	321, 2183
v. Warwick	1661	Autry v. Floyd	581	v. Williams	2020
Attwell v. Lynch	1226	Avan v. Frey	1195	Bacot v. Lumber Co.	905
Attwood v. Small	1856, 2047	Avary v. Searcy	1960	Badder v. Keefer	282
Atwater v. Cardwell	2429	Avery v. Adams	1239	Badgeley v. Bender	1665
v. Schenck	2575	v. Burrall	451	Badger v. Badger	1602, 1603
Atwell v. State	1029, 1781	v. Clemons	1779	v. Mills	2054
Atwood v. Cornwall	570, 1969, 2012	v. R. Co.	1943	Badische A. & S. F. v. Klipstein	1271
v. Fricot	1299	v. State	1842	v. Levinstein	2484
v. Impson	922, 923	v. Woodruff	1403	Baeder v. Jennings	157, 2139, 2143
v. Marshall	1890	Avery's Ex'rs v. Avery	1530	Baer v. State	1873
v. Scott	89	Aveson v. Kinnaird	1714, 1718, 1747, 1754, 1796, 2283	Bageard v. Consol. T. Co.	1075
v. Welton	1022, 1817, 1820	Awdley v. Awdley	2122	Baggs v. Martin	1158
Atwood's Estate	2475	Axford v. Meeks	2465	Bagley v. Eaton	1196, 1198, 1709
Auberle v. McKeesport	1951	Axson v. Belt	2016	v. Kennedy	1651
Auhuchon v. Murphy	1651	Ayer v. Ahlborn	1352	v. McMickle	1192, 1198
Auburn Seminary v. Calhoun	1802, 1804, 2049	v. Mfg. Co.	2442	v. Mason	235, 1719, 1721, 1974, 2220
Auditor v. Haycraft	1350	Ayers v. Harris	797	Bagwell v. R. Co.	2194, 2220
Auge v. Variol	2124	v. Hewitt	1291, 1676	Baikle v. Chandless	1650
Augur, re	2523	v. Ins. Co.	1066	Bailey v. Barclay	1777
Augur S. A. & G. Co. v. Whittier	1201	v. Watson		v. Bidwell	1292, 2164
Augusta v. Hafers	458	182 U. S.	1031	v. Centreville	
Augusta Factory v. Barnes	1750	187 U. S.	1567	108 Ia.	437, 438, 1974
Augusta & S. R. Co. v. Dorsey	460, 1385, 1951, 1978	Aylesbury v. Harvey	1177	115 Ia.	458
v. McDade	2509	Aylesford Peerage Case	2093	v. Chesley	1141
v. Randall	189, 1750, 1807, 1896, 2206	Aylett v. Jewel	2352	v. Hammond	2531
Auld v. Walton	745	Ayres v. Ayres	1511	v. Hyde	74
Aulger v. Smith	1267, 2115	v. Duprey	923, 928, 1028, 1985	v. Kerr	2579
Aulls v. Young	1704	v. Stewart	1678	v. M'Dowell	1664
Ault v. Zehering	1681	Ayrey v. Davenport	2450	v. N. H. & N. Co.	461
Aultman v. Ritter	2311			v. Palmer	1267
v. Timm	2529			v. Seattle & R. R. Co.	914
Aultman Co. v. Ferguson	681			v. State	
v. Mosloski	571			107 Ala.	1966
Aumick v. Mitchell	2008, 2016			56 Ga.	2059
Aurora v. Brown	458			36 Nebr.	2085
v. Cobb	928, 1615, 1890			40 Tex. Cr.	821
v. Hillman	680			42 Tex. Cr.	2081
Ausland v. Parker	987			v. Trumbull	458
Austin v. Austin	391, 397			v. Trustees	1684
v. Chambers	1856			v. Woods	1373, 1396
v. Com.	1442			Baillie v. Assur. Co.	714
v. Hanchet	73			Baln v. Case	1706
v. Hilliers	1152			v. Cushman	1944
v. King	1640			v. Hargrave	2223, 2254
v. Rumsey	1312			v. Mason	1644
v. Sawyer	1063			v. Whitehaven & F. R. Co.	
v. State				5, 18,	
14 Ark.	88, 863, 394, 1800			1074, 1845	
				341	
				1195	
				2433, 2437	
				529, 2192,	
				2222, 2223	
				253, 458, 1951	
				1866	
				1521	

	Section		Section		Section
Baird v. Rice		Baldwin v. Soule	406	Baltimore & Y. T. R. v.	
10 Cal.	1962	v. State		State	458
63 Pa.	1598, 166	W. Va., 25 So.	847	Barnfield v. Massey	75, 78,
	2159	12 Mo.	1988		210, 1106
Baird Lumber Co. v. Dev-		v. Wentworth	1008	Banbury Peerage Case	68, 269,
lin	754	Bales v. State	1893		1065, 1388,
Baiz, re	2603	Balfour v. Cleveland	1678, 1681		1490, 1606,
v. Malo	2372	v. Fresno C. & I. Co.	2463		1670, 2086,
Bakeman v. Rose	922, 923, 924,	Balguy v. Broadhurst	2319		2063, 2494,
987, 1111, 1985		Balkum v. State	59		2527
Baker v. Adams	1189, 1820	Ball, re	1736	Bancroft v. Wentworth	2281
v. Arnold	2317	v. Gates	1544	Bane v. Gwinn	2008, 2016
v. Baker		v. Hardesty	1976	Banfill v. Leigh	1252
16 Abb.	1729	v. Loomis	1086	Bangess v. Partee	6
13 Cal.	2067, 2068,	v. U. S.	457	Banghart v. Ilyde	392
	2069, 2527	Ballard v. Ballard	745, 748	Bank v. Brown	658, 1202,
202 Ill.	233, 1417,	v. State			1207, 2094, 2105
	1958, 2500	31 Fla.	580	v. Clark	1777
v. Blount	1808, 1312, 1316	19 Nebr.	682, 1852,	v. Cowan	786, 747
v. Borello	67		1853	v. Dandridge	2451, 2535
v. Com.		Ballenger v. Barnes	2098	v. Fordyce	1890
Ky., 17 S. W.	276	Ballentine v. White	620, 2027	v. Gifford	1404
106 Ky.	987, 1434,	Ballew v. U. S.	821	v. Henry	2260, 2279
	1442, 2277	Ballingier v. Davis	1312	v. Hull	529
v. Dobyne	2051, 2052	Ballot v. Bowman	529	v. Jacobs	2005, 2008
v. Fairfax	1409	Ballou v. Black	1350	v. Keeler	1985
v. Gas Co.	2507	Ballowe v. Com.	194	v. Kennedy	581, 1777
v. Gausin	1754	Baltimore v. War	208, 2105	v. M'Williams	1210
v. Hagey	451	Baltimore City P. R.		v. Mumford	2444
v. Haines	2016	Co. v. Cooney	460, 1976	v. Plannett	1539
v. Hancock	481	v. Knee	1129	v. Salina	2280, 2282
v. Humphrey	1032	v. Tanner	681, 1003,	v. Slemmons	987
v. Irish	97		1750, 1976	v. Stryker	924
v. Jamison	1879	Baltimore Consol. R.		v. Zorn	735, 745, 749,
v. Joseph	953, 1029	Co. v. State	1387		758, 759, 761
v. Kelly	1784	Baltimore Elev. Co. v.		Bank of British Colum-	
v. Lyman	1406	Neal	199, 250, 571, 1951	bia v. Trapp	1856
v. Madison	568, 1051	Baltimore P. & C. R.		Bank of British N. Amer-	
v. Massengale	1290	Co. v. Stoner	1043	ica v. Delafield	1073
v. Miles	2355	Baltimore R. Co. v. Johnson	1943	v. McElroy	1911
v. Mygatt	2579	Baltimore Traction Co. v.		Bank of Columbia v.	
v. Palne	1032, 2417	Appel	2507	Magruder	585
v. People	359	Baltimore Turnpike v.		Bank of Gunterville v.	
v. Preston	531, 1225, 1651	State	1978	Webb	2416
v. Pritchard	2268	Baltimore & L. T. Co. v.		Bank of Middlebury v.	
v. R. Co.	2319	Cassell	568, 571, 1951	Rutland	1623
v. Sherman	1976, 1978	Baltimore & O. R. Co.		Bank of Montreal v.	
v. State		v. Camp	250	Snyder	1205
122 Ala.	1909	v. Colvin	65	Bank of N. Liberties	
4 Ark.	863	v. Glenn	1271, 1703, 2573	v. Davis	905, 907
Miss., 33 So.	62, 278	v. Hellenthal	460, 1978	Bank of Newbury v. R.	
v. Thompson	1909	v. Henthorne	96, 249	Co.	2572
v. Towles	1248	v. Kreager	1354	Bank of New Zealand v.	
v. Trotter	1270, 1966	v. Polly	1164	Simpson	2465
Balbec v. Donaldson	2529	v. Rambo	290, 568, 987,	Bank of Nova Scotia v.	
Balbo v. People	823, 851		1270, 1719	Robinson	377
Balcetti v. Serain	318	v. State	104	Bank of Rochester v.	
Balding v. Andrews	1018, 1750,	v. Thompson	571, 681,	Gray	1675, 2165
	1756, 1976		728	Bank of Sallna v. Henry	2282
Baldney v. Ritchie	1200	Baltimore & O. S. W. R.		Bank of State of N. Y. v.	
Baldridge v. Penland	1549, 1558	Co. v. Tripp	454	Southern N. Bank	224
Baldwin v. Bricker	1700	Baltimore & P. R. Co. v.		Bank of the Metropolis v.	
v. Burt	1195	Landrigan	2510	Jones	529
v. Gregg	1066, 1097	Baltimore & S. P. Co. v.		Bank of U. S. v. Dandridge	2535
v. Hale	1216, 2555	Hackett	1951	v. Dunn	529
v. McKay	1246	Baltimore & S. R. Co. v.		v. Sill	1198
v. Parker	2337	Woodruff	15, 456	v. White	1678
v. R. Co.		Baltimore & Y. T. R. v.		Bank of Utica v. Hillard	529,
4 Gray	65, 1621, 1984	Leonhardt	458		1858, 2200
68 Ia.	1415, 1951				

TABLE OF CASES.

BAN

	Section		Section		Section
Bank of Utica v. Merse- reau	2294, 2298, 2315, 2321, 2328	Barker v. Bushnell v. Coleman	1062 568, 1722, 1974	Barnett v. State 83 Ala. 117 Ga.	2061 2239
Bank of Washington v. Kurtz	1206	v. Com. Ky., 50 S. W. 90 Va.	1839 1620	v. Wilson	1256
Bank of Wilmington and B. v. Wollaston	1684	v. Comins	1938	Barnewall v. Murrell	1302, 1310, 2452
Bankhead v. State	1750	v. Dixie	2228, 2242	Barney v. State	1853, 2497
Banking House v. Darr	749, 1060, 1640, 1677, 1680	v. Haskell	750, 1550, 1558, 1558	Barney's Will	1739, 2503
Banks v. Bnrnam	2579	v. Kuhn	2327	Barnhart v. Riddle	2465
v. Darden	2109	v. McFerran	1511	Barnstable, The	2465
v. Farquharson	1812	v. Mackay	2232	Barnum v. Barnum	
v. Jacobs	2016	v. Mfg. Co.	437	9 Conn.	2115
v. State		v. People	1364	42 Md.	1492, 1603
84 Ala.	838, 857	v. Perry	792, 795, 1157, 1158	Barnwell v. Merion	2578
96 Ala.	2506	v. Pope	689, 1621, 1938	Baron v. Reading Iron Co.	283
Bannen v. State	398, 1136	v. Ray	21, 291, 1471, 1476	Barough v. White	1084
Banning v. Banning	2155	v. Sterne	2419	Barr v. Armstrong	1206, 1234
v. Marleau	1065, 1086	Barkley v. Bradford	1869	v. Gratz	2141
v. R. Co.	1164	v. Screven	1664	v. Hack	1511
Banta v. Banta	2066	Barkiy v. Copeland	958, 960, 1126, 1128, 1874	v. Moore	74, 988
Bantley v. Finney	2427	Barkman v. Hopkins	1271, 1684	v. People	406
Barabaz v. Kabat	2496	v. State	363, 389, 390, 987, 1157	v. Post	2270
Baran v. Reading Iron Co.	2509	Barley v. Byrd	1525, 1651	v. State	93
Barataria & L. C. Co. v. Field	461	Barley's Case	1193	v. State	1819
Barbar v. Martin	321	Barlow v. State	2354	Barranger v. Baum	2569
Barbat v. Allen	604, 619	v. Vowell	583	Barrara v. State	2090
Barber v. Anderson	2117	v. Waters	1738	Barrenberg v. Boston	437
v. Bennett	1548, 1777	Barlow B. Co. v. Parsons	784	Barrett v. Featherstone	1067
v. Glogell	377, 1391	Barnby v. Plummer	1203	v. Flah	2183
v. Goddard	619	Barnwell v. Hannegan	1112	v. French	1080, 1082, 1086
v. Holmes	1641, 2529	Barnard v. Crosby	1225	v. Hammond	458
v. International Co.	890, 1676, 1677, 1680, 2104, 2165	v. Gantz	2503	v. Kelly	1565, 1956
v. McKay	1681	v. Kellogg	2440	v. Long	404, 406
v. Manchester	561, 1951	v. State	905, 1037	v. Murphy	791
v. Merriam	688, 1719	Barnes v. Barnes	2506	v. R. Co.	1042
v. People	21, 2231, 2242	v. Com.		Barrickman v. Marion Oil Co.	451
v. R. Co.	2463	101 Ky.	318, 1249	Barrie v. Smith	2434
Barber's Appeal	229, 681, 682, 1548, 1576, 2132, 2500	110 Ky.	1442	Barringer v. Barringer	2239
Barber Co. v. Ullman	1415	Ky., 70 S. W.	1111	v. Ryder	2536
Barbour v. Archer	1708	v. District	2535	Barron v. Daniel	1681
v. Duncanson	1085	v. Harris	2300, 2302	v. Grillard	2222
v. Watts	1280, 1651	v. Ingalls	379, 571	v. Mason	2539
Barbre v. Goodale	2438	v. Kelly	2117	v. People	276
Barcello v. Hapgood	1677, 1680	v. Lynch	1210	Barrow v. State	416
Barclay v. Com.	2239	v. Martin	613	Barrows v. Downs	564, 1271, 1684
Bardin v. Stevenson	1248, 2132	v. Mawson	378	v. White	1456
Bardsley v. Sternberg	1672	v. Rumford	1750	Barrus v. Phaneuf	2208
Barelli v. Lytle	382	v. Simmons	1862, 1521	Barry v. Alexander	1858
Barfield v. Britt	1432	v. State		v. Babbington	1472, 1476
v. Hewlett	1312, 1320	88 Ala.	108, 398, 1841	v. Barry	2067
Barhight v. Tammany	2539	111 Ala.	2497	v. Bennett	1876
Barhyte v. Summers	1908	38 Tex.	826, 833, 855	v. Butlin	2502, 2503
Baring v. Reeder	530, 607, 2234, 2235	v. Trompowsky	702, 1288, 1311, 1312, 1313, 1320	v. Colville	2437
v. Shippen	529	v. Trust Co.	2104	v. Crowley	2165
Bark Havre, The	1841	Barnes' Case	2287	v. Hoffman	1302, 1651, 1676
Barker v. Barker		Barnet v. Woodbury	1678, 1680	v. People	1065
16 N. H.	2115, 2120	Barnet's Lessee v. Day	1490	v. Rhea	1678
14 Wis.	1204	Barnett v. Barnett	2046	v. Ryan	1299
v. Bell	911	v. People	1396	v. Snowden	2573
		v. Stanton	1966	v. Sturdivant	620
				Barrymore v. Taylor	2104
				Bartelott v. International Bank	2494
				Bartels v. Brain	2465
				Barth v. State	821, 851

BAN

BEA

TABLE OF CASES.

Section

2061
2239
1256
1310,
2452
2497
2503
2465
2405

2115
2, 1808
2578
283
1084
6, 1234
2141
1511
74, 988
406
2270
93
1819
2509
2000
437
1067
2183
1, 1082,
1086
458
5, 1956
04, 406
791
1042

451
2434
2239
2536
1681
2222
2539
276
416
1271,
1684
1456
2208
1858
2, 1476
2067
1876
2, 2508
2437
2165
1651,
1676
1005
1678
1299
2573
620
2104

2494
2465
1, 851

Section
Bartholomew v. Bank 2580
v. Edwards 1189, 1195
v. Farwell 1521
v. People 967, 1270
v. Stephens 1214
Bartlett v. Boyd 1352
v. Clongb 609
v. Decreet 263
v. Delprat 21, 1085, 1795
v. Emerson 1362, 1567
v. Falk 581
v. Gale 2123
v. Gilliard 2122
v. Hoyt 18, 772,
1062, 2550
v. Lewis 2251, 2268,
2272
v. Patton 2354
v. Remington 2472
v. Smith 1872, 2550
v. Tarbox 1082
v. Wheeler 1280
v. Wilbur 1048
Bartley v. People 825, 862,
2071
v. State 53 Nebr. 1230, 2497,
2511
55 Nebr. 784, 2511
Barto v. Morris 1195
Barton v. Bruley 62, 75, 212,
357, 1021
v. Com. 925, 2277
v. Dundas 1525, 1566
v. Kane 462, 770, 1204
v. Morpheus 979, 987, 988
v. Murrain 1225, 1239
v. Osborn 2232
v. State 154 Ind. 276, 1003
18 Oh. 347
v. Thompson 604
Bartov v. Brands 496
Barwell v. Adkins 406
Bas v. Steele 1859
Bascom v. Bascom 2067, 2069
Basham v. Com. 276
Bashford v. Barstow 2373
Basket v. Univ. of Cam-
bridge 1684
Baskin v. Vernon 1652
Bass v. Gobert 1547
v. Sevler 2138
v. State 37 Ala. 2060
29 Ark. 1667
103 Ga. 398
136 Ind. 736, 2098
v. U. S. 581
Bass Furnace Co. v. Glass-
cock 728
Bassell v. Elmore 406
Bassett v. Glass 944
v. Marshall 1352
v. Shares 461
v. Spofford 1639, 1649
v. U. S. 2239
Bassham v. State 914, 1890
Basterach v. Atkinson 1195

Section
Bastrop State Bank v. Levy 289, 1631
Baeye v. State 59, 194, 247,
826, 934, 968, 968,
1442, 1867, 2303,
2326
Batchelder v. Batchelder 1021,
1028, 1783
v. Sanborn 1548
v. Taylor 1919
Batchelor v. Honeywood 702,
704
Bate v. Hill 210, 966, 1106
v. Kinsey 1204, 1207, 2307,
2308, 2309
Bateman v. Bailey 1081, 1783
v. Bateman 1189, 1225
v. Phillips 1858
v. Rntland 457
Bates v. Ableman 1082, 1086
v. Barber 691, 1111,
1965
v. Bates 1738
v. Cain's Estate 2518
v. Cilley 616
v. Coe 1161, 1856
v. McCully 1681, 2573
v. Morris 288
v. Preble 736, 745, 754
v. R. Co. 2456
v. Ryland 585
v. Sabin 616, 754,
1249, 1835
v. Sharon 1925, 1978
v. State 987
Bateson v. Hartink 2307
Bath v. Bathersea 1388, 2121
Bath and Mountague's
Case 1991, 1992,
2047
Bathrick v. Detroit Post 73, 392,
692, 2097
Batre v. Simpson 1530
Batt & Co.'s Reg. Trade-
marks 1666
Batte v. Stone 1651
Batten v. State 276
Battersbee v. Calkins 291, 2516
Batthwvs v. Galindo 2280
Battin v. Woods 1240
Battie v. State 1033
Batties v. Holley 2144
v. Landenslager 64
Batturs v. Sellers 1056
Baty v. Elrod 2232
Baucum v. George 1215, 1651
Baudin v. Pollock 1186
Bauer v. Indianapolis 458
Baner's Estate 2312
Bauerman v. Radenius 1076
Baugh v. Read 2474
Banghan v. Graham 1684
Banghman v. Banghman
29 Kan. 2088
32 Kan. 1938
Baulec v. R. Co. 190, 250
Baum v. Lynn 2433
Baum Iron Co. v. Berg 770
Banmann v. Trust Co. 2575

Section
Baumer v. French 1352
Baunier v. Antiau 783
Bannen v. State 770
Banskett v. Keith 905
Baustian v. Young 790, 792
Baxendale v. Bennett 2420
Baxter v. Abbott 232, 559,
1511, 1938
v. Baxter 2069
v. Camp 1124, 2535
v. Cedar Rapids 2300
v. Doe 442, 457
v. Hamilton 2016
v. Knowles 1133
v. Knox 682
v. McDonnell 2580
v. Pritchard 2450
v. R. Co. 438, 571, 792
v. State 1896
Bay State Iron Co. v.
Goodall 2268
Bayha v. Munford 2529
Bayley v. Bates 1670
v. Wylie 1215, 2111
Baylis v. Atty.-Gen'l 2473
Baylis v. Cockcroft 581
Baylor v. Smithers 1668
Bayne v. Stone 1245
Bayonne K. Co. v. Um-
benhauer 2165
Bays v. Herring 1908
v. Hunt 1908
Beach v. Brown 1730
v. Catiin 1080, 1082
v. Fulton Bank 1898
v. Mills 1537, 1549
v. O'Riley 2025
v. U. S. 2272
v. Wise 1083
v. Workman 2166
Beachcroft v. Beachcroft 2493
Beachinall v. Beachinall 2426
Beacon L. v. F. Ass. Co. 2462
Beadles v. Alexander 1511,
1736, 1738
Beakes v. Da Cunha 96
Beal v. Nichols 915, 1888,
1890
v. Robeson 64
Beale v. Bird 1858
v. Boston 463, 1943
v. Brown 607
v. Posey 273, 660, 1977
Beall v. Barclay 1212
v. Bealls 1662
v. Cunningham 1081
v. Dearing 1213, 1225,
2143
v. Dick 1225, 1651
v. Ledlow 1779
v. Poole 1248
Beam v. Link 2363
Beamer v. Darling 2313
Beamish v. Beamish 2062
Beamon v. Ellice 1842
Bean v. Evans 3115
v. Green 2386
v. Quimby 803, 2300
Beard v. Boylan 2435

TABLE OF CASES.

BEA

	Section		Section		Section
Beard v. Kirk	717, 1943	Beebe v. McNeill	1225	Bell v. State	
v. Ryan	1225, 2141	v. Parker	380, 1592,	44 Ala.	1842
Beard's Lessee v. Talbot	1564		1670	74 Ala.	390, 1036
Beardlee v. Columbia Tp.	437,	Beebees, <i>ex p.</i>	2204, 2206	124 Ala.	1109, 2498
	792, 1951	Beech v. Haynes	2123	91 Ga.	2582
Beardsley, <i>re</i>	2195	v. Jones	735, 753	98 Ga.	1072
v. Bridgman	406	Beeche Dene, The	2508	100 Ga.	1109, 1807
v. Foot	1820	Beecher v. Denniston	291, 677	72 Miss.	1442
v. Wildman	1022	Beeching v. Gower	596	81 Tex. Cr.	2277
Beardstown v. Clark	1951	Beedle v. People	1013	33 Tex. Cr.	852
v. Virginia		Beekman v. Hamlin	1640	v. Stewart	1878
76 Ill.	1712, 2421	Beeler v. Young	1839	v. Terr.	2063, 2527
81 Ill.	1678, 1712	Beemer v. Kerr	1046	v. W. C. S. Co.	283
Bears v. Copley	571, 1038	Beer v. Ward	1645, 2323	v. Wetherill	1257
Beasley v. Clarke	1239	Beers v. Aylsworth	1082	v. Woodman	1021
Beason v. State	1821	v. Hawley	1082	v. Young	382, 1194, 1195,
Beaton v. Skene	2375, 2376	Beery v. U. S.	822, 836, 855,		2105
Beattie v. Browne	2445		858, 865	Bell's Case, 1 Browne	987
Beatty v. Gilmore	1951	Beeson v. Beeson	2303, 2313	Bellamy v. Hawkins	2110
Beaty v. Knowler	2572	v. Green	2442	Bellamy's Case	1228, 1252
Beauhien v. Cicotte	689, 761,	v. Moore	1817	Belle of N. D. Co. v.	
	957, 1041,	Beets v. State	786, 749, 753,	Riggs	2220
	1160, 1738, 1920,		1450	Bellefontaine & I. R.	
	1934, 1938	Beever v. Hanson	283	Co. v. Bailey	675, 1051
Beauchamp v. Ferry	1084	Befay v. Wheeler	302	Beller v. Jones	689, 1938
v. State	1126	Beggary v. State	830, 834, 852,	Bellerophon, The	2375
Beaufort v. Smith	1591		855	Bellet, <i>ex p.</i>	2220
Beaumont v. Fell	2477	Beggs v. State	1644	Belleville Stone Co. v.	
v. Field	2473	Beglin v. Ins. Co.	2387, 2390	Comben	461
v. Mountain	2572	Behn v. Young	2164	Bellinger v. People	1263,
v. Perkins	1993	Behrens v. Behrens	1786		1667, 2280
Beauvais v. Wall	1239	Behrman v. Terry	1842	Bellows v. Todd	1219
Beavan v. M'Donnell	233	Beiderbecke v. Transp. Co.	93	Belmont v. Morrill	2572
Beaver v. Slear	2442		93	v. Vinalhaven	1784
v. Taylor	1777	Beltman v. Hopkins	2336	Belote v. State	858
Beavers v. State	792	Belair v. R. Co.	792	Belt v. Lawes	221, 901
Beebe v. Tinker	1893	Belcher v. Fox	2143	v. State	1051, 1186
Beberstein v. Terr.	347	v. Magnay	586	Belt E. L. Co. v. Allen	2220
Beck v. Hood	960	Belden v. Allen	1874	Belton v. Briggs	1196
v. State	2512	v. Carter	2408	Beltran v. Gauthreaux	613
Becker v. Cain	1040	Belk v. Meagher	1209	Beltzhoover v. Blackstock	2294
v. Koch	905, 907, 1006	Belknap v. Stewart	778	Bemis v. Bishop	1976
v. Qulgr	1384, 1635, 1709	Bell v. Ansley	1081	v. Charles	1208
v. R. Co.		v. Bank	95, 736, 747	v. R. Co.	561, 1951
131 N. Y.	1943	v. Bell		v. Temple	444, 458, 461
177 Pa.	463			v. State	1225, 1651, 2141
Beckett v. Ald Ass'n	457, 561	34 N. Br.	1817, 2066		1434
Beckham v. State	824, 833	12 Pa. St.	1911	Benaway v. Coyne	1889, 1840
Beckman v. Souther	258	v. Bowdoin	1681	Bender v. Montgomery	93
Becknell v. Hosler	2389	v. Brewster	2008, 2145	v. Pitzer	1567, 1568,
Beckwith v. Benner	2813	v. Chambers	1891		1584
v. Butler	2123	v. Chandler	1203	v. State	1350
v. R. Co.	2220	v. Chaytor	1297	Benedict v. Boulton	1911
v. Sydebotham	672, 1917	v. Clarion	19	v. Flanagan	2008, 2016
v. Talbot	1640	v. Davidson	2118	v. Fond du Lac	1951
Bedard v. Hall	1350, 2577	v. Denson	1248	v. Helneberg	1677
v. Berkey	792, 796	v. Farwell	2165	v. Matthews	2016
v. Chase	581	v. Hearne	1207	v. Nichols	1326, 1667, 2121
v. R. Co.	720	v. Ingestre	2409	v. State	106, 2300
Bedford Case	1712	v. McCawley	1678, 2141	v. Union Agricultural	
Bedgood v. McLain	2525	v. Parke	74	Soc'y	461
v. State	200, 308,	v. Porter	1573	Benefiel v. Anghe	1651
	967, 2282	v. Prewitt	1890	Bener v. Edgington	1086
Bedtkey v. Bedtkey	1890	v. R. Co.		Benglesdorf v. Hanaway	891
Bee Pub. Co. v. Shields	406	64 Ia.	455, 1204	Benham v. Cary	334
v. World Pub. Co.	1230,	86 Mo.	618	v. Dunbar	463
	1978	v. Radford	392	v. Richardson	133
Beebe v. De Baum	1974	v. Rinker	75, 210	Benjamin, <i>re</i>	2531
v. Knapp	987	v. Rinner	934	v. Coventry	2328
		v. Spokane	437		

TABLE OF CASES.

Section

Section	Section	Section	Section
1842	Benjamin v. Hathaway	2223	Berberich v. Bridge Co.
1036	v. R. Co.	1415, 1961	Berckmans v. Berckmans
2498	v. Wheeler	1021	Berd v. Loveiace
2582	Benje v. Creagh	1587	Berdei v. Egan
1072	Bennet v. Paine	1879	Berg v. R. Co.
1807	v. Robinson	1300, 1316	v. Spink
1442	Bennett v. Adams	2008	Bergen v. Bergen
2277	v. Bennett	2528	v. People
852	v. Eddy	944	Bergen Co. T. Co. v. Bliss
1876	v. Fall	568, 675	Berger v. Booth
2527	v. Griffiths	1862	Bergere v. U. S.
283	v. Hyde	73	Berges v. Daverede
1257	v. Ins. Co.		Bergstrand v. Townsend
1021	43 Minn.	1040	Berkeley Postage Case
195	107 Tenn.	2047	1124, 1280, 1362, 1367,
2105	v. Jones	1387, 1696	1877, 1481, 1482, 1488,
987	v. McDonald	844	1484, 1486, 1487, 1495,
2110	v. Marion	2577	1500, 1588, 1839, 2286
1252	v. Mathewes	709, 1991,	Berkey v. Judd
2220		2008, 2016	Berles v. Adsit
1051	v. Needham	1976, 1978	Beriin v. Berlin
1938	v. O'Byrne	1029	v. Cantrell
2375	v. People	1761	Bermon v. Woodbridge
2220	v. Runyon	2141	Bernard v. Lewis
461	v. State		v. R. Co.
283	52 Ala.	664, 1976	Bernasconi v. Atkin-
2260	62 Ark.	1899	son
219	3 Ind.	2354	v. Fairbrother
2572	Mart. & Y.	2167, 2576	Berneker v. State
784	1 Swan	1817	Bernett v. Taylor
858	32 Tex. Cr.	2098	Berney v. Dinmore
901	67 Wis.	681	v. Mitchell
186	v. Stont	1085	Bernhard v. State
2220	v. Tillmon	2444	Bernhardt v. Brown
195	v. Walker	2105, 2192	Bernhard v. Humes
613	v. Whitehouse	1862	Berry v. Clark
294	Bennifield v. Hypres	618	v. Com.
976	Benning v. Neison	334	v. Hull
208	Bennison v. Walhank	791	v. Jourdan
951	Benoist v. Darby	253	v. R. Co.
461	Benoit v. R. Co.	2494	v. Raddin
141	Benson v. Bellasis	2426	v. Safe D. & T.
434	v. Files	1080	Co.
840	v. Lundy	1086	v. State
93	v. McFadden	660	63 Ark.
268	v. Morgan	2242	10 Ga.
584	v. Olive		Berryhill v. Kirchner
350	Bunh.	2138, 2189	Berryman v. Wise
911	2 Str.	1417	Bersch v. State
1016	v. R. Co.		Bertha Mineral Co. v. Mor-
377	98 Cal.	2580	rill
1016	23 R. I.	461	Bertha Zinc Co. v. Mar-
121	v. Shotwell	1404	tin's Adm'r
800	v. State		Bertholf v. Quinlan
161	79 Miss.	1985	Berthon v. Loughman
351	Tex. Cr., 69 S. W.	2265	Bertie v. Beanmont
986	v. U. S.	580, 586	Bertoi v. Smith
491	Bent v. Allot	2227	Bertrand v. Heaman
334	v. Baker	529, 583	Besseia v. Stern
163	Bentley v. Cooke	2227, 2231,	Bessemer L. & I. Co.
33		2239	v. Dubose
31	v. Fleming	2355	Bessette v. State
28	v. O'Bryan	1085	Best v. Best
	v. Ward	1558	Poynter
	Benton v. Craig	1245, 1248	22 Wash.
	v. Martin	2410	Bestor v. Roberts
	v. Starr	1141, 1476	Bethany Hospital Co. v.
	v. State	1164, 1803	Hale
	Benton's Estate	1699	
			Bethea v. Byrd
			Bethel v. Moore
			Bettis v. Logan
			Betts v. Badger
			v. Betts
			113 Ia.
			1 John.
			v. Davenport
			v. Grand T. R. Co.
			v. Jackson
			v. Menzies
			v. R. Co.
			v. State
			v. Stevens
			v. Venning
			Bettys v. Denver Tp.
			Betzler v. Coleman
			Bevan v. M'Mahon
			v. Waters
			Beveiot v. Lestrade
			Bever v. Bever
			v. Spangier
			Beveridge v. Mlnter
			Beverley v. Waiden
			Beverly v. Burke
			v. Williams
			Bewicke v. Graham
			Bey's Succession
			Beyer v. Hermann
			Beyerline v. State
			Bias v. R. Co.
			Bibb v. Thomas
			Biccard v. Shepherd
			Bickenstaff v. Perrin
			Bickley v. Bank
			Bicknell v. Mellett
			Biddis v. James
			Biddie v. Shippen
			Bidinger v. Bishop
			Bielschofsky v. People
			Bierbach v. Rubber Co.
			Biesenthal v. Williams
			Bigcraft v. People
			Bigelow v. Bear
			v. Blake
			v. Hali
			v. Maynard
			v. Sickles
			v. Young
			Biggins v. Brockman
			Biggs v. Stusier
			Bigham v. Coleman
			Bigler v. Reyher
			Biles v. Holmes
			Billin v. Henkei
			Billings v. Flight
			Billings v. Billings
			v. Ins. Co.
			v. State
			Billingslea v. Smith
			Bills v. Keesler
			v. Ottumwa
			Bindley v. Martin
			Bines v. State
			Binfield v. Lambert

TABLE OF CASES.

BIN

	Section		Section		Section
Birfield v. State	1839	Birmingham Union R. Co.		Blackburn v. Ins. Co.	2498
Birford v. Dement	596	v. Alexander	487, 458	v. Mann	928
v. Young	1063	v. Hale	923	v. State	
Bingel v. Voiz	2477	Birmingham Waterworks		71 Ala.	1816
Bingham v. Bernard	1614	Co. v. Hume	2536	23 Oh. St.	143, 144, 304, 2071
v. Foster	2354	Birney v. Hann	1805	Blackett v. Ins. Co.	2440
v. Rogers	716, 1943	Birt v. Barlow	1644, 2084, 2085, 2088, 2529	v. Johnson	1890
v. Walk	2317, 2328	v. White	1404	v. Rockland	1256
Binney v. Russell	1213	Birum v. Johnson	1823	Blackman v. Collier	451, 1976
Binns v. State		Bischof v. Mikels	1871	v. Dowling	1273
46 Ind.	1447	Bish v. Ins. Co.	1248	v. Johnson	568, 1974
57 Ind.	890	Bishop v. Averill	1890	v. Riley	1665
66 Ind.	41, 1244	v. Clay Ins. Co.	1954	v. State	
Finyon v. U. S.	367, 1852	v. Cone	2584	38 Ala.	68
Binz v. Weber	1850	v. Morgan	2477	78 Ga.	288
Birch v. Depeyster	2465	v. People	347	80 Ga.	1878
v. Ridgway	2016	v. Spining	681	v. Stogner	1290
v. Rogers	2529	v. State		v. West Jersey & S. R.	
Birchall v. Bullough	754	20 Ala.	2016	Co.	1078, 1807
Birchard v. Booth	815, 1066	41 Fla.	580	Blackwell v. Bull	2463
Birchett v. Bank	2016	9 Ga.	2849, 2354	v. Glass	1271, 1681
Birchfield v. Bonham	1225	55 Md.	318	v. State	
Bird v. Butler	1304	v. Tucker	1387	67 Ga.	2265
v. Com.	2086, 2088, 2573	v. Williamson	2349	11 Ind.	1821
v. Davis	619	Bishop of London v.		Tex. Cr., 73 S. W.	2349
v. Halay	987, 1391	Fytche	2257	Blackwell D. T. Co. v.	
v. Hardwicke	2250	Bishops, Case of the	2250	McElwee	1072
v. Hueston	619, 1471	Seven; see R. v. Seven		Blackwood v. Damer	2452
v. Miller	2008, 2013	Bishops.		Blade v. Noland	1198
v. Smith	1225, 2105	Bisell v. Beckwith	1576	Bladen v. Cockey	1564, 2349
v. State		v. Cornell	1908	Blagrave v. Blagrave	1415
38 Ala.	2060	v. Starr	987	Blague v. Gold	2477
50 Ga.	1842, 1851, 2272	v. Wert	1943	Blair v. Bank	1379
104 Ind.	222, 1138	Bitner v. Boone	608	v. Brown	1195, 1779
v. U. S.		Bittick v. State	1874	v. Caldwell	1681
180 U. S.	100	Bixby v. Bent	1280	v. Charleston	1943
187 U. S.	1854	v. Bridge Co.	1393	v. Hopkins	1476
v. Veith	1841	v. Carskaddon		v. Madison Co.	1719
Bird's Case	564	55 Ia.	1225, 2168	v. Pelham	792
Birdsall v. Carter	1202	63 Ia.	1086	v. R. Co.	
v. Dunn	616, 2232	v. Ins. Co.	1641, 1847	59 Mo.	2388
v. Patterson	605	v. R. Co.	1951	20 Wis.	1876
Birdsell v. Johnson	2065	Bizer v. Bizer	1974	v. Sayre	1644, 1646, 2109
Birdsong v. Brooks	1252, 1353, 1662	Blabon v. Gilchrist	2240, 2245	v. Seaver	1817
v. State	293, 1732	Black v. Bacheider	2465	v. State	946, 968, 1750, 1873
Birkel v. Chandler	715	v. Bank	1800, 2445	Blaine Co. v. Heard	1350
Birmingham v. McPoland	750,	v. Baylees	1028	Blaisdell v. Bickum	1605
770		v. Besse	1842	v. Davis	1213
v. Pettit	1672	v. Black	787, 1391	Blake v. Assurance Co.	4, 10, 216, 302, 304, 321
v. Starr	458	v. Braybrook	5, 1377, 1681	v. Damon	394, 948, 960
Birmingham M. R. Co. v.		v. Crozier	2222	v. Everett	1082, 1133
Harris	2569	v. Dale	2027	v. Fash	1198
v. Smith	1840	v. Fizer	1540	v. Graves	604, 1086, 1779, 2242
v. Wilmer	223, 1698	v. Pate	222, 1712, 2216	v. Howard	334
Birmingham Nat'l Bank		v. R. Co.	2416	v. Page	1364
v. Bradley		v. R. M. B. Tel. Co.	1951, 2354	v. People	728, 1800
108 Ala.	1808, 2012	v. State		v. Pilfold	2375
116 Ala.	570	1 Tex. App.	1398	v. Powell	1867, 1889, 1890
Ala., 30 So.	571, 1404	59 Wis.	2056	v. Rourke	689
Birmingham R. & E.		v. Woodrow	2098	v. Rous	2125
Co. v. Ellard	1984	Black's Estate	2383	v. Stoddard	1028, 1044
v. Francomb	1974	Blackburn v. Blackburn	1260	v. White	1062, 1086
v. Jackson	1951	v. Crawfords	18, 1213, 1244, 1491, 1644, 1646, 2314	Blake's Case	2455
v. Mason	1818	v. Com.	905, 907, 2059	Blakemore, re	2220
v. Wildman	2324	v. Hargreaves	2201		
Birmingham Southern R.					
Co. v. Cazzart	223				

Section	Section	Section	Section
2498	Blakeslee v. Hughes 76	Blood v. Light 571	Boardman v. Reed 1888
928	Blakesley v. Wheldon 1862	v. Rideout 1777	v. Spooner 2063
1816	Blakey v. Porter 1858	Blood's Estate 1958	v. Woodman 64, 680, 689,
143, 144,	Blakey's Heirs v. Bla- 664, 1007,	Bloom v. State 1018	1174, 1509, 1933,
304, 2071	key's Ex'r 1021, 1023	Bloomer v. State 1127	1934 1938
2440	Blalock v. Millard 1063	Bloomington v. Legg 252, 283,	Boatman v. Curry 2033
1890	v. Randall 818	451, 458	Boatner v. Scott 1080
1256	v. State 826	v. Osterle 913, 1893	Boatright v. Porter 64, 1374
451, 1976	Blanchard v. Bank 1951	v. Schrock 1696, 1700	Bob v. State 386, 10, 2
1273	v. Blanchard 953, 1963,	Bloor v. Delafield 461	Bobo v. Bryson 2294
568, 1974	2503	v. Barrett 15	Bock v. International Nav.
1065	v. De Graff 1267	v. Dodd 2415	Co. 1856
68	v. Lambert 2505, 2506	Blough v. Parry 905, 987,	Bodde v. Hardee 1239
288	v. Moors 2240	1021, 2500	v. State 2061
1878	v. Pratt 1012	Blount v. Burrow 2122	Boddy v. Boddy 396
1290	v. Steamboat Co. 463	v. Kimpton 2311, 2327	Bodine v. State 987
1, R.	v. Young 1225	v. Layard 1640	Bodman v. American
978, 1807	Bland v. Armagh 787	v. Riley 1084	Tract Society 2472
2463	v. R. Co. 1976	Blow v. Maynard 1267	Bodwell v. Swan 73, 209, 406
271, 1681	v. State 1750	Blower v. Hollis 2110	Body v. Jewson 382
2265	v. Warren 1466, 1661	Bloxam v. Elsie 1256	Boecker v. Naperville 463
1821	Blandy-Jenkins v. Dun- 157, 2145	Bluck v. Gompertz 1859	Boehm's Goods 2421
W. 2349	raven 157, 2145	Blue v. R. Co. 561	Boehlinc v. Schnelder 1271
1072	Blanton v. Miller 1196	Blum v. Jones 787, 803	Boelter v. Ross Lumber
2452	v. Ray 1226	v. State 1230, 2264	Co. 2220
1198	Blasini v. Blasini 2083	Bluman v. State 2236, 2242	Boerlein v. Bank 16
64, 2349	Blatch v. Archer 285	Blume v. State 228, 1988, 2272	Boeshore, re 2201
1415	Blatz v. Rohrbach 2582	Blumenthal v. Craig 1951	Boetge v. Landa 2355
2477	Blazo v. Cochran 2051	v. Meat Co. 463, 2581	Boettger v. Iron Co. 1984
1879	Bleckley v. White 1960	v. R. Co. 2552	Bogan v. McCutchen 1195
95, 1779	Blecker v. Johnson 289, 200	v. Rails 1956	Bogard v. Johnstone 2016
1681	Blessing v. Dodds 1072	Btumer, ex p. 1727	Bogardus v. Trinity
1948	v. Galveston 1350	Blundell v. Gladstone 2463	Church 378, 382,
1476	Blethen v. Bonner 2536	Blunt v. Strong 1392	437, 1232, 1587,
1719	Blevins v. Pope 770, 774, 1212	Blurton v. Toon 528, 1991	1598
792	Blewett v. Bash 1676, 2525	Blythe v. L'Estrange 2256	Bogart v. Brown 1210
2388	v. Gaynor 1877	Blythe v. Houston 1239	v. Green 1256
1976	v. Tregonning 15, 1896	v. State 1803	Bogert v. Bogert 913, 1890,
46, 2109	Blewitt v. Boorum 2410	Boak, re 2065	2317
1817	Blight v. Ashley 1768, 2119	Boais v. Shields 1873	v. Phelps 1082, 1088
38, 1750,	v. Schenck 2408, 2420	Board v. Chambers 715	Bogie v. Nolan 1418
1873	Bles v. Brainard 2201, 2202	v. Coler 1350	Boggs v. Ass'n 2451
1360	v. Franklin 2336	v. Dillard 463	v. Harper 2531
1605	v. Johnson 89, 253, 1623	v. Estrella 2573	v. Thompson 1890
1218	v. Long 2098	v. Harlev 1867	Boggus v. State 2016
4, 10,	v. Nichols 1006	v. Ileenan 1850	Bogle v. Kretzler 1985
1016, 302,	v. Shuman 770	v. Hendricks 1943	v. Sullivant 1511
304, 321	v. State 1750	v. Hernandez 1677, 1680	Bogue v. Bigelow 2529
948, 950	v. Stevens 1195	v. Lee 2203	Bohan v. Avoca 1890
32, 1133	v. Wareham 1951	v. May 1275, 1641	Bohanan v. Shelton 1225
1198	v. Winston 1778	v. Meagher 1195	Bohannon v. Com. 246, 247
4, 1086,	Blitz v. U. S. 944	v. Meisenhelmer 701, 2008	Bohlman v. Coffin 1185
79, 2242	Blizard v. Applegate 770	v. Merchant 1354	Bohner v. Bohner 2239
334	Block v. Hicks 1073	v. Moore 1854	Boice v. Palmer 966
28, 1890	v. Jacksonville 1684	Ky., 66 S. W. 615, 1802	Boies v. McAllister 568, 1620
2375	v. R. Co. 688	17 Minn. 1202	Boileau v. Rutlin 1065, 1066,
99, 1890	Blocker v. Burness 1817	v. Nelms 463, 714	1075
689	Blodget v. Jordan 1681	v. Nichols 1721	Boit v. McKenzie 1352
2125	Blodgett Paper Co. v. 571, 581	v. O'Conner 1108	Bolan v. Bolan 1664
28, 1044	Farmer 571, 581	v. Pearson 283	Bold v. Rayner 2463
2, 1086	Blode Co. v. Bancroft 1859	v. People 1350	Bolden v. R. Co. 2354
2455	Co. 1859	v. Reinhart 1244	Boldon v. Thompson 951
2220	Blogg v. Kent 1858	v. Smlth 2159	Boldt v. State 451
	Blols v. State 2059	v. State 2575	Bole v. State 367
	Blomgren v. Anderson 892	v. Verburg 1062	Bole v. State 855
	Blomquist v. R. Co. 571	v. Vickers 1129	Bolen v. People 1852, 1878,
	Blondeau v. Sheridan 1195	Boardman v. Ins. Co. 1164	2269, 2270
	Blondei v. R. Co. 561	v. Jackson 2122	923, 987
			Boling v. Boling 2411

TABLE OF CASES.

BOL

	Section		Section		Section
Bolling v. Faunla	747, 1660	Booth v. Lenox	1065	Boniden v. State	1195, 1441,
v. State	233, 235, 1142	v. Swesey	1063		1450, 2512
Bolinger v. Gallagher	1953	Boothby v. Lacasse	1978	Bonidin v. Massie's	
Bollo v. Navarro	1082	Booths v. Dorsey	1188	Heirs	93, 728, 1105
Bolton v. Cummings	1224, 1225	Bootle v. Blindell	1302, 1304	Boulter v. Peplow	1255, 1256
v. Liverpool	1857, 2294	Boots v. Canine	1066, 1037	Boulton v. Robinson	2047
Bolton Case	2287	Booser v. Teague	1778	Bound v. R. Co.	1850
Boms v. Plunkett	2016	Borden v. Keverberg	377	Bonnds v. Bonnds	1226, 1778
Boma v. Rosser	15, 321	Borsing v. Borsing	2239	Bourda v. Jones	748, 2054
Bomford v. Wilme	1817	Borgess Inv. Co. v. Vette	1549,	Bourne v. Boston	1225
Bomgardner v. Andrews	682		1660	v. Gatliff	877
Bonaparte v. Thayer	967, 1616	Borland v. Mayo	1779	Bousfield v. Godfrey	1858
Bond v. Central Bank	1248	v. Walrath	786, 747, 2016	Bovard v. Wallace	787
v. Douglas	406	Born v. Rosenow	406	Bovili v. Moore	1862
v. Fitzpatrick	1084	Borrego v. Terr.	944, 987,	Bowden v. Achor	463, 784,
v. Montague	1651		1079, 2512		1085, 1213,
v. State		Borst v. Eniple	1653		1260, 1938
21 Fla.	111, 246, 247	Borum v. Fons	2297	Bowditch v. Boston	463
20 Tex. App.	1841	Boake v. Comingore	2375	v. Jordan	2531
v. Whitfield	2105	Boaley v. Ins. Co.	2349	v. Soityk	1271
Bond Debt Cases	1350	Boat v. Boat	1958	Bowdie v. R. Co.	494, 495, 497
Bondurant v. Bank	736	Bostain v. Separator Co.	95	Bowen v. Allen	2477
Bone v. State	1842	Boston v. Coon	1684	v. Bowen	712
Bonebrake v. Board	1951	v. Hewitt	1976	v. Huntington	681, 682, 1976
Boneill's Goods, re	690	v. Richardson		v. Jones	2016
Boner v. Com.	1668	13 All.	1066	v. R. Co.	455, 561
Bones v. State	2497	105 Mass.	157	v. Rutherford	1024
Bonestee v. Lynde	2219, 2220	v. State	293, 579,	Bower v. Bower	229, 233,
v. Sullivan	1677		1144, 1750		1938, 2382
Bonet v. Stowell	607	v. Weymouth	393, 2145	v. Earl	1778
Bonfield v. Smith	1971	Boston Massacre Trial	1123	v. State	2100
Bonnell v. Mawha	1558	Boston Water P. Co. v.		Bowers v. Briggs	2312
Bonnemort v. Gill	1040, 1042	Hanlon	1567, 1573,	v. State	
Bonner v. Ins. Co.	1213		1566	29 Oh. St.	205, 401,
v. Phillips	1678	Boston & W. R. Co. v.		Tex. Cr., 71 S. W.	2311, 2321
v. State		Dana	154, 991,		1987,
55 Ala.	825, 860, 861		1072, 1230,	v. Van Winkle	1186, 1225
107 Ala.	2497		2349, 2354	Bowersock v. Adams	1219
Bonnet v. Devebaugh	1082,	v. O. C. & F. R. C.	463	Bowes v. Broadhead	1350
	1065, 1573, 1633	Boatwick v. Ins. Co.	260, 2415	Bowie v. Findley	1414
v. Glattfeldt	736, 749,	Bosewell v. Blackman	1615	v. Hume	1409
	760, 1890, 1896	v. State	687	v. O'Neale	1387, 2098
Bonsail v. State	347	Bosworth v. Bryan	1225	v. State	246, 248
Booby v. State	1800, 2354	v. Clark	1212	Bowker v. Burdekin	2408
Boody's Estate	2526	Boteler v. Aillington	2258	v. Johnson	2437
Booge v. Parsons	1225, 2105,	Botham v. Swingier	1258	Bowler v. Washington	1802
	2159	Bothomly v. Usborne	2307,	Bowles v. Bingham	2063
Bongher v. Neece	1225		2308, 2311	v. Eddy	1271
Booker v. Booker	1417	Botkin v. Cassidy	934	v. Johnson	2201
v. Bowles	1302, 1309	Botna V. S. Bank v. Silver		v. Langworthy	1298, 1300
Boomer v. Lane	2450	C. Bank	2530	v. State	276
Boon v. Weathered	922, 923,	Botsford v. Chase	406	Bowles' Succession	1681
	987, 1612, 1614,	Bottomley v. Forbes	2440	Bowlin v. Pollock	1678
	1615, 1985	v. Goldsmith	1195	Bowling v. Bowling	689, 1304,
Boone v. Dyke	2447	v. U. S.	194, 302, 334,		1968
v. Oakland T. Co.	1750		841, 2489	v. Com.	2059
v. Peopie	2252	Bottoms v. Kent	52, 63, 64,	v. Haz	1299, 1301
v. Purnell	1603, 2083,	Botts v. Wood	194, 1983	v. Helm	1339
	2085	Bouchaud v. Dias	291, 1083	v. State	2089
Boone Co. Bank v. Wal-		Boncher v. Clark Publ.		Bowius v. State	111, 246,
lace	1083, 1779	Co.	1860		248, 1983
Boorman v. Express Co.	2537	v. Robeson Mills	437	Bowman v. Bartlett	1273, 1312
v. Relief Ass.	689	Boucicault v. Fox	1244	v. Bowman	917, 1933
Boorn's Case	867, 2081	Boudereau v. Mont-		v. Dewing	1640
Boosey v. Davidson	1234	gomery	1388, 1483	v. Montcalm Circuit	
Booth v. Beckley	1890	Boudinot v. Winter	2118	Judge	2374
v. Cook	1225	Bouker v. Peopie	2079	v. Norton	2301, 2328
v. Fire-Engine Co.	1074	Boulden v. Hebel	1911	v. Patrick	2339
v. Hart	1141				

Section
1441,
2612
1198
1266
3047
1860
1778
2084
1225
877
1868
787
1862
63, 784,
55, 1213,
99, 1938
463
2531
1271
105, 497
2477
712
82, 1976
2016
155, 561
1624
29, 233,
38, 2382
1778
2100
2312
401,
1, 2321
987,
2194
1225
1219
1350
1414
1409
7, 2098
46, 248
2408
2437
1802
2063
1271
2201
8, 1300
276
1681
1678
9, 1304,
1938
2059
9, 1301
1339
2089
11, 246,
8, 1983
3, 1312
7, 1933
1640
2374
1, 2328
2339

Case Name	Section
Bowman v. Sanborn	694, 702, 1680, 2008, 2016
v. Wettig	378, 1207, 1226
v. Woods	1698
Bowser v. Cravener	1573, 3141
v. Warren	1226, 1820
Boyce v. Chapman	1321, 1661, 285
v. Foster	219
v. Mooney	1226
v. People	2062
v. R. Co.	
42 N. H.	465
43 N. H.	465
v. Stage Co.	2354
v. Stambaugh	2167
Boyd v. Bank	1126, 1698
v. Boyd	318
v. Com.	2168
v. Jones	1779
v. Ladson	1543
v. M'Lean	2054
v. Petrie	1850
v. State	
2 Hamp.	836
14 Lea	143, 144, 457
94 Tenn.	1270
33 Tex. Cr.	2239
v. U. S.	
116 U. S.	1859, 2188, 2264
142 U. S.	523
Boyd v. Moore	1779
Boydston v. Morris	1225, 1661
Boyens' Will	1505
Boyer v. Norris	1320
v. St. Louis S. F. & T. R. Co.	1058, 1640
v. Sweet	1538, 1539, 1552
v. Teagne	1712, 1757, 2195, 2215
v. Welmer	1086
Boyett v. State	1665
Boykin v. Boykin	2063
v. People	273, 274, 1852, 2497
v. Smith	1651
v. State	2153
v. Wright	1225, 2138, 2143
Boylan v. Meeker	271, 1033, 1505, 1514, 1736, 1738
Boyle v. Boyle	2523
v. Columbian F. Co.	1576
v. Mahanoy City	2552
v. Relief Assoc.	2386
v. Saginaw	252
v. Smithman	2264, 2272
v. State	
97 Ind.	246, 249, 1445
105 Ind.	1445, 1447, 2276, 2277
57 Wis.	1700
61 Wis.	397, 1976
v. Wiseman	1213, 1228, 1872, 2268, 2272
Boyles v. M'Eowen	2282
Boynton v. Boynton	2200

Case Name	Section
Boynton v. Kellogg	52, 75
v. Miller	1082
v. Merco	2445
v. Trumbull	2354
Bozeman v. Browning	1213
Brabbits v. R. Co.	1976
Brabo v. Martin	1084
Bracegirdle v. Balley	73, 200, 1891, 1893
Bracken v. State	205, 1198
v. Wells	1651
Brackett v. Edgerton	717
v. Holtt	2450
v. Norton	2573
v. People	1681
v. Weeks	1021
Brackney v. Fogie	2386
Bradburn v. U. S.	276, 907
Bradbury v. Dwight	392
Braddee v. Brownfield	1106, 1108, 1109, 1514, 1664
Braden v. McCleary	969
Bradford v. Barclay	1035
v. Bush	1966
v. Cooper	728
v. Cunard S. S. Co.	2570
v. Ins. Co.	340, 451
v. People	2012, 2016, 2018, 2276
v. Russell	1681
v. S. S. Co.	1533
Bradford's Case	1199
Bradford Glycerine Co. v. Kizer	561, 2500
Bradford S. Co. v. Joost	2442
Bradley v. Arthur	1084
v. Bank	1675, 1684
v. Bradley	
4 Dall.	2352
11 Me.	2067
v. Clark	2271, 2281
v. Crackenthorp	1406
v. Cramer	406
v. Dinneen	1871
v. Gardner	2120
v. Gelselman	1415
v. Gibson	73, 74
v. Goodyear	1549
v. Lightcap	2143
v. McIntosh	2374, 2376
v. Morris	529
v. Myrick	1371
v. Obear	321
v. R. Co.	451
v. Ricardo	897, 907, 908
v. Silsbee	1239
v. Spofford	1779
v. State	232
v. Steam Packet Co.	2462, 2465, 2470
v. Veazie	2210
v. West	1350
Bradley T. Co. v. White	1186
Bradshaw v. Atkins	714
v. Bennett	1297, 2434
v. Combs	774
v. Hedge	1675
v. Murphy	2259

Case Name	Section
Bradshaw v. People	2528
Bradston's Case	2250, 2260
Bradstreet v. Baldwin	1383
Bradt v. Rommel	2364
Brady v. Brady	716
v. Casady	2465
v. McArdle	461
v. Nally	18, 2592
v. Parker	1783
v. Shirley	1163, 1696
v. State	2304
v. U. S.	861
v. West	1350
Bragg v. Colwell	2006, 2021
v. Massie	1777
Bragge v. Dyer	2452
Bralesford v. Williams	95
Brain v. Preece	1675
Bralnard v. Bralnard	2067, 2069
v. Buck	1072
v. R. Co.	714
Braintree v. Battles	1195, 1225
v. Illingham	1383
Brakefield v. State	1440
Brakehill v. Leonard	1680
Braley v. Braley	1969, 2097
Bray v. Henry	1890
Bram v. U. S.	142, 821, 823, 832, 865, 1976, 2266
Bramlett v. Flick	1976
Bramwell v. Lucas	2290
Branch, ex p.	2206, 2207
v. Libbey	458
Branch Bank v. Black	2123
v. Klnsey	1871
v. Parker	253, 1623
Brandao v. Barnett	2580
Brander v. Ferriday	253
Brandon v. Cabiness	1856
v. Mullenix	1389
v. People	967, 2276
Brandt v. Klein	1257, 2309
Brannin v. Force's Adm'r	1539
Brannon v. Hnrnell	905
Brannum v. O'Connor	1067
Brant v. Gallup	1963
v. Lyons	1951
Brantly v. State	457
Brard v. Ackerman	2309
Brashear v. Barton	1291, 1299
Brashears v. Orme	1938, 2500
Bratt v. Lee	1196
Braun v. Campbell	1109
Brawdy v. Brawdy	2047, 2054
Braxton v. Hillyard	2237
Bray v. Flickinger	1188
v. State	1138
Braydon v. Goulman	1879
Brayley v. Kelly	2596
v. Ross	2104, 2120
Brayton v. Chase	2300
Brazier v. Fortne	2312
Brazil v. State	56
Breadalbane v. Chance	1697
Breadalbane Case	1602, 2063, 2505
Breck v. Blanchard	2355
Bredlau v. York	1719
Bredon v. Gill	1364

TABLE OF CASES.

BRB

	Section		Section		Section
Breed v. Gove	2245	Briesenmeister v. Supreme Lodge	2388, 2394	Brocas v. Mayor	1186, 1219
v. Nagle	1288	Briggs v. Alnsworth	1873	Brock, re	1511
Breeden v. Fe...	1888	v. Briggs		Brock v. Brock	116 Pa. 2330, 2341
Breeden v. G. I.	2052	80 Cal.	1388	92 Va.	1085
Breen v. Richardson	1196, 1278	30 Mich.	2384	v. Cottingham	1195, 1196
Breese v. U. S.	759	v. Campbell	1678	v. Ins. Co.	1206
Breinig v. Metzler	1558	v. Henderson	1651, 2143	v. Kent	1070
Breitenwischer v. Clough	1698	v. McBride	285	v. Milligan	1817
Brembridge v. Osborne	2518	v. Morgan	2220	v. Saxton	1290, 1651
Bremer v. Freeman	1271, 1697, 1953, 1984	v. Murdock	1633	v. State	
Brennan v. People	1013, 1079	v. Partridge	2400, 2438	26 Ala.	354, 1042
Brenner v. Luth	1271	v. Rafferty	736	123 Ala.	288, 2273
Bressler v. People	2070, 2368	v. Stafford	530	Tex. Cr., 71	
Breton v. Cope	1245, 1266	v. Taylor	1042, 1219, 2535	S. W.	2242
Brett v. Beales	1502, 1692, 2139	v. Whipple	2572	Brockbank v. Anderson	585
v. Brett	2048	Brigham v. Clark	1040	Brockett v. Bartholomew	1031, 2442, 2465
v. Rigdon	2413, 2471	v. Fayerweather	1042	Brockiebank v. Thompson	1584, 2522
Bretto v. Levine	2430, 2454	v. Palmer	1209, 1301	Brockiebank's Will	2500
Bretton v. Prettiman	575	Bright v. Pennywit	1225	Broder v. Salliard	451
Brevaldo v. State	399	v. Tel. Co.	581	Broderrick v. Higginson	68, 201, 2232
Brewer v. Bowersox	18	v. White	1681, 1684	Brodhead v. Wittes	1693, 1694
v. Ferguson	2336	v. Woodward	1912	Brodnax v. Groom	1350
v. Huntingdon	1350	Bright's Ex'rs v. Swinebroad	617	Brody v. Chittenden	2463
v. Knapp	2518	Brighthope R. Co. v. Rogers	456	Brogan v. Savage	1226, 1051
v. Palmer	2447	Brill v. Car Co.	290	Brogy's Case	1135, 1186, 1362
v. Poreh	905	v. Christy	1678, 2152	Broiley v. Lapham	907
v. R. Co.	392	v. Flagler	668, 1948	Bromago v. Price	1904
v. State	2066	Brind v. Hampshire	2409	Bromley v. Wallace	211
Brewers' Co. v. Benson	1858	Brindle v. M'livaine	938, 1610, 1621	Brookbank v. State	1226
Brewster v. Sewall	1180, 1194, 1228	Bringloe v. Goodson	1296, 1297	Brookbank v. Woodley	1992, 1993, 2002
v. Thompson	2354	Brink v. Ins. Co.	1947	Brooke v. Berry	1938
Brewton v. Glass	2442	v. Stratton	894, 935, 951, 953	v. Brooke	600
Brice v. Bauer	282, 1063	Brinx's Express Co. v. Kinnare	1976	v. Jordan	1195
v. Miller	1330	Brinton v. Seevers	1635	v. People	150, 1877, 2513
v. Smith	1512	Brisbane v. Pratt	1083	v. R. Co.	458
Briceland v. Com.	136	Briscoe v. Ballie Hamilton	2421	v. Townshend	689, 1038
Bricheno v. Thorp	2323	v. Lomax	1593	v. Winters	39, 437
Brick v. Brick	2437	Brister v. State	833, 857, 2097	Brookes v. Tichborne	2024
Brickell v. Hulse	1075	Bristol v. Cox	2319	Brookfield v. Warren	1784
Bricker v. Lightner's Ex'r	689, 1938	v. Dann	1083	Brooking v. Dearmond	1225
Bride v. Clark	1684	v. Warner	2113, 2115	Brooks v. Acton	438, 952, 1022
Bridge v. Eggleston	336, 1080, 1082, 1085, 1086, 2355	Bristol Co. Bank v. Keavy	714	v. Brooks	398
v. McCarthy	2447	Bristor v. Bristor	1124	v. Cannon	1387
v. Oshkosh	569, 1719	Bristow v. Cormican	157, 378	v. Clay	1225, 1501
v. Wellington	585	v. Sequevill	5, 687, 690	v. Com.	106
Bridger v. R. Co.	1951	British Empire S. S. Co. v. Sones	2212	v. Crosby	1873
25 S. C.	252, 458, 461	Britt v. State	352	v. Daniels	1186
27 S. C.	2164	Brittain v. Allen	406	v. Duggan	1777
Bridges v. Branan	2164	Britton v. Lorenz	2294, 2312	v. Francis	2341
v. McClendon	794	v. R. Co.	1807	v. Hall	1719
v. R. Co.	2494, 2552, 2570	v. State		v. Hazen	657
v. State		54 Ind.	1186	v. Holden	1576, 2329
103 Ga.	392	115 Ind.	1890	v. Jenkins	1225
110 Ga.	1672, 2118	Broach v. Kelly	1407	v. Lowenstein	1779
Bridgewater v. Plymouth	2349	v. Sing	2050	v. Marbury	1225
v. Roxbury	1521	Broad v. Pitt	2291, 2294, 2297	v. McMeekin	1195
v. State	1523, 1531	Broadnax v. R. Co.	2533	v. R. Co.	1041
Bridgewater Case	1168	Broadrup v. Woodman	1065	v. Sionx City	1951
Bridgewood v. Wynn	2287	Broadwell v. McClish	1813	v. Somerville	2494
Brierly v. Davol Mills	2355	v. Stiles	1198	v. State	1142, 2513
	451	Brobston v. Cahill	2008, 2016		

TABLE OF CASES.

Sections
 1219
 1511
 2341
 1085
 1106
 1206
 1070
 1817
 1651
 1042
 2273
 2242
 585
 1031,
 2442,
 2405
 1584,
 2522
 2500
 451
 201,
 2232
 1694
 1350
 2468
 1051
 1180,
 1362
 907
 1994
 211
 1226
 1992,
 1993,
 2002
 1938
 600
 1195
 2513
 458
 1938
 437
 2024
 1784
 1225
 952,
 1022
 398
 1387
 1501
 106
 1873
 1186
 1777
 2341
 1719
 657
 2329
 1225
 1779
 1225
 1195
 1041
 1951
 2494
 2513

Section	Section
Brooks v. Weeks	905, 906
v. Wilcox	1873
Brooks, Estate of	1938
Broom v. Broom	2239
Broquet v. Tripp	569, 1975
Brotherline v. Hammond	2529
Brotherton v. Livingston	1651
v. Mart	1260
v. People	1447
Brott v. State	177
Brough v. Perkins	1698
Broughton v. Harpur	605
Brouillette v. R. Co.	97
Brounker v. Atkins	1598, 2199
Broussard v. Mallet	1335
Brown, <i>ex p.</i>	
97 Cal.	2215
72 Mo.	2200, 2287
<i>re</i>	2220
Brown v. Anderson	747
v. Bellows	897, 907
v. Benson	455
v. Booth	1206
v. Brown	
38 Ala.	2067
8 E. & B.	1267, 2523
v. Burnham	2540
v. Burrus	1867, 1890, 1896
v. Butler	1576, 2294
v. Byam	1380
v. Byrne	2425, 2431, 2440, 2462
v. Cady	1225, 1226, 1651
v. Castellan	2530
v. Chenoweth	2015
v. Chicago M. & St. P.	
R. Co.	2220
v. Cockerell	254
v. Cole	2349
v. Collins	1676
v. Com.	
14 Bush	1922, 1938
102 Ky.	200
2 Leigh	2056
73 Pa.	1396, 1483, 2096
76 Pa.	414, 600
v. Corey	1943
v. Crandall	1624
v. Dean	1018
v. Doubleday	1978
v. Doyle	2463
v. Drake	2495
v. Driggers	1239
v. Eaton	2110
v. Edison	1651, 1680
v. Farley	1210
v. Foster	
1 H. & N.	2306, 2308
113 Mass.	1160
v. Frat. A. Assoc.	95
v. Giles	1876
v. Greenly	1409
v. Griffith	1225, 1239
v. Hicks	1312, 1651, 2105
v. Hooper	2280
v. Huffard	675
v. Ins. Co.	688, 792, 2384
v. Isbell	1204, 1254

Section	Section
Brown v. Jewett	1066, 2309
v. Jones	738
v. Kennedy	2525
v. Kenyon	1777
v. Kimball	1518, 2539
v. King	2515
v. Kingsley	967
v. Kohout	1164
v. Leach	430
v. Livingstone	2529
v. Luhrs	736, 749
v. Lutz	2577
v. Mailer	1093
v. Markland	2465
v. Marshall	
120 Ind.	1873
47 Mich.	1873
v. Matthews	2303
v. Mendonca	1207
v. Metz	2529
v. Mitchell	
87 Tex.	1088
88 Tex.	667, 1738, 1958
v. Mooers	1106, 1109
v. Mt. Holly	1719
v. Nash	1350
v. Norton	620, 2245
v. Oattis	1213
v. Oldham	2522
v. Owen	1021
v. Payson	2306, 2313
v. People	
3 Colo.	1061
17 Mich.	1126, 2079
36 Mich.	1186
v. Perez	928
v. Perkins	15
v. Piper	2580
v. R. Co.	
5 Gray	1640
94 Ia.	1977
Ky., 53 S. W.	1750
66 Mo.	1012, 2382
32 N. Y.	1719
22 Q. B. D.	65, 461
12 R. I.	714, 1943
v. Reed	2419
v. Richmond	1267
v. Road Co.	1951
v. Schiappacasse	2468
v. Schock	4, 38, 289
v. Scott	1677
v. Selwin	2475
v. Sheppard	1690, 1700
v. Shields	1062
v. Simpson	2143
v. Smith	399
v. Stanton	1272
v. Swanton	1951
v. Swineford	1159, 1806
v. State	
46 Ala.	1618
52 Ala.	2086
124 Ala.	861
Fla., 27 So.	2056
Fla., 35 So.	18, 1029
28 Ga.	761, 1893, 2254

Section	Section
Brown v. State	
76 Ga.	1390
71 Ind.	1829
73 Md.	69, 789, 928, 1028, 1807
82 Miss.	528, 1445, 2071
72 Miss. 98	62
73 Miss. 997	309
78 Miss.	1072
62 N. J. L.	1270, 2512
18 Oh. St.	580
26 Oh. St.	563
1 Tex. App.	2081
3 Tex. App.	1840
42 Tex. Cr.	906
v. Thornton	
6 A. & E.	5
1 Myl. & Cr.	2121
v. Tourislotte	136, 907, 2496
v. Tucker	1196
v. U. S.	
150 U. S.	21, 1079
164 U. S.	1616
v. Upton	2099
v. Walker	2255, 2258, 2281
v. Warner	1539, 1540
v. White	1387
v. Wightman	1500
v. Wiley	2444
v. Wood	
17 Mass.	1304
121 Mass.	2376
19 Mo.	907, 1213
6 Rich. Eq.	1312, 2141
J. Woodman	1268
v. Woodward	2015
v. Wren	332
v. Wright	2536
v. Zachary	1388
Brown's Case	2100
Browne v. Crashaw	519
v. Hickie	581
v. Moore	
3 Bligh	1862
32 Mich.	716
v. Phila. Bank	2165
v. State	142
v. Steck	1873
Brownell v. Black	1700
v. Briggs	334
v. Curtis	2268
v. McEwen	2351
v. People	111, 194, 245, 247, 1974, 1976
v. R. Co.	1482, 1747, 1756
Brownfield v. R. Co.	1976
Browning v. Aylwin	1858
v. Flanagan	1244, 1267, 1847, 1621, 1689, 1664, 2107, 2450
v. Gosnell	2015
v. Hanford	1684
v. Huff	1238, 1876, 1890, 2168
v. State	2595

TABLE OF CASES.

BRO

	Section		Section		Section
Brownsword v. Edwards	2260, 2266	Beard v. Beard	1316	Bullard v. Lambert	908, 1023, 1971, 1986
Broyles v. Frisock	1164, 1719, 1840	Bubater v. State	2090	v. Fearall	779, 900, 904, 905, 907
v. State	1072, 1349	Bucoluch v. Metropolitan Board	1900, 1912, 2349, 2356	v. R. Co.	390, 1807
Brubaker v. Taylor	916, 1023, 1061	Buchanan v. Atkinson	2097	v. Smith	1003
Bruce v. Beall	561, 705, 1961	v. Cook	1878	v. Thomas	1166, 1215, 2158
v. Nicolopulo	1213, 2167	v. Grocery Co.	1802	v. Wilson	736, 745
v. State	1350	v. Moore	1962	Bullen v. Michel	21, 1195, 1304, 1464, 1473, 1592, 2130, 2143
Brucker v. State	240	v. Rucker	1371, 1681, 2163	Bulley v. Bulley	1053
Bruckman v. Tausig	1384	v. State		Bulliner v. Pa. ple	1842, 1852
Bruendl's Will	2322	65 Ala.	2066	Bullinger v. Marshall	1127, 1131
Bruler v. Kelsey	1086	109 Ala.	416, 602, 2277	Bullions v. Loring	1312
Bruley v. Garvin	2303	41 Tex. Cr.	276, 1841	Bullis v. Easton	702, 1211
Brundred v. Del Hoyo	1684	Bucher v. Jarratt	1249, 1647	v. Montgomery	1082, 1083
v. Paterson M. Co.	1959	Buchman v. State	2201, 2203	v. R. Co.	1800
Bruner v. Wade	2015	Buck v. Appleton	529	Bullitt v. Overfield	1280
Bruni's Case	2372	v. Ashbrook	613	Bullock v. Corry	2323
Brunnell v. H. S. M. Co.	377	v. Boston	461	v. Hunter	760
Bruns v. Clase	1195	v. Gage	1225	v. Knox	2527
Brunson v. Lynde	78	v. Grimes	1681	v. Lake Drummond	
v. State	118	v. Maddock	1051	C. & W. Co.	451
Brunswick & A. R. Co. v. McLaren	1943	Buckholts v. Buckholts	2067	v. Richardson	2257
Brunt v. Thompson	2575	Buckingham v. Harris	1878	v. State	194, 822, 845, 861, 1006
Brusberg v. R. Co.	464, 466	v. Roar	2235, 2341	v. Wilson	2108
Brusch v. R. Co.	1719	Buckinghamshire v. Drury	1625	Bulstrode v. Letchmere	2286, 2308
Brush v. Cook	3162	Buckley v. Buckley	1890	Bumgardner v. R. Co.	1750
v. Gibbon	1858	v. Express Co.	201	Bunberry v. Brett	1085
v. Smith	567	v. Smith	1316	Bunbry v. Bunbry	2317
v. Taggart	1239	v. Thomas	1917	v. Matthews	2168
Brush E. L. & P. Co. v. Wells	1018	v. Wood	2250	Bunce v. McMahon	1015, 2354
Bruton v. State	2059	Bucklin v. State	923, 1008, 1965	Bunch v. Hurst	1213
Bryan v. Duff	2445	Buckmaster v. Job	2167	Bunckley v. Jones	289
v. Farnsworth	1681	Buckminster v. Perry	1938	v. State	2272
v. Forsyth	1672, 1684	Buckner v. Armour	1839	Bundy v. Hlyde	16, 18, 785, 2406, 2527
v. Malloy	1388	v. Finlay	1675	Bunel v. O'Day	2406
v. Moring	736, 754	Budd v. R. Co.	561	Bunker v. Shed	736
v. O'Connor	1388	Buel v. New York Steamer	1877	Bunker Hill Co. v. Schmel-ling	791
v. Smith	1250	v. State	140, 963, 967, 2061, 2497	Bunn v. Bunn	2200
v. State		Buell v. Cook	1250	Bunnell v. Butler	1908
41 Fla.	961	v. Warner	2572	v. Studebaker	1779
Fla., 34 So.	905, 1036	Buffalo Co. v. Van Sickle	1013	Buns v. Cornelius	1065
v. Wagstaff	1206	Buffalo L. T. & S. D. Co. v. Knights T. & M. M. A. Ass'n	2390	Bunzel v. Maas	996, 1003, 2103
v. Walton		Buffum v. Harris	571, 1923, 1951	Burbank v. Dennis	736
14 Ga.	1035, 1195, 2143, 2535	v. R. Co.	1943	Burch v. Stovall	2050
20 Ga.	167, 1606, 1673, 1922	v. York Mfg. Co.	2190	Burchfield v. State	664
v. Wear	1680, 2167	Buford v. Bostick	1678	Burden v. Taylor	2450
Bryant v. Foot	2522	v. M'Luny	70, 78, 209	Burdette v. Burdette	2239, 2245
v. Ingrahr	803	v. Tucker	2580	v. Com.	967, 1270, 2277
v. Kelton	1271, 1677, 1680	Bule v. Carver	2098	Burdge v. State	861
v. Owen	1273, 2426	Builders' Co. v. Cox	1078, 1124	Burdick v. Hunt	604, 1021, 2008, 2383
v. Pierce	1738	Bulger v. Ross	2502	Burditt v. Howe	2429
v. R. Co.	65, 461	Bulkeley v. Butler	18, 20, 2529	Burdon v. Rickets	1186
v. Ritterbush	529	Bulkley v. Landon	1076	Burford v. McCue	2529
v. State	1781, 2497, 2511, 2513	Bull v. Com.	2349	Burg v. R. Co.	460, 1385, 1693
v. Stillwell	1182	v. Loveland	2193, 2211, 2222, 2223	Burge v. Hamilton	1736, 2052, 2452
Bryant's Estate	418	Bullard v. Billings	1085, 1779		
Bryce v. R. Co.	458	v. Brewer	2424		
Bryden v. Taylor	1624	v. Bullard	1051		
Bryne v. Van Tienhoven	2410	v. Hascall	778		
Brynjolfson v. Elev. Co.	1290				
Bryson v. Hamilton	2098				

Section

1022, 1023,
71, 1906
900, 904,
906, 907
90, 1807
1003
1215,
3158
786, 746
11, 1195,
4, 1464,
3, 1692,
30, 2143
1053
12, 1832
27, 1141
1312
92, 1214
32, 1081
1800
1280
2323
760
2627

451
2257
22, 1456,
11, 1006
2108
2280,
2308
1750
1085
2317
2108
5, 2354
1213
280
2272
18, 785,
2406
2527
736

791
2200
1908
1779
1066
3, 1003,
2103
736
2050
664
2450
9, 2245
7, 1270,
2277
861
1, 1021,
8, 2303
2429
1189
2629
1, 1885
1893
3, 2062,
2452

Burger v. R. Co. 716, 717, 720
v. State
83 Ala. 960
81 Ga. 2071
Burgert v. Borchert 1086, 1779
Burgess v. Bennett 762
v. Blake 1225
v. Bosworth 1141
v. Burgess
2 Hagg. Cons. 2067
47 N. H. 2007
v. Clark 2152
v. Langley 2352
v. Quimby 1086
v. Sims Drug Co. 2386, 2389
v. Tel. Co. 2533
Burghardt v. Turner 1225
Burghart v. Angerstein 1640
v. Brown 2115
Burgin v. Chenault 2141
Burgin v. Ellington 2420
Burgoyne v. Showler 1302, 1512
Burb v. Andle 1842
v. Putnam 7
v. Tregg 1216
v. Winters 1244
Burke v. Burke 1604
v. Dulaney 2400
v. Elliott 2535
v. Ellis 507
v. Miller
6 Blackf. 73, 406
7 Cush. 1800
v. Ryan 1664, 2138
v. Scribner 76
v. Shaver 1808
v. Shelby 1208
v. State 1066
v. T. M. W. Co. 1208
v. Voyles 1195
Burke Co. v. Fowler 1003
Burr v. Scarborough 1051
Burkhalter v. Edwards 607
Burkhart v. Loughridge 1677
Burkhardt v. Gladish 228
Burkholder v. Casad 1085
Burks v. State
117 Ala. 2497
120 Ala. 770
Tex. Cr., 49 S. W. 759
Burleigh v. Stubbs 1256
v. Stott 1077
Burleson v. Reading 1722
Burley v. Batbne 1416
Burling v. Paterson 2520
Burlingame v. Central R. Co. 2355
Burlingim v. State 318
Burlington C. R. & N. R. Co. v. Dey 1354
v. Sherwood 2120
Burlington G. Co. v. Greene 1248
Burlington Lumber Co. v. W. C. & M. Co. 1208
Burlington Nat'l Bank v. Beard 1066
Burlington & M. R. Co. v. Beebe 1943

Burlington & M. R. Co.
Schluatz 1943
Burton, ex p. 2206
Burnaby v. Baillie 1213, 1644
Burnand v. Norot 2529
Burnap v. Sharpsteen 1090
Burnell v. Weid 1681
Burnet v. Brnsh 1225
Burnett v. Lynch 1207, 1299
v. Mc' Juey 1244
v. People 68, 866
v. R. Co. 682, 953, 1021,
1028, 1124
v. Simpkins 75
v. State
87 Ga. 2008
32 Tex. Cr. 398
v. Thompson 1225, 1306
v. Wilm. N. & N. R. Co. 1131, 1122
Burney v. Allen 1976
v. State
87 Ala. 2050
100 Ga. 2497
v. Torrey 1988
Burnham v. Ayer 604, 702, 728
v. Brennan 1086
v. Cornwell 1770
v. Hatfield 2303
v. Mitchell 283, 1938
v. Morrissey 2211
v. Roberts 2311, 2312
v. Webster 2572
v. Wood 1218
Burns v. Barenfield 672
v. Burns
13 Fla. 2085
68 N. H. 308
4 S. & R. 2051
v. Campbell 1073, 1681,
1966
v. Fay 1539
v. Kempshall 2260
v. Kerr 1062
v. Paine 2354
v. Sennett 461
v. State
43 Ala. 111
49 Ala. 2100
61 Ga. 1750
v. Stuart 1124
v. Superior Court 2195
v. Welch 660, 1976
Burns' Will 229
Burns & S. L. Co. v. Doyle 2400
Burnside v. Terry 2311
Burpee v. Carvill 1219
Burr v. Com. 216
v. Harper 1993, 1999,
2002, 2007
v. Kase 2105
v. Ross 1350
v. Smith 1778
v. Wilson 224, 1623
Burr's Trial; see U. S. v. Burr.
Burraston v. Bank 2296
Burrell v. Bull 603
v. North 1182

Burrell v. State 1109, 1296
v. Unapher 2232, 2235
Burrige v. Russel 1670
Burrin v. State 276, 278
Burrin v. Com'rs 1350
Burrrough v. Martin 735, 745, 748
Burrows v. Lock 1292, 1301,
1304
Burrows v. Lake Crystal 262,
458
Burros v. Kyle 770
Burson v. Edwards 406
v. Huntington 2096, 2420
Burt v. Burt 1974
v. Gwinn 1069
v. Palmer 1070
v. Place 1416
v. R. Co. 1350, 2154, 2577
v. State
23 Oh. St. 1136, 1138,
1871
38 Tex. Cr. 821, 1873
v. Walker 1313
Burton v. Anderson 1684
v. B. S. C. Co. 1044, 1955
v. Com. 1441
v. Driggs 18, 1213, 1230,
1632
v. Griffiths 2553
v. March 66
v. Mills 613
v. Payne 1200
v. Pettibone 1677, 2166
v. Plummer 735, 745, 748
v. Railway 1411
v. Scott 1938
v. State
107 Ala. 104, 791, 841,
851, 861, 1157,
1404, 1405, 1974
115 Ala. 106, 664, 791,
1013, 1404, 1913
118 Ala. 1750
v. Young 2257, 2260,
2268, 2272
Burwell v. Corbin 2049
v. Sneed 791, 1665, 1960
Bush v. Barnett 1058, 2509
v. Bush 1738
v. Com. 1628, 2098
v. Delano 1738, 2502,
2508
v. Hicks 2417
v. Jackson 457
v. Livingston 2123
v. Prosser 406
v. Roberts 1066
v. Stanley 1267
v. State 1434, 1451,
1651
v. Van Ness 1068
Bush & M. Co. v. Helbing 620
Bushell v. Barrett 1208
Bushnell v. Colony 1560
Buskett, ex p. 2261, 2282
Bussey v. Whitaker 1513
Bustin v. Rogers 1649
Bustros v. White 2319
Buswell v. Davis 1777

TABLE OF CASES.

BUS

	Section		Section		Section
Buswell v. Fuller	2508	Byrne v. Fagan	1239	Calkins v. Lee	2296
Buswell T. Co. v. Case	392	v. Harvey	208	v. State	1999, 2000, 2002, 2008
Butcher v. Bank of Brownsville	2573		C.	Calkins' Estate v. Calkins	1738
v. Coats	2205			Call v. Dunning	1288, 1801
v. R. Co.	455, 456			Callaghan v. Chipman	1850
Butcher's Company v. Jones	1258	Cabanné v. Walker	1856	v. Myers	371
Butler v. Boyles	784	Cabell v. Holloway	1195	v. S. P. C. A.	461
v. Butler		Cable v. R. Co.	2495	Callaghan's Estate	2475
3 Day	585	Cable Co. v. Parantha	1033	Callahan v. Ingram	1971
5 Harringt.	2106	Caddell v. State		Callan v. Buil	1978
v. Carver	1221, 1258	129 Ala.	106, 1938	v. Gaylord	2016
v. Dunagan	1225, 1651	Ala., 34 So.	890	Callanan v. Hurley	1854
v. Durham	1877	Caddy v. Barlow	2188	v. Shaw	946, 1013, 1020, 1263, 2034
v. Estrella R. V. Co.	1590	Cade v. Hatcher	770, 773	Callary v. Transit Co.	916
v. Fayerweather	6, 2311, 2814, 2326	Cadge's Goods	2525	Callaway v. Fash	1635, 1651, 1684
v. Ford	2535	Cadioux v. Beauchemin	371	v. McMillian	1548
v. Ins. Co.	681, 1630, 1672, 1938	Cady v. Shepherd	1078	Callen v. Rose	1082
v. Iron Co.	1521	v. State	885	Callihan v. W. W. Power Co.	1129
v. King	1944	v. Walker	2312	Callison v. Smith	1800, 1893
v. Moore	2192, 2894	Caffey v. State	2501	Calloway v. Cossart	1573
v. Mountgarret	1182, 1481, 1482, 1483	Cahie v. State	2082	v. Gibbins	1225
v. Owen	1681	Cahn v. U. S.	2572	v. Henderson	2405
v. R. Co.		Cahill v. Cahill	2515	Callen v. Hope	2573
87 Ia.	1984	Cahn v. Ladd	1013	Calverley v. Williams	2483
85 Mich.	1651	Cahoon v. Marshall	1086	Calvert v. Fitzgerald	736, 1778
130 N. C.	1700	v. West	944	v. Flower	1199, 2125
143 N. Y.	1755	Cahow v. R. Co.	1861	Calvin's Case	516
v. State		Cain v. Cain ¹	2854	Cambers v. Lowry	2464
34 Ark.	952, 1003, 1903	v. State	860, 861	Camden v. Belgrade	263, 1645, 2105
97 Ind.	1908	v. Uhlman	571	v. Cowley	1954
Miss., 24 So.	821	Cain Bros. Co. v. Wallace	2354	v. Doremus	18, 586
7 Tex. App.	2060	Caine v. Horsfall	2463	Camden & A. R. Co.	
v. Tufts	586	Cairo & F. R. Co. v. Parks	1354	v. Williams	1061, 1698
v. Warren	1196	Calahan's Will	2052	Camden & S. R. Co. v. Stetson	6, 2220
v. Watkins	321	Calcraft v. Guest	2319, 2325	Cameron v. Palmer Co.	608
Butt v. Tuthill	2349	Calder v. Bull	7	Cameron v. Blackman	759, 760
Butte & B. C. M. Co. v. Montana O. P. Co.	2406	Calderon v. O'Donahue	1861	v. Cameron	583, 1378
Butterfield v. Gilchrist	1021	Caldwell v. Davis	2297	v. Estabrooks	2410
Butterworth v. Bailey	2121	v. Drummond	1067	v. Forsyth	1911
Butts v. Eaton Rapids	252, 1721	v. McDermitt	1651	v. Kersey	1195
v. Newton	616	v. McVicar		v. Lightfoot	2158
v. State	1842	9 Ark.	1378	v. Peck	1274, 1275
v. Swartwood	1817	12 Ark.	529	v. State	2086
Buxton v. Cornish	2447	v. Meltveidt	2311	Cameron Lumber Co. v. Somerville	1521
v. S. P. Works	1951	v. Murphy	1718, 1719	Camfield v. Bird	406
Buzard v. McAnulty	707, 1065, 1066	v. Perkins	2434	Camp v. Hall	1951
Byars v. Mt. Vernon	1684	v. Pollak	1312, 1651	v. Randle	1672, 2506
Byers v. Orenstein	2103	v. State		v. Ristine	1044
v. R. Co.	460, 1385, 1700	17 Conn.	78, 204, 928, 1620	v. State	62
v. State				Camp's Estate	2052, 2106
105 Ala.	390, 923	Caledonian F. I. Co. v. Traub	1062	Campau v. Dewey	1871, 1888, 1889, 1890, 1893
87 Tex.	1362	Calhoon v. Belden	1247	v. Dubois	1062
v. Wallace	1484, 1502	v. Com.	925	v. Moran	392
Byerts v. Robinson	1519, 2065	Calhoun v. Akeley	1944	v. North	2383
Rylington v. Oaks	1225	v. Calhoun	1188, 1213	Campbell v. Ayres	2110
Bynon v. State	2066	v. Hays	2103	v. Bank	2535
Byrd v. Hudson	1131	v. Thompson	1195, 2271, 2279	v. Bannister	73, 209, 406, 987
v. State	2245	Callvada C. Co. v. Hays	6	v. Brown	1873
Byrket v. Monokon	66	Calkins v. Ann Arbor R. Co.	923	v. Burns	2498
Byrne v. Boadle	2509	v. Hartford	458		

CAR

TABLE OF CASES.

Section	Section	Section	Section
2286	Campbell v. Butte 406	Canwell v. Curtis 2635	Carpenter v. Hollister 1082,
2002,	v. Campbell 18	Capohart v. Huey 610	1257
2006	3 Head 73	Capen v. Stoughton 2355	v. Laswell 454
1738	54 Wis. 2620	Capital Nat'l Bank v. Williams 2016	v. Leonard 258
1801	v. Carruth 2330	Capital & Counties Bank v. Henty 2556, 2557	v. Lingenfeiter 21, 1003
1350	v. Chace 2000	Carbone v. Cotton 1992	v. Moore 607
371	v. Com. 1083, 1085	Card v. Foot 1773	v. Nixon 987
461	v. Coon 2437	v. State 818	v. People 205
2475	v. Dearborn 1974	Carden v. McConnell 1253	v. Sawyer 530, 1275, 1852
1971	v. Fidelity & C. Co. 1304	Cardigan Case 1842	v. Snow 2475
1978	v. Garven 571, 1078	Carey v. Adkins 2232	v. State 1028
2016	v. Gilbert 1263	v. Hubbardston 792, 794	v. Transp. Co. 1961
1854	5 Ail. 1263	v. Pitt 702, 704,	v. Wait 571
1020,	v. Hodgson 2431	1993, 2020	v. Wall 75, 210, 953, 1028
2034	v. Holland 1086	v. State 2081	v. Ward 1007
916	v. Kalamazoo 252, 438	v. Williams 1074, 1188	v. Wiley 2354
1635,	v. Mayor 1951	Cargile v. Wood 2083	Carpenter's Appeal 905, 1081
1684	v. Miller 2354	Cargill v. Atwood 1549, 1554	Carpenter's Estate 680
1548	v. Moore 2447	v. Com. 200	Carpmael v. Powis 2294, 2297,
1062	v. People 16 Ill. 111	v. Thompeon 1955	2317
1129	159 Ill. 2050, 2071,	Carhart v. Clark 2167	Carr v. Burdiss 1297
1893	2081	Carico v. Com. 247	v. Carr 1232
1573	v. R. Co. 455, 456	Carkhuff v. Anderson 1225,	v. Coke 1850, 2592
1225	v. Rusch 1955	1818, 1651	v. Cornell 619
2405	v. Russell 561	Carli v. State 2073	v. Dooley 2442
2573	v. Skidmore 2349	Carland v. Cunningham 1207	v. Gale 590
2463	v. State 23 Ala. 276, 298, 493,	Carie v. People 246, 918,	v. Griffin 852
1778	791, 794, 905,	2079	v. Hilton 1072
2125	987, 994, 1044,	Carlie v. Eady 1258	v. Miner 1196
516	1977, 2529	v. Hunley 1029	v. Moore 463, 901
2404	55 Ala. 1072, 1163	v. State 2079	v. Sellers 1543, 1549
1645,	183 Ala. 1750, 2236	Carlos v. Brook 1003, 1982	58 Ga. 1203
2105	38 Ark. 248	Carlson v. Benton 778, 2115	129 N. C. 1022
1954	11 Ga. 1397, 1398,	v. Hoin 691, 923, 1985	v. State 43 Ark. 987, 1079,
3, 589	1431, 1438,	Carlton v. Carey 1530	1750
1698	2497	v. Carlton 493, 989	Fla., 34 So. 276
2220	100 Ga. 2497	v. Hlescox 460	96 Ga. 2354
608	160 Ind. 2513	v. Litton 1212	135 Ind. 59
9, 760	3 Kans. 1009, 1014	v. People 140, 2081	Carr Land & L. S. Co. v. U. S. 1239
1378	42 Tex. Cr. 857	Carlyle v. Piomer 770	Carradine v. Hotchkiss 1877,
2416	v. Twemlow 2230	Carmack v. Drum 2446	2125
1911	v. Wallace 1681, 2529	Carmait v. Post 658, 728, 787	Carrail v. State 2497
1195	v. White 613	Carman v. Dunham 1549	Carre's Case 1991
2158	v. Wilson 1481	Carme N. G. & I. Co. v. Small 2486	Carren v. Breed 2201
1275	v. Wood 2572	Carmichael, re 689, 1038	Carrick v. Armstrong 2110
2086	v. Woodstock Iron Co. 702	Carmody v. Gaslight Co. 2509	Carrico v. Neal 728, 1304
1521	v. York 1698	Carnahan v. Wood 1085,	v. R. Co. 1158, 1330,
406	Campbell Co. v. Marder 1847	1086, 1778	1898
1951	Canada C. R. Co. v. McLaren 456, 1524,	Carnarvon v. Villebols 1584	Carrier v. Hampton 693
2506	2319	Carne v. Litchfield 2273	Carrington v. Cornock 1415
1944	Canale v. People 1271	v. Nicoli 1458, 1778	v. Eastman 1290
62	Cancemi v. People 21, 55	Carnell v. State 321	v. Holabird 1911
2106	Canfield v. Jackson 438	Carnes v. Crandall 1503, 1605	v. Payne 1304, 1312
1888,	v. Thompson 1225	Carney v. Gleissner 2245	v. St. Louis 2358
1890,	Canniff v. Myers 1911	v. State 1974	v. Ward 728
1893	Cannady v. Lynch 492, 494,	Carnie v. Murphy 613	Carrroll v. C. B. & N. R. Co. 2509
1062	495, 496, 497	Caroline, Trial of Queen; see Queen's Case.	v. Peake 1232, 1256
392	Cannell v. Ins. Co. 1947	Carpenter v. Ambrosen 771	v. Nodine 2415
2383	Cannon v. Cannon 166	v. Calvert 1938, 1903	v. Norwood 1651, 2141
2110	v. Iowa City 1874, 1943	v. Corinth 451, 561, 1976	v. Sprague 2811
2535	v. State 2354	v. Dame 610, 934, 1268	v. Stato 23 Ala. 111, 247,
200,	Cantey v. Platt 704, 1991	v. Dexter 1651	824, 830
9, 987	Cantling v. R. Co. 1943	v. Groff 1404	46 Ark. 2060
1873	Canton v. Bentley 2063, 2235	v. Hatch 561, 1983	3 Humph. 246, 1725
2498	Canty v. Sumter 529		74 Miss. 1620

TABLE OF CASES.

CAR

	Section		Section		Section
Carroll v. State		Cartmell v. Walton	1300	Cathcart v. Rogers	716, 1876
5 Nebr.	580, 1808	Cartwright v. Cartwright	680	Catherina Maria, The	1639
53 Nebr.	1853	v. Green	2232, 2260	Catherwood v. Casion	2065
3 Tex. App.	2056	v. Vandry	2463	Cathey v. Shoemaker	1006
32 Tex. Cr.	921, 923, 937	Caruthers v. Eldridge	2141	Catlett v. Ins. Co.	
Carrollton R. Co. v. Municipality	1665	Carver v. Carver	1676, 2489	1 Palne	1240, 1681, 2164
Carruth v. Bayley	1021	v. Huskey	107, 108	1 Wend.	1680
Carskadden v. Poorman	401, 1503	v. Jackson	1080, 1082, 1257, 1318, 1573, 1651, 1662, 1676	v. R. Co.	2494
Carson v. Canning	249	v. People	318	Catlin v. R. Co.	1018
v. Hawley	2200	v. Pinkney	1199	Catlin Coal Co. v. Lloyd	2525
v. Smith	2573	v. Pinto Lette	2212	Cato v. Hunt	1738
v. State	1842	v. Tracy	2115, 2117	Caton v. Carter	1871
Carson's Appeal	663, 1290, 2048	v. U. S.	21, 1032, 1033, 1439, 1442, 1443, 1446	v. Lenox	2098
Carstens v. Hauselman	1158	Carville v. Stont	912, 1035	Catt v. Howard	735, 2118
Carte v. Dennis	415, 1388	v. Westford	1028	Cattell v. Dispatch	
Carter, ex p.	2282	Carwie v. House	1186	Pub. Co.	2856
v. Bailey	2165	Cary v. Cary	2109	Cattison v. Cattison	1730
v. Beals	236, 1856, 2271	v. Hotaling	321	Caudrian v. Millier	73
v. Bennett	1058	v. White	2326	Caufman v. Cong. of C. S.	1195, 1564
v. Boehm	1917, 1918, 1947	Casat v. State	105	Caujolie v. Ferrie	1436
v. Buchanan	1072, 1777	Case v. Burrows	749, 1040	Caulfield v. Sanders	1195, 1558
v. Carter		v. Case	2085	Caulkins v. Whisler	2419
152 Ill.	600	v. Lyman	1695, 2105	Causey v. Wiley	1911
79 Ind.	1126, 1127	v. McGee	1681	Cavallaro v. R. Co.	2536
44 Mo.	1456	v. Mobile	2572	Cavan v. Stewart	1681
v. Cavanaugh	62, 75, 922, 923, 987, 1935	v. Perew	1698	Cavanah v. State	1263, 1807
v. Chambers	287	v. Potter	1549	Cavanagh v. Noble	406
v. Clark	1587, 1980	Case Plough Works v. N. & S. Co.	2434	Cavasos v. Gonzales	811, 1839
v. Com.	1618	Casey v. Leggett	770, 1073	Caven v. Bodwell G. Co.	1978
v. Davidson	1651	v. O'Shanghnessy	1487	Cavender v. Guild	2573
v. Doe	2141	v. State	580, 609, 2050	v. State	392
v. Edwards	1195	Cash v. Cash	1070	Cavendish v. Troy	1976
v. Gregory	1788	v. Taylor	377	Cavin v. Smith	1086
v. Hill	617	Casley v. Mitchell	1644, 2088, 2506	Caviness v. State	1842
v. Hornback	1219, 1346, 2427	Case v. R. Co.	461	Cawley v. State	248
v. Jackson	2008, 2016, 2020	Cassady v. Old Colony St. R. Co.	2509	Cayford's Case	1339, 2067, 2086
v. McDowell	406	v. Trustees	1404	Caykendoil, ex p.	2340
v. Montgomery	1501, 1605	Cassem v. Galvin	770	Cazenove v. Vaughan	1371
v. People	987, 1106	v. Heustle	614	Cazier v. Hinchey	1225
v. Pryke	377	Cassily v. Cassily	2432	Cecil v. Henderson	963
v. Robinett	1651	Castellano v. Pelion	521, 1270	Cecil Bank v. Salvely	1245
v. Saunders	1062	Castello v. Castello	2239	Cedar Rapids N. Bank v. Lavery	2232
v. Seattle		v. Landwehr	283	Central B. Co. v. Lowell	2593
19 Wash.	65	Castle v. Bullard	321, 338	Central Bank v. Copeland	520
21 Wash.	283	v. Fox	2467	v. Veasey	1681
v. State		Castleberry v. State	507, 987	Central Branch U. P. R. Co. v. Andrews	1911
63 Ala.	1821	Castles v. McMath	1675	v. Batman	1062
106 Ga.	1079	Castner v. Sliker	259, 571, 1754, 1755, 1974, 1976	v. Nichols	715
2 Ind.	391, 687, 1700	Castro v. Bavington	1890	v. Walters	1234
23 Tex. App.	821	Castro v. Gill	2355	Central City Ins. Co. v. Oates	677
Tex. Cr., 76		Caswell v. R. Co.	461	Central Coal & C. Co. v. Good	2446
S. W.	367, 987	Cates v. Hardacre	2280	v. Henry Shoe Co.	657
v. Tinicm Fish-ing Co.	2522	v. Keliogg	1062	Central El. Co. v. Sprague	1213
v. Troy Lumber Co.	201	v. Loftus	2529	Central Grain & S. Exch. v. Board of Trade	286
v. West	2297	v. McKinney	1770	Central M. T. R. Co. v. Rockafellow	1817, 1820
v. Wilson	2555	v. Winter	1177, 1208	Central Pacific R. Co. v. Pearson	463, 720
Carter's Estate	2008	Cathart v. Com.	59	Central R. Co. v. Hearne	1350
Carthage Turnpike Co. v. Andrews	689, 1722, 1976	v. Gibson	1196	v. Ingram	438

CAR

CHE

TABLE OF CASES.

Section	Section
16, 1876	Central R. Co. v. Mitchell 685
1639	v. Phillips 1841
2065	v. Richards 1698
1006	v. Skellie 712, 718, 719
	v. Whitehead 1246
	v. Wolff 712
0, 1681,	Central R. & B. Co.
2164	v. Kelly 1944
1680	v. Murray 1408
2494	Central Railroad v. Moore 1671
1018	Central Stock & G. Ex-
2525	change v. Board of
1738	Trade 2273
1871	Central Vt. R. Co.
2098	v. Ruggles 65, 199, 249
5, 2118	v. Soper 451
	Central of G. R. Co.
	v. Bond 771, 1680, 1977
2856	v. Duffey 1898
1730	v. Joseph 571
73	v. Trammell 456, 1041
1195,	Cesna v. Meyers 1712
1664	Chadborn v. Franklin 2354
1436	Chaddock v. Chaddock 2336
6, 1658	Chadron v. Glover 2220
2419	v. Harris 2082
1911	Chadsey v. Greene 1070
2536	Chadwick v. Bowman 2318,
1681	2319
8, 1807	v. Bunning 2189
406	v. Chadwick 2260
	v. Fonner 1 & 2, 1083
1, 1839	Chaffe v. Cnpp 1510, 1513
1978	Chaffee v. Baptist M. C. 1512
2573	v. Taylor 702
392	v. U. S. 291, 1362, 1520
1976	Chahoon v. Cone 2327, 2328
1086	Challis v. Lake 461, 987,
1842	1961
246	Chalmers v. Mfg. Co. 283, 681,
9, 2067,	683, 1008
2086	Chamberlain, ex p.
2349	re 2201
1371	v. Chamberlain 2115
1225	v. Enfield 68, 201
963	v. Gorham 1196
1245	v. Lesley 2442
	v. Maitland 2109
	v. People 2063, 2245,
	2336, 2341
	v. Pierson 142
	v. Sands 736, 745,
	743, 905
	v. Torrance 1614, 2146
	Chamberlaine v. Turner 2477
	Chamberlin v. Ball 1681
	v. Osipee 745
	v. Vance 406
	Chambers v. Bernasconi 1075,
	1524
	v. Dickson 2063
	v. Handley 1300
	v. Haney 1225
	v. Hill 664, 2097
	v. Hunt 18, 770, 1244, 1245
	v. Oehler 2199
	v. People
	5 Ill. 2164
	106 Ill. 2276, 2277

Section	Section
Chambers v. Prince 1784	Chambers v. Prince 1784
v. State 2100	v. State 2100
v. Thompson 2260	v. Thompson 2260
v. Watson 2472	v. Watson 2472
Chambles v. State 276	Chambles v. State 276
v. Tarbox 1573	v. Tarbox 1573
Chamness v. Chamness 715	Chamness v. Chamness 715
Champ v. Com. 457, 681,	Champ v. Com. 457, 681,
906, 907,	906, 907,
1021	1021
Champaign v. Patterson 461	Champaign v. Patterson 461
Champron v. Atkinson 890	Champron v. Atkinson 890
Champrneys v. Peck 1523, 1526	Champrneys v. Peck 1523, 1526
Chan Sing v. Portland 1961	Chan Sing v. Portland 1961
Chance v. Gravel R. Co. 928,	Chance v. Gravel R. Co. 928,
2008,	2008,
2016	2016
v. Hine 585	v. Hine 585
Chancellor v. Milly 167, 1154,	Chancellor v. Milly 167, 1154,
1606	1606
Chandler v. Allison 1888, 1889,	Chandler v. Allison 1888, 1889,
1890	1890
v. Aqueduct Co. 437, 463	v. Aqueduct Co. 437, 463
v. Beal 1890	v. Beal 1890
v. Brainard 803	v. Brainard 803
v. Freeman 916	v. Freeman 916
v. Horne 1842	v. Horne 1842
v. J. P. Aqueduct 714,	v. J. P. Aqueduct 714,
1943	1943
v. Le Barron 2016, 2018	v. Le Barron 2016, 2018
v. Mason 529	v. Mason 529
v. Moulton 529	v. Moulton 529
v. Spear 1352	v. Spear 1352
v. Thompson 1961	v. Thompson 1961
Chanoine v. Fowler 564, 1271,	Chanoine v. Fowler 564, 1271,
1684	1684
Chant v. Brown 2812	Chant v. Brown 2812
Chanter v. Hopkins 2434	Chanter v. Hopkins 2434
Chaperon v. Electric Co. 2509	Chaperon v. Electric Co. 2509
Chapin v. Dobson 2434	Chapin v. Dobson 2434
v. Lapham 764	v. Lapham 764
v. Marlborough 1723	v. Marlborough 1723
v. Mitchell 1554	v. Mitchell 1554
v. Siger 1028	v. Siger 1028
Chaplain v. Briscoe	Chaplain v. Briscoe
5 Sm. & M. 1212, 1225,	5 Sm. & M. 1212, 1225,
2200	2200
11 Sm. & M. 1292	11 Sm. & M. 1292
Chaplin v. Hartshorne 1141	Chaplin v. Hartshorne 1141
Chapman, re 2195	Chapman, re 2195
v. Bennett 1664	v. Bennett 1664
v. Callis 2443	v. Callis 2443
v. Chapman 1862, 1481,	v. Chapman 1862, 1481,
1483, 1484,	1483, 1484,
1486, 1487	1486, 1487
v. Coffin 950	v. Coffin 950
v. Cooley 921, 1023,	v. Cooley 921, 1023,
1108, 1109, 1985	1108, 1109, 1985
v. Dodd 1416	v. Dodd 1416
v. Floyd 1651	v. Floyd 1651
v. Holding 619, 2340	v. Holding 619, 2340
v. James 1884	v. James 1884
v. Ordway 73, 209	v. Ordway 73, 209
v. Peebles 2309	v. Peebles 2309
v. Polnton 2202	v. Polnton 2202
v. R. Co. 250	v. R. Co. 250
55 N. Y. 1063	55 N. Y. 1063
26 Wis. 1063	26 Wis. 1063
v. State, 109 Ga. 1072, 2059	v. State, 109 Ga. 1072, 2059

Section	Section
Chapman v. Taylor 2530	Chapman v. Taylor 2530
v. Tiffany 715	v. Tiffany 715
v. Twitchell 1056, 1070,	v. Twitchell 1056, 1070,
1687	1687
v. Walton 1946, 1947	v. Walton 1946, 1947
Chappell v. Smith 1911	Chappell v. Smith 1911
Chappell's Goods 2474	Chappell's Goods 2474
Charbonnel v. Seahury 581	Charbonnel v. Seahury 581
Charles v. R. Co. 613	Charles v. R. Co. 613
v. State 1042	v. State 1042
Charles, Trial of King 1177,	Charles, Trial of King 1177,
2250	2250
Charles L. Jeffrey, The 2507	Charles L. Jeffrey, The 2507
Charles Morgan, The 906, 1283	Charles Morgan, The 906, 1283
Charleston v. Hunt 1416	Charleston v. Hunt 1416
Charlesworth v. Tinker 1387	Charlesworth v. Tinker 1387
v. Williams 1684	v. Williams 1684
Charley v. Potthof 1729	Charley v. Potthof 1729
Charlotte v. Chonteau	Charlotte v. Chonteau
21 Mo. 1651, 1654,	21 Mo. 1651, 1654,
1677	1677
26 Mo. 1271, 2558,	26 Mo. 1271, 2558,
2573	2573
33 Mo. 1671, 1699,	33 Mo. 1671, 1699,
1703, 2558	1703, 2558
Charlotte O. & F. Co.	Charlotte O. & F. Co.
v. Kippy 1076	v. Kippy 1076
Charlton v. Barret 406	Charlton v. Barret 406
v. Coombs 2298	v. Coombs 2298
v. Unis 1002, 1008,	v. Unis 1002, 1008,
1007, 1018	1007, 1018
Charnock v. Dewings 1841	Charnock v. Dewings 1841
v. Lumley 1858	v. Lumley 1858
v. Merchant 986, 2376	v. Merchant 986, 2376
Charter v. Charter 2474, 2477	Charter v. Charter 2474, 2477
Chartered Bank v.	Chartered Bank v.
Rich 2319	Rich 2319
Chartlers & R. T. Co. v.	Chartlers & R. T. Co. v.
McNamara 6	McNamara 6
Chase v. Blodgett 522, 987,	Chase v. Blodgett 522, 987,
1117	1117
v. Blodgett Milling Co. 461	v. Blodgett Milling Co. 461
v. Caryl 1225,	v. Caryl 1225,
1226, 1652	1226, 1652
v. Chase 1784	v. Chase 1784
v. Lincoln 1933, 1938	v. Lincoln 1933, 1938
v. Lowell 252, 266	v. Lowell 252, 266
v. Maine Central	v. Maine Central
R. Co. 2570	R. Co. 2570
v. Pitman 617	v. Pitman 617
v. R. Co. 1074	v. R. Co. 1074
v. Smith 1463	v. Smith 1463
v. State 246	v. State 246
v. Surry 96	v. Surry 96
v. Vandegrift 1669	v. Vandegrift 1669
v. Winans 1938	v. Winans 1938
Chastang v. State 2183, 2264	Chastang v. State 2183, 2264
Chatfield v. Bunnell 2097	Chatfield v. Bunnell 2097
v. Lathrop 585	v. Lathrop 585
Chatsworth v. Rowe 1976	Chatsworth v. Rowe 1976
Chattanooga R. & C. R.	Chattanooga R. & C. R.
Co. v. Owen 2570	Co. v. Owen 2570
Chauncey v. Tahourden 2258	Chauncey v. Tahourden 2258
Chaurand v. Angerstein 1271,	Chaurand v. Angerstein 1271,
1947	1947
Cheatham v. Hatcher 1802,	Cheatham v. Hatcher 1802,
1938, 2049	1938, 2049
v. Riddle 1207, 2132	v. Riddle 1207, 2132
Check v. James 1278	Check v. James 1278

TABLE OF CASES.

CRD

	Section		Section		Section
Cheek v. Lisle	2423	Chicago v. McKechney	1073	Chicago W. D. R. Co.	
v. State	289	v. Peck	1960	v. Becker	1750, 1754
v. Wheatly	1029, 1038	v. Pennsylvania Co.	1662	Chicago & Alton R. Co.	
Cheever v. Congdon	667	v. Powers	252	v. Am. Strawboard	
Chelsea Water Works		v. Smith	1013	Co.	749, 750
v. Cowper	1311,	Chicago B. & Q. R. Co.		v. Bntlof	1012
	2138, 2141	v. Dickson	2441	v. Clausen	1159
Chenall v. Palmer B.		v. Hyatt	2578	v. Corson	792
Co.	2509	v. Jones	1354, 1680	v. Davis	2415
Chenanit v. Walker	1959	v. Kellogg	1839	v. Eaton	283
Chenery v. Goodrich	1954	v. Lewis	1239, 2169	v. Glenny	681
Cheney v. Watkins	1225, 1651	v. Martin	688	v. Keegan	
Chenle v. Watson	1108,	v. Roberts	1062	152 Ill.	665, 1705, 2163
	1181	v. Shafer	714	185 Ill.	2531
Chenowith v. Chamberlin	1635	Chicago City R. Co.		v. Lewondowski	667, 1976
Cheny v. State	847	v. Allen	1008, 1013	v. Pearson	65
Cherokee v. Land Co.	403,	v. Carroll	17, 150, 949,	v. R. Co.	1921, 1948, 1960
	714, 720		1877, 2509	v. Shannon	252
Cherokee Co. v. Dick-		v. McMahon	278, 280	v. Sullivan	96, 249
son	249, 1078,	v. Taylor	461	Chicago & E. I. R. Co.	
	1984	v. Tuohy	1053	v. Beaver	2570
v. Boyd	1302, 1585, 1587	v. Van Vleck	568	v. Bivans	715
v. Slade	1727, 1768	Chicago D. D. Co. v. C.		v. Chancellor	1726
v. State		D. Co.	371	v. Donworth	1721
68 Ala.	1481, 1493,	Chicago Great W. R. Co.		v. Grimm	1951
	1503	v. Price	1976	v. Randolph	1974
Miss., 20 So.	2497	Chicago K. & N. R. Co.		v. Wallace	18, 682
Cherry Point Fish Co. v.		v. Elin	2396	Chicago & E. R. Co.	
Nelson	1698	v. Stewart	463	v. Blake	714
Chesapeake Club v. State	2271,	Chicago K. & W. R. Co.		v. Holland	2220
	2276	v. Anderson	613	v. Thomas	949
Chesapeake Ins. Co. v.		v. Farsons	1168, 2670	Chicago & N. W. R. Co.	
Starke	2553	Chicago Lumbering		v. Calumet Stock Farm	716
Chesapeake & O. C. Co.		Co. v. Hewitt	750, 751,	v. De Clow	1041
v. B. & O. R. Co.	2573		1530	v. Hart	460
Chesapeake & O. R. Co.		Chicago M. & St. P. R.		v. Ingersoll	1195, 1951
v. Patton	2354	Co. v. Artery	1028,	v. Moranda	1951
v. Riddle	96		1040, 1263	v. Simon	2537
v. Smith	1078	v. McArthur	1653	Chicago & R. I. R. Co. v.	
Chessaldine v. Brewer	2063	v. Minnesota	1354	N. Ill. C. & I. Co.	1890
Chesley v. Chesley		v. O'Sullivan	1976	Chicago & W. C. Co. v.	
54 Mo.	2240	v. Staff	1671	Liddell	736
10 N. H.	66, 406	Chicago P. & M. R. Co.		Chicago & W. I. R. Co. v.	
v. Murdock	2065	v. Mitchell	1943	Maroney	463
Chesmer v. Noyes	1675	Chicago R. Co. v. Adler	736, 745,	Chick v. Robinson	1074
Chesnut v. People	150		749, 760	Chicot Co. v. Davies	1350
Chess v. Chess		v. Provine	657	Child v. Grace	1072
1 Pa. St.	233	Chicago R. I. & P. R. Co.		v. Kingsbny	1566
17 S. & R.	736, 1409,	v. Buel	714, 791	Childers v. State	2059
	2098	v. Clark	65, 461	Childress v. Allin	1267
Chester v. Bowen	1841	v. Collier	1910	v. Cutter	1044, 1672,
v. Wilhelm	907	v. Farwell	1188		1677
v. Wortley	2256, 2268	v. Holmes	1951	v. R. Co.	1951
Chesterfield v. Ratliff	2553	v. Langton	2220	v. State	1807, 2060
Chetwind v. Marnell	1858	v. Moffitt	1921	Childs v. Merrill	2279
Chetwynd v. Lindon	2257	v. Young	2509	v. Muckler	1974
Chew v. O'Hara	581	Chicago St. L. & P. R. Co.		v. O'Leary	571
Cheyney's Case	2426, 2470,	v. Champion	442, 451	v. State	1614
	2472	v. Spilker	688, 1719	Chiles v. Drake	2083
Chicago v. Babcock	2435	v. Wolcott	1230	Chillicothe F. R. & B.	
v. Baker	1803	Chicago St. P. M. & O. R.		Co. v. Jameson	2304
v. Dermody	2354	Co. v. Gilbert	455	Chilton v. State	1124, 1977
v. Drexel	1777	v. Myers	1404, 2098	Chin Bak Kan v. U. S.	1354
v. English	1674	Chicago St. P. & K.		Chipman v. Peabody	2573
v. Greer	720, 1951	C. R. Co. v. Chambers	1976	v. People	367
v. Jackson	463	Chicago Telephone Co. v.		v. R. Co.	571, 1076, 1977
v. Le Moyne	791	Northwestern T. Co.	1350	v. Tucker	2409
v. McGliven	1951	Chicago Terminal T. R.		Chippendale v. Masson	783
v. McGraw	1244	Co. v. Bugbee	463, 720, 1908	Chirac v. Reinicker	2313

CLA

TABLE OF CASES.

Section	Section	Section	Section
0, 1754	Chisholm v. Ben 1267, 1511, 2090	Cilley v. Bartlett 1257, 1778	Clark v. Brown 73, 408
49, 750	v. Machine Co. 1530	v. Cilley 689	v. Britts 1185
1012	v. Sheldon 1297	v. Van Patten 1267	v. Carter 2349, 2354
1159	Chism v. State 906	Cincinnati C. I. & St. L. R. Co. v. Lutes 1890	v. Clark 168 Mass. 1988
792	Chittenden v. Evans 1012, 1013	Cincinnati I. St. L. & C. R. Co. v. Grames 2507	1 Mo. & Rob. 2294
2415	Chitty v. Dandy 2578	Cincinnati N. O. & T. P. R. Co. v. Disbrow 1288	65 N. C. 1021, 1022
283	Choctaw O. & G. R. Co. v. Deparade 716	Cincinnati & F. M. Ins. Co. v. May 681, 1618, 1951	v. Cochran v. Com. Ky., 32 S. W. 276
681	v. McDade 283	Cincinnati & G. R. Co. v. Mims 1948	111 Ky. 359, 1621, 1700, 1984
5, 2163	Choice v. State 683, 689, 1021, 1873, 1922, 1938, 1974	Cincinnati & Z. R. Co. v. Smith 1951	90 Va. 910, 2079
2531	Cholmondeley v. Clinton 19 Ves. Jr. 2328	Cire v. Rightor 2855	v. Ducheneau 2437
7, 1976	2 Jac. & W. 2463	Citizens' Bank v. Fromholz 783	v. Ellsworth 715, 1944
65	Choteau v. Raitt 1201, 1204	v. Rhntasel 1389, 1890, 2103	v. Field 2363, 2375
8, 1960	Chontean v. Chevallier 1219, 1651	Citizens' Gaslight Co. v. O'Brien 660	v. Fisher 229
252	v. Searcy 657	Citizens' R. T. Co. v. Dew 68, 1706	v. Fletcher 89, 2125
96, 249	Choctean L. & L. Co. v. Chrisman 987	Citizens' S. R. Co. v. Burke 1800	v. Freeman 702
2570	Chowning v. State 150	v. Willcooby 1158	v. Fry 1676
715	Christ v. Webster City 2349	City Bank v. Bateman 2222, 2223	v. G. T. R. Co. 1062
1726	Christ's College v. Wid- drington 2047	v. Kent 1841, 1871	v. Hall 1680
1721	Christensen v. U. T. Line 199, 283, 1938	v. Young 1041	v. Harmer 1391
1951	Christensen's Estate 1750	City Fire Ins. Co. v. Carrngi 811, 2206	v. Hedden 2054
1974	Christianson v. Furniture Co. 497	City of Washington, The 1951	v. Hills 1582, 1587, 1588
18, 682	Christie, re v. T. Jnction 2358	Clafin v. Dodson 908	v. Holmes 749
714	Christman v. Pearson 12	v. R. Co. 2522	v. Hornbeck 1195, 1196, 1198
2220	Christopher v. Covington 12	Clafin's Will 87, 1511	v. Houghton 2105
949	Christy v. Badger v. Cav. gh 4	Clafin Co. v. Rodenberg 2498	v. Huffaker 1133
n 716	v. Kavanagh v. Minor 1034	Clagett v. Easterday 571	v. Hull 1695
1041	Chnbv v. Salomons 2375	v. Phillips 94	v. Irwin 699
460	v. Westley 406	Clague v. Hodgson 571, 571	v. Krause 2242, 2245
5, 1951	Chnmasero v. Gilbert 2573	Claiborne v. R. Co. 258	v. Locomotive Works 1951, 1955
1051	Chung Sing v. U. S. 59	Clancy's Case 2872	v. Longworth 1212
2537	Chunot v. Larson 616	Clanton v. Jones 1684	v. Lowe 2465
1890	Church, ex p. v. Burghardt 1676	Clapp v. Fullerton 1988	v. Lumber Co. 1672
736	v. Case 1778	v. Norton 791	v. Manchester 2354
463	v. Cherryfield 2406	v. Peck 907	v. Mix 1225
1074	v. Drummond 2509	v. State 2276	v. Morrison 2578
1350	v. Hnbart 1271, 1674, 1677, 1680, 1681	v. Wilson 952, 1044, 1261, 1263	v. North American Co. 76
1072	v. Milwaukee 792, 1943	Clapton, re Clara, The 2446, 2572	v. Owens 2141
1568	v. Shelton 1065	Clardy v. Richardson 1312, 1320, 1652	v. Patterson 2523
2059	Chrnl. of Jesus Christ v. Watson 1082	Claremont v. Cariton 1778	v. People 605
1267	Churchill v. Corker 1225, 1658, 1911	Claridge v. Hoare 2257, 2260	v. Ferdne 1651
1672	v. Fulliam 1911	Clark v. Arnold 1082	v. Read 2355
1677	v. Smith 1532	v. Bailey 923	v. Reese 987, 2277
1951	v. Snter 2232	v. Baird 1924, 1943	v. Rhodes 2008, 2016
2060	v. White 529	v. Bank 748	v. Sanderson 1812, 1513
2279	v. White 1061	v. Beach 1082	v. Sawyer 1664
1974	Churchwell v. State 738, 753, 1163, 1164	v. Bigelow 658, 726	v. Slidell 1256
571	Chytrans v. Chicago 1873	v. Board 2454	10 Conn. 2115
1614	Cicely v. State 276	v. Bond 1108	72 Vt. 376
2083	Cicero v. State 852, 1329	v. Boyd 1812, 1320, 1506, 1518	v. Spence 716, 1943
2304	Cicero & P. S. R. Co. v. Priest 1719	v. Bradstreet 166, 167, 1154	v. State 105 Ala. 1442
1977			117 Ga. 1108
1354			4 Ind. 786
2573			47 N. J. L. 367
367			12 Oh. 568, 1938
1977			v. Stevenson 2356
2409			v. Trinity Church 1640, 1646
783			v. Troy 1651
2313			v. Turner 1738
			v. Van Riemsdyk 2047

TABLE OF CASES.

CLA

	Section		Section		Section
Clark v. Vorce	736, 2098	Cleavelands v. R. Co.	456	Clifford v. Huntly	2250, 2256
v. Water Power Co.	451, 1943	Cleavland v. Burton	2105	v. Richardson	1918, 1923, 1976
v. Willett	461	Clegg v. Fields	1956, 1963	v. Taylor	1858
v. Willmot	1464	v. Levy	1271	Clifton v. Granger	2270
v. Wright	1267	Cleghorn v. R. Co.	80, 96	v. Lilley	1195, 1213
v. Wyatt	702, 2007, 2017	Cleland v. Tbornton	438	v. U. S.	285, 291, 2278
Clark, Estate of	1010, 1013	Clem v. State	1108	Clinch Co. v. Willing	2444
Clark's Lessee v. Hall	522	Clemens v. Conrad	967, 1247, 1270, 2184	Cline v. Broy	2354
Clark's Petition	2208	Clement v. Brooks	967	v. Lindsey	1938
Clark Co. v. Kerstan	2203	v. Cureton	1966	v. State	1398
Clarke, ex p.	2282	v. Kimball	66, 950, 1042	Clinton v. Estes	233, 1079
v. Bank	1084	v. Packer	1567, 1587	v. Hooper	2475
v. Bartlett	1290, 1312, 2051	Clement, The	691	v. Howard	261, 1976, 1978
v. Clarke	1890	Clementi v. Golding	2582	v. McKenzie	1873, 1874, 1890
v. Courtney	1308, 1320, 2141	Clementine v. State	78, 987, 1028	v. State	1816, 1817, 1828
v. Dunnivant	1302, 1511, 1512, 2049	Clements v. Benjamin	1390	Cliver v. Hell	2442
v. Magruder	1518, 1621	v. Kyles	378, 1568	Cluquot's Champagne	719, 1704
v. Mead	1854, 2584	v. McGinn	492, 493, 497	Close v. Olney	2279
v. Periam	194, 195, 202	v. Marston	2336	v. Samm	1154, 1168
v. Roblnson	1181	v. Moore	2123	Cloud v. Patterson	1247
v. Saffery	770, 774	v. Pearce	794	Clough v. Bowman	1225
v. Shee	526	Clemmons v. Clemmons	1842	v. Little	751, 1655
v. State		v. State	1484	v. State	700, 852, 914, 1890
78 Ala.	106, 376	Clemons v. State		Clouse v. Coleman	2220
87 Ala.	2273, 2276	4 Lea	858	v. Elliott	613
117 Ala.	2239	92 Tenn.	1899	Cloyes v. Thayer	2260, 2270
v. Walte	1080, 1082, 1086	Clendenning v. Ross	1871	Cluck v. State	105, 1607
v. Warwick C. M. Co.	1256	Clennell v. Lewthwhite	2475	Cluett v. Rosenthal	2183
Clarkson v. Woodhouse	157, 2138, 2139	Clergue v. McKay	2311	Cluggage v. Swan	2353, 2354
Clary v. Clary	639, 1919, 1933, 1934, 1938	Clergy Society, The	2477	Clukey v. Electric Co.	1700
v. Grimes		Clerk v. Wright	2063	Clum v. Smith	2354
v. Hardeeville		Clermont v. Tullidge	1993, 2026	Clune v. U. S.	1079
Brick Co.	905, 1891	Cleveland v. Burnbam	1298	Clunnes v. Peggy	291
v. O'Shea	1203	v. Spillman	2477	Clutch v. Clntch	2067
Clason v. Morris	2123	v. Worrell	1195	Clute v. Small	736, 747, 1198
Clouser v. Stone	13	Cleveland C. C. & L. R. Co. v. Newell	488, 1721, 1722	Cluverius v. Com.	1725, 1729
Clavey v. Lord	1881	Cleveland C. C. & St. L. R. Co. v. Gray	598	Clyde v. Clyde	529
Clawson v. State	2501	v. Hornsby	2509	Clymer v. Cameron	1186
Clay v. Alderson's Adm'r	2008, 2016, 1292	v. Jenkins	2580	Coagler v. Rhodes	772
v. Holbert	1076	v. Monaghan	792, 794	Coal C. M. & M. Co. v. Ross	1664
v. Langslow	2005, 2006, 2008, 2016, 2017	v. Patton	1157	Coale v. Harrington	1082
v. Robinson	2008, 2016, 2017	v. Prewitt	1719	Coan v. Flagg	1674
v. State	2276	v. Walter	461	Coates v. Chapman	1003
v. Tyson	2312	Cleveland C. & C. R. Co.		v. Early	2415
v. Williams	2297	v. Mara	1750	v. R. Co.	283, 1698
Clayes v. Ferris	1873	Cleveland Paper Co. v. Banks	1807	v. Semper	2315
Clayton v. Gregson	2464	Cleveland R. Co. v. Wynant	461	v. Sulan	
v. Nugent	2467	Cleveland Ref. Co. v. Dunning	2410	21 Kan.	923
v. Rhem	1240, 1273	Cleveland T. & V. R. Co.	654	46 Kan.	928, 1612
v. State	2592	v. Marsh		v. Wilkes	916
v. Wardell	2063, 2066, 2505	Cleveland & P. R. Co. v. Ball	1943	Coats v. Elliott	1067
Clayton Co. v. R. Co.	1955	Cleveland & T. R. Co. v. Perkins	719, 1232, 1704	v. Gregory	1878, 2104
Clayton v. Anthony	1086	Cleverly v. McCullough	736	v. Lynch	770
Claxton's Adm'r v. R. Co.	1961, 1978	Clevinger v. Hill	1256	Cobb v. Boston	736, 747, 754
Clealand v. Huie	1888, 2098	Clewser v. Samuel	1777	v. Haynes	2529
Cleave v. Jones	2312, 2318, 2550	Clifford v. Brooke	2032	v. Makee	1641
		v. Burton	2232	v. Tirrell	2211
		v. Drake	736, 749, 760	Cobban v. Hecklen	1890
		v. Hunter	1893	Cobbe v. Garston	2067
				Cobbett v. Hudson	1842, 1911
				Cobden v. Bolton	1214
				v. Kenrick	2310
				Coble v. Coble	1807
				v. State	351, 987
				Coburn v. Odell	2290, 2276

Section
0, 2356
3, 1923,
1976
1858
2370
5, 1213
35, 291,
2373
2444
2354
1933
1398
3, 1079
2475
6, 1978
3, 1874,
1890
7, 1828
2442
9, 1704
2279
4, 1168
1247
1225
1, 1655
32, 914,
1890
2220
613
0, 2270
5, 1807
2183
3, 2354
1700
2354
1079
291
2067
7, 1198
5, 1729
529
1186
772
1664
1082
1674
1003
2415
3, 1608
2315
923
1612
916
1067
3, 2104
770
7, 754
2529
1641
2211
1890
2067
1911
1214
2310
1807
1, 987
2276

Coburn v. Storer 1079
Cochran v. Cochran 1195
v. Llanville L. Co. 1651
v. State 118 Ga. 579, 770, 940
7 Humph. 2349
v. Street 2349
Cochrane v. Com. 714
v. McEntee 2065
v. W. D. Co. 392
Cokerel v. Wynn 1678
Cockerham v. Nixon 251
Cockrill v. Cox 1938
v. Hall 987
Cocks v. Nash 1858, 2325
v. Purday 1271
Coddington v. Jenner 1267, 2106
Codman v. Caldwell 1642
Cody v. Conly 701
Coe v. Darknell 392, 1890
Cofe v. Scroggins 1183, 1219
Coffee v. Neely 1681, 2110
Coffin v. Anderson 1124, 1126
v. Bradbury 1051
v. Bucknam 1436
v. Collins 1074
v. Jones 13 Mich. 607
14 Pick. 803
v. Plymouth 1062
v. U. S. 2511
v. Vincent 748, 759, 760
Coffin v. Cole 2465, 2466
Cogan v. Ebdon 2355
v. Frisby 1651
Cogdell v. R. Co. 129 N. C. 2494
130 N. C. 1951
132 N. C. 1976, 2490,
2510
Cogswell v. Davis 770
v. Dolliver 1548, 1551
Coghill v. Kennedy 1738, 2503
Coghlan v. William-
son 1312, 1513
Coglan v. Beard 1351
Cohen, ex p. 2281, 2282
v. Dubose 2355
v. Goldberg 344
v. Templar 2907
Cohn v. Kingsley 1350
v. Mulford 1086
v. Saidel 88, 1079, 2530
Coit v. Millikin 1081
Coke v. Fountain 1388
Cokeley v. State 1021
Coker v. Ferguson 1299, 1651
v. Guy 2470
v. Hayes 770, 1898, 2349
v. Merritt 1164
v. State 111, 247
Colburn v. Groton 1061, 1062
v. Spitz 987
Colby v. Kenniston 1188, 1237,
1269, 1314
Colchester v. Culver 1651, 2141
Colchester Sav. Bank
v. Brown 1651
Colclough v. Rhodus 1878

Section
Coldwater N. Bank v.
Buggie 1779
Cole v. Andrews 2296
v. Cheovenda 1206, 2309
v. Cheshire 1784
v. Clarke 1943
v. Cole 153 Ill. 2231
83 Me. 1062
v. Com. 349
v. Dial 1637, 1649
v. Fall Brook C.
Co. 682, 1976,
2220
v. Gibson 1177, 1252
v. Gray 2227
v. Hadley 1075
v. Hall 1379
v. Jessup 736, 747
v. R. Co. 81 Mich. 280
95 Mich. 1012, 1903
105 Mich. 655
19 Ont. Pr. 283
v. Rawlinson 2470
v. State 105 Ala. 1442
59 Ark. 1329
6 Baxt. 398, 1028,
1029, 1037
v. Varner 1083
Cole's Lessee v. Cole 522
Cole v. State 689, 1922,
1933
Coleman v. Applegarth 2410
v. Bread 1225
v. Com. 499
v. Davis 1225
v. Dobbins 1850, 2577
v. Frazier 1476
v. Ins. Ass'n 1540
v. Lewis 1623
v. People 15, 216, 278,
301, 326
v. Perry 1951
v. Slade 2349
v. Southwick 1174, 1362
v. State 79 Ala. 1296, 1300
28 Ga. 2349
94 Ga. 987
111 Ind. 288, 2272
55 N. Y. 194
44 Tex. 2059
v. Wise 529
Coleman's Case 492, 494, 495
Coleman's Will 2315
Coleman & Burden Co. v.
Rice 2530
Coler v. Tacoma R. & P.
Co. 2536
Coles v. Brown 905, 907
v. Perry 26
Coley v. State 2073
Colf v. R. Co. 461
Coll v. Transit Co. 1755
Collagen v. Burns 271, 1737
Collidge v. Horn 1083
Collett v. Lord Keith 850, 2098

Section
Collier v. Collier 2250
v. Corbett 2106
v. Dick 1073
v. Hicks 1834
v. Jeffreys 1889
v. Nokes 1061, 1861
v. Poe 1777
v. Simpson 600, 1890
v. State 609, 1450
Colling v. Troweak 1206, 1206,
1234
Collins v. Bane 2120
v. Bayntun 2198
v. Bennett 2508
v. Blantern 2414
v. Com. 1404, 1447
v. Dorchester 458, 1672
v. Elliott 1304, 1513,
1736
v. Godefroy 2203
v. Grantham 1483, 1503
v. Hoehle 905
v. Kilroy 2503
v. Lemasters 747
v. Lynch 2518
v. Mack 619, 620, 1028,
1051, 2383
v. Mathew 2555
v. Maule 1224, 1650
v. Nalleau 1225
v. People 580, 2056
96 Ill. 568, 1440
194 Ill. 454, 456, 1078
v. R. Co. 1879
v. Richart 1841
v. Shaw
v. State 137 Ala. 1079, 1750
94 Ga. 2570
98 Ill. 580
46 Nebr. 1442, 1750,
1896, 2497
115 Wis. 1062
v. Stephenson 1022, 1730
v. Todd 2120
v. Vallean 1275
v. Voorhees 2505
v. Waters 1722
v. Wilson 607
Collis v. Bowen 1076
Colman v. Trueman 2319
Colorado C. C. M. Co. v.
Turck 2494
Colorado Electric Co. v.
Lubbers 283
Colorado F. & I. Co. v.
R. Co. 1802
Colorado M. & I. Co. v.
Rees 252, 437,
1976
Colpoys v. Colpoys 2470
Colquit v. State 1671, 1732,
2115
Colquitt v. State 61 Ala. 2061
34 Tex. 1750
Colson v. Bonzey 1352
Coit v. McConnell 2312, 2437
Colter v. Calloway 1064

TABLE OF CASES.

COL

	Section		Section		Section
Columbia v. Harrison	784, 764, 806	Commonwealth v. Anthes	2857	Commonwealth v. Campbell	Section
Columbia, Dist. of, see District of Columbia.		v. Armstrong	2116	156 Mass.	225, 792, 2100
Columbia Bank v. Rice	1028	v. Arnold	1660	v. Cardone	78
Columbia R. Co. v. Hawthorne	263	v. Bacheider	1817, 1820, 2314	v. Carey	12 Cush. 1306 3 Pick. 705
Columbia & F. S. R. Co. v. Hawthorne	2406	v. Barry	2315	v. Carney	862
Columbian Ins. Co. v. Lawrence	20	v. Bell	103 Mass. 2513 145 Pa. 2271, 2291 166 Pa. 308	v. Casey	1445
Columbus v. Dahn	561	v. Bentley	2130, 2529	v. Castles	261, 1291
v. Ogletree	1008, 2168	v. Berchins	2501	v. Certain Intox. Liquors	2163
v. Sims	1698	v. Berry	382	v. Certain Lottery Tickets	2183
Columbus & R. R. Co. v. Christian	250, 1084	v. Best	1244	v. Chabbock	836, 1476
Columbus & W. R. Co. v. Tillman	1205	v. Bezak	233	v. Chance	499, 1164, 1476, 1774, 1775, 2100, 2263
Colvill v. R. Co.	1943	v. Biddle	363, 1876	v. Chaney	770
Colvin v. McCormick C. O. Co.	18	v. Bigelow	318, 1243	v. Chase	6 Cush. 1680 147 Mass. 106, 2060
Coman v. State	1240, 1268	v. Billings	437, 928, 1010	v. Choate	88, 216, 238, 1978
Combe v. London		v. Birriols	307, 1443	v. Churchill	923
1 Y. & C.	2294	v. Bishop	655, 1442, 1451, 2056, 2100	v. Clancy	736
4 Y. & C.	1846	v. Blair		v. Clark	
Combe v. Breathitt Co. v. Com.	1218	123 Mass. 230		14 Gray 285	
97 Ky.	1615	126 Mass. 1873		180 Pa. 852, 866	
90 Va.	728	v. Blanchette	2515	v. Cleary	162 Mass. 2336 172 Mass. 1135, 1136, 1138
v. Dowell	1650	v. Blood		148 Pa. 1398	
v. Hodge	1006	11 Gray 1182		v. Clemmer	524
v. State	111, 300, 1807	141 Mass. 216, 321		v. Clifford	238
v. Winchester	1020, 1021, 1038	v. Bolkom	2450	v. Cluse	1010, 2056
Comer v. Comer	1235	v. Bond	851, 861	v. Coe	321, 2020
v. Hart	1188	v. Bonner	800, 987, 2276	v. Cole	1141
v. Way	2558	v. Borden	20, 1807	v. Collier	150, 415
Comfort v. People	1781, 2100	v. Bosworth	2066, 2069	v. Connors	792, 794
Com'ore, re	2375	v. Bowers	239	v. Cooley	664, 1976
Com'ore v. Comins	1778	v. Boynton	2060	v. Cooper	934, 1441
Commander v. State	106, 300, 306, 1910	v. Bradford	216, 354	v. Corkery	108, 1275, 1680
Commercial Bank v. Barkedale	1635	v. Bralley	1073	v. Corkin	216, 359
v. Ins. Co.	581, 1947	v. Braly	1073	v. Costello	119 Mass. 290 120 Mass. 413, 2591
v. Sparrow	1350	v. Brayman	1060	v. Costley	2497
v. Union Bank	787, 1185, 1392	v. Brelsford	1159, 2183	v. Cotton	104, 267
Commercial & F. Bank v. Patterson	1684	v. Brennan	2277	v. County Com'rs	1351
Commerell v. Poynton	2211	v. Brewer	1442, 1451	v. Crane	2572
Commissioners v. Clark	2406	v. Briggs	2382	v. Cressinger	841, 1938
v. De Rosset	1350, 2592	v. Brogy	1398, 1404	v. Crossmire	1976
v. Higginbotham	1350	v. Brooke		v. Crowe	107, 108, 268
v. Snuggs	1350	9 Gray 2056		v. Crowley	165 Mass. 1732 167 Mass. 1977 168 Mass. 1842
Commissioners of Marion Co. v. Clark	2404	109 Mass. 415		v. Cuffee	824, 851, 855
Commons v. Walters	78, 74	v. Brothers	163	v. Cullen	855
Commonwealth v. Aaron	660	v. Brown		v. Cniver	860, 861
v. Abbott	141, 142, 397, 1732	121 Mass. 221, 1073, 1690		v. Curtis	308, 832, 835
v. Acton	276, 2183	193 Pa. 689		v. Dally	278
v. Alburger	1598, 1665, 2159	90 Va. 1842		v. Dam	1873
v. Allen	951, 2018	v. Brownell	2273	v. Dame	520
v. Alley	1725, 2243	v. Buccieri	689	v. Damon	123 Mass. 1335 136 Mass. 406
v. Andrews	196, 232, 1621, 1862	v. Burke			
v. Antaya	861	13 All. 1157			
		16 Mass. 985, 2241			
		114 Mass. 763			
		v. Burroughs	861		
		v. Bnrton	759, 790		
		v. Buzzell	985, 1003, 1004, 1007, 1816		
		v. Byrnes	2183		
		v. Byron	960		
		v. Call	256, 1072		
		v. Campbell			
		7 All. 363			

TABLE OF CASES.

Section	Section
225, 792, 2100	Commonwealth v. Dana 2183
78	v. Davidson 2126
1306	v. Dearborn 282
705	v. Dedham 1346
282	v. Denmore 1479
1445	v. Desmond 5 Gray 2000, 2598
101, 1291	108 Mass. 2678
2183	v. Devaney 154, 278, 851
136, 1476	v. Dill 2068, 2245
99, 1164, 74, 1775, 60, 2263	v. Dillon 822, 835
770	v. Donahoe 906, 1022
1680	v. Dorsey 508
26, 2060	v. Dowdican 660, 1978
116, 238, 1978	v. Downey 290
923	v. Downing 2000, 2104
736	v. Drake 16 Mass. 840, 2394
285	124 Mass. 2059, 2060
352, 866	v. Dunan 1006
2336	v. Eagan 851
5, 1136, 1158	v. Easland 600
1398	v. Eastman 321, 1073, 1876, 1990, 2010, 2019, 2020
524	v. Edds 367
238	v. Edgerly 818, 1073
0, 2056	v. Elliot 2066, 2059, 2060
1, 2020	v. Emery 2 Gray 1224, 1225, 1318
1141	107 Mass. 2252, 2282
60, 415	v. Epps 861
92, 794	v. Fairbanks 1939
4, 1976	v. Fairfield 580, 1254, 1614, 1672
4, 1441	v. Farrar 1022
5, 1080	v. Farrell 107, 569, 901, 1977
16, 359	v. Felch 143, 1503, 1730
290	v. Fenno 1719
3, 2591	v. Ferrigan 63, 216, 246, 300
2497	v. Ferry 307
1351	v. Finnerty 163, 392, 2529
2572	v. Fitzgerald 933, 1008
1, 1938	v. Flaherty 2514
98, 268	v. Flood 839, 841
1732	v. Flynn 668, 1976
1977	v. Follansbee 1839
1842	v. Ford 14 Gray 1677
1, 855	130 Mass. 748, 749, 760, 763
855	v. Foster 987
0, 861	v. Fox 762, 763
2, 835	v. Funal 1072
278	v. Galavan 784
1873	v. Gallagher 950, 1116
520	v. Gannett 78, 204
1335	v. Gearhardt 1938
406	v. Gillon 280
	v. Goodman 439
	v. Goodwin 14 Gray 108, 291, 1133
	122 Mass. 2447
	186 Pa. 841
	v. Gorham 987, 1270, 2277

Section	Section
Commonwealth v. Gorman 238	v. Gray Ky., 30 S. W. 390, 396, 1726
	120 Mass. 08
	v. Green 17 Mass. 522, 586, 1370
	126 Pa. 2364
	2 Pick. 2514
	v. Griffin 2239
	v. Hackett 1756
	v. Haley 762
	v. Hall 4 All. 278, 318
	164 Mass. 561, 606, 1885
	v. Haney 1441, 1450
	v. Hanley 2372
	v. Hardy 56, 58, 104
	v. Harman 26, 862, 863, 2081
	v. Harris 62, 200
	v. Harrold 1671
	v. Hart 96 Ky. 2044
	21 Pa. 1086, 1809
	v. Harvey 1072
	v. Haskell 200, 2079
	v. Hawkins 1026, 1042, 2511
	v. Hayden 1633, 1644, 1660, 2068, 2245
	v. Hayes 140 Mass. 2059
	145 Mass. 2386
	v. Heffron 1640
	v. Henderson 2183
	v. Hervey 238, 298, 1840
	v. Hershell 664
	v. Higgins 2303
	v. Hill 11 Cush. 2303
	14 Mass. 811
	146 Mass. 2614
	v. Hilliard 246
	v. Hille 987, 1821
	v. Hobbs 2463
	v. Hollis 222, 667, 1164
	v. Hollister 2060
	v. Holliston 791
	v. Holmes 127 Mass. 2060
	167 Mass. 108, 896, 897
	v. Holt 2065, 2066
	v. Homer 1432
	v. Hopkins 203, 1620
	v. Horner 2278
	v. Hoskins 63, 247
	v. Horton 396
	v. Hourigan 1008, 1021, 1618
	v. Howe 9 Gray 235, 499, 933, 2071
	18 Gray 2270
	v. Hudson 906, 913, 1890
	v. Hunt 1006
	v. Hunton 862, 1079

Section	Section
Commonwealth v. Hurley 2066	14 Gray 2066
	168 Mass. 153, 2183
	v. Hutchinson 506, 506
	v. Ingraham 1104, 1108, 1109
	v. Jackson 5 Bush 1360
	11 Bush 2066
	182 Mass. 194, 216, 301, 318, 321
	v. James 90 Mass. 1124
	1 Pick. 2080
	v. Jardine 2336
	v. Jeffries 12, 38, 36, 302, 762, 763, 1073
	v. Jenkins 1126, 1128, 1129
	v. Jennings 951, 952
	v. Jongrass 1819
	v. Jullus 681
	v. Kane 2535
	v. Keenan 2183
	v. Keller 792, 2079
	v. Kelley 950, 1263
	v. Kendrick 415, 439
	v. Kennedy 97 Mass. 153
	170 Mass. 363, 457, 655, 738
	v. Kenney 1873, 1977, 2166
	v. Kent 1071, 1072, 2069
	v. Keyes 1732
	2094, 2113, 2115
	v. Kimball 7 Gray 78
	24 Pick. 2260, 2270
	v. King 8 Gray 852
	150 Mass. 2580
	v. Kinisou 2079
	v. Knapp 824, 834, 861, 1163, 1850
	v. Kneeland 2582
	v. Lahey 396
	v. Lanman 762, 862, 2276
	v. Larrabee 2056, 2059
	v. Lawler 602, 1614, 1935
	v. Lenousky 21, 1893
	v. Lenox 246, 247
	v. Little 1750
	v. Littlejohn 1646, 2065, 2088
	v. Locke 145 Mass. 280
	14 Pick. 1850
	v. Lubinsky 321
	v. Lynes 1821
	v. McBean 1021
	v. McCabe 285, 287, 290, 1072
	v. McCann 2071
	v. McCarthy 354
	v. McCall 2354
	v. McCne 372
	v. McDermott 1072
	v. McDonald 200, 987
	v. McGuire 524
	v. McHugh 280

TABLE OF CASES.

COM

Commonwealth v. Mc-	Section	Commonwealth v. Phelps	Section	Commonwealth v. Segs	Section
Kenna	1406	v. Phillips	761, 1850	820, 290	
v. McMurray	2592	162 Mass.	937	v. Selfridge	1671
v. McNamee	208	170 Mass.	1646	v. Shaw	927, 2270
v. M'Pike	218, 1766	10 Flet.	1081, 2164	v. Sheehan	828
v. Madan	105, 106, 390	v. Pierce	308, 2276	v. Sheets	855
v. Magee	2496	v. Piper	416, 451, 1976	v. Shepard	216, 221
v. Major	263	v. Pitsinger	2100	v. Shepherd	2022
v. Maloney	153	v. Place	406	v. Sherman	1222
v. Mansou	609	v. Pollard	2042	v. Shew	861
v. Marsh	580	v. Pomeroy	223	v. Sileo	1442
v. Martin	1360	v. Pope	1181, 1977	v. Smith	
v. Marzynski	1696, 2667	v. Porter	2550	2 Gray	1820, 2214
v. Mason	987	v. Powers	437	119 Mass.	852, 851, 2071
v. Matthews	1442, 1447	v. Pratt	2276	163 Mass.	1042, 2272, 2276
v. Mead	246, 2260, 2362, 2863	v. Preece	851	166 Mass.	1254, 2182
v. Meaney	1873	v. Price	318, 2056	12 Metc.	560
v. Merriam	398	v. Quin	967, 1270	6 S. & R.	701, 1991, 1993
v. Meserve	2354	v. Quinn	106, 108	v. Seelling	63, 72
v. Messenger	1177, 1202, 1205	v. Ramage	507, 1822	v. Snow	2050
v. Mika	1442, 2512	v. Randall	2613	v. Sparks	2225
v. Millard	153	v. Regan	200, 963, 987	v. Starkweather	905, 907, 1017, 1018, 1362
v. Miller		v. Reyburg	457	v. Stearns	318
3 Cush.	318, 415, 2591	v. Reynolds	852	v. Stevenson	667, 1335
129 1 ^a .	1164	v. Rich	509	v. Stewart	1600, 1620, 1302
v. Minor	524	v. Richards	1396, 1898, 2098	v. Stone	
v. Mitchell	832, 871	v. Richardson	1674, 1677, 2159	4 Metc.	321
v. Moffat	2085, 2086	v. Ricketson	1873	Thacher Cr. C.	1331, 1383
v. Montgomery	152, 154	v. Roark	1267, 2107	v. Storti	396, 837, 1810
v. Mooney	1041	v. Robbins	290	v. Strasser	246, 248
v. Moore		v. Roberts	1428, 1440, 1441, 1442	v. Stricker	2063, 2064
2 Dana	203	v. Robertson		v. Stump	2063
3 Pick.	967	v. Robinson		v. Sturivant	412, 414, 550, 668, 1696, 1924, 1977
v. Morey	822, 830, 832	1 Gray	609	v. Sullivan	
v. Morgan		146 Mass.	216, 304, 363, 2550	123 Mass.	416
107 Mass.	1990, 2276	165 Mass.	506, 507, 851, 1770, 1821, 1832	160 Mass.	2276
159 Mass.	225, 792	Thacher Cr. C.	195	156 Mass.	278
v. Morrell	801, 1386	v. Roddy	212, 1426, 1445	161 Mass.	1270
v. Morris	268, 1645	v. Rogers		v. Switzer	791
v. Morrissey	2071	136 Mass.	691, 1613	v. Talbot	153
v. Mosler	851	131 Mass.	1079	v. Tarr	2071
v. Moulton	1878	7 Metc.	1918	v. Tate	1978
v. Mudgett	363	v. Rowe		v. Taylor	
v. Mullen	2276	14 Gray	1354	5 Cush.	836
v. Mullins	506, 507, 680, 1821, 1825	105 Mass.	1781	14 Gray	153
v. Mulrey	154	v. Russell	2100	132 Mass.	2183
v. Murphy		v. Ryan		v. Thompson	
4 All.	612	184 Mass.	85, 280, 376, 1667, 1908	3 Dana	1959
14 Mass.	923	167 Mass.	2183, 2215	159 Mass.	1432, 1839
v. Murtagh	2086	v. Sacket	280, 962, 1613	v. Thrasher	398, 770
v. Myers	322, 855	v. Salyards	1803	v. Thyng	1028
v. Nefus	561, 2520	v. Sanders	1076	v. Tibbetts	2183
v. Nefus	898, 2276	v. Sapp	2230, 2237, 2341	v. Tolliver	276, 321, 2276, 2529
v. Norcross	1644, 2083	v. Saulebury	352	v. Trefethen	13, 143, 266, 278, 1072, 1802, 1714, 1715, 1726, 1726, 2100
v. Nott	832, 838	v. Savory	987, 2056, 2059	v. Trider	950, 2276
v. O'Brien		v. Schaffner	216, 218, 480, 987	v. Tuckerman	331, 824, 826, 832, 838
12 All.	2069	v. Scott	216, 351, 1156, 1824, 2066, 2060, 2272	v. Turner	349, 967, 987
119 Mass.	194, 988, 1083				
134 Mass.	1974				
179 Mass.	104, 1072				
v. O'Connor	133				
v. Parker	2042				
v. Payne	923				
v. Pease	600				
v. Peckham	2570, 2582				

TABLE OF CASES.

Section	Section	Section	Section
680, 690	Commonwealth v. Twitchell	Compton v. Arnold	Conner v. State
1671	oil	v. Fleming	34 Tex.
67, 2270		v. Randolph	2100
823	v. Van Horn	v. State	2256
855	1760, 1808	Comstock v. Carnley	Connersville v. Wadleigh
216, 221		v. Hadlyme	1878
2063	v. Vaughan	v. Kerwin	Connelly v. Murrell
1353	806	v. Smith	2340
861	v. Vincent	23 Mo.	Connop v. Hayward
1443	v. Vosburg	20 Mich.	2123
	v. Voss	24, 244, 463,	Connor v. Corson
	v. Walte	645, 719	Connors v. Morton
	v. Wallace	26 Mich.	v. People
	v. Walker	2625	v. State
	18 All.	2434	Conoly v. Gayle
	163 Mass.	2067	Conover v. Bell
	v. Wallace	406	Conrad v. Ellington
	v. Walton	1063	v. Griffey
	v. Weber	290, 1867, 2343	11 How.
	v. Webster	26, 56, 57, 136,	16 How.
		133, 149, 206, 273,	1028, 1031
		278, 413, 400, 708,	1803
		903, 1163, 1063, 2026,	Conran v. Lowe
		2027, 2072, 2081,	2068, 2084,
		2273, 2467	2066
	v. Welch	Condit v. Blackwell	Conroe v. Conroe
	134 Mass.	1693, 2673	73, 73
	163 Mass.	657	Consaul v. Sheldon
	378, 2183	Cones v. Blinford	940, 960,
	v. Welch	Confederation L. Ass'n v.	1022, 1267
	4 Gray	O'Donnell	1271
	110 Mass.	10 Can. Sup.	Considine v. Ins. Co.
	2183	13 Can. Sup.	v. U. S.
	v. Wentz	2 Russ. & C.	702, 2513
	2068	Congar v. R. Co.	Consolidated Coal Co.
	v. Wesley	1800	v. Peers
	140 Mass.	Congdon v. Morgan	v. Seniger
	106 Mass.	1194, 1814	208, 901,
	1256	v. Scale Co.	1674
	2575	Conger v. Converse	Consolidated I. M. Co.
	v. Wheeler	2450	v. Trenton Il. I. Co.
	v. White	Congregation v. Miles	2354
	145 Mass.	Congregational Il. M. Soc.	Consolidated Ins. Co. v.
	147 Mass.	v. Van Arsdale	Cashow
	162 Mass.	2477	600
	21	Conkey v. Carpenter	Consolidated S. & W. Co.
	v. Whitney	v. People	v. Burnham
	v. Willard	v. Post	2593
	2222, 2223	1042, 1195	Consolidated Tank L. Co.
	v. Williams	1554, 1590	v. Pien
	2 Cush.	2620	1085
	6 Gray	Conn v. Penn	Consolidated Traction Co.
	105 Mass.	987, 1005, 1117	v. Lambertson
	600	v. State	688
	413, 561,	Connecticut v. Bradish	Constances v. Brain
	600	2153	1841
	171 Mass.	Connecticut M. L. Ins. Co.	Constitutional Prohibitory
	2061	v. Akens	Amendment
	v. Wilson	v. Ellis	1350
	2 Cush.	v. Hillmon	Consenters' Ice Co. v. Jen-
	1 Gray	1075, 1079,	nings
	111, 228, 1129,	1081, 1725	2605
	1181, 1700,	v. Lathrop	Continental Ins. Co. v. Dn'
	1938	v. Schaefer	pench
	Ky., 23 S. W.	v. Schwenk	238, 391, 1076
	923, 967		v. Horton
	152 Mass.		716
	2056, 2059		v. Ins. Co.
	186 Pa.		341
	308, 830, 1821		v. Pruitt
	v. Wirebach		1195
	1988		Continental Nat'l Bank
	v. Wood		v. First Nat'l Bank
	11 Gray		64, 1074,
	111 Mass.		1530
	1041		Converse v. Allen
	v. Worcester		v. Meyer
	65		1860, 2103
	v. Wright		v. Wead
	2535		1273, 1705
	v. Wyman		Conway v. Clinton
	1820		581, 987
	v. Yerkes		v. Fitzgerald
	321, 392		571
	v. York		v. John
	7 L. Rep. Mass.		v. State
	240		580, 682, 905,
	9 Metc.		1018, 1073
	2511		v. Vizard
	v. Zorambo		220
	1072		Conyers v. P. F. C. Co.
	Commonwealth's Ins. Co.		1236
	1205		Coogler v. Rhodes
	1271		789
	Compart v. Jernogan		Cook v. Bank
			v. Barr
			1066
			v. Bartlett
			2558
			v. Blair
			1414
			v. Brown
			953, 906,
			1026, 1028, 2406

TABLE OF CASES.

COO

	Section		Section		Section
Cook v. Castner	1978, 2324	Cooper v. Ord	612	Cornell v. State	
v. Com'rs	468	v. Philps	76	Tex. Cr.	1068
v. Corn	2322	v. Potts	2064, 2465	S. W.	
v. Field	406	v. R. Co.	792, 1722	104 Wis.	681
v. Fuson	677	v. Randall	461, 717, 1943	v. Vanartsdalen	610, 2257,
v. Grange	2336, 2337, 2341	v. Smith	1388	2383, 2841	
v. Guirkin	2640	v. State		v. Woolley	1304
v. Hearn	1204	68 Ala.	1774, 1781	Cornet v. Bertelsmann	1366,
v. Henry	2337, 2633, 2341	86 Ala.	2265, 2373	2047, 2007	
v. Hunt	983, 1196, 1986	90 Ala.	2009	Cornett v. Williams	1266, 1276
v. Hunter	1235	80 Ala.	736	Corning v. Corning	76, 967
v. Ins. Co.	1974	23 Tex.	412, 1918,	Cornish v. Abington	2413
v. Knowles	1082, 1267		1688, 1977	v. Ins. Co.	1947
v. Mason	253, 292	Cooper's Case	1364	v. Pugh	607
v. Moore	168, 234	Cooper-King v. Cooper-		King	1645
v. Netherroote	1842	King	1645	Cornville v. Brighton	1784
v. Parkham	18, 240	Cope v. Cope	1646, 2063	Cornwall v. Richardson	66
v. Perry	281	v. Pearce	2063	v. State	822, 841,
v. R. Co.	403	Copeland v. Collins	1684	2354, 2618	
v. State		v. R. Co.	392	Cornwell v. State	1079
11 Ga.	21, 2065, 2066	v. State		Corps v. Robinson	1073, 2266
110 Ala.	1690	41 Fla.	63, 2277	Corrigan v. Rockefeller	2268
111 La.	194, 988	7 Humph.	63, 111	v. Trenton D. F. Co.	2469
81 Miss.	1206	v. Watts	2211, 2307	Corse v. Patterson	607
24 N. J. L.	1976	Copenhaver v. State		v. Sanford	1189
v. Stout	1408, 1415	Ind., 67 N. E.	21	Corsen v. Dubois	2211, 2307
v. Swan	1082	Copes v. Pearce	1492, 1495	Corser v. Paul	1056, 1056,
v. Sypher	2340, 2364	Copland v. Toulmin	1854	1073	
v. Totton	2141	Copp v. Henniker	1854	Cortland Co. v. Herkimer	
v. Wood	2460	v. Upham	1065, 2223	Co.	581
Cooke v. Booth	2465	Copperman v. People	526	Cory v. Bretton	1062
v. Curtis	1127, 1131	Coppin v. State	18, 288,	v. Silcox	1700
v. Lalane G. M. Co.	1862		2273	Cogrove v. Pitman	96, 1621
v. Lloyd	1644	Coppock v. Lampkin	2016	Coselman v. Dunfee	292
v. Maxwell	521, 2376	Corbett v. Clough	1067	Cossens, ex p.	2200, 2276
v. Tanawell	1296, 1298,	v. Corbett	1406, 2111	Cossey v. R. Co.	2319
	1856	v. Gibson	1219, 2378	Costello v. Costello	2218
v. Wilson	803, 2576	v. Gilbert	2312	v. Crowell	
v. Woodrow	1812	v. Kilminster	2016, 2018	133 Mass.	302, 783, 747,
Cookes v. Hellier	291	v. Nutt	1196, 1276	139 Mass.	754, 2020
Cookson v. R. Co.	1961	v. State	2100		85, 221,
Cool v. Roche	1890	Corbin v. Jackson	1267, 1800	233, 1548,	
Cooley v. Cooley	2340	Corbishley's Trusts	2531	2020	
v. Foltz	2383, 2384, 2386	Corbleys v. Ripley	1566	v. State	1264
v. Norton	960, 1078	Coreoran v. Detroit	262, 458	Coster v. Merest	23-4
Cooldge v. Ins. Co.	1647, 1680	v. Peakskill	283	v. Symons	1064
Coombs v. Coether	157, 1692	Cordray v. Mordacal	2104	Costigan v. Lunt	2098
Coon v. People	770, 778	Corey v. Jones	2098	Costill v. Costill	2040
v. State	00	Corfield v. Parsons	2629	Costley v. State	61
v. Swan	2294, 2302,	Corinna v. Exeter	581	Cottarill v. Hobby	1246, 2447
	2303	Cormier v. Richard	2313	Cottrell v. State	1350
Cooney v. Packing Co.	2145,	Cornell v. Buckley	1320	Cottrill v. Myrick	
	2106	Cornelleon v. Foushee	2578	3 Fair.	2168
Coonrod v. Madden	1245, 1254	Cornelison v. Browning	1304,	12 Mo.	1976
Coons v. Renick	1218, 1219		1678	Cotton v. Jones	1878
Cooper v. Brockett	2525	Cornelison v. Ort	1060	v. Luttrell	607
v. Central R. Co.	1961,	Cornelius v. Corn.		v. State	
	1976	15 B. Monr.	111, 247,	87 Ala.	2273, 2276,
v. Cooper	2046		1022		2326
v. Dawson	1872, 2020	3 Metc. Ky.	609	31 Miss.	246
v. Gibbons	291	v. Cornelius	2067	Couch v. Couch	1738
v. Granberry	1199	v. Kessel	1678	v. Gentry	229
v. Hayward	1036	v. State	852, 1362, 1420,	v. R. Co.	1951
v. Hopkins	1002, 1008,		1714, 1725, 1732,	v. Steele	770
	1006		1903	Coughlin v. Hanessler	1388
v. Marsden	1312, 1521	Cornell v. Barnes	18	v. People	664
v. Morrel	1558	v. Dean	715	Conillard v. Duncan	1021
v. Nelson	2169	v. Green	736, 1918,	Coulam v. Doull	2475
v. O'Brien	1804		1924, 2006	Coulson v. Diaborough	784,
					910, 2484

Section

1008
681
2257
2841
1304
1266
2007
1275
5, 967
2413
1947
607
1784
66
841,
2513
1079
2266
2558
2450
607
1188
2307
056,
1073

581
1062
700
621
292
276
2319
218

747,
020
221,
148,
020
254
3-4
084
098
046
63
147
350

68
078
078
007

76,
26
43
38
29
51
70
88
34
21
75
4,
34

Section	Section	Section	Section
Coulter v. Express Co. 906, 907	Coyle v. Gessler 96	Crane v. Thayer 923, 987	Section 923, 987
v. Stewart 2042	Coyne v. Souther 2440	v. Waldron 1364	
Coulter Mfg. Co. v. Grocery Co. 2463	v. Weaver 1086	Crane Co. v. Columbus C. Co. 668, 1961, 1894	
Counselman, re 2288	Cosens v. Higgins v. Holt 282	v. Tierney 1275	
v. Hitchcock 2244, 2281, 2282	Crabb v. Orth 1240	Crank v. Frith 1816	
v. Reichart 581	Crabtree v. Dunn 618	Crary v. Sprague 918, 1088, 1086, 1404, 1406	
Countryman v. Bunker 1648	v. Hagenbaugh 691, 1011, 1018, 1014, 1012, 1066	Crauford v. Blackburn 1481	
County Com'rs v. Wise 791	v. Kile 691, 928, 1612, 1966	Crauford v. State 1661, 2460	
Courcamp v. Weber 2425	Craddock v. Craddock 18	Craven v. Russell 1078	
Courser v. Kirkbride 1951	v. Merrill 1661	v. Walker 406	
Courton v. Touss 777, 779	Crafton v. Metropolitan R. Co. 2	Cravens v. Carter-Crume Co. 877	
Courvoisier v. Raymond 682	Craft v. Com. 80 Ky. 2059	Craw v. Abrams 2159	
Cousins v. Partridge 1878	81 Ky. 960, 1028, 1082	Crawford v. Branch Bank v. Christian 987, 1988	
Covanhovan v. Hart 592	v. State 925, 967, 2066	v. Crawford 1778	
Coveney v. Tannahill 2296, 2306, 2307, 2308, 2309, 2311	Crafs v. Clark 1271	v. Duckworth 2579	
Coventry Case 2257	Cragin v. Lamkin 1708	v. Hodge 1304, 1206	
Covert v. Herzog 1481	Craig v. Brown 1084	v. McKissack 2308	
v. Sebern 2477	v. Burris 1064	v. People 1079	
Covey v. Campbell 1944	v. Craig 906, 1124, 1126, 1129	v. State 44 Ala. 1781	
Covington v. Geyler 616	v. Dimock 2184	112 Ala. 4, 142, 288, 928, 987, 1002, 1003, 1157, 1896, 1986	
v. State 821	v. Miller 608	113 Ala. 12 Ga. 141	
Cowan v. Abrahams 1240	v. R. Co. 681	155 Ind. 2576	
v. Musgrave 1877	v. Rohrer 1017	98 Wis. 2259	
v. State 321	v. Sauc 1651	2 Yerg. 2340, 2363, 2364	
Coward v. Clanton 1066, 1067	v. Southard 223	v. Williams 1603, 1694	
Coward v. Reynolds 906	v. State 923, 1965	v. Wolf 1978	
Cowdery v. McCheesney 715	Craig, dem. Annesley v. Angless; see Annesley v. Angless.	v. Word 1387	
Cowen v. Truett 2477	Crake v. Crake 1684	Crawford and Lindsay Peerage Cases 570, 1279	
Cowles v. Merchants v. R. Co. 2349	Cram v. Cram 619	Crayton v. Mungler 1225	
Cowley v. People 223, 225, 682, 790, 792, 811	v. Ingalls 1800, 1220, 1231, 1513, 1651	Creamer v. McIlvain v. State 2494	
Cox v. Allingham 1288	v. Spear 1587, 1649	Crease v. Barrett 21, 1458, 1691	
v. Beaufort C. L. Co. 1273	Cramer v. Burlington 283, 1871	Credit v. Brown 3117	
v. Brower 2517	v. Cullinane 1800	Creedy v. Carr 1898	
v. Com. 2066, 2069	v. Hurt 612, 2385, 2389	Creighton v. Hopple 1774, 1779	
v. Couveless 2447	v. Reford 619	r. Johnson 1312	
v. Davis 1316, 1320	v. Shriner 1248	Crenshaw v. Gardner 1842	
v. Eayres 906	v. Truitt 1186, 2694	v. Johnson 770	
v. Hill 2223	Crandall v. Lynch v. R. Co. 2529, 2573	Crescent C. I. Co. v. Ermann 291	
v. Jones 1681, 2184	Crandall's Appeal 229	Cresswell v. Jackson 2 F. & F. 2016	
v. McDonald 1225	Crandoll v. White 581	4 F. & F. 2024	
v. Montague 2286	Crane v. Ayre 1313	v. State 1840	
v. Pearce 1873	v. Barkdoll 2297	Creswick's Case 575	
v. People 561	v. Buchanan 618	Crete v. Hendricks 1168	
v. Prater 906	v. Crane 81 Ill. 612	Crew v. Saunders 1858	
v. Pruitt 64	33 Vt. 1938	Crew v. Crew 2067	
v. R. Co. 170 Mass. 250	v. Dameron, 1267	Crick v. McClintic 1389	
126 N. C. 400	v. Ellis 1867, 1878	Criddle v. Criddle 1133, 1779	
r. Robinson 1684	v. Horton 797	Crippen v. Des Moines v. People 1719	
r. Royal Tribe 1073, 1671	v. Marshall 1062, 2138	v. People 950	
v. State 64 Ga. 1746, 2116	v. Morris 1257, 1511	Crisler v. Garland 2304	
41 Tex. 1586	v. Northfield 1943, 1951		
v. Strickland 66, 74	v. People 398, 2540		
v. Troy 2409	v. Reeder 1502		
v. Whalley 2218, 2222	v. State 415		
v. Williams 529, 1911			
Coxe v. Deringer 377			
v. England 1278, 2105			
v. Milbrath 738			
Coxwell v. State 247			
Coyle v. Baum 1943			
v. Coyle 1856			

TABLE OF CASES.

CRI

	Section		Section		Section
Crispeu v. Hauavau		Cross v. Wilkins	463	Cummiugs v. McCullough	334
50 Mo.	1225, 1651,	v. Williams	1189,	v. McKluney	1208
	2141		1205	v. Nichols	85, 1541, 1556
72 Mo.	1225, 1226,	Cross L. L. Co. v. Joyce	1750	v. Stone	2575
	1275,	Crossgrove v. Himmelrich	1391	Cummins v. Ius. Co.	1770
	2143	v. Crossman	2525	v. People	276
Crispin v. Doghton		Crouse v. Drury	1518	v. R. Co.	463
Crissou v. State		v. Eveleth	1481	Cundell v. Pratt	986
Crist v. State		v. Hooper	1495	Cuney v. Dupree	2054
Criswell v. Altomus		Croughton v. Blake	2130	Cunliffe v. Sefton	1313, 1316
Critchlow v. Parry		v. Duffield	1312	Cunneev. State	1900
Crittenden v. Com.	1021, 1963	v. Holman	720, 1943	Cuuning v. State	1349, 1667
v. Rogers	736, 747, 754	v. Miller	1506, 1514, 1557	Cuuuligham v. Bank	993, 609,
Crossdale v. Tantum		v. R. Co.	1698		701, 702, 2529
Crocker v. Agenbroad		Crow v. Jordan	166, 1154	v. Com.	2071
		Crowder v. Garber	617	v. Cunnigham	
v. Clements		v. State	2071	Coun., 52 Atl.	1225
v. Chase's Estate		Crowe v. Capwell	1195	2 Dow	1003, 2083
v. Lowenthal		v. Peters	1393, 1938	121 N. C.	1404
v. McGregor		Crowell v. Bauk	18, 728, 1969	v. Davis	1311, 1400,
v. State		v. Kirk	917, 1302,		2141
v. Turnstall			1312, 1316,	v. Fonblanque	1954
Crockett v. Crockett			1505, 1511	v. Freeborn	581
		Crowley v. Crowley	1803, 2049	v. Fuller	1082
v. Davis		v. Page	1037	v. R. Co.	
v. State		Crowninshield v. Crown-		72 Coun.	437, 488,
Croff v. Ballinger		inshield	2500	Coun., 52 Atl.	492, 1807
Croft v. Arthur		Crownson v. Crowson	1738	61 Mo.	2107
v. Pawlet		Crowther v. Hopwood	520	88 Tex.	199, 208, 250,
Crofter v. R. Co.		Croster v. Ganq	2083		995, 1896
Crofton v. Crofton		v. People	205	v. Smithson	
Cromack v. Heathcote		Crum v. State	321	v. State	1710
Cromer v. Peuston		v. Thornley	229	73 Ala.	2062
Crompton v. Butler		Crumley v. Adkins	2354	97 Ga.	1842
Cromwell v. Grunsden		Crummen v. Cavenah	2124	65 Ind.	987
v. Tate's Ex'r		Crummey v. Bentley	1651	v. Steiu	402
Cronin v. R. Co.	1720, 1722	Crumptou v. State	1022	v. Tracy	1225, 1651
Cronk v. Frith		Crusen v. State	2042	v. Underwood	207, 1613
Cronkrite v. Trexler		Crusoe v. Butler	1804	Curby v. Terr.	2001
Crook v. Rindskopf		v. Clark	468	Curlewis v. Corfield	291
Crookham v. State		Cubbisou v. M'Creary	1817,	Curling v. Perring	2319
			1820	Curme v. Rauh	1195
			1779, 1890	Curran v. Stange Co.	1719,
			1738		2408
			1078	v. Witter	1560
			108	Curren v. Couery	1866, 1868
			65	v. Crawford	1550
				Currey v. State	1215, 2576
				Currie v. Child	1316
				v. Donald	528
				v. Southern P. Co.	1350
				v. Stairs	1501, 2083
				Currier v. Gale	
				9 All.	2515
				4 Gray	1450, 1458,
					1409, 1774
				v. R. Co.	2268, 2282
				v. Shiloway	1063, 1066
				Curry v. Charles Warner	
				Co.	1230
				v. Colburn	2408
				v. Raymond	1225
				v. State	800, 1976
				Curtin v. R. Co.	463
				Curtis v. Aarcneou	1567, 1587
				v. Belknap	1291
				v. Bradley	748, 754, 763
				v. Cochran	523, 980
				v. Gano	1951

	Section		Section		Section
Curtis v. Hunting	1239	Dale v. R. Co.	283	Dannenberg v. Berkner	63, 246
v. Parker	1899	v. Stato	1841	Danser v. Boyle	1641
v. R. Co.	1976, 1977	Da Lee v. Blackburn	1800,	Danville Bank v. Waddill	20,
v. Stato			1969		2349
118 Ala.	2008	Dalson v. Stark	2429	Dantzler v. D. C. & I. Co.	1699
36 Ark.	1164	Dalrymple v. Dal-		Darby v. Huffman	1225
v. Wilcox	1335	rymple	1697, 2406	v. Ouseley	935, 1048,
Curtis v. Strong	1816, 1818,	v. Williams	2355		1244, 1256,
	1820	Dalrymple's Estate	333		1696, 1699, 2214
Curson v. De la Zouch	2298	Dalton v. Coatsworth	291, 1267	Darcy's Infants	2003
Cushing v. Billings	1873, 1908	Dalton v. All Souls'		Dare Valley R. Co., re	1912,
v. Cushing	1876	College	1163		2358
v. Friendship	581	v. Bethlehem	2088	Darland v. Rosencrans	1878
v. Hederman	406	v. Dregge	13, 1730, 2232	Darling v. Banks	2498
v. R. Co.	1634, 1684	v. Driggs	2232	v. Bryant	1779
Cushman v. Coleman	2125	v. Poplar Bluff	2495	v. Thompson	907
v. Loker	521	v. R. Co.	190	v. Westmoreland	39, 57,
v. Wooster	803	Dalton's Appeal	1195		216, 444,
Cushman P. B. M. Co. v.		Daly v. Byrne	404, 405, 406		445, 458, 461
Goddard	2580	v. Kimball Co.	717	Darrak v. Watson	1681
Cusick v. Whitcomb	2115	v. Maguire	797	Darrett v. Donnelly	1779
Cussons v. Skinner	1292	v. Milwaukee	1951	Darrier v. Darrier	2245, 2336
Cutbush v. Gilbert	1456	v. Multnomah Co.	2203	Darrigan v. R. Co.	1721
Cutcher v. Crawford	1350	v. Webster	1633, 1639	Dartmouth v. Holdsworth	2319
Cutler v. Carpenter	1969	Dalzell v. Davenport	1943	v. Roberts	1065, 1060,
v. Cutler	2508	v. Stato	2081		1082, 1215,
v. Skeels	21, 1807	Dambmann v. Schulting	2417		1216, 2529
v. Stato		Dame v. Kenney	74, 76,	Dartnell v. Howard	1185, 2168
v. Thomas	1249		1611	Dasher v. Ellis	1188
Cuta v. Pickering	2304	Damon's Case	1644, 2085	Dashlell v. Griffith	569
Cutter v. Terr.	1398	Dampman v. R. Co.	1018	Daspit v. Ehringer	2239
v. Waddingham	1678	Damport v. Simpson	2040	Daubney v. Cooper	1834
Cuyler v. McCartney	1083, 1086	Dan v. Brown	1076, 1081,	Daugherty v. Heckard	770
Cyr v. Sanfacon	2164		1195, 1304,	Dauvillier v. Myers	1859
Czarecki v. R. & N. Co.	492, 561	Dana v. Boyd	1786, 1782	Dave v. State	692, 1014,
Czenewska v. R. Co.	1951	v. Fiedler	1204		1085
		v. Fiedler	463	Davenbagh v. M'Kinnie	1858
		v. Kemble	95, 1201, 1280	Davenport v. Cummings	2349
		v. Tucker	2354	v. Freeman	529
		v. Underwood	1889	v. McKee	762, 1181
		Dandridge v. Corden	2276	v. Ogg	1843
		Dane Co. v. Reindahl	2577	v. Russell	62, 75
		Danforth v. Reynolds	1684	v. Ryan	614
		v. Stato	1271	v. Stato	248, 923
		Daniel v. Braswell	1678	Davey v. Janeville	2572
		v. Daniel	1958, 2306,	v. Pröndergass	2455
			2314	David Adler & S. C. Co. v.	
		v. Gay	167, 1154	Hellman	2312
		v. Johnson	1245	Davidson v. Arsenian	905
		v. Pitt	1070	v. Cornell	688, 1719
		v. Stato		v. Davidson	
		63 Ga.	2071	10 B. Monr.	1215
		65 Ga.	1476	Nebr., 96 N. W.	1738
		103 Ga.	246, 396, 950	v. Kahn	334
		114 Ga.	1186	v. Klampton	2528
		v. Wilkin	1591, 1634,	v. Kling	1871
			1065	v. Murphy	1267
		Daniels v. Conrad	1021, 1040	v. Peck	1245
		v. Hamilton	382	v. People	111, 246
		v. Ins. Co.	1047	v. Peticolas	2579
		v. McGinnis	1080	v. R. Co.	456, 571, 1976
		v. Mosher	1061	v. Shuler's Heirs	2477
		v. Stone	1225	v. Slocomb	1273, 2450
		v. Woonsocket	1062	v. Stato	
		Danielson v. Dyckman	1873	33 Ala.	2060
		Danks v. Rodeheaver	20	104 Ga.	2513
		Danley v. Danley	2242	135 Ind.	852, 1157,
		v. Stato	1503		1976
		Dann v. Cudney	1800	89 Tex.	1821

TABLE OF CASES.

DAY

	Section		Section		Section
Davidson v. Wallingford	1061	Davis v. Improvement Co.	1061, 2620	Davis v. Supreme Lodge	2300
Davidson L. Co. v. Jones	1196	v. Ins. Co.		v. Tarver	1630
Davie v. Briggs	2621	v. 59 Kan.	682	v. Taylor	2355
v. Jones	291, 760	v. 89 U. C. Q. B.	1911	v. Teachout	1198
v. Terrill	736, 747	v. Jenny	1168, 2625	v. U. S.	
Davies, re	2196	v. Jones	2410	160 U. S.	2601
v. Davies	1261	v. Keyes	1021	166 U. S.	1696
v. Flewellen	2111	v. Kimball	1031	v. Vories	321
v. Humphreys	1465	v. Kneale	377	v. Walter	2155
v. Lowndes	1489	v. Lees	1154	v. Watkins	2166
v. Morgan	1468	v. Lloyd	1476, 1644	v. Weaver	2337
v. Pettit	1267	v. Lyon	876	Davis' Sons v. Sweeney	451
v. Pierce	1476, 1778	v. McEnaney	2678	Davis' Trusts, re	2165
v. Ridge	1081	v. Marvin	561	Davison v. Bloomer	1809, 1818
v. Salter	2581	v. Mason	1963	v. Cruse	928
v. Waters	2306	v. Melson	1082	D'Avry v. World News-	
D'Avignon v. Jones	963	v. Mills	571	paper Co.	2270
Davis v. Allen	760	v. Monroe	530	Dawbeny v. Davis	2250
v. Alston	291, 1290, 1301	v. Morgan		Dawby's Case	1364
v. American T. & T. Co.	1164	1 C. & J.	1684	Dawkins v. Rokeby	2375
v. Bank of Fulton	2572	19 Mont.	2303	v. Smithwick	2581
v. Barr	596	v. Neligh	1890	Dawley v. State	2056
v. Batty	1373	v. Paducah R. & L. Co.	2509	Dawson v. Barham	1219
v. Brown		v. People	246	v. Callaway	726, 1890
98 Ky.	1807	v. Power Co.	791	v. Dawson	
94 U. S.	529, 531	v. Printing Co.	2606	18 Mich.	2067
v. Buchanan	906, 1085	v. R. Co.		Rice Eq.	1321, 1511
v. Byrd	1842	11 Cush.	403	v. Graves	1249
v. Cal. Powder Works	967	75 Ga.	265, 288	v. Parham	1239
v. Calvert	40, 229, 233, 1871	20 Mich.	249, 250	v. Paterson	1684
v. Campbell	1778	70 Minn.	2307	v. Pittsburgh	1040
v. Clements	1672	v. Randall	2444	v. Smith	1888
v. Coblens		v. Reid	2279	v. State	351
12 D. C. App.	944	v. Reynolds	1247	Day v. Backus	1268
174 U. S.	944	v. Rhodes	1226, 1226	v. Caton	2414
v. Com.		v. Richardson	6	v. Cooley	905
95 Ky.	1476	v. Robinson	2153	v. Crawford	1009
90 Va.	2239	v. Roby	1021, 1022	v. Day	
v. Cook	771	v. Rogers	112	Eng.	166
v. Cotey	468	v. Ruggles	1651	56 N. H.	1821
v. Council	1131	v. Salisbury	1141	v. Donohue	969
v. Curry	25, 2491	v. Sanford	1649	v. Lumber Co.	283
v. Dale	1894, 2200	v. Sigourney	1267, 2106	v. Moore	1186
v. Davis		v. Simma	1890	v. Ross	64, 1614, 1983
2 Add. Eccl.	267	v. Smith	2099	v. State	
90 Fed.	2207, 2211	v. Spooner	1082	63 Ga.	2265
123 Mass.	233	v. Spurling	2122	13 Mo.	923, 1111, 1985
v. Dinwoody	603, 223	v. State		v. Stickney	950, 1022, 1026, 1714, 1730, 2008
v. Emmons	2591	17 Ala.	1387, 2098	v. U. S.	1385
v. Field	735, 745, 747, 748, 749, 763, 754	181 Ala.	1072, 2265	Day Land & C. Co. v. State	1350
v. Franks	953, 964, 988, 1028, 1614	63 Ark.	1186	Dayrell v. Glascock	528, 1302, 1512
v. Fredericks	2008	Fla., 32 So.	561	Dazey v. Mills	1078
v. Freeland	1680	105 Ga.	56, 2071	Deacon v. Shreve	1166, 2354
v. Fuller	1466	114 Ill.	246	Deadman v. Ewen	2211
v. Gaines	1850	35 Ind.	500, 682, 684	Deal v. State	33, 660
v. Gray	1678	38 Md.	590, 662, 682, 1106, 1109, 1700, 1976	Dean v. Blackwell	1010
v. Hamilton	284, 1971	31 Nebr.	496, 1821	v. Border	1205
v. Hardy	1018	51 Nebr.	21, 86, 480, 786, 944, 963, 960, 1018, 1873, 2497	v. Carnahan	1190
v. Hare	1245	54 Nebr.	347, 2514	v. Chapin	1681
v. Herndon	1651	58 Nebr.	318	v. Com.	273, 279, 413
v. Hopkins	18	2 Tex. App.	2066, 2060	v. Dean	1304, 1512
v. Howard	1347, 2006	6 Tex. App.	1840	v. Fuller	1938
v. Huber Mfg. Co.	2349	v. Strolm	1267	v. McLean	1951
				v. Sharon	437, 1951
				v. State	
				89 Ala.	2591

Section
2390
1530
2355
1198

2501
1696
321
2155
2168
2337
451
2165
1818
928

2270
2250
1364
2375
2581
2056
1219
1890

2067
1511
1240
1239
1684
1040
1888
351
1298
2414
905
1009

166
1821
969
283
1186
1983

2265
1985
1026
2008
1385

1350
1302
1512
1076
2354
2211
660
1010
1205
1190
1681
413
1512
1938
1951
1951
2591

Section
Dean v. State 1072, 1966
106 Ala. 1851
43 Ga. 1954
v. Swoop 1911
Deane v. Packwood 906
Dear v. Knight 246, 988
De Arman v. State 1890
Dearmond v. Dearmond 415, 1623
De Armond v. Neasmith 824, 833, 1623
Deathridge v. State 858
Deaver v. Rice 1213
De Baker v. R. Co. 2575
De Bode's Case 609, 1271, 1455, 1907, 1963
De Bow v. People 1860
De Cair v. Manistee & G. R. Co. 461
De Cambra v. Rogers 1347
De Camp v. Archibald 2195, 2210
v. Vandagriff 1536
D'cary v. Polier 1028
Decatur v. Fisher 682
Decatur C. W. & M. Co. v. Mahaffy 451
Deck v. Johnson 2282
Decker v. Decker 2474, 2477
De Cordova v. Korte 2463
Dederichs v. Salt Lake 792
Dedric v. Hopson 2214
Deeies v. Giles 1486
Deep River Nat'l Bank, re 2149
Deerfield Tp. v. Harper 1219
Deering v. Cunningham v. Metcalf 907
v. Sawtel 527, 1010, 1018
v. Shnmpik 529
Deery v. Cray 2155
Defarges v. Ryland 1573
De Ford v. Palnter 613
De Forest v. State 784
De Forge v. R. Co. 247
De France v. Stricker 795
De Freese v. Lake 1239
v. State 2471
Defries v. Davis 321
Degraffenroid v. Thomas 406
De Graw v. Emory 1779
De Gray v. N. Y. & N. J. Tel. Co. 1969
De Haas v. Galbreath 1168, 2570
De Haven r. De Haven 1373
1483, 1906
Deininger v. McConnel 778, 1325
De Kalb Co. v. Smith 2106
DeLafield v. Hand 923, 1826
v. Parish 2164
1968, 2500, 2508
Delancy v. Little 661
v. Erickson 1225, 1234
v. Philadelphia 2373
Delano v. Goodwin 581, 1971
Delaplaine v. Cook 1354
Delaware, The 2432

Section
Delaware Co. Com'rs v. Diebold S. & L. Co. 1060
Delaware L. & W. R. Co. v. Ashley 1750
v. Burson 1943
v. Converse 2495, 2552
v. Roalefs 680, 688, 1721
Delaware Surety Co. v. Layton 2378
Delaware & C. Towboat Co. v. Starrs 561, 1951
Delegall v. Highley 406
De Lisle Peerage Case 1670
Dalk v. State 1476
Deil v. Oppenheimer 1009
v. Taylor 1862
Delmare v. Robello 2474
Delogny v. Rentoul v. Smith 1092
1676
Delony v. Delony 1812, 1820
Delphi v. Lowery 252, 458
De Lucenay v. State 987, 1839, 2535
Delugilo v. Barney 2155
Delventhal v. Jones 18
De Manneville v. De Manneville 2239
Demars v. Mfg. Co. 969
Demartini v. Anderson 78,
1620
De May v. Roberts 461, 1263
De Medina v. Owen 2104
De Mell v. De Mell 905, 907, 2239
Demelman v. Burton 1067, 2124
Dement, ex p. 2203
Dement v. State 1841
Demeritt v. Miles 89
v. Randall 782, 2008
Deming v. Carrington 1082, 1257
Deminger v. McConnell 1189
Democrat P. Co. v. Lewis 1384
Demombreun v. Walker 1291
Den v. Allen 1304
v. Clark 1671
v. Downam 98
v. M'Allister 1212, 1203, 2354
v. Mayfield 1812
v. Pickett 1779
v. Vancleve 493, 505, 1783, 1820
v. Vreelandt 2169
v. Wright 1943
Denbo v. Wright 2336
Dench v. Dench 112
Denins v. State 1404
Denison's Appeal 1738
Denlston v. Hoagland 610
Denmead v. Maack 2165
Denn v. Fulford 1691
v. Pond 1665
v. White 2232
Dennehy v. O'Connell 952
Dennett v. Crocker 1245
v. Dow 905, 917
v. Kneeland 1141
Denney v. Stout 1013
Dennie v. Williams 1066

Section
Denning v. Butcher 229, 232, 1988, 2316, 2391
v. Roome 1661
Dennis v. Barber 2106
v. Brewster 167
v. Codrington 2290
v. Crittenden 605
v. Holsapple 2473
v. Mfg. Co. 2451
v. Pawling 73, 209
v. Slyfield 2463
118 Ala. 2497
Ala., 35 So. 1807
v. Weeks 1738
Dennison v. Page 2063
Denny, re 2577
v. Dana 253
v. Pinney 1312
v. Sayward 1416
v. Williams 2494
Densler v. Edwards 584
Denslow v. Fowler 1858
Denson v. Denson 2096
Dent v. Hertford 2352
v. Portwood 384
v. R. Co. 1943
v. State 1966, 2512
Denton v. Foute 1219, 1680
v. Jackson 1898
v. Perry 1086
v. Peters 2445
v. Smith 463
v. State 1760
Denver S. P. & P. R. Co. v. Moynahan 1807
v. Wilson 1951
Denver T. Co. v. Owens 2304, 2326
Denver T. & F. W. R. Co. v. Ditch Co. 1169
v. Smock 571
Denver & R. G. R. Co. v. Glascott 379
v. Roller 682, 792, 1976
v. Spencer 1725
Depew v. Wheelan 1195
De Phue v. State 1621
Depue v. Place 2016, 2020
De Pusey v. Du Pont 1248
Derby v. Derby 2067
De Remer v. Parker 1873
Derham v. Derham 2340
De Rosax' Goods 2478, 2474
Derr v. Greenwalt 2048
Derrick v. Sams 2465
v. Whitman A. Co. 1657
Derry Bank v. Webster 2408
De Rutzen v. Farr 1472
De Saily v. Morgan 1040
Desborough v. Rawlins 2312
Desbrack v. State 199
Deshon v. Ins. Co. 1124
Des Molnes v. Casady 1248
Des Molnes S. Bank v. Colfax H. Co. 1877
Desnoyer v. McDonald 1201

TABLE OF CASES.

DES

	Section		Section		Section
Desnoyers Shoe Co. v. First Nat'l Bank	2165	Dickerson v. State v. Talbot	278, 852 1195, 1212, 1225, 1226, 1651, 2141, 2196	Dimmick P. Co. v. Wood	1906
De Sobry v. De Laistre	906, 1018, 2164	Dickey v. Grice v. Malechi v. State	2052, 2106 987, 2277	Dinan v. Supreme Council	1487
De Sonora v. Bankers' M. C. Co.	690, 1697	Dickle v. Carter	1737, 1738	Dingee v. Branson	233
Despan v. Swindler	2578	Dickinson v. Barber v. Breeden v. Clarke v. Coward v. Dickinson	1988 1189, 1225 1212 1060	Dingle v. Bowman	1225, 1318
Destrehan v. Lumber Co.	2140	Dickson v. Bamberger v. Lodge v. M'Farlane v. Mfg. Co. v. Pinch v. State v. Waldron v. Wilton v. Zizinia	655 1625 1188 2442 1890 1842 500 2375 2430	Dismore v. State	770
De Thoren v. Attorney-General	1602, 2505	Diebold S. & L. Co. v. Holt	716	Dishazer v. Maitland	2141
Detroit v. Brennan	1960	Diehl v. Rogers v. State	623 1960, 2115	Dismukes v. Musgrove	7 Mart. 1512 8 Mart. 1065, 1813, 2108
Detroit C. R. Co. v. Mills	1908	Diener v. Diener v. Schley	1810 1213	v. State v. Tolson	1745, 1747 1500
Detroit Post Co. v. Mc-Arthur	406	Diers v. Mallon	2554	Di Sora v. Phillippo	1271, 1053
Detroit & M. R. Co. v. Van Steinburg	199, 571, 656, 1888, 1390	Dietrich v. Dietrich	64	Disque v. State	1890
Detweiler v. Groff	571, 1974	Diffenderfer v. Scott	917	D'Israeli v. Jowett	1841
Detzur v. Brewing Co.	681, 1951	Diffin v. Dow	681	Distad v. Shanklin	1236, 2154
Deupree v. Deupree	1612	Digby v. People v. Stedman	1822 735, 748, 1518	Distin v. Rose	406
Devenbath v. Devenbath	1697, 1700, 2067, 2225	Diggins v. Hartshorne	2575	District of Columbia v. Armes	458, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497
Dever v. State	1079	Diggins' Estate, re	694, 695, 1548	v. Bakersmith v. Haller v. Woodbury	2219 568, 1951 18
Doveronx's Estate	2517	Diggs v. Downing v. Kurtz	1082 2455	Dittman v. Distilling Co.	2536
Devine v. Rand	364	Dighton v. Holt	2250	Dittrich v. Detroit	2384
Devlin v. Crocker	1873	Dike v. Polhill	1658	Divers v. Fulton	1208
Devling v. Williamson	661, 2158, 2373	Dikes v. Miller	1219	Dix v. Atkins	1201, 1203
Devonshire v. Neill v. Peters	1688, 1594 1874	Dill v. State	106 Ga. 1157, 1760 1 Tex. App. 2059, 2236	Dixon v. Barclay v. Doe v. Ins. Co. v. Monroe v. Niccolis v. Orr v. Parmelee v. People v. Plann v. R. Co. v. State	1248 1225, 1651 2437 1573 2581 1351, 2215 2294 2201 2354, 2509 1576 18 Fla. 106, 1440 86 Ga. 905 113 Ga. 888, 2050 46 Nebr. 890
Devoli v. Brownell	2222, 2223	Dillard v. Samuels v. Scruggs v. State	1890 1777 457, 568, 1160, 1896, 1977	Dixon-Woods Co. v. Glass Co.	2442
Devries v. Phillips	289, 1779	Dilleber v. Ins. Co.	206	Doak v. Johnson	1086
De Wald v. Ingle	1944	Dillin v. People	280, 293	Doan v. State	2273, 2513
De Warren v. State	2595	Dillon, re v. Anderson v. Bell v. Crawly v. Dillon v. Harris v. Mattox v. Pinch	2191, 2372 581 1020 1300 2239 2452 1678 905	Doane v. Farrow v. Glenn	1257 18
Dewdney v. Palmer	586	Dillon's Case	2372	Dobbin v. Cordlner	2419
Deweese v. Colorado Co. v. Ins. Co.	2576 2434	Diman v. R. Co.	2415, 2417	Dobbs v. Justices	1186, 2167
Dewey v. Algire v. Dewey v. Hotchkiss v. Williams	1671 1802 2118 437, 463, 1021, 1168	Dimenstein v. Richardson	2220	Dobson v. Crew v. Finley v. Graham v. Laval v. Southern R. Co. v. Whisenant	2190 1582 2212 1075 18 791, 1065
De Whelpdale v. Milbrn	1082	Dimmick v. Collins v. Downs	392 62, 200, 571, 923, 987	Dock v. Com.	246
Dewit v. Greenfield	60, 73, 74, 209			Doctor Jack v. Terr.	1913
Dewitt v. Barley 13 Barb. 9 N. Y.	1934 568, 689, 1934, 1938			Dodd v. Norris	75, 76, 210, 986, 1106, 2257
v. Berry	2434			v. State	367
De Wolf v. Strader	2297			Dodge v. Bache	728
Peybel's Case	2575			v. Carroll	2354
Dexter v. Booth	1554, 2237, 2336, 2341			v. Freedman's S. & T. Co.	1082, 1084, 1257
v. Hall	681				
Diamant v. Colloty	1555				
Dibble v. Morris	1081				
v. Nash	341				
Dick v. Balch v. State	1225 2056				
Dicken v. Johnson	1938				
Dickens v. Winter	1523				
Dickerman v. Graves	610, 2237				
Dickenson v. Fitchburg	655, 672				
Dickerson v. Barke	1807				

DOE

TABLE OF CASES.

Section
1906
1487
233
1318
770
2141

1512
1813,
2108
1747
1600
1, 1053
1890
1841
2, 2154
406

58, 402,
34, 406,
96, 497
2219
8, 1951
18
2536
2384
1208
1, 1203
1248
5, 1651
2437
1573
2581
1, 2215
2294
2201
4, 2509
1576

3, 1440
905
3, 2050
390
1, 1684
2276

2442
1086
2513
1257
18
2419
2167
2190
1582
2212
1075
18
1065
246
1913
210,
2257
307
728
2354

1082
1257

Dodge v. Haskell	Section 818
v. Hollinshead	1347
v. State	
24 N. J. L.	2043
100 Wis.	687
Doe v. Adams	1415
v. Allen	2472
v. Andrews	2315
v. Arkwright	
3 A. & E.	1634, 1640
5 C. & P.	1778
v. Askew	157
v. Auidjo	1487
v. Austin	1082
v. Barnes	2535
v. Barton	1492
v. Benjamin	2465
v. Benson	2470
v. Benyon	2145
v. Bevis	17, 1465, 1472
v. Biggers	1194, 1195, 1213, 1257, 1268
v. Biggs	1072
v. Bird	2593
v. Blanche	1256
v. Bray	1633, 1646
v. Brown	1378
v. Burdett	1292, 1311, 2145
v. Burt	2465
v. Burton	1471
v. Calvert	1072
v. Campbell	2144
v. Cartwright	
8 B. & Ald.	2429
Ry. & M.	1465, 1640
v. Catmore	2525
v. Chichester	2463, 2470
v. Clifford	1194, 1212, 1650, 2211
v. Cockell	1210
v. Cole	1082, 1214, 1268
v. Connoly	1878
v. Cooke	2522
v. Cox	1842
v. Dauler	2525
v. Date	2211, 2222
v. Davies	704, 1484, 2006, 2550
v. Deakin	
4 B. & Ald.	2531
3 C. & P.	1297, 1811, 2188, 2145
v. Derby	1888
v. Dring	2402
v. Durnford	1248
v. Egremont	2196
v. Esalava	157, 1219, 2139, 2141
v. Evans	
1 Blackf.	1458
3 C. & P.	1062, 1406
v. Fleming	2083
v. Ford	
3 A. & E.	2456
3 U. C. Q. B.	687, 1498
v. Forster	1072
v. Foster	1887
v. France	1632, 1646
v. Fraser	1082

Doe v. Galloway	Section 2477
v. Gatacre	1644
v. Gilbert	31, 1958, 2500
v. Green	1778
v. Gray	1204, 1206
v. Griffin	1495, 1601, 2531
v. Gwillim	2459
v. Harris	
5 C. & P.	2294, 2297, 2298
7 C. & P.	1106, 1514
v. Harvey	
1 Moo. & Sc.	1246
1 Ry. & Moo.	1489
v. Hemming	1207
v. Henry	2141
v. Hertford	2311, 2329
v. Hindson	582, 1304
v. Hiscocks	2474
v. Hodgson	1210
v. Holmes	1225
v. Holtom	2470
v. Hubbard	2467, 2471
v. Huthwaite	2477
v. Jack	2105
v. Jersey	2468
v. Jesson	2531
v. Johnson	
3 Ill.	1318
18 N. J. L.	2284, 2235
v. Joinville	2473
v. Jones	1080, 1458, 1476
v. Keeling	2189
v. Kelly	2200
v. Kemp	378
v. Kennedy	1225
v. Kilner	1224
v. King	1677, 1678
v. Knight	2408
v. Langdon	2211, 2307
v. Langfield	21, 1458, 1471
v. Lyford	2462
v. M'Caieb	1195, 1239
v. McLean	1651
v. McWilliams	1645
v. Martin	2470
v. Mason	379
v. Mew	1238
v. Minge	1354
v. Moore	1085
v. Morris	
3 A. & E.	1202, 1203
12 East	1246, 2447
v. Murray	
1 Ail.	1666
8 Kerr	1567, 1802
v. Needs	2472
v. Nevers	1301
v. Newton	1994, 2001, 2015, 2017
v. Palmer	112, 1736, 2525
v. Passingham	1311, 1388, 2141, 2145
v. Pearce	2139
v. Pearson	1246, 2447
v. Pembroke	1078
v. Perkes	1797
v. Perkins	735, 749, 760
v. Pettett	1080, 1778

Doe v. Phelps	Section 2141, 2144
v. Phillips	2139
v. Pitt	2465
v. Fulman	157, 1232, 2139
v. Randall	1484, 1486, 1489
v. Reagan	1028, 1938
v. Reynolds	1244
v. Richards	1083
v. Rickarby	1456, 1458
v. Rideout	1651
v. Ridgway	1033, 1862
v. Ries	1207
v. Roberts	
2 Chlty	20
13 M. & W.	878, 1218, 1223, 1224, 1653, 1665
v. Robson	1471, 1476
v. Roe	
2 Camp.	783
1 E. & B.	1858, 1859
13 Fla.	1684
16 Ga.	2016
31 Ga.	2141
1 John.	2067
v. Ross	
5 All.	1065
7 M. & W.	1180, 1268, 2307
v. Samples	2139
v. Savoy	1681, 2500
v. Seaton	1082, 1640, 2211, 2307
v. Servos	1481, 1490
v. Sisson	360
v. Splitz	1208
v. Stacey	1472
v. Stevens	186, 287, 1651, 1676
v. Stiles	2105, 2143
v. Strong	2581
v. Suckermore	604, 605, 702, 704, 709, 1992, 1994, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2002, 2006, 2007, 2012, 2017, 2026
v. Sybourn	1065
v. Tarver	704, 1998, 2006
v. Taylor	2463
v. Thomas	
9 B. & C.	2307
14 East	1587
v. Thynne	1472, 2144
v. Todd	1257
v. Turford	1518, 1523, 1526
v. Turnbull	1311, 2143, 2145
v. Twigg	1292, 1306, 1309, 1813, 1316
v. Tyler	
6 Bing.	21
4 Moo. & P.	1465
v. Vowles	1464
v. Walnwright	
1 Nev. & P.	1233, 1278, 1297
3 Nev. & P.	1076
v. Walker	1514
v. Wallaston	1644

TABLE OF CASES.

DOE

	Section		Section		Section
Doe v. Watkins	2296, 2308,	Donley v. Dougherty	949	Doty v. Wilson	586
v. Webster	2312	Donnell v. Jones	770	Doud v. Ganthrie	1164
v. Westlake	2465	Donnelley v. Terr.	1821	Dongan v. Champlain Co.	283, 458
v. Whitefoot	2472	Donnelly v. Donnelly's Heirs	2063	Donge v. Pearce	2097
v. Wilkins	232	v. Fitch	1951	Dongherty v. Milliken	1951
v. Wilkinson	1297	v. R. Co.	1976, 1921	v. Posegate	2119
v. Williams	1081, 1085	v. Smith	607	v. Swett	1271
v. Wilson	1778	v. State	1072, 1431, 1485, 1439, 1442, 1443, 1445, 1890	Doughton v. Tillay	2158, 2144
v. Winn	1199, 1224, 1225, 1230	Donner v. Palmer		Douglas v. Bank	1850
v. Wittcomb	1465	23 Cal.	2854	v. Douglas	1044
v. Wollaston	1646	31 Cal.	1239	v. Leighton	1672
v. Wolley	1311, 2138	v. State	657	Douglas Peerage Case	166, 1431
v. Wombwell	1072	Donoho v. Petit	803	Douglas v. Eyre	1641
v. Wood	1514	Donohoo v. Brannon	2168	v. Hart	1554, 1561
v. Young	2535	Donohue v. McNulty	1664	v. K. & M. R. Co.	2566
Doe d. Latham v. Wright	228, 1804	Donovan v. Driscoll	581	v. Mitchell	41
Doggett v. Simms	987, 1270, 3110	v. R. Co.	65 Conn. 2500	v. Sanderson	1709
Doheny v. Lacy	2312, 2508	65 Conn.	2500	v. Touzey	73, 662
Doherty v. Gilmore	1738	168 Mass.	1630	Douston v. State	1800, 1802
v. Hill	2465	v. Richmond	1807	Douthitt v. Terr.	2513
v. O'Callaghan	2314	v. Terr.	2678	Dove v. State	
v. Thayer	1680	Donovan's Estate	1738	37 Ark.	347
Dohmen Co. v. Ina. Co.	1012, 1580, 2496	Don Yook v. Milling Co.	2433	8 Heak.	1938, 2085
Doker v. Hasle	2341	Dooley v. Baynes	1460	Dover v. Harrell	2307
Dolan v. M. R. F. L. Ass'n	792, 2529	v. Van Hohenstein	1351	v. Maester	623, 1245
v. State		Doollittle v. State	397, 2338	v. Winchester	68, 142, 201
81 Ala.	925	v. Stone	1557, 2118	Dow v. Beldelman	1350
40 Ark.	1404	Doon v. Donaher	1210	v. Julien	1951
Dolder v. Lord Hunting- field	2574	v. Ravey	1062	v. Sawyer	1522, 1525
dole v. Allen	1674	Door v. Geary	2477	v. Tuttle	2444
v. Johnson	561, 687, 1691, 1606	Doran v. McConlogue	1938	v. Weare	458
v. Woodredge	1896, 2115	v. Mullen	770, 778	Dowagiac M. Co. v. Watson	95
Dollarhide v. Parks	1225	v. Shaw	2349, 2354	Dowden v. Wilson	
Dollner v. Lintz	1618	Dore v. Babcock	987	71 Ill.	1225
Dominges v. State	1306	Dorf v. Schmunk	1573	106 Ill.	1195
Dominic v. U. S.	2572	Dorin v. Dorin	2463	Dowdy v. Watson	585, 587
Dominick v. Randolph	568, 689, 1988, 1958	Dormady v. State Bank	1195	Dowie v. Driscoll	21, 1738
Domschke v. R. Co.	1830	Dormen v. Ames	451, 1678	Dowie's Estate	2321
Domville v. Ferguson	1066, 1388	v. State	2570	Dowley v. Winfield	2531
Don v. Lippman	5	Dormer v. Thurland	1302	Dowling v. Dowling	
Donahue v. Coleman	382	Dormoy's Goods	1674	10 Ir. C. L.	89
v. Donahue	2528	Dorough v. Equitable M. Co.	2581	116 Mich.	2240
v. Johnston	2319	Dorr v. Fenno	2349, 2354, 2356	v. Feeley	2111
Donald v. Mitchell	2308	v. School District	1257, 1676	v. State	194, 363
Donaldson v. Boston	252	Dorset v. Girdler	1396, 1417	Down v. Eilla	2005
v. Com.	2079	Dorsey v. Clapp	258	v. Murpley	1965
v. Jude	2051	v. Dorsey	1082	Downer v. Baxter	2354
v. R. Co.	1698, 1873, 1874	v. Habersack	792	v. Button	1002
Doncaster v. Day	735, 1330	v. State		v. Dana	1026, 1027, 1028, 1031
Donegan v. Wade	1195, 1219	107 Ala.	1157	v. Morrison	1558
v. Wood	1633, 2165	110 Ala.	293	v. Rowell	736, 2098
Doneho v. Johnson	2477	108 Ga.	59	Downes v. Mooreman	1177, 1223
Donellan v. Donellan	2046	34 Tex.	246, 247	v. Society	581
v. Hardy	1278, 1684	v. U. S.	831	Downey v. Dil' n	68, 406
Donelson v. Taylor	586	v. Warfield	1938	v. Murphy	987, 1985, 2421
Don Francisco, The	2212	Dosch v. Diem	1867	v. Sawyer	283
Donk Bros. C. & C. Co. v. Stroff	1951	Dossett v. Miller	1126, 1128	v. State	57
Donkle v. Kohn	1820	Dost Aly Khan, Goods of	690	Downing v. Butcher	258
Donlan v. Clark	2506	Doster v. Brown	715	v. Gallagher	1257
		Dotson v. Moss	1226, 2143	v. Pickering	157, 1287
		Dotton v. Albion		v. Plate	291
		60 Mich.	252	Downing's Will	2314
		57 Mich.	252, 2390	Downs v. Belden	1083
				v. Downs	1312, 1320
				v. Lyman	1082, 1778
				v. R. Co.	736, 749, 750

TABLE OF CASES.

Section
586
1104
283, 458
2007
1951
2119
1271
28, 2144
1850
1044
1072
36, 1431
1041
34, 1561
2566
41
1709
73, 062
0, 1802
2513
347
8, 2085
2307
3, 1245
42, 201
1550
1951
2, 1625
2444
458
on 95
1225
1195
85, 587
1, 1738
2321
2531
89
2240
2111
34, 303
2005
1985
2354
1002
1028,
1031
1558
3, 2098
1177,
1223
581
26, 406
2, 2421
283
57
258
1257
1287
291
2314
1083
1320
1778
3, 750

Section	Case Name	Section
87	Dow's Ex'r v. Spenny's Ex'r	
1006	Dowset v. Rawlings	
2323	Doxon v. Haigh	
2673	Doyle v. Bradford	
1354	Doyle v. Mizner	
1680	v. R. Co.	
458, 461	42 Minn.	
451, 462	128 N. Y.	
1068	v. Sleeper	
960, 2061	v. State	
1195, 1887	v. Wiley	
1007	Dosier v. Joyce	
1779	v. McWhorter	
2204	v. State	
1681	Drum v. Cessannm	
2290, 2294,	Du Barré v. Livette	
2317		
2509	Dubé v. R.	
2287	Dublin Election Case	
2495, 2552	Dublin, etc. R. Co. v. Slattery	
93, 570,	Dubois v. Baker	
2012, 2016,		
2024, 2027		
2232	v. Ferrand	
821	v. People	
1407, 2372	Dubois' Case	
	Dubose v. State	
1442	120 Ala.	
1840	18 Tex. App.	
206, 1715	Du Bos v. Beresford	
1080, 1083,	Duckham v. Wallis	
1064		
1530, 1540	Ducoign v. Schreppel	
1681	Ducommun v. Hysinger	
2298	Dudley v. Beck	
1126, 1127	v. Bolles	
1640	v. Chilton Co.	
1680	v. Grayson	
64	v. McCluer	
2376	v. State	
1812, 1816	v. Sumner	
1267, 2106	v. Wardner	
2040	Dudleys v. Dudleys	
1044	Dudly's Case	
1951	Duer v. Allen	
1066	Duff v. Duff	
1644	Dufferin and Claneyboys Peerage	
1777	Duffey v. Presbyterian Congregation	
1651	Duffield v. Brindley	
223, 1738,	v. Morris' Ex'r	
1988, 2500		
797, 1229	Duffin v. People	
2294, 2297	v. Smith	
850	Duffy v. People	
692, 1046,	Dufreane v. Welsh	
1968		
569, 833, 861,	Dugan v. Com.	
2071		
736, 747, 754	v. Mahoney	
1878	Duggan v. State	
1651	Dugger v. Collins	
1195	v. Oglesby	
2578	Duke v. Taylor	
2498	Dukehart v. Coughman	

Section	Case Name	Section
63, 240	Dukes v. State	
1387, 1398	11 Ind.	
1482	80 Miss.	
233, 382	Dulling v. Johnson	
1306	Dumangue v. Daniels	
1442, 1451	Dumas v. Hunter	
821	v. State	
2066,	62 Ga.	
2241	63 Ga.	
2336	14 Tex. App.	
2257	Dumbach v. Bishop	
1051	Dummer v. Chippenham	
1065	Dunafon v. Barber	
1777	Dunaway v. School Directors	
1777	Dunbar v. McGill	
1806, 1812	v. Madden	
905, 916	v. Meek	
1910	v. Parks	
1203, 1236	v. U. S.	
1256, 2132		
7	Dunbarton v. Franklin	
1350, 2577	Duncan, re	
1311, 2141,	Duncan v. Beard	
2622		
1289, 1275	v. Blair	
	v. Duncan	
1676	1 Watta	
1303	23 Ill.	
1297, 2121	v. Gibbs	
2232	v. Landis	
1878	v. McCullough	
1677	v. Scott	
762	v. Seeley	
1011	v. State	
308	97 Ga.	
1873	40 Tex. Cr.	
15, 1807	Dunck v. Milwaukee Co.	
1850, 1662	Duncombe v. Daniell	
252, 458,	v. Prindle	
1722	Dundas v. Lansing	
2463		
2378	Dunham v. Averill	
65, 249	v. Chicago	
1948	v. Rackliff	
1836	v. Simmons	
394, 679,	v. State	
1938, 1951	Dunham's Appeal	
2441	Dunkles v. Goodnough	
1275	Dunlap v. Berry	
1779	v. Griffith	
619, 1900	v. Hearn	
747, 754	v. Hopkins	
905	v. Richardson	
1887, 1898	v. State	
1674, 2164	v. Waldo	
2354	Dunlavy v. Watson	
758, 759,	Dunlop v. Berry	
760		
95	v. Higgins	
527, 1010, 1015	v. Patterson	
1401	v. Servas	
95, 2511	v. U. S.	
1807	Dunmore v. State	
2165	Dunn v. Adams	
2303	v. Amos	
901, 905	v. Aslett	

Section	Case Name	Section
1196	Dunn v. Choate	
1038, 1415	v. Dunn	
906	v. Dunnaker	
1778, 2522	v. Eaton	
2354	v. Hall	
367	v. People	
172 Ill.	40 Ill.	
784, 1063, 1450	172 Ill.	
527, 1010,	29 N. Y.	
1015, 2056,		
2000		
1808	v. Pipes	
2446	v. Price	
	v. State	
390, 1320, 1442	2 Ark.	
2209	99 Ga.	
20	Ind., 67 N. E.	
2061	58 Nebr.	
1135, 1138	45 Oh. St.	
2272	118 Wis.	
5	v. Welsh	
1587, 1598,	v. Whitney	
1541		
1879	v. Wolf	
2340	Dunnaway v. State	
855	Dunne v. Park Com'rs	
455, 2501	Dunning v. R. Co.	
1229	v. Rankin	
7	v. West	
1587	Dunraven v. Llewellyn	
571	Duntley v. Inman	
579	Dunwoody v. State	
1684	Dupays v. Shepherd	
1195	Dupee v. Chicago II. S. Co.	
1248	Dupey v. Ashby	
	Dupleisis v. Attorney-General	
2256		
1335	v. Kennedy	
1651	v. Miller	
1502, 1503	Du Pont v. Davis	
1215	Dupont v. Downing	
063	Dupré v. Desmaret	
063	v. Prescott	
104, 247,	Dupree v. State	
692, 1404		
1065	Durden v. Cleveland	
1835	Duren v. Kee	
1186	v. Sinclair	
1644, 1646,	Durfee v. Abbott	
2529		
2512	v. State	
290, 1194,	Durgin v. Danville	
3220		
1062	v. Somers	
1083,	Durham v. Beaumont	
1109		
1777, 1779	v. Shannon	
2500	v. Smith	
951	v. State	
1207,	Duringer v. Moechino	
1234		
2219, 2294,	Durkee v. Leland	
2307, 2308,		
2309		
	v. R. Co.	
1750	69 Cal.	
1236	29 Vt.	
2442	Durkin v. Cobligh	

TABLE OF CASES.

DUR

	Section		Section		Section
Darnell v. Bowden	3008, 3018	Driver v. Lanier	2829	Earl v. Leber	791
Darnford v. Clark	1888, 1890	Drohn v. Brewer	1800	v. Lewis	3130
Durning v. Hastings	2808	Droop v. Ridenhour	1881, 2433	v. State	222
D'Urphy v. Nelson	1664	Drosdowski v. Chosen		v. Tupper	1772, 3008
Darrell v. Bederley	1917, 1920, 1947	Friends	1882, 2110	v. Vase	2376
Durrence v. Northern Nat'l Bank	661, 1676	Drowne v. Stimpson	1141	Earle v. Earle	416
Durst v. Masters	793	Druce v. Denison	2463	v. Grout	2204, 2303
Duseberry v. Abbott	1681	Drucker v. R. Co.	462	v. Picken	1256, 2004
Dushane v. Benedict	608, 1944	Drum v. Harrison	1867	v. Rice	2408
Dutch Flat W. Co. v. Mooney	2680	Drum v. Cessun	1276	Earl v. People	2056
Dutcher v. Howard	16	Drummond v. Henderson	76	Earle's Trial	1700, 1842
Dutchess Co. Bank v. Ibbotson	2427	Drumwright v. State	2364	Earle's Trust, re	2165
Duttlot v. Blanchard	1084	Drury v. Ilverry	1071	Early's Case	880, 855
Duttenhofer v. State	2337	Drury v. Midland R. Co.	1072, 1573, 1587, 1592	Earnshaw v. Tomlinson	1770
Dutton v. Woodman	1073	v. Terr.	908, 1061	v. U. S.	2553
Duval v. Davey	2326	Druse v. Wheeler	306, 2535	Earp v. Edgington	1736
Du Vall v. Augusta	2582	Dwelly v. Dwelly	2229	Easier v. R. Co.	
Duvall v. Ellis	1081	Dwight v. Brown	1456, 1472	59 S. C.	675, 1951
v. Griffith	406	v. Co. Com'rs	1943	60 S. C.	2220
Duval's Ex'r v. Darby	658, 728	v. Macklam	2287	Easley v. Com. v. R. Co.	1141
Du Vivier v. Phillips	1044	Dwinell v. Larrabee	1207	Eason v. Chapman	1065, 1086
Drabble v. Donner	1208	Dwyer v. Collins	1202, 1204, 1218	East v. Chapman	2276
Drach v. Kamberg	1911	v. Dunbar	1218	v. Pace	1254
Draggou v. Graham	1681	Dyas v. Southern P. Co.	283, 458, 1951	East Dubuque v. Burhyte	1003
Drake v. Drake		Dye v. Young	1738	East India Co. v. Atkins	2256, 2275
4 Dev. L.	1062	Dyer v. Dyer	233, 1757, 1963	v. Campbell	2257, 2258, 2260
8 H. L. C.	2474	v. Flint	2165	v. Kynastou	1862, 2221
v. Ilenly	529	v. Fredricks	1233	v. Neave	2257
v. Klusell	1267, 1273	v. Hudson	1275	East Kingston v. Towle	68, 201
v. Ramey	1195	v. Lowell	1216	East Line & R. R. Co. v. Scott	250
v. State		v. Morris	1842	East Omaha St. R. Co. v. Godola	2536
74 Ga.	2264	v. Rosenthal	720	East Pa. R. Co. v. Hiester	463, 1943
110 Ala.	106, 2115	v. Smith	1240, 1271, 2573	v. Hottenstine	1945
Drakeford v. Adams	2498	v. State	1878, 1879	East Teun. V. & G. R. Co.	
Draper v. Clemons	1209	v. Union R. Co.	21, 190	v. Culler	285
v. Crofts	1073	Dymoke's Case	575	v. Dauler	1005
v. Draper	505, 1821	Dysart v. Farrow	1554	v. Hall	2509
v. Hatfield	1062, 1225	Dysart Peerage Case	268, 1862, 1424, 1483	v. Heisters	456, 2509
v. Horton	1062	Dyson v. R. Co.	437, 792	v. Kane	97, 290
v. Vanhorn	2442	v. Wood	2460	v. Maloy	1432
Draughn v. State	836			v. Smith	1719
Dravo v. Fabel	6, 906, 916			v. Watson	791
Draycott v. Talbot	2529			v. Wright	1951
Drayton v. Wells	1362, 1406			East Teun. & Tel. Co. v. Stimm's Adm'r	1073
Dreher v. Fitchburg	20			East & W. I. R. Co. v. Miller	1168
Dreunen v. Lindsey	916, 1023			Eastabrooks v. Prentiss	616
Dresbrack v. State	221			Eastham v. Riedell	461
Dresch v. State	2089			Eastle v. Montgomery	230
Dresden v. Bridge	2427			Eastland v. Caldwell	73
Dresler v. Hard	2025			v. Jordan	1649, 1651
Drew v. New River Co.	1949			Eastman v. Amoskeag Mfg. Co.	1062
v. Sutton	1722			v. Bennett	1777
v. Tarbell	2336			v. Martin	1490
v. Wadleigh	1291			v. Moulton	1544, 1549, 1551
v. Wood	950			v. R. Co.	1750
Dreyspring v. Loeb	787			Eastwood v. People	1163, 1166
Drinkwater v. Porter	1584, 1588, 1596			Eastou v. Campbell	1224, 1225, 1818, 1651
Driscoll v. Fall River	249			v. Farmer	1856, 2271
v. People	987, 1006, 1021, 1117, 1142, 1270				
Drish v. Davenport	75, 210, 1362				
Driver v. Driver	1730, 2340				

TABLE OF CASES.

Section	Section	Section	Section
791	Eaton v. Freeman 1631	Edmonston v. Hughes 1311,	Elam v. Commercial Bank 2354
2139	v. Gladwell 2464	1511, 1513,	v. State 237, 292
222	v. Hall 1367, 2110	1676, 2141	Elberfeldt v. Waite 1646
2098	v. Knowles 2240	Edmonds v. State 1684	Elbin v. Wilson 728, 2348
2376	v. New England T. Co. 1072	Edrington v. Harper 2437	Elcensor v. Elcensor 1931
416	v. Rice 2097	Education, etc., of the Royal Family 1598	Eld v. Gorham 1350
2303	v. Tallmadge 1490	Edward v. Carrier 581, 661	Elden v. Keddeh 1238
2091	v. Tol. Co. 377	v. Evans 21	Elder v. Coal Co. 1951
2408	Eaves v. Henderson 2436, 2441	v. Foote 1750	123 Ala. 1606
2066	Eberhart v. State 40 Ga. 960	v. Gimbel 749, 1667, 1688	124 Ala. 1490
1842	47 Ga. 21, 1067, 1078	v. Hanna 1851	89 Ark. 1750
2165	Eberis v. Board 1645	v. Hener 1689	Elderton's Case 2376, 2378
0, 865	Eborn v. Zimpelmann 797, 2016	v. James 1651	Eldred v. Eldred 2063
1779	Ebos v. State 689	v. Logan 1351, 1671, 1712	Eldridge v. Hargreaves 1062
2543	Eby v. Winters 1225, 1415	v. Matingly 2111	v. Knott 2322
1738	Eccles v. Shackelford 406	v. Noyes 1278, 2105	v. State 1644
1951	Echols v. Staunton 1389	v. Pitts 2355	Eleanor, The 1641
2220	Eck v. Hatcher 2218	v. Publishing Soc. 2582	Electric Light Co. v. Grant 1021
1141	Eckert v. State 821	v. Rives 1247, 1957, 2103	Electric Lighting Co. v. Rust 1391
2351	v. Triplett 1081	v. State 39 Fla. 569	Electric R. Co. v. Carson 1750
1080	Eckford v. Berry 2437	2 Wash. 580, 2056	Elfelt v. Smith 717
2276	v. Eckford 2477	v. Sullivan 953, 1028,	Elias v. Lancaster 263
1251	Eckles v. Bates 888, 1722	1312, 2098	Ellot v. Elliot 1512
1003	Eckstein's Petition 2268	v. Three Rivers 96 Mich. 1158	v. Skynn 2355
2256,	Economy L. & P. Co. v. Sheridan 682	102 Mich. 252, 438, 664	Elkins v. Hamilton 1777
2275	Eddings v. Boner 1051	v. Tipton 1664	v. McKean 1750
2258,	Eddy v. Gray 62, 133, 166,	v. Tracy 1257	v. State 1244
2200	1141, 1977	v. Vasey 1684	Elkinton v. Brick 1511
2221	v. Wilson 1176	v. Williams 1072	Elledge v. Todd 2354
2257	Ede v. Johnson 2164	v. Worcester 98, 1951, 1974	Ellen v. Ellen 16 S. C. 1778
0, 201	Eden v. Gough 894	Edwards' Case 2250	18 S. C. 1133
2520	Edelhoff v. State 331	Edwin L. Morrison, The 2533	Eller v. Church 2495
403,	Edelstein v. Schuler 2580	Elbank v. Burt 1779	v. Roberts 2205
1943	Eden v. Blake 2425, 2442	Eel River D. Ass'n v. Topp 2572	Ellershaw v. Robinson 73
1945	v. Chalkill 1650	Egan v. Bowker 278	Ellerson v. State 1290, 1291
285	Edgar v. Brown 1290	v. Gordan 204, 1620	Ellicott v. Pearl 1 McLean 1126, 1136
1005	v. Richardson 1256	v. Horrigan 1223, 1651,	10 Pet. 1124, 1126, 1129,
2500	Edgell v. Bennett 1086, 2237	2520	1363, 1481, 1565,
2509	v. Francis 1790	Egbers v. Egbers 1081, 2500	1587, 1665
290	Edger v. Board 1350	Egbert v. Greenwalt 617, 2063	Ellingboe v. Brakken 1651
1432	Edgeworth v. Wood 2515	Egg v. Barnett 156	Ellingwood v. Bragg 561, 1923
1719	Edgington v. Fitzmaurice 661	Eggart v. State 1700	Elliot v. Shnlta 913
791	v. Nixon 1858	Eggers v. Eggers 680	Elliott v. Boyles 406, 781
1951	Edie v. East India Co. 1954,	v. Fox 1712, 2215, 2276	v. Dycke 1521
1078	2580	Eggett v. Allen 1666	v. Hayden 1065, 1066
1168	Edinburgh A. L. M. Co. v. Peoples 1347	Eggle v. Peopie 248, 1976	v. McClelland 1621
616	Edington v. Etna L. Ina. Co. 2381, 2382,	Eggleston v. Boardman 463	v. Mills 2349
461	2383, 2384	Eggpieller v. Nockies 1879	v. Moreland 2445
230	v. M. L. Ina. Co. 266, 2380,	Ehrensperger v. Anderson 1258	v. Peirsoi 18, 1347,
73	2383, 2384,	Ehrman v. Hoskins 2474	1483
1651	2386, 2387,	Ehrmann v. Ehrmann 2210	v. R. Co. 2494
1062	2388	Ehream v. Brown 2434	v. Russell 681
1777	Edison El. L. Co. v. N. S. El. L. Co. 2219,	Eichenlaub v. St. Joseph 1680	v. Stocka 1213
1490	2125, 2374	Eicke v. Nokes 2301, 2311	v. Van Buren 656, 1268,
549,	Edisto Phos. Co. v. Stanford 1278	Eidt v. Cntter 33, 451, 660,	1286, 1339
1551	Edmister v. Garrison 2354	1160	Ellis v. Abell 2434
1750	Edmiston v. Schwartz 1877	Eifert v. Lytle 2329	v. Aiford 620
106	Edmonds v. Rowe 1818	Eighmie v. Taylor 2434	v. Baldwin 128
225,	v. State 390	Eiland v. State 63, 248, 2100	v. Buzell 2498
1651	v. Walter 779	Eisenhart v. Slaymaker 1186,	v. Ellis 11 Mass. 1645, 2065,
2271	Edmondson v. Lovell 1318, 1651	1206, 1234, 2158	2068
	Edmonson v. R. Co. 1415	Eisenlord v. Cism 1481, 1482,	55 Minn. 1681
		1503	v. Houston 2463
		Eisfeld v. Dill 2012	
		Ela v. Edwards 1312, 1512	

TABLE OF CASES.

HILL

	Section		Section		Section
Ellis v. Howard	1083, 1086	Emerson v. Lebanon	438	Equitable Acc. Ins. Co. v. Stout	1830
v. Huff	1198	v. Lowell Gaslight Co.	442, 457	Equitable L. A. Soc. v. Clark	1859
v. Leonard	2870	v. Stevens	1041	Equitable Secur. Co. v. Talbert	2432
v. Lindley	408	v. White	1461, 1464, 1490	Erb v. Poprits	68, 687, 1978
v. Mills	1188	Emerson Co. v. Nimocks	787	Erd v. R. Co.	728
v. Newell	1777	Emery v. Atlanta R. E. Exchange	1062	Erhart v. Dietrich	2318
v. Reddin	2377	v. Berry	1271, 1684	Erickson v. R. Co.	1898
v. Saltan	2372	v. Fowler	2096	v. Schmill	183, 2580
v. Short	21, 84, 230	v. Haven	2471	v. Sophy	1960
v. Smith	1198, 1300, 1301	v. State		Erie Preserving Co. v. Miller	760
v. State		92 Wis.	861, 1043, 2008, 2497	Erie R. Co. v. Decker	456
108 Ala.	1966	101 Wis.	460, 948, 987, 2269, 2276, 2497, 2511	v. Kane	288
190 Ala.	344	v. Twombly	1312	Erie & Pac. Despatch v. Stanley	1890
152 Ind.	111, 987, 1117	Emig v. Diehl	1406, 1408	Ernest v. Napier	1215
v. Thayer	1671	Emmert v. Hayes	2477	Errisman v. Errisman	1839
v. Thompson		Emmott v. Penoyer	2452	Erskine v. Davis	382, 2505
3 M. & W.	2442	Emmons v. Barton	1066, 2337, 2341	v. State	2089
37 N. Y. Snpp.	1770	v. Emmons	2046, 2067	Erwin v. Bailey	269, 1605
v. Watkins' Estate	1065	v. R. Co.	1943	v. Balla	1802
Ellis' Appeal	1681	Emory v. Smith	289	v. English	1644, 1645
Ellison v. Bennabia	770	Empire Mfg. Co. v. Stuart	702	v. Porter	1212, 1233
v. Branstrator	1673, 2169	Emporia v. Schmidling	283	v. State	905
v. Cookson	2475	Emrich v. Union Stockyard Co.	18	Eachbach v. Hartt	17, 18
v. Gray	2435	Emrie v. Gilbert	1244	Ekridge v. State	499, 2100
Ellmaker v. Buckley	915, 1865	Endally v. State	216, 347	Elow v. Mitchell	1268, 1293
1890, 1893		Enders v. Sternbergh,		Esquimalt & N. R. Co. v. New Vancouver Coal Co.	1862
Ellmore v. Mills	1890, 1891	2 Abb. App.	2141	Essex' Case	2220
2529		40 N. Y.	1198, 2141	Essex' Murder	1837, 1836
Ellsworth v. Fairbary	2220	Endick v. Endick	2047, 2069	Este v. Wiltshire	2276
v. Potter	951, 953	Endowment Rank v. Allen	859	Estell v. State	1262, 1750
1007, 1022		Enfield v. Ellington	1640, 1878, 2145	Estep v. State	1842
Elmer v. Fessenden	1714, 1729	Engelthaler v. Engelthaler	2473	Esterbrooks v. Towse	157
Elmore v. Overton	763, 2104	England v. Hatch	1651, 2143	Ester v. Bridgforth	1909
Elmondorff v. Carmichael	1188, 1304, 1658, 1862	Engles v. Bruington	693, 1312	v. Farnham	1269
Elms v. Chevis	1521	English v. Cropper	2337	v. Jackson	1549
Elrod v. Ashton	1013	v. Oliver	1350	Estey v. Birmanam	1078
v. Cochran	1194, 1284	v. Sprague	1678	v. Fuller I. Co.	2242
Elson v. Fancott	211	v. State	2060	Estofe v. Vaughan	1211
Elmer v. Supreme Lodge	222, 1974	Engler v. R. Co.	2507	Etheridge v. Hobbs	1842
Elster v. Seattle	252, 458	Enloe v. Hall	1242, 1249	Ethier v. Homier	2298
Elston v. Kennicott	736	Enlow v. State	233, 247, 248	Etna v. Brewer	1764
Elswick v. Com.	2337	Ennis v. Little	561, 1951	Etting v. Bank	64
Elting v. Scott	1066	v. Smith	1271, 1684	Etbanks v. Harris	2141, 2145, 2447
Elton v. Larkins		Ennor v. Barwell	1662	Eure v. Pittman	1192, 1202, 1207
5 C. & P.	1041, 1946, 1947	Eno v. Allen	1018	Eureka F. Co. v. Baltimore C. S. & R. Co.	2556
1 Mo. & Rob.	2593	Enos v. Enos	406	Erreka Ins. Co. v. Robinson	98
Elzroth v. Ryan	1239	v. Tuttle	1774, 1775	Evans, re	2498
Elvins v. Delaware & A. T. & T. Co.	714	Enright v. R. Co.	1951	v. Arnold	1304
Elwell v. Meraick	1194, 1194	Ensley v. R. Co.	1750	v. Birch	93
v. Russell	321	Enthoven v. Cobh	2325	v. Blood	1933
v. Walker	2105	Katick v. Carrington	2264	v. Browne	1350
Elwood v. Delfendorf	586	Entwistle v. Meikle	1417, 2500	v. Chamberlain	2494
v. Saterlie	1779	Ephraims v. Murdock	2098	v. Eaton	585, 1040
Ely v. Ely	2525	Epperson v. State	1215, 1450	v. Evans	
v. James	1684	Eppinger v. Scott	95	41 Cal.	2046
v. R. Co.	263	Eppe v. State		1 Hagg. Cons.	2081
v. Stewart	1885, 2136	19 Ga.	784	155 Pa.	620, 2232
Elyton Land Co. v. Denay	2105	102 Ind.	439, 457, 680, 1188, 1896		
Embry v. Millar	1188				
Emerson v. Bigler	718				
v. Blonden	2232				
v. Boynton	1062				
v. Fisk	291, 1206				
v. Gaslight Co.	569				

FAR

TABLE OF CASES.

Section

1230

1852

2432

1976

728

2316

1828

2580

1960

760

454

288

1690

1215

1839

2505

2089

1605

1802

1645

2506

1233

905

7, 18

2100

1293

1862

2220

1836

2276

1750

1842

157

1909

1269

1549

1076

2242

1211

1842

2298

1784

64

2141,

2447

1202,

1207

2556

98

2498

1304

93

1933

1350

2494

585,

1040

2046

2081

2232

Section

Evans v. Evans	
1 Rob. Ecol.	3046
10 Sm. & M.	1304
v. Gas Co.	451
v. Gerry	1960
v. Getting	1598
v. Gray	585
v. Hetlich	492, 493
v. Ins. Co.	565, 571
v. Lee	3166
v. Lipcomb	944
v. Merthyr Tydfal	1075,
	1566, 1645
v. Morgan	1603, 2083
v. Murphy	748
v. O'Connor	2376
v. People	546, 656,
	1218, 1911,
	1409
v. Reed	1594
v. Rees	1379
v. Rothschild	1032
v. Smith	1651
v. Sprague	2235
v. Stalle	
v. State	
109 Ala.	457, 966
120 Ala.	1974
58 Ark.	1442
76 Ga.	2059
106 Ga.	2264
44 Miss.	247
61 Miss.	580
35 Tex.	521
Tex. Cr., 78	
S. W.	281
v. Trenton	1807
v. Turnpike Co.	1223
v. Watt	2063
Evans' Estate	2341
Evansich v. R. Co.	967, 1890
Evanson v. Gunn	1633,
	1634, 1639
Evansville R. Co. v.	
Fitzpatrick	1943
Evansville T. & C. G. R.	
Co. v. Cochran	1166
Evansville & T. H. R. Co.	
v. Crist	1977
v. Tothill	250
Evarts v. Middlebury	1951
v. Young	1586
Evening Journal Ass'n v.	
McDermott	406
Everage v. State	1072
Everett v. Deal	2451
v. Lowdham	1841
v. R. Co.	1908
v. State	
33 Fla.	2245
62 Ga.	107, 1976
v. Tidball	1415
Everingham v. Roundell	1274,
	1275
Evers v. Life Ass'n	613
v. State	246
Everson v. Carpenter	1026
Ewbanks v. Ashley	1684
Ewell v. State	1420,
	1605, 2085

Ewer v. Ambrose	
3 B. & C.	907, 908
	908, 907
4 B. & C.	1215, 1216
Ewers Adm'r v. National	
I. Co.	2342
Ewing v. Bailey	1826
v. Duncan	1350
v. Goode	2494
v. Keith	1128
v. Moses	770
v. Osakliston	2276
v. Savary	1665
Excelsior Co. v. Sweet	2509
Excelsior M. A. Ass'n v.	
Riddle	2384
Excelsior Mfg. Co. v.	
Owens	2516
Exchange & B. Co. v.	
Boyce	1676
Exon v. State	267
Exton v. R. Co.	252, 461
Eyerman v. Sheehan	1216, 1976
Eyler v. State	398
Kyman v. People	2534
Eyre v. Palsgrave	1219
Eyster v. Gaff	1186
v. Young	2046
F.	
Fabrigas v. Mostyn	256, 259,
	666, 1562,
	1789, 1981
Fabyan v. Russell	2579
Facey v. Fuiler	1661
v. Hurdum	2553
Fachina v. Sabine	1616
Fackler v. Chatman	1332
Faerber v. Lumber Co.	461
Fager v. State	
22 Nebr.	764, 2061
49 Nebr.	1653
Fagin v. Cooley	1409
Fahy v. Crotty	64
Fahnstock v. State	246, 1612
Fahr v. Hayes	406
Fala v. Edwards	57
v. Goodwin	2354
Fairbank v. Hughson	2550
Fairbanks v. Kuhn	1257
v. Snow	2423
Fairchild v. Ada Co.	2203
v. Bascomb	233, 569, 661,
	905, 932, 1738,
	1938, 1956, 1976
v. Dentison	1556
v. Stage Co.	1876
Faircloth v. Jordan	1859
Faire v. State	396
Fairfax v. Fairfax	1245
Fairfield Co. Turnpike Co.	
v. Thorp	1076
Fairfield P. v. Ins. Co.	963, 2520
Fairly v. Smith	718, 719,
	1704
Fairlie v. Deuton	1073
v. Hastings	1056, 1076

Section

Fairly v. Fairly	
	901, 907,
	2139, 2141
v. State	457
v. Wappoo Mills	2440
Falvre v. Menderchoid	1158
Falconer v. Hanson	1404
Falk v. Witham	604
Falkland v. Bertie	2426
Falkner v. Beers	1204
v. Earle	372
Fall v. Overseers	68, 153, 302,
	211, 267,
	1003, 2180
Fall Brook C. Co. v.	
Hawson	1693
Fallon v. Dougherty	1225
Falls v. Building Co.	1684
Falls City v. Sperry	1800, 2554
Falls Land & C. Co. v.	
Chisholm	1651
Falmouth v. Moss	2360
v. Roberts	1313
Fancher v. De Montegro	2167,
	2477
Fane v. Fane	2426
Fanning v. State	276
Fant v. McDaniel	1215
v. Miller	5, 18, 763,
	766, 1379,
	1898, 2123
Farhing v. Webster	2052
Faribault v. Ely	1206
Farkas v. State	852
v. Stewart	770
Farleigh v. Kelley	17, 1124,
	1505, 1514
Farley v. C. B. & V.	
Co.	223
v. Farley	1511
v. Graham	1212, 2447
v. Peebles	1079, 2304
v. Rodocanachi	2115
v. State	923, 967, 1270
v. Tillar	613
Farmer v. Brown	2280
v. State	1066
Farmers' Bank v. Cole	2341
v. Gilson	1267
v. Salling	658, 1624
v. Whitehill	
10 S. & R.	728, 2016
16 S. & R.	1562
Farmers' Mnt. F. Ins.	
Co. v. Bair	749, 779
Farmers' & M. Bank v.	
Bornel	736, 754
v. Bronson	1651
v. Israel	2125
v. Lonergan	1207
v. Woods	803
v. Young	1873
Farmers' & T. N. Bank	
v. Woodell	561, 571
Farnsworth v. Briggs	1236,
	1288, 1320
v. Sharp	1202
Farnsworth Co. v. Rand	1352
Farnum v. Farnum	377
v. R. Co.	2463

TABLE OF CASES.

PAR

	Section		Section		Section
Farr v. Hill	616	Fellowes v. Williamson	1739	Fidelity M. L. Ass'n	
v. Kouillard	1066	Fellows v. Fellows		v. Mettler	1500, 2531
v. Swan	1680, 1956, 2100	37 N. H.	1002, 1957	v. Miller	1139
v. Thompson	1108, 1109	66 N. H.	112	v. Winn	1001
Farrand v. R. Co.	1676, 1943	r. Smith	1779	Fidler v. McKisley	613
Farrar v. Fassenden	1223,	Folska v. R. Co.	1753, 1974	Fiebler v. Darrin	861
	1651, 1655	Folt v. Amidon	1750	Field v. Cain	1677
Farrell v. Boston	776	Feltner v. Com.	905	v. Clark	1350
v. Leivell	613, 619	Felton v. Pitman	1314	v. Harrison	2054
v. Leighton	1710	Felza v. Walker	2433	v. Malster	2572
v. People	2273	Fengas v. Brown	2034	v. R. Co.	485, 456
v. U. S.	1960	Fenn v. Granger	2218	v. Tenney	654
v. Welts	166, 792, 794, 1461, 1476	Fenner v. Lewis	2117, 2232	v. Thompson	754, 1340, 1360
		v. R. Co.	2319	Field's Appeal	1304
Farrall's Adm'r v. Brennan's Adm'r	689, 1213, 1938, 1958	Fennerstein's Champagne	1521, 1522, 1528, 1704	Fidler v. Collier	1330
Farrer v. State	313, 363, 2354	Fenno v. Weston	1073	v. Ray	2447, 2456
Farrington v. Sinclair	338	Fenstermaker v. Pub. Co.	949, 1005, 1021	Fields v. Copeland	1069
Farris v. Com.	2511	Fenton v. Hughee	901	v. State	
v. People	216	v. Reed	2083	47 Ala.	63
v. State	390	Fenton's Will	699	121 Ala.	2277
Farrow v. Blomfield	1256, 1263	Fenwick v. Bell	1921, 1949	Fla., 35 So.	111, 950, 1732, 1890, 1974, 2115
v. R. Co.	1225	v. Reed	2327	134 Ind.	63, 246
Farwell v. Cramer	2513	v. State	581	39 Tex. Cr.	987
Fash v. Blake	728, 1320	Ferguson v. Brown	1843	Fife v. Com.	824, 841, 861, 862
Fasset v. Brown	1292	v. Clifford	483, 1219 1632, 1677	Fifth Nat. B. Soc. v. Holt	1549, 1978
Fassin v. Hubbard	634	v. Davis Co.	1719, 1975	Figg v. Wedderburne	1503
Fatheroe v. Lawrence	1511	v. Hemingway	1203	Fightmaster v. Fightmaster	2239
Faucett v. Nichols	354	v. Hirsch	784	File v. Springel	1244
Faulder v. Silk	1671	v. Hubbard	1923, 1951	Filer v. R. Co.	663
Faulk v. Iowa Co.	252, 438	v. Miles	1904	v. Smith	2534
Faulkner v. Brine	905	v. Moore	2061	Fillipowski v. Merry	
v. Faulkner	1675	v. Peden	2167	weather	1349
v. Gilbert	928	v. Rutherford	1890	Filley v. Angell	666
v. Hendy	2203	v. Stafford	714, 720, 1943, 1944	v. Registrar	344
v. Torr.	851, 2301	v. State		Fison v. Te	2089
Fauce v. Gray	842, 843, 852, 1540, 2183	49 Ind.	1807	Finch, rr	2065
Faust v. R. Co.	2509	71 Miss.	581, 2062	v. Barclay	760
v. U. S.	1898	31 Tex. App.	821	v. Finch	2250, 2260
Fawcus' Goods	5	Fernandez, ex p.	2192, 2271, 2371	v. Garrett	2475, 2526
Faxon v. Hollis	1537, 1558	Ferner v. State	376	v. Kent	2504
v. Jones	581	Fero v. Roscoe	406	v. State	238
Fay v. Davidson	1246	Ferrand v. Milligan	18	Finch's Case	2463, 2477
v. Gaynon	2336	Ferrell v. State	852, 1186, 1877, 2505	Fincher v. People	862
v. Harlan	1719	Ferrers v. Bosel	2165	v. State	93
Fayerweather v. Ritch	2314	v. Shirley	699, 1065, 1991	Findlay v. Pruitt	63
Fayette v. Chesterville	561, 689, 1938	Ferriday v. Selser	1086	Findlay Brewing Co. v. Baner	451
Fazakerley v. Wiltshire	2575	Ferrill v. Simpson	2349	Flndley v. Meane	2410
Fearing v. Clark	2420	Ferris v. Bank	2573, 2578	Fink v. Denny	603
v. Kimball	1073	v. Boxell	1456	Finley v. Widner	66, 73, 2498
Fearn v. Taylor	1300	v. Commercial Nat'l Bank	2165	v. Woodruff	1239
Feary v. O'Neill	905	v. Saxton	529	Flin v. Cassidy	1951
v. R. Co.	2594	v. Thaw	728	v. Com.	318, 1398, 1404
Featherstone v. People	784, 1821	Ferry v. Legras	2054	Finnegan v. Dugan	166, 1154
Fee v. Taylor	2006, 2016, 2027	v. Taylor	1062	v. Gas Works Co.	687
Feemster v. Ringo	2580	Fertig v. State	2097	Finnerty v. Tipper	209, 406
Feeney v. R. Co.	2383	Fetherly v. Waggoner	2141	Finney v. College	1195
Feeter v. Heath	736	Fetkenhauer v. State	2089	v. State	2231
Feibelman v. Assn. Co.	905, 987, 1062	Ficken v. Atlanta	1890	Fiott v. Com.	1651
Felder v. Stndley	2426	v. State	1018	First Congreg. Church	
Fell v. R. Co.	2098			v. Ins. Co.	1947
v. Young	1442				

FLO

TABLE OF CASES.

	Section
First Meth. Ep. Church v. Fadden	7
First Nat'l Bank v. Allen	2015
v. Bows	2442
v. Booth	1971
v. Briggs	1875
v. Broadway Bank	2536
v. Carson	2016
v. Chaffin	1558
v. Cody	1631
v. Com. Assur. Co.	833, 1107, 1108, 2494
v. Fire Ass'n	1974
v. Foote	2444
v. Harris	2518
v. Holland	617, 1458
v. Kidd	1856, 1890
v. Inn Co. Bank	1078
v. Lippman	1676
v. Lowrey	2504
v. Marshall	1076
v. Minneapolis & N. E. Co.	1014, 1589, 2103
v. Priest	1243
v. Robert	2016, 2016
v. Smith	1890
v. Wirebach's Ex'r	233, 561, 662, 1392, 1938
v. Wisdom's Ex'r's	318, 2019, 1674
v. Wolff	1674
First Nat'l Bank of B. v. First Nat'l Bank of N.	1242, 2508
First Nat'l Bank of D. v. First Nat'l Bank of W.	736, 762
First Nat'l Bank of Hoopston v. R. Co.	456
First Nat'l Bank of Nashville v. R. Co.	2463
First Nat'l Bank of Omaha v. Goodman	2496
Fire Ass'n v. Fleming	1911, 2917
Firebrass's Case	2250
Fireman's Ins. Co. v. Mohlmann	1921, 1978
Firkin v. Edwards	1208
Firkins v. R. Co.	1719, 1750
Firneis v. State	2888
Fischer v. Bergson v. State	1779, 561
Fish, re	2463
v. Dodge	663
v. Hubbard	2463
v. Smith	1074, 1633
Fishburne v. Ferguson's Heirs	1938
Fishel v. Ireland	1014
Fisher v. Betts v. Clark	1244, 1272, 1938
v. Conway	616, 938, 1818, 1908
v. Donovan	2536

	Section
Fisher v. Fisher	2278
v. Greene	1213
v. Hall	2409
v. Hart	905
v. Hood	1003, 1021
v. Kaufman	2334
v. Kyle	2098
v. Lane	2450
v. Mayor	1521, 1523
v. Owen	2059
v. Patterson	787, 209, 406
v. People	1100
v. Price	2257
v. Porter	1820
v. Ronalds	263, 222
v. Saunders	108, 108
v. True	582
v. Willard	1400
Fishmonger v. Robert	5, 173, 1836
Fisk, re	581
v. Hopping	2167
v. Klusane	189
Fiske v. Gowing	1969
v. Ins. Co.	1947
Fitch v. Bogue	1182, 1192
v. Chapman	1082, 1436
v. Hill	2235
v. Hyde	1373
v. Mason C. & C. L. T. Co.	1951
v. Murray	236, 1416
v. R. Co.	456
v. Smallbrook	521
Fitchburg R. Co. v. Eastern R. Co.	1168
Fidler v. Morris	1675
v. Shotwell	1651
Fitts v. R. Co.	1951
v. State	396
Fits v. Rabbits	1190
Fitcox v. State	527, 2056
Fitzgerald v. Clark	2349
v. E. E. Illum. Co.	252
v. Elsee	1903
v. English	2596
v. F. & M. C. Co.	5538
v. Hayward	1944
v. McCarty	1558
v. R. Co.	2494
v. Williams	24 Ga. 1268, 148 Mass. 1003
Fitzgibbon's Adm'r v. Kinney	736
Fitzherbert v. Fitzherbert	1304, 1312
Fitzhugh v. Croghan	1306
v. Love	1213
Fitzjames v. Moys	1910
Fitzpatrick v. Brigman	1966
v. Fitzpatrick	2477
v. Hoffman	2433
v. U. S.	2276
v. Williams	1681
Fitzsimons & Connell Co. v. Brann	451

	Section
Fitzwalter Pezrage Case	704, 1993
Fitzwater's Case	3352
Flack v. Green	25, 736, 747
v. Neill	2296
Fladong v. Winter	82
Flagg v. Mann	586
v. Mason	1567
v. People	838
v. Willington	354
Flaherty v. Powers	431, 458, 876
Flannery v. Boucher	406
Flannery v. State	276, 504, 605, 1072, 1821, 2058
Flanders v. Davis	1511
Flannery v. Ellsworth	1978
Flannery v. Guggenheim	283
Flannery v. State	678, 688
Flannery v. Com.	1391
Flattery v. Flattery	2046
Flint v. Murton	379, 2436
Flint v. Toplits	2115
Flint v. Clark	2450
v. Fleming	2063
v. Barry	1352
v. R. Co.	2509
v. Springfield	1719
v. St. John	2266
v. State	335, 933, 1163
v. Humph. 11 Ind.	2131
v. Thomas	1614, 1985
Flemister v. State	1210
Flemming v. Lawless	2152
Fletcher v. Hradyll	1891
v. Crosbie	1035
v. Fletcher	1640
v. Fuller	1031
v. Henley	1318
v. Horne	1195
v. Jackson	1350
v. Peck	1299
v. Perry	1021
v. R. Co.	821
v. State	59, 290, 890, 923, 2477, 1779
v. Wakefield	2218
Flery v. Campbell	1225
Flick v. Gold Hill & S. M. M. Co.	2291, 2294
Flight v. Robinson	1256, 1681
Flindt v. Atkins	1188, 1194
Flinn v. M'Gonigle	2203
v. Prairie Co.	456
v. R. Co.	406
Flint v. Clark	1640
v. Flint	754, 2391
Flint's Estate	2354
Flood v. McClure	736, 738, 754, 2099
v. Mitchell	1461, 1756
v. Russell	

TABLE OF CASES.

FLO

	Section		Section		Section
<i>Flora v. Anderson</i>		<i>Folsom v. Manchester</i>	2354	<i>Foresman v. Marsh</i>	1223, 1651
67 Fed.	2463	v. R. Co.	461, 1976	<i>Forester v. Guard</i>	2354
75 Fed.	1487, 1492, 1605, 1671	v. Scott	1195	<i>Forgy v. Bank</i>	2008, 2012
<i>Florence L. M. & M. Co.</i>		<i>Folts v. State</i>	93, 667	<i>Formby v. Wood</i>	497
v. Warren	1225, 1246	<i>Folwell v. Journal Co.</i>	209	<i>Fornes v. Wright</i>	2494
<i>Floreys Ex'rs v. Florey</i>	689, 1936	<i>Fonda v. R. Co.</i>		<i>Fornette v. Carmichael</i>	1355
<i>Florida C. & P. R. Co. v.</i>		71 Minn.	65, 267	<i>Forney v. Hallacher</i>	2066
Seymour	1690	77 Minn.	1976	v. Hallagher	1373, 1404
<i>Flournoy v. Newton</i>	1256	<i>Fong Yue Ting v. U. S.</i>	516, 1354	<i>Fornahill v. Murray</i>	2083
v. State	521	<i>Fong Yuk, re</i>	1620	<i>Forrest v. Kissam</i>	1890, 1458
v. Warden	2135, 2529	<i>Fonnereau v. Poynts</i>	2470	v. State	1750
<i>Flower v. Brumbach</i>	1963	<i>Fonseca v. Cunard S. Co.</i>	2415	v. Trammell	2132
v. MacGinniss	1856	<i>Fonsick v. Agar</i>	1404	<i>Forrester v. P'igon</i>	583
v. R. Co.	1168	<i>Fontaine v. Beers</i>	1779	<i>Forsyth v. Clark</i>	1195, 1219, 1225, 1267, 1651
v. Young	1647	<i>Fonts v. State</i>	852	<i>Forsyth v. Lewis</i>	2313
<i>Flowers v. Fletcher</i>	702	<i>Foot v. Bentley</i>	1234	<i>Forshee v. Ahrams</i>	2354
v. Haralson	1605	v. Buchanan	2282	<i>Forsyth v. Charlebois</i>	2327
<i>Floyd v. Bovard</i>	913, 915, 1887, 1890	v. Hunkina	1021	v. Clark	1010
v. Miller	2336	v. Silliman	1225	v. Cothran	1807
v. Mintsey	1195, 1664	v. Tracy	70, 73, 209	v. Doolittle	672, 680, 682
v. R. Co.	1750	<i>Foot v. Beecher</i>	1083	v. Kreakbanm	1082, 1083
v. Rice	803	v. Cobb	1312, 1779	v. Vehmeyer	1273
v. Ricks	2167	v. Hayne	2313	<i>Forsyth Boulevard v.</i>	
v. State		v. Richmond	1877	Forsyth	463
82 Ala.	1263	v. Woodworth	437	<i>Forsythe v. Norcross</i>	1558
7 Tex.	2260, 2281	<i>Foot v. D. Co. v. Malony</i>	1944	<i>Fort v. Clarke</i>	1573
v. Wallace	950	<i>Forbes v. Caruthers</i>	1917, 1956	v. State	2059
<i>Flynn v. B. E. L. Co.</i>	1978	v. Howard	716	<i>Fort Smith Oil Co. v.</i>	
v. State	1760, 1755	v. Morse	266	Slover	1078, 1750
v. Sullivan	1651, 2520	v. Myers	406	<i>Fort Wayne v. Coombs</i>	438
<i>Flynt v. Bodenhamer</i>	561	v. Snyder	1389	v. Doolittle	561, 571
<i>Flynt B. & C. Co. v. Brown</i>	1951	v. Wale	1309, 2138	<i>Fort Worth & D. C. R. Co.</i>	
<i>Fockler v. Simpson</i>	1709	v. Wall	2141	v. Thompson	1976
<i>Foerst v. Kelso</i>	2509	v. Waller	581	<i>Fortescue & Coake's Case</i>	803, 1364
<i>Foerster v. U. S.</i>	1614	<i>Force v. Martin</i>	133, 905	<i>Fosdahl v. State</i>	194, 367
<i>Foertach v. Germuller</i>	619	<i>Forcheimer v. Stewart</i>	2475	<i>Foskett & B. Co. v.</i>	
<i>Fogarty v. Finley</i>	1635	<i>Ford v. Beech</i>	1936	Swayna	2495
<i>Fogel v. R. Co.</i>	1951	v. Cunningham	1234, 1280	<i>Foss v. Haynes</i>	2257
<i>Fogg v. Dennis</i>	693, 2015	v. Ford		<i>Fossett v. State</i>	1618
v. Hill	463	4 Ala.	2086	<i>Fosler v. Schriber</i>	2329
<i>Fogleman v. State</i>	1021, 1022	7 Humph.	1503, 1605, 1611, 1985	<i>Fossam v. R. Co.</i>	714
<i>Fok Yang Yo v. U. S.</i>	1354	11 Humph.	1415, 1693	<i>Foster v. Beals</i>	1083
<i>Folck v. Williams</i>	2466	v. Grey	1080, 1082, 1257, 1573	v. Bowman	1195
<i>Folger v. Boynton</i>	1067	v. Hale	1321	v. Brooks	1621, 1938
<i>Folk v. Schaeffer</i>	1053	v. Haskell	1776	v. Collner	2008, 2016
<i>Folkes v. Chadd</i>	442, 451, 728, 1917	v. Nesmith	2164	v. Crawford	2540
<i>Foley v. Platt</i>	715	v. R. Co.	1561	v. F. & C. Co.	675, 1770
v. Royal Arcanum	2388	v. Savage	2433	v. Foster	2106
v. State		v. State		v. Globe Venture	
59 N. J. L.	205	71 Ala.	15, 106, 689, 1938	Synd.	2566, 2569
Wyo., 72 Pac.	1434, 1445, 2098	34 Ark.	351	v. Gray	7
<i>Foley-Wadsworth Co. v.</i>		92 Ga.	987	v. Hall	
Solomon	2525	73 Miss.	2501	12 Pick.	334, 1082, 2291, 2294, 2295
<i>Follain v. Dupré</i>	530	75 Miss.	832, 852	7 S. & R.	2169
v. Lefevre	2168, 2578	101 Tenn.	136, 279	v. Jolly	2444
<i>Follansbee v. Walker</i>	1911, 2351	v. Teal	1347	v. McDonald	2205
<i>Follett v. Jefferyes</i>	2298	v. Tennant	2317, 2319	v. Mackay	1195, 1196, 2550
<i>Folly v. Smith</i>	1911	v. Tirrell	2444	v. Mackinnon	2-15, 2416, 2419
<i>Folsom v. Brown</i>	1022, 2349, 2356	v. Whitaker	1249	v. Magill	1249
v. Cressey	2450	v. Wiley	461	v. Mansfield	2408
v. Log-driving Co.	759, 760, 761	<i>Forde's Case</i>	1020, 1037	v. Montgomery	1674
		<i>Fordham v. Gouverneur</i>	458	v. Newbrough	1985
		v. Smith	1006	v. Nowlin	1133, 1779
		<i>Fordyce v. Godman</i>	1350		
		v. Lowman	1951		

TABLE OF CASES.

	Section		Section		Section
Foster v. People		Fox v. Stevens	282	Fraser v. James	1352
18 Mich.	348,	v. Vanderbeck	2097	v. Jennison	1304, 1502,
	2270, 2376	v. Whitney	529		1503, 1908,
63 N. Y.	1157	v. Wunderslich	2349		1938, 2384,
v. Pierce	2276	Foxley's Case	276		2391
v. Pointer	1208	Foxworth v. Brown	1254, 1318,	v. Pigott	2463
v. Shaw	1128, 1646, 1676		1851	v. Sutherland	2311
v. Sinkler	1554, 1561	Fraim v. Ins. Co.	571	v. Tupper	1951
v. State		Fraim v. State	1062	Fratini v. Caslani	1730, 2159,
88 Ala.	1195	Fralick v. Presley	1083, 1884,		2233
45 Ark.	580		1890	France v. State	1182, 2281
70 Miss.	1803	Framingham Mfg. Co. v.		Fraser v. Linton	1124
63 N. Y.	414	Barnard	1469	Frazier v. Basset	1651
39 Tex. Cr.	521	France v. Lucy	1206	v. Drayton	1542
v. Trull	1269	Francis v. Edwards	1072	v. Langhlin	1680, 2218
v. Wallace	1250, 1293,	v. Francis	2531	v. McCloskey	406
	1779	v. Hazelrig	1065	v. Moore	1312
v. Ward	716	v. Ins. Co.	1195	v. R. Co.	250, 1984
v. Woodfin	1779	v. Mayor	1678	v. State	
v. Worthing	1040, 1042	v. Roades	615	42 Ark.	1029, 2100
Foster's Appeal	1267, 1736	v. Rosa	770, 1018	135 Ind.	351, 2273
Foster's Will	797, 2016	v. Wilkinson	1085, 1738	Frear v. Brinker	1911
Fouché v. Bank	2109	Franco v. Bolton	986	v. Evertson	1085
Fonke v. Douglass	1350	Frank v. Bank	795	Fred r. Fred	2408
v. Ray	1215	v. Lilienfeld	604	Fred M. Lawrence, The	285
Fouk v. Colburn	1267	v. Longstreet	1206, 1213	Fredericks v. Judah	1388
v. Eckert	1985	v. Morley's Estate	2317	Frederickson v. Johnson	406
Foulkes v. Sellway	77, 206,	v. Pennle	1543	Fredericton Boom Co.	
	692	v. Renter	1225	v. McPherson	1890
Foulke's Case	1359	v. State		Fredin v. Richards	1770
Fountain v. Boodle	1984	39 Miss.	824, 833	Fredrick v. State	857
v. Brown	229, 568,	94 Wis.	2497	Free v. Buckingham	932, 935,
	1938, 1974	Frank Waterhouse Co. v.			944, 1817,
v. Lynn	1652	Rock Island A. M. Co.	288		1820, 2214
v. Young	2302	Frankenthal v. Solomonson	2235	v. Hawkins	2444
Fourth Nat'l Bank v.		Frankford & B. T. Co.		Freel v. R. Co.	2382
Albany	1076, 1083,	v. R. Co.	461	Freeland v. Heron	1073
	1890	Frankfort & K. R. R. Co.		Freeman v. Arkell	1194, 1195,
Fonte v. State	318	v. Windsor	1943		2368
Fowkes v. Ins. Co.	1021	Frankhouser v. Neally	1415	v. Brewster	
v. Pascoe	2065	Frankland v. Johnson	2444	93 Ga.	1076, 1464,
Fowler v. Fowler		Franklin v. Com.	949, 1041,		2148, 2296,
111 Mich.	770, 1944		1072, 1124,		2317
118 Mich.	73	v. Creyon	1215, 1658	94 Ga.	830
v. Hoffman	1275	v. Franklin	85, 318,	v. Brittin	529
v. Ins. Co.	64		934, 1021,	v. Fogg	285
v. Lewis	1690		2016	v. Freeman	612
v. Middlesex	714	v. Mayor	726	v. Ins. Co.	1951
v. More	1267	v. State		v. Phillippis	1483, 1588
v. Pierce	1350	28 Ala.	851	v. Price	74
r. Sergeant	285	29 Ala.	194, 246	v. State	
v. Simpson	1484	69 Ga.	792, 2364	112 Ga.	1445
v. State	804	Franklin Bank v. Navig.		40 Tex. Cr.	1750
v. Strawberry Hill	1899	Co.	905, 907,	v. Walker	1058
Fox v. B. & O. K. Co.	1168		1028, 1078	Freeny v. Freeny	507
v. Barrett	1062	Franklin Fire Ins. Co.		Freleigh v. State	1878
v. Lambson	167, 1195,	v. Gruver	1946, 1947	Fremont B. & E. Co. v.	
	1225, 1239,	v. Martin	2425, 2434	Peters	1037, 1044
	1651, 2454	Franklin Syndicate, re	2282	Fremont E. & M. V.	
v. Lead Works	949	Franklin's Adm'r's Appeal	2514	R. Co. v. Marley	1325,
v. Mining Co.	439, 2524,	Franks v. Gress Lumber Co.	771		1943
	2580	Frary v. Gusha	1938	v. Whalen	1943
v. Pedigo	1188	Fraser v. Berkeley	1768, 1769	Fremoult v. Dedire	2573
v. Peninsular Works	1700	v. Black	2098	French v. Day	2498
v. People	318, 1249,	v. Charleston	1661, 2451	v. Fitch	463
	1256	v. Drew	2349	v. Hall	1911
v. R. Co.	2413	v. Fraser	745	v. Merrill	1126, 1129
v. Reil	1287, 1500	v. Hopkins	1647, 1650	v. Millard	923, 1612, 1985
v. State	2569			v. Piper	463

TABLE OF CASES.

FRE

	Section		Section		Section
French v. Sale	891, 923, 1111, 1612, 1614, 1615, 1985	Fuller v. Rice v. State	1390	Gage v. Caraher v. Eddy	1384
v. Spinning	461	117 Ala.	794, 851, 1442, 1974	167 Ill.	1267, 1270
v. State	233	109 Ga.	821, 828, 2238	179 Ill.	1082, 2522
v. Ware	2237, 2337	v. Valiquette	15	v. Meyers	451, 1201
v. Wilkinson	437, 1154	v. Weaver	2471	v. Parmelee	291
Freyman v. Knecht	437	Fullerton v. Fordyce	682, 1873, 2220, 2484	v. Smith	1165, 1802
Fretwell v. State	882	Fullington v. Williams	1350	Gagg v. Vetter	456, 1168
Frick v. Barbour	221	Fulmer v. Com.	392	Gagnon v. Dana	2495
v. Reynolds	1084	Fulmore v. R. Co.	199	Gahagan v. People v. R. Co.	65, 249, 376, 1984, 2507
Fricker v. Moore	803	Fulsome v. Concord	1977	Gainer v. Cotton	1239, 1513, 1651, 2141
Friedberg v. People	2058	Fulton v. Bayne	1225	Gaines v. Catron v. Com.	950, 1022, 1028, 1873
Friedlander v. Assur. Co.	907	v. Central Bank	1890	v. Green P. I. M. Co.	1645
Friel v. Wood	2231	v. Hood	2027	v. Horrigan	1350
Friend v. Burlough	1749, 1750	v. Hughes	1034	v. Relf	894, 923, 987, 1112, 1612, 1632, 1644, 1645, 1730, 1985, 2008, 2086
v. Hanrill	259, 367, 1789	v. McCracken	728	v. State	
v. Ingersoll	1698	v. Northern Ill. College	2538	99 Ga.	505, 507
Friendly v. Lee	736, 738, 763	v. State	105	108 Ga.	1750
Fries v. Brugler	987, 1021, 1026, 1028, 2268, 2270	Fullon Bank v. Benedict	1985	v. White	2354
Frink v. Frink	2450	v. Stafford	901, 913, 1885, 1890	Gainesville J. & S. R. Co.	
v. Phelps	1777	Fulton Co. v. Phillips	2349	v. Edmondson	2509
v. Potter	571, 1415	Fulton Works v. Kimball	283	v. Wall	285
Frith v. Frith	792	Fulton's Estate	1542, 1548	Gainsford v. Grammar	2294
v. Sprague	1271	Fulwood's Case	2239	Galbraith v. Galbraith	585
Frita v. Tel. Co.	481, 1951, 1974	Fund Com'rs v. Glass	2165	v. Green	1133
Frizell v. Cole	664	Funderberg v. State	59, 1109	v. McLain	612, 2334
Froman v. Com.	1877, 2018	Funderhuk v. State	1072	v. Zimmerman	1388, 1409
Frome v. Dennis	1777	Funk v. Davis	2477	Galbreath v. Eicheiberger	9, 987
Frontino v. Frost	2089	v. Eggleston	614	v. Knoxvillie	1230
Frost v. Brown	1267, 1573	v. Ely	1551, 1557	Gale v. Ins. Co.	581
v. Rosecrans	15, 581	v. Mohr	2312	v. Lincoln	1072
v. Shapleigh	2450	v. U. S.	276	v. People	987, 1808, 2268, 2276
v. Wolf	1213	Funkhouser v. Pogue	2322	v. R. Co.	950
Fruit Dispatch Co. v. Murray	1976	Fnnston v. R. Co.	1951	v. Salas	50
Fry v. Bennett	406	Fnqna v. Bogard v. Com.	1085, 1435, 1445	v. Shillock	18
v. State		Furber v. Hilliard	705, 2024	Galena & C. U. R.	
27 Ind.	1674	Furnbsh v. Maryland C. Co.	1976	Co. v. Fay	461, 1029, 1748, 1750, 1757
96 Tenn.	928	Furlong v. Carraher	102 Ia. 1938, 1958	Galena & S. W. R. Co. v. Haslam	1943
v. Stowers	1072, 1082, 1568	102 Ia.	1938	Gallagher v. Assur. Co.	1246, 1313
v. Wood	1404, 1406	Furman v. Peay	1558	v. Dearygy	1513
Frye v. Bank	923, 1985	Furneaux v. Hutchins	380	v. McBride	2593
Fudge v. Payne	2465	Furrow v. Chapin	2235	v. Land Co.	1247
Fugate v. Pierce	613	Furson v. Clogg	1469	v. People	571
Fulbright v. Perry Co.	2500	Furst v. R. Co.	1020, 1040	v. R. Co.	1597, 1690, 1693, 1698, 1699
Fulcher v. State	821, 2272	Fussell v. State	284, 660	v. Williamson	2311
Fulham v. Howe	1671, 1684	Fyson v. Kemp	1279	Gallaher v. State	851
Fulkerson v. Holmes	1481, 1490, 1573			Gallick v. Bordeaux	1779
Fullam v. Rose		G.		Gallivan v. O'Donnell	2529
Fuller v. Dean	1072	Gable v. Ranch	87, 1302, 1913	Galpin v. Armstrong	2166
v. Fletcher	2349, 2354	Gadbois v. R. Co.	1951	Galveston v. Barbour	1749
v. Fox	2016	Gaddis v. Lord	2115	Galveston H. & S. A. R. Co. v. Davis	208, 250, 1984
v. Fuller		Gadshy v. Dyer	907	v. Matlis	1908
17 Cal.	1828, 2086	Gaetano and Maria, The	5	Galvin v. Palmer	1680, 2168
108 Ga.	280	Gaffney v. People	1028, 1263		
177 Mass.	2336	Gafford v. Invest. Co. v. State	1199		
v. Hampton	1062	122 Ala.	390		
v. Hollander	1858	125 Ala.	1034		
v. Ins. Co.	1955	Gage v. Bulkeley	1271, 1703		
v. Jackson	252, 437	v. Campbell	1210		
v. Knights of Pythias	2388				
v. Prentice	2202				

TABLE OF CASES.

Section	Section	Section	Section
1354	Galvin v. R. Co. 2433	Gardner v. R. Co. 21, 987	Gartside v. Ontram 2212
1270	v. State 2349	v. State 81 Ga. 950	Garvey v. Hibbert 1 Jac. & W. 2166
2522	Gamble v. Mfg. Co. 2466	90 Ga. 1963	19 Ves. Jr. 2477
1201	Gambrill v. Schooley 406, 460, 581, 1270, 2018	4 Ind. 1908	Garvin v. Carroll 1215, 1216, 2529
291		Tex. Cr. 34 S. W. 1072	v. State 1154, 2016
1802	Ganahl v. Shore 1539, 1547	v. Vidal 2016	v. Wells 2572
1168	Ganaway v. Dramatic Ass'n 1755	v. Way 341, 987	Garwood v. Dennis 1133, 1311, 1420, 1573, 1680, 1778, 2141
2495		Gardner Peerage Case 688, 760, 1230, 1490, 1662, 1700, 1722, 2380	v. Hastings 1225, 1651
3086	Gandolfo v. Palmer v. State 63, 246, 1983, 1986	Gardom v. Woodward 581	v. R. Co. 1698
376,		Garey v. Nicholson 2113, 2115	Gary v. Terrill 1779
2507		Garfield M. & M. Co. v. Hamner 1225	Gaskill v. King 2237, 2336
1513,		Garland, ex p. v. Foster Co. S. Bank 1188	v. Skene 1073
2141	Ganer v. Lady Lanesborough 564, 1271	v. Gaines 2184	Gass v. Stinson 586, 986, 1377, 1391, 1985
1651	Gannon v. Gaslight Co. v. State 2495, 2339	v. Scott 2294	Gassenheimer v. State 275, 326, 770, 1974
1022,	v. Stevens 770, 775, 2099	Garnan v. Fox 2426	Gassert v. Noyes 581
1873	Ganong v. Green 334	Garnean v. Mill Co. 1654	Gassett v. Glazier 2556
1645	Gant v. Carmichael 1230	Garner v. Graves v. State 1085	Gaston v. Merriam 392, 1225, 1352
1350	Gant v. Jenks 1074	28 Fla. 111, 246, 247, 248	v. State 364
987,	Gantling v. State 40 Fla. 568, 826, 1012, 2497, 2073, 2081	31 Fla. 246, 247, 248	Gate City Abstract Co. v. Post 93
1632,		5 Lea 18, 2110	Gates v. Bennett 1267
1730,		76 Miss. 1021	v. Fleischer 681, 683, 1951
2086		v. Taylor 1777	v. People 154, 841, 1125, 1128, 1852
507,		Garnet v. Ball 1070	v. R. Co. 2552
1750	Ganton v. Size 1464	Garnett, re v. Ferrand 1834	v. Winslow 1678
2354	Gant v. Cox 916	Garnett's Goods v. Garnett-Botfield 2421	Gathercole v. Mlall 1194, 1195, 2150
2509	Garber v. Blatchley v. State 285, 1732	Garnier v. Berry 1651	Gattis v. Kilgo 1064
285	Garbatt L. Co. v. Gress L. Co. 1189, 1651	Garnsey v. Rhodes 950	Gatzmeyer v. Peterson 133, 282, 2060
2294	v. People 1700	Garr v. Craney 561	Gandy v. R. Co. 456
585	Garcia v. State 1802	Garrard v. Frankel v. State 2418, 822, 836, 838, 861	Gaunt v. Harkness v. State 2015, 166, 1150, 1154
1133	Garcin v. Garcin 2046	Garrella v. Alexander 694, 728, 1993, 2003	Ganntlett v. Whitworth 1940
2534	Garden City v. Heller 754	Garrett v. Ferguson v. Hanshue 1288, 1299, 1300	Gavan v. Ellsworth 1387
1409	Garden City S. Co. v. Miller 1681	v. Hefin 2503	Gavisk v. R. Co. 1951
9,	Gardenshire v. Parks 1514, 1985	v. Mannheimer 581	Gavit v. Snowhill 1681
987	Gardere v. Fisk v. Ins. Co. 2164	v. Southern R. Co. 2509	Gay v. Lloyd 1256, 1681
1230	Gardiner v. Gray v. People 2434, 1157	v. Sparks 905, 907, 916	v. Rogers 1186
581	Gardner v. Barney v. Bartholomew 987, 1116	v. State 1028	v. State 2081
1072	v. Brookline 463	v. Tel. Co. 1969	Gayle v. Bishop 1877
1608,	v. Connelly 907	v. Weinberg 54 S. C. 1330	Gazett, re 1280
2276	v. Eberhart 2575	59 S. C. 1623	Gearhart v. Dixon 1661
950	v. Frieze 1738	Garretty v. Brazell 2355	Geary v. People 1022
50	v. Gardner 23 Nev. 397	Garrigues v. Marris 1186, 1205, 1871, 2105, 2134	v. Stevenson 64, 258, 1078
18	177 Pa. 112	Garrison v. Blanton 689, 1936, 1938, 1975	Gebhart v. Burket 64, 66
748,	104 Tenn. 2239	v. Owens 1812, 2406	v. Shindle 499
1757	v. Grannis 1311, 1651, 2138, 2140, 2141	v. People 2061	Geer v. Ward 1483, 1484
1943	v. Heyer 2463	Garrott v. Johnson 2098	Geer v. Durham W. Co. 561
246,	v. Irvin 2311	Gartrell v. Stafford 2153	v. Gony 2341
1313	v. Kellogg 1135	Gartside v. Ins. Co. 2326	v. M. L. & M. Co. 797, 2016
1513	v. Ladne 1658		Geery v. Hopkins 1177, 1223, 2211
2593	v. Lewis 1271, 1703		Gehrke v. State 1938
1247	v. Madeira 398		Geiger v. State 2339
571	v. M. C. R. Co. 2552		Gelsendorff v. Eagles 684
693,	v. Mecker 377, 1066, 1404, 2954		Geist v. Rapp 791
1699	v. Minea 1075		Gelott v. Goodspeed 1304, 1312, 1320
2311	v. Mont 1750, 1852		
851	v. People 1676		
1779	v. Port Blakely M. Co. 321		
2529	v. Preston 321		
2166			
749			
250,			
984			
908			
2168			

TABLE OF CASES.

GEL

	Section		Section		Section
Gelpeke v. Dubuque	6	Gertz v. Fitchburg R. Co.	967,	Gilbert v. Nat'l C. R. Co.	2573,
Gelston v. Hoyt	3546		1000, 1017,		2578
Geneva v. Barnett	796		1106, 1109, 1114	v. Odum	657, 1940
Gentry v. McGinnis	167, 1151,	Gerrais v. Baird	1290, 1320	v. Palmer	1073
	1154, 1900, 1977	Geschell v. Mill		v. Porter	1058
Gene v. State	1938, 2501	16 Miss.	681	v. R. Co.	
Geohagan v. Eckles	2164	24 Miss.	1951	160 Mass.	225, 792
George v. Pilcher	1106, 1108,	Gethin v. Walker	1206, 1225	116 Mich.	905
	1109	Gettelman v. Assur. Co.	2407	v. State	2511
v. R. Co.	461	Getto v. Birkost	2444	Gilbraith v. State	347
v. Radford	1877	Gott v. Hamlin	283	Gilbreath v. State	1800, 1404
v. State		Gotsaloff v. Selinger	613, 2287	Gilchrist v. Ass'n	736, 747
39 Miss.	2056	Geyman v. District Court	1829	v. State	1714, 1730,
16 Nebr.	1021	Gholson v. Lefevre	1225		2239
61 Nebr.	276, 651, 1896	Giannone v. Fleetwood	1290,	v. M'Kee	920
			1291	v. Martin	1464
v. Stubbs	585	Gibbleshouse v. Stong	1060, 1060,	Gildersleeve v. Caraway	2098
v. Surrey	693		1082, 2257,	Giles v. Hodge	283
v. Thompson	1203		2407	v. Powell	1876
v. Triplett	904, 905	Giberson v. Mills Co.		v. Vandiver	1072
Georgia v. Bond	73, 2276, 2277	174 Pa.	1078	Gill v. Caldwell	1818
v. Keppel	2071	187 Pa.	1404	v. Ferrin	2465
Georgia H. Ins. Co. v.		Gibbon v. Featherston-		v. Shurtleff	2215
Campbell	946	hangh	2518	v. Staylor	
v. Warten	1078	Gibbons v. Proprietors of		95 Md.	1127
Georgia Med. Co. v. Hyman		Waterloo Bridge	2259	Md., 55 Atl.	377
& Co.	2415	v. Powell	1208	v. Strozier	1651, 1676,
Georgia P. R. Co. v. Strick-		v. R. Co.	455, 456		1779
land	1195	Gibbs v. Cook	1312	v. Watson	986
Georgia R. Co. v. Homer	987	v. Lanabury	1051	Giffan v. Sigman	2115
Georgia R. & B. Co.		v. Linsley	1125, 1126	Gillard v. Bates	2310
v. Fitzgerald	1061, 1451	v. Pike	29	Gillebrand, ex p.	1346, 1666
v. Hicks	1976	Gilbuey v. Marchay	1267		2450
v. Lybrand	280, 959, 2276	Gibson v. Com.	1215, 1681	Gilleland v. Martin	2581
v. Smith	1035	v. Gibson		v. Schuyler	1712
Georgia S. & F. R. Co. v.		24 Mo.	1736	Gillespie v. Burleson	1777, 1778
Cartledge	283	9 Yerg.	689, 1938, 1958	v. Gillespie	2341
Gerald v. State	1447	v. Goldthwaite	1391	v. People	609, 1398
Geralopulo v. Wieler	1240, 1288,	v. Hatchett	461, 1951, 1976	Gillet v. Phelps	1082
	1456	v. Hunter	38, 318, 377,	Gillett v. Abbott	1295
Gerdes v. Iron & F. Co.	2553		2495	Gillian v. Perkinson	1320
Gere v. Ins. Co.	716	v. Ins. Co.	2558	v. State	923, 1965
Gerhauser v. Ins. Co.	1415	v. Peebles	1466	Gillian v. State	270, 2069
Germain v. Lumber Co.	2437,	v. Poor	2139, 2143	Gillies v. Smithers	1314
	2440	v. Robinson	2110	Gillis v. Gillis	1302, 1511
German v. German	2336	v. State	1442	Gillmor's Will	1511
German Bank v. Citizens'		v. Sutton	1081	Gillmore v. Fitzgerald	2105
Bank	669	v. Thornton	1189	Gillooley v. State	2395
German Ins. Co. v. Bartlett	1460	v. Trowbridge	696, 2008	Gillrie v. Lockport	458
v. Gibe	2437	v. Winter	1076	Gilman v. Groas	2410
German N. Bank v.		Giddings v. Smith	2145	v. R. Co.	249
Leonard	1073, 1330	Gidney v. Logan	1779	v. Riopelle	380, 661, 1680
German Sav. Bank v.		Giffen v. Lewiston	283	v. Sheets	2529
Kerlin	1877	Gifford v. Ford	2016	v. Strafford	681, 683
German Theol. School v.		v. People	1852, 1985	Gilmanton v. Ham	166, 1154
Dubuque	792	Gihon v. Albert	2210	Gilmer v. Atlanta	458
German-American Bank v.		Gilbert v. Boyd	1207, 2535	v. Higley	1890
Stickler	393	v. Campbell		Gilmore v. Paper Co.	1078
German-Amer. Ins. Co.		1 Hann. N. Br.	1073	v. State	149
v. Paul	714, 2337	13 N. Br.	1890	v. Swisher	2008, 2504
v. Steige	1947	v. Com.		Gilpins v. Consequa	1873
Germania L. Ins. Co. v.		Ky., 51 S. W.	580	Gilruth v. Gilruth	1951
Ross-Lewin	569, 1671	111 Ky.	1842, 2071	Gilson v. Gilson	1456
Germinder v. Machinery		v. Dnnan	1244, 1254	Gimbel v. Hafford	1200, 1212
M. I. Ass'n	987	v. Gilbert	664, 1738	v. Salomon	1195
Geron v. Felder	1680, 1684	v. Gooderham	1023, 1041	Gindrat v. People	2183, 2264
Gerrish v. Gerrish	770	v. Guild	1951	Ginger v. Ginger	2066
v. Pike	1003	v. Kennedy	463, 1246, 1976	Gingrich v. Foltz	1257
v. Sweetser	1062	v. McGinnis	2425, 2440	Ginn v. Com.	133, 2276
v. Whitfield	455				

Section	Section	Section	Section
2573.	Glou v. State 852	Godfrey v. Norris 1316	Goodman v. James 1681
2578	Ginterman v. Steamship Co. 1951	v. Macaulay v. State 255	v. Kennedy v. State 1969
1940	Glordano v. Brandywine Granite Co. 398	Godkin v. Monahan 1438, 1445	141 Ind. Meigs 326
1073	1616, 1900	Goetz v. Goetz 2341	Goodrich v. Conrad 2595
1058	Glard v. Kalamazoo 1732	Goetsch v. State 1781	v. Hanson 1678
5, 792	Girdner v. Walker 1195	Goetsen v. Com. 363	v. Senate 1588
905	Gist v. McJunkin 1254	Goetschel v. Fisher 770	v. Stone 2427
2511	Gitt v. Watson 1856, 2539	Goetsch v. Dairs 616	v. Tracy 406
347	Gittings v. Hall 1223, 1236, 1982, 1651, 1778, 2138, 2141	Goins v. Moberly v. State 1842, 1898	v. Weston 1234, 1268, 1375
1404	Givens v. Hundley v. State 76	Golden v. Eddy 1409	Goodright v. Moss 1377, 1386
1, 747	Glasgow v. Ridgeley 18, 1299	Golden v. State 1781, 1840, 1842	1484, 1492, 1495, 2063
1730.	Glaspell v. R. Co. 2349	25 Ga. 276	v. Sanl 1492
2239	Glass v. Beach 736	v. Vyse 1777	Goodrum v. State 2337
923	v. Bennett 1126, 1127, 1128, 1130, 1730	Golden Reward M. Co. v. Buxton M. Co. 439, 460, 1978	Goodsell v. Leonard v. Taylor 1681
1464	v. Gilbert 2529	Golder v. Bressler 1195, 1678, 2535	Goodson v. Brothers v. U. S. 1247, 1587, 2580
2098	Glanzer Mfg. Co. v. Voter 654, 785	v. Lund 246, 569, 1983	Goodtitle v. Braham 84, 1993, 2026
283	Glasner v. Whitley 1108, 1109	Goldie v. McDonald 2534	v. Clark 1802
1676.	Glanier v. Hebron 792	Goldsberry v. State 326	v. Clayton 528
1779	Gleadow v. Atkins 1464, 1466, 1471	Goldsboro v. R. Co. 792, 2552	v. Milburn 2520
986	Gleason v. Kinney v. Knapp 1539, 1548, 617	Goldsborough v. Piddnck 378, 791	v. Southern 2477
2115	Glenister v. Harding 1645, 1646	Goldsby v. U. S. 389, 1854, 1873	Goodwin v. Assur. Soc. 95, 1684, 2536
2310	Glenn v. Carson 1029	Goldschmidt v. Marryat 1858, 2219	v. Goodwin 2432
1666	v. Gleason 1263, 1890	Goldsmith v. Friedlander v. Picard 2054, 76	v. Harrison 1718
2450	v. Hhnt 1382, 1684	v. Sawyer v. State 2580, 246	v. Nicklin 619
2531	v. Philadelphia & W. C. T. Co. 1890	Goldstein v. Black v. People 2012, 2514	v. Scott 561
1712	v. Rogers 1194, 1208, 1243	Goldstone v. Davidson 2110	v. Spray 1592, 1670
1778	v. State 351	Goldthorp v. Goldthorp 1938	v. State 102 Ala. 851
2341	v. Stewart 1873	Goldthorp's Estate 1738	95 Ind. 682, 699, 1671, 1938
1398	Glidewell v. Martin 1350	Golson v. Ebert 1704	114 Wis. 770, 821, 987, 2194, 2239
1082	Globe Accident Ins. Co. v. Gerisch 41, 1719, 1750	Goitra v. Wolcott 2303	v. West 2199, 2201
1295	Globe Printing Co. v. Stahl 2155	Gonzales v. State 2061	Goodwin G. S. & M. Co.'s Appeal 2297, 2312
1320	Globe Savings Bank v. Nat'l Bank 1557	Good v. Knox v. Zook 905, 916, 2503	Goodwyn v. Goodwyn 20 Ga. 728, 934, 1922
1985	Glos v. Cary 1225, 1859	Goodall v. Goodall v. Little 1291, 2317, 2319	25 Ga. 1213, 1681
2059	v. Hallowell 1705	Goodbar v. Lidikay 1443	Goon Bow v. People 987, 1142, 1842
1314	v. Huey 2515	Goode v. Riley v. State 2417, 2418, 2462, 2463	Goon Gan v. Richardson 2437
1511	Glossop v. Pole 1670	Goodell v. Labadie 987, 1126, 1132	Gorder v. Canning Co. 2169
1105	Glover v. Hnnnewell v. Patten 736, 2329	Goodell's Ex'rs v. Gibbons 157	Gordon v. Bucknell v. Burris 112, 1738, 2474, 2477, 2500
2395	v. People 216, 352	Goodenough v. Alway 2485, 2538	v. Clapp v. Com. 1777, 2361, 2363
458	v. Scotten v. State 461, 851	Goodfellow's Exr's v. Meegan 1388, 93	v. Funkhouser v. Gordon 905, 1029
890	Gloystine v. Com. 1730	Goodhand v. Benton 17, 995, 1005	Prob. 1 Swanst. 2527, 803, 2111
078	Glubb v. Edwards 1312	Goodhay v. Hendry 1258	v. Irvine v. Kitrell 784, 2477
139	Glyn v. Caulfield 2317, 2319	Goodier v. Lake 1177, 1189	v. Little 1389, 1416
873	Glyan v. Bank of Eng-land 1409, 1466, 1518	Gooding v. Morgan 2575	v. Miller 1312
951	v. Houston 2257, 2260	Gooding v. Goodings 2462, 2470	v. Montgomery 2572
456	Goblet v. Beechy 2467	Goodlett v. Kely 1388	v. Parmelee 1066
212	Godard v. Gray 1864	Goodliff v. Fuller 1858	v. Payne 1315
195	Godard v. Gardner v. Groninger 2311, 704	Goodman v. Goodman 2083	v. People 279
264	v. Parker 1275		v. Price 701
966	v. Pratt 1624		v. R. Co. 461
257	Godding v. Orentt 1543		
276			

TABLE OF CASES.

GOR

	Section		Section		Section
Gordon v. Searing	1213, 1225, 1867	Governor v. Jeffreys	1635, 1674	Granger v. George	2450
v. Secretan	1298	Gowen v. Bush	1072, 1750	v. Warrington	2296, 2363
v. State		v. Glaser	456	Grangers' Ins. Co. v. Brown	2221
68 Ga.	2265	Gower v. Emery	2313	Grannis v. Brandon	67
3 Ia.	59, 988	Grabowsky v. Baumgart	392	Grant v. Coal Co.	2109
v. Trevarthan	2354	Grace v. Adams	2415	v. Cole	1536
v. Tweedy		v. Hanks	2054	v. Dreyfus	748
71 Ala.	2336	v. R. Co.	1951	v. Grant	
74 Ala.	1213	Gracie v. Morris	1267	34 Beav.	2065
v. Waterous	2434	Graddy v. Tel. Co.	1078	L. R. 5 C. P.	2463,
Gordon's Will	1736	Grady v. Sharron	1296		2467, 2473
Gore v. Bowser	2312	Graffam v. Pierce	2442	1 Sand. Ch.	1267, 1736,
v. Curtis	62, 75, 200, 212	Graft v. Lord Bertie	318, 1512		2106,
v. Elwell	1267, 2450	Grafton v. Cnmings	2454	v. Jackson	1056
v. People	1852, 2071	Grafton Bank v. Moore	1624	v. Lewis	1086
*Gores v. Wadsworth	1675	v. Woodward	15	v. Maddox	2463
Gorgas v. Hertz	1194	Gragg v. Learned	1318, 1648,	v. Pendery	2103
Gorham v. Canton	1784		1651	v. State	1842
v. Carroll	529, 2222, 2223	Graham, matter of	2578	v. Thompson	233, 1938
v. Peyton	728	v. Anderson	2578	v. Varney	1951
Gorham Mfg. Co. v. Emery		v. British C. L. & I. Co.	2058	Grant's Succession	1651, 2109,
R. T. D. Co.	2212	v. Campbell	1194, 1651		2167
Gorkow's Estate	634, 2477	v. Chrystal	928, 2105	Grantham v. State	98
Gorman v. Montgomery	1540	v. Com.	2501	Grattan v. Life Ins. Co.	
v. Park	716	v. Dyster	1259, 1884	80 N. Y.	2382, 2384,
v. R. Co.	1698, 1877	v. Gordon	1254		2387
Gormley v. Uthe	1239	v. Henry	1225	92 N. Y.	2116, 2384, 2389
Gorton v. Dyson	1297	v. Larimer	1890	Gratz v. Land & R. L. Co.	2143, 2520
Gosa v. Southern R. Co.	1718,	v. Law	2083	v. Wilson	2535
	1750, 1951	v. Lockhart	747, 1250	Gravely v. State	2512
Goshen v. England	283	v. McReynolds		Graves v. Aisap	1350
v. Richmond	7, 1354	88 Tenn.	996, 1384	v. Battie Creek	1158, 2220
Gosford v. Robb	1256, 1257,	90 Tenn.	784, 1126	v. Bruen	1239, 1651
	1300, 1311, 2141	v. Martin	1770	v. Colwell	2491, 2529
Goss v. Ellison	2432	v. Nowlin	251	v. Davenport	908
v. Lord Nngent	2441, 2455	v. O'Bryan	2538	v. Graves	
v. Turner	1867, 1873	v. O'Falion		70 Ark.	2237
v. Watlington	1474	3 Mo.	1267, 1304	45 N. H.	581
Goss P. P. Co. v. Scott	2211	4 Mo.	1304, 2052, 2314	v. Harris	2235
Gosse v. Tracy	1409	v. Oldis	1208	v. Kennedy	1944
Gossett v. Tolen	1651	v. Pennsylvania Co.	1918,	v. Key	2432
Gossler v. Refinery	561		1926, 1951	v. People	390, 1440
Gotlieb v. Danvers	1206, 1234	v. State	1072	v. U. S.	274, 286, 2243
Gotloff v. Henry	1029	Gran v. Houston	1976, 2354	Gravett v. State	2275
Gottlieb v. Hartman	682, 1013	Granby v. Ménard	2494	Gravlee v. Lamkin	2432
Gonge v. Roberts	463	Grand Gniif R. & B. Co.		Gray v. Brooklyn H. R. Co.	568
Gongh v. McBride	2143	v. Barnes	1320	v. Com.	2071, 2073,
v. St. John	64, 2117	Grand Island Banking Co.			2081
Gould v. Crawford	499, 2098	v. Shoemaker	2016	v. Davis	1186
v. Excelsior Co.	2442	Grand Isle v. Kinney	2406	v. Fielder	1211
v. Gould	2067	Grand Lodge v. Bartes	1486	v. Fox	2308
v. Gould Co.	2169	v. Randolph	457	v. Gray	2069
v. Jones	702, 704	v. Wieting	682, 689, 1671,	v. Haig	291
v. Lakes	112, 1736, 2452		1938, 2500	v. Hardman	1862
v. Leavitt	2446	Grand Pass S. C. v. Crosby	1684	v. Harrison	1779
v. Norfolk Lead Co.	1018,	Grand Rapids v. Bennett	1960	v. Kanfman D. & I. C. Co.	1073
	1026, 2098	v. Hastings	1651		1820
v. Safford	2034, 2045,	v. R. Co.	1943	v. Macallnm	1718, 1722
	2050	Grand Rapids & I. R. Co.		v. McLanghlin	1207, 1212,
v. Schermer	1973	v. Ellison	1951	v. Pentland	2211, 2371, 2374
v. Trowbridge	1195	v. Huntley	438, 689, 1718,		2056, 2059
Goulson v. Wainwright	2250		1721, 1722	v. R. Co.	1896
Gouldin v. Staggers	1215	v. Martin	2388	v. Rollinsford	1062
Gourley v. Hankins	2535	Grand Trunk R. Co.		v. Rnmrill	2500
Gove v. Cather	1635	v. Richardson	455, 456, 461	v. Schneider	1859
Government v. Aloiau	937	Graney v. K. Co.	458		
v. Hering	1398, 1442	Granger, re	1350		
Governor v. Barkley	1196				

TABLE OF CASES.

Section
2450
2, 2363

2221
67
2109
1536
748

2065
2463,
7, 2473
1736,
2106
1056
1086
2463
2109
1842
1, 1938
1931
2109,
2167
93

2384,
2387
2, 2389

2, 2320
2335
2512
1350
2220
1651
2529
908

2237
581
2235
1944
2432
1440
2243
2275
2432

568
2073,
2081
1186
1211
2308
2069
291
1862
1779

1073
1820
1722
212,
2374
2059
1896
1062
2500
1859

Section	Section
Gray v. St. John	335, 1908
v. State	
63 Ala.	398
42 Fla.	664
Grays v. Turnpike Co.	1074
Grayson v. Atkinson	1304, 1311, 1312
v. Bannon	787
v. Com.	247
v. Lynch	568, 665
Graystock v. Barnhart	2525
Greasons v. Davis	1271, 1681, 1684
Great Western Colliery Co. v. Tucker	2212
Great Western R. Co. v. Hanks	664
Great Western Turnpike Co. v. Loomis	2210, 2268
Greaves v. Hunter	701
Grehhin v. Davis	2110
Greely v. Mansur	2349
v. Quimby	1346, 2454
v. Stilson	718
Greely Co. v. Gehhardt	714
Green v. Barker	2534
v. Brown	2531
v. Cank	719, 738, 745, 747, 748, 749, 753, 1362
v. Canthorn	751
v. Chelsea	1587, 2140, 2141
v. Chicago	714, 720, 1943, 2570
v. Com.	363
v. Compagnia	1383
v. Crapo	1576, 2328
v. Fall River	463
v. Ford	1898
v. Gould	770, 1554
v. Graves	1350
v. Green	1225
v. Hart	2123
v. Heritage	2529
v. Howard	2463
v. Indianapolis	1186
v. Lancaster Co.	2451
v. McLeod	2065
v. Nebagamsin	2389
v. Pacific L. Co.	1719
v. Pratt	1540
v. Proude	2143
v. R. Co.	
122 Cal.	1029
171 N. Y.	2381, 2383
v. Skogvist	142
v. State	
69 Ala.	111, 247
38 Ark.	1398
59 Ark.	233
64 Ark.	232, 233, 569, 1938
21 Fla.	2085
40 Fla.	851, 852
43 Fla.	1440, 1667
88 Ga.	838
112 Ga.	1076
Ga., 45 S. E.	1873

Section	Section
Green v. State	
154 Ind.	142, 1033, 1442, 1749, 1750, 1978
97 Tenn.	1072
v. Waller	2164
v. Water Co.	283, 675
v. Weaver	2260, 2275
v. Weiler	1350, 2577
v. Wilkle	2416
v. Woodhury	278, 280
Greenawalt v. McEnelley	2086, 2235
Greenbaum v. Bornhofen	2008, 2016
Greene v. Almand	1491
v. Chickering	1389
v. Durfee	1186, 1678
v. Greene	2245
v. Harriman	1083
v. Ina. Co.	1908
Greene Co. v. Bledsoe	1378
Greenfield v. Kennett	1062, 1607
v. People	273, 568
v. State	273, 1476
Greening v. Keel	787
Greenlaw v. King	2286, 2303, 2329, 2380, 2394
Greenleaf v. R. Co.	18, 1481, 1503
Greenlee v. McDowell	2594
Greenman v. O'Connor	1392
Greenough v. Eccles	900, 905, 907
v. Gaskell	2290, 2291, 2294, 2295, 2306, 2311, 2315, 2319
v. Greenough	1511
v. Sheldon	1208, 1212
Greenshields v. Crawford	1513, 2329
Greenlade v. Dare	253, 959
Greenville N. Bank v. Evans S. B. Co.	2573
Greenwell v. Crow	728, 1951
Greenwood v. Spiller	1678
v. State	1398
Greer v. Ferguson	1678
v. Higgins	1031
v. State	581, 968
Gregg v. Forayth	1225, 1684
v. Jamison	1003, 1037
v. Mallett	1131, 1877
v. State	
106 Ala.	836, 857
3 W. Va.	1839, 1842
Gregory v. Bangh	167
v. Cheatham	1031, 1263
v. Dodge	18
v. Howard	1056, 1062
v. Loose	1073
v. McPherson	1239, 1275
v. Parker	2232
v. Taverner	762, 763
v. Thomas	258
Grellier v. Neale	1303, 2520
Grenell v. R. Co.	655

Section	Section
Grenfell v. Girdlestone	89
Gresham v. Manning	1753
Gresham Hotel Co. v. Manning	1362
Greswold v. Kemp	1684
Grever v. Taylor	581
Greville v. Chapman	1984
Grey v. Hesketh	2256
Gribble v. Pioneer Press Co.	
34 Minn.	404, 406
37 Minn.	1971
Gridley v. Bingham	1086
v. Boggs	1890
Grieve v. H. Co.	1669
Griffen v. Manice	2509
Griffeth v. Griffeth	2337, 2341, 2505
Griffin v. Anburn	458, 2349
v. Brown	607
v. Griffin	2312
v. Harriman	2354
v. Henderson	20
v. Ing	1938, 1958
v. Marquardt	581
v. Sheffield	1305
v. Smith	2336, 2341
v. State	
76 Ala.	1136, 1138, 1761
129 Ala.	1254
14 Oh. St.	318, 1615
32 Tex.	2242, 2243
v. Wall.	1605
v. Willow	1951
v. Wise	1640, 1651
Griffin's Divorce	1666
Griffith v. Davies	2312
v. Diffenderffer	1738, 1890
v. Huston	1225, 1256, 1303
v. Ketchum	2116
v. Richmond	1676
v. Rive	791
v. State	
37 Ark.	1028, 1029, 1031, 1349
140 Ind.	194, 195, 987, 988
v. Williams	1993, 1994
Griffiths v. Montandon	2354
v. R. Co.	2361
Griffitts v. Ivery	2015
v. Payne	88
Grigby v. Water Co.	1976
Grim v. Murphy	1778
Grimes v. Cannell	1890
v. Fall	1256
v. Hilliary	1192, 2498, 2518
v. Keene	1062
v. Kimball	1212
v. Martin	1842
v. Simpson College	1195
v. State	
105 Ala.	1821
68 Ind.	1732
v. Talbot	1247
Grimes D. G. Co. v. Malcolm	1086
Grimshaw v. Kent	1938, 2297

TABLE OF CASES.

ORI

	Section		Section		Section
Grimsinger v. State	652, 652, 1927	Gulf C. & S. F. R. Co. v. Compton	293, 461, 682, 1951	Hackett v. Martin	Section 1065
Grimston v. Cunningham	2442	v. Evansich	461	Hackley v. Hastie	2354
Grindall v. Grindall	1861, 2318	v. Harriett	461	Hackney v. Raymond B. C. Co. v. State	561, 770, 579, 2278, 2277
Grinnell v. Phillips	2352, 2355	v. Johnson	987	Hadden v. Mills	1064
v. R. Co.	1951	83 Tex.	2509	Hadden v. Powell	1779
Grisler v. McKenson	1676	92 Tex.	455	Haddock v. R. Co.	1492, 1603, 2065
Griswold v. Pitcairn	2161, 2163	10 U. S. App.	283	Haddow v. Parry	1471
v. R. Co.	663	v. McGowan	250	Hadduck v. Wilmarth	529
v. State	2100	v. Norfleet	2507, 2509	Hadfield v. Jameson	1269, 1598, 1601
Gritten v. Dickerson	2066, 2498	v. Rowland	461	Hadjo v. Gooden	892, 1188, 1612, 1614, 1983
Grob v. Cushman	2577	v. Shieder	2312	Hadley v. Bean v. Carter	1714, 1729, 1749
Grosvelt v. Burrell	1858	v. Smith	1013	Hadra v. Bank	1391
Groff v. Ramsey	1189, 1677	Gulick v. Gulick	1013	v. Howe	1568
Groh's Sons v. Groh	18	Guilher v. People	1194	Haerle v. Kreihn	613, 2340
Groll v. Tower	2368, 2391	Gully v. Exeter	2406	Hagaman v. Gillie	1213
Grooms v. State	797	Guns v. Giegling	1951	v. Moore	1943
Gross v. Brodrecht	62, 75, 200, 266	Gundlach v. Schott	1881	Hagan v. Carr	791
v. Disney	2538	Gunn v. Peakes	1164	v. Ina Co.	1248
v. Feehan	770	v. R. Co.	1405	v. Merchants' Ins. Co.	2325
v. Scheel	1557	v. Wades	2575	v. State	232
v. Smith	1779	Gunning v. People	616	Hagedorn v. Reid	1518
Groundwater v. Washington	2221	Gunter v. Earnest v. State	1963	Hagenlocher v. R. Co.	1719
Grove v. Elliot	2250	83 Ala.	111, 1966	Hagenow v. People	1442
v. Ware	1306	111 Ala.	770, 779	Ilager v. Cleveland	1074
Grover v. Grover	30 Mo.	v. Watson	1486	v. Shindler	2311
63 N. J. Eq.	1861	Gupton v. Hawkins	2385	Hagerman v. Wigent	2338
Groves v. Groves	9 L. T. R.	Guphill v. Verback	738	Haggenmacher's Patents, re	1003
57 Miss.	803	Gurley v. MacLennan v. Park	2314, 2384	Haggerty v. R. Co.	675, 1951
65 Oh. St.	2433	Gurney v. Howe	1639	Haggitt v. Iniff	1267
Grubb v. State	684, 889	v. Langlands	2026	Haggitt v. Iniff	2165
Grubbe v. Grubbe	1876	v. Morrison	2444	Hahn v. Bettingen	401, 1013, 1623
Grubbe v. Pickett	1339	Gurno v. Janis	1878	v. Penney	
Gruder v. Bowles	1779	Gutgesell v. State	2363	Haig v. Newton	529
Grundy v. Janesville	1873	Gutherless v. Ripley	1551	1 McCord	735, 754
Grusenmeyer v. Logansport	1956	Guthrie v. Shaffer	492	1 Mills Const.	1871
Guard v. Whitehouse	2435	Gutridge v. R. Co.	1951	Haigh v. Beicher	1671
Guardhouse v. Blackburn	2408, 2421, 2452	Gutsch v. McIlhargey	782	Haigh v. Kimbark	716
Gude v. Mankato	252	Guterson v. Morse	949, 987	v. Turner	2349
Gudger v. Benoit	2408, 2420	Gutsell v. Pennie	2169	Hails v. Hill	1684
Guelph C. Co. v. Whitehead	2319	Guy v. Hall	589, 1049, 1080, 1082	v. Palmer	1213, 1658
Gauthier's Case	2373	v. Manuel	1072	Haines, re	2199
Gasparrato v. Young	1953	v. Mead	736, 747	v. Cadwell	760
Garrin v. Hunt	1195	v. State	236, 2378	v. Christie	1554
Garrin v. Hudson	85	Guyette v. Bolton	726, 2518	v. Dennett	529
Gassdorf v. Glanson	1681	Gwainey v. Provident S. L. Assur. Co.	2415	v. Gibson	2580
Gastig v. State	682	Gwin v. Gwin	1738	v. Guthrie	1503
Gaugenheimer v. R. Co.	371	Gwynn v. Frazier	1851	v. Hayden	233, 1738
Gaugins v. Van Gorder	1198	Gyford v. Woodgate	2 Camp.	v. Ina Co.	463, 781, 1261, 1263
Gault v. Whitcomb	2275, 2378	11 East	1347, 1864	v. State	1329, 1667
Gaule v. Thornton	1159	Gyles v. Hill	1664	v. Trust Co.	2494
Gaule v. Thornton	1312	Gynn v. Kirby	1279	Hainsworth v. State	238, 1974
Gaudry v. Green	2433, 2441	H. Haak v. Breidenbach	2313	Hain v. Pawson	463
Gaudry v. Quivot	1066	Haas v. Choussard	1943	Halsden v. Catshansen	2569
Gault v. Hall	1738	Habershon v. Troby	2222, 2378	Haltorn v. Rosenhalm	1839
Guilliams v. Hulle	1837	Hach v. Rollins	2239	Haltorn v. State	2085
Guinan's Appeal	1777	Hacker v. Young	1647	Haldeman v. Terr.	968, 2079
Guinan v. State	68	Hackett v. Bonnell	623, 1981	Hale v. Cushing	1352
Guiterman v. Steamship Co.	661	v. King	2450	v. Dunforth	616
Gulf C. & S. F. R. Co. v. Brown	2280				

Section	Section	Section	Section
1085	Hale v. Darter	Hall v. State	Hamilton v. Marsden
2354	v. Gibbs	40 Ala.	1316,
	v. Gidden	51 Ala.	1510, 1513
581, 770	v. Life Ins. Co.	130 Ala.	v. Mendota C. & M.
9, 2276,	108, 143,	134 Ala.	Co.
2277	1725	137 Ala.	15, 461
1064	v. McGottigan	64 Ark.	v. Manor
1779	v. N. J. S. N. Co.	46 Ga.	v. Nickerson
	2567,	43 Tax. Cr.	v. Peoples
92, 1601,	2573	v. Steele	29 Mich.
2063	v. Philbrick	v. Taylor	56, 765, 923,
1471	v. Rawallie	v. Tha Emily Banning	928, 967, 968,
529	1009, 1013,	v. Warren	994, 1022, 1111,
1269,	1014	v. Williams	1390, 1690, 1985,
98, 1681	v. Rich	v. Wooten Co.	1986, 2056, 2103
92, 1108,	v. Ross	v. Young	46 Mich.
2, 1614,	v. Silloway	Hall's Case	967, 1005
1993	v. State	Hallahan v. R. Co.	1021
1225	122 Ala.	Hallenbeck v. Garst	v. R. Co.
4, 1729,	72 Miss.	Halleran v. Moon	461, 1923, 1951
1749	v. Taylor	Hallett v. Cousens	v. Rice
1391	Hale's Ex'rs v. Ard's Ex'rs	v. Walker	v. Shoaff
1568	1542	Halley v. Webster	v. Smith
13, 2240	Haley v. Flaccus	Halliday v. Hess	704, 1033, 1082,
1213	v. State	v. Martinet	1673, 2143
1943	Halifax Banking Co. v.	v. McDougall	v. State
791	Smith	v. Sweeting	36 Ind.
1248	258, 1165,	Hallock v. Ins. Co.	77 Miss.
2525	1911, 2016,	v. Smith	34 Oh. St.
232	3115	Halloway v. People	41 Tex. Cr. App.
1518	Halifax Union v. Wright	Haliwell v. Dickerson	v. Wright
1719	Hall v. Acc. Ass'n	Hallum v. Dickinson	Hamilton B. S. Co. v.
1442	v. Acklen	Halsey v. Adams	Milliken
1074	v. Aitkin	v. Sinsebangh	Hamilton Bnggy Co. v.
2311	v. Anstin	Halstead v. Mullen	Iowa B. Co.
2336	v. Benson	Halsted v. Colvin	Hamilton W. Co. v. Good-
	v. Bishop	v. Rice	rich
	1166, 1213, 1273,	v. State	Hamit v. Lawrence
	1640, 2535	Halvorsen v. Moon & K.	Hamlin v. State
	v. Brown	L. Co.	Hamlyn v. Nesbit
	v. Bynnm	Halverson v. Cola	Hammack v. State
	v. Cardell	Ham v. Ham	Hammargren v. St. Paul
	v. Casanova	v. Salem	Hammatt v. Emerson
	v. Cedar R. & M. C. R.	v. State	Hammick v. Johnson
	Co.	Ham's Case	Hammock v. McBride
	v. Collins	Hambel v. Davis	Hammon v. Sexton
	v. Com.	Hamberg v. Ins. Co.	Hammond v. Bline
	v. Costello	Hamblett v. Hamblett	r. Bradstreet
	v. Goodson	Hambrook v. Smith	v. Dike
	v. Hall	Hamburg v. Wood	v. Freeman
	v. Harris	Hamburg-Bremen F. Ins.	v. Inloes
	v. Houghton	Co. v. Pelzer Mfg. Co.	v. Johnston
	v. Huse	Hamburger v. Rinkel	v. Noble
	v. Ins. Co.	Hamby v. State	v. Plank
	v. Manchester	Hamelyn v. White	v. State
	v. Manson	Hamer v. Bank	v. Varian
	v. Mayo	v. McFarlin	v. Woodman
	v. Murdock	Hamerly v. Lambert	Hammond's Case
	v. Naylor	Hamill v. Woods	Hanner v. Eddins
	v. Obder	Hamilton v. Billingsley	Hampshire v. Pierce
	v. Pegram	v. Crowe	Hampton v. Garland
	v. People	v. Galloway	v. M'Connel
	21 Mich.	v. Gray	v. M'Girnis
	47 Mich.	v. Hastings	v. R. Co.
	v. Perry	v. Holder	v. Ray
	v. Phelps	v. L. L. & G. Ins. Co.	v. Speckenagle
	v. R. Co.	v. Love	v. Spencer
	v. Rankin		v. State
	v. Ray		45 Tex.
	v. Redson		5 Tex. App.
	v. Renfro		Hamrick v. Hamrick
	v. Rixey		Hamsher v. Kline
	v. Simmons		Hanawalt v. State
	v. Sims		

TABLE OF CASES.

HAN

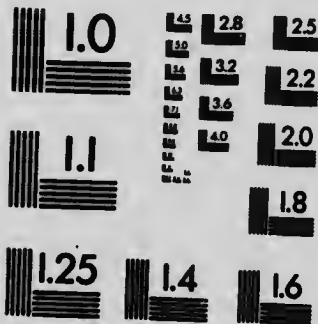
	Section		Section		Section
Hancock v. Blackwell	967	Hanoverian Consul's		Hargrett v. —	Section 1267
v. Byrne	1293	Case	2372	Harkins v. Forsyth	530, 1247
v. Cook	1460, 1466	Harrick v. Andrews	1684	Harkless v. Smith	1185, 2303
v. Hintrager	1554, 1558	Hans v. State	367	Harkness v. State	247
v. Kelly	747, 1248	Hansard v. Robinson	1197	Harkrader v. Carroll	2834
v. Parker	1539, 1540	Hansberg v. People	2582	Harlan v. Howard	2129, 2140, 2141
v. Supreme Council	524, 2191	v. Stianett	406	v. Moore	2327
N. J. Eq., 55 Atl.	667	Hanecom v. Burmood	1028, 1029, 1035	Harland v. Eastman	1481, 1481, 1490
87 N. J. L.	1644, 1683	Hansel v. Hansel	2048	Harless v. Harless	2304
v. Tram Lumber Co.	1851	Hanselman v. Dovel	2239	Harloe v. Lambie	1200
Hancock Co. v. Leggett	1719	v. Doyle	1204	Harlow v. Roswell	2444
Hancock Nat'l Bank v.		Hansen v. Ins. Co.	1195	Harm v. Wilson	86
Ellis	2558	v. Miller	1890	Harman v. Harman	16 Ill. 2065, 2068
Hand v. Ballou	1354	Hansley v. Hansley	2067, 2069	70 Fed.	576, 2442
v. Brookline	682	Hanson v. Armstrong	1186, 1225	v. McLeland	2067
v. Elvira	1018	v. Bean	2311	v. Stearns	1495, 2537
v. Howell	1073	v. Chlatovich	392	v. Vanhatten	1062
v. Ryan Drug Co.	2442	v. Crawley	2115	Harmon v. Decker	1195, 1549
v. Scodoletti	780	v. Eustace	291	v. Harmon	406
Handleigh v. Leigh	2354	v. Parker	1078	v. James	1225, 1257
Handley v. Fitzhugh	1215	v. Red Rock	968	v. State	248
v. R. Co.	1974	v. South Scituato	1641, 1662, 1874, 1878	v. Terr.	1135, 1136
Handlong v. Barnes	819	Hanye v. State	2497	Harness v. Harness	1085
Hands v. James	1512	Happel v. Brethauer	2592	v. State	1871
Handy v. Canning	1041	Haralson v. Campbell	1943	Harnett, re	2065
v. Ins. Co.	2349	Harbers v. Tribby	1874	v. Garvey	682
v. State	1620	Harbison v. Shook	406	Harasbarger v. Kinney	2349
Hanes v. State	907, 914	Hard v. Ashley	581	Harp v. Harp	1082
Haney v. Clark	1938	v. Brown	1823, 1959	v. Parr	233, 1304, 1417, 1736, 2500
Hank v. State	860, 928, 1012, 1478, 2385	v. Moring	5309	Harper v. Burrow	1384, 2223
Hankinson v. Lombard	1379	Hardage v. Coffman	2535	v. Lamping	1890
v. R. Co.	2110	Hardeman v. English	1869	v. R. Co.	1021
v. Vantine	2448	Harden v. Hays	905, 1033, 1505, 1514	v. Rowe	1664
Hanks v. Phillips	1651	Hardiman v. Brown	580, 687	v. Scott	1195, 1196
v. Rhoads	1890	Hardin v. Blackshear	1186	v. State	109 Ala. 1214
v. Van Garder	2337	v. Cheek	1654	101 Ind.	1076
Hanley v. Barlas	1406	v. Forsythe	1225	79 Miss.	1439, 1440
v. Donoghue	2573	v. Ho-yo-po-nubby	1676, 1680, 2025	Miss., 3 ^d Co.	278
v. Gandy	2008, 2016	v. Kretsinger	1205	v. Tapley	1651
v. Huntington	2552	v. State	56 Ark. 832	v. Wilson	1304
Hanlon v. Doherty	2297, 2312	107 Ga. 1375	Harding v. American	Harraway v. Harraway	2503
v. R. Co.	2464	Glucose Co.	289, 2210	Harrel v. State	1920
Hanlon's Will	1511	v. Brooks	66, 76	v. Ward	1304, 1312, 1313, 1513
Hann v. Wilson	78	v. Craigie	1293	Harrell v. Enterprise Sav.	1195, 1268, 2105
Hanna v. His Creditors	1681	v. Harding	1510	Bank	1564, 1566, 1588, 1582, 1587
v. Palmer	2473	v. R. Co.	987	Harriman v. Brown	65
Hannahan v. State	2059	v. State	318, 851	v. Jones	2313
Hannan v. Greenfield	1290	Hardisty v. Glenn	1778	v. Pullman F. C. Co.	68
Hanners v. McClelland	88, 73, 74, 406, 928, 987, 988, 106, 1515	Hardtke v. State	1911	v. R. Co.	288, 1018
Hannibal & St. J. R.		Hardwick S. B. & T. Co. v.		v. State	1852
Co. v. Clark	1779	Dreman	451	v. Stowe	613, 1747, 2383
Hannon v. Hannah	1257	Hardy v. Alexander	73	Harrington v. Fry	2153
v. State	1135, 1136	v. Merrill	1918, 1919, 1933, 1934	v. Lincoln	957, 1022, 1061, 1062, 1106
Hannum v. Belcher-		v. Moore	1938, 1977	v. MacMorris	1064
town	2349, 2354	v. U. S.	334, 1779	v. Mining Co.	1890
v. Hill	437	3 D. C. App.	832, 861, 862	v. R. Co.	1166, 2349
v. Melroe	2288	186 U. S.	852	v. Sedalia	613
Hanoff v. State	987, 2276, 2277	Harford v. Morris	1271	Harris v. Aldrit	1858
Hanover F. I. Co. v. Stod-				v. Anderson	1678, 2110
dard	1082			v. Ansonia	792, 1661
Hanover R. Co. v. Coyle	1750				
Hanover Water Co. v.					
Iron Co.	714, 1640				

Section	Section	Section	Section
1267	Harris v. Brooks 2444	Harrison's Will 2500	Hartwig v. Schiefer 2477
0, 1347	v. Clinton 1991	Harrold v. Smith 1539, 1551	Harty v. Malloy 1141
5, 2303	v. Collins 1249	Harrop v. Fisher 2409	Hartz v. Com. 1377
247	v. Daugherty 2912	Hart v. Alexander 95, 255	Hartong v. Hubbard 1584
2534	v. Doe 1873, 2166	v. Atlas K. Co. 963	Harvard v. Stiles 770
0, 2140,	v. Harris 136 Cal. 2312	v. Bridge Co. 1029, 1951	Harvester Co. v. Miller 2015
2141	26 N. Y. 1267, 2052	v. Coram 1308, 1312	Harvey v. Chouteau 1219, 1260
2327	v. Hill 2211, 2307	v. Deamer 1871	v. Clayton 2297
1481,	v. Knight 1367, 1512,	v. Gage 1651	v. Cummings 1273, 1660
5, 1490	1738, 2106	v. Hicks 1079	v. Harvey 2426
2304	v. Leavitt 1369	v. Livingston 1341	v. Mitchell 1301
1200	v. Lumber Co. 19, 561	v. McElroy 1350	v. Morgan 1206
2444	v. Miller 1391	v. Newman 1072	v. Osborn 392
66	v. Murphy 2441	v. Powell 1747, 1748	v. R. Co. 1673
5, 2086	v. Patten 1513	v. Pratt 1051	v. Smith 2419
2, 2442	v. Powell 1564	v. R. Co. 293	v. State 40 Ind. 761, 1500
2067	v. Quincy 722	v. Randolph 1082, 1085	Miss., 20 So. 835
3, 2537	v. R. Co. 588	v. Robinett 1205, 2335	v. Terr. 2062, 2598
1062	v. Rickett 2425	v. Ross 57 Ala. 1878, 2165	v. Thomas 1188
5, 1549	v. Smith 1944	64 Ala. 1851	v. Thorpe 1268, 1352
406	v. State 34 Ala. 111	40 Ala. 7	Harvy v. Board 2581
3, 1357	73 Ala. 1375, 1404	36 Fla. 248	Harwich Case 2215, 2287
246	76 Ala. 2276	85 Ind. 2582	Harwood v. Lee 575
5 1136	34 Ark. 247	15 Tex. App. 1157,	v. Mulry 751, 1555
1085	61 Ga. 784	1188,	v. People 204
1871	109 Ga. 106	1188,	v. Sims 1565, 1588
2065	30 Ind. 1108	v. Steknoy 1493, 1503	v. State 1405
682	48 Miss. 248, 247	v. Strode 1195	v. Wentworth 1350
2349	24 Nebr. 2349, 2354	v. Ten Eyck 2122, 2123	Harwood's Adm'x v. R. Co. 460
1082	v. Tippett 1005, 1022	v. U. S. 1677	Hasbronck v. Baker 1257
1417,	v. Tisorean 1311	v. Vinsant 1248	v. Vandervoort 819
2, 2500	v. Traction Co. 1669	v. Walker 438, 1523	Haseltine v. R. Co. 454
3, 2223	v. Wilson 567	v. W. S. R. Co. 2552	Haskell v. Becket 2354
1890	v. Zanone 406	v. Wilson 736, 747	v. Mitchell 1943
1021	Harris' Trial 1911	v. Yunt 2105	Haskens v. Lumsden 74
1664	Harrisburg Bank v. Forster 529	Hart's Appeal 1066	Haskins v. Com. 1842
1196	Harrison v. Bevington 2097	Harter v. Harter 2421	v. Ins. Co. 716
1214	v. Blades 1456	Hartford v. Palmer 494, 495,	v. Lumsden 73
1076	v. Burgees 610	v. Power 2065	v. People 2059
1440	v. Charlton 2098	Hartford Bank v. Barry 529	v. Warren 321, 1934
278	v. Com. 248	v. Stedman 95	Haslam v. Campbell 1389
1851	v. Courtland 566	Hartford Bridge Co. v. 1061, 1062	Hasard v. Municipality 2572
1304	v. Doyle 1558	Granger 1061, 1062	Hasler v. King 1651
2503	v. Garrett 13, 1811	Hartford Deposit Co. v. 461	Hastings v. B. H. T. Co. 1352
1820	v. Glover 719, 1704	Sollitt 461	v. Devlin 1674
1313,	v. Gordon 1022	Hartford F. Ins. Co. v. 2311, 2550	v. Hopkinson 1249
1513	v. Gordy 1350	Reynolds 2311, 2550	v. Livermore 1043
1195,	v. Harrison 2067	Hartford I. M. Co. v. 2458, 2463	v. Palmer 1873
2105	v. Howe 2442	Cambria M. Co. 2458, 2463	v. Rider 569, 1938
1566,	v. Kiser 285	Hartford L. Ins. Co. v. 1313, 2415	v. Stetson 73, 280
1587	v. Langston 1040	Gray 1313, 2415	Hastings' Trial; see R. v. Hastings.
2313	v. Lincoln 2506	Hartley S. Bank v. Mc- 1877	Hatch v. Dennis 1063, 1084
65	v. McCawley 2054	Corkell 1877	v. Fowler 1247
1018	v. McKim 2445	Hartman v. Diller 1086	v. Fuller 1718, 1721
1832	v. Middleton 736, 748, 749,	v. Evans 377	v. Lewis 2349
2383	753, 754, 760	v. Ins. Co. 1728, 1946, 1947	v. Pryor 2447
2153	v. Powers 2272	v. Rogers 950, 1963	Hatcher v. Bowen 1062
1061,	v. R. Co. 116 Cal. 2382, 2391	Hartman Steel Co. v. Hoag 2115	v. Dunn 66 N. W. 1699
1106	36 Ia. 1943	Hartness v. Boyd 1891	102 Ia. 656
1064	v. Rowan 773, 915, 1045,	v. Brown 2311, 2319	v. Hatcher 1197
1890	1873, 1890, 1917,	Hartnett v. McMahan 1755	v. Rochelean 1881, 2529
2349	1938	Hartney v. Ins. Co. 1062	Hatchett v. Connor 1651, 2167
613	v. Simons 1678, 2165	Hartranft's Appeal 2369, 2371,	v. Gibson 461
1858	v. Southcote 2251, 2256	2375	Hately v. Pike 2445
2110	v. Tate 2463	Hartrich v. Hawes 1873	Hatfield v. R. Co. 1158, 2320
1661	v. Williams 1858	Hartwell v. Masterson 93	Hathaway v. Addison 1352, 2158
	VOL. IV. — 25	Hartshorne v. Wilkins 2532	



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TABLE OF CASES.

HAT

	Section		Section		Section
Hathaway v. Brown		Hay v. Hay	2237	Haywood v. Rogers	1947
18 Minn.	581, 1967	v. Miller	1938	Hazard v. Ins. Co.	2466
22 Minn.	1963, 1976	v. Peterson	1539, 1548,	v. R. Co.	1031, 1382
v. Clark	2534		2524	Hazell v. Dyas	1195
v. Crocker	944, 987, 1021,	Hay's Appeal	1379, 1390, 1409	Hazen v. Pierson	1195
	1037	Haycock v. Grep	2008, 2016	Hazer v. Streich	616, 748,
v. Hemingway	1873, 1874	Hayden v. Goodnow	2525		1541
v. Power	2477	v. Mitchell	1189, 1225,	Hazleton v. Union Bank	1389,
v. Spooner	1314, 1318, 1651		1651		2016, 2017
v. Tinkham	2113	v. Palmer	18	Hazzard v. Vickery	2008
Hathaway's Adm'r v.		v. Rice	1245	Heacock v. Lubnke	
Ins. Co.	569, 682,	v. Stone		107 Ill.	1705
	1722, 1938, 2500	112 Mass.	1042	108 Ill.	2529
Hathaway's Will	613	121 Mass.	1133	v. Stoddard	803
Hathorn v. King	1938	v. Williams	1074	Head v. Bridges	2570
Hathorne v. Hodges	321	Haydon v. Moore	1225	v. Hargrave	1920, 2570
Hatt v. Nay	199, 208	Haye's Will	2052	v. State	923, 987,
Hatton v. Robinson	2291, 2294,	Hayes v. Banks	1292, 1299,		1126
	2297			Heady v. Turnpike Co.	1168
Haneustein v. Gillespie	1230	v. Berwick	2167	Heald v. R. Co.	1807
Haug v. Riley	1273	v. Caudee	1958	v. Thing	688, 1362
Haughton v. Ewbank	1249	v. Cheatham	1126, 1128,	Healey v. R. Co.	1040
Hank v. State	1726, 2497		1129	v. Thatcher	1062
Hanlenbeck v. Cronkright	1943	v. Frey	2165	Heane v. Rogers	1058
Hann v. Wilson	2354	v. Mut. Prot. Ass'n	613	Heap v. Parrish	581
Haupt v. Henninger	1387	v. Parmales	616	Heard v. McKee	1188, 1391
Hausenfuck v. Com.	775, 2061	v. People	2086	v. Russell	2123
Hausner v. Leviness	1539	v. Pitts-Kimball Co.	266,	v. State	18
Hansknrecht v. Claypool	6		1576, 2097	v. Tappan	2525
Hant v. Rongh	1312	v. R. Co.		Hearn v. Ins. Co.	2464
Haver v. Foster	1271	54 Ill.	1943	v. Smith	1651
v. Mo. R. Co.	2495	17 Utah	460, 1951	Hearne v. De Young	
v. Wendell	736, 747, 754	v. Smith	1005, 1807,	119 Cal.	406, 1078, 1971,
Haver v. R. Co.	949		1984		2498
v. Tenney	1955	v. State		132 Cal.	74
Haverhill L. & F. Ass'n v.		Teun.	1350	Heaton v. R. Co.	2572
Cronin	1984	112 Wis.	1385	Heath, re	2260
Hawes v. Dingley	321	v. Wells	728, 1623,	Heath v. Com.	363
v. Ins. Co.	1946, 1947		1831, 1959	v. Glisan	1951
v. State	1644, 1680, 1683,	v. West	1304, 1738	v. Keyes	609
	1684, 2167, 2302	Haymond v. Sancer	64, 288	v. Page	334
Hawhe v. R. Co.	2475	Haynes v. Brown	1074	v. Stato	
Hawkesworth v. Showler	609	v. Burlington	451	Fla. 20 S. E.	993
Hawkins v. Craig	1267	v. Gas Co.	2509	7 Tex. App.	2059
v. Grimes	2008, 2027	v. Heller	1350	v. Waters	1390
v. Hanson	1564	v. Hillsdale	438	v. West	1621
v. Howard	2200, 2211,	v. Ledyard	1890	Heaton v. Bank	1347
	2307	v. McRae	287	v. Dennis	1841
v. Publishing Co.	2354	v. State	10, 111	v. Findlay	2304, 2311
v. Rice	1212	v. Trenton	2220	Heaton's Estate	
v. Ross	1296, 1300, 1318	Hays v. Bouthalier	1681	135 Cal.	1492, 1495, 1605
v. State		v. Briggs	463	139 Cal.	1492
25 Ga.	111, 247	v. Harden	1033, 1505,	Heavy v. Odell	1873
7 Mo.	832, 861		1511, 1513	Hebbard v. Hanghian	2312
v. Samter	2211	v. Hays	2245	Heberd v. Myers	1271
v. Warre	2184	v. Millar	65, 1984	Hebert's Snccession	1644, 2159
Hawks v. Baker	1819	v. State		Heckert v. Haine	1291, 1293
v. Charlemont	451	110 Ala.	1104	Heckle v. R. Co.	1750
v. Chester	1722	40 Md.	391	Hecla P. Co. v. Signa I.	
v. Patton	1971	v. Tacoma R. & P. Co.	905	Co.	1684
Hawksland v. Gatchel	2405	v. Terr.	1802, 1803	Hecox v. State	826
Hawley v. Robinson	1206	Hayslep v. Gymer	1072	Hector v. State	833
Hawley D.-D. F. Co. v.		Hayward v. Barron	1406, 1409	Hedden v. Overton	1275, 2105
Hooper	2442	v. Knapp		Heddle v. R. Co.	1012, 1721
Haws v. Hand	1409	22 Minn.	1802	Heddles v. R. Co.	1018
Hawthorne v. Hoboken	1674,	23 Minn.	1951	Hedge v. Clapp	1026, 1027,
	1680	Hayward Rubber Co. v.			1028
Hawver v. Hawver	406, 614, 615	Duncklee	1083, 1086,	Hedger v. Horton	1080, 1084
Hay v. Coventry	2459		1213, 2104	v. Ward	1651, 2141

Section	Section	Section	Section
1947	Hedlum v. Holy Terror	Henderson v. State	Hepburn v. Cassel
2466	Min. Co. 949	12 Tex. 63, 246	529
031, 1382	Hedrick v. Gohhle 1778	14 Tex. 2089	Hepler v. Bank 2098
1195	Heely v. Barnes 586	v. Terry 2311	v. Hosack 1938
1195	Hefflebower v. Dietrick 289	v. Wanamaker 1082	Herbert v. Berrier 1312
616, 748,	Heffron v. Brown 715	v. Williams 1382	v. R. Co. 2552
1541	v. Gallape 1802, 2349,	Henderson Bridge Co. v.	v. Tnckal 1503
1389,	2354	McGrath 2414	Herblay v. Norris 1878
2017	Hei v. Heller 2433	Hendon v. Morris 2433	Herbst v. Asiatic Prince 1271
2008	Height v. People 1028	v. White 1225	Hercules, The 1641
1705	Heilman Milling Co. v.	Hendrick v. R. Co. 461	Herd v. State 1450
2529	Hotaling 1234	Hendricks Case 318	Hereford v. Combs 66, 2054
803	Heim B. Co. v. Gimber 2536	Hendricks v. State 2042	v. People 2042
2570	Hein v. Holdridge 64	Hendrickson v. Com.	Herendeen Mfg. Co. v.
920, 2570	Heintz v. Thayer 1651, 1677	64 S. W. 1263	Moore 2155
923, 987,	Heinze v. District Court 1862	Ky., 73 S. W. 1450	Herlock's Adm'r v. Riser 1543
1126	Heisler v. State 770	v. People 389, 390, 823,	Herman v. Mason 1646
1168	Heister v. Davis 2296	845, 852, 2266	v. State 363, 2497, 2511,
1807	Helland v. Allen 96	Hendron v. Robinson 1878, 1899	2512
1362	Helbreg v. Schumann 2437	Hendry v. State 348	Hermann v. State 222, 261,
1040	Heldt v. State 841	v. Willis 1678	1154, 1335
1062	Helfenstein v. Medart 461, 561,	Heney v. Smith 1181	Hermes v. R. Co. 1750
1058	571	Henion v. R. Co. 461	Herndon v. Black 17
581	Helfrich L. & M. Co. v.	Henislaw v. Freedman 2287	v. Casiano 1239, 1651
188, 1391	Bland 1029	Henly v. Phillips 4, 1311, 1312	v. Givens 1193, 1258
2123	Heller v. People 2354	Henly v. Hemming 1291, 1301	v. State 1938
18	Hellman v. Hellman 1651	Henman v. Dickinson 2235	Herne v. Brown 2250
2525	Hellyer v. People 968, 1976	v. Lester 986, 1256, 1270	Herren v. People 925, 2277
2464	Helm v. Cantrell 2097	Hennell v. Lyon 1215, 1218,	v. Strong 1651
1651	v. Dncayet 2054	2158, 2529	Herrick v. Ammerman 1681
78, 1971,	v. Shackelford 1681	Hennen v. Hacker 2240	v. Odell 2336
2498	v. State 1476	v. Monro 1388	v. Swomley 1669, 1890,
74	Helms v. Green 916	Hennequin v. Naylor 321	2008
2572	v. U. S. 111, 968	Hennessy v. Ins. Co.	Herries v. Waterloo 2382
2260	Helser v. McGrath 1890	74 Conn. 1261, 2537	Herring v. Clobery 2294,
363	Helton v. Asher 1188, 1195	8 Wash. 1414	2295, 2306
1951	Helwig v. Lascowski 987, 1005,	v. Wright 2375, 2376	v. Levy 1532
609	1270	Hennicut v. Kirkpatrick 561	v. Rogers 1297
334	1209	Henry v. Adey 1681, 2163,	v. Skaggs
993	Helzer v. Helzer 748	2164	62 Ala. 1966
2059	Hematite M. Co. v. R. Co. 2324	v. Bank of Salina 2222, 2282	73 Ala. 777, 912, 1872
1390	Hemingway v. Garth 905	v. Bishop 1290, 1292	Hersey v. Barton 1072
1621	Hemlinway v. Miller 1603	v. Brown 64	v. Hutchins 285
1347	Hemmens v. Bentley 1896	v. Diviney 1195	Hersom v. Henderson 1003,
1841	Hemmenway v. Towner 2063	v. Hall 1736	1612
004, 2311	Hemmi v. R. Co. 283, 2509	v. Ins. Co. 1858	Herster v. Herster 233, 1738
195, 1605	Hemmlinger v. Assur. Co. 1890	v. Lee 758, 759, 763	Herstine v. R. Co. 2509
1492	Hemmings v. Gasson 406	v. Leigh 1244, 1639	Hertfordshire murder 9
1873	v. Smith 2085, 2529	v. Norwood 73, 209	Hertig v. People 2165, 2167
2312	Hempstead v. Reed 2573	v. People 105, 216, 968,	Herton v. U. S. 1854
1271	Hempton v. State 233, 773,	1157, 1807, 2497	Hertrich v. Hertrich 1081, 1938,
44, 2159	2354	v. R. Co. 454, 455, 456	2336, 2341
191, 1293	Hendershot v. Tel. Co. 2382	50 Cal. 454, 455, 456	Headra's Will 1033, 1129
1750	Henderson v. Anderson 529	2 Ia. 1943	Healer v. Degant 406
1684	v. Cargill 2083	v. Salina Bank 2260	Healop v. Healop 280
826	v. Com. 1447	v. Sneed 2338	Hess v. Griggs 1291
833	Ky., 72 S. W. 1447	v. State 293	v. Lowrey 940, 1700,
75, 2105	98 Va. 2513	v. Taylor 1960	2220
12, 1721	v. Galloway 1664	Henry Coxon, The 1641	v. Oregon G. B. Co. 2554
1018	v. Hlackney 1678	Hensel v. Maas 2530	v. R. Co. 2220
26, 1027,	v. Hart 1086	Henshaw v. Davis 1549	v. State 703, 1339
1025	v. Haynes 987, 1615,	Hensley v. Com. 987	v. Wilcox 1873, 2115
80, 1084	1985	v. Tarpey 1219	Hesse v. C. S. & H. R.
51, 2141	v. Jones 1124, 1125, 1126,	Hensoldt v. Petersbnrg 1350,	Co. 2509
	1127, 1131	1684	v. St. John R. Co. 285
	v. R. Co. 454, 455, 456	Henson v. State 111, 1037	Heater v. Rowley 1633
	v. State 580, 1781	v. Veatch 73, 74	Hessick v. Hessick 2526
	70 Ala. 580, 1781	Henthorn v. Doe 1680,	Hester v. Com. 390, 1124,
	95 Ga. 852, 2281	2141, 2573	1127, 1131
			v. Hester 610, 2237, 2336

TABLE OF CASES.

HES

	Section		Section		Section
Hester v. Lumpkin	1035	Higdon v. Rice	2477	Hill v. Hill	1320
Hetch v. Eherke	1640	Higdon's Heirs v. Higdon's		v. Hill's Adm'r	
Heth v. Young	1387	Devises	2235	9 Ala.	728
Hetherington v. Kemp	95	Higginbotham v. State		32 Pa. 1603, 1645, 2086	
Hengh v. Garrett	2212	Ala., 29 So.	1974	v. Home Ins. Co.	561
Henston v. Simpson	2384	Tex Cr., 20 S. W.	166	v. Kerr	665
Hewatson v. Tookey	2218	Higgins v. Andrews	89	v. Manchester & S. W.	
Hewes v. Fruit Co.	1078	v. Cal. P. & A. Co.	2463	Co.	1074
v. Glos	2515	v. Carlton	1029, 1244,	v. Miller	
v. Wiswell	1314		1938	50 Kan.	1876, 2503
Hewett v. Hnrley	1958	v. Dewey	1951	7 La. An.	1878
Hewitt v. Bank	1684	v. Higgins	561	v. Montgomery	1011
v. Clark	771, 1969, 2097	v. Nethery	1938, 2500	v. Nall	1308
v. Corey	1126, 1128, 1129	v. People		v. Nisbet	1651, 2140, 2146
v. Eisenbart	1719	157 Ind.	736	v. Norris	1676
v. Pigott		58 N. Y.	1135	v. North	416
7 Bing.	1858	v. Reed	1267, 1269	v. Packard	1271, 1279
5 C. & P.	2104	v. Shepard	1062	v. People	1850, 1852, 1853
v. Praine	2383	v. Senior	2438	v. Pratt	1073
v. State	1244	v. Spahr	1086	v. Proctor	613, 1566, 1568
Hewlett v. Wood	1390	v. State	343	v. R. Co.	
v. Henderson	1233	v. Watson	1195, 1196	55 Me.	461, 1951
v. Cock	2141	Higginson v. Clowes	2442	100 Ala.	461
v. Wood	1958	Higgs v. Dixon	1290	v. State	
Hey's Case	1842	v. Shehee	1536	Ala., 34 So.	398
Heylor v. Hall	2352	High v. Pancake	1566, 1569,	41 Ga.	605, 1438
Heyn's Case	2239		1778	64 Ga.	2355
Heyward, re	1909	Higham v. Ridgway	1465, 1476,	91 Ga.	2354
v. Hazard	689, 1938	v. Vanosdol	1584	4 Ind.	133, 987
Heywood v. Reed	64, 253,	Highfield v. Peake	17, 1730	5 Lea	784
	1109	v. Phelps	1215, 2158	64 Miss.	1443
Hibbard v. Russell	581, 1969	Highland Avenue & B. R.	1651	42 Nebr.	987
Hibberd v. Knight	2308	Co. v. Sampson	571	91 Tenn.	987, 1117,
Hibbs v. Ross	1647	Highland Turnpike Co. v.		22 Tex. App.	1842
Hice v. Cox	905, 907	McKean	1074	17 Wis.	759
Hickey v. Campion	2061	Highlander v. Flnke	1086	v. Sturgeon	1951, 2103
v. Fitzgerald	364, 986	Highley v. Bank	907	v. Taylor	1225, 2143
v. Morrissey	1646	Highsmith v. State	1219, 1672	v. Townsend	1209, 1298
v. R. Co.	461	Hight v. Wilson	1290	v. Whidden	2433
Hickinbotham v. Leach	73	Hightower v. Ogletree	702	v. Wiggett	2426
Hickman v. Gillum	1215	v. Williams	2132	v. Wilson	2065
v. State	1938	Higley v. Bidwell	1587	v. Winston	1404, 1405
Hickory v. U. S.		Higlister v. French	216	Hill's Case	1749
151 U. S.	905, 907, 1028,	Higman v. Camody	2508	Hill Estate Co. v. Whittlesey	2580
	2008, 2016, 2018	Hihn v. Peck	1664	Hill Mfg. Co. v. P. & N. Y.	
160 U. S.	276	Hilbert v. Com.	2336	S. Co.	461
Hicks v. Bradner	619	Hilborn v. Alford	1300, 2132	Hillian v. State	2060
v. Chouteau	2135	Hildebrand v. Carroll	2508	Hilliard v. Beattie	220, 1908
v. Coleman	1225, 2132	Hildeburn v. Curran	1020, 1021	v. Enders	1275
v. Cram	1624	Hilders v. McCartney	461	v. Wylie	923, 1985
v. Hinde	2444, 2445	Hildreth v. Martin	1072	Hills v. Barnes	2525
v. Ivey	2463	Hildyard v. Smith	1858	v. Farmington	2434
v. Person	709, 2008	Hiler v. People	2085, 2086	v. Ins. Co.	1946, 1947
v. R. Co.		Hilker v. Hilker	64	v. Jacobs	1208
S. C., 38 S. E.	763	Hill v. Aland	1858	v. Ludwig	1085
63 S. C.	1984	v. Amer. Surety Co.	1947	v. State	2239, 2395
v. Stone	1021	v. Anltman	1195	v. Union L. & S. Co.	1862
v. Thomas	1062	v. Bacon	1352, 2582	Hilton v. Gnyot	1697
v. Williams	1960	v. Bahrs	1738	v. Masc.	1960
Hicks' Estate v. Blanchard	2325	v. Bellows	1678	v. Roylance	1699, 2569
Hieronynms v. Glass	2437	v. Bigge	2368	v. State	166
Hiers v. Risher	1587	v. Canfield	18	Hilts v. Colvin	1270
Hiersche v. Scott	75, 770	v. Com.	910, 2079, 2080	v. R. Co.	96, 249
Higbee v. Dresser	2298	v. Crook	2463	Hilyard v. Harrison	1185, 1861
v. McMillan	608, 2235	v. Eldredge	667	Himmelman v. Hoadley	1680,
Higbie v. Ins. Co.	658, 1947	v. Goode	905, 1028		2167
Higdon v. Heard	2260, 2275,	v. Gust	1029	Himrod v. Gilman	2008
	2282	v. Helton	584		

Section		Section		Section		Section
1320	Hinchcliff v. Hinman	1318,	Headley v. Hammond	1960	Hogan v. Rohinson	1086
728	Hinckley v. Somerset	1651	v. Northern Transp. Co.	5	v. Roche's Heirs	1938
1645, 2086	v. Thatcher	252	v. Seward & S. Co.	451,	v. State	1620
561	Hinds v. Vatlter	2467		1896	Hoge v. Fisher	689
665	1 McLean	1311	Hoag v. Wright	991, 2015	v. Turner	617
W.	5 Pet.	1684	Hoard v. State	290, 500, 1106	Hoghton v. Hoghton	1062
1074	Hinde's Case	2250	Hoare v. Allen	1795	Hogins v. Brashears	1676
1876, 2503	Hindman v. Van Dyke	233	v. Graham	2444	Hogsett v. Ellis	1195, 1778
1878	Hinds v. Barton	454, 455	v. Silverlock	2582	Hoit v. Russell	463
1011	v. Evans	1225	Hobart v. Hobart	1303, 1511,	Holt v. Moulton	694, 726,
1308	v. Harbon	571		1513		923, 933, 987,
140, 2146	v. Keith	253, 371	Hobbs v. Batory	2438		1943, 1969, 1985
1676	v. Kersey	1304	v. Beard	1189, 1269, 1651	Hoke's Exr's v. Fleming	1126
416	v. State	391	v. Duff	1329	Holbrook v. Debo	1587
271, 1279	Hindson v. Kersey	2049	v. Massasoit W. Co.	2413	v. Dow	987, 2277
852, 1853	Hine, re	771	v. Norton	2047	v. Gay	1561
566, 1568	v. Pomeroy		v. State		v. Holbrook	
	24 Vt.	93	75 Ala.	1878	113 Mass.	1086
	30 Vt.	379	133 Ind.	1126, 1132	30 Vt.	1021
461, 1951	v. R. Co.	451, 1729	Hobby v. Alford	1298	v. Jackson	18, 260
461	Hines v. Greenlee	1239	v. Dana	1947	v. Murray	1777
	v. Johnston	1272, 1273	v. Wisconsin Bank	616	v. Nichol	1651, 1677, 2105
	v. Miller	2582	Hoby v. Jones	2083	v. Trustees	1195
605, 1438	v. Potts	2538	Hobe v. Swift	1249	Holcomb v. Holcomb	
2355	v. Soule	1080, 1082,	Hobhouse v. Hamilton	1650	28 Conn.	493, 932,
2354		1083, 1085, 1257	Hobson v. Ogden	1066		1822
133, 987	v. Thorn	1225	v. Porter	1188, 1195	95 N. Y.	1934, 1938
784	v. Wilcox	2442	Hock v. Hock	2048	v. Mosher	1195
1443	Hinkle v. R. Co.	987	Hockenbury v. Carlisle	1680,	v. State	689, 1938
987	v. State			2158, 2159	v. Tift	1681
87, 1117,	94 Ga.	857, 1841, 2264	Hockett v. Alston	2573	Holcombe v. Hewson	
2277	157 Ind.	1003, 2062	Hocking, re	2528	v. State	1248
1842	Hinkley v. Davis	1474	Hockmoth v. Des Grands		Holcroft v. Smith	1409, 1650
759	Hinshaw v. State	41, 278, 285,	Champs	1956	Holden v. Ins. Co.	2388
951, 2103		390, 1126, 1330,	Hocks v. Sprangers	282, 1067	v. Jenkins	1295
225, 2143		2363, 2497	Hodgdon v. Shannon	1776	v. Mfg. Co.	1976
209, 1298	Hinton v. Locke	2463	v. Wright	2518	Holder v. State	987
2433	Hipsley v. R. Co.	283, 437,	Hodge v. Palms	1240, 2141	v. U. S.	1842
2426		438, 458	Hodges v. Bales	1126, 1127	Holdfast v. Dowling	1304
2065	Hirsch, re	1219, 2375	v. Bearse	458	Holdrege v. Watson	1014
104, 1405	v. Leatherbee L. Co.	1213	v. Bennett	2061	Holdsworth v. Mayor	905
1749	v. State	2281	v. Drakeford	2434	Holladay v. Littlepage	1476
Desey	Hirschfeld v. Williamson	1086	v. Eastman	1300	Holland, re	2454
2580	Hirschman v. People	968,	v. Hodges		v. Barnes	923
Y.		1983	2 Cnsh.	1278	v. Carter	1651
461	Hirst's Case	1328	106 N. C.	1483	v. Holland	2067
2060	Hisrick v. McPherson	1536	v. Percival	283	v. Hnston	571
20, 1908	Hitch v. Wells	1511	v. Windham	211	v. Kindregan	2494
1275	Hitchcock v. Bnrgett	132, 675,	Hodgkins v. State	1614	v. Reeves	1884
23, 1985		1021, 1755	Hodgkinson v. Willis	1215,	v. State	826, 861, 862,
2525	v. Clendinen	1955		2526		2071, 2073
2434	v. Grant	1141	Hodgson, re	2065	v. Zollner	689
46, 1947	v. Moore	949, 963, 1106,	Hodnett v. Forman	1312	Holleman v. De Nyse	2164
1208		1807, 2341	Hoe v. Nathorp	1218	Hollenback v. Fleming	1300
39, 2395	Hitchcox v. Hitchcox	2069,	Hoener v. Koch	1951	v. Todd	2297
1862		2085	Hoes v. Van Alstyne	1271	Hollenbeck v. Marion	1978
1697	Hitchins v. Eardley	1492	Hoff v. Fisher	1417	v. Ristine	2517
1960	Hitchon v. Best	2152	Hoffman v. Crerar	2311	v. Rowley	792
99, 2569	Hite v. Com.	852	v. Harrington	1871	v. Stanberry	1234, 1245
166	v. Shrader	1573	v. Kemerer	75, 210	Holler v. State	111
1270	Hitner's Appeal	2336	v. North Milwaukee	438	Holleran v. Meisel	1956
96, 249	Hitt v. Sterling-Goold Mfg. Co.	2237	v. Pack	1230	Holley v. Bngress	74
95, 1861		276	v. R. Co.		v. Coffee	1672
1680,	Hittner v. State	276	40 Minn.	657, 736, 754	v. State	
2167	Hittson v. Davenport	1267, 1269	143 Pa.	451, 1168	105 Ala.	609, 1108
2008	Hitz v. Algreen	2531	v. Smith	2121	39 Tex. Cr.	106, 396,
	Hix v. Drury	406, 1064, 2349,	v. State			2277
		2354	93 Md.	923	v. Yonng	2593, 2594
			97 Wis.	2497	Holliman v. Cabanne	1984

TABLE OF CASES.

HOL

	Section		Section		Section
Hollingham v. Head	377	Holt v. Walker	1083	Hopklus v. R. Co.	1951
Hollingsworth v. State		Holteu v. Board	1623, 1943	v. Simmons	2005
53 Ark.	923, 953, 969, 987, 1022, 1112	Holtou v. Lloyd	2145	v. Smith	
79 Ga.	907	Holtz v. Dick	2337, 2341	11 John.	2117
111 Ind.	1230	Holtzman v. Hoy	1621	1 Ont. L. R.	2260
v. Walker	2530	Wagner	619	v. State	1451
v. Waruock	111	Holy Cross G. M. & M. Co.		v. Stamp	1387
Holligworth's Will	1738	v. O'Sullivan	1951	Hopkins' Will	2026
Hollingworth v. Lucy	575	Homans v. Cornlug	581	Hopkinson v. Barghley	2286
Hollis v. Dashiell	2141	Home v. Bentinek	2375	v. Kuapp Co.	2570
v. Sales	1458	Home Fire Ins. Co. v. Berg	2304	v. Leeds	1890
v. State	1974	Home Ins. Co. v. Baltimore		Hopkinson's Adm'r v. Steel	770
Hollister v. Cordero	1671	W. Co.	1062	Hopkiuton v. Waite	1876
v. McCord	1684	v. Clark	1710	Hoppe v. Byers	112, 1736
v. Young	1593, 1778	Home Protection of N. A.		v. R. Co.	571, 1977
Holloway v. Rakes	1778	v. Whidden	1202, 1206	Hopper v. Ashley	694
Holly v. Bass	1681	Homer v. Cilley	1225, 1651, 2138, 2141	v. Beck	760
v. Bennett	1684	v. Everett	281	v. Com.	660, 770, 1842
v. Com.	949	v. Inter-Mountain A.		v. Dunsmulr	1856
v. State	111, 247, 2550	Co.	2354	Hopps v. People	59, 228
Hollywood v. Reed	1807, 1906	v. Wallis	1312, 1320, 1994, 2016	Hopson v. Caswell	2485
Holman v. Austin	2210	Houeywood v. Selwin	2256	Hopt v. Utah	7, 824, 860, 865, 866, 1977
v. Bachus	2337	Honselman v. People	1135, 2056	Horah v. Knox	1938, 1958
v. Bank	1031, 1035, 1388	Houyman v. Campbell	401 2090	Horau v. Byrnes	1042
v. Kimball	2300	Hood v. Bloch	1161	Horbach v. State	246, 247
v. R. Co.	461, 682	v. French	1777	Hord v. Colbert	18, 586
v. Riddle	2349	v. Mathers	1225, 1651, 1658	v. Dishman	1225, 1651
v. Whitaker	2465	v. Maxwell	716	Horford v. Wilson	21
Holman's Heirs v. Bank of		v. R. Co.	340	Horkan v. Beuning	1076
Norfolk	2593	v. Reeve	1070	Horn v. Noel	1249
Holmberg v. Johnson	2016	Hoodless v. Jernigan	1660	v. Ross	1257
Holmes v. Anderson	1651	Hook v. George	1040	v. State	
v. Baddeley	2294	v. Payee	167, 1151, 1154	102 Ala.	364
v. Boydston	1388	Hooker v. R. Co.	1750	Wyo., 73 Pac.	141, 363, 866, 905, 1021, 1974, 2497
v. Bro...	406	Hooks v. Houston	1131	Hornbeck v. State	1138
v. Coryell	2141, 2143, 2146	Hoopes v. Chism	1278, 2105	Hornberger v. State	2512
v. Deppert	2105	v. Gumm	2317	Horne v. Mackenzie	745, 749
v. Foud du Lac	613	v. Hall	1225	v. Mehler	2572
v. Goldsmith	377, 693, 2016, 2026	v. Harcourt	2306	v. Smith	2220
v. Hinkle	1873	v. Moore		v. Williams	
v. Holloman	1310, 1316, 1317, 2222	3 Jones	953, 1028, 1985	12 Ind.	786, 1842
v. Holmes	2083	5 Jones	2573	23 Ind.	2098
v. Hnnt	1354	v. R. Co.	1387	Horner, re	2463
v. Jones	1064	Hoopes v. De Vaughn	1404	v. Com.	953
v. Marsden	750, 1532	Hoosier Stone Co. v. Mc-		v. Spelman	1681
v. Matthews	2437	Cain	2509	v. Yance	1730, 2338
v. Pontiu	1312	Hoover v. Gehr	1548, 1558, 1561	Hornish v. People	2501
v. Roper	1085	v. M'Chesney	2264	Horsburg v. Baker	2256
v. Sawtelle	1779	v. Patton	20	Horseman v. Todhunter	1195, 1269
v. State		v. State		Horsley v. Garth	1352
88 Ala.	692, 988, 1983	Ind., 68 N. E.	15	Horton v. Green	569, 662, 1975
108 Ala.	1239	48 Nebr.	1938	v. State	
136 Ala.	1966	35 Tex. Cr.	2242	18 Ala.	1398
v. Stateler	928, 1117	Hope v. Hnrt	1681	110 Ga.	396
v. W. R. E. Co.	1058	v. People	351, 414	v. U. S.	682, 944, 1938
Holmesly v. Hogue	334	v. R. Co.	2390	Hosack v. Rogers	603
Holsenbake v. State	2071	Hope's Appeal	112, 1203	Hosford v. Rowe	1461
Holsteu v. Jumpson	2466	Hopkins v. Albertson	1304, 1306	Hoshauer v. Hoshauer	1738
Holstou v. R. Co.	1013	v. Chuug Wa	2527	Hosic v. R. Co.	461
Holt v. Collyer	2464	v. Com.	106	Hosklus v. Miller	1238
v. Miers	1208	v. De Graffenreid	1304, 1306, 1321, 1513, 1664	v. State	318, 2484
v. State		v. Grimshaw	2334	Hoskison v. Adkins	1651
9 Tex. App.	1840	v. Hopkins	1154, 1807	Hoskison v. R. Co.	455
39 Tex. Cr.	273, 347, 1079, 2279	v. Megguire	728	Hosmer v. Groat	1040
		v. Millard	1678	Hotard v. R. Co.	1225

HOL

HUD

TABLE OF CASES.

Section	Case Name	Section
1951	Hottle v. Weaver	1671
2005	Houck v. Wright	2435
	Hondeck v. Ins. Co.	1062
2117	Honghtaling v. Kilderhouse	66
2260	v. R. Co.	716
1451	Houghton v. Jones	1890
1387	v. Koenig	1300
2026	v. Page	529
2286	v. Paine	1249
2570	Hoak v. Allen	2354
1890	Houlditch v. Donegall	1347
Steel 770	Houlton v. Mantenffel	667, 1493, 1503, 1646
1876		
112, 1736	Honpt v. Honpt	2085
571, 1977	House v. Beak	1519, 1538, 1532, 1535
694	v. Camp	913
760	v. Fort	571
770, 1842	v. House	2311
1856	v. Metcalf	461
59, 228	v. Robertson	2525
2485	Household F. & C. A. Ins.	
7, 824, 860,	Co. v. Grant	2410
866, 1977	Housoan v. Roberts	1208
1938, 1958	Houser v. State	
1042	86 Ind.	133
246, 247	93 Ind.	64
18, 586	Housh v. People	347
1225, 1651	Houstman v. Thornton	2531
21	Houston v. Blythe	797, 1239, 1408
1076	v. Brush	1951
1249	v. Gran	104
1257	v. McCluney	1085
364	v. Perry	
141, 363,	3 Tex.	1239
905, 1021,	5 Tex.	1239, 2159
1974, 2497	v. Spruance	1684
1138	v. State	
2512	114 Ala.	1305
745, 749	13 Ark.	2570
2572	Houston E. & W. T. R. Co.	
2220	v. Campbell	1078
	v. De Walt	1067
786, 1842	Houston & T. C. R. Co.	
2098	v. Burke	657, 760
2463	v. Cowser	461
953	v. Patton	208, 1984
1681	v. Smith	1951
1730, 2338	Houston & T. R. Co. v.	
2501	Odum	1350
2256	Honze v. Honze	1186, 1681
er 1195,	Everson v. Noker	613
1269	Hovey v. Chase	672, 680, 728
1352	v. Grant	321
662, 1975	v. Hovey	1075
	v. Long	1387
1398	v. Sawyer	1977
396	Hovill v. Stephenson	583, 1316
944, 1938	How v. Hall	1202, 1205
603	Howard v. Bell	575
1461	v. Bralhwate	528
1738	v. Brower	620
461	v. Canfield	735, 753
1238	v. Com.	
318, 2484	Ky., 61 S. W.	987,
1651		1079, 2059
455	Ky., 69 S. W.	2334
3040	v. Coon	1681

Section	Case Name	Section
665	Howard v. Gt. Western Co.	665
	v. Howard	1072
	v. Illinois T. & S. Bank	797, 1644, 1646
	v. Ina. Co.	
	4 Den.	379, 987, 1021, 1023, 1770, 1943
	109 Mass.	2464
	v. Johnson	770
	v. McCall	2356
	v. McDonald	1012
	v. McDonough	736, 745, 747, 748, 754, 763
	v. Moot	1354, 1398
	v. Newsom	2115
	v. Patrick	
	38 Mich.	1018, 1404, 1406, 1408
	43 Mich.	1029, 2015
	v. People	
	27 Colo.	78, 204, 1620
	185 Ill.	682, 1726
	193 Ill.	2515
	v. Providence	561, 714, 1943
	v. Quattlebaum	1275
	v. R. Co.	747
	v. Russell	
	104 Ga.	1309
	75 Tex.	270, 797, 1487, 2019
	v. Sexton	406
	v. Sheward	94
	v. Shields	1351
	v. Smith	1256
	v. Snelling	1085, 1513
	v. State	
	108 Ala.	2494, 2497
	73 Ga.	2570
	109 Ga.	1079
	32 Ind.	905
	v. Tenney	615
	v. Thompson	2374
	v. Tremaine	1371
	Howard Co., Division of	1350
	Howard H. I. Co., ex p.	1350
	Howe v. Fleming	1195
	v. Howe	1739
	v. McBride	1955
	v. McKernan	2212
	v. Medaris	283
	v. Reed	334
	v. Taylor	1195
	v. Thayer	376, 1908
	Howe M. Co. v. Stiles	1195
	Howe's Case	987, 1896, 1898
	Howell v. Barden	1738
	v. Cheatham	406
	v. House	1188, 1304, 2521, 2522
	v. Howell	1779
	v. Hnyck	1204, 1205
	v. Lock	586
	v. Reynolds	1029, 1031
	v. Smith	715
	v. State	247
	Howell's Lessee v. Tilden	1564
	Howes v. Colburn	233, 682, 1021

Section	Case Name	Section
1387	Howland v. Crocker	1387
2349	v. Jacobs	2349
	v. R. Co.	
	110 Cal.	571, 1951
	115 Cal.	199
	v. Westport	714
	Howley v. Whipple	1236, 2154
	Howser v. Com.	655, 1375, 1395, 1639, 1710, 1910
	v. Pepper	1351
	v. R. Co.	2509
	Hoxle v. State	2230
	Hoxsie v. Lumber Co.	719
	Hoy v. Morris	2326
	v. State	1038
	Hoyatt v. Phifer	1082
	Hoye v. State	111, 2354
	Hoyle v. State	2059
	Hoyt v. Beach	2531
	v. Des Moines	438, 458
	v. Hoyt	2382, 2388
	v. Jeffers	454, 455, 461
	v. People	2056
	v. R. Co.	
	57 N. Y.	571
	118 N. Y.	458
	v. Shipherd	1684
	Hronek v. People	1820, 1828
	Hubbard v. Briggs	1032
	v. Dewey	1352, 1676
	v. Greeley	2420
	v. Hubbard	1842
	v. Kelley	1244, 1678
	v. Lees	1496
	v. Moore	1640
	v. R. Co.	458
	Hubbell v. Bisse'l	1938
	v. Grant	2242
	v. Osborn	1908
	v. Ream	1839, 1873
	Habert v. Bartlett	1239
	Hackabee v. Shipherd	1186, 1925
	Hackins v. Ins. Co.	770, 777, 2125
	v. State	2201
	Haddle v. Martir	1012, 1013
	Huddleston v. Coyle	701, 2008, 2016
	Hudgins v. Bloodworth	1021
	v. State	247
	v. Wrights	167, 1154, 1605
	Hudnutt v. Comstock	760
	Hudson v. Appleton	1394
	v. Daily	1681
	v. Green H. & S. Co.	1680, 1684
	v. Hulbert	529
	v. Puett	1291
	v. R. Co.	
	59 Ia.	283, 458
	92 Ia.	463, 719
	v. Revett	2408, 2410, 2419
	v. Solomon	1351
	v. State	
	61 Ala.	396, 714
	137 Ala.	2115

TABLE OF CASES.

HUD

	Section		Section		Section
Hudson v. State		Hame v. Hopkins	1194	Hunter, The	391
3 Coldw.	1432	v. Scott	923, 987	Huntingdon v. Mildmay	1211
101 Ga.	376	Hames v. Bernstein	791, 794	Huntington v. Attrill	463
9 Yerg.	2349, 2354	v. O'Bryan	253, 255,	v. Cast	2577
Hudson's Case	528, 689, 1302,		1415, 1457, 1463	Huntington B. T. M. R.	
	2049	Hammel v. Kistner	2311	Co. v. Decker	96
Hudspeth v. State	1985	Humphrey v. Archibald	2374	Huntley v. Cage	2250
Huebener v. Childs	1556, 1576	v. Humphrey	64	v. Terr.	1045
Huet v. Le Mesurier	1644	v. State	133, 1005,	v. Whittier	95
Hney v. Hney	1876		1876, 1896	Huntly v. Compstock	1644
Huff v. Bennett	736, 758, 759,	Humphreys v. Blevins	2047	Hunton v. Hertz & H. Co.	2300
	760, 2098	v. Boyce	2232	Huntress v. R. Co.	2570
v. Campbell	1680	v. Collier	1244	Huntsman v. Nichols	377
v. Hall	714, 1195, 1280	v. N. N. & M. V. Co.	461	Huntsville R. Co. v. Cor-	
v. Nims	2016, 2018	v. Pensam	1388	peuing	1890
v. State		v. Spear	1538	Huot v. Wise	2239
104 Ga.	1044, 1270,	Humphries v. Parker	728	Hupfer v. Nat'l Distilling Co.	
	1877	v. Taylor D. Co.	1856	114 Wis.	792
106 Ga.	1040	Hunley v. State	1877	Wis., 96 N. W.	794, 1750
Huffman v. Canble	784	Hannicutt v. Higinbotham	1960	Hupp v. Boring	1908
v. Click	1690, 1700	v. Kirkpatrick	714	Hard v. Haggerty	1777
v. State	832, 861	v. Peyton	20, 1567, 1568	v. People	390, 2079,
Huggins v. Drury	2500	v. State	2079		2080
Hughes, re	1836	Hunscom v. Hunscom	1817	v. R. Co.	458
v. Biddulph	2294	Hunsinger v. Hofer	1086, 1890	v. West	1083
v. Budd	1208	Hunt v. Blackburn	2327	Hurlburt v. Bellows	903, 905
v. Canal Co.	1081	v. Boston	655, 1720	v. Dusenbery	2410
v. Clark	1386	v. Chosen Friends	1643,	v. Hurlburt	
v. Coal Co.	1890		1644	128 N. Y.	2312
v. Com.	1750	v. Coe	916	63 Vt.	905
v. Easten	1201	v. Collins	2524	v. Wheeler 1082, 1133, 1257	
v. Felton	1350	v. Dubuque	437, 458	Hurlburt's Estate	1481, 1605
v. Garnous	2294	v. Eaton	2240, 2336	Hurlbut v. Leper	1013
v. General Electric L.		v. Gray	2525	Hurlbutt v. Butenop	1225
& P. Co.	451	v. Hewitt	1857, 1859	Hurley v. Osier	1082, 1086
v. Hays	1203	v. Hort	2473	v. State	
v. Hughes	21	v. Johnson 1304, 1651, 2141		29 Ark.	1404
v. Hughes' Ex'r	1738	v. Kile	1951	46 Oh. St.	761, 905,
v. Listner	2349	v. Lowell Gaalight			907
v. Muscatine Co.	1976	Co.	442, 457,	v. West St. Pani	1195
v. Peopie	2354		681, 1378	Hurparshad v. Sbeo Dyal	1805
v. R. Co.		v. Massey	2520	Hurricane Tel. Co. v.	
Ky., 48 S. W.	1750	v. Owiugs	1651	Mohler	1856
65 Mich.	505, 506,	v. Rousmanier	2417	Hurst v. Beach	2475
	508, 509, 1820	v. Royiauce	1133, 1249	v. Dippo	1196, 1672
v. Rogers	1994, 2021	v. Selleck	1225, 1651	v. Larpin	803
v. State		v. State		v. Parker	2538
70 Ark.	1908	135 Ala.	833	v. R. Co.	
109 Wis.	1442	22 Tex. Cr. App.	1350	49 Ia.	682
v. Ward	1028	v. Van Alstyne	1350	163 Mo.	1951
v. Wilson	2529	v. Weiner	1347	v. State	821
Hngbey v. State	247	Hunt's Case	2250	Hurt v. Davis	1249
Huguet, ex p.	1404	Hunt's Heirs v. Hnnt	689, 1938	v. Evans	1564
Huguley v. Holstein	728	Hunter v. Allen	2221	v. R. Co.	1944
Huidekoper v. Cotton	1416, 2363	v. Biount	2169	Hussey v. Elrod	2232
Hnizega v. Lumber Co.	1951	v. Cobb	2184	v. Roquemore	1225
Hulet v. Barnett	2354	v. Grand Trunk R. Co.	2319	v. State	
Hulett v. Carey	1073	v. Hunter	2506	77 Ala.	619
		v. Leathley	2211	86 Ala.	205, 1620
Hulin v. Powell	1388	v. N. Y. O. & W. R.		87 Ala.	63, 195, 1614,
Hull v. Horner	1193	Co.	2568, 2580		1983
v. Lyon	2312	v. Randall	2363	Huston v. Council Bluffs	1639
v. Miller	1350	v. State		v. Plato	1872
v. State	904, 905	112 Ala.	1079	v. Schindler	2008, 2016
Huil's Will	689, 1073, 1511	74 Miss.	826	Hutchason v. State	619, 620,
Huis v. Buntin	1239	40 N. J. L.	1714, 1725,		2245
v. Kimball	1195, 1272		1745, 2236	Hutcheon v. Mannington	2165
Humble v. Hunter	2438	v. Trustees	1257	Hutchings v. Castle	1086
v. Shoemaker	905	v. Turnpike Co.	1354	v. Cavalier	923

Section 391 1311 483 2577 96 3250 1045 95 1644 2200 2570 377 1890 2239 g Co. 792 94, 1750 1908 1777 90, 2079, 2080 458 1083 903, 905 2410 2312 905 33, 1257 81, 1605 1013 1225 82, 1086 1404 61, 905, 907 1195 1805 1856 2475 96, 1672 803 2538 682 1951 821 1249 1564 1944 2232 1225 619 5, 1620 1614, 1983 1639 1872 8, 2016 9, 620, 2245 2165 1086 923

Section	Case Name	Section
1330	Hutchings v. Corgan	1388
2535	v. Van Bokkelen	
2045	Hutchins v. Deuziloe	
1082, 2437	v. Hutchins	
1644, 2085	v. Kimmell	
1066	v. Van Vechten	
	Hutchinson v. Consumers'	
	Coal Co.	2349
	v. Glover	2319
1189, 2125	v. Gordon	
2538	v. Hutchinson	
1653, 1664	v. Kelly	
1249	v. Payton	
1943	v. R. Co.	
2356	v. Sandt	
2431, 2438	v. Tatham	
1022	v. Wheeler	
	Hutchinson Cooperage	
	Co. v. Snider	1951
2556	Hutchison v. Bowker	
1681	v. Partick	
	Hutchison Mfg. Co. v.	
	Pinch	2442
	Hutmacher v. R. G. &	
	E. Co.	1034
	Huttman, re	2375
	Hutton v. Mansell	1770
	v. Warren	2440
	Hixtable, re	2465
	Huyett v. R. Co.	456
1644, 1651,	Hyam v. Edwards	1709
1709		
905	Hyde v. Buckner	
2334	v. Gannett	
1063	v. Stone	
794, 952	v. Swanton	
1270, 2277	v. Terr.	
1923, 2020,	v. Woolfolk	2021
2506	Hyde Park v. Canton	
1943	v. Dunham	
	Hygeia D. W. Co. v. Hygeia	
561	I. Co.	
	Hygienic P. I. M. Co. v. R.	
	Co.	
2509	122 N. C.	
456	126 N. C.	
1871	Hyland v. Miller	
1296	Hylton v. Hylton	
1859	Hylton's Lessee v. Brown	
2354	Hyman v. Eames	
700, 797,	Hynes v. McDermott	1271, 1684,
2008, 2011, 2536		

I.

1859	Isagi v. Brown	
760, 761,	Iglehart v. Jernegan	763, 2098
222, 1168		
1956	Ihniger v. State	
1347	Ii Estate v. Judd	
1186	Ilderton v. Ilderton	
	Iles v. Watson	
	Illinois C. R. Co.	
65 1668, 1977	v. Ashline	
2220	v. Clark	
1951	v. Davidson	

Section	Case Name	Section
1842	Illinois C. R. Co. v. Ely	
2570	v. Greaves	
2220	v. Griffin	
283	v. Hyatt	
1778	v. Houghton	
2472	v. LeBlanc	
455, 456	v. McClelland	
1063	v. Manion	
1943	v. Smith	
688, 1721,	v. Sutton	1722
612	v. Taylor	
458, 1608	v. Treat	
1941	v. Van Horn	
1350, 2577	v. Wren	
252	v. Wyatt	
	Illinois Land & L. Co. v.	
	Bonner	1201,
1273		
	Illinois Masonic Orphans'	
	Home v. Gracy	1303
	Imboden v. Mining Co.	1195
	Imhoff v. McArthur	916
	v. Richards	754
	Imlay v. Rogers	2363
	Imperial Gas Co. v. Clarke	1858
	Imperial Loan Co. v. Stone	2413
	Independence v. Pompton	1501
	Independence, The,	6
	Independence Boulevard,	
	re	2575
	Independent School Dist.	
	v. Hewitt	1225
	Indiana C. Co. v. Parker	1158
	Indiana R. Co. v. Maurer	1719
	Indianapolis v. Huffer	1976
	v. Kingsbury	1967, 2413
	v. McAvoy	1956
	v. Scott	571, 1168
	Indianapolis D. & S. R.	
	Co. v. Pugh	1943
	Indianapolis P. & C. R.	
	Co. v. Anthony	923, 928,
		1985
	Indianapolis St. R. Co. v.	
	Whitaker	1750
	Indianapolis & C. R. Co.	
	v. Caldwell	2572
	v. Jewett	1203,
		1268
	Indianapolis & St. L. R.	
	Co. v. Stont	1388
	Ingalls v. State	83, 85, 987,
		1270, 2056
	Inge v. Murphy	1703
	Ingersol v. McWillie	2270
	v. Van Gilder	1680
	Ingersoll v. English	907
	v. Hopkins	2475
	Ingham v. Primrose	2419
	Inglby v. Shafto	1856
	Ingle v. Jones	1225
	Inglebright v. Hammond	1624
	Inglis v. Usherwood	1271
	Ingoldshy v. Juan	2120
	Ingraham v. Bockius	751, 1555,
		1558
	v. Chapman	150
	Ingram v. Music House	2434

Section	Case Name	Section
	Ingram v. State	
	27 Ala.	2576
	39 Ala.	303
	67 Ala.	988
	v. Watkins	2098
	Inman v. Foster	406
	v. State	
	65 Ark.	2237
	72 Ga.	1851, 1852
	Innerarity v. Byrne	1871
	v. Mims	1271
	Innes v. Mliwankee	1951
	Inness v. R. Co.	104, 1725
	Innman v. Jackson	2144
	Insole v. Prall's Ex'r	1539
	Insoley v. Shire	1951
	Insurance Co. v. De Wolf	1010
	v. Esbelman	1947
	v. Forchelmer	2573
	v. Gotthelf	770
	v. Higginbotham	1073
	v. Mosley	1714, 1747,
		1775
	v. Newton	1073, 2120
	v. Rodel	1938
	v. Smith	1374
	v. Tobin	443, 458,
		1951, 1976
	v. Weide	
	9 Wall.	736, 749, 754
	11 Wall.	38, 379, 461
	v. Weides	735, 736,
		747, 754
	International & G. N. R.	
	Co. v. Anderson	1750
	v. Dalwigh	770, 772
	v. Dyer	933, 1029
	v. Gordon	2354
	v. Klaus	1951
	v. Underwood	2220
	Interstate Commerce Com'n	
	v. Brimson	2195
	Ionides v. Pender	1946,
		1947
	Iowa V. S. Bank v. Sigstad	2445
	Iowa & M. R. Co. v. Per-	
	kins	2451
	Ireland v. Com.	149
	v. R. Co.	456, 1890
	v. Stiff	1263
	Irish v. Smith	233, 1738,
		1938
	Irish Society v. Bishop of	
	Derry	29, 1632,
		1633, 1634, 1639
	Irlbeck v. Bierl	1078
	Irnham v. Child	2425
	Iron Mountain Bank v.	
	Murdock	377, 1003,
		1013
	Ironton Land Co. v.	
	Butchart	1944
	Iroquois F. Co. v. McCrea	792
	Irvin v. State	
	19 Fla.	2354
	1 Tex. App.	2060
	Irvine, ex p.	2271, 2290, 2292
	v. Buckloe	377
	Irving v. Brownell	1225

TABLE OF CASES.

IRV

	Section		Section		Section
Irving v. Irving	1312, 1513	Jackson v. Claw	2083	Jackson v. Packer	529
v. Motly	391	v. Cody	1313, 2529	v. People	1444, 2088
v. Sheohar	1916, 1978	v. Cole	1257, 1275, 1674	v. Perkins	2205
Irwin v. Bear	1085	v. Com.		v. Phillippe	2000, 2002, 2008, 2016
v. Lever	1200	19 Gratt.	1446	v. Rice	1225, 1290
v. Reed	1409	Ky., 37 S. W.	961, 1750	v. Robinson	1236
v. State	247	100 Ky.	238, 390	v. Root	1194, 1315
Isaac v. U. S.	2497	96 Va.	581, 1841	v. Ramsey	583
Isaac v. Clark	2549	98 Va.	246	v. Russell	1195, 1335, 1573
Isabella v. Pecot	1271	v. Cooley	1487, 1605	v. Shearman	2257
Isenhour v. State	569, 687	v. Crilly	1374	v. Still	2471
Isham v. Cooper	2406	v. Crissey	1368	v. Smith	377
v. Post	461	v. Cullam	1267	v. Son	914, 916, 1890
Isherwood v. Lumber Co.	1974	v. Davis	2141	v. State	
Isher v. Dewey		v. Denison	1232, 1257, 2307	53 Ala.	2245
71 N. C.	1108, 1109	v. Dickenson	2353	77 Ala.	267, 1111
75 N. C.	500, 934	v. Dillon	1223	78 Ala.	986, 1612, 1983
Israel v. Brooks	2359	v. Ely	2432	106 Ala.	276, 2497
v. State	2192, 2201, 2203	v. Evans	1538, 1552, 1555, 1558	181 Ala.	1350
Itata, The	2566	v. Etz	1124, 1125, 1126, 1502, 1605	6 Baxt.	246, 247
Ivat v. Fluch	1060, 1063, 1476	v. Feather R. W. Co.	1312, 1890	56 Ga.	1451
Ivelcheater Case	1712	v. Filteau	1896	Ga., 45 S. E.	1876, 2183
Iverville v. Spaulding	1335	v. French	2326	14 Ind.	1842
Ives v. Ellis	19	v. Frier	1192, 1194, 1196	56 Miss.	652
v. Hamlin	1969	v. Gager	1309, 1312	59 Miss.	643
v. Kimball	1651	v. G.	2465, 2529	75 Miss.	1270
v. Leonard	561, 2027	v. Grady	1817, 1820	35 Oh. St.	652, 855
v. Medcalfe	1065	v. Har	2463	7 Tex. App.	2089
Ivey v. State	1012, 1013	v. Heath	2235	8 Tex. App.	2085
Izer v. State	2362, 2363	v. Hwy	2054	31 Tex. Cr.	2273
		v. Irvin	382	61 Wis.	1397, 1398, 2098
		v. Jackson		v. Stetson	406, 1064
		5 Cowen	586	v. Tallmadge	1877
		40 Ga.	2337, 2341	v. Thomas	
		47 Ga.	1195	1 B. & S.	905, 917, 1040
		80 Md.	1492, 1603	8 Jur. n. s.	958
		62 Md.	564, 1612	v. Thompson	744, 1311
		4 Mo.	1706	v. Timmerman	334
		v. Johnson	1677, 1880	v. Tolleto	1949
		v. Jones	1858	v. U. S.	626, 641
		v. Kniffen	1367, 1432, 1738	v. Vall	1257, 1314
		v. Kling	1644, 2579	v. Van Dusen	610, 693, 2008, 2016
		v. Kingsley	1297, 1298, 1314	v. Van Slyck	1207
		v. Lamb	1198, 2141	v. Varick	201, 913, 1890
		v. Lambert	1956	v. Victory	1304, 1306, 1513
		v. Laroway	2141, 2145	v. Vosburgh	1257
		v. Lawson	1388	v. Vredenburg	1432, 1445, 1778
		v. Leek	900, 907	v. Waldron	1320, 1321, 1513
		v. Leggett	1219	v. Warford	1021, 1023
		v. Legrange	1304, 1306, 1513	v. Williamson	2356
		v. Lewis	923, 987, 1292	v. Witle	1663
		v. Litch	1890	v. Woolsey	1195, 1199
		v. Livingston	1257, 1267	Jackson Co. v. Arnold	2577
		v. Lucett	1238, 1267, 1268	Jacksonville T. & E. W.	
		v. Luquere	1304, 1306, 1513, 2141	R. Co. v. Le	
		v. M'Call	1082	wood	950
		v. M'Vey	291, 1257, 2105, 2309	v. P. L. T. & M. Co.	456, 714, 1873
		v. Miller	1257, 1587, 1633	Jacob v. Bob	2067
		v. Myers	1257	v. Lee	1208
		v. Neely	1195, 1299	v. Lindsay	735, 748, 754, 1253
		v. Osborn	987	v. U. S.	2535

J.

Jaccard v. Anderson	1387, 1666, 2098
Jack v. Klernan	1681
v. Mutual R. F. Life Ass'n	340, 1750, 1754
v. Naber	2349
v. Russey	2237
v. Woods	1408
Jackman's Will	1736
Jacks v. Adamson	2450
Jackson v. Alsop	2471
v. Bailey	1373, 1368, 2098
v. Bard	610, 1082, 1257
v. Barron	2237
v. Belknap	1237, 1674
v. Benson	2105
v. Betts	1736
v. Blanshan	1195, 1311, 2138, 2141, 2145
v. Boneham	1501, 1502, 1644
v. Boone	687
v. Bowley	1295
v. Bradt	2141
v. Brooks	704
v. Browner	1487, 1490
v. Burleigh	2158
v. Burnham	682
v. Burtis	2307
v. Barton	1306, 1313
v. Cary	1257
v. Chamberlain	1313, 2141
v. Christman	1302, 1309, 1311, 2141, 2529

Section	Section	Section	Section
529	Jacob Tome Institute; see Tome Institute.	Jefferson, re	Jewell's Lessee v. Jewell
1644, 2088	Jacob v. Alabama	v. Barhans	1466,
2206	v. State	v. Chapman	1489
3000, 3002,	1404, 1405,	v. C. Haway	451
3008, 3016	1725	v. State	662
1325, 1390	1778	Jefferson vs. Co. v. Co-	2027
1338	Jacobs v. Callaghan	thea'	2446
1194, 1315	v. Cater	Jaffersonville M. & I. R.	380
583	v. Davis	Co. v. Bowen	1871
1338, 1573	v. Farrell	Jeffery v. Walton	1651, 2168
2257	v. Hesler	Jeffries v. Harris	1198
2471	v. Laybourn	Jelks v. Barrett	1318, 2109
377	v. State	Jenkin v. Ins. Co.	2462, 2463
916, 1890	v. Whitcomb	Jenkins v. Biddniph	833
	Jacob's Case	v. Bisbee	7
2245	Jacobsen v. Metzger	v. Blizard	2308
267, 1111	v. Suddal	v. Irrigation Co.	283, 461
1612, 1983	Jacock v. Gilliams	v. Lewis	613
276, 2497	Jacques v. Horton	v. N. C. O. Dressing	1807
1350	v. Sax	Co.	1164
246, 247	Jaffray v. Dennis	v. R. Co.	
1451	v. Thon won	v. State	
1676, 2183	Jahnke v. State	82 Ala.	1974
1842	Jakway v. Jenison	Ala., 17 So.	1689
652	James, ex p.	35 Fla.	852, 1669,
643	v. Biou	78 Ind.	2363
1270	v. Crockett	41 Mis.	2110
652, 855	v. Hodsdon	v. Tobin	2071
2089	v. Kirk	Jenkins' Will	2164
2085	v. Letaler	Jenkins v. Andrews	1302
2273	v. Mills	Jenks, ex p.	2320
397, 1398,	v. Parnell	Jenkyns v. Bnahby	2206
2098	v. R. Co.	Jenne v. Piper	2294, 2319
406, 1064	v. State	Jenner v. Jolliffe	616
1877	115 Ala.	Janner's Case	1257
905, 917,	41 Ark.	Jennes v. Jones	2250
1040	v. Turnpike Co.	v. State	1062
958	James' Estate	Jenney Electric Co. v.	2068
744, 1311	1495, 1719	Branham	
334	James R. & K. Co. v.	561, 715,	
1949	Littlejohn	1936, 2570	
626, 841	James v. Drinkald	Jennings, ex p.	2310
257, 1314	v. Weld	v. Albion	283
610, 693,	Jamieson v. R. Co.	v. Blocker	1083
3008, 3016	13, 276, 1938,	v. Machine Co.	946, 987
	2115, 2497	v. People	988
913, 1890	v. R. Co.	v. R. Co.	456
1306, 1513	Jammison v. R. Co.	v. Rooney	254, 944
1257	Janes v. Williams	v. Sturdevant	2304
432, 1445,	Janney v. Howard	v. Webb	1491
1778	Jansen v. People	Jensen v. McCorkell	95
920, 1321,	J'Anson v. Stuart	Jerman v. Denniston	1083
1513	Janssen's Case	Jerman v. Hudson	1313, 1320
921, 1023	Janvrin v. Fogg	Jernigan v. Carter	1273
2356	v. Scammon	v. State	1194, 1195
1665	Jaques v. Horton	Jesse v. Parker	1304, 2049
195, 1199	Jardine v. Sheridan	v. Preston	1664
2577	Jarrett v. Jarrett	v. State	1896
	Jarvis v. Albro	Jessup, re	166, 792, 1154
	v. Robinson	v. Cook	
	v. State	1 Halet.	1373
	v. Vanderford	6 N. J. L.	2349
	Jasper Co. v. Osborn	v. Osceola Co.	437
	Jaspers v. Lano	Jester v. Steiner	2008
	Jastrzemboki v. Marx-	Jesus College v. Gibbs	1212
	hausen	Jeter v. Headley	1351
	Jean v. Whaedon	Jevens v. Harridge	1858
	Jefferts v. Alvard	Jewell v. Center	912
	v. People	v. Chamberlain	1312

TABLE OF CASES.

JON

	Section		Section		Section
Johnson v. Levy	391	Johnson v. State		Jones v. Coopridger	1312
v. Lawellin	1298	17 Oh.	1135, 1136,	v. Dege	613
v. M'Call	1060		1136	v. Duchow	987
v. McDuffee	1416	27 Tex.	2348	v. Edwards	1208
v. McGhee	1680	1 Tex. App.	1375, 1398	v. Ellis	377
v. McGregor	617	10 Tex. App.	1841	v. Falles	1267
v. McGuire	1876, 2158	28 Tex. App.	2242	v. Finch	705, 2024
v. McKee	1718, 1938	Tex. Cr., 62 S. W.	568	v. Filat	1064
v. Marble Co.	1249	Tex. Cr., 71 S. W.	857	v. Fort	1390, 1872
v. Marlborough	2535	8 Wyo.	1750, 2078	v. Forall	1061, 1062
v. Mason	1299	v. Stevens	2500	v. Fuller	1922, 1944
v. Mays	1878	v. Sullivan	2294, 2297	v. Galbraith	1873, 1938
v. Melville	606	v. Terr.	2513	v. Gale	2167
v. Morgan	415, 1237	v. Thompson	1944	v. Glidewell	1351, 1908
v. Parrotte	2354	v. Timmons	2141, 2144	v. Grantham	2111
v. Patterson		v. Van Veisor	1347	v. Grogan	1738, 1958
2 Hawks	1066, 1126	v. Warf	1075, 1674	v. Guano Co.	1672
13 Lea	2311	v. Watson	2235	v. Hagler	1166, 1225
v. People		v. Wiley	850, 1022, 1890	v. Harrell	1078
3 Hill	923, 1985	v. Wilson	1062	v. Harris	1817
197 Ill.	621, 866, 2071	v. Winship M. Co.	1164	v. Hatchett	1931
202 Ill.	778	Johnson's Will	1736, 2052,	v. Henry	1296, 1300,
v. Portwood	2446		2106		1456, 2132
v. Powell	1195	Johnson Steel Rail Co. v.		v. Hoey	2053
v. Powers		N. B. S. R. Co.	2194, 2212	v. Holoopeter	1678
62 Cal.	1067	Johnson v. Cox	1225	v. Howard	1066, 1250,
40 Vt.	2098, 2100	v. Darrah	2450		2116
v. Price	1549	v. Ewing Female Uni-		v. Howland	581
v. R. Co.		versity	1877	v. Hunter	1603
111 Ill.	714	v. Haines	1651	v. Hutchinson	1350
47 Minn.	688, 1722	v. Ins. Co.	463, 728, 761,	v. Inge	1873
56 Vt.	1978		1839	v. Ins. Co.	379, 461, 944
91 Wis.	2570	v. Jones	944, 987, 1873,	v. Jones	
v. Rannels	1680		1890	38 Cal.	1203
v. Richardson	2415	v. R. Co.	1696, 2507	1 Cox	1406
v. Russell	1063, 1066	v. Slater	601	2 Hen. & M.	2118
v. Sargent	1404, 1406, 1415	v. Spencer	1021, 1041	102 Ky.	2516
v. Shaw	2144	v. Todd	781, 804	9 M. & W.	1513, 2313,
v. Skipworth	1272, 1273	Johnston Harvester Co.			2529
v. Spaulding	736	v. Bartley	1195	45 Md.	166, 1154,
v. State		v. Clark	720, 1943		1496
17 Ala.	273, 276, 363,	Joice v. Branson	613	48 Md.	1603
	389, 390, 397,	Joliet v. Blower	1698	18 Me.	1645
	770	Joliet A. & N. R. Co. v.		80 N. C.	1028, 1126,
35 Ala.	705	Velic	2495, 2496		1129, 1131
47 Ala.	619	Joliet S. R. Co. v. Caul	2220	17 N. J. Eq.	2067
50 Ala.	1432	Jolley v. Taylor, 1 Camp.		137 N. Y.	1085, 2500
59 Ala.	826, 2071	143	1905	12 Pa.	1350
73 Ala.	1684	Jolly v. State	63, 246	12 Rich.	1510, 1513
102 Ala.	1439, 1966	Jones v. Arterburn	1290, 1302,	13 Tex.	923
14 Ga.	10, 664, 1839,		1304, 1306,	v. Lake View	2572
	1842		1310, 1312,	v. Lanier	2223
46 Ga.	1270		1316, 1513, 2046	v. Layman	1770
61 Ga.	506, 987, 1821,	v. Blontt	1320	v. Lee	1862
	1828, 1832, 2231	v. Botsford	1073	v. Levi	1186, 1273
65 Ga.	1750	v. Boyce	1949	v. Loney	1013
76 Ga.	1821	v. Brewer	1300, 1315	v. Long	751, 1550, 1555
92 Ga.	2059	v. Brine	1354	v. Love	1378
4 G. Greene	2059	v. Brinkley	1311, 1513	v. Lovell	1174, 1312
2 Ind.	705, 1841,	v. Brooke	529	v. Lumber Co.	461
	2024, 2056	v. Call	1254	v. McMullen	2144
21 Ind.	1109	v. Carrington	1633	v. Maffet	1684
65 Ind.	2056	v. Casler	2052, 2106	v. Manchester	2286
80 Ind.	1267	v. Chiles	658	v. Marks	1651
54 Miss.	111, 247	v. Collins	233, 1938, 1958	v. Mason	1316
63 Miss.	2243	v. Com.		v. Melindy	1269
Miss., 27 So.	247	Ky., 46 S. W.	1018,	v. Morgan	1651, 2138,
53 Nebr.	2497		1442, 1447		2141, 2143
59 N. J. L.	1157	86 Va.	1142	v. Morrell	1072

TABLE OF CASES.

Section	Case Name	Section
1312	Jones v. Morse	1066
613	v. Murphy	3048
967	v. Murray	2557
1308	v. N. Y. L. Ins. Co.	2520
377	v. Newman	2472
1267	v. Orto	1556
708, 2024	v. Overstreet	2582
1044	v. P. B. L. Assur. Co.	3384
1390, 1872	v. Packet Co.	1621
1061, 1062	v. Parker	
1922, 1944	97 N. C.	2349
1873, 1936	30 N. H.	2329
2167	v. Tomperton	1856
1351, 1906	v. People	2501
2111	v. Perry	251, 262
1736, 1958	v. Phelps	1316
1166, 1225	v. Pitcher	1647
1076	v. Portland	1721
1617	v. Pugh	2296
1931	v. R. Co.	
1296, 1300,	107 Ala.	994
1456, 2132	43 Minn.	663
2053	80 Minn.	5
1678	3 Sawyer	1417
1066, 1250,	v. Randall	1216, 1219, 2426
2116	v. Reilly	2307
581	v. Risley	2442
1603	v. Roberts	1312
1350	v. Robinson	1206
1573	v. Rose	1674
0, 461, 944	v. Shattuck	276
	v. Simpson	1066
	v. State	
	61 Ark.	2497
	76 Ala.	248, 951
	96 Ala.	925
	107 Ala.	1126
	113 Ala.	1290, 1651
	115 Ala.	907, 911
	116 Ala.	247
	120 Ala.	652, 986
	137 Ala.	652, 1750
	52 Ark.	1445
	59 Ark.	276
	Fla., 32 So.	1976
	1 Ga.	580
	63 Ga.	413
	65 Ga.	1072
	105 Ga.	2513
	106 Ga.	222, 1154
	11 Ind.	2024
	60 Ind.	2008, 2016,
		2021
	64 Ind.	1044, 1476
	71 Ind.	460, 1441, 1750,
		1756
	69 Ind.	2334
	118 Ind.	16
	65 Minn.	1029
	65 Miss.	2327
	67 Miss.	1021, 1022
	79 Miss.	1445, 1451
	51 Oh. St.	1164
	54 Oh. St.	745
	13 Tex.	1133, 2056,
		2071, 2100
	3 Tex. App. 150	1640
	3 Tex. App. 575	2059
	Tex. App., 31 S.W.	278

Section	Case Name	Section
	Jones v. State	
	32 Tex. Cr. 106	222
	32 Tex. Cr. 135	521
	v. Stevens	
	36 Nebr.	782
	11 Price	66, 70, 73, 74,
		307, 209
		745, 749
	v. Stroud	
	v. Swayze	2406
	v. Tarlton	1214
	v. The Phoenix	1641
	v. Thompson	1730
	v. Tucker	561
	v. Turberville	1061
	v. U. S.	3566
	v. Walker	1225, 1239
	v. Waller	2139
	v. Ward	736, 2096
	v. White	
	11 Humph.	675
	1 Stra.	1671
	v. Williams	378
	v. Wood	1397
	Jones' Adm's v. Perkins	1938
	Jones' Will	1304
	Joust v. Craig	1635
	Joplin v. Johnston	1296, 1456
	Joplin Waterworks Co. v.	
	Joplin	1677
	Jordan v. Lashbrook	528, 529,
		1302
	Jordan v. Black	1661
	v. Bradshaw	1664
	v. Cameron	2141, 2145
	v. Duke	794
	v. Faircloth	1293
	v. Foster	656
	v. Hoikham	2256
	v. Jordan	803
	v. Lewis	2183
	v. Money	2042
	v. Osgood	321, 334, 1976
	v. State	
	81 Ala.	293
	142 Ind.	2245, 2336
	32 Miss.	825
	29 Tex. App.	2272
	v. Thomas	1661
	v. Warner	1230
	v. Wilkins	2125
	Jordan's Case	1748
	Jory v. Orchard	1234
	Joseph v. Morrow	1898
	v. National Bank	3016
	Joseph B. Thomas, The	285,
		2509
	Joseph Hargreaves,	
	Limited, re	2374, 2376
	Joseph v. Furnish	1051, 1072,
		1085
	Josephus v. State	852
	Jocoy v. R. Co.	2169
	Joske v. Irvine	2494
	Joslin v. Giese	2432
	v. State	1442
	Josselyn v. McAllister	396
	Joy v. Hopkins	1943
	v. State	1029
	Joyce v. Hamilton	1085
		3741

Section	Case Name	Section
	Joyce v. Ins. Co.	1947
	v. R. Co.	1976
	Joyner v. Roberts	2583
	Joyner v. Statham	2417
	Judd v. Brentwood	1126, 1129,
		2120
	v. Fargo	461
	v. Gibbs	652, 1065
	Judevine v. Weeks	290
	Judge of Probate v. Briggs	2450
	Judges, Answer of the; see	
	Answer, etc.	
	Resolutions of the	
	7 C. & P.	1262, 1349
	Judice v. Chretien	1676
	Judson v. Blanchard	1141
	v. Glant Powder Co.	2509
	Judy v. Gilbert	2477
	v. Johnson	905, 1026
	Julius K. Optical Co.	
	v. Treat	1206
	Jumpers v. People	143, 144,
		460, 1160,
		2016
	Jureau Hank v. McSpedon	1369
	Juniata Bank v. Brown	736,
		1539, 1540
	Juniata Bldg. Ass'n v.	
	Hertzel	561, 2047
	Junkin v. Davis	2164
	Jupis v. People	56, 439
	Justen v. Schaff	794
	Justice v. Com.	2277
	v. Eistob	1208
	v. Luther	794, 1196, 1213
	v. State	1442
	Justices, Opinion of the	
	35 N. H.	1350
	52 N. H.	1350
	Justus' Succession	1644, 1646

K.

	Kadlec v. Pavik	1712
	Kaelin v. Com.	1326, 1404,
		1416
	Kanders v. Moutague	1736
	Kahal v. Kamai	2525
	Kahlebeck v. State	1673
	Kahu v. Kahu	2433
	v. Triest-Rosenberg	
	Co.	263, 1976,
		2509
	Kaime v. Omro	613
	Kain v. Larkin	1066
	v. Old	2425, 2434
	Kairson v. Packhaber	1890
	Kaiser v. Alexander	1540
	Kalankoa v. Henry	1890
	Kaler v. Ins. Co.	1021
	Kalk v. Fielding	1263
	Kalmes v. Gerrish	1291
	Kamm v. Bank	1066
	Kane v. Ins. Co.	2047
	v. N. C. R. Co.	2552
	v. N. Y. El. R. Co.	462
	Kankakee & S. R. Co.	
	v. Horan	701

TABLE OF CASES.

KAN

	Section		Section		Section
Kannon v. Galloway	795, 9006, 2016	Kearsley v. Phillips	1859	Kelly v. People	1072, 1079
Kansas Cent. R. Co. v. Allen	1943	Keash v. Santa Ysabel G. M. Co.	1698	v. Proctor	601, 619, 692, 1615, 1985
Kansas City F. S. & M. R. Co. v. Becker	2540	Keating v. Pacific S. W. Co.	2441	v. Richardson	556, 715, 1919
v. Murray	2383	v. People	570, 1157, 2497, 2513	v. Riggs	1267
v. Perry	2494	v. State	107	v. Schupp	377
v. Stoner	1721	Kaaton v. Greenwood	2235	Kelliher v. Sntton	334
Kansas City M. & B. R. Co. v. Burton	461	v. Jones	2432	Kellington v. Trinity College	1670
v. Smith	792	v. Mayo	1062	Kello v. Maget	736, 1267, 1269, 2105, 2158
v. Spencer	1951	Keator v. People	928, 1985	Kellogg, re	285
v. Weeks	1976	Kee v. State	56, 59	v. Clyne	334
Kansas City Star Co. v. Carlisle	406, 1781	Keefe v. Pacific M. L. Ins. Co.	1750	v. Kranser	1083, 1943
Kansas City & S. W. R. Co. v. Baird	714, 720, 1168	v. Zimmerman	1320, 1513	v. McCabe	987
v. Ehret	714, 720	Keeling v. Ball	1314, 1321	v. Northrup	2437
Kansas City & T. R. Co. v. Spittlog	463	Keen v. Keen	112, 1736	v. Schenerman	1330
v. Vickroy	463	v. Priest	1073	Kellogg Co. v. Holm	916
Kansas M. O. M. Ins. Co. v. Rammelsberg	2498	Keenan v. Hayden	251	Kellum's Will	1511
Kansas Pac. R. Co. v. Miller	283, 702, 784, 1182, 1492, 1496, 1644, 1873	Keene v. Acc. Ass'n	2510	Kelly, re	2282
v. Peavey	1951	v. Meade	2432	v. Alderson	68
v. Watson	1503	Keener v. State	38, 111, 246, 247, 1616, 1852	v. Brooks	1890
Kansas S. Y. Co. v. Couch	437	Keenholts v. Becker	406	v. Craig	1192, 1195, 1281
Kansas & T. Coal Co. v. Galloway	1416	Keesler v. State	278, 949	v. Cunningham	2425
Kanter, re	2264	Keesling v. Powell	1460	v. Draw	2231
Kaoru Yamataya v. Fisher	1354	Keffler v. State	30, 390, 1874	v. Elevator Co.	1235
Kapohaku v. Koa	2354	Kehoe v. Com.	580, 1986, 2287	v. French	788
Karr v. Jackson	1680	Keist v. R. Co.	461, 1722	v. Goodbread	1878
v. State	246	Keister v. Myers	2416	v. Oliver	2410
v. Stivers	1521, 1538, 1547	Keith v. Kihbe	1540	v. People	2060
Kassing v. Walter	1062, 1867, 2349	v. Lothrop	697, 2014	v. Perrault	682, 689
Kasson's Est.	783, 987	v. Marcus	1072	v. R. Co.	28 Minn. 283, 438, 45E, 461
Kastner v. State	969, 1853	v. N. H. & N. Co.	208, 221, 1154	60 Wis.	1856
Katzer v. Milwaukee	2580	v. State	157 Ind. 140, 1977	v. Sharp S. Co.	1299, 1302
Kaufman v. Shellworth	1225	Tex. Cr., 56	2061	v. Small	2232
v. Swar	86, 334	v. Taylor	318	v. Smith	1876
Kaufman v. Canghai	1414, 1738	v. Tilford	415, 1943	v. State	60 Ala. 928
Kaufman's Estate	1738	v. Wilson	1842	72 Ala.	852
Kant v. Kessler	2312	Keithler v. State	2056	75 Ala.	1506, 1821
Kay v. Brookman	1312, 1513	Keithley v. Stafford	1958	133 Ala.	133, 166, 1154
v. Fredrigal	1028	Keithley's Estate	689, 1938	39 Fla.	2354
v. R. Co.	1943	Keithsburg & E. R. Co. v. Henry	1943	19 Ga.	784
Kean v. Com.	1668	Kelch v. State	2501	82 Ga.	1476
v. Davis	2444	Kell v. Charmer	2467	Ga., 45 S. E.	1841
v. M'Laughlin	406	Kellenberger v. Sturtevant	1256	51 Nebr.	1853
v. Rice	1681, 1684	Keller v. Donnelly	398	v. Thney	2525
Kearney v. Farrell	1730	v. Gilman	1719, 1721, 1974	v. U. S.	569
v. King	2575	v. Holderman	2414	v. West Bend	1951
v. London B. & S. C. R. Co.	2509	v. Ins. Co.	2388	Kelly's Heirs v. McGuire	689, 1934, 1938
v. State	101 Ga. 784, 1243, 1447	v. Moore	1651	Kelsea v. Fletcher	463, 754
58 Miss.	682	v. State	102 Ga. 205, 770, 1841, 2060	Kelsey v. Bush	2115
68 Miss.	194, 988	123 Ind.	2079	v. Hanmer	1188, 1194, 1195, 1225, 1651
v. Thernanson	748	v. Vernon	613	v. Ins. Co.	944, 995, 1719
Kearns v. Kearns	1267, 2052	Kelly v. Andrews	2340	Kelton v. Hill	1554
		v. Combs	1062	Kelway v. Kelway	2290
		v. Crawford	1525	Kemerer v. Bourne	1878
		v. Dillon	74	Kemp v. King	2211
		v. Fond dn Lac	1951	Kemper v. Pryor	1312, 1314
		v. Kelley	161 Mass. 2536	Kempsey v. McGinniss	672, 681, 683, 1938, 1958
		20 Wis.	1082	Kendall v. Field	1548
				v. Limberg	1951

Section	Section	Section	Section
1072, 1079	Kendall v. May	Kent v. State	Kidd v. Manly
619, 692,	v. Powers	64 Ark.	v. State
1615, 1985	Kendall's Ex'rs v.	42 Oh.	Kidder v. Bacon
556, 715,	Coller	v. Walton	v. Blaisdell
1919	Kendrick v. Com.	v. Weld	v. Dunstable
1267		Kent Co. v. Ransom	v. Smith
377	v. Dellinger	Kentucky C. R. Co.	Kidwell v. Com.
334	v. Kemp	v. Barrow	v. State
	v. State	v. Smith	Kierstead v. Brown
1670	10 Humph.	Kentucky Cit. B. & L. Ass'n	Kiesel v. Ins. Office
267, 1269,		v. Lawrence	Kieth v. Kerr
2105, 2158	55 Miss.	Kentucky Lumber Co. v.	Kilbee v. Sneyd
285		Abney	
334	Kenerson v. Henry	Kenworthy v. Williams	Kilbourn v. Enry
1083, 1943	Keniston v. Rowe	1839, 1841	v. Thompson
987	Kennard v. Burton	1936, 2500	Kilbourne v. Jennings
2437	v. Carter	2086	38 Ia.
1330	v. Kennard	2383	40 Ia.
916	Kennedy, re	2062	Kilbride v. Carbon D. & M.
1511	v. Com.	v. State	Co.
2282	14 Bush	Kerber, re	Kilburn v. Bennett
68		Kerfoot v. Chicago	v. Mullen
1890	78 Ky.	Kerker v. Carter	v. Ritchie
1195, 1281	v. Dear	Kerkow v. Baner	Kilgore v. Bulkley
2425	v. Divine	Kermott v. Ayer	v. Cross
2231	v. Dodson	Kern v. Bridwell	v. Hanley
1235	v. Doyle	v. Ins. Co.	v. Jordan
788		v. Kern	v. Magee
1878	v. Towke	Kernin v. Hill	v. State
2410	v. Gifford	Kerns v. Perry	Killen v. Side
2060	v. Hensley	v. R. Co.	Killian v. R. Co.
682, 689		Kerr v. Com'rs	Killins v. State
	v. Kennedy	v. Gibson	Kilmer v. Smith
283, 438,	v. Lnbold	v. Lunsford	Kilpatrick v. Com.
458, 461	v. Lyell	Kerrains v. People	Kilpatrick Co. v. Box
1856	v. People	Kerrans v. Brown	Kilrow v. Com.
299, 1302	v. R. Co.	Kerrigan v. Conolly	
2232	67 Barb.	v. R. Co.	Kilvert's Trusts
1876	150 N. Y.	Kershane v. Collins	Kimball v. Bellows
	v. Rountree	Kersher v. Kersher	v. Borden
928	v. Spring	Kesse v. R. Co.	
852	v. State	Kessler v. Best	v. Carter
506, 1821	101 Ga.	Ketchingman v. State	v. Davis
133, 166,	19 Tex. App.	Ketchum v. Brennan	v. Kimball
1154		Ketland v. Bissett	v. Ladd
2354	64 Tex.	Kettering v. Jacksonville	v. Morrill
784		Ketterman v. R. Co.	v. People
1476	66 Tex.	Key v. Thomson	v. Saguin
1841		Keyes v. Cedar Falls	Kimberley's Appeal
1853	Kennedy's Will	v. Mooney	Kimble v. Joelin
2525	Kennett v. Chambers	v. State	Kimbrough v. Mitchell
569	v. Engle	Keys v. Warner	
1951	v. Fickel	Keys v. Pickrell	Kimmarle v. R. Co.
689,	Kenniff v. Caulfield	Keystone Axle Co. v.	Kimmel v. Kimmel
934, 1938	Kennon v. Gilmer	Leyda	
463, 754	Kenny v. Clarkson	Keystone Mfg. Co.	Kimpton v. Glover
2115		v. Adams	Kinchelow v. State
94, 1195,	v. Walker	v. Johnson	Kindel v. Le Bert
225, 1651	Kenosha Stove Co. v. Shedd	Kibbe v. Bancroft	Kine v. Beaumont
995, 1719		Kibby v. Rucker	King v. Atkins
1554		Kibler v. McIlwain	v. Badeley
2290	Kenrick v. Kenrick	v. Com.	v. Barrett
1878	Kensington v. Inglis	Kidd v. Alexander	v. Bolling
2211		v. Henderson	v. Carpenter
312, 1314	Kent v. Garvin		v. Cole
672, 681,	v. Gray		v. Dale
938, 1958	v. Lincoln		v. Donahne
1548			v. Faber
1951	v. Lowen		v. Fowler

TABLE OF CASES.

KIN

	Section		Section		Section
King v. Frost	1779	Kingston v. R. Co.	64, 96, 987	Klenk v. Knoble	613
v. Hall	1225	v. Tappen	1898	Klepsch v. Donald	1164
v. Hersey	928	Kingwood v. Bethlehem	1195,	Kline v. Baker	1271, 2558,
v. Hopkins	575, 1354,		1314, 1513,		2573
	2494		2132	v. R. Co.	1976
v. Ins. Co.	1223, 1683	Kinnaird v. Saltoun	2165	Kling v. Tnustall	747
v. Jordan	791, 1339	Kinnard v. Willmore	2098	Klingemann's Goods	1674
v. Kenny	1186	Kinne v. Kinne	233, 689	Klinkner v. Schmidt	1586
v. Kent's Adm'r	2575	Kinnear v. Gallagher	1064	Kloke v. Martin	2526
v. Kersey	1770	Kinneberg v. Kinneberg	64	Kloman v. Kloman	2067
v. King		Kinney v. Berran	1404	Klotz v. James	1028
28 Ala.	2067	v. Farnsworth	1587	King v. State	1035
49 Ga.	2349	v. Flynn	693, 1300, 1316,	Knapp v. Fuller	406
Ky., 42 S. W.	2502		2004, 2008, 2529	v. Haskall	1873
2 Roh. Eccl.	2260	v. Hosea	1013, 1684, 2098	v. Schneider	1086, 1890
4 Tannt.	1858	Kinsman v. Crooke	1408	v. Smith	1960
90 Va.	2517	Kipp v. Silverman	763, 1126,	v. Wing	1871
	2144		1890	Knapp Case	219, 444
v. Little	2144	Kirby v. Com.	1750	Knard v. Hill	1624
v. McCarthy	1404, 1725	v. Gibe	1650	Kneass' Case	2215
v. Maddux	2118	v. Ins. Co.	1947	Kneeland v. State	2282
v. Mims	1225, 1651	v. Masten	1779	Knickerbocker v. Wilcox	1213
v. Mittalberger	770	v. State	18	Kniffen v. McConnell	1623
v. R. Co.		v. Tallmadge	285, 289	Knight v. Barber	2425
34 Ia.	463, 1164	v. U. S.	1388	v. Danler	1193
72 N. Y.	437, 1154,	Kircher v. Larchwood	252	v. Epsom	2354
	1977, 1978	Kirchner v. Collins	946	v. Fisher	2349, 2354
v. Raines	1658	Kirk v. Carr	1505, 1511	v. Goodyear Mfg. Co.	461
v. Randlett	1195, 2447	v. Garrett	1051, 2363, 2554	v. House	1985
v. Root	73, 74, 209,	v. Mowry	1668	v. Knight	
	406, 1974	v. Nowell	1064	178 Ill.	254, 1778, 1960
v. Ruckman	923, 1985	v. State	1304	12 La. An.	1225
v. Schener	1225	v. Terr.	861	v. Lawrence	1653, 1676
v. Sears	2141	Kirkendall v. Omaha	463	v. Martin	1200, 1203,
v. Shepard	2593	Kirkham v. People	928, 968,		1205, 1297
v. State			1442, 1852	v. Overman W. Co.	1976
40 Ala.	832, 841	Kirkland v. Nisbet	1955	v. Packard	529, 531
100 Ala.	2190, 2220	v. Smith	1681	v. Rothschild	716, 905, 1075
17 Fla.	78	v. Trott	1799	v. Rushwood	575
65 Mis.	246, 248	Kirkman v. Oxley	73	v. Smythe	568, 1974
74 Mis.	1873, 2512	Kirkpatrick v. Clark	1246	v. State	290
91 Tenn.	1450, 2501	v. Jenkins	1738	v. U. S.	2272
13 Tex. App.	1157	v. Love	2122	v. Waterford	
v. U. S.	2374	v. Pope Mfg. Co.	1859, 2219	2 Y. & C.	2294
v. Westbrook	770	v. Snyder	1943	4 Y. & C.	1205, 1465
v. Wicks	1025, 1028	Kirksey v. Kirksey	2015, 2016	v. Whitmore	1187
v. Wilkins	1083	Kirschner v. State	987, 1270,	Knights v. Piella	2508
v. Worthington			1681, 2271	v. State	354
73 Ill.	1234,	Kirsher v. Kirsher	2530	Knobell v. Fuller	73, 209
	1705, 2105	Kirwan v. Cockburn	1684, 2535	Knoll v. State	1700, 1977
104 U. S.	6	Kissam v. Forrest	1390	Knopke v. Ins. Co.	392, 2498
King Charles' Trial	1177, 2250	Kissel v. Lewis	1620	Knowles v. Crampton	1159
King of the Two Sici-		Kiskimmins v. Shaver	2260	v. People	1010, 2228,
lies v. Wilcox	2258, 2259,	Kitchell v. Beach	1738		2243, 2273
	2276	Kitchen v. Rohhins	1053	v. Scribner	2498
King's Lynn Case	1712	v. Tyson	1985	v. State	
King's Proctor v. Daines	2452	v. Union Tp.	1951	80 Ala.	457
Kingery v. Berry	1351	Kitchens v. Kitchens	2052	Tex. Cr., 72 S. W.	133
Kinghorne v. Tel. Co.	1236	Kittanning Ins. Co.		Knowlton v. McMahon	2349,
Kingman v. Cowles	1681, 2164	v. O'Neill	1770		2334
v. Lynn & B. R. Co.	451	Kitteringham v. R. Co.	1951	v. R. Co.	2580
Kingshury v. Davidson	2515	Kittredge v. Elliott	251	Knox v. Clark	1963
v. Moses	463, 658,	v. Russell	2097	v. Johnson	1017
	2097	Klanowski v. R. Co.	460	v. Knox	1738
Kingsford v. Hood	1777	Klatt v. Lumber Co.		v. Rossi	6, 2184
Kingsley v. Kingsley	1703	92 Wis.	2525	v. Silloway	1225, 1314,
Kingston v. Horner	1267	97 Wis.	949		1651, 1676
v. Lesley	1196, 1219,	Kleeberg v. Schrader	1213	v. State	286, 579
	1644, 1672, 1709	Kleiman v. Geiselman	1194	v. Vinsant	1350
v. Phelps	1056				

Section
613
1164
71, 2558,
2573
1976
747
1674
1586
2526
2067
1028
1035
406
1873
86, 1890
1960
1871
219, 444
1624
2215
2282
1213
1623
2425
1193
2354
49, 2354
461
1985
78, 1960
1225
53, 1676
20, 1203,
05, 1297
1976
529, 531
05, 1075
575
68, 1974
290
2272
2294
05, 1465
1187
2508
354
73, 209
00, 1977
92, 2498
1159
0, 2228,
13, 2373
2498
457
7, 133
2349,
2354
2580
1963
1017
1738
6, 2184
5, 1314,
51, 1676
86, 579
1350

Section
1851
1276
2484
1913, 2497
1699
1350, 1852
377
2509
1874
949, 1756
1184
397
2463
21, 905, 914
1074
770
1873
1803, 1904
2690
2349
2577
211, 987
1280
461, 571, 1951
2432
199, 451
461, 1951
994, 2088
455, 456
1271
451, 949
2012
2497
719
1938
5
1839, 2531
1852
1549
1705, 1778
2028
1890
617, 1106
354
1587
2312
442, 451
1750
233
615
1082
283, 458, 916
1051
1493,
1497, 1712,
1784
2575
1225
1900
681, 1696
1086
331
1041
2195, 2210
VOL. IV. — 36

Section
1851
1276
2484
1913, 2497
1699
1350, 1852
377
2509
1874
949, 1756
1184
397
2463
21, 905, 914
1074
770
1873
1803, 1904
2690
2349
2577
211, 987
1280
461, 571, 1951
2432
199, 451
461, 1951
994, 2088
455, 456
1271
451, 949
2012
2497
719
1938
5
1839, 2531
1852
1549
1705, 1778
2028
1890
617, 1106
354
1587
2312
442, 451
1750
233
615
1082
283, 458, 916
1051
1493,
1497, 1712,
1784
2575
1225
1900
681, 1696
1086
331
1041
2195, 2210
Kring v. Missouri
Krippner v. Biehl
Krisse v. Neason
Kritzer v. Smith
Krogg v. R. Co.
Krom v. Vermilion
Krueger v. Sylvester
Kruse v. S. & W. Lum-
ber Co.
Kuen v. Upmier
Kuenster v. Woodhense
Kugadt v. State
Kuglar v. Garner
Kuhl v. Kusner
Kuhlman v. Brown
Kuhlika v. Mediuika
Kuhls v. Gates
R. Co.
65 Ia.
70 Ia.
Kul.berger v. Congress
S. Co.
Kumler v. Ferguson
Kupfer v. Bank
Kurtz v. Hibner
v. Kurtz
v. R. Co.
Kusch v. Kusch
Kusler v. Crofoot
Kutcher v. Love
Kux v. Bank
Kvammen v. Mill Co.
Kwong Lee Wai v. Ching
Sai
Kyburg v. Perkins
Kyle v. Craig
v. Kavanagh
v. Kyle
Kynaston v. East India
Co.
L.
Labaree v. Wood
Labarre v. Hopkins
Labarthe v. Gerbeau
La Beau v. People
La Bourgogne
Lacus v. R. Co.
Lacey v. Davis
v. Hill
v. Marnan
v. Newport
Laciede F. B. M. Co. v.
Hartford Co.
Lacon v. Higgins
Lacy v. Kossuth Co.
v. State
v. Sugarman
Ladd v. Blunt
v. Ladd
v. Wilson
Ladnier v. Ladnier

Section
7
1951, 1976
1186, 1195,
1279, 2062, 2132
1416
1078
1651, 1676
1388, 1698
581, 778
1963, 1984
933,
1005
2081
253
2083
799, 811
571, 811
1779
1951
112, 392
1195
2476, 2477
2067
1085
613
2110
1062
2025
392
905
1633
112, 581, 770,
804, 1725
2466
779
1802, 2221
607
1876
1299
987
2256
1722
1186, 1239, 1676
278
1244, 1678
1225
2494
1271, 1684,
1697, 1953
208, 221,
657, 1674,
1984
1185, 1193,
1761
1249
1216
463
2349
2472
Lafayette v. Weaver
Lafayette B. & M. R. Co.
v. Wiuslow
Laffan v. U. S.
Laffan v. Missisquoi
Puip Co.
Lafin v. R. Co.
Lafoue v. Falkland
Islands Co.
La Fontaine v. Southern
Underwriters' Ass'n
Lafoon v. Shearin
Laidlaw v. Sage
Laing v. Barclay
v. Kaine
v. R. & C. Co.
Laird v. Ass'n Co.
v. Campbell
v. Kilbourne
v. Laird
Lake, re
v. Brown
v. Gilchrist
v. People
Lake's Case
Lake Erie & W. R. Co. v.
Craig
v. Middlecoff
v. Mugg
v. Nooker
v. Wilson
Lake Lighting Co. v.
Lewis
Lake Merced W. Co.
v. Cowles
Lake Shore R. Co. v.
Herrick
Lake Shore & M. S.
R. Co. v. Taylor
Lake Street Elev. R. Co.
v. Burgess
v. Shaw
Lalance & G. M. Co. v.
Haberman M. Co.
Laliberté v. R.
Lallande v. Brown
Lally v. Rossman
Laloue v. U. S.
Lalor v. Lalor
Lamalere v. Caze
Lamance v. Byrnes
Lamar v. Allen
v. Pearre
v. Raysor
La Master v. Dickson
Lamb v. Lippincott
v. Littman
v. Lynch
v. Moberly
v. People
v. State
66 Md.
40 Nebr.
Nebr., 96 N. W.

Section
288
1943
1633
1058
1943
2310
2261,
2271, 2282
2354
2404
2307
1296
463
106
1556
1225
286
1354
1651
2124
672, 681
1518
376
456
442, 451, 461
2594
792
928
2579
1714, 1725
1671
791
1719
2319
200, 986,
2196
1072
1680
2498
1457, 1486
1021
1873
1605
657, 1065, 1066,
1458, 1678
1651
2232
1804, 1938
1816
1938
1204, 1242,
1247
2079
359
2056
792,
1079, 2272

TABLE OF CASES.

LAM

	Section		Section		Section
Lamb v. Stewart	1040	Landy v. Humphries	1750	Laros v. Com.	232, 857, 868, 1984
v. Ward	1890	Lane v. Agric. Soc.	1871, 1978	Larrabee v. Tribune Co.	406
Lambe v. Manning	1777, 2410	v. Boicourt	2389	Larrison v. R. Co.	1850
Lambe's Case	848, 1827, 1929, 1475	v. Bommeimann	1239	Larry v. Sherburne	1072
Lambert v. Cooper	2049	v. Bratard	1386	Larson v. Ean Clair	1908
v. La Conner T. & T. Co.	1756	v. Bryant	1021, 1756	v. First Nat'l Bank	2572
v. Lambert	2289	v. Cameron	1267	La Rue v. St. Anthony & D. E. Co.	1067
v. People		v. Clark	1238	Lasater v. Van Hook	1275
6 Abb. N. C.	1070	v. Dighton	89	Las Caygas v. Lari-onda's Syndica	1272, 1676, 2165, 2168
29 Mich.	1142	v. Harlan Co.	949	Lascelles v. State	818
v. Weir	1651, 2167	v. Harris	1662	Lassels v. Chatterton	529
Lamberton, re	2375	v. Hill	1786	Lassell v. James	2477
Lamberts v. Cooper	1302, 1804	v. M. & T. Hardware Co.	1550	Lassiter v. State	1842
Lambeth v. Caldwell	2165	v. Moore	293, 1737	Lassone v. R. Co.	1527
v. State	1397, 1398, 1438, 1451	v. R. Co.		Last Chance Co. v. Ames	1018
Lambie's Estate	291, 1736, 2132	132 Mo.	96	Laster v. Blackwell	1189, 1195, 1278, 2106
Lambright v. State	1750, 2071, 2073	21 Wash.	2220, 2386	Latham v. Latham	238, 1879
Lammiman v. R. Co.	2384	v. Stanbope	2462	v. Smith	6, 2184
Lanaille Valley R. Co. v. Bixby	561	v. State		v. Tombs	2531
Lamoreaux v. Att'y-Gen'l	1503	Fia., 32 So.	247, 581	Lathrop v. Atkinson	1668
Lamoreux v. Huntley	1778	151 Ind.	1447, 1450	v. Branch	19
Lamos v. Snell	73, 209	Lang v. Sanger	283	v. Mitchell	1208
Lamoure v. Caryl	1948	v. Terry	1951	Latimer v. Elgin	1703
Lamoureux v. R. Co.	1116, 1117, 2570	v. Waters	619	v. Sovereign Camp	770
Lampley v. Scott	1142, 1362	Langdon v. Hulls	1206	Latkov v. Eamer	1670
Lampton v. Lampton's Ex'rs	2123	v. Roane	1073	Latour's Estate	2502
Lamson v. Boyden	2264, 2279, 2281	v. Wintersteen	716	Latters v. Snasex	2250
Lanahan v. Com.	118, 276	Lange, ex p.	2450	Lattourett v. Cook	1271, 1681, 2110
Lanark v. Dougherty	1158	v. Perley	2811	Lau v. Fletcher	1951
Lanauze v. Palmer	1206	v. Schoettler	950	Lauer v. Estes	1712
Lancashire Ins. Co. v. Stanley	966	v. Wiegand	987	Lauffer v. Traction Co.	199, 2125
Lancaster v. Lancaster's Trustees	1698	Langford v. Jones	904, 905, 1819, 2349	Laughlin v. Com.	7
v. Smith	1352	v. U. S.	1819, 2349	13 Bush	
v. State	2081	Langham v. Sanford	2475	Ky., 37 S. W.	855, 2081
Lancaster Co. Nat'l Bank v. Moore	1621	Langhammer v. Munter	1640	v. Eaton	2086
Lancey v. Brock	378	Langborne v. Com.	949, 967, 1003, 1005, 1021, 1022, 1985	v. Harvey	1158
Lancot v. State	2336, 2337, 2505	Langley v. Fiaber	2235	v. R. Co.	
Landecker v. Hough-taling	1062	v. Mark	1154	62 Mich.	1951
Lander v. Goodenough	461	v. Oxford	2593	80 Mich.	1721
v. People	1745, 1754, 1757	v. Wadsworth	944, 2014	v. State	1188, 1842
v. Propper	1676	Langedale v. Woollen	1195	Laugbran v. Kelly	2042
v. Seaver	64	Langedorf v. Field	1779	Laupahoehoe Sugar Co. v. Wilder S. S. Co.	1951
v. State	247	Langston v. R. Co.	1984	Laurence v. Laurence	1730
Landers v. Bolton	1225, 1312, 1320, 1321, 1648, 1651, 1676	Langton v. Higgins	2425, 2440	Laurenson v. State	531
Landis v. Turner	1537, 1538, 1550, 1552, 1554	Langtry v. State	2086	Laurent v. Lanning	1676
Landreth v. State	2061	Langworthy v. Green	1158	v. Vaughn	720, 1943
Landry v. Kiopman	1681	Lanigan v. North	1684	Lauterbach v. Netzo	1890
v. Landry	1267	Lanning v. R. Co.	456	Lavalle v. People	2572
Landsberger v. Gorham	1890, 2301, 2327	Lannum v. Brooks	1225	Lavenburg v. Harper	1015
		Lanpher v. Clark	204, 207	Lavergne v. Elkins	1239
		Lanphere v. State	898, 1013, 2061	Lavigne v. Lee	1126
		Lanquist v. Chicago	463, 1168	Lavin v. LeFevre	1354
		Lansburgh v. Winsatt	561	v. Mntual Aid Soc'y	1646
		Lansky v. R. Co.	1873	Lavretta v. Holcomb	1250, 1291, 1292
		Lanter v. McEwen	406	Law v. Fairfield	1018
		Lapham v. Atlas Ins. Co.	1947	v. Merrille	1879, 2094
		v. Kelly	754	v. Scott	2375
		Laplante v. Mills	238, 487	v. Woodruff	291
		v. Warren Cotton Mills	1988	Lawder v. Henderson	1890
		Lapleine v. R. Co.	613	v. Lawder	770
		Laporte v. Cook	461		
		Larkin v. Avery	1404		
		v. Baty	1779		
		Larkins v. Tartar	2849		

TABLE OF CASES.

Section	Section	Section	Section
232, 857,	Lawes v. Reed 758, 760, 761	Leach v. Prebster 1938	Lee's Case 1022
363, 1984	Lawhorn v. Carter 1556	v. Shelby 2245	Lee Gon Yung v. U. S. 1354
406	Lawless v. Grogan 2466	v. Simpson 4, 1326, 1329,	Lee Sing Far v. U. S. 2034
1850	v. Guelbreth 1312, 1514	1349, 1666	Leedom v. E. F. & C. Co. 844
1072	v. Quesale 1255, 1256	v. State 499	Leeds v. Cook 1207
1908	v. Stamp 1664, 2579	v. Swallow 2221	v. Debays 2054
2572	Lawlor v. Wolff 1978	Leach's Goods 1302	v. Ins. Co. 1076
	Lawrence, ex p. 2286	Leache v. State 1841	v. Lancashire 2444
	Lawrence v. Barker 736, 900,	Leader v. Barry 1644, 2088	Leek v. Chesley 716
	905, 907,	Leahy v. R. Co. 1749	Lees v. U. S. 2257
	1021	v. State 1808	Leese v. Clark 291
72, 1676,	v. Boston 561, 677	Leake v. Westmeath 2110	Leeson v. Holt 255
165, 2168	v. Boswell 2355	Leaphart v. Leaphart 2235	Lects v. State Bank 616, 2240
318	v. Burris 1225	Learned v. Hall 390	Lefebure v. Worden 1518, 1521
529	v. Campbell 2294, 2300	v. Tillotson 1073	Lefever v. Johnson 784
2477	v. Clark 1208, 1244	Leary v. Fitchburg R. Co. 2319	Leferts v. State 1339
1842	v. Dana 371, 1230	v. R. Co. 2570	Leforge v. State 398
1627	v. Dodwell 2426	Leath v. State 461	Le Franc v. Hewitt 1539
	v. Dubois 613	Leathers v. Wrecking Co. 154	Lefley v. Millis 1635
89, 1195,	v. Fulton 1225	Leavenworth T. & S. W. 797	Legard v. Foot 2290
178, 2106	v. Gront 1690	Le Co. v. Paul 1961	Legare v. Ashe 1207
138, 1379	v. Haynes 1568	Leavit v. Bartholomew 1943	Legatt v. Toilervey 2183
6, 2184	v. Hudson 1951	v. Cutler 1064, 1067	Legg v. Annapolis 1850
2531	v. Ins. Co. 1858, 2121	v. Kennicott 2468	v. Drake 915, 916,
1668	v. Kimball 1469	v. Simes 1206	1700, 1890
19	v. Lanning 1021	Leazure v. Hillegas 1194, 1651,	Legg v. Clark 1271
1208	v. Mt. Vernon 65	2159, 2169	Legge v. Edmonds 68, 269,
1703	v. State 363	Le Baron v. Crombie 1410	2003
770	v. Tennant 1853	Le Barron v. Le Barron 2220	Leggett v. Boyd 607, 1481
1670	v. Van Horne 2125	Leber v. R. Co. 1943	v. Patterson 1660
2502	Lawrence Co. v. Schmanl- 1351	Le Blanc v. Nolan 1877	v. State 97 Ga. 1326
2250	hansen 1351	v. Sweet 2509	15 Oh. 1781
11, 1681,	Lawrence & W. R. Co. 714, 720	Le Brun v. Le Brun 2046	Leggo v. N. O. C. & B. 1225
2110	v. Hawk 720	Lecky v. Bioser 64, 1770,	Co. 357, 1135,
1951	v. Ross 2525	1974	1896
1712	Lawson, re 568	1511	1835
99, 2125	Lawson v. Conaway 745, 790	v. Cunningham 664	Le Grange v. Ward 2486
	v. Glass 253, 1188, 1623,	Le Cointe v. U. S. 283	Lehigh V. C. Co. v. 463, 1943
	v. Orear 1959	Lederman v. R. Co. 2375	Chicago 468, 1943
	v. R. Co. 1951	Lee v. Birrell 1225, 1657	McKeen 458
	v. State 1072	v. Blandy 521	Lehman v. Knapp 2486
	20 Ala. 928	v. Gansell 2119	Lehmann v. Chapei 1681
	32 Ark. 398, 399	v. Hamilton 1064	v. Rivers 493, 714,
	v. Swirney 1263	v. Heath 2426	720, 1943
	Lawton v. Chance 463, 716	v. Henley 1418	Leibe v. Hebersmith 1676
	v. Chase 20, 1086, 1285	v. Hill 406	Leiber v. Com. 1862, 1494
	v. Tarratt 1511, 1737	v. Huson 253	Leicester v. Haydon 1662
	Lawyer v. Smith 1594	v. Kilburn 2046	v. Waiter 73, 74
	Laybourn v. Crisp 759	v. Lee 2450	Leidlein v. Meyer 437, 792,
	Layer v. Wagstaff 1675	v. Meacock 1826	1164
	Layman v. Brown 2329	v. Missouri P. R. Co. 2463, 2477	Leigh v. Evans 2538
	Layman's Will 613	v. Pain 1066	v. Leigh 2467
	Layson v. Cooper 564	v. Read 2260, 2275	Leigh's Case 2250
	Layton v. Chaylon 1513	v. State 86 Ark. 987, 1139	Leighton v. Leighton 1670
	v. Hastings 1898	102 Ga. 821	v. Manson 1561
	Lazarus v. Lewis 1302, 1320	51 Miss. 580	v. People 1873
	Lazier v. Com. 580	21 Oh. St. 987	v. Sargent 1984, 2349
	v. Westcott 1681	Tex. Cr., 64 S. W. 498	Leinhanf v. Brinker 64
	Lea v. Henderson 210, 987,	v. Tapscott 1239, 1651	Leiper v. Erwin 93
	2260	v. Tlges 39, 377, 770	Leitch v. Ins. Co. 1947
	v. State 1618	v. Water Co. 1948	Leland v. Cameron 1195, 1521,
	v. Wheatley 2290	v. Wheeler 892	1523, 2107
	Lea's Case 1674	v. Wisner 1818, 1877	v. Wilkinson 1678, 2572
	Leach v. Burr 2495, 2500	2110	Lemann v. Bonsall 2106
	v. Hall 2506	Lee's Adm'x v. Lee 3747	Le Mere v. McHaie 2203
	v. Hill 1067		
	v. Money 2264		

TABLE OF CASES.

LEM

	Section		Section		Section
Lemmon v. Hartsook	1779	Letton v. Young	406, 1010	Lewis v. State	
Lem Moon Sing v. U. S.	1354	Lever v. Lever	1816	91 Ga.	1040, 1911
Lemon v. Dean	1308	Lever v. Van Buskirk	2313	4 Kan.	296, 326, 347, 1037
v. Johnson	1213	Levi v. Gardner	1082	v. Sutliff	1081
Lemons v. State		v. Mylne	2559	v. Terr.	2276
97 Tenn.	1442	Levin v. El. R. Co.	463	v. Turnley	2442
4 W. Va.	923, 1614	Levine v. Ins. Co.	1351, 1558	Lewy v. Fischl	1129
Lench v. Lench	89, 2054	Levison v. State	38, 142, 273, 276, 278, 826, 855, 1475	Lexington v. Long	463
Lendrum v. Deasley	380	Leviston v. French	1387	Lyons	377
Le Niemen	1641	Levy v. Burley	1674	Lay v. Ballard	1302
Lenert v. State	2497	v. Chicago N. Bank	2540	v. Barlow	1868, 2211
Lenney v. Finley	747	v. Pope	2313	v. Huber	1943
Lennig v. Ralston	2413	v. State	2572	Ley's Case	1933
Lenning v. Lenning	2498	v. Superior Court	2257	Leyfield's Case	1179, 1193, 1211, 1681
Lenoir Car Co. v. Smith	1841	Levy & Cohn M. Co. v.		Leyman v. Levy	610
Lenox v. Fuller	1612, 1614	Kauffman	2444	Lexinsky v. Superior	
Lent v. Shear	1086, 1362, 1364	Lewin v. Dille	1195	Court	2195
Lentz v. Dallas	1951	v. Simpson	437	Li Sing v. U. S.	516, 2006
v. Martin	1186	Lewis v. Adams	1133	Libby v. Brown	1455, 1460
Leo v. State	784, 1270	v. Alexander	2538	v. Clark	2437
Leominster Case	1712	v. Alkire	1879	v. Land Co.	2446
Leon v. Bouillet	2232	v. Barker	142, 340, 1021	v. Scherman	458
Leonard v. Bolton	1141	v. Beatty	1213, 1225	Lichfield v. Bond	2257
v. Huntington	1647	v. Bell	568	Lichtenberg v. Mair	1890
v. Kingsley	1028, 1263	v. Bergess	1484, 1487	Liddle v. Bank	1041
v. Leonard	2351	v. Brown	658, 2097	Liddon v. Hodnett	1239
v. Mixon	747	v. Bullard	2110	Lide v. State	1807
v. R. Co.	442, 451	v. Burns	1774, 1777	Liebman v. Pooley	1272, 1275
v. State		v. Com.	967	Liebrandt v. Sorg	1770
115 Ala.	154	v. Dunne	488	Life & Fire Ins. Co. v.	
60 N. J. L.	851	v. Emery	1984	Ins. Co.	291, 1199
v. Young	1232	v. Fermor	461	Liggett v. Glenn	1074, 2310, 2325
Leonard's Succession	701, 2008, 2016	v. Freeman	728	Lightfoot v. Com.	247
Leopold v. Van Kirk	1956, 1976, 1977	v. Fullerton	371, 1230	v. People	351, 1263, 1329, 1667, 2103
Leport v. Todd	1778, 2515	v. Gaslight Co.	199, 1040	v. State	2061
Leppia v. Tribune Co.	2336, 2341	v. Gibson	2115	Lightner v. Wike	736, 2008
Leuch v. Times Co.	2442	v. Glenn	1074	Ligon v. Ford	75, 923
Leroux v. Brown	5, 2454	v. Harris	2575	Lihs v. Lihs	2241
Leroy & W. R. Co. v. Ross	1043	v. Hartley	1181, 1210	Lihs v. State	278
Leslie, re	2282	v. Havens	2154	Lillbridge v. McCann	2570
v. Com.	987	v. Hodgdon	1010	Lillstrom v. R. Co.	2507
v. Hanson	1530	v. Hudmon	1254	Lilly v. Larkin	1525
v. Hervey	2237	v. Ins. Co.		Limburg v. Glenwood	
v. R. Co.	355, 1951	10 Gray	719, 1390	L. Co.	283, 1951
v. Sims	596	71 Ia.	1943	Lime Rock Bank v.	
v. State	266, 285, 290, 2513	v. Kramer	736, 748, 751	Hewett	2098
Lessee v. Hoge	2530	v. Lonsborough	1859	Limerick Nat'l Bank v.	
Lesser v. New Hampshire		v. McCinre	2580	Adams	377
F. Co.	987	v. McGrath	2503	Linch v. Linch	1738
Lesser Cotton Co. v. R. Co.	455	v. McMullin	2349	Lincoln v. Barre	561
Lester, re	2373	v. Maris	1290, 2048	v. Battelle	1271, 1275, 1832
v. Ins. Co.	2102	v. Marshall	1644	v. Chrisman	73, 406
v. Jenkins	2450	v. Morris	1802	v. Claffin	321
v. People	1859, 2219, 2579	v. Norton	1518	v. Com.	714
v. Pittsford	458, 1933, 1951	v. Payn	1232	v. Detroit	2333
v. State		v. Post	1028, 1029, 1037	v. Fitch	529
32 Ark.	499, 933	v. R. Co.	2415	v. Haugan	1350
37 Fla.	111, 1440, 1441, 1442, 1446, 2277	v. Ringo	1297	v. Mfg. Co.	451, 655
106 Ga.	2513	v. San Antonio	1239, 1238, 2299	v. Power	2566
v. Thompson	1560	v. Sapio	696	v. R. Co.	663, 1920
Le Targe v. De Tuyl	2437	v. Sr th	468	v. Wright	1647
Letcher v. Morrison	2355	v. Stammers	1658	Lincoln Ave. & N. C. G.	
Le Texier v. Auspach	2232	v. State		R. Co. v. Madaus	608, 619, 2235
Lethulier's Case	2462	35 Ala.	1022, 1044, 1106, 1108		
L'Ettoile	1641	62 Ark.	2497		
Lett v. State	1404				

Section

040, 1911	Lincoln Mill Co. v. Wissler	2155
296, 326,	Lincoln R. Co. v. Cox	2509
247, 1037	Lincoln V. P. & P. B. Co.	
1681	v. Buckner	93
2276	Lincoln & B. H. R. Co. v.	
2442	Sutherland	714
1120	Lind v. Lind	2530
463	Lindauer v. Ins. Co	1930
	v. Teeter	2356
	Linde v. Gaffke	716
377	Lindeman v. Desborough	1947
1302	Lindenthal v. Hatch	682
868, 2211	Linderberg v. Mining Co.	1078,
1943		1750
1933	Lindgren v. Lindgren	2474
179, 1193,	Lindle v. Com.	290
211, 1681,	Lindley v. Lindley	2498
610	v. Smith	1685
	Lindner v. Ins. Co.	1066, 1067
2195	Lindo v. Belisario	564
516, 2006	Lindsay v. Chicago	1680
455, 1460	v. McCormack	1304
2437	v. McCormick	607, 613
2446	Lindsay & P. Co. v.	
458	Mullen	1672
2257	Lindsey v. Attorney-	
1890	General	2576
1041	v. State	818
1239	Lindsley v. R. Co.	1921
1807	Lino v. Mack	1684, 1271
272, 1275	v. Taylor	1161
1770	Linehan v. State	
	118 Ala.	100, 789
291, 1199	120 Ala.	1906
74, 2310,	Lines v. Alaska C. Co.	716
2325	Linfeld v. O. C. R. Co.	1389
247	Lingenfelter v. Simon	1244
263, 1329,	Lingle v. Chicago	1248
367, 2103	Lingo v. State	111, 247,
2081		2841
736, 2008	Link v. R. Co.	437
75, 923	v. Sheldon	681, 1719
2241	Links v. State	347
278	Linn v. Sigsbee	1944
2570	Linneil v. Sutherland	1535,
2507		1552
1525	Linsday v. People	273, 437, 451,
		568, 580,
283, 1951		1975, 2056
2098	Linsce v. State	1203
	Linsley v. Lovely	1890, 1971
377	Linthicum v. Remington	2297
1738	Linton v. Baker	1681
561	v. Com.	1911
275, 1832	v. Cooper	1676
73, 406	v. Wilson	1183
821	Lipe v. Eisenlerd	987
714	Lipes v. State	600, 1385, 2365
2383	Lipcomb v. Lyon	736, 754,
529		1669
1350	v. R. Co.	1951
451, 655	v. State	18, 21, 1398,
2506		1442, 1445, 1447,
63, 1920		2497, 2550
1647	Lipschitz, re	2036
	Lisbon v. Bath	20
306, 619,	Liscomb v. Eldredge	2529
2235	v. R. Co.	2515
	Lisman v. Early	1873

Section

Lissak v. Crocker Est. Co.	1750,
	2390
Lister v. Perryman	2554
Litchfield v. Merritt	610
Litcot v. Blackwell	1674
Liter's Estate	4
Little v. Beasley	2016
v. Birdwell	2349
v. Chauvin	1812
v. Com.	2363
v. Downing	1220, 2144,
	2159
v. Gibson	1082
v. Head & D. Co.	451, 1978
v. Indianapolis	1195
v. Johnston	1195
v. Keon	1911
v. Knox	2503
v. Larrabee	2355
v. Marsh	291
v. R. Co.	
N. H., 55 Atl.	1072
88 Wis.	1010
v. Rogers	2020
v. Wyatt	1559
Little Rock C. Co.	
v. Hodge	2110
Little Rock Granite Co.	
v. Dallas Co.	1521
Little Rock J. R. Co. v.	
Woodruff	463
Little Rock M. R. & T. R.	
Co. v. Haynes	1944
Little Rock R. Co. v.	
Leverett	1747, 1750,
	1757
Little Rock T. & E. Co.	
v. Nelson	1750, 1951
Little Rock & F. S. R.	
Co. v. Alister	719
Little Rock & M. R. Co.	
v. Harrell	199
Little Rock & S. F. R.	
Co. v. Payne	1354
Littlefield v. Rice	612, 751,
	1538
Littlehale v. Dix	2569
Littlejohn v. Fowler	2447, 2495
v. Shaw	1921, 1951
Littler v. Franklin	1195
Littleton v. Clayton	1203, 1204,
	1208, 2484
v. State	1975, 1976
Litton v. Com.	581, 1163
Livingston v. Arnoux	1400,
	1523
v. Com.	1880
v. Cox	1686
v. Harris	2256, 2268
v. Heck	987, 2446
v. Ins. Co.	1271
v. Kettelle	1635, 2168
v. Kiersted	492
v. M'Donald	1225
v. Rogers	1177, 1198
v. Stevens	877
v. Tompkins	2256
v. Tyler	1521, 1530
v. Wagner	2812

Section

Livingston's Appeal	1081
Livingstone v. Colpitta	1075
v. Gartshore	2307
Livermore F. & M. Co.	
v. Union S. & C. Co.	792, 1005
Liverpool Ins. Co. v. Mc-	
Guire	1947
Liverpool & G. W. S. Co.	
v. Ins. Co.	2573
Liverpool & L. & G. Ins. Co.	
v. Southern Pac. Co.	454
Llanover v. Homfray	1388
Llewellyn v. Winkworth	377
Lloyd v. Giddings	1246
v. Lloyd	2220
v. McClure	2349
v. McGarr	2427
v. Mostyn	1204, 1208,
	2325
v. Passingham	1644, 2269,
	2272
v. Simons	18
v. Supreme Lodge	1268
v. Willan	1070
Lochlibo, The	905, 907
Lock v. Mayne	1649, 1676
Lockard v. Com.	925, 2277
Locke v. R. Co.	792, 794,
	1951, 2466
Lockett v. State	2059, 2276
Lockhart v. Camfield	1208,
	1847, 1651
v. Harrell	334
v. Luker	619
Lockhead v. Berkeley	
Springs W. & I. Co.	1679,
	2573
Locklayer v. Locklayer	269,
	1502, 1605
Lockwood v. Crawford	2567
v. Lockwood	1730, 2235
Lockyer v. Lockyer	398
Loder v. Wheelpley	2314, 2391
Lodge v. Phipper	2006
v. State	949
Loeb v. Hnddleston	1201
Loennecker's Will	1788
Loftin v. Nally	1226
Lofts v. Hndson	1062
Logan v. Com.	821
v. McGinnis	1938
v. R. Co.	2257, 2259, 2264
v. Steele	142, 803
v. U. S.	6, 522, 523, 1079,
	1854
v. Watt	1658
Logansport v. McMillen	1943
Logansport & P. G. T. Co.	
v. Heil	1126
Logg v. People	1852
Lohman v. People	950, 967
Loid v. State	2582
Loker v. Haynes	529
Loloff v. Sterling	463
Lombar v. East Tawas	252,
	283, 458
Lombard v. Johnson	1280
v. Mayberry	2276
v. Oliver	581

TABLE OF CASES.

LOM

	Section		Section		Section
Lombard R. Co. v. Christian	538	Lord v. Bigelow		Louisville N. A. & C. R.	
Lombardo v. Ferguson	1206	124 Mass.	1063	Co. v. Pedigo	461
Londagan v. Hammer	2535	8 Vt.	1257	v. Richardson	928
London v. Lynn	1074, 1661	v. Colvin	762	v. Shires	571, 675, 681, 680, 1219, 2535
v. Perkins	1415	v. Ins. Co.	1777	v. Snyder	688
London Gaslight Co.		v. Mobile	987	v. Spain	1951
v. Chelsea	2319, 1859	v. Moore	1627, 1630	v. Wallace	463
London G. O. Co. v.		v. State		v. Wood	222, 675, 678, 682, 686, 1159, 1168, 1974
Lavell	1168	17 Nebr.	2239	v. Wright	468, 461, 1062
Londonderry v. Andover	1608	18 N. H.	1854	Louisville & C. P. Co. v.	
Londonderry Case	1646	v. Wood	1063	Samuels	1750
Londoner v. Stewart	1195, 1213	Lord Electric Co. v.		Louisville & N. R. Co. v.	
Louergan v. Assur. Co.	2203	Morrill	2155	Alumbaugh	1044
v. Buford	2465	Loree v. Abner	2578	v. Banks	1951
v. Whitehead	1641, 1644	Lorimer v. Lorimer	2311	v. Barker	1899
Long v. Baillie	583	Loring v. R. Co.	454	v. Berry	791
v. Barrett	406	v. Steineman	2531	v. Binion	1978
v. Booe	944, 949, 1780	Lorton v. Kingaton	21, 1075	v. Bizzell	987
v. Brougher	74	Lorts v. Wash	1804	v. Bowen	1951
v. Colton	1567, 1587	Losee v. Losee	928, 1033, 1505, 1514	v. Brinckerhoff	2580
v. Davidson	1955	Loshbaugh v. Birdsell	1030	v. Brown	18
v. Davis	1387, 1388, 1404	Lothrop v. Blake	1891	v. Carothers	1755
v. Dollarhide	1086	v. Clapp	2282	v. Carter	806
v. Dow	1141	v. Roberts	2270	v. Cassibry	747
v. Drew	2125	Lott v. Buck	1195	v. Com.	2250
v. Hitchcock	1087	v. Burrel	2222	v. Ellis' Adm'r	1078
v. Ins. Co.	1975	v. King	772	v. Fox	438
v. Lamkin	834, 950	Loucks v. R. Co.	680, 715	v. Frazee	1708
v. McDow	2141, 2529	Loud v. Merrill	95	v. Hall	1626
v. McKissich	1240	Louden v. Blythe	233	v. Henry	438
v. Martin	616, 2836	Londermilk v. Louder- milk	2444	v. Hill	
v. Morrison	987	Lougee v. Bray	1388	114 Ala.	400
v. Perine	2442	Louie You, rs	2066	115 Ala.	367, 949, 1078, 2827, 2498
v. Pierce Co.	1062	Louis v. Easton	578	v. Hurt	905
v. R. Co.	1951	Louis Cook M. Co. v.		v. Jones	882
v. Regen	786	Randall	1195	v. Kelly	1698
v. State		Louisiana Elections	2287	v. Kice	1706
86 Ala.	391, 2237, 2841	Louisiana State Lottery	1850	v. M'Clish	1109
11 Fla.	1985	Co. v. Richoux		v. Malone	21, 283, 456, 2509
la., 32 So	2511	Louisiana & N. W. R. Co.		v. Marbury L. Co.	2509
22 Ga.	2100	v. Phelps	2573	v. Miller	21, 456
56 Ind.	2272	Louisville v. Muldoon	1415	v. Milliken	1951
95 Ind.	2354	Louisville Banking Co. v.		v. Pearson	1158
52 Miss.	238	Asher	1073	v. R. Co.	1955
Tex. Cr., 47 S. W.	351	Louisville Bridge Co. v.		v. Ray	789
v. Steiger	778	R. Co.	1280	v. Reagan	1951
Long-Bell Co. v. Thomas	1770	Louisville Ins. Co. v.		v. Samuels	455
Longabaugh v. R. Co.	455, 456	Monarch	80, 1873, 1898	v. Sandlin	561, 571
Longenecker v. Hyde	1862, 1455	Louisville J. C. Co. v.		v. Shaw	1750
Longman v. Winchester	371	Lischkoff	716, 1003	v. Simpson	1755
Longstreth v. Korb	1194	Louisville R. Co. v. Hart- lege	2220	v. Stewart	
Lonsdale v. Curwen	1862	Louisville Water Co. v.		Ala., 29 So.	571
Lonzer v. R. Co.	2495	Upton	1404, 1668	56 Fed.	1078
Look v. Mays	1275	v. Weis	451	v. Sullivan	287
Loomis v. Bedel	1225, 1651	Louisville N. A. & C. R.		v. Summers	376
v. Day	2416	Co. v. Buck	1757	v. Tegnor	949, 1951
v. Ins. Co.	1947	v. Falvey	18, 675, 678, 682, 684, 688, 991, 992, 1974	v. Webb	1021
v. Kellogg	1316	v. Frawley	1108, 1109	v. Williams	2536
v. R. Co.	1063	v. Howell	1700	v. York	1838
v. Wadhams	1256	v. Jones	1977	Louisville & N. T. Co. v.	
Looper v. Bell	1722	v. Lucas	863	Jacobs	1626
Loos v. Wilkinson	1083, 1086	v. Miller	1719	Louy v. Cady	2450
Lopes v. De Tastet	2203	v. Patchen	1684	Lovat Peerage Case	413
Lopez v. Bergel	2054				
v. State	2059				
Loranger v. Jardine	1206				
Lord v. Beard	934				

Section	Section	Section	Section
461	Love v. Bentley 1661	Lucas v. State 96 Ala. 1404	Lynch v. Benton 1871
928	v. Harbin 1661	28 Conn. 619, 620	v. Clements 1738
675, 681,	v. Masoner 205, 210, 987	v. U. S. 1461	v. Clarke 1108, 1199, 1224,
119, 2535	v. Peyton 1312	v. Williams 1175, 1181	1275, 2121, 2137
688	Loveden v. Loveden 2061	Luce v. Carley 1082	v. Coffin 278, 281
1951	Lovejoy v. Howe 658, 1301	v. Ins. Co. 1947	v. Cronin 1648
463	Lovell v. Briggs 334, 338	Luck v. State 1166	v. Doran 1938
675, 678,	v. Hammond Co. 1963	Lucker v. Liske 738	v. Lively 1640
88, 1158,	v. State 398	v. Phoenix Assurance Co. 1859	v. M'Hugo 1549
168, 1974	Loveridge v. Botham 1068	Luckett v. Anderson 1247	v. Moore 660
468, 461,	Loving v. Com. 1021	Luco v. U. S. 797	v. O'Hara 1256, 2308, 2309
1062	v. Warren Co. 2167	Ludden & Bates S. M. H. v. Sumter 1873	v. Peabody 289
1750	Low v. Atwater 1800	Ludlam's Will 1233, 1268, 2143	v. Postlethwaite 1312
1044	v. Burrows 1661	Ludtke v. Hertzog 1005, 1230	v. State 1555
1951	v. Mitchell 64, 967, 2376	Ludwig v. Blackshere 1067	Lynch's Adm'r v. Petrie 1549
1899	45 N. H. 1943, 1977	Lueck v. Heisler 1890	Lynde v. Judd 1212, 1270,
791	46 N. H. 1974	Luft v. Langanle 2364	2307
1978	v. State 1072	Luhns v. Kelly 990	v. McGregor 334
987	Low's Case 2364	Luke v. Calhoun Co. 792, 794	Lynde v. Plymouth 458, 1021
1951	Lowden v. Blakey 2294, 2297	Lum v. Kelso 1275	Lynn v. Cumberland 1280
2560	Lowe v. Dorsett 2004	Lumley v. Woodard 1254	v. Lyster 2312
18	v. Firkins 2307	Lumpkin v. State 1364, 2038	Lyon v. Assur. Co. 2158
1755	v. Jolliffe 528, 907,	Lunay v. Vantyne 616	v. Hancock 389, 390, 949
805	1302, 1303,	Lund v. Rice 1275, 1651	v. Lyman 728, 1909, 2000,
747	1933, 2084	v. Tyngsborough 1862,	2002, 2016, 2026
2250	v. Lehrman 2464	1363, 1774, 1951	v. Lyon 1730, 2087
1078	v. Lowe 770, 778	Lunday v. Thomas 1213	v. McCadden 1672
438	v. State 86 Ala. 1404	Lundy v. Lundy 1081	v. Marriott 2124
1706	88 Ala. 867	Luning v. State 1 Chand. 681, 1693, 1976	v. Perry 1235, 1651, 1676
1628	97 Ga. 1045, 1135	2 Pinn. 1693	v. Prouty 2338
438	Wis., 96 N. W. 669,	Lunniss v. Row 1258	v. R. Co. 2220
460	784, 1041	Lunsford v. Smith 1215	v. Ricker 1458, 1473
19, 1078,	v. Vaughn 1404	Lupton v. Lupton 2465	v. State 1476, 1477
27, 2498	v. Waller 2414	Lurton v. Gilliam 1662, 1684	r. U. S. 2580
905	Lowell v. Com'r's 463, 561	Lush v. Druse 719	v. Washburn 1195
382	Lowenfeld v. Curtis 2435	v. McDaniel 132, 1722	Lyons v. Holmes 1513
1698	Lowenstein v. Lombard 377	Lusk v. State 1109	v. Marcher 1388
1708	Lower v. Winters 1111	Luther v. Clay 2593	v. Red Wing 438
1109	Lowery v. People 605, 2086	v. Skeen 74, 988	v. Van Gorder 1219
83, 456,	v. State 86 Ala. 1404	v. Stats 1041	v. Ward 1064
2509	72 Ga. 2060	Lutterell v. Reynell 1123,	Lytle v. Bank 377
2509	Lowman v. State 1951	1864, 1406	v. Bond 15
21, 456	Lowrance v. State 2089	Luttrell v. State 280, 1106	
1951	Lowry v. Cady 1664	Lycoming Co. M. I. Co. v. Schreffler 1770	Mc.
1158	v. Coster 2083	Lycoming F. I. Co. v. Wright 1240, 2558	McAdam v. Spice Co. 1207
1955	v. Downey 2442	Lydlard v. Chute 1676	v. Walker 232
789	v. Harris 1245, 1651	Lyell v. Kennedy 1524, 1856,	McAdams v. Stillwell 1373
1951	v. M'Durmott 2110	2301, 2319, 2322	McAdory v. State 273, 288,
455	v. Moss 1456	Lyford v. Thurston 664, 1225,	391, 825, 1807
361, 571	v. Pinson 334, 1264	1651, 1871	McAflerty v. Hale 2184
1750	v. Saginaw 95	Lygon v. Stuart 2139	McAler v. Horsey 1126, 1127,
1755	v. State 1478	Lyle v. Ellwood 1602, 1603,	1181
571	Loy v. Kennedy 2110	2083	v. McMurray 41
1078	Loyd v. Freshfield 735, 753,	Lyons v. Lyles 1126	McAllister v. McAllister 2016,
287	754, 2286	v. U. S. 1135	2017
376	v. R. Co. 1445	Lyman v. Boston 463, 714, 718	v. Mfg. Co. 1681
9, 1951	Luby v. Com. 1445	v. Cain 1195	v. People 1186
1021	Lucas v. Brooks 201	v. Clty 1985	17 Ala. 1938
2536	23 La. An. 619	v. Hilo Tribune P. Co. 987	112 Wis. 357
1838	18 Wall. 619	v. Ins. Co. 1947	M'Almont v. M'Clelland 406
1626	v. Evans 2256	v. Philadelphia 1614, 2529	Macalpine v. Calder 1862
2450	v. Filina 953		McAipine v. State 860, 952,
413	v. Nichols 406		969, 1985
	v. Novosilski 93		McAnally v. State 896
	v. Parsons 1062		McArdle v. Bullock 2103
			v. McArdle 967

TABLE OF CASES.

MoA

	Section		Section		Section
McArthur v. Morrison	2146	McClintock v. Card	1389	McCray R. & C. S. Co. v. Woods	2424
v. Sears	907	McClory v. Wright	2060, 2066, 2069	McCrea v. Parsons	1800
Macarty v. Bond	2248	M'Clure v. Tennessee	1817	M'Crea v. Farnort	2482, 2483
McAteer v. McMullen	1098	McClurg v. Terry	2414	McCready v. Sexton	1854
McAulay v. Earnhart	1196	McCoggie v. State	1809	M'Creary v. Grundy	76, 986
Macaulay v. Shackell	1380, 2267	McCollister v. Yard	1226	McCreeary v. Hood	1208
McBean v. State	1862, 2267	McColluh v. State	851	v. Turk	18, 1951
McBee v. Bowman	84	McCollum v. Boughton	2444	McCroary v. State	2059
McBeth v. McBeth	271, 1736	v. Seward	681, 688	McCullou v. C. & N. W. R. Co.	2500
McBlain v. Edgar	1061	McComas v. Haas	1196	McCulloch v. McCulloch	2067
McBride v. Bryan	529	McComb v. Dillo	607	v. Ins. Co.	1021
v. Com.	140, 1726	McComb v. Chandler	2356	v. Judd	1078
Macbride v. Macbride	986	v. State	62, 200, 208, 1138, 2020	v. State	11 Ind. 1360
Co.	1892	McConeghy v. Kirk	2529	48 Ind.	2081
v. Thompson	1778	McConnel v. Johnson	1651	36 Tex. Cr.	2340
v. U. S.	1800	v. Reed	1273	McCullough v. Davis	1267
v. Wallace	774	McConnell v. Bowdry	1065	v. Dobson	1972
v. Watts	1078	v. Hannah	1779	v. R. Co.	1085
McCabe, re	1807, 1938	v. Lewis	439	Maccullum v. Turton	2200
McCabe v. Com.	499	v. Martin	618	M'Cully v. Barr	1888
v. Platter	66, 73, 76	v. Osage	1008, 2386, 2399	McCully v. Malcom	1389, 1664, 2110
McCabe's Will	288	v. State	604	McCurdy v. Neall	1611
McCague v. Miller	2396	v. Wildes	1988	McCurry v. Hooper	689, 1938
McCament v. Roberts	1008	McConnells v. Ins. Co.	2496	McCurtain v. Grady	1082
McCampbell v. McCampbell	987, 2067	McCoos v. R. Co.	1800, 2321, 2322	McCutchen v. Loggins	923
McCandless v. McWha	235, 1960	McCool v. Grand Rapids	458	McCutcheu's Adm'rs v. McCutcheu	923, 1404, 1965
McCann v. Beach	1195, 1709	McCord v. Johnson	1812	McDaniel v. Logi	1860
v. Gould	1230	McCord v. State	1126, 1128	McDaniel v. Baca	1021
v. State	2100	McCorkle v. Binns	2002, 2016, 2024	v. State	53 Ga. 905
v. Ullman	569	McCormack v. McBride	1225	100 Ga.	108
McCarragher v. Rogers	451	McCormick v. Cleal	763	M'Daniel's Will	1938
McCarrick v. Kealy	1750	v. Evans	1651	McDeed v. McDeed	1271, 1497, 1708
McCarthy v. Boston Dneck Co.	675, 1951	v. Grundy Co.	1195	McDermott v. Barnum	1681
v. R. Co.	1051	v. Holbrook	1878	v. Jackson	95, 770
v. Whitcomb	1807	v. Ince	2465	v. McCormick	1512
McCartney v. McCartney	2406	v. Irwin	1378	v. Mahoney	681
v. State	318	v. Joseph	1966	v. Mitchell	1086
McCarty v. Leary	96, 1106	v. R. Co.	736, 749, 754, 759, 760	v. State	62, 200, 398, 1111
v. People	194	McCormick Co. v. Faulkner	2409	McDevitt's Estate	1738
McCarver v. Herzberg	2578	v. Seeman	1013	McDill v. McDill	1676
McCaskill v. Elliot	251	McCormick H. M. Co. v. Davis	715	McDonald v. Ashland	560
McCausland v. Ralston	786	v. Gray	100 Ind. 451	v. Bowman	1086
M'Caw v. Blewit	2123	114 Ind.	1195	v. Carnes	1521, 1530
McChesney v. Chicago	2463	v. Hiatt	581	M'Donald v. Carson	907
v. Cook Co. Collector	1248	McCormicks v. Fuller	1085, 1086	McDonald v. Com.	2277
McClein v. Com.	839	M'Corquodale v. Bell	2319	v. Coniff	1354
v. Esham	792	McCourry v. Suydam	2520	v. Cutter	1388
M'Clain v. Gregg	1299	McCoy v. Curtice	2535	v. Franchere	1974
McClain v. R. Co.	663	v. Julien	20	v. Gilbert	2153
McClaskey v. Barr	1888	v. People	18	v. Jacobs	658, 1898
McClean v. Hertzog	1205	v. Rhodes	2123	Macdonald v. Longbottom	2465
Maclean v. Scripps	797	v. Watson	1871	McDonald v. McDonald	142 Ind. 675, 944, 1736, 2006, 2015, 2303, 2310, 2322
McClellan v. Dunlap	1225	v. World's Columbian Exposition	2575	67 Mich.	1021
v. F. W. & B. I. R. Co.	1041	McCracken v. West	1731	M'Donald v. M'Donald	1818
v. R. Co.	1021	M'Craw v. Gentry	1903	McDonald v. McDougall	2143
v. State	601, 1839	McCraw v. McCraw	2530	v. McKinnon	2065
M'Cliehall v. Lindsay	1066	McCray v. R. Co.	93, 1961	v. Moore	1878
McClennaghan v. Reid	1867	v. Stewart	2354		
McClenkan v. McMillan	1072				
McCleod v. Bishop	1778				
McCleskey v. Leadbetter	21, 1257, 1367, 1391, 2139, 2141,				

McK

TABLE OF CASES.

Section	Section	Section	Section
McDonald v. Murray	1213, 2498	MacFerson v. Thoytes	1994, 3002
v. People	1807	McGahan v. Crawford	816
Macdonald v. Putman	2294	M'Gahay v. Alston	1105, 2435
McDonald v. R. Co.	1608	McGar v. Adams	289
v. Savoy	65	v. Bristol	792, 794, 1168
v. Smith	1878	v. Worsted Mills	461
v. Stark	1195	M'Garahan v. Maguire	1260
v. State		McGar v. Lloyd	2165
118 Ala.	770	v. National & P. W. Mills	283
89 Tenn.	784	McGarrahan v. R. Co.	2570
80 Wis.	1350	McGarrity v. Byington	728, 1230
v. Wood	571	v. R. Co.	18, 253
McDonal v. State	988, 1157, 2221	McGean v. R. Co.	463, 1943
McDonnell v. People	246	McGeary v. R. Co.	1976
McDonnell v. Evans	1179, 1244, 1258, 1259, 1260, 1270	McGee v. Allison	2525
McDonough v. O'Neil	289	v. Baumgartner	207, 905
McDonough's Succession	2008, 2016	v. State	351
McDonough v. Lane	1911	McGhee v. Hansell	1911
v. McLean	689, 1038	v. Wilkins	1064
M'Dowell v. Hall	1205, 1312	McGinnis v. Allison	1311, 1313, 2188, 2141
v. Ins. Co.	95, 1208	McGhee v. Wells	581, 851
v. Preston	235, 934	McGibbons v. McGibbons	1958
v. Rissell	1666	McGill v. Rowland	612, 716, 1943
McDuffie v. Greenway	608	McGinn v. Platt	455
McElhannon v. State	141, 1391	McGinness v. School District	1210
McElheny v. Bridge Co.	714	McGinnis v. Com.	1871
McElmurray v. Turner	1072	v. Grant	959
McElrath v. Haley	1062	v. State	
McElree v. Darlington	2259	31 Ga.	784
McElroy v. Phink	68, 1786, 2523	24 Ind.	1205
McElven v. State	2364	4 Wyo.	680
M'Elveney v. Connellan	2375	McGinnias v. Sawyer	1278
M'Elwee v. Sutton	334, 1033, 1511	McGlasson v. State	2018
McEntire v. Levi C. M. Co.	1078	M'Gloemery v. Keller	406, 1010
McEwan v. Milne	2503	McGlothlin v. State	855, 858
v. Bigelow	561	McGoldrick v. Traphagen	1538
v. Springfield	1108	McGonigle v. Kane	1552, 1555
McFadden v. Ellmaker	1082, 1257	McGough v. Wellington	1961
v. Frits	1267	McGovern v. Hope	1779, 2220
v. Mitchell	1267	v. Smith	
v. R. Co.	1890	73 Vt.	283, 305
M'Fadden v. Murdock	1890	Vt., 53 Atl.	794, 987, 1270, 1404
McFaddin v. Preston	379, 1923, 1976	McGowan v. McDona-	
McFadin v. Catron	1651	ald	748, 1074, 1078
120 Mo.	2337	v. McLaughlin	1513
188 Mo.	2502	v. R. Co.	1873
McFaden v. Liverpool	2268	v. Supreme Court	266, 1081, 2384
McFalls v. State	2060	McGrath v. Cox	1284, 1237
McFarlan v. Roit	2819	M'Grath v. Isaacs	2120
McFarland v. Accld. Ass'n	1415	McGrath v. Seagrave	2450
v. Dey	1709	McGregor v. Keiller	1524
v. Lewis	1777	v. McArthur	74, 75
v. Pico	1240, 1680	v. Walt	1204, 1207
v. Shaw	1432, 1436	McGrew v. State	2079
McFarlane v. Loudon	2520	McGruder v. State	916
v. Martin	1842	McGuerty v. Hale	283, 1961, 1984
v. R.	617		
McGuff v. State	505, 508, 1159, 1821, 1841, 2194, 2320	McGuire v. Kenefick	928
		v. Kouss	2110
		v. Moloney	2237, 2336, 2341
		v. People	506, 1820
		v. Bayward	1678
		v. State	1168
		McHugh v. Brown	2180
		v. Mellugh	278
		v. State	943, 948, 1022, 1441, 1445
		McIlvain v. State	282, 1029
		M'Ilvoy v. Kennedy	1249
		McInerny v. Irvin	923
		McIntire v. Funk	1188, 1196, 1299, 1651
		M'Intyre v. Layward	1390
		v. Manclus	2268
		McIntyre v. Meldrim	2337
		v. Mining Co.	291
		v. R. Co.	2098
		v. White	15
		v. Young	403, 1021, 1028
		McIntosh v. Lee	2581
		v. State	2497
		McIsaac v. Lighting Co.	1960
		McIver v. Clay	1651
		M'Iver v. Ilumbie	1647
		v. Robertson	1225, 1651
		M'Kain v. Love	2348, 2354, 2570
		Mackay v. Easton	1783
		McKay v. Johnson	65, 1951
		v. Lasher	708, 791, 2020
		v. Myers	95
		McKee, ex p.	2210
		v. Bidwell	283
		M'Kee v. Gilchrist	1066
		McKee v. Jones	1028, 1124, 1125, 1129
		M'Kee v. Nelson	1993
		v. People	2232
		McKee v. State	1977
		v. White	1511, 1512
		McKeen v. Bank	1521
		M'Keen v. Delancy	1651
		McKeigue v. Janesville	1698, 1723
		M'Kenire v. Fraser	1311, 2138, 2145
		McKenna v. Gas Co.	1698
		v. McMichael	1180
		McKennon v. Cotner	1350
		Mackenzie v. Conison	2416, 2417
		McKenzie v. Gordon	564
		v. Lautenschlager	1730, 2336
		McKenzie v. Mackenzie	2298
		McKenzie v. State	
		24 Ark.	580
		32 Tex. Cr.	1079
		Mackenzie v. Yeo	2048, 2309, 2315, 2319, 2327
		McKenzie's Case	2376

TABLE OF CASES.

MoK

	Section		Section		Section
McKern v. R. Co.	681	McLeod v. Rogers	1236, 1818	McNamee v. Hunt	2556
McKeone v. Barnes	2020	v. State	398	McNamee v. U. S.	2166
v. People	2377	McLeod v. Wakley	406	McNeal v. R. Co.	1800
McKeown v. Harvey	772, 1196	McLeod's Estate	2109	M'Neale v. Clarke	2169
McKern v. Calvert	64, 76, 1021	McLeroy v. State	1079	McNealley v. State	2066, 2069
McKesson v. Sherman	987, 1270	MacIn v. Wilson	2306	McNeely v. Duff	758
M'Kewan v. Thornton	1006	McLoughlin v. Bank	377	v. McNeely	2687
McKillip v. R. Co.	1974	M'Lughan v. Bovard	1096	v. Pearson	1267, 2107, 2110
McKim v. Foley	300	McMahan v. McGrady	1314	v. Rucker	1196, 1347, 1651
McKinder v. Littlejohn	1321	M'Mahon v. Burchell	1856	McNeil v. Holbrook	6
McKinley v. Bank	2356	McMahon v. Davidson	1346, 1391	M'Neil v. Perchard	1279
v. Irvine	1316	v. Dubuque	1078	McNeill v. Arnold	1226, 1271, 1676
McKenney v. Dingley	321	v. Harrison	303	17 Ark.	1651, 1676
v. Nell	1028, 1081	v. Mellale	461, 684	23 Ark.	1623
v. People	1852	M'Mahon v. Spangler	1076, 1399	v. Eiam	1630
v. R. Co.	2389	McMahon v. State	2069	McNerney v. Reading	904, 1066
v. State	861	v. Waterworks Co.	782	McNichols v. Wilson	1225, 1873
McKinnon v. Bliss	1573, 1582, 1587, 1591, 1596, 1602	McMakin v. Weston	1212	M'Night v. Biesecker	1770
v. Norcross	1758	M'Managil v. Rose	1141	McNish v. State	862
McKinstry v. Clark	1226	M'Mannus v. State	2206, 2306	McNutt v. McNutt	1196, 1877
v. Collins	286, 682, 1646	McManus v. Com.	390	M'Nutt v. Young	71, 73
McKivitt v. Cone	786, 783, 762	v. Commow	1196, 1290	McPeake v. Hutchinson	1133
McKnight v. U. S.	97 Fed. 200, 951, 953	v. Finan	1878	McPeck v. Tel. Co.	1219
115 Fed.	2273, 2495	v. Mason	1873	McPeters v. Ray	715
M'Knight v. U. S.	1206, 1890	v. State	396	McPhail v. State	1781
McKonkey v. Gaylord	707	v. Wells	1066	McPherrin v. Jennings	142, 461
McKormick v. West Bay City	1721	McMaster v. Inc. Co.	260	v. Jones	1013
McKown v. Hunter	581	v. Morse	2575	McPherson v. R. Co.	571
McLain v. Com.	662, 1374, 1406	v. Scriven	2315	v. Rathbone	1208, 2307
v. Winchester	1209, 1681	v. State	633, 865	M'Pherson v. Rathbone	1321, 1518, 1624
McLamb v. R. Co.	715	v. Stewart	1267	McPherson v. Rockwell	770
McLanahan v. Blackwell	1060, 1680	McMasters v. State	81 Miss. 987	v. Ryan	1770
M'Lanahan v. Ins. C.	21, 1947	81 Miss.	987	v. State	247
McLanathan v. Patten	1068	Miss. 35 So.	863, 2008	M'Pherson v. State	1033
McLane v. State	1407	McMath v. State	961, 1761, 1821	McQuade v. Hatch	2088
McLaren v. Birdsong	443	McMechen v. McMechen	681, 1788	McQueen v. Farrow	1681
v. Gillespie	1911	McMicken v. Ontario Bank	243/	v. Fletcher	1195
McLaughlin v. Cowley	209	McMillan v. Baxley	1206, 1254	v. State	1440
v. Mencke	987, 1270	v. Berthold	1195	McQuigan v. R. Co.	2220
McLean v. Clark	31 Fed. 908	v. Bissell	2437	McQuillian v. El. Light Co.	969
47 Ga.	1014, 2304	v. Davis	1621	McQuirk v. State	62, 200, 598
v. Lewiston	770	v. Larned	1313	McRea v. Lilly	64
v. McDonell	1219	v. Lovejoy	2110	v. Malloy	1738, 1938
v. Palne	1898	v. State	1841	v. Morrison	728
v. State	233, 568, 1431, 1442, 1446, 1448, 1839, 2115	McMillen v. Andrews	1909	McReynolds v. McCord	291, 2132
v. Webster	1225	v. State	111	McShane v. McShane	2046
McLear v. Hunsicker	2124	McMina v. O'Connor	1225, 1236, 1312, 1820, 1821, 1651	McSwyny v. R. Co.	2220
McLeary v. Norment	1938	v. Whelan	1812, 1320, 1321	McTaggart v. Thompson	233
McLellan v. Longfellow	2298	M'Morine v. Storey	1387	McTague v. Finnegan	2442
v. Richardson	2363	M'Mullen v. Brown	1225	McTavish v. R. Co.	2509
McLellan's Estate	2502	McMunn v. State	1404	McTeers v. Perkins	391
McLenon v. R. Co.	1206	McMurrin v. Rigby	460, 1136, 1138, 1719, 1761	McTyler v. State	2354
McLeod v. Bullard	1126, 1127, 1182, 2008	McMurtry v. Frank	1283, 1299	Macubbin v. Lowell	2016
v. Crosby	2158	McNail v. Ziegler	614	McVay v. State	1976
v. Ginther's Adm'r	1747	McNair v. Com.	604, 2007, 2008	McVey v. R. Co.	571
v. Lee	1873, 1876	v. Stewart	1951	v. State	55 Nebr. 276
		McNamara v. People	1875, 1398, 1406	57 Nebr.	1853, 2511
		v. State			

<p>Section 2666 2104 1800 2108 2060, 2069 758 2527 2107, 2108 2110 196, 1347, 1661 6 1279 226, 1271, 1661, 1676 1628 1830 904 1066 1225, 1873 1770 882 1106, 1677 499 71, 72 1133 1219 716 1781 142, 401 1013 571 206, 2307 1321, 1618, 1624 770 1770 247 1053 2088 1681 1196 1440 2503 2220 909 200, 898 64 738, 1038 728 291, 2132 2046 2220 233 2442 2509 391 2354 2016 1976 571 276 853, 2511</p>	<p>McVicker v. Conkle McWhorter v. State M. Maas v. Bloch Maass v. Phillips Mabe v. Mabe Mabry v. Cheadle Maccesfield v. Davis Mace v. Cadell v. Reed Macey v. Titcombe Machette v. Wanless Mack v. Handy v. Porter v. R. Co. v. State Mackel v. Rochester Mackin v. People Mackrall v. R. Co. Macomber v. Scott Macon D. & S. R. Co. v. Moore Macon & W. R. Co. v. Johnson Macy v. Goodwin Madden v. Burris v. Farmer v. Koester v. State Maddison v. Alderson Maddox v. Maddox Maden v. Catanach v. Taylor v. Veovers Madison v. Nuttall v. Zabrickle Madison D. & P. R. Co. v. Whitesel Madison I. & P. R. Co. v. Whitesel Madox v. Dawson Magee v. Magee v. Maignel v. Mark v. R. v. Sanderson v. Scott O' Cush. 32 Pa. Maggl v. Cutts Magill v. Kauffman Magnay v. Knight Magness v. State v. Walker Magouirk v. Tel. Co. Maguire, ex p. v. R. Co. Mahaffey v. Byers Mahanke v. Cleland</p>	<p>Section 1201, 1390, 1613, 2016, 2080 1842 2306, 2317 1671 1387 877 1662, 2221 3066 935 2572 2297 2067, 2069 1735 199 890, 627, 1010 2282 2042 1807 707, 2006, 2016 1008 668 1225 1290 1911 987 907, 907 2065, 2454 229, 230, 2500 1820, 1828, 2214 2528 2319 1062 1513 1223 1268 2356 2066 1063 2068 2329 1684 2616 1691 68, 201 1404 2447 960 619, 2232 1974 2271 199 2654 967, 2271, 2279</p>	<p>Mahaaska Co. v. Ingalls Maher v. People Mahoney v. Hardware Co. v. Macdonnell Mahurin v. Bickford Maier v. Benefit Ass'n Maillet v. People Main v. Aukam 4 D. C. App. 12 D. C. App. v. McCarty v. Newson Maine v. Harper Mair v. Culy Maitland v. Bank v. Goldney v. Paper Co. v. Zanga Majestic, The Major v. Barker v. Collins v. State Majors v. State 20 Ark. Miss., 35 So. Makin v. Att'y-Gen'l of N. S. Wales Malachi v. State Malcolm v. Scott Malcomson v. O'Dea Maldaner v. Smith Male v. Roberts Malley v. Young Mallonee v. Duff Mallory v. Aspinwall Mallow v. Walker Malone v. Adams v. Bell v. Dougherty v. Hawley v. L'Estrange v. R. Co. Maloney v. Bartlett v. Purden Malton v. Nesbit Malynak v. State Man v. Rickette v. Ward Mauhan v. Halloran Manatt v. Scott Manby v. Curtis Manchester v. Manchester Manchester F. A. Co. v. Feibelman Manderschild v. Dubnque Mandeville v. Reynolds v. Stockett Mangold v. Oft Manhattan L. I. Co. v. Beard Manhattan M. Co. v. Swete- land</p>	<p>Section 1450, 1464, 1467, 1471, 1474 800, 2079 1067 1642 1681 1873 1185, 1186 1900 1684 259 585 1689 900, 916 1127, 1132, 1302 2007 1976 1009 2508 2215 2218 2166, 2576 923, 1985 1900 883 2059 1856 167, 1665 2525 1371 1738 1126, 1127 2141 2502 1491 1641 1800 252 1527, 1644 1848 1848 2257 1256 1919 672, 681 2138 529, 580 1974 228, 229, 682, 1936 1311, 1456, 1472, 1476 619 1966 283 738, 747, 1257, 1348, 2107, 2450 2110 1842 2341 1225</p>	<p>Manigault v. Hampton Manistes N. Bank v. Sey- mour Manix v. Malony Mankato v. Meagher Manley v. Minneapolis Paint Co. v. Patterson v. Shaw Mans v. Cavanaugh v. Forein v. Mann v. Maxwell Mann B. C. Co. v. Dupre Manners v. Postan Manney v. Crowell Manning v. Carberry v. Fifth Parish v. Hlogan v. Ins. Co. v. Lechmere v. Lowell v. R. Co. 160 Mass. 173 Mass. v. Wheatland Manning's Case Manogue v. Herrell Mansell v. Clements Mansel v. Dix Mansfield's Case Mansfield C. & C. Co. v. McEmery Mansen v. Wilcox Mantel v. R. Co. Mantonya v. Reilly Manufacturing A. I. Co. v. Dorgan Manufacturing Co. v. Platt Manufacturers' Furn. Co. v. Kremer Many v. Jagger Maples v. State Marande v. R. Co. Marble v. Marble Marbury v. Madison March v. Com. v. Davidson v. Harrell v. Ludlum v. P. & C. R. Co. Marshall's Estate Marcly v. Shults Marcom v. Adams Marcott v. R. Co. Marcy v. Barnes v. Pierce v. Stone Marder v. Leary Mardis v. Shackelford Marguerite v. Chouteau Mari. das Dorias, The</p>	<p>Section 1306, 1313 1063 2354 1661 282 2531 1900, 1910 1491 2132 2403 1141 2432 1288, 1291 1278 1018 2451 1081 41 1478 714, 992, 1000, 1640 2570 463 529 575 1788 1921, 1967 2294 2260 458 2196 1961 1011 681 762 2410 1065 856 285, 1750 68 2371, 2375 2578 2257 1109, 1125, 1131 2294 463 606 738, 738, 749, 754, 760 64, 988, 2453 664, 1061 892, 681, 797 694 1469 283 1320, 1871 564, 1868 1659</p>
--	--	---	--	---	---	--

TABLE OF CASES.

MAR

	Section		Section		Section
Marianski v. Cairns	228, 1066	Marston v. Dingley	437, 601	Marvin v. New Bedford	458, 461
Marine Investment Co. v. Havilade	2184	v. Downes	2196, 2211, 2308, 2312	v. Richmond	1062
Mariner v. Saunders	1194, 1195, 1269, 1312	Martin v. Anderson	1678, 2313	v. Sager	527
Marion v. Lambert	928	v. Barnes	963, 961, 964	v. State	2042
v. State	660, 792	v. Bonsack	1778	Marx v. Bell	1777
Mark v. Buffalo	2203	v. Bowie	1513, 2139	v. Hanthorn	1354
Markel v. Moudy	1037	v. Brown	1213, 1352	v. Hart	1327
Market v. F. N. Bank v. Sargent	2404	v. Cole	2445	v. Hilsendegen	987
Markey v. Angell	64	v. Com.		v. McGlynn	1738
Marlham v. O'Connor	1072	93 Ky.	390	Mary v. State	1876
v. Russell	406	2 Leigh	318, 705	Mary, Trial of Queen; see Queen Mary's Trial.	
Markley v. Swartzlander	1890	v. Cope	2098	Mary or Alexandra, The	2271
Marks v. Beyfus	2374	v. Courtney	1984	Mask v. State	
v. Lahee	1464, 1471	v. Eagle D. Co.	2582	32 Miss.	1867, 1800
v. Orth	1684	v. Ehrenfels	2354	36 Miss.	1618
v. Pell	1257	v. Elden	944, 1871	Mason v. Buckmaster	1859
Marler v. R. Co.	1750	v. Elliot	2221	v. Bull	1267
v. State		v. Farnham	1005, 1022, 1040	v. Cattley	2312
67 Ala.	1408, 2059	v. Fyffe	1538	v. District	1245
68 Ala.	890, 2059	v. Good	735, 747	v. Ditchbourne	783
Marlow v. Marlow	1195	v. Hall	1219, 1275, 1677, 1680	v. Libbey	1198
Marmet Co. v. Archibald	2463	v. Hardesty	258, 1779	v. Mason	74, 406
Marr v. Gilliam	2110	v. Hughes	1667	v. Phelps	736, 754, 1984
v. Wetzell	1392	v. Huriburt	616	v. Poulson	1018
Marr's Heirs v. Gilliam	2522	v. Ingham	2369	v. R. Co.	1893
Marriage v. Lawrence	1074, 1661	v. Ins. Co.		v. Russell	2354
Marriner v. Dennison	1225, 1264	1 F. & F.	905	v. State	351
Marriot v. Pascal	2509	42 N. J. L.	1947	v. Vestal	1125, 1126, 1128
Marriott v. Chamberlain	1856	v. Jennings	16	Mason's Case	2372
Marsden v. Panshall	1862	v. Martin		Mason v. J. Co. v. Palne	2529
Marses v. Middlesborough T. L. Co.	2166	22 Ala.	2086	Masonic M. B. Ass. v. Beck	2307, 2384, 2691
Marsh v. Case	1554, 1556	25 Ala.	928, 1985	Masonic M. B. Soc'y v. Lackland	1230
v. Collnett	1221, 1311, 2138	174 Ill.	1779	Masons v. Fuller	569, 1503, 1923
v. Gold	1062	51 Me.	2575	Masons' F. A. A. v. Riley	1476, 1662
v. Hammond	1021	v. Mayer	1290	Massey v. Robillard	2395
v. Hand	18, 1234	v. Orndorff	1807	Massey, re	2215
v. Jones	736, 2098	v. Payno	1271, 1684	v. Allen	1464, 1524
v. Kelth	2317	v. People	1012, 1013	v. Farmers' Bank	1253, 1254, 1985, 2015
v. Marsh	2257	v. Perkins	1302	v. Huntington	1738
v. Pugh	616	v. Reeves	1066	v. State	106
Marshall v. Adams	2098	v. Richmond F. & P. R. Co.	1896	v. Walker	1917, 1950
v. Brown	687, 1700	v. Root	1075	v. Young	344
v. Cliff	1063	v. Rutt	2232	Masure v. Noble	1957
v. Fire Ins. Co.	1943	v. Sherwood	1719	Mast v. Matthews	2596
v. Gougler	1302	v. Simpson	1778	Masters v. Marsh	21, 747, 2211
v. Hancock	1388	v. Smith	321	v. Masters	2024, 2025
v. Hanby	2502	v. State		v. Varner	1664
v. Ins. Co.	1947	28 Ala.	276, 280, 354, 2059	Matchett v. R. Co.	2580
v. J. Grosse C. Co.	2495	125 Ala.	949, 2081	Matchin v. Matchin	2067
v. Lynn	2455	63 Miss.	1806	Mather v. Clark	1063
v. May	1086	32 Tex. Cr.	1781	v. Goddard	1248
v. Mitchell	64	33 Tex. Cr.	1476	Matherly v. Com.	1440
v. Morris	1225	v. S. T. & T. Co.	1963	Mathes v. Robinson	1544, 1548, 1551, 1555
v. Peck	615	v. Towle	283	Mathias v. O'Neill	92, 736, 747
v. R. Co.	1362, 1363, 1481	v. Williams		Mathis v. Buford	772
v. Riley	2379	18 Ala.	2200	v. State	
v. Sheridan	1066	42 Miss.	1267	31 Fla.	1850
v. State		Martin Brown Co. v. Perrill	291	Fla., 34 So.	782
49 Ala.	1974	Martinez v. Planel	458	Mathews v. Boland	530
5 Tex. App.	1871	Martinsteln v. Creditors	1536	v. Cedar Rapids	468
v. Westrope	2416	Marts v. State	63, 246, 1984	v. Colburn	1388
Marshman v. Conklin	619	Martyn v. Curtis	1564		
Marsk v. Willard	2473	v. Hind	77		
Marston v. Allen	2409, 2420				

Section
458, 461
1062
527
2042
1777
1854
1327
987
1788
1876

2271

1890
1618
1859
1267
2312
1245
783
1198
74, 406
54, 1984
1018
1893
2354
351
26, 1128
2372
2529

2,384,
2391

1230
03, 1923

76, 1662
2395
2215
64, 1524
1253,
54, 1985,
2015
1738
106
17, 1959
344
1957
2596
47, 2211
24, 2025
1664
2580
2067
1063
1248
1440
4, 1548,
51, 1555
796, 747
72

1850
782
30
458
1388

Mathews v. Heyward	1890
v. Mathews	2067
v. Mattrass Co.	2438
v. R. Co.	2509, 2580
v. State	1130, 2061
v. Yerex	617
Mathewson v. Sergeant's Est.	610
v. Spencer	2148
Matlock v. Glover	2016
Matossy v. Frosh	1187
Matson v. Buck	403
Matteson v. Hartmann	1085
v. Noyes	1236, 2154
v. R. Co.	688, 1719, 1721
Matthai v. Matthai	2046
Matthews v. Castleberry	2141, 2146
v. Coalter	1278
v. Dare	530, 1031
v. Detroit J. Co.	308
v. Hoagland	2298, 2308
v. Huntly	64, 69
v. Lumber Co.	280, 960
v. Port	1364, 1380, 1670
v. Poythress	664
v. R. Co.	81 Minn. 1725 142 Mo. 455, 1856
v. State	1072, 2071
v. Supervisors	1335
Matthews Estate	2527
Matthewson v. Burr	1612, 1614
Matthis v. State	1029
Mattice v. Allen	914, 1890
Mattison v. State	42
Mattocks v. Bellamy	1215, 1677
v. Lyman	10 Vt. 736, 1071, 1072 18 Vt. 2118
v. Stearns	1189, 1208
v. Wheaton	2195, 2199, 2201
Mattox v. U. S.	146 U. S. 1438, 1442, 1545, 1448, 1452, 2340, 2354
156 U. S.	1028, 1032, 1398
Matseviz v. Hughes	1614
Matsenbaugh v. People	987, 1784
Mauch v. Hartford	795, 1385
Maugham v. Inbbard	735, 747
Mauk v. Brundage	19
Maupin v. Scottish U. & N. I. Co.	2434
v. Triplett	1312
v. Whiting	2123
Mauran v. Lamb	2218, 2222, 2223
Nauri v. Heffernan	1257, 1678, 1680, 2464
Maurin v. Lyon	1680
Maus v. Bome	2464
Maverick v. R. Co.	1779
Mawby v. Barber	613
Mawman v. Tegg	73, 371, 1161, 1230
Mawson v. Hartsink	692, 1982, 1985

Maxfield v. State	2407
Maxham v. Place	1684
Maxson v. R. Co.	1078
Maxted v. Fowler	1263, 2098
Maxwell v. Bolles	944, 1890
v. Chamberlin	2442
v. Durkin	15
v. Hardy	1141
v. Hill	1811, 1739
v. Kennedy	73
v. Light	1225, 1651
v. Maxwell	2083
v. R. Co.	1330
v. State	105
v. Warner	2007
v. Willingham	2434
Maxwell's Ex's v. Wilkinson	736, 745, 761
Maxwell Land-Grant Co. v. Dawson	254
May v. Baskin	1665
v. Bradlee	233, 568, 1938, 1958
v. Brown	42, 986, 1982
v. Dorsett	570, 2012
v. Gentry	1082
v. Hill	1195
v. Jameson	1684
v. Jones	1778
v. Little	2232
v. Logie	1481
v. May	1 Port. 1245 2 Stra. 1644, 1646
v. People	2071
v. State	55 Ala. 1489 90 Ga. 111, 1841 94 Ga. 1841
Mayberry v. Johnson	2423
Mayer, re	2235
v. Brensinger	1869
v. Building Co.	458
v. People	320, 321, 1041, 1083
v. R. Co.	807
Mayes v. State	2079
Mayfield v. Turner	1195
Mayhew v. Mining Co.	443, 461, 1951
v. Taylor	950
Maynard v. Buck	461
v. Interstate B. & L. Assoc.	1223
v. Maynard	2408
v. Render	2465
v. State	1781
v. Vinton	2341, 2502
Mayne v. Hawkey	2211
Maynes v. Dolan	1845
Mayo v. Mayo	1043, 2269, 2276
v. Mazeaux	1225, 1651
v. Wright	682, 1718
Mayor v. American Cable R. Co.	1857
v. Brown	1163
v. Caldwell	497
v. Craven	2140
v. Harwood	1350

Mayor v. Minor	1062
v. Pentz	29, 1918, 1919, 1948, 1976
v. Second Ave. R. Co.	786, 760, 751, 1580
v. Wood	1951
Mayor of Hull v. Horner	89
Mayor of London v. Ainsley	2257
v. Levy	2257
Mays v. Deaver	2100
v. Johnson	1678
v. Mays	1302
v. Pryce	1347
v. Shields	2420
Mayson v. Beazley	2105
v. Atlanta	1244
Maywood Co. v. Maywood	1168
Meacham v. Pell	788
v. State	688
Mead v. Danbigny	406
v. Degolyer	1062
v. McGraw	736, 749
v. Harris	497
v. Randall	1644, 1645
v. Randolph	2054
Meade v. Black	1778
v. Gilfoyle	616
v. Smith	2354, 2355
Meadrhouser v. State	2580
Meadowcroft v. People	1354
Meadows v. Frost	1580
v. Ins. Co.	1876, 1880, 2495
v. State	821, 839
Meagoe v. Simmons	759, 1021
Mealer v. State	247
Mears v. R. Co.	65, 1639
Meath v. Winchester	8 Bing. N. C. 1053, 2139 10 Bligh 2294
Mechanics' Bank v. Woodward	1387, 1405
Mechanics' & F. Bank v. Smith	934
Medill v. Snyder	682
Medlicot v. Joyner	1193, 1280
Medway v. U. S.	1362, 2001, 2008, 2016
Mee v. Reid	1818
Meek v. Pierce	616
v. Spencer	1195
Meeker v. Meeker	75 Ill. 232 74 Ia. 682, 1938
Meeks v. State	51 Ga. 1830 32 Tex. Cr. 2042
v. Willard	2556
Meers v. Stoughton	1825
Meguire v. Corwine	1073
Mehlin v. Mutual R. F. L. Ass'n	2409
Meier v. Meier	1082, 1778, 1779
v. Morgan	1908
Meighen v. Bank	93
Meinaka v. State	832
Meixsell v. Williamson	1012
Melby v. Osborne	2153

TABLE OF CASES.

MEL

	Section		Section		Section
Melcher v. Flanders	1804	Merriam v. Field	2434	Metz v. Butte	1951
Melen v. Andrews	1072	v. Ins. Co.	1047	v. Metz	1778
Melendy v. Spanling	1958	v. R. Co.	619, 1104	v. State	2272
Melhuish v. Collier	761, 903, 904, 905, 907.	Merrick v. Wakley	1632, 1634, 1639	Metzgar v. R. Co.	461
Mellish v. Arnold	1005	Merricourt v. Norwalk		Metzger v. Assnr. Co.	720
v. Rawdon	2352	F. Ins. Co.	354, 944, 987	Mener v. R. Co.	2536
Meilor v. Union	2553	Merrifield v. Robbins	1684	Meunier, re	2056
v. R. Co.	1951	Merrill v. Berkshire	1890	v. Couet	605
Meloin v. Marshall	2390	v. I. & O. R. Co.	1560	Mewes v. Pipe-Line Co.	714, 720
Melton v. State	1567	v. Perkins	987	Mexican C. R. Co. v.	
	216, 363, 2060, 2071	v. R. Co.	736, 745, 748	Glover	2536
Meivin v. Bullard	1458	v. Syper	1852	v. Lauricella	2509
v. Easy	1690, 1700	Merrills v. Swift	2408	Mexican N. R. Co. v.	
v. Hodges	2015	Merriman v. State	923, 987, 1985	Slater	1271, 2558
v. Lyons	1681	Merriman's Appeal	764	Mexican & S. A. Co., re	2271
v. Whiting		Merritt v. Bopden	25	Meyer v. Barker	1195
7 Pick.	1387, 2098	v. Hepenstal	21	v. Berlandi	1354
10 Pick.	2522	v. Hinton	1351, 1640	v. Bohlfling	403
Memphis & C. P. Co. v.		v. Merritt		v. Brown	1530
Buckner	1164	20 Ill.	934, 1271	v. Everth	2434, 2439
Memphis & C. R. Co. v.		45 Ill.	1271	v. Kranter	2580
Womack	1671	v. R. Co.	284	v. Mitchell	1898
Memphis & O. R. P. Co. v.		v. Seaman	18, 1900	v. Munro	1066
McCooi	928	v. State	1042	v. People's Railway Co.	770
Menage v. Rosenthal	2440, 2463	v. Stehhins	1082	v. Rothe	18, 811
Menard v. R. Co.	283, 1168	Mershon v. State	2277	v. Sefton	1230
Mendenhall v. Cassella	1587	Mertz v. Detweiler	67, 1960	v. State	367
Mendenhall's Will	1512, 2500	Merwin v. Ward	291	Meyers v. Menter	851, 2580
Mendum v. Corn.	569	Meserve v. Folsom	1880	v. State	1374, 1442
Menk v. Steinfort	616	Messenger v. Bridgetown	1111	v. U. S.	1778
Menomenie R. S. & D.		Messer v. Reginniter	600	Meyncke v. State	987, 1612
Co. v. R. Co.	456, 2487	Messimer v. McCray	7, 1409	Miami & M. T. Co. v. Baily	2220
Meracie v. Down	1850	Metcaif v. Mnsson	253	Michael v. Foil	2312
Mercer v. Kelso's Adm'r	1938	v. Van Benthynsen	2105	v. Gay	2257
v. Mackin	1736	Metcalfe v. Carr	2165	v. Marshall	2503
v. Patterson	2336, 2341	v. Deane	2353	Michaud v. Grace H. L. Co.	720
v. Sayre	1877	Methodist Ep. Church v.		Michener v. Lloyd	2450
v. State		Jaques	2117	Michigan B. & P. Co. v.	
40 Fla.	923, 1079, 1108, 2245, 2332, 2339	v. Wood	2123	Coll	2235
41 Fla.	905	Metler's Adm'r v. Metler	613, 2245	Michigan C. R. Co. v.	
17 Ga.	2349	Metropolitan Asylum		Gilbert	96, 190, 250
v. Vose	715	Dist. v. Hill	443, 451	Micksy v. Ins. Co.	1972
v. Wright	1010, 2056	Metropolitan Life Ins.		Micklethwart's Case	2360
Mercer's Adm'r v. Mackin	1457	Co. v. Anderson	1646	Middeke v. Balder	2532
Merchants' Bank v. Moffatt	2819	v. Howie	2380	Middleditch v. Williams	1738
v. Rawis	907	Metropolitan Nat'l Bank v.		Middlesborough W. Co. v.	
Merchants' Exch. Bank v.		Com. St. Bank	1078	Neal	1651
McGraw	2573	v. Jansen	529	Middlesex Case	1712
Merchants' Life Ass'n v.		Metropolitan R. Co. v.		Middlesex B. Co. v. Smith	782
Yoaknm	1890	Collins	1755	Middleton v. Barned	1876
Merchants National Bank		v. Jackson	7552	v. Croft	2067
v. Glendon Co.	2535	v. Snashall	2580	v. Janverin	1271
Merchants' Nav. Co. v.		v. White	463	v. Mass	2141
Amsden	1647	v. Wright	2552	v. Melton	1466, 1471, 1474, 1476
Mercier v. Harnan	2109	Metropolitan Sav. Bank v.		v. Middleton	1777
Meredith v. Footner	2232	Manion	1960	v. Sandford	2529
Mergentheim v. State	1908	Metropolitan S. O. Co. v.		v. State	2059
Mericke v. King	575	Hawkins	1859	Miffin Bridge Co. v. Juniata	
Merkle v. Beidleman	1083	Metropolitan St. R. Co. v.		Co.	1640
v. Bennington		Gumhy	1387	Mighell v. Sultan of Johore	2566
58 Mich.	1722, 1749	v. Jacohl	2390	Milam v. State	1750, 1873
68 Mich.	1951	v. Johnson	461	Milbourne Port Case	1712
v. State	1693, 1694	Metropolitan W. S. & E. R.		Milburn v. Phillips	1081
Merle v. Moore		Co. v. Dickinson	451,	Mildrone's Case	1818
2 C. & P.	2321	v. Fortin	463	Milenovich's Estate	1195
Ry. & Mo.	2327		208, 249	Miles v. Dawson	2211
				v. Loomis	1999, 2000, 2008, 2011, 2012, 2016

Section	Section	Section	Section
1951	Miles v. O'Hara	Miller v. Road Co.	Milton's Case
1778	4 Binn. 736, 1215, 1636	v. Russel	Milward v. Hibbert
2272	1 S. & R. 1911	v. S. S. Co.	v. Ingram
461	v. U. S. 2086, 2231	v. Salomons	v. Temple
720	v. Vanhorn 66, 76	v. Shaw	Milwaukee B. Co. v.
2536	v. Wilson 2462, 2463	v. Shay	Duncan 2434
2056	v. Wingate 2116	v. Smith	Milwaukee R. Co. v.
605	v. Woodward 1067	v. State	Kellogg 1947
714, 720	Milford v. Worcester 1644	40 Ala. 860	Milwaukee & M. R. Co.
2536	Millich v. Packing Co. 2442	45 Ala. 619	v. Eble 1943
2509	Millar v. Babcock 1267	107 Ala. 1974, 1978	Milwaukee & S. P. R.
71, 2558	v. Heinrich 1271	110 Ala. 1198, 2257	Co. v. Smith 1271
2271	Millard v. Hall 1216	130 Ala. 363	Mima Queen v. Hepburn 1363
1195	Millaudon v. McDonough 1680	40 Ark. 1267	Mimms v. State 106, 1003
1354	Mille v. Dupuy 2054	97 Ga. 1042, 1044	Mims v. Sturtevant
406	Millar v. Bingham 1084	109 Ga. 1821	23 Ala. 1777
1530	v. Boykin 1209, 1635, 1639	3 Oh. St. 1350	36 Ala. 754, 1404
34, 2459	v. Busick 1667	37 Tex. Cr. 2289	v. Swartz 2573
2580	v. Carothers 1921, 1510, 2048, 2110, 2159	25 Wis. 1398	Mine & Smelter S. Co.
1898	v. Childress 2054	106 Wis. 617, 1012, 1029	v. Parke & L. Co. 18, 1890
1086	v. Com. 367	v. Stem 1009, 1013	Milner v. Phillips 581, 758, 759, 1029, 1086
Co. 770	13 Bush 2059, 2060	v. Thatcher 2054	v. State 2236
18, 811	78 Ky. 906	v. Travers 2471, 2474	Mineral Point R. Co. v.
1230	v. Cook 987	v. Webb 1248	Keep 736, 754
367	v. Crayon 75, 192, 200, 202, 209, 212, 340, 963	v. Weeks 2313	Mineral R. & M. Co. v.
51, 2580	v. Cnrtis 1053	v. Wells 1195, 1651	Auten 1564
74, 1442	v. Denman 273, 282, 393, 987	v. White 16 Can. Sup. 1040	Minet v. Gibson 2443
37, 1612	v. Dill 795	80 Ill. 2063	v. Morgan 2290, 2294
2220	v. Dumon 2434	v. Wilson 2636	Minich v. People 1852
2312	v. Electric Co. 1082, 1778	Miller's Case 728, 735	Mink v. State 2063
2257	v. Feenane 2189	Miller's Estate 1302	Minkler v. Minkler 1267, 2106
2503	v. Foster 1275, 1350	Millette v. Little 2235	Minkley v. Springwells 1896
Co. 720	v. Goodwin 2122	Millican v. Booth 1391	Minneapolis Mill Co.
2450	v. Gow 95, 736, 747	Miliken v. Barr 1245	v. R. Co. 1870, 1404
2235	v. Hackley 1186, 2132, 2158	v. Long 1614	Minneapolis Thresh-
90, 250	v. Hale 1186	Milling v. Hillenbrand 1086	ing Co. v. McDonald 716
1972	v. Harrington 1072	Millman v. Tucker 986, 2272	Minneapolis Times Co.
2360	v. Heck 1651	Milner's Estate, re 2528	v. Nimocks 1268
2532	v. Holt 2159	Mills v. Catlin 1698	Minnie, The, v. R. 1672
1738	v. Johnston 2016	v. Com. 2062	Minor v. Tillotson 1194, 1195, 1259
1651	v. Jones 406	v. Dunlap 18	Minters v. People 2261
1712	v. Kerr 392	v. Duryee 1216, 2555	Minthon v. Lewis 1908
782	v. Lamb 1677	v. Griswold 2286	Minton v. State 507, 832
1876	v. Livingston 1213	v. Hallock 1954	Mintzner v. Hogg 1164
2067	v. McKinnon 1258	v. May 1300	Mish v. Wood 677, 716, 1948
1271	v. Mariner's Church 2572	v. Oddy 2211, 2307	Mishler v. Baumgardner 1911
2141	v. Matthews 1960	v. R. Co. 2220	Miskimmins v. Shaver 2271, 2276, 2282
1471, 1476	v. Mayer 1085	v. Spencer 73	Misner v. Darling 747, 1669
1777	v. Metzger 2550	Holt N. P. 603, 610	Mississippi Co. v. Vowels 1778
2529	v. Miller 928	v. State 1821	Mississippi & T. R. Co. v.
2059	187 Pa. 2168	v. Twist 1313	Ayres 1385
1640	S. C., 21 S. E. 1890	v. U. S. 2088, 2228, 2239	Missouri K. & T. R. Co. v.
2566	v. Miller's Adm'r 6	v. Winter 20, 1978	Colburn 2572
1873	v. Morrow 6	Mills' Estate 2063, 2527	v. Dilworth 1213
1712	3 Coldw. 1067	Milne v. Leisler 10, 1755, 1757, 1768, 2102, 2113	v. Elliott 291
1081	5 Heisk. 181, 833	Miltimore v. Miltimore 1267	102 Fed. 1207, 1404
1818	v. Nicodemus 1109	Milton v. Edgworth 2441	2 Ind. T. 1721
1195	v. People 792	v. Hunter 2235	v. Johnson 1951
2211	v. R. Co. 461	v. Rowland 568, 784, 1378	92 Tex. 65, 199
2008	93 Ga. 688	v. State 1440	95 Tex. 1721
2016	62 Minn. 1960	134 Ala. 363, 1893	v. Merril 1951
	71 N. Y. 1678	40 Fla. 363, 1893	v. Moore 792
	v. Reinhart 1678		v. St. Clair 949
			v. Simonson 1354

TABLE OF CASES.

MIS

	Section		Section		Section
Missouri P. R. Co. v.		Mix v. Woodward	406	Monongahela Water Co. v.	
Baier	1749, 1760	Milxer v. Bennett	2004	Stewartson	1890
v. Collier	1765	Moak v. Moak	2046	Monroe v. Ins. Co.	2494
v. Finley	569	Moale v. Baltimore	463	v. Lattin	1961
v. Fox		Moats v. Rymer	961, 1911, 2211, 2313	v. State	
56 Nebr.	1976			5 Ga.	111, 246, 247, 1732
60 Nebr.	561, 1890, 1961	Moberly v. Brooks	2047	71 Miss.	2061
v. Hall	571, 677	v. Preston	74	v. Twistleton	2237
v. Heldenhelmer	2155	Mobile Life Ins. Co. v.		Monson v. Palmer	1784
v. Hennessey	283	Morris	1081	Montague v. Dougan	1552, 1560
v. Johnson		v. Walker	1415, 1976	v. Perkins	2419
59 Kan.	571	Mobile & B. R. Co. v.		Montague's Case	2250
73 Tex.	2220	Ladd	15	Montana Co. v. St. Louis	
v. Lovelace	2432	Mobile & G. R. Co. v.		M. & M. Co.	1862
v. Mackey	571, 1961	Williams	1109	Montana R. Co. v. Warren	660, 712, 1943
v. Moffatt		Mobile & M. R. Co. v.			
56 Kan.	460	Ashcraft	458, 461, 1729, 1748, 1755	Montclair R. Co. v. Ben-	
60 Kan.	98	v. Blakely	571	son	463
v. Palmer	715, 1235	v. Yeates	2318	Monteath v. Caldwell	18
v. White	1807	Mobile & O. R. Co. v.		Montefiore v. Montefiore	2106
Missouri & K. Tel. Co.		Postal T. C. Co.	2580	Monterey v. Jacks	257
v. Vandevort	1063, 1961	v. Steamer New South	991	Montgomery v. Com.	
Mist v. Kaplolani Estate	1573	v. Stinson	1750	v. Deeley	2573
v. Kawelo	1967	Mobley v. Bilberry	1779	v. Dickey	1582
Mitovaki v. Mandleberg	2212	v. Breed	1269, 1960	v. Dorlon	1312, 1314, 1651
Mitchell v. Allison	1944	v. Hamit	923, 1985	v. Ins. Co.	1890
v. Bridger	1226	v. Kittleberger,	1750	v. Koester	282
v. Com.		v. Watts	238, 2085	v. Lipscomb	1568
78 Ky.	928	v. Watts	1267, 1273	v. McLeod	1644
Ky., 14 S. W.	987	Mock v. Kelly	715	v. Page	2445
Ky., 64 S. W.	1270	Mockabee v. Com.	1445	v. Pickering	2327
v. Henry	2462, 2463	Modawell v. Holmes	2580	v. Ronth	1213
v. Ins. Co.	1947	Moddie v. Breiland	2525	v. Scott	568, 569, 1951, 1976
v. Jacobs	1213	Mode v. Beasley	2529	v. Snodgrass	1873
v. McDougall	615	Modern Woodmen v.		v. State	
v. Mitchell		Kozak	1073, 2500	40 Ala.	1842, 2059
11 G. & J.	586	Modisett v. Governor	2158	80 Ind.	1432
1 Gill	1888, 1651	Moeckel v. Heim	2338	v. Taylor	1976
3 Stew. & P.	1195, 1225, 1651	Moehn v. Moehn	1461	Montgomery B. B. W. v.	
80 Tex.	2336	Moellering v. Evans	1899	Gaston	1350
11 Vt.	2086	Moett v. People	1010, 1013	Montgomery & W. P. R.	
v. R. Co.		Moffatt v. Tenney	907	Co. v. Varnar	1943
87 Cal.	461	Moffit v. Hereford	716	v. Webb	382
85 Ill.	1168	v. State	609	Montreuil v. Pierre	1239, 1680
68 N. H.	288	v. Witherspoon	1072, 1482	Monts v. Stephen	1219, 1677
100 Tenn.	2509	Mohawk Bank v. Atwater	586	Moody v. Pender	1416
v. Ryan	2408	Mohon v. Harkreader	1835	v. Rowell	770, 773, 774, 777, 775, 915, 1888, 1890, 2002, 2008, 2016, 2020, 2026
v. Savings Inst.	1268	Moises v. Thornton	1674, 1680, 2169	v. State	1350
v. Sawyer	906	Moldenhaur v. R. Co.	461	Moers v. Bunker	1481, 2529
v. Sellman	15	Molina v. U. S.	564	Moog v. Randolph	1350
v. State		Molineux v. Molineux	2454	Moon v. Hawks	378, 1779
58 Ala.	569	Moller v. Moller	2066	v. State	791
94 Ala.	923, 925	v. U. S.	805	Moon's Adm'r v. Crowder	2008, 2012, 2016
114 Ala.	1157, 1404, 1405, 1605, 2497	Molm v. Barton	1195	Mooney v. Davis	289
43 Fla.	1507	Moiton v. Harris	1202, 1224	v. Kennett	2572
Fla., 33 So	2071	Molyneaux v. Collier	1035, 1062, 1195	v. Olsen	1738
71 Ga.	285, 1698, 2098	Momence Stone Co. v.		Moor v. Adam	2203
Miss., 24 So.	838	Groves	291, 1263	Moor's Case	600
36 Tex. Cr.	2354	Monahan v. Worcester	249	Moore v. Andrews	1521
v. Terr.	1781	Moncrief v. State	2518	v. Arm	1681
v. Welch	1890	Monk v. Farlinger	2144	v. Bank	
v. Work	75, 212	v. Jenkins	1676	6 Mo.	1675
Mitchell's Case	2307	Monkton v. Attorney-		13 Pet.	18
Mitchinson v. Cross	619	General	1493, 1484, 1486, 1491, 1496, 1501		
Mitchnm v. State	1745, 1747, 1750, 1806				

TABLE OF CASES.

Section	Section	Section	Section
1890	Moore v. Beale 749	Mordcael v. Bell 1218	Morris v. Hammerle 1609, 2096
2494	v. Beattie 1195	Morr's Estate 666	v. Hanser 1208
1961	v. Bray 2266, 2310	Morehead Bkg. Co. v. Walker 1208	v. Henderson 18, 1064, 1676
3, 247,	v. Brown 1410	Morehouse v. Mathews 1943	v. Hubbard 2536
1732	v. Burlington 252	v. Morehouse 1976	v. Hurst 2118
2061	2 Leigh 852	186 Cal. 2219	v. Ins. Co. 1951
2237	9 Leigh 1644	70 Conn. 1896	v. Jamieson 2120
1784	v. Craven 2212	v. Potter 1225	v. Lessees 1397, 1508
1560	v. Davis 392	Moreland v. Lawrence 923	v. Miller 1174, 2084, 2085, 2086, 2088
2419	v. Gilliam 1248	v. Mitchell Co. 1976	v. Morris 2033
2250	v. Gwyn 1777	Morell v. Morell 1576, 2500	20 Ala. 2083
1862	v. Heineke 1770, 2085, 2498, 2505	Morelock v. State 1033	119 Ind. 2384, 2391
660,	v. Holmes 2596	Morely v. Dunbar 1010	v. Patchin 1681
1, 1943	v. Jones 13 Ala. 1021, 1029, 1857	Moreton v. Horton 1199	v. Pugh 2450
463	108 Ill. 1021	Morewood v. Wood 1587, 1606, 2006, 2017	v. R. Co. 1006
18	v. Jonesboro 2572	Morey v. Hoyt 1256	116 N. Y. 2390
2106	v. Kalamazoo 252	Morgan v. Barnhill 64	v. Sargent 736, 747, 2016
257	v. Moore 39 Ia. 736	v. Bealle 1651	v. State 124 Ala. 1977
2271	51 Mo. 2245	v. Brydges 1893, 1894	38 Tex. 78, 987
2573	67 Mo. 689, 1938	v. Burrow 2581	v. Stokes 728, 1072
1582	102 Tenn. 2506	v. Com. 140	v. Swaney 1278, 1279, 2048
1651	v. Oastler 73, 209	v. Griffith 2442	v. Vanderen 1056, 1080,
1890	v. Palmer 89, 1409, 1416, 2008, 2016	v. Halberstadt 2270	1082, 1198, 1200,
282	v. Pearson 2098	v. Halverson 1415	1257, 1267, 1275,
1568	v. People 26 Colo. 106	v. Jones 1195, 1225	1673, 1659, 1672,
1644	108 Ill. 1018	v. Livingston 406, 1071	1674, 2286
2445	v. R. Co. 65 Ia. 1978	v. Minor 1249	v. Wadsworth 1651
2327	59 Miss. 906	v. Nicholl 1388	Morris and Clayton's Case 2297
1213	v. Smead 2410	v. People 1236	Morrissey v. Ferry Co. 2529
3, 569,	v. Smith 1071, 1072	v. Purnell 1483	v. Ingham 688, 951,
1976	v. Steele 1290, 2048	v. Roberts 1911	962, 1722
1873	v. State 12 Ala. 1033, 1452	v. S. M. L. V. Co. 2442	v. People 609
2059	68 Ala. 787	v. Seaward 1862	v. Wiggins Ferry Co. 1644
1432	51 Ark. 2164	11 Ala. 2066	Morrison v. Arnold 1406, 1417
1976	79 Ga. 1821	88 Ala. 15, 59, 194	v. Chapin 736, 745, 748,
1943	2 Oh. St. 266, 273	31 Ind. 1362, 1431,	1082
382	17 Oh. St. 676	117 Ind. 1439, 1442	v. Coad 1219
1680	96 Tenn. 457, 1270, 1385, 1441, 1618	51 Nebr. 2497	v. Com. 247
1677	31 Tex. Cr. 364	56 Nebr. 321	v. Grand T. R. Co. 1856
3, 774,	Tex. Cr., 75 S. W. 2230,	86 Tenn. 524	v. Hinton 1680
1888,	2243	v. Stevens 2050	v. Lennard 498, 811
2008,	v. Stone 2498	Morgan Co. Bank v. People 1678	v. Madison 2552
2026	v. Terrell 2294	Moriarty v. Moriarty 2500	v. Moat 2212
1350	v. Townsend 1951	v. R. Co. 278	v. Myers 1263
2529	v. Triplett 1378	v. State 111, 246, 247, 248	v. People 2167
1350	v. U. S. 91 U. S. 2308, 2016	Moritz v. Brongh 1362, 1738	v. Porter 1651, 1998, 2000,
1779	150 U. S. 213, 259, 300	Morley v. Green 2211	2008, 2016
791	v. Westervelt 1951	Morley's Case 1374, 1405, 1406	v. R. Co. 1164, 1168
2008,	v. Wingate 2334	Morrell v. Lumber Co. 2155	v. State 42 Fla. 1450
2016	v. Wright 289, 1195	v. State 246	40 Tex. Cr. 144, 1722
2572	Moorhouse v. De Passon 586	Morrill v. Hershfield 682	v. Welty 1202
1738	Moots v. State 786, 764	v. State 2239	Morrow v. Campbell 2498
2203	Mora v. People 821, 1433	v. Tegarden 682	v. Canadian P. R. Co. 2507
600	Morales v. State 2277	v. Tiltcomb 1567, 1778	v. Com. 1206
1521	Moran v. McLarty 2416	v. Whitehead 1552	v. Ostrander 738
1681	v. People 1013	Morris v. Bethell 377	v. Parkman 1911
1675	Moran Bros. Co. v. Snoqualmie F. P. Co. 791,	v. Briggs 750, 1555	v. R. Co. 208
18	1161, 1385	v. Callanan 1573	v. Saunders 1859
		v. Creel 2374	v. State 2079
		v. Davidson 2573	v. Waterous 1051
		v. Davies 1646	Morse v. Blanchard 1152
		1 Moo. & R. 2527	v. Bruce's Est. 1978
		v. East Haven 65, 199	v. Crawford 1938
		v. Guffey 93, 905, 913	v. Hewett 1651
			v. Pineo 923

TABLE OF CASES.

MOR

	Section		Section		Section
Morse v. Potter	1556	Mow v. People	794	Mnnkers v. Ins. Co.	64, 2008,
v. R. Co.	283, 438	Mowry v. Smith	15		2016
v. Royal	1076	v. Starbuck	1873	v. State	206
v. State	1974	Moxie Nerve Food Co. v.		Mnnkwitz v. R. Co.	1168
Morse v. Morse	1009, 1910, 1912	Beach	2212	Munn v. Baker	255
v. Palmer	928, 983, 1105,	Moye v. Herndon	2027	v. Baldwin	95
	1614	Moyer v. Com.	414	v. Godbold	1233
v. Salisbury	1778	v. Moyer	78	Munro v. Callahan	1415
Mortimer v. M'Callan	1214,	Moyle v. Congreg. Soc.	1078,	v. Meech	2450
	1215, 1218,		2442	v. Stowe	716, 783
	1219, 1223	Moyler v. Moyier	2047, 2069	Munroe v. Godkin	64
v. Mortimer	2007	Moynihan v. Drobas	1647	v. Phillips	2111
Mortlock v. Williams	1208	Mudd v. Dillon	2472	Munshower v. State	1040, 1041,
Morton v. Barrett	1674	Mudgett v. Horrell	1074		1476, 1698,
v. Edwin	1852	Mdsall M. Co. v. Watrons	321		1704
v. Fairbanks	2555	Mueller v. Rebhan	614, 615,	Munson v. Hastings	1125, 1126,
v. Foiger	1568, 1570, 1587		1081, 1873,		1127, 1129
v. Heidorn	1302, 2502		1906	Mnnyon v. State	580, 2235,
v. M'Glaughlin	1085, 1456	Mnetze v. Tuteur	209		2236, 2239
v. State	1800	Mngge v. Adams	1195	Munx v. R. Co.	2381
Mose v. State		Muir v. Miller	1738	Murcib v. Peck	2444
35 Ala.	1484	Mnlatto Lucy v. Slade	1676	Murdock v. Hnnter	1513
36 Ala.	836, 855,	Mulcahey v. R. Co.	1417	v. Mfg. Co.	1244
	1157, 1616,	Mulcairns v. Janesville	1698,	v. State	382, 413
	1985, 2071		1951	v. Sumner	1800, 2349, 2570
Moseley v. Davies	1584, 1588	Muldowney v. R. Co.	1951	Murieta v. Wolfhagen	702
v. Eakin	2063, 2336	Mulford v. Mueller	2311	Murphey v. State	1896
v. Hanford	2444	v. Tennis	581	Murphree v. Senn	233, 869
Moseley's Adm'r v. Mastin	2582	Mnihado v. R. Co.	1158	Murphy v. Backer	21, 377,
	2052	Mnihall v. Failon	1960		1021
Mosey v. Carr	803	Mniholland v. Harman	2143	v. Carter	603, 607
v. Mosey	303	Muikey v. Long	2525	v. Com.	1008, 2235, 2336
v. Wingo	2110	Mullaney v. Duffy	1587	v. Ganey	604
Moses v. Cromwell	2354	Mullanphy S. Bank v.		v. Hagermann	1993
v. Ins. Co.	1947	Schott	1195	v. Hendricks	25,0
v. State	2058	Mullen v. Ins. Co.	1042, 1807	v. Jack	2155
Moshier v. Knox College	18	v. M'Kelvy	2048	v. Loyd	1573
Mosley v. Com.	905	v. McKim	1023	v. Lyons	1195
v. Ins. Co.	1109	v. Morris	1684	v. Manning	461
Moss v. Anderson	1318, 1551,	v. Pryor	2530	v. Mulgrew	1088
	2143	v. Sackett	2580	v. Murphy	
v. Atkinson	1651	v. Union C. L. Ins. Co.	1064	74 Conn.	1890
v. Dearing	1083	v. U. S.	290	Ky., 65 S. W.	2341
v. State	580	Mullenback v. Bats	1195	1 S. D.	2355
Mostyn v. Fabrigas	1271, 1390,	Muller v. Hospital Assoc.	967	v. Olberding	1198, 1960
	2368	v. Muller	1736	v. Orr	2580
(see Fabrigas v. Mostyn)		Mullery v. Hamilton	2529	v. People	
v. Mostyn	2463	Mulligan v. R. Co.	1067	87 Ill.	1442
v. Spencer	803	v. Thompson	2063	63 N. Y.	390, 851
Motes v. Bates	923	Mulliken v. Boyce	1195	v. Prudential Ins. Co.	1947
v. U. S.	21, 1405	v. Corunna	1164	v. State	
Mott v. Dongbty	1513	Mnllin's Estate	678, 2315, 2390	63 Ala.	830, 857
v. Hicks	585	Mnllins v. Com.	1019	108 Ala.	194, 1270
v. R. Co.	571, 1721	Mnlliner v. Bronson	437	118 Ala.	1057
Mongbon v. State	2354	Mullis v. Cavins	1676	43 Nebr.	1839
Monlin v. Dallison	390	Mulry v. Ins. Co.	1947	27 Oh. St.	1072
Moulton v. McOwen	571	Mnllville v. Ins. Co.	97	41 Tex. Cr.	1130
v. Mason	1210	Munford v. Gething	2465	108 Wis.	987
v. State	194, 988,	v. Sewall	1850	v. Waterhouse	2312, 2498
	1614, 1983	v. Thomas	1202	Murray v. Bethune	1971
Monnce v. Kurtz	2432	v. Tolman	2444	v. Board	1951
Monnt v. Bogert	1062	Mnmma v. McKee	1378	v. Bogue	371
Monnt Adams & E. P. I. R.		Mnncey v. Sun Ins.		v. Encbanan	1188, 1195
Co. v. Lowery	2494	Office	1086	v. Cone	1779
Monnt Sterling Bank v.		Mnndy v. Foster	2498	v. Coeter	1062
Bowen	1185	v. Mnndy	1511	v. Dublin	1876
Mountain v. Fisher	618	Munford v. Green's		v. Duff	1681
Mt. Terry M. Co. v. White	754	Adm'r	2487	v. Elston	2200, 2219
Mousler v. Harding	613	v. Wilson	1210	v. Gregory	1256

TABLE OF CASES.

Section
4, 2008,
2016
206
1168
255
96
1233
1415
2450
116, 783
64
2111
0, 1041,
6, 1698,
1704
5, 1126,
17, 1129
0, 2235,
6, 2239
2381
2444
1513
1244
82, 413
19, 2570
702
1896
33, 680
21, 377,
1021
903, 607
5, 2336
604
1993
25.0
2156
1573
1195
461
1088

1800
2341
2355
8, 1980
2580

1442
90, 851
1947

90, 857
4, 1270
1057
1839
1072
1130
987
2, 2498
1971
1951
371
1185
1779
1062
1876
1681
2219
1256

Murray v. Hennessy
v. Hoboken L. &
I. Co. 1854
v. Milner 1492, 1495, 2063
v. R. Co.
N. H., 54 Atl. 1750
64 S. C. 2465
16 Utah 568
v. State 2071
v. Supreme Lodge 1644,
1646
v. Toland 1073
Murrell v. State 276
Murty v. Allen 2573
Mushrow v. Graham 1407
Musick v. Barney 1677
v. Ray 913, 1389
Muskogon v. Lumber
Co. 1248
Mussel v. Tama Co. 1352
Musser v. Hyde 1352
v. State 1079
v. Stauffer 2636
Mutter v. Lime Co. 1078
Mutual Ben. Life Ins. Co.
v. Brown 2008,
2016,
v. Hlginbotham 2120
v. Martin 2631
v. Robinson 1699, 2581
Mutual Life Ins. Co.
v. Boyle 1726
v. Bratt 1698
v. Hillmon 1714, 1726,
1726
v. Jonah 321
v. Lenbrie 568, 1938
v. Logan 1459
v. Selby 266, 1061, 2396
v. Suiter 2018
v. Thomson 1877
v. Wiswell 2540
Myatt v. Walker 2540
Myers v. Baker 2094
v. Beals 1195
v. Bernstein 1779
v. Brownell 1852
v. Com. 2512
v. Currie 78
v. Kinsie 1066
v. Ladd 2476
v. Litts 608
v. Murphy 18
v. People 18
v. Sari 2463, 2463
v. State
62 Ala. 247
Fla., 31 So. 770, 1021,
1041
97 Ga. 909, 2100, 2204
51 Nebr. 987
7 Tex. App. 2059, 2060
83 Tex. 247
v. Taylor 2446
v. Toecan 2016
v. Weger 736
Myers' Estate 987, 1244
Myerstown Bank v.
Roessler 944, 2442

Section
2500
1854
1750
2465
568
2071
1644,
1646
1073
276
2573
1407
1677
913, 1389
1248
1352
1352
1079
2636
1078
2008,
2016,
2120
2631
1699, 2581
1726
1698
1714, 1726,
1726
321
568, 1938
1459
266, 1061, 2396
2018
1877
2540
2540
2094
1195
1779
1852
2512
78
1066
2476
608
18
18
2463, 2463
247
770, 1021,
1041
909, 2100, 2204
987
2059, 2060
247
2446
2016
736
987, 1244
944, 2442

Mygatt v. Tarbell
Mynatt v. Hudson
Mynd v. Francis
Myrberg v. Baltimore &
L. M. & R. Co

N.
Naanes v. State 1671, 1677,
2166
Nabors v. Goldforb 762
Nachman, re 2282
Nadin v. Bassett 1411
Nailey v. Carpet Co. 283
Najac v. R. Co. 718
Nalle v. Fenwick 1312
Names v. Ins. Co. 780
Nance v. Callender 1554
Nancy v. Snell 1247
Narregang v. Brown Co. 1350
Nash v. Classen 1704,
2550
v. Gilkeson 64
v. Hoxie 89, 1938
v. Hunt 1938
v. Minn. T. I. & T.
Co. 581
v. State 1389
Nashua Savings Bank v.
Anglo-American L. M.
& A. Co. 1684
Nashville C. & St. L. R.
Co. v. Lawson 1128
Nashville & C. R. Co. v.
Carroll 1955
Nason v. Jordan 1278
Nass v. Vanswearingen 2223,
2223
Nathan v. Brand 463
v. Jacob 1234
v. Sands 908
Nation v. People 950
National Acc. Soc'y v. Spiro
78 Fed. 2008,
2016, 2183
94 Fed. 1633, 1681
National B. & L. Co. v.
Dunn 451
National Bank
v. Armstrong 2007
v. Delano 2310
v. Emmitt 2516
v. Galland 1674
v. National Bank 2287
National Bank of C. v.
New Bedford 1704
National Bank of Monti-
cello v. Bryant 2579
National Cash-Register
Co. v. Leland 6, 1960
v. Navy U. R. Co. 1657
National Express & T.
Co. v. Morris 1074
National German A.
Bank v. Lawrence 2233, 2240,
2242, 2243
National Granite Bank
v. Whicher 1576

Section
393
928, 1117
2257
2230

National Masonic A.
Ass'n v. Burr 95
v. Shryock 1750
National Provincial Bank
v. Jackson 2456
National Trust Co. v.
Gleason 522
National Ulster Co. Bank
v. Madden 736, 738,
764
Natoma W. & M. Co.
v. Clarkin 1239
Naugher v. State 246, 1038
Nauman v. Zoerhlaut 786
Nannberg v. Young 2431, 2434
Nave v. Baird 2312
v. Flack 458
v. Tucker 682, 1770
Nave's Adm'r v.
Williams 167, 1005, 1074
Naylor v. Semmes 2223
Neal v. Erving 1249
v. Neal 2015
v. R. Co. 2496
v. Thornton 1062
Neale v. McKinstry 1185
Neall v. U. S. 2026
Neally v. Greenough 1000, 1196,
1206, 1207,
1267
Nealy v. Brown 2534
Nebonne v. R. Co. 67 N. H. 1078
68 N. H. 1158, 1921
Nebraska Expos. Ass'n
v. Townley 2435
Nebraska Nat'l Bank
v. Johnson 2498
Needham v. Ide 1938
v. Smith 586
Neel v. Potter 1738
Neely v. Carter 2105
v. Shepard 1958
Negus v. Reynal 1199
Nehring v. McMurrian 270,
2488, 2531
Nehrling v. Herold Co. 749
Neil v. Childs 905, 913
v. Miller 2180
v. Thorn 1890
Neill v. Devonshire 378, 1593
v. Kees 2054
Nelson v. Crawford 1074
v. Ins. Co. 1668
v. R. Co.
67 Conn. 1415
58 Wis. 992, 1168,
1943
Nelius v. Brickell 1316, 1513
Nelms v. State 1033, 1448,
2354
v. Steiner 29, 288, 334,
344, 944, 2498
Nelthrop v. Johnson 2109
Nelson v. Bank 463, 1078,
1335, 1530,
1676
v. Becker 2312
v. Blakey 1275, 1680

TABLE OF CASES.

NEL

	Section		Section		Section
Nelson v. Branford L. & W. Co.	2566	New Gloucester v. Bridg-	106, 1729	Newbold v. Lamb	1508, 1511
v. Bridport	690, 1271, 1697	ham		Newbolt v. Pryce	2477
v. Evans	74	New Hampshire F. I.	2963	Newberry v. Carpenter	2231, 2264
v. Haywood Co.	1350	Co. v. Healey		v. State	1442
v. Ins. Co.		New Hampshire T. Co. v.	3104	Newburgh v. Newburgh	1670
110 Ia.	2384, 2390	Korsmeyer P. & H. Co.		Newburyport v. Boothbay	2063
71 N. Y.	561	New Haven Co. Bank v.	736, 747,	Newby v. Security Co.	2447
v. Iverson		Mitchell	2152	Newcastle v. Broxtowe	1588, 1604
17 Ala.	1779	New Haven & H. Co. v.		v. Haywood	2515
24 Ala.	664, 1029,	Goodwin	1554, 1561	Newcomb v. Drummond	1267
	1045, 1778	New Jersey Case	1712	v. Griswold	981, 987,
v. Land Co.	1195	New Jersey Express Co. v.		1006, 1263, 1270	
v. Onelda	2383	Nichols	786	v. Noble	1244
v. Pierce	2498	New Jersey R. & T.		v. State	111, 247, 263,
v. Potter	1658	Co. v. Suydam	1651, 1677,	1022, 1732	
v. R. Co.			2106	Newcomb's Ex'rs v. New-	1938
38 Ia.	1029	New Jersey Traction Co.		comb	
104 Mich.	1098	v. Brabban	1076	Newell v. Clapp	1212
v. Southern P. Co.	461	New Jersey Zino & I.		v. Desmond	1416
v. State		Co. v. L. Z. & I. Co.	561, 1254,	v. Hlomer	1028
130 Ala., 32 So.	1750		1530, 1696,	v. Newell	2220
32 Ark.	1829	New London Cred. Syn-		v. Newton	2578
10 Humph.	2349	dicate v. Neale	2444	v. Nichols	2532
2 Swan	1035, 1124,	New Milford v. Sherman	1640,	v. Roberts	1459
	1750, 1839,		1678	v. State	826, 1977, 2746
	1840	New Orleans v. Locke	1878	Newgold v. A. E. N. &	
Tex. Cr., 58 S. W.	1732	New Orleans J. & G. N. R.		M. Co.	2257
v. Terr.	1620	Co. v. Allbritton	509	Newhal v. Adams	957
v. U. S.	1391	New Portland v. Kingfield	1022,	Newhall v. Hoyt	1256
v. Welch	1807		1023, 1023,	v. Jenkins	815
v. Whitfield	1278		2536	Newham v. Raithby	1644
v. Whittall	1513, 2529	New River Mineral Co. v.		Newhouse v. Miller	613
v. Wood	571	Roanoke C. & C. Co.	2534	Newis v. Lark	1177, 2094
Nelson's Estate	2314, 2384	New York, The	2573	Newland v. Graham	1712
Nelson's Will	1739	New York v. R. Co.	1225	v. Reeves	1894
Neesho V. I. Co. v.		New York C. & H. R. R.		Newlin v. Lyon	1086
Hannum	1225	Co. v. Diffendaffer	2415, 2494	Newman v. Bradley	1911, 2117
Nepean v. Knight	2531, 2538	New York Central Ins.		v. Cobleigh	1225
Nesbit v. Crosley	1977	Co. v. U. S. Ra-		v. Dodson	1722
v. People	1350, 2382	dicator Co.	1951	v. Doe	1633, 1639,
v. State	1443	v. Watson	1073		1671, 1674
Nesbitt v. Turner	2525	New York Dry Dock		v. Mackin	923
Netter v. Brett	1658	v. Hicks	1651, 1677	v. Newman	1818
Neubrandt v. State	351	New York El. Eq. Co.		v. Studley	1651
Neuffer v. Moehn	1085	v. Blair	18, 675,	v. V. T. C. S. & I. Co.	2110
Neuman v. R. Co.	2220		1921, 1951	v. Willetts	1681
Neuval v. Cowell	9133	New York H. & N. R.		Newmark v. Ins. Co.	720
Nevan v. Roup	1878, 1414	Co. v. Hunt	1187	Newport News & M. V.	
Nevil v. Johnson	1388	New York Iron Mine v.		R. Co. v. Carroll	1158
Neville v. Northcutt	1554	Negaunee Bank	1868, 1890	Newport's Case	1238
Nevling v. Com.	111, 247	New York L. & W. R.		Newsam v. Carr	73, 258
New Albany & S. R. Co.		Co.'s Petition	2592, 2598	Newsom v. Hoiesapple	1215
v. Huff	1948	New York Life Ins. Co.		v. Jackson	1246
New Albany & V. P. R.		v. Aitkin	2477	v. Luster	1225, 320,
Co. v. Stallcup	1064	v. Johnson	2341		1821, 513
New Boston v. Dunbarton	157,	v. People	2270	Newstrom v. R. Co.	2356, 2341
	1267, 2522	New York N. H. & H. R.		Newton v. Bank	1664
New England Bank v.		R. Co. v. Benedict	2143	v. Belcher	1058
Lewis	2123	New York, Newf. & L. Tel.		v. Chaplin	2211, 2307
New England D. M. &		Co., re	2287	v. Fay	2437
W. Co. v. Standard		New York P. & N. R. Co.		v. Foot	809
Worsted Co.	2465	v. Jones	665, 2496	v. Harland	2202
New England Glass Co.		v. Thomas	456	v. Ins. Co.	1, 50
v. Lovell	1923, 1976	New York S. & W. R. Co.		v. Jackson	1160
New England L. & T.		v. Moore	794	v. Liddiard	1058
Co. v. Robinson	2516	Newark E. L. & P. R. Co.		v. Rowe	1416
New Era Ass'n v. Mac-		v. Ruddy	2509	v. State	1807
tarish	1947				

06, 1511
2477
2231,
2204
1442
1670
2063
2447
1588,
1604
2515
1267
981, 987,
33, 1270
1244
47, 953,
22, 1732

1938
1212
1416
1028
2220
2578
2532
1459
7, 2746

2257
967
1256
815
1644
613
7, 2094
1712
1894
1086
1, 2117
1, 1225
1722
3, 1630,
71, 1074
923
1818
1651
2110
1681
720

1158
1238
73, 258
1215
1246
5, 320,
1, 513
8, 2341
1664
1058
1, 2307
2437
809
2202
1:50
1163
1058
1416
1807

Newton v. Tolles	Section 2417
Ney v. Mumme	1280
Niagara F. Ins. Co. v. Greene	1051
v. Whittaker	1206
Nias v. R. Co.	2294
Niccolls v. Foster	2349
Nicewander v. Nicewander	1215
Nichol v. Ridley	1186
Nicholas v. Austin v. Com.	813
v. Kershner	88, 238, 363
v. Lansdale	680, 1988
Nicholl v. Jones	2529
Nicholls v. Dowding	2319
v. Downes	770, 772, 778
v. Parker	1072
v. Roland	1585, 1588
v. Webb	2508
	1862, 1518, 1521, 1528, 1524, 1675
Nichols v. Aisop v. Bardwell Lodge	2134
	2506, 2538
v. Boston	2522
v. Goldsmith	1523
v. Haynes	1560
v. Hoigate	529
v. Hotchkiss	1082
v. Howe	1286
v. Jones	1066
v. Kingdom Co. v. Nichols	1278
	147 Mo. 2840
	2 Phillim. 2411
v. Ore Co. v. R. Co.	1971
v. Ridley	682
v. Rosenfeld	1664
v. Stewart	2410
v. Snncock Mfg. Co.	1126
Nichols & S. Co. v. Charlebois	2355
Nicholson v. Burkholder	1205
v. Desobry	2529
v. Horton	1391, 1890
v. Snyder	1239
	580, 1058, 1066, 1852
v. State	
	117 Ala. 2497
	88 Md. 826, 832
v. Tarpey	1205
v. Withers	735, 753
Nickerson v. Buck	1511
v. Gould	30, 377
v. Morin	1557
v. Spindell	1236
Nickle v. Baldwin	1236
Nicks v. Rector	1541, 1544
Nickson v. Thomas	1312, 2166
Nicolay v. Mallery v. Unger	527
	1079
	1060
Nieman v. Schnitker	229, 233
Nies v. Broadhead	792, 794
Nightingale v. Scannell	18
v. State	784
Niland v. Kallish	2245
Nile v. State	1800

Niles v. Brackett	Section 586
v. Burke	1062
v. Hancock	1347
v. Patch	1778
v. Sprague	1275, 1492, 1644, 2083
Nilier v. Johnson	2004
Nims v. Johnson	2110
Nininger v. Knox	1623
Nino v. People	2501
Nicol v. Laundry	1164
Nishimura Ekiu v. U. S.	1354
Nix v. Gilmer	620
v. Hedden	1699
Nixon v. Beard	1899
v. Brown	2088
v. McKinney	581, 987
v. Mayoh	2307
v. Porter	1511, 1684, 2141
v. State	347
Noah v. Angle	1948
Noble v. Epperly	2442
v. Kennoway	379
v. Martins	1407
v. People	1817
v. R. Co.	283
Nobles v. State	851
Noblesville & E. G. R. Co. v. Gause	569
Noblitt v. Durbin	1779
Nodin v. Murray	1284
Nodie v. Hawthorne	1779
Noel v. Dickey	922, 923
Noel, Motion of	759
Nokes v. Milward	1644
Noian v. Pelham v. R. Co.	1195
	987
Noiland v. R. Co.	455
Noien v. Harden	2235, 2336, 2341
v. State	821
Nolin v. Farmer	660, 791
Nolley v. Holmes	1586
Noonan v. Hsley v. Mining Co.	716, 1943
	18
	1 Sm. & M. 1776
	55 Wis. 1976
Norberg v. Plummer	1078
Nordon v. Defries	2319
Norfeet v. Com.	1750
Norfeet v. Nelson	1225, 1651
Norfolk v. Gaylord	2276, 2279
v. Germaine	308
Norfolk's Divorce Suit	932, 1982
Norfolk R. & L. Co. v. Corietto	1976
Norfolk & C. R. Co. v. Lumber Co.	1078, 1951
Norfolk & W. R. Co. v. Hoover	249, 250
v. Prindle	613
v. Reeves	719
Norma, The	760, 751, 1530
Norman v. Beaumont	2352
v. Kentucky Board	1850, 2592
v. Morrell	2024, 2027
v. Norman	2444

Norman v. Wells	Section 603, 1943
Norman's Will	680, 1938
Normanshaw v. Norman-shaw	2804
Norris v. Cargill v. Clinkscales	16, 1194, 2495
	714, 1029
v. Crandall	1573
v. Hall	1721
v. Haverhill	1670
v. Le Neve	1388
v. Monen	1195, 1219
v. Russell	392
v. Spofford v. State	
	16 Ala. 689, 1934, 1988
	87 Ala. 968
	3 Ilumph. 2349, 2354
North v. Drayton	1196, 1256
v. Mallory	18
North American Acc. Ass'n v. Woodson	682, 1750
North Austr. T. Co. v. Goldsborough	1263
North Bank v. Abbot	1521, 1531
North Brookfield v. Warren	1496, 1503
North Cheshire & M. B. Co. v. Manchester B. Co.	1921
North Chicago R. M. Co. v. Monka	1096
North Chicago St. R. Co. v. Anderson	961
v. Dudgeon	966
v. Kaspers	461
v. Louis	2507
v. Zelger	2203
North Durham Case	2216
North Pacific L. Co. v. W. S. M. L. & M. Co.	1078
North Pennsylvania R. Co. v. Bank	2494
North Stonington v. Stonington	1777
Northampton Co. v. Innes	2203
Northeastern Nebr. R. Co. v. Frazier	714, 1943
Northern Line P. Co. v. Shearer	614
Northern Mo. R. Co. v. Akers	1951
Northern Pac. R. Co. v. Charless	785
v. Hayes	21, 600
v. Keyes	1280, 1530, 2208
v. Peterson	2552
v. Rogers	456
v. Urlin	770, 1719, 1951
Northern Trust Co. v. Hiltgen	2444
Northfield v. Plymouth	19, 2159
v. Vershire	2083
Northington v. State	1807
Northrop v. Hale	1492
v. Hatch	987, 2223, 2256, 2279
v. Knowles	1608, 1645, 2083, 2159, 2167

TABLE OF CASES.

NOR

	Section	O.	Section		Section
Northrop a. Wright	1311, 1831, 1818, 2187, 2141			Odiorno v. Winkley	583, 991
Northrup v. Jackson	1287	Oakes v. Finley	1281	O'Donnell a. Johns	2144
Northumberland Coal Co. v. Cisment	1986	v. Hill	1678	v. Pollock	1900
Northwestern M. L. I. Co. v. Sun Ins. Office	1164, 1168	v. U. S.	1623	v. Segar	782, 1871, 1890
Northwestern R. Co. v. Ilack	1029	v. Weston	1951	O'Driscoll v. R. Co.	1576
Northwood v. Keating	2525	Oakey v. Bank	630	O'Gutt a. Expos. Co.	2494
Norton v. Moore	1938, 1975	Oakland P. Co. v. Hilton	1350	O'Gara v. Eisenlohr	2063
v. Parsons	779, 1969, 2007	Oakley v. State	1138	Ogdan v. Dodge Co.	1086, 1778
v. Pettibona	1082	Oaks v. Walker	95, 1258	v. Olbbons	2201
v. Warner	63, 75	Oatis v. Brown	1066, 2354	v. Illinois	660, 1077
v. Willis	463	Oats v. U. S.	967	v. Parsons	1056
Norwell v. Onry	1389	O'Barr v. Alexander	2354	v. State	1819
Norwalk v. Ireland	747	Ober v. Carson	1871	Ogia v. Cook	1304
Norway, Tha	803	Oberg v. Breen	1639	v. Pelaski	686
Norwegian Plow Co. v. Ilanthorn	1044	Obermann Brewing Co. v. Adams	2155	O'Hagan v. Dillon	655, 777
v. Munger	2153	Obermier v. Core	1664	O'Hagan's Will	1512
Norwood v. Oreen	1651	Obernalta v. Edgar	770	O'Hara v. State	1350
v. Kenfield	1712	O'Brien v. State	62	v. Wells	682
v. Marrow	233, 1740, 1938	O'Boya v. Com.	397, 1442, 1722	O'Hare v. Dackworth	1082
Norwood & B. Co. a. Andrewa	928	v. State	2061	Ohio v. Ilnechman	1681, 2573
Nossaman v. Nossaman	1244, 2505	O'Brian v. Com.	1375	Ohio Ins. Co. v. Nune-machar	1245
Nostrum v. Halliday	1280	O'Brian, re	2245	Ohio & I. T. Co. v. Fish-barn	1951
Nouria v. Theobald	1951	O'Brien v. Com.	303	Ohio & M. R. Co. v. Dnnn	2494
Nourse v. Finch	2475	v. Flynn	2054	v. Heaton	688
v. Nourse	1777	v. Keefe	1270, 1871	v. Stein	728
v. State	2059	v. La Crosse	2220	Ohio, etc. R. Co. v. Ridge	2572
Noverre v. Noverre	2067	v. Look	1951	Ohlsen v. Terrero	770, 774
Novotny v. Danforth	1890	v. O'Brien	2118	O'Keefe v. U. S.	1684
Nowack v. R. Co.	280	v. Peopla	1938	Oknu v. Kalaikawaha	2487
Nowell v. Chipman	1078	v. Spalding	2303, 2314, 2315	Old Colony R. Co. v. Robinson Co.	463
v. Wright	1951	v. Stambach	736	Olden t. Field	1681
Nowlan's Case	1712	v. State	135 Ind.	Oldenburg v. Oregon Sngar Co.	1008
Nowlin v. Burwall	2141	125 Ind.	2265	Oldenburg's Goods	1674
Noyes v. Belding	1890	Nebr. 96 N. W.	1079	Oldham v. Com.	1873
v. Brown	1023, 1959	O'Bryan v. Allen	95 Mo.	Olds v. Congor	1195
v. Oardner	252	108 Mo.	7	v. Powell	1777
v. Marston	2387	Ocean S. S. Co. v. Etna Ins. Co.	2463	O'Leary v. Mankato	283
v. Merrill	1082	v. Wilder	2110	Oleson v. State	1135, 1136, 1138, 2061
v. State	580	Och v. R. Co.	2509	v. Tolford	1951, 1976
v. Tootle	1013	Ochsenreiter v. Elev. Co.	571	Oliphant v. Ferrant	1219, 1800
Nueva Anna, The	2566	O'Connell v. Cox	1665, 1777	v. Liversedge	2096
Nngent v. State	133, 923, 987	v. Dow	582, 967, 1304, 1352, 1890, 2421	v. Taggart	1312
Nunes v. Perry	702	v. Walker	1675	Olive v. Adams	1208, 2218
Nurse v. Bnnn	2122	O'Conner v. Ins. Co.	618	v. Gwin	1681, 2164
Nussbaum v. R. Co.	1018	O'Connor, re	2475	v. Olive	1876
Nussacar v. Arnold	64	O'Connor v. American I. M. Co.	1389	v. State	194, 195, 290, 783, 949, 968
Nutall v. Brannin	1195, 1258	v. Dunn	1524, 1567, 1665	Oliver v. Oray	2117
Nuta v. Nute	728, 1037, 1040, 1041, 1043	v. Madison	689, 1988	a. Haywood	2257
Nutter v. O'Donneli	1051, 1133, 1873, 1874	v. Malone	1644	v. Morawetz	377
v. Railroad	571	v. Marjoribanks	2228, 2232, 2237	v. Pate	258, 988, 2296, 2327
v. Ricketts	1163	v. Traction Co.	2509	v. Persons	1188, 1651, 1676
Nutzmann v. Ins. Co.	1984	O'Connor's Estate	1087	v. R. Co.	
Nye v. Daniels	2375	O'Connor M. & M. Co. v. Dickson	2498	Ky., 32 S. W.	1888
v. Dibley	461	Odell v. Culbert	1561	170 Mass.	681, 682
v. Oribble	1225	v. Koppee	935, 1817, 1818, 1820	65 S. C.	1387, 1719
v. Lowry	1648	Oden v. State	247, 1807	v. State	
v. Merriam	1042	v. Stubblefield	261, 1778, 1779	17 Ala.	293, 1442
v. Otis	2097	Odiorno v. Bacon	782, 1186	38 Fla.	363
v. Spencer	1064			106 Ga.	93
v. Thompson	74				

TABLE OF CASES.

Section	Section	Section	Section
583, 991	Oileman a. Kilgore 1236	Ordway a. Haynes 791, 794,	Osterhout v. Shoemaker 1671,
2144	Olmstead v. Miller 2007	1700	2341
1900	v. Webb 1873, 2312,	Oregon Pottery Co. a. Kern 716,	O'Sullivan v. Overton 1304
871, 1890	2314	904	Oswald v. King 1205
1570	a. Winsted Bank 900, 907	Oregon S. S. Co. v. Otis 95,	v. Leigh 2517
2494	569, 681,	1236, 1281	Otay v. Hoyt
2083	1951	Orient Ins. Co. v. Daggs 1354	2 Jones L. 451, 570
066, 1778	Olsen v. Andrews 199, 221	O'Riley v. Clampet 1066, 1263	3 Jonas L. 2008, 2016
2301	v. Lantulum 258, 2654	2103	Otis v. Spencer 614, 615
600, 1977	v. N. P. Lumber Co. 1163	Orms v. Crockford 2291	Ottawa v. Gilliland 2320
1056	v. R. Co. 1976	Ormond v. Hutchinson 2121,	v. Perkins 1850
1819	v. Rogers 379	2122	Ottawa Gaslight Co. v.
1904	Olsen v. Paterson 1062, 2061	1956	Graham 451, 1943
586	v. R. Co. 1976	O'Rourke v. O'Rourke 1010	Ottawa O. C. & C. G. R.
655, 777	v. Swanson 1779	Orpen, re 1442	Co. v. Adolph 1943
1512	Olsen Co. v. Brady 2570	Orr v. Cox 2336	Ottawa Univ. v. Parkinson 715
1350	Omaha v. Jansen 1404	v. F. A. W. & C. Co. 747,	Otto v. Trump 1213,
682	Omaha Bridge Cases 1876	748	1209, 1273
1082	Omaha L. & T. Co. v.	v. Hadley 1873, 1388	Ougler v. Jannings 2440
1681,	Douglas Co. 561, 1203	v. Lacey 529	Ouidas v. Stata 399
2573	Omaha Nat'l Bank v.	v. Morice 1297, 1298	Outlaw v. Hurdle 2016
1245	Thompson 944	v. R. Co. 729	Ontram v. Morewood 1586
1951	Omaha South. R. Co. v.	a. State 107 Ala. 1021	Onverton v. Grafton 1061, 2507
2494	Beeson 792, 796	117 Ala. 1951, 1974	Ovenston v. Wilson 702,
688	Omaha St. R. Co. a.	Orser v. Orser 1302	1904, 2153
728	Elkins 1494	v. Vernon 1311	Over v. Schiffling 17, 581
2572	v. Emminger 1158	Ort v. Fowler 2012, 2016	Overall v. Overall 1904
770, 774	Omaha & R. V. R. Co. v.	Orthwald v. Thomas 2527	Ovarend v. Superior Court 2271,
1684	Krayanbuhl 1013	Ortes v. Jawett 1021	2276
2437	v. Walker 1168	Ortiz v. Stata 852, 792,	Overstreet v. State 1620
463	O'Mara v. Com. 1975	794	Overton v. State 2239
1681	O'Malley v. Com. 655	2303	v. Tyler 2443
1003	Omberg v. U. S. Mut.	Orton v. McCord	Ovarton's Heirs v. Davis-
1674	Ass'n 1732	Orton's Trial; see R. v.	son 378
1873	O'Mellia v. R. Co. 1698	Castro.	Overtoon v. R. Co. 730,
1195	Omichund v. Barker 29, 1174,	Osborn v. Bell 1387	1013, 1327,
1777	1183, 1263, 1306, 1309,	v. Black 603	1320, 1977
283	1481, 1646, 1674, 1676,	v. Gay's Hospital 2414	Owen v. Barksdale 1664
5, 1136,	1817, 1818, 1882, 2138	v. Harron 1911	v. Boyle 1271, 1678,
38, 2061	Onbie's Case 2290	v. London Dock Co. 2303,	1684
51, 1976	Onardonk's Trial 2032	2271	v. Brockschmidt 613
19, 1980	O'Neal v. McKinna 1195	v. Robbins 581	v. Henderson 2463
2006	O'Neale v. Com. 3066, 2088	v. SImerson 451	v. Mining Co. 797, 2024
1312	O'Neale v. Walton 745, 748,	v. Vickers 2220	v. Owen 2067
8, 2218	759	Osborne, re 2568	v. Palmour 1404, 1668,
1, 2164	O'Neil v. Attorney-General 6	v. Bell 451	2594
19, 1876	v. Hanscom 1974	v. Detroit 283, 438, 457,	v. State 2336, 2341
90, 783,	v. Mining Co. 382	458, 1156, 1158,	v. Thomas 1195, 2105
49, 968	a. R. Co. 1951	1160, 1824	v. Warburton 2352, 2353
2117	v. Vanderburg 1065	v. Hargreaves 986	Owens v. Dawson 1065
2257	v. West Branch 252	v. O'Reilly 1896	v. Frank 2228
38, 988,	O'Neill v. Lowell 950	v. Stas 1339	v. Gentry 1890
3, 2327	v. Read 1053	v. Tunis 2141, 2144	v. Lancaster 1960
1, 1651,	Onondaga Co. Bank v.	Osbourne v. Hoelar 2018	v. Owens
1676	Bates 1635	Osborn a. Stalay 1350	81 Md. 2364
1888	Outcote v. Ludlow 1778	Oscanyon v. Arms Co. 2590,	14 W. Va. 578
31, 682	Opinion of the Justices 1350	2594	v. R. Co. 2220
7, 1719	Oppenhalmer v. R. Co. 1195	Osgood v. Chicago 437, 1164	v. Stata
1, 1442	Orange Belt R. Co. v.	v. Contes 1257, 1778	67 Md. 747, 748
363	Craver 714	v. Dewey 2016, 2024	68 Miss. 1393, 1404
93	Orange Co. F. E. v.	v. Manhattan Co. 1081,	Miss., 33 So. 967
	Hubbell 944	1086	Owings v. Hull 1225, 2573
	Orchard v. Collier 1225	O'Shea v. R. Co. 2446	v. Low 736, 747,
	Orent v. Cook 610	v. Wood 1859, 2204,	1536, 2222
	Ord v. McKee 1225	2311	v. Speed 1074, 1661
	v. Nash 1887, 1404	Oskamp v. Gadsdan 689	v. Ulery 1275
	v. Ord 1085	Osmun v. Winters	v. Wyant 1244
	Ordinary v. Thatcher 2420	25 Or. 1770	Owsley v. Greenwood 2184
	Ordway v. Cor... 1681	30 Or. 401, 2008, 2016	Oxford Co. v. Spradley 1966

770
1770
1826
1813
829
1084
2483
1609
458

2086
7, 1760
1842
73, 2512
857
1974
2365
52, 1839
1062
2063

3146
1842
2160
2336
1928
209, 928
55, 3311
1978
773, 774
1063,
3, 2306
2203
1644
857
2060
8, 1800,
2670
2098
2466
2281

1442
1853
367

0, 1352
1602
1223

80, 782,
1, 1079,
0, 1368,
7, 1807,
1, 1917,
1, 2009,
5, 2286,
2374
1196
2352
1777
581

1862
1157
3, 2349
1779
1200
5, 1273

Section	Section
Parsons v. Copeland	1006
v. Huff	
28 Mo.	770, 774, 777
41 Mo.	1010
v. Ins. Co.	786, 747, 1976
v. Parsons	
66 Ia.	1739, 1974
45 Mo.	1388
1 Vee. Jr.	2463
v. People	607, 617
v. Philippe	669
v. Parcell	1256
v. State	2068
Parsons City v. Lindsay	1961
Parsons Water Co. v.	
Knapp	1943
Partee v. Silliman	529
Parton v. Cole	2447
Partridge v. Coates	1200
v. Fors, th	2068
v. Strange	2669
Paschal v. Perez	1239, 1651, 2159, 2167
Pasley v. Richardson	1640, 1778
Pascio Co. v. Stevenson	1360, 2692
Pasmore v. Pasmore's	
Estate	1978, 2327
Patch v. Boston	463
v. White	2471, 2477
Patchin v. Ins. Co.	1029, 1040, 1041
Pate v. Joe	1611
v. McConnell	1951
v. People	702, 2006, 2016, 2027
Patek v. Waples	2442
Patent Type Founding	
Co. v. Lloyd	1802
Patillo v. Alexander	2636
Patman v. State	951
Paton v. Ormerod	2470
Patrick v. Crowe	1002, 1073
v. Gibbs	1681
v. Graham	18
v. Jack	1552
v. Nance	1690
Patriotic Bank v. Coote	1245
Patten v. Cilly	2600
v. Farguson	1362, 1773
v. Glover	2303
v. Ins. Aca'n	2384
v. Moor	2317
v. People	1021
v. Poulton	1736
v. Rambo	287
v. U. S.	658
Patterson v. Cole	2382
v. Colebrook	1976
v. Collier	2143, 2584
v. Com.	2071
v. Dallas	1180, 1226
v. Fagan	1383, 1384
v. Gaines	2088
v. Hansel	7, 1651
v. Hickey	1736, 1737
v. Jones	1651
v. Linder	1205
v. Mining Co.	2447

Section	Section
Patterson v. Patterson	229
v. St. Clair	1404
v. State	194, 968
Patterson v. R. Co.	454, 2509
Pattillo v. Alexander	2536
Pattison v. Norris	1062
Pattle v. Hornbrook	2410
Patton v. Allison	1739
v. Coates	1640, 1712
v. Dyke	1779
v. Goldsborough	1065, 1133
v. Hamilton	1800
v. Ryan	1558
v. Southern R. Co.	456, 2522
v. State	413, 660, 1157
v. Wilson	2336
Patton's Adm'rs v. Ash	1621
Paty v. Martin	603, 728
Patzwald v. U. S.	2497
Paul v. Leavitt	2240
v. Meek	1256
v. Paul	987
v. State	2071
Paulette v. Brown	1010
Paulk v. State	166, 1184
Paulsen v. Hall	616
Paulson v. State	104, 363, 792, 987, 1270, 2081, 2115
Paulson Mercantile	
Co. v. Seavar	1072, 1066
Pavey v. Pavey	2008
Pavler v. Snow	1225, 1651
Pawashick, Tha	1684, 1697, 1703, 2573
Pawling v. U. S.	3192
Paxton v. Douglas	2260, 2266, 2269
v. Dye	1108
v. Price	1573
v. State	1066
Paxton's Case	2264
Payne v. Com.	246
v. Ibbotson	754, 763
v. Long	1373
v. McCormick Har-	
vesting M. Co.	2581
v. McKinney	1651
v. Ormond	2141
v. State	
60 Ala.	247, 1037
66 Ark.	1607
57 Miss.	1781
61 Miss.	1435, 1447
v. Treadwell	2572
v. Trezavant	529
Paynes v. Coles	2123
Payson v. Everett	1690, 1696, 1706, 2012
v. Good	1049, 1058, 1082
Peabody v. Denton	1676
v. Hawett	1082
v. Norfolk	2212
Peace v. Head	1225
Peaceable v. Watson	1458, 1778
Peacock v. Cooper	456
Peacock's Case	785

Section	Section
Peaden v. State	1860
Peak v. State	1440
Peake v. Stout	1066
Pearce v. Foster	2319, 2323
v. Furr	1329
v. Hooper	1208
v. Lansdowne	21
v. Orsby	406
v. Whale	2535
Pearcy v. Dickar	606
Pearl v. Allan	1312, 2503
v. Howard	1651
v. R. Co.	1698
Pearre v. Folb	1828
Pearse v. Pearse	2291, 2294
Pearson v. Fletcher	2307
v. Hardin	318
v. Lemaitra	406
v. McDaniel	702
v. Spartanburg Co.	458
v. Wheeler	654
v. Wightman	735, 747, 1302, 1306, 1511
Peart v. Taylor	1264, 2105
Pease v. Peck	1350
v. Sanderson	2105
v. Smith	200, 1010, 1013
Pease Piano Co. v. Cam-	
eron	763
Peaslee v. R. Co.	221
v. Robbins	253
Peavy v. State	579
Peay v. Capps	2141
v. Picket	1194, 1196, 1224, 1226
Peazler v. State	2497
Peck v. Abba	1544
v. Brewer	2354
v. Callaghan	2016
v. Clark	1667
v. Farrington	1239
v. Hutchinson	1693
v. Lake	762
v. Parchen	1263, 1552, 1558
v. Pierce	1539, 1555
v. R. Co.	1976
v. Ritchey	1018, 1037
v. Ryan	1072, 1073
v. Small	1978
v. State	
2 Humph.	318
86 Taun.	1476, 2277
v. Tingley	1960
v. Valentine	750, 753, 754
Pecker v. Sawyer	529
Peckham v. Potter	1084
Peddy v. State	1405
Pedigo v. Com.	177
v. Grimes	2215
Pedler v. Paige	1275
Pedlay v. Wellesley	2230, 2232
Peek v. Boone	2001
Peele v. Ins. Co.	1072
Peeples v. State	692
Peer v. Ryan	568
Peerless, The	576, 1709
Peerless Mfg. Co. v.	
Gates	1069

TABLE OF CASES.

PBE

	Section		Section		Section
Peery v. Peery	1738	Pennsylvania Ins. Co. v. Murphy	2506	People v. Arrighini	959, 1938, 2251, 2276
Peet v. Dougherty	530	Pennsylvania R. Co. v. Books	96	v. Ashmead	276, 821, 2497
Pefferling v. State	1135, 1136, 1138	v. Bruner	1943	v. Atkinson	2311
Pegg v. Warford	13, 18	v. Conneli	1955	v. Austin	958, 1022, 1028, 1029
Pegram v. Isabell	1605	v. Henderson	283, 1943, 1976	v. Azoff	2349, 2354
Peiffer v. Lytle	2338	v. Lyons	1750	v. Badgley	2071
Peirce v. Kile	2509	v. Page	458	v. Baker	1 Cal. 2354
Pelamorges v. Clark	772, 1389, 1938, 1958, 1963	v. Stranahan	455, 456	112 Mich.	1858, 2079
Pelican Ins. Co. v. Wilkerson	1339	Pennsylvania & N. Y. R. Co. v. Bunnell	1943	96 N. Y.	581
Peli v. Daubeny	2201, 2202	Penny v. Pindell	1195	v. Baldwin	507, 1976
Pelletreau v. Jackson	1313, 1321	Pennypacker v. Ins. Co.	96	v. Barberi	390, 782, 1908
Pelton v. Schmidt	1062	Penobscot B. Co. v. Lamson	2125	v. Barker	114 Cal. 2059
Peltz v. Clarke	1225, 1651	Penobscot & K. R. Co. v. Bartlett	1703	56 Ill.	2304
Pelzer v. Cranston	1542	Penrice v. Parker	2250	60 Mich.	1890, 1893, 2302
Pelzer Mfg. Co. v. Hamburg-Bremen F. I. Co.	2355	Penrose v. Griffith	1257	153 N. Y.	2497
v. Sun Fire Office	1947	Penruddock v. Hammond	2294	v. Barney	568
Pember v. Mathers	2047	Pensacola R. Co. v. Schaffer	1213, 1236	v. Barone	15
Pemberton v. Pemberton	21	Pentecost v. State	821, 1196, 2427	v. Barrie	832, 2000
Pemberton's Case	1738	Pentz v. Ins. Co.	1061, 1062	v. Barthleman	397, 689, 2501
Penarth Harbour D. & R. Co. v. Cardiff W. Co.	1859	People v. Abell	1808	v. Beck	2277
Pence v. Com.	389	v. Abbot	62, 200, 398, 664, 923, 928, 987, 1985, 2268	v. Beckwith	2081
v. Dozier	987	v. Abbott	62, 200, 359, 398	v. Beech	507
v. Waugh	1041, 2315	v. Adams	137 Cal. 246, 1614	v. Beil	21, 1003
Pendleton v. Weed	2118	176 N. Y.	2183, 2264	v. Bemmerly	2501
Pendock v. Mackinder	520	v. Ah Choy	276	v. Benc	200
Pendrell v. Pendrell	68, 1026, 2063	v. Ah Fat	1106, 1108	v. Benham	390, 397, 569, 2073
Peney v. Gilliland	2373	v. Ah Fook	770, 1072	v. Bennett	2072, 2081
Penn v. Hartman	2156	v. Ah Fung	118	v. Benson	62, 200
Penn M. L. Ins. Co. v. M. S. B. & T. Co.	302, 321, 1946, 1947, 2537	v. Ah Kl	858	v. Bernal	506, 1821
v. Wiler	1719, 2384, 2390, 2391	v. Ah Lee	1750	v. Bernor	1136
Penn Tobacco Co. v. Leman	2463	v. Ah Len	1806, 1807	v. Beverly	1440, 1912
Pennel v. Weyant	1512, 1680	v. Ah Wee	571, 2100	v. Bidleman	331
Pennell v. Meyer	2111	v. Ah Yute	53 Cal. 1072	v. Bill	580
Penniman v. Hill	1840, 1841	66 Cal.	751, 1810	v. Bird	124 Cal. 318, 950
v. Jones	1856	60 Cal.	779	132 Cal.	1398
Pennington v. Com. v. Schwartz	987, 1223	v. Alden	2183	v. Bishop	1042, 1860
Pennsylvania v. M'Kee	2066	v. Alivtre	111	v. Blake	1062, 1257
Adds. 1, 5	1994	v. Aliender	2601	v. Blakeley	923, 987, 1432, 1461
Adds. 35	1994	v. Altmeyer	1800	v. Bodine	290, 2260, 2270
v. Robertson	246	v. Alton	367	v. Boggs	1354
v. Stoops	2237, 2239	v. Alviso	2061, 2230	v. Bonney	1803
Pennsylvania Coal Co. v. Kelly	791	v. Amanacus	987, 1106	v. Boo Doo Hong	2486
Pennsylvania Co. v. Boylan	664	v. Amaya	1083, 1072	v. Borgetto	1938
v. Bridge Co.	1078	v. Ames	2059	v. Boscovitch	1842
v. Conlan	1010	v. Ammerman	736, 821	v. Boequet	1029
v. Files	1721	v. Anderson	26 Cal. 2083, 2280	v. Bowen	357
v. McCaffrey	1530	28 Cal.	246	v. Bowers	784, 1807
v. McCann	2509	39 Cal.	246	v. Braun	987
v. Marion	2583	105 Cal.	950	v. Brennan	1398
v. Newmeyer	944, 2220	v. Angsbury	682	v. Brewer	206, 1618, 2528
v. R. Co.	318	114 Cal.	2059	v. Brooks	950, 953
v. Watson	454, 456	Ill.	994	v. Brotherton	88, 451
		v. Armstrong		v. Proughton	1021, 1644, 2529
		v. Arnold		v. Brown	53 Cal. 2272
		15 Cal.	10, 110, 111, 247	130 Cal.	390
		116 Cal.	2276, 2277	53 Mich.	1761
		43 Mich.	278	68 N. Y.	987

TABLE OF CASES.

Section	Section	Section	Section
59, 1938, 251, 2276 276, 821, 2497 2311 58, 1022, 28, 1029 149, 2354 2071	People v. Brown 72 N. Y. 987, 2276, 2276, 2311 v. Buchanan 15, 2, 1896, 2311 v. Buddensieck 1, 792 v. Burch 1, 792 v. Burgess 21, 538, 995, 1938	People v. Cloonan 2050 v. Coffman 1297 v. Colburn 1078 v. Cole 113 Mich. 2388 43 N. Y. 1390 v. Colburn 1040 v. Columbia Common Pieas 2356 v. Commissioners 7 Colo. 1712 64 N. Y. 1850 v. Compton 123 Cal. 1079, 2059 132 Cal. 1032 v. Conklin 21, 1440, 1725 v. Conkling 1802 v. Conroy 97 N. Y. 1938 153 N. Y. 21, 2277 v. Considine 736, 1029, 1669, 1839, 2070 v. Constantino 571, 1152 v. Cook 2495 v. Coombs 2259 v. Copsy 935 v. Corbin 318 v. Corey 148 N. Y. 220, 694, 2016, 2132 157 N. Y. 1898, 1686 v. Costello 2058 v. Coughlin 85 Mich. 1912 13 Utah 363 v. Court 83 N. Y. 915, 987 101 N. Y. 1166 v. Craft 1438 v. Craig 111 Cal. 106, 216, 863, 507 183 116 Mich. 792, 987 v. Crandall 987 v. Crapo 318, 2050, 2000 v. Creegan 906 v. Crespi 108 v. Cronin 238, 239, 2272 v. Cunningham 216, 347 v. Curiale 2239 v. Curlee 2060 v. Curtis 1329, 1349 v. Daily 507 v. Daniels 2100 v. Davis 56 N. Y. 1482, 1750 15 Wend. 1010, 2204, 2205 21 Wend. 1614, 1965, 2056 v. Deacons 568, 2071 v. Decker 106 v. Deegan 2364 v. De France 1021, 2382 v. Deitz 2079 v. Dennis 89 Cal. 1890, 2276 4 Mich. 1267	People v. Derbert 987 v. Detroit & S. P. R. Co. 1951 v. Devine 44 Cal. 1021, 1029, 1035, 1040, 1263, 1329, 1667 46 Cal. 1404 v. Devlin 1350 v. De Wolf 1350 v. Diaz 2595 v. Dice 1048, 2100 v. Dillwood 967, 1044, 1283, 1270 v. Dimick 321 v. Dobbins 1013, 1442, 2354 v. Doggett 50 v. Dolring 1009, 1910 v. Dole Cal., 51 Pac. 287, 2276 122 Cal. 1072 v. Donald 330 v. Donovan 1041, 1263 v. Doody 342, 2043 v. Dorthy 987 v. Doty 826 v. Douglass 100 Cal. 1398 4 Cow. 1010 v. Dowd 863, 1074 v. Dowling 254, 326 v. Doyell 1126, 1128 v. Doyle 13 v. Driscoll 1072 v. Druse 63, 198, 770 v. Dubois 351 v. Duncan 1136, 1761 v. Dunn 1350 v. Dupounce 2276 v. Durrant 118, 451, 682, 781, 780, 792, 905, 2286 v. Dyckman 799, 2200, 2219 v. Dye 194, 1003 v. Dyle 285, 2056, 2050 v. E. L. & Y. Co. 2134 v. Eastwood 1974 v. Ebanks 117 Cal. 216, 414, 688, 1144 120 Cal. 2578 v. Ecarus 2276 v. Eckert 2056 v. Edwards 41 Cal. 246 Cal., 73 Pac. 398 v. Egnor 851 v. Elco 222, 398, 918 v. Elliott 119 Cal. 860 106 N. Y. 2059 163 N. Y. 988 172 N. Y. 1398 v. Elyea 736, 764 v. Eppinger 664, 1244, 1706 v. Estrado 1072 v. Etting 2575

TABLE OF CASES.

PEO

	Section		Section		Section
People v. Evans		People v. Gillespie	774, 905	People v. Hickman	821, 925, 2277
Cal., 41 Pac.	238	v. Glaze	1037, 2210		
72 Mich.	963, 1853	v. Gleason	290	v. Hicks	
40 N. Y.	1010, 2066, 2060	v. Glenn	1398, 1446, 1450	79 Mich.	2276
v. Everhardt	318, 2059	v. Glennon	204, 258, 999	98 Mich.	1135, 1136, 1138, 1142, 1761
v. Ezso	1185	v. Glover	1761, 2265, 2382	v. Higgins	260, 987
v. Fair	57, 59	v. Goldberg	2079	v. Hill	
v. Farley	1976	v. Goldenson	681, 770, 951, 2265, 2849, 2354	116 Cal.	682, 689, 1873, 1976
v. Farrell		v. Gonzalez	832	123 Cal.	400, 794
80 Cal.	818, 2060	v. Gonzalez	559, 568, 1157, 2130	v. Hillhouse	1021
81 Cal.	16, 283, 681	v. Goodrode	1398	v. Hinchman	1829
v. Faust	2575	v. Gordon		v. Hoagland	2059
v. Fehrenbach	347	99 Cal.	1398	v. Hoch	21, 233, 2272, 2382
v. Ferguson	581, 1351	39 Mich.	1195	v. Hodgdon	1440
v. Fernandez	21	40 Mich.	285, 950, 2079	v. Holbrook	1205
v. Fiedling	1807	100 Mich.	2241	v. Holden	1351
v. Figueroa	704, 1135	v. Gotshall	460, 987, 1977	v. Holmes	
v. Fine	689	v. Governor	2369	111 Mich.	105, 457, 1021, 1084
v. Flinley	1938	v. Graham	789, 1135, 1136, 1138	166 N. Y.	1257
v. Flinnegan	1129	v. Grant	2079	v. Hong Ah Duck	108, 568, 1263, 1841
v. Fire Ins. Co.	1482, 1488, 1484, 1489	v. Gray		v. Hong Tong	2059, 2060
v. Fish	702, 1395, 1975	61 Cal.	1440, 1442, 2354	v. Hooghkerk	163, 451, 1157, 1160
v. Fitzgerald	354, 389, 2272	66 Cal.	331	v. Hope	
v. Fitzpatrick	612, 2079	25 Wend.	2450	v. Hopson	364
v. Flaherty	898, 1135	v. Green		v. Horton	1887, 1888, 1890
v. Flannelly	276	53 Cal.	1802	v. Hospital	494, 497
v. Fleming	2061	1 Denio	2239	v. Hovey	2243
v. Flynn	2849	1 Park	1078	v. Howard	
v. Foglesong	682, 1722	v. Greenwall	194, 1005, 1983	112 Cal.	246
v. Foley	682	v. Gress	118, 890	73 Mich.	2276
v. Fong Ah Sing	1434	v. Griffin	233	v. Howes	1853
v. Foo	936	v. Griner	246	v. Hoy Yen	836, 858
v. Foote	987, 2276	v. Gross	106	v. Hubert	2497
v. Forbes	2260, 2271, 2276, 2282	v. Grossman	328	v. Hughes	
v. Foster	1398, 1639	v. Grundell	2059	29 Cal.	2349
v. Fowler	1072, 2235	v. Haas	367	116 Mich.	2079
v. Fox	861	v. Hagar	1219, 1225, 1352	11 Utah	581
v. Frank	216, 304, 318	v. Hall		v. Hughson	1913
v. Freeland	1862	94 Cal.	1476	v. Hulbut	2363, 2364
v. Freshour	2276	48 Mich.	682, 1690, 1700, 1839, 1853	v. Hull	1802, 1803
v. Fuhrig	1442, 1445	v. Hamblin	987	v. Hulse	1106, 1108, 1109
v. Fultz	357, 952	v. Hammond	1852, 2154, 2272	v. Humphrey	2086
v. Gage	1136, 1761	v. Hare	1975, 1976	v. Hurley	343
v. Gaimari	198	v. Harlan	770, 987, 1850	v. Hurst	1223
v. Gallagher		v. Harris		v. Hust	1205
100 Cal.	2276	95 Mich.	248	v. Hyde	1807
75 Mich.	2327	136 N. Y.	390, 2385	v. Imes	1645, 2239
v. Gallo	1802, 1808	v. Harrison	987	v. Irving	
v. Garbutt	56, 59, 63, 111, 228, 232, 246, 247	v. Hart	2513	95 N. Y.	987
v. Gardner		v. Hatch	1850	1 Wend.	2222
98 Cal.	1398	v. Hawes	437, 1157	v. Isham	1645, 2086, 2239
144 N. Y.	2263, 2265	v. Hawkins		v. Jacks	2089
v. Garnett	1841, 2059	106 Mich.	831	v. Jackson	
v. Gates		109 N. Y.	233	111 N. Y.	792, 794
46 Cal.	77	v. Hawley	1416	3 Park. Cr.	62, 200, 898, 879, 960, 987, 1028, 1041
13 Wend.	2395	v. Hayes	2840	v. Jacobs	905
v. Gay	987, 1106	v. Henderson	248	v. Jaehne	2071
v. Gelabert	571, 2100	v. Hennessey	2071	v. Jamleson	398
v. Genung	934, 958	v. Henry	351	v. Jenness	398, 935, 1828, 2056
v. Germaine	2079	v. Henshaw	2079	v. Jocelyn	1852
v. Gibbons	852	v. Hensler	216, 321		
v. Gibbs	364	v. Herr	2588		
v. Giblin	987	v. Herrick	521, 967, 1270		
v. Gibson	568				

Section
121, 925,
2277

276
5, 1186,
42, 1761
260, 987

82, 680,
73, 1976
100, 794
1021
1329
2059
3, 2272,
2382
1440
1205
1351

06, 457,
1, 1984
1257
108,
3, 1841
2059
9, 2060
53, 451,
7, 1160
364
8, 1890
84, 497
2243

246
2276
1853
86, 858
2497

2349
2079
581
1913
3, 2364
2, 1803
4, 1109
2086
343
1223
1205
1807
2, 2239

987
2222
2, 2239
2089

2, 794
2, 200,
9, 980,
1, 1041
905
2071
398
3, 935,
2056
1852

	Section
People v. John	1810
v. Johnson	
41 Cal.	835
57 Cal.	2277
106 Cal.	62, 923, 952
110 N. Y.	1166, 1802
140 N. Y.	791
v. Johr	2168
v. Jones	
31 Cal.	516, 987, 2071
123 Cal.	2072
124 Mich.	1978
99 N. Y.	364
v. Josephs	56, 59
v. Josselyn	2062
v. Joy	2513
v. Kahler	987
v. Keep	276
v. Kehoe	205
v. Keith	
50 Cal.	1036, 1899,
	2100
136 Cal.	1890
v. Kelley	852
v. Kelly	
24 N. Y.	2252, 2282
113 N. Y.	779, 905
v. Kemmler	2265, 2382
v. Kennedy	
105 Mich.	1040
32 N. Y.	106, 854
159 N. Y.	832, 851
164 N. Y.	1072
v. Kenyon	2079
v. Kern	397
v. Kerrigan	1835
v. Kessler	1072, 1750
v. Kindra	1390, 2079
v. Kinney	1159
v. Knapp	
26 Mich.	863, 1445
42 Mich.	205, 987,
	2232
v. Koerner	21, 569, 1072,
	1502, 1873, 1938,
	2382, 2501
v. Krist	689
v. Kruger	905, 1263
v. Kuches	62, 200
v. Kunz	2059
v. Lagrille	1249
v. Lake	681
v. Lamb	246
v. Lambert	
120 Cal.	352, 1044,
	1135, 1136, 1263
5 Mich.	584, 1271,
	1645, 2086
v. Lander	2252
v. Lane	
101 Cal.	216, 231, 2385
49 Mich.	2071
v. Lange	1196
v. Langtree	609, 2234, 2236
v. Lansing	363
v. Lapique	89
v. Larned	413, 1157
v. Larsen	2277
v. Larubia	333

	Section
People v. Lauder	852
v. Lavelle	689
v. Lawrence	1033
v. Lee	
119 Cal.	1185
128 Cal.	1664
v. Lee Ah Chuck	950
v. Lee Dick Lung	194, 276
v. Lee Fat	751, 1669, 1810
v. Lehr	1960
v. Lem Deo	1442
v. Lem You	1387, 1669
v. Levison	327
v. Levy	689
v. Life Ins. Co.	1608
v. Lilly	111, 247
v. Loewenthal	1850
v. Lombard	246, 247
v. Long	2079
v. Lonsdale	1442
v. Lon Yeck	1013
v. Lopez	
26 Cal.	1852
59 Cal.	347
v. Lovejoy	617
v. Lovren	1977
v. Luchetti	1013, 2513
v. Luders	1853
v. Lynch	
22 Cal.	194
29 Mich.	1135, 1761
v. Lyons	702
v. McArron	983, 987,
	1853
v. McCarthy	
115 Cal.	689
102 N. Y.	463
v. McCarty	1839
v. McConnell	2578
v. McCormick	987
v. McCoy	2265
v. McCrea	1072, 1142
v. McCullough	2079
v. McCurdy	1157
v. McDonald	1270
v. McElvaine	672, 673, 681
v. McFarlane	751, 761
v. McGee	498, 811,
	1138, 1825
v. McGilver	351
v. McGlade	318
v. McGloin	824, 839,
	851, 852
v. McGungill	1890, 2272
v. McHenry	1511
v. McKane	2155
v. McKeller	1022
v. McKinney	1275, 2105
v. McLaughlin	
44 Cal.	1452
150 N. Y.	192, 216, 377,
	738, 1963
v. McLean	
84 Cal.	2059
71 Mich.	62, 200,
	398, 987
v. McMahan	823, 852, 2266
v. McNair	1821
v. McNamara	1896

	Section
People v. McQuaid	660, 1684
v. Macard	216
v. Machen	847, 1839, 1853
v. Mahaney	1350
v. Mahon	2296
v. Main	2059
v. Malaospina	239, 279
v. Mallon	1071
v. Malach	2239
v. Manke	1978
v. Manning	987, 1270
v. Marble	216, 363, 2237
v. Marion	664
v. Markham	923, 1616
v. Marra	1136
v. Mason	278
v. Mather	770, 772, 774,
	775, 987, 1111,
	1112, 1898, 1983,
	2255, 2260, 2271
v. Mathews (Edwards)	1803
v. Matteson	1817
v. Maussanau	987, 1270
v. Mayes	988, 2277, 2567,
	2569, 2581
v. Mayhew	2059
v. Mayne	736, 1481, 1503
v. Mead	56, 416, 2265
v. Melvane	2059
v. Merceln	2239
v. Metlvin	1985
v. Meyer	
75 Cal.	1800, 2276,
	2277
N. Y., 66 N. E.	851, 861
v. Miles	228
v. Millard	1690, 1700
v. Miller	
121 Cal.	863
122 Cal.	821
135 Cal.	851
195 Ill.	1681
2 Park. Cr.	1909
v. Mills	987, 1853, 2273
v. Milner	1168, 1802,
	1976, 2512
v. Mitchell	
94 Cal.	905
100 Cal.	142
v. Molineux	863, 852, 1722,
	2016, 2018,
	2020, 2265
v. Mondon	852
v. Montelth	571
v. Montgomery	
13 Abh. Fr.	2203
53 Cal.	293
N. Y., 68 N. E.	390
v. Mooney	2019
v. Moore	805, 914, 953,
	959, 996, 1026,
	1123, 1326
v. Moran	1853
v. Morgan	889
v. Morine	811
v. Morrigan	460, 1142,
	1976
v. Morton	1072, 2059
v. Most	985

TABLE OF CASES.

PEO

	Section		Section		Section
People v. Muller		People v. Peckens		People v. Rodley	
32 Hnn	790, 796	v. Perriman	216, 321,	v. Rodrigo	1070, 2042
96 N. Y.	1978	v. Petrea	1853, 2088	v. Rodriguez	1270
v. Mullings	1808, 1890,	v. Pette	1350	v. Roemer	1890
	2340, 2341	v. Phelan	216	v. Rogers	1007
v. Mnrrpy		v. Philhon	460, 792		
45 Cal.	1898, 2098,	v. Phillips	71 Cal.		216
	2232	v. Pico	18 N. Y.		851
101 N. Y.	688, 2385	v. Piggott	728, 2059, 2529	v. Rolfe	2529
186 N. Y.	354, 2015,	v. Pike	218	v. Ross	987
	2016	v. Pinkerton	2110	v. Rozelle	1890, 2276
v. Mnrray		v. Piper	2276	v. Russell	1860, 2272
10 Cal.	63, 246	v. Pitcher	1842	v. Ryland	2059
85 Cal.	2349	v. Place	276	v. Safford	900, 906, 906,
94 Cal.	2354	v. Piath	363		907
62 Mich.	21	v. Plyer	2062	v. Salsbny	280
89 Mich.	1835	v. Plyler	1384, 1669	v. Sam Lung	1841
v. Myers	463			v. Samonset	1963
v. Nairs	2100	121 Cal.	580, 1014	v. Sanders	1438, 1445
v. Newman	1404	126 Cal.	1669		216, 318, 664,
v. Niles	569, 987	v. Pope	1390, 2079		2272, 2511
v. Nino	233, 770	v. Porter	2071	v. Sanford	1443, 1903
v. Noelke	987, 1270	v. Potter	238	v. Sansome	153, 196
v. Northey	2363	v. Powell	111, 246, 248	v. Savant	2079
v. Oakland Water-		v. Prather	925, 959	v. Saxton	581
Front Co.	2566	v. Pratt	2308	v. Schmidt	1976
v. O'Brien		v. Price	1853	v. Schmitt	689, 1124, 2530
66 Cal.	2276	v. Priorl	2271	v. Schoonmaker	2239
96 Cal.	1890, 2276	v. Purdy	1350	v. Schuyler	2361, 2883
130 Cal.	62	v. Pnstolka	792	v. Schweitzer	347
176 N. Y.	2262	v. Putnam	987, 1407	v. Scoggins	111, 247
v. O'Farrell	2059	v. Qunstrom	2239	v. Scott	238, 390
v. O'Hare	923	v. Quick		v. Seaman	359
v. Oiler	1898	51 Mich.	581, 2079	v. Searcy	701
v. Oldham	1010, 1079, 2515	58 Mich.	1853	v. Sears	2277
v. Oliver	2079	v. Quimhy	368	v. Sehring	2239
v. Olliveria	2265	v. Quinn	1852	v. Sehorn	246, 1974
v. Olmstead	568, 689, 1445	v. Qurise	1898	v. Session	359, 680,
v. O'Loughlin	1790, 1839,	v. Rader	782		682, 1976
	1841	v. Ramirez	409, 851, 1985	v. Sexton	852
v. O'Neil	527, 2059	v. Rando	254, 326	v. Sharp	
v. O'Neill	906, 2368	v. Rangod	398	53 Mich.	664, 1198
v. Onondaga	1350	v. Rathbnn	276, 293	107 N. Y.	57, 194, 286,
v. Osmond	390	v. Ratz	667, 1496		812, 329, 343,
v. Ostrander	2511	v. Rector	247, 923, 979,		1969, 2282
v. O'Eullivan	357, 1185,		967, 994, 1106,	v. Shattuck	
	1136		1108, 1106, 1112,	6 Abb. N. C.	2364
v. Overseers	2063		1125, 1126, 1514,	109 Cal.	940, 1722
v. Owens	987		1966	v. Shaver	1044
v. Pakenham	1988	v. Reed	1960, 2277	v. Shaw	298, 1036, 1447
v. Page	1072, 2061	v. Reeder	2066	v. Shea	
v. Palmer		v. Reggel	2863	8 Cal.	247
96 Mich.	111	v. Reinhart		125 Cal.	62
105 Mich.	111	89 Cal.	987, 1270, 2277	147 N. Y.	57, 216, 363,
109 N. Y.	2072, 2061	26 Or.	821		367
v. Paquin	1335	v. Resh	968, 2079	v. Shulman	320, 321
v. Parent	1828, 2042	v. Restell	1374	v. Sickles	106
v. Parker	2016	v. Rice		v. Sierp	1398, 1810
v. Parmelee	967, 2277	103 Mich.	960, 2582	v. Silva	925, 987
v. Parsons	826	159 N. Y.	569	v. Simonds	2232
v. Parton	831, 949, 1899	v. Ritchie	2854	v. Simonsen	2072
v. Patterson	398, 2060	v. Roat	770	v. Simpson	1142, 1442,
v. Payne	906	v. Roberts	2512		1450
v. Pease		v. Robinson		v. Skutt	396
3 Johns.	523	19 Cal.	500	v. Slater	1496
27 N. Y.	1351, 1712,	6 Utah	2079	v. Silgh	1396, 1667
	1864, 2196,	v. Robles		v. Sllney	2382
	2215, 2421	29 Cal.	1829	v. Snller	682
v. Peck	1839	34 Cal.	347, 967	v. Smth	
				31 Cal.	232

TABLE OF CASES.

Section	People v. Smith
106 Cal.	363
104 N. Y.	1461
121 N. Y.	792
162 N. Y.	1124
172 N. Y.	1072, 1073, 1434, 1974
v. Suelle	987
v. Soap	728
r. Solomou	2059
v. Southern	1452
v. Spiegel	2264
v. Sprague	1010, 1013, 1841
v. Squires	206
v. Stackhouse	1041
v. Stanley	21, 276, 1350
v. Sternberg	2059, 2060, 2281
v. Stevens	
52 Cal.	1861
47 Mich.	784, 1466
v. Stewart	
28 Cal.	56, 59
97 Cal.	1130
v. Stock	246
v. Stokes	
71 Cal.	1644, 2085
103 Cal.	2349, 2354
r. Storke	2016
v. Stout	194, 216, 304, 390
v. Stralt	
148 N. Y.	281, 688, 1938
164 N. Y.	21, 1873
v. Streuber	2273
v. Strong	
30 Cal.	821, 1013
46 Cal.	276
r. Stubeuoll	2497
v. Sullivan	1157
v. Supervisors	1350
v. Sutherland	
104 Mich.	987, 1168, 2277
164 N. Y.	106, 390
v. Sutto	684, 1890
v. Swafford	1835
v. Swartz	2497
v. Swetland	1206, 1225, 2079
v. Swist	507, 1135
v. Symonds	1852
v. Taing	247
v. Taylor	
59 Cal.	852, 1434, 1440
186 Cal.	414
98 Mich.	828
138 N. Y.	233, 1838
v. Teixeira	364
v. Thacker	363, 569
v. Thiede	412, 568, 811, 944, 1860, 1862, 1899, 1910
v. Thomas	
110 Cal.	196
9 Mich.	579
v. Thompson	
50 Cal.	2059

Section	People v. Thompson
84 Cal.	832
122 Mich.	199, 461, 457, 2363
41 N. Y.	963
v. Thoms	318, 822
v. Thomson	960
v. Thorn	1803
v. Thrall	2071
v. Tice	987, 2276
v. Tiley	987, 1003
v. Tillman	247
v. Tobey	1680
v. Tomlinson	216
v. Tracy	1450
v. Travis	111, 247
v. Treadwell	1013
v. Truck	1938, 2016, 2265, 2339
v. Tucker	348
v. Tuczkewitz	2498
v. Turner	1043
v. Turney	987, 1983
v. Tyler	579, 1985, 2272
v. Un Dong	987
v. Vail	1858
v. Valliere	
123 Cal.	390, 1976
127 Cal.	1807
v. Van Dam	56
v. Vauderhoof	682, 1696, 1700
v. Vane	290, 1124, 1125, 1126, 1127, 1128, 1131
v. Van Eman	968
v. Van Horu	131
v. Vaun	762
v. Van Slyck	1351
v. Van Tassel	342, 1007, 1010
v. Van Wormer	580, 2265
v. Vasalo	1208
v. Vedder	2060
v. Vermilyea	2595
v. Vernou	1450, 1750
v. Vidal	276
v. Wade	1028, 1963, 2061
v. Wakely	321
v. Walker	
140 Cal.	851, 2276
113 Mich.	507
v. Wallace	905
v. Walters	216, 363
v. Ward	
184 Cal.	987, 2073
15 Wend.	838
v. Warner	
117 Cal.	2334
104 Mich.	851
v. Warren	
134 Cal.	987
122 Mich.	2495
v. Weaver	1440
v. Webb	1003
v. Webster	
68 Hun	792
139 N. Y.	792, 984, 987, 1006, 2276

Section	People v. Weiger
v. Wells	987, 1808
v. Wenneholm	1072
v. Wentz	839
v. Westlake	
124 Cal.	944
134 Cal.	1157
v. West	2385
v. Wheatley	196
v. Wheeler	1690, 1693, 1700
v. Whipple	521, 580
v. White	
118 Cal.	1164, 2497
53 Mich.	166, 980
176 N. Y.	841, 861, 2071
14 Wend.	57, 194, 202, 1326, 1327
24 Wend.	57, 290, 1329, 1697
v. Whiteman	318
v. Whitson	987
v. Wilder	1010
v. Willett	1072
v. Williams	
18 Cal.	140, 1040
64 Cal.	1219, 2677
133 Cal.	1072
19 Weud.	580
v. Willmot	62, 1136
v. Wilson	
117 Cal.	216, 364
135 Cal.	2613
65 Mich.	1873
3 Park. Cr.	2061
v. Winters	
29 Cal.	153
125 Cal.	1079, 2512
v. Winthrop	216, 276, 1157, 2511
v. Wirth	1042
v. Witty	1035, 1405
v. Wolcott	273, 822, 830, 836, 1006, 2079
v. Wolf	2511
v. Woug Ah Ngow	276
v. Wong Chuey	960, 1022, 1434
v. Wood	
126 N. Y.	231, 233, 2340
3 Park. Cr.	216, 363
v. Woon Tuck Wo	490
v. Worden	1976
v. Wreden	657, 1938
v. Wright	
90 Mich.	2079
136 N. Y.	852
v. Wyman	2849
v. Yeager	1835
v. Yee Fook Din	413
v. Yokum	1442
v. Young	
81 Cal.	2363
108 Cal.	811, 1072
v. Youngs	675, 1988
v. Yslas	923
v. Zigouras	861, 952

TABLE OF CASES.

PHO

	Section		Section		Section
People's Bank v. Brown	2210, 2322	Perry v. Graham	1779	Pengh v. Mitchell	2525
People's Building L. & S.		v. Lawless	1294	Peverly v. Boston	458
Ass'n v. Backus	2536	v. Lovejoy	1730, 2085	Peycke v. Shinn	2163
People's Nat'l Bank		v. Machine Co.	451	Peyroux v. Howard	2576
v. Geisthardt	2158	v. Mays	2158	Peyton v. Hallett	1206, 1248
v. Mulkey	1387	v. People		v. Morgan Park	1261, 1263,
People's F. R. Co. v. Green	792	14 Ill.	1852	v. State	136, 2512
Peoples v. Com.	1484, 1441, 2060	86 N. Y.	1270	Pfan v. State	2513
Peoria A. & D. R. Co. v.		v. Porter	581	Pfefferkorn v. Seefield	916
Sawyer	1168	v. R. Co.	2572	Pfefferle v. State	616
Peoria, D. & E. R. Co. v.		v. Randall	2337, 2340, 2341	Pfeifer v. Ins. Co.	2465
Rice	2220	v. Roberts	1188	Pfial v. Vanbatenberg	156, 2130
Peoria, G. & C. Co. v.		v. Ruby	613	Pfister v. Wade	1067
R. Co.	463, 1168	v. Simpson W. M. Co.	2503	Pfjaeger v. State	689, 1671,
Peoria & F. R. Co. v.		v. Smith	1086	1988, 1958	
Barnum	1108	v. State		Pfotzer v. Mullaney	1605
Pepoon v. Jenkins	1681	87 Ala.	1404	Phares v. Barber	1609
Pepper v. Barnett	694	102 Ga.	1434, 1445, 1446	Pharis v. Lambert	1195
Peppercorn v. Black				Pharr v. Bacheior	1330
River Falls	1166, 2354	110 Ga.	1976	Phelan v. Bonham	1267
Peppinger v. Low	1770	113 Ga.	2575	v. Slattery	2473
Percival v. Hickey	1392	Ida., 38 Pac.	2325, 2326	Phelin v. Kenderdine	2270, 2272
v. Nanson	1465, 1466,	44 Nebr.	2089	Phelps v. Abbott	2444
Perdue v. C. C. C. Co.	1877	v. Weyman	1909	v. Com.	500, 1985, 2501
Perdason v. Etcherson	1842	Person v. Bowe	1082	v. Conant	377
Perham v. Raynal	1077	Perteel v. People	1852	v. Foot	1225
Perigai v. Nicholson	586, 1460	Perth Peerage Case	1496, 1633, 1644, 1697	v. Hunt	15
Perit v. Cohen	1890	Petapso Co. v. South-		v. Mankato	288, 458
Perkins v. Adams	944, 950, 2103	gate	1414, 1417	v. Mayer	20
v. Augusta Co.	1523	Petch v. Lyon	1063	v. Prew	1212, 2183, 2190,
v. Bank	2271	v. State	833, 855	2211	
v. Blood	1778	v. Thickstun	994, 1704	v. R. Co.	458
v. Brinkley	1778	Peterboro v. Jaffrey	1943	v. Riley	583
v. Concord R. Co.	1062	Peterborough v. Mordaunt	1278	v. Titton	1081, 2110
v. Guy	1807	v. Norfolk	1388	v. Town	565
v. Hayward	15	Petermans v. Laws	1225, 1651	Phene's Trusts	2531
v. Hersey	2414	Peters v. Fogarty	2354, 2355	Phenix v. Baidwin	1415
v. Humes	89	v. Irish	2276	Phenix Fire Ins. Co. v.	
v. Ins. Co.	736, 747	v. Reichenbach	2105	Philip	1943
v. Knisely	1013	v. U. S.	770, 907	Phenix Ins. Co. v. Hart	747
v. Perkins	2067	Petersfield Case	1712	v. Sullivan	748
v. R. Co.	1718	Peterson, ex p.	2578	Phettiplace v. Sayles	913, 1808
v. Railroad	682	v. Aibach	1382	Phlfer v. Erwin	581
v. Roberge	1003	v. Ankrom	1481, 1487, 1651	v. R. Co.	1951
v. Scott	1354	v. Gresham	1244	Philadelphia v. Gowan	1640
v. Spaulding	258, 331, 1416	v. Johnson-Went-		v. Millier	2529
v. State	959, 1126, 2363	worth Co.	1951	v. Reeder	950
v. Stickney	561	v. Morgen	73, 74	v. Rnie	290
v. Towie	1458	v. R. Co.	603, 682	Philadelphia C. P. R. Co.	
Perkins' Est.	1738	v. State		v. Henrice	41
Perley v. Perley	2520	47 Ga.	507, 1821, 1089	Philadelphia W. & B. R. Co.	
Peristein v. Express Co.	93	50 Ga.	111	v. Howard	1388
Perret v. Perret	1738	83 Md.	1028, 1029	v. Lehman	2581
Perrill v. Nichois	1873	63 Nebr.	661, 2582	Philadelphia & N. Y. R.	
Perrin v. Wells	1406	v. Taylor	1352	Co. v. Bunnell	714
Perrine v. Striker	2256, 2282	Peterson Co. v. Steiner	2504	Philadelphia & R. R. Co.	
Perry v. Archard	1202	Petit v. Teal	1543	v. Hendricksen	454
v. Bailey	2340, 2358, 2354	Petite v. People	2272	v. Spearen	2098
v. Bank	95, 770	Petrick v. Ashcroft	2245	v. Schultz	456
v. Block	1335	Petrie v. Rose	261	v. Yeager	2494
v. Breed	1042	Pettibone v. Derringer	1405	Philadelphia & T. R. Co.	
v. Burton	657, 2106	v. Phelps	1062	v. Stimpson	15, 1007,
v. Clift	2143	v. Smith	451	1770, 1856, 1867,	
v. Com.	1620, 1823	Pettigru v. Sanders	1257	1876, 1885, 1890	
v. Dicken	1911	Pettit v. State	390, 1730,	Philamalee v. State	968
v. Gibson	1894	Petty v. Anderson	2581	Philbin v. Patrick	738
		v. Grisard	2282	Philips v. Com.	247
			1847	v. Fowler	2352

Section	Section	Section	Section
2525	Phillips v. Stewart 2364	Pickering v. Dowson 2425, 2434	Pingree v. Johnson 618, 747
458	Phillipson v. Bates 1651, 2110	v. Meyers 1205	Pingry v. Washburn 1878
2163	v. Chase 1206, 1232	v. Noyes 1858	Pinkard v. State 293
2676	Phillips v. Cole 1084, 1455	v. Reynolds 1183	Pinkham v. Benton 754, 1580
06, 1248	v. Crawly 1311, 1312	v. Townsend 1384	v. Cockell 702
01, 1293,	v. Eamer 1893	Pickert v. Hair 1063	Pinney v. Andrus 745, 761
2534	v. Gregg 564, 1271	Pickett v. Boyd 1681	v. Cahill 457, 1790
06, 2512	v. Hoyle 17	Pickton v. Fargo 1350	v. Jones 1772
2513	v. Kelly 1718	Pickup v. Thames Ins. Co. 2533	v. Pinney 2047
016	v. Kingfield 923, 987, 1111,	Pico v. Cuyas 1387	Pinney's Will 233, 1938, 1958
816	1920, 1982,	Pictorial League v. Nelson 377,	Plinschower v. Hanks 736
2465	1985, 1986	2442	Pioneer Cooperage Co. v. Romanowicz 2410
56, 2130	v. Lindsey 1194, 1207, 1208	Pidgeon v. Williams 233, 1038	Piper v. Spokane 252
1067	v. Mahan 1466	Piedmont Bank v. Hatcher 334	Pipestone Co. Bank v. Ward 916
0, 1671,	v. Marblehead 1021, 1040,	Pier v. Duff 1066	Pipher v. Lodge 1244, 1278,
18, 1958	2345, 2358	Pierce v. Boston 463, 677, 1021	1406
1605	v. Meagher 1346	v. Bradford 610	Pipkin v. Bond 953, 1028
1609	v. Meily 2047, 2431	v. Brennan 1166, 2354	Plie v. Anderson 1047, 1650
1195	v. Phillips 2526	v. Carleton 1248	v. Wyid 1062
1339	v. Poindexter 1240, 1675,	v. Chase 585	Pitcairn v. Iliis Co. 2400
1267	1680	v. Gilson 949, 950, 951,	v. Ogbourne 2423
2473	v. Robbins 1680	953, 1028	Pitcher v. King 1681
0, 2272,	v. Scott 95	v. Gray 1225	Pitman v. Maddox 1518
2444	v. Smith 1064	v. Goldsberry 1072	v. State 111, 247
5, 2501	v. Starr 1951	v. Insdeth 1271	Pitt v. Emmons 1208
377	v. State 62 Ark. 107	v. Kimball 2572	v. State 111, 1404
1225	29 Ga. 1072, 2081	v. Myrick 63, 1983	Pitton v. Waiter 1670
15	33 Ga. 142	v. Newton 923	Pitts v. State 2071, 2073
88, 458	9 Humph. 1125, 1188,	v. Northey 2015, 2016	v. Wilder 1257
20	1362	v. R. Co. 749, 760	Pittsburg v. O'Neill 571
3, 2196,	22 Tex. App. 2079	v. Reh fuss 1219	Pittsburg C. C. & St. L. R. Co. v. Indiana ll. 456
2211	v. Stewart 2240	v. State 1009, 1012, 1013	v. Lewis 905
458	v. U. S. Benef. Soc'y 1062,	v. U. S. 851	v. McGrath 1874, 1671
583	1213	v. Wallace 1195, 1225	v. Martin 20
1, 2110	v. U. S. Benevo- 1213, 1238	v. Woodward 2349	v. Noel 1873
565	lent Soc'y 443, 458	Piers v. Piers 1645, 2505	v. Noftger 1777
2531	v. Willow 1327	Pierson v. Doe 1225	v. Sheppard 1706, 1976
1415	v. Wimburn 1827	v. Hutchinson 1197	Pittsburg Coal Co. v. Withers 2354
1943	Philps v. Trueman 1065	v. People 216, 390, 2385	Pittsburg F. W. & C. R. Co. v. Ruby 65, 190,
747	Phipps v. Martin 620	v. R. Co. 682	249, 250
748	v. Parker 1303	v. Steortz 2206	Co v. Rose 463, 1943
1898	Phoenix v. Dey 1066	v. Wallace 1044	v. Vance 463, 720,
581	Phoenix Assur. Co. v. McArthur 907, 1195	Pigg v. Carroli 615	728, 1943
1951	Phoenix Ins. Co. v. Amuse- 754	145 Ind. 1896	Pittsburg W. & K. R. Co. v. Appiegate 1074
1640	ment Co. 1058	43 Tex. 21, 675	Pittsburg & C. R. Co. v. Andrews 1020, 1040
2529	v. Gray 779, 1263, 1898	Piggot v. R. Co. 455	Co. v. Robinson 714
950	v. Moog 379	Pigot's Case 2405	Pittsburg & W. R. Co. v. Patterson 463
290	v. Philip 2336	Pigott v. Holloway 736, 747	v. Thompson 18, 492, 497,
41	Phoenix Nat'l Bank v. Taylor 2018	Piipiliani v. Houghtailing 1890	2509
1888	Pichler v. Reese 1900	Pike v. Badmering 907	Pittsfield & F. P. R. Co. v. Harrison 7, 1354
2581	Pick v. Rubicon H. Co. 1164	v. Bradbury 1302	Pittsford v. Chittenden 2527
714	Pickard v. Bailey 564, 1194,	v. Chicago 714, 1164, 1943	Pizarro, The 291
454	1195, 1279,	v. Crehore 347, 1476, 1677	Place v. Alicock 379
2098	1676, 2164, 2558	v. Dyke 2116	v. Baugher 1555
456	v. Bryant 907, 1037	v. Hayes 1458, 2336	v. Minster 1013
2494	Pickens v. Davis 1737, 1782	v. State 149, 153	Plainfield F. N. Bank v. Dunn 2446
1007,	115 Aia. 2497, 2512	v. Street 2445	
1867,	61 Miss. 52, 691, 1111,	Pike's Will 1736	
1890	1612, 1613, 1614	Pile v. State 1842	
968	Pickens' Estate 1499	Pilow v. Impr. Co. 593	
738	Pickering, re 1859	v. Roberts 1354, 2456	
247	v. Barkley 1304, 1947	Pillsbury v. Locke 748, 1558	
2352	v. Cambridge 1784	Pim v. Curell 1593	
		Pinch v. Willard 2437	
		Pinens v. Reynolds 344	
		Pine Tree L. Co. v. Fargo 2534	
		Pingery v. R. Co. 720, 1947	

TABLE OF CASES.

PLA

	Section		Section		Section
Planing-Machine Co. v. Kelth	1856	Polling v. R. Co.	791	Porter v. Hawkins	711
Plant v. Grimm	581, 661	Polini v. Gray	1487, 1624, 1627, 1662, 1670	v. Judson	1676
Plank-Road Co. v. Thomas	1910	Polite v. Jefferson	1267	v. Mfg. Co.	571, 1951
Plano Mfg. Co. v. Frawley	2304	Polk v. Butterfield	2573	v. Rich	682
v. Kautenberger	1969, 1974	v. Coffin	716	v. Seiler	64
v. McCold	1230	v. State		v. State	
Plant v. McEwen	1076	62 Ala.	247	55 Ala.	279, 836, 855
v. Taylor	1484, 1491	36 Ark.	681, 2090	135 Ala.	681
Planters' Bank v. Bass	2635	40 Ark.	75, 206, 987, 2063	76 Ga.	2068
v. George	2223	Poll v. Hicks	2536	2 Ind.	376, 1839, 1842
v. Massey	2098	Pollak v. Harmon	288	1 Tex. App.	3079
Planters' Mut. Ins. Co. v. Rowland	1947	Pollard v. Lively		v. Throop	338, 1806
Planters' & M. Bank v. Borland	1245, 1906	2 Gratt.	1225, 1651, 2168	v. Waring	2677
Plass v. Plass	1029	4 Gratt.	182, 1225, 2629	v. Warner	1566
Plaster v. Rigney	2148	v. Meloin	1225, 1661	v. Wilson	697, 706, 707, 1188, 1192, 1194
Platner v. Platner	2115	v. People	1010, 1013	Portland v. Kamm	1943
Plato v. Reynolds	1021	v. Wybourn	1922	Portuguese Consul's Case	2377
Platt v. Buck	2819	Polleys v. Ins. Co.	1339	Portwood v. Com.	2507
v. Haner	1269	Pollock v. Glassell		Posey v. Buckner	1083
Plattsmouth v. Mitchell	252	1802, 1304, 1511, 2049, 2406, 2456		v. Hanson	1058, 1487, 2341, 253
Platz v. McKean	1951	v. Morrison	581	Post v. Kenerson	154
Plaxton v. Dare	1471, 1592	v. Pollock	898, 907	v. R. Co.	1856
Pleasant v. State		v. Wilcox	1198, 1253	v. Rich	1677
13 Ark.	964, 987	Polson v. State	1136, 2337	v. School District	119
15 Ark.	62, 200, 308, 923, 987, 1135, 1136, 1138, 1611, 1842, 1986, 2282	Pomeroy v. Baddeley	1841	v. Schooner Lady Jane	164
Pleasanton v. Nutt	2235	v. Benton	291, 1416	v. Snrvisors	1850, 168
Pleasants v. Heard	2354	Pomfrey v. Saratoga Springs	458	Postal Tel. Cable Co. v. Brantley	1078, 1651, 177
v. Meng	1854	Ponca v. Crawford	1248, 1362	v. Hulsey	94
v. Pemberton	529	Ponce v. McElvy	1067	v. Le Noir	107
Pledger v. R. Co.	1760	Poncin v. Furth	606	Postel v. Palmer	119
Pileque v. La Branche	1054, 2008, 2016	Pond v. Lockwood	1196	Posten v. Rasette	210
Plimpton v. Chamberlain	1459	Ponder v. Shumans	2166	Postlethwaite v. Rickman	229
v. Somerset	1354	Pontius v. People	89, 224	Poston v. Jones	251
Plumb v. Curtis	94, 392, 1500	Pool v. Bridges	1757	Poteete v. State	143
Plummer v. Com.	276	v. Devens	664, 1084	Potter v. Barclay	122
v. Currier	1062	v. White	1669	Potter v. Baldwin	23
v. Mercantile Co.	1558, 1877	Pooler v. Dean	1921, 1988, 1958	v. Bank	
v. Ossipee	199, 438, 785, 963, 1718, 1906	v. Dicus	1522, 1523, 1527	v. Clapp	250
v. Ricker	1722	v. Fleeger	20	v. Easton	243
v. State	1350	v. Gerrard	1250	v. Natural Gas Co.	25
Plunket v. Bowman	1513	v. Mitchell	1890	v. Ware	437, 40
Plunkett v. Cobbett	406, 2375	v. People	2505	v. Washburn	191
v. Dillon	1248, 1256	v. Perritt	2260, 2271	v. Webb	157
v. Hauschka	2184	v. Richardson	1933, 1938	Potts v. Cogdell	126
Plympton v. Preston	1208	v. State	1782	v. Coleman	1188, 210
Poague v. Spriggs	2105	v. Warren	1298	v. House	689, 1292, 193
Pocock v. Billing	1084	Pooler v. State	1375	Poulet v. Johnson	1195, 163
v. Hendricks	93, 736, 747	Poor v. Robinson	1521	Ponlett Peage	206
v. Lincoln	2462	Poorman v. Miller	1256	Ponison v. Stanley	233
v. Thornicroft	2239	Pope v. Allis	1066	Poultney v. Fairhaven	206
Pocconoket, The	2442	v. Askew	693, 700, 2008	v. Raas	15
Poff v. N. E. Tel. & Teleg. Co.	2531	v. Dodson	1013	Pound v. State	111, 246, 247, 396, 206
Poignand v. Smith	1225, 1233, 1269, 1709	v. Filley	571	v. Wilson	9
Poindexter's Case	363	v. Hanke	581	Povall, ex p.	1658, 1681, 213
Pointer v. U. S.	118	v. State	1898	Powel v. Cleaver	19
Poler v. Poler	64	Popkin v. Popkin		Powell v. Biddle	24
Polhill v. Brown	1665	Porath v. State	398, 770, 949, 2066, 2060	v. Blackett	19
Polin v. State	451	Porrell v. Cavanagh	2024	v. Edmunds	24
		Porter v. Allen	1085	v. Ford	694, 6
		v. Buckingham	1661	v. Harper	66, 73, 14
		v. Com.	1072, 2069	v. Hendrick	1813, 166
		v. Ferguson	1189	v. Lea	29
		v. Hale	1218		

FLA

PRU

TABLE OF CASES.

Section	Section	Section	Section
71	Powell v. Olds 112, 1777	Pratte v. Coffman 2354	Primrose v. Browing 1247
167b	v. Pearlstone 1310	Proeper v. R. 551, 687	Prince v. Blackburn 1312
571, 1951	v. Powell 114 Ill. 616	Preferred Acc. Ins. Co. v. Gray 949	v. Samo 1045, 2113
682	L. R. 1 P. D. 1782	Frell v. McDonald 2572	v. Smith 1540, 1548
64	v. R. Co. 7206	Frentis v. Bates 38 Mich. 2500	v. Swett 1558
79, 830, 855	v. State 19 Ala. 111, 247, 1029, 1030	93 Mich. 1938, 2500	1860
681	25 Ala. 1030	Frentis v. Roberts 1106	Princess of Wales v. Lord 1856
2068	52 Ala. 396, 1036	Presbrey v. R. Co. 463	Prindle v. Glover 239
1839, 1842	58 Ala. 247	Presbyterian Church v. Emerson 1519	Prine v. State 111
3079	68 Ala. 2236	Prescott v. Board 1850	Pringle v. Miller 1037, 1807
338, 1808	101 Ga. 248, 891, 1614, 1722	v. Ward 987, 1021	v. Pringle 607, 1085, 1086, 1390, 2228
2872	61 Miss. 1157	Prescott Bank v. Caverly 2445	Printing Tel. & C. Co. v. Drucker 1388
1566	Miss., 23 So. 852, 1849	Prescott Irrig. Co. v. Flathers 2580	Printz v. Cheeney 2261, 2271
97, 706, 707, 1192, 1196	18 Tex. App. 1841	President, etc. of Mendota v. Thompson 2535	v. People 716
1943	v. Wark 2005	Preslar v. Stallworth 1195	Prior v. Powers 2352
Case 2372	v. Waters 529	Presnell v. Garrison 18	v. State 987
2501	v. Wathen 1458	Press Publishing Co. v. Lefferts 2322	v. Whitla 1082
1081	v. Watts 1086	Proeper v. State 1109	Prion v. Adams 1198
1058, 1487, 2341, 2531	v. Young 1681	Pressley v. State 857	Pritchard v. Austin 283, 792, 794
1848	Power v. Ellis 2258, 2268	Preston v. Bowers v. Carr 1845, 1856, 2290, 2294, 2318	v. Bagshawe 1075, 1256, 2106
1858	v. Frick 702	v. Cedar Rapids 1908	v. Henderson 1908, 1911, 1988
1677	v. Kitching 1850	v. Dills 949	Fritchett v. Davis 2450
1195	Powers v. Armstrong 64	v. Mercean 2442	v. Munroe 2124
y Jane 1647	v. Charnabury 1693	v. Robinson 1651, 1655	v. Smart 1858
1850, 1684	v. Com. Ky., 61 S. W. 1005, 1079	v. State 987	v. State 246, 247
1078, 1651, 1778	Ky., 63 S. W. 1005	Preatwood v. Watson 2588, 2593, 2594	Pritt v. Fairclough 1518, 1551, 1616
949	Ky., 70 S. W. 2463	1225	Probasco v. Cook 276
1078	v. Leach 52, 1002, 1013, 1080	1045, 1263	Probat v. Bravenicb 2349
1195	v. M'Ferran 1313, 1513	1347	Procter v. Lamson 1389
2105	v. McKenzie 561, 1908, 2016	1521, 1590	Procter v. Bigelow 2083
2298	v. Mitchell 682, 1976	1858, 1859	v. De Camp 1807
2518	v. Presgroves 73, 74, 691, 1612, 1615	2408	v. Houghtaling 73, 74, 209, 406
1433	v. R. Co. 437	v. Harrison 1858, 1859	v. Irvin 457
1225	v. Russell 1318	1249	Profile & F. H. Co. v. Bickford 1416
233	v. Slisby 1566, 1567, 1568	1877, 1890	Proper v. State 357, 398, 770
6	v. State 80 Ind. 2595	1661	Proprietor v. Keith 1364, 2032
2506	74 Miss. 1447, 2497	1518	Proprietors v. Bullard 1082, 1257
2431	Poyner v. State Tex. Cr., 48 S. W. 59	1219	Propson v. Leatham 252
252, 437, 461, 1911, 1573, 64	40 Tex. Cr. 1141	1312	Propst v. Mathis 1278, 1362, 1633
1267	Prader v. Accident Ass'n 2384	2354	Prosser v. Wapello Co. 1943
1188, 2105, 90, 1292, 1938, 1195, 1651, 2063, 2337, 2083, 1540	Prater v. State 106, 928	253, 1623	Protection Ins Co. v. Harner 1946, 1947
111, 246, 248, 396, 2098, 905, 58, 1681, 2163, 1304, 2463, 1300, 2434, 694, 698, 66, 73, 1478, 1313, 1651, 1674, 2947	Prather v. Palmer 382	2478	Protection L. I. Co. v. Dill 1195
	v. Pritchard 736	1951	Protector, The, v. Lord Lumley 2260
	v. Wilkina 1236	2530	Pröthro v. Minden Seminary 1195
	Pratt v. Andrews 64, 66, 75, 76	1250	Providence G. M. Co. v. Burke 17
	v. Barker 1388	v. Standard L. & A. Ins. Co. 1530, 2384	Providence Tool Co. v. Mfg. Co. 60
	v. Bailes 786, 1235, 1651	v. State 114 Ga. 851, 861	Provis v. Reed 1106, 1514, 1771
	v. Delavan 2237	18 Ob. St. 824, 841	Provost v. Brueck 1950
	v. Ducey 1672	v. U. S. 1163, 1803, 2273	Pruden v. Alden 1267, 24
	v. Fowler 2115	v. Wolfert 1247	Prudential Assurance Co. v. Edmonds 2531
	v. King 1681	Fridgen v. Green 2138, 2141	Pruitt v. Cox 1109
	v. Patterson 1409	Priest v. State 1828, 2071	
	v. Rawson 1874	v. Union Canal Co. 1873	
	v. White 1537, 1649, 1551	v. Way 1416	
	v. Wickham 1270	Prime v. Eastwood 406	
		Primm v. Stewart 1503, 1605	

TABLE OF CASES.

PRU

	Section		Section		Section
Fruitt v. State	1404	Queen's (Caroline)		R. v. Anstruther	2006
Frusell v. Knowles	2354, 2355, 2356	Case, The	996, 1026, 1033, 1036, 1043, 1045, 1350, 1360, 1361, 1362, 1363, 1816, 1818, 1819, 1820, 1840, 1841, 1844, 1917, 1963, 2004, 2113	v. Antrobus	1886
Fruyn v. Young	285	Queen's Proctor v. Fry	1644	v. Appleby	1072
Fryor v. Portsmouth C. Co. v. State	160, 861	Queenan v. Oklahoma	680, 1938	v. Apuna	1040
Psyche v. Paradol	1878	v. Terr.	233, 1938	v. Aram	266
Publishing Co. v. Keller	371	Queener v. Morrow	1072, 1120, 1122, 1129, 2232, 2236	v. Armitage	2061
Puckley v. Bridges	1364	Queenberry v. State	246	v. Arnold	
Puett v. Beard	1072	Quick v. Johnson	2090	8 C. & P.	837, 848, 1875
Puffer v. Smith	2416	v. Quick	1726, 1728	16 How. St. Tr.	1983
Pugh v. McKee	1456	Quilter v. Jores	1194, 1196	v. Arundel	
Pugsley v. Ring	2622	Quimby v. Ayers	657, 1460	4 Cox Cr.	580
Puleston v. Warburton	1658	v. Buzell	1828	Hob. 100	291, 1850
Pulford's Appeal	2311, 2319	v. Morrill	681	1 How. St. Tr.	1364
Pullen v. Hutchinson	1291, 2134	v. N. A. C. & T. Co.	1196	v. Ashton & Thorneley	1489, 1440
v. People	609	Quin v. Assurance Co.	1946, 1947, 2444	v. Atkin	1821
v. Pullen	1005	v. Sexton		v. Atterbury	560, 992, 1364, 1825, 1981, 1991, 1992, 2015, 2026, 2185, 2291, 2375
Pullely v. Hilton	2129	Quincy Horse R. & C. Co.		v. Attwood	837
Pulliam v. Cantrell	987, 988, 1106	v. Gnnse	1760	v. Atwood & Robbins	2056
Pullman P. C. Co. v. Harkins	1061	Quinlan v. R. Co.	1961	v. Audley	518, 1364, 2227
Purcell v. M'Namara	806, 1103	v. Utica	458	v. Ansten	1404
v. Purcell	2086	Quinn v. Champagne	2675	v. Avery	2299, 2312
v. R. Co.	2349	v. Com.	106	v. Aylmer	2059
Purdee v. State	949, 1006	v. Eagleston	1777, 2188	v. Azir	2239
Purdy v. Hall	1215	v. Halbert	408, 634, 1393	v. Babington	819, 1364
v. People		v. Higgins	132, 681, 682, 1951	v. Backler	1244
4 Hill N. Y.	1350	v. Moss	2434	v. Bacon	2032
40 Ill.	374, 946, 1018	v. People	2273	v. Bailey	308, 363
Purnell v. R. Co.	664, 2496	v. State	906	v. Baillie	744, 963, 2312, 2327
Purvis v. Robinson	1224, 1225, 1661	Quinsigamond Bank v. Hobbs	561, 923, 967, 1618	v. Baker	1433
Furyear v. Reese	1938	Quint v. Merrill	1684	v. Baldry	822, 824, 832, 837, 843, 865, 866, 867
v. State		Quintal v. Chalmers	1674	v. Ball	
63 Ga.	2096	Quintana v. State	821, 2276	1 Camp.	88, 318
28 Tex. App.	2061	Qnock Ting v. U. S.	2498	8 C. & P.	774, 906, 907
Pusch v. Brady	1240	Quong Sue v. U. S.	2066	1 Moo. Cr. C.	318
Puth v. Zimbleman	1730			R. & R.	21, 318
Putnam v. Goodall	1246, 1500			v. Balls	330
v. U. S.	774, 761			v. Baltimore	782
v. Wadley	701, 2008, 2016			v. Barber	704, 2006
Pye v. Bntterfield	2252, 2256			v. Barker	62, 986, 1022, 1209
Pyke v. Crouch	1364			v. Barley	2079
Pyle v. Clark	2552			v. Barnard	
v. Oustatt	614			1 C. & P.	966
v. Piercy	987			19 How. St. Tr.	298, 352, 1981
v. Pyle	609, 681, 1671			v. Barnett	761, 1262
Pym v. Campbell	2410			v. Bartlett	
v. Pym	1062			7 C. & P.	848, 1072
Pyroicum Appliance Co. v. W. H. & S. Co.	2054			1 Cox Cr.	609
Pytt v. Griffith	1313			v. Basingstoke	
				19 L. J. M. C.	1257
				14 Q. B.	1256
				v. Bastwick	1177
				v. Bate	832, 865
				v. Bathwick	2145, 2234, 2235
				v. Bayard	2364
				v. Baylis	1821
				v. Baynton	2250

Section	Section
2006	R. v. Beard 1907
1886	v. Bedel 2063
1079	v. Bedfordshire 1682, 1683, 1685, 1687
1040	v. Bedingsfield 1576, 1766
866	v. Beeston 1875, 1387
2061	v. Beesley 2079
	v. Bell
837, 846,	5 C. & P. 848, 1328
1875	McNally 865
r. 1983	v. Bellingham 1033
	v. Bembridge 1610, 1981, 2269
580	v. Bennet 848
291, 1850	v. Benson 747, 1676
r. 1364	v. Bentley 1349
	v. Berger 1587
1489, 1440	v. Berigan 834, 855
1821	v. Bernadotti 1441
560, 992,	v. Bernard 782, 1078
625, 1981,	v. Berriman 848, 858
1092, 2015,	v. Berwick 818, 847
1183, 2281,	v. Bickley 1670
2375	v. Birkett 2059
837	v. Birkett & Brady 2059
2056	v. Birmingham 10, 1457, 1458, 1465, 1469
516,	v. Blapham 1982, 1985
1364, 2327	v. Blittie 6
1404	v. Blackburn 744, 835
2298, 2312	v. Blandy 238, 960
2059	v. Bleasdale 216, 347
2239	v. Biles 1584, 1585
819, 1364	v. Blunt 819
1244	v. Bodkin 847
2032	v. Bodle 918, 2079
308, 363	v. Bond
963, 2312,	4 Cox Cr. 848, 855
2327	27 How. St. Tr. 285,
1433	986, 1982
824, 832,	v. Bonner 1441
843, 865,	v. Boulter 2042
866, 867	v. Bourdon 1674
	v. Bowes 2239
88, 318	v. Bowler
4, 906, 907	Annual Register 1938
318	Phillippe' Ev. 1671
21, 318	v. Boyea 2056, 2258, 2271, 2280
330	v. Boyle
782	1 Lew. Cr. C. 1842
704, 2006	1 Moo. & Rob. 906
986, 1022,	v. Braddon 1111, 1884, 1821, 2201, 2202
1209	v. Bradshaw 1933
2079	v. Braintree 1196
	v. Braithwaite 2042
966	v. Bramley 2063, 2230
r. 298,	v. Brandreth 1079, 1836
862, 1981	v. Brannan 664, 1244
761, 1262	v. Brasler
	East Pl. Cr. 1760,
848, 1072	Leach Cr. L. 1821, 1825, 606,
609	508, 508
	v. Brecknock 196
1257	v. Brett 827
1256	
1177	
832, 855	
1145, 2234,	
2236	
2364	
1821	
2250	

Section	Section
R. v. Brewer	6 C. & P. 2317
	9 Cox Cr. 1262
	v. Brice 1911
	v. Bridgeman 1858
	v. Briggs 851
	v. Britton
	17 Cox Cr. 1686
	1 F. & F. 2529
	1 Moo. & R. 843, 850
	v. Bromwich 1864
	v. Brooke 1894
	v. Broughton 2040
	v. Brown
	10 Cox Cr. 1982
	3 Haw. 940, 2056
	McNally 56
	21 U. C. Q. B. 1002,
	1005, 1006
	1 Ventr. 2299
	v. Brunt 1886
	v. Bryan 855
	v. Buckley 1528, 1725
	v. Buckworth
	2 Keh. 1364, 2296
	1 Sid. 1154
	v. Budge 657
	v. Bull
	9 C. & P. 2079
	12 Cox Cr. 1406
	v. Bullivant 2298, 2319
	v. Burdett 4, 41, 285, 437,
	2081, 2491, 2494
	v. Burke
	2 Cox Cr. 744
	8 Cox Cr. 811, 1006
	v. Burley 834
	v. Burt 58
	v. Burton 152, 153, 2070,
	2081, 2513
	v. Busby 1364
	v. Bushel 657, 1168, 1864,
	1800, 1864
	v. Bushnell 657, 922
	v. Butcher 858
	v. Butler 1981
	v. Byrne
	27 How. St. Tr. 1981
	28 How. St. Tr. 1981
	v. Byron 1430, 1440, 1450
	v. Cain 839, 858
	v. Calder 863
	v. Caldwell 2015
	v. Callaghan 1430
	v. Campbell 1006
	v. Campion 157, 200
	v. Candy 2374
	v. Canning 25, 285, 527,
	755, 991, 1044, 1123,
	1259, 1364, 1718, 1837,
	1884, 1981, 1982, 2098,
	2152, 2349
	v. Canterbury 1177
	v. Carew 1991, 2260
	v. Carpenter 918, 2079
	v. Carstairs 818
	v. Castell Careinion 521,
	1270
	v. Carter 826

Section	Section
R. v. Carty	856, 1092
v. Casey	2066
v. Cass	525, 836
v. Caseldy	918, 2079, 2080
v. Castle Morton	1246
v. Castlemaine	623, 980,
	1002, 1847, 2036,
	2038, 2250
v. Castleton	1212, 1223
v. Castro	87, 158, 270, 278,
	413, 660, 792, 962,
	963, 986, 1154, 1387,
	1796, 1977, 2298, 2304
v. Cator	1993, 2026
v. Celliar	735
v. Chadwick	952
v. Chambers	857
v. Champnay	2042
v. Chapman	774, 918, 2079
v. Chappel	1667
v. Chappell	1378
v. Charlesworth	2281
v. Charnock	526, 580, 657,
	1177, 1364,
	1837
v. Chasson	1732
v. Cheverton	838, 847, 855,
	2081
v. Child	1666
v. Christopher	1326, 1349
v. Clancey	520
v. Clapham	1646
v. Clare	1128
v. Clarendon	2372
v. Clark	850
v. Clarke	62, 200, 360,
	1106, 1117, 1760,
	1982
v. Clay	62
v. Clement	1836
v. Clewes	390, 855, 2100
v. Cliviger	607, 2228,
	2234, 2235
v. Cobbett	
	29 How. St. Tr. 1981
	2 State Tr. n. s. 367,
	1981
v. Cobden	218
v. Cockburn	1408
v. Cockcroft	200, 396
v. Cockin	2513
v. Cole	1364
v. Coleman	
	6 Cox Cr. 2026
	7 How. St. Tr. 575,
	1042, 1991
v. Coley	838
v. Colledge	575, 896, 950,
	1005, 1364, 1864,
	2088
v. Colley	1842
v. Collier	838, 855
v. Collins	1981
v. Colton	1586
v. Coningsmark	761, 774,
	782, 811, 1826
v. Cook	986, 1732, 1837, 1839
v. Cooke	1872, 2201
v. Cooley	2248

TABLE OF CASES.

R.

	Section		Section		Section
R. v. Cooper		R. v. Denew	1981	R. v. Edwards	
5 C. & P.	836, 845	v. Denie	1196, 1196	12 Cox Cr.	1743
3 Cox Cr.	801, 852	v. Dennis		4 T. R.	986, 1970
v. Coote	850	3 F. & F.	1005	v. Egerton	828
v. Cope	1423	3 Lew. Cr. C.	2104	v. Eldridge	2070
v. Coppull	1944	v. Denslow	609	v. Ellicombe	1806
v. Corby	2272	v. Dent	564	v. Ellis	
v. Corder	879	v. Derby	2250	5 B. & C.	347
v. Cornelius	2259	v. Derrington	841, 2183	1 M. & A.	380
v. Cornish	1934, 1909, 2081, 2096	v. Deepard	1900, 2056, 2059, 2060	Ry. & Moo.	848
v. Cornwallis	575	v. Devils	847	v. Ewce	1864
v. Coroner	1165	v. Dewhurst		v. Elworthy	1199, 1206, 1244
v. Cotton	363	1 Low. Cr. C.	1329	v. Emden	1362
v. Court	824, 832, 848	1 State Tr. n. e.	648, 1182, 1243	v. Enoch	826, 832
v. Courtenay	800	v. Dillon		v. Entrehman	1818
v. Covey		v. Dilmore	1329	v. Erdheim	850, 1349, 2200
7 C. & P.	1327, 1849	v. Dingler	1367	v. Eriswell	1364, 1374, 1375, 1877, 1408, 1482, 1486
8 C. & P.	1262, 1327, 1349	v. Dixon			
v. Cowper	143, 144, 301, 457, 460, 1018, 1090, 1097, 1730, 1732, 1961	3 Burr.	2307	v. Frith	
v. Cox and Railton	2398	11 Cox Cr.	1732	v. Errington	1601, 1598
v. Cranburne	966	v. Doaks	57	v. Essex	
v. Craven	1440	v. Dogherty	532	1 How. St. Tr.	1364
v. Creamer	2066	v. Doherty	2230	Jardine	1837
v. Crickmer	363	v. Donellan	26, 87	v. Evans	1781
v. Crockett	1440	v. Donnelly	1981	v. Ezali	152, 1781, 2613
v. Crook	2260	v. Doran	1981	v. Exeter	1465
v. Crosby		v. Dosset	215, 301, 354	v. Eyre	1189, 1760
12 How. St. Tr.	523, 980, 986	v. Douglas		v. Fagot	1445
12 Mod.	1991	11 Man.	6, 850	v. Fagg	848
v. Crossfield	275, 821, 996	18 Q. B.	1824	v. Fairie	382, 451
v. Crouch		v. Dover	59	v. Falkner	2070
1 Cox Cr.	1696, 1697, 1700	v. Dowlin	2098	v. Fanshaw	2040
4 Cox Cr.	701	v. Dowling		v. Farler	2067, 2069
v. Crowhurst	1781	3 Cox Cr.	2040	v. Farley	2298
v. Croydon	829, 838	7 St. Tr. n. a.	1981	v. Farr	
v. Cuffey	1079	v. Downer	1078, 2325	4 F. & F.	1182, 1196
v. Cuipepper	1189, 1196, 1991	v. Downes	735	8 C. & P.	905
v. Daimas	2629	v. Doyle		v. Farrell	
v. Dammaree	1732	1 Cr. & D.	847	3 Cox Cr.	2079
v. Dane	2043	12 Ont.	822, 868, 2183	12 Cox Cr.	1406
v. D'Aoust	2276	v. Drege	826	v. Farrington	1811, 2138
v. Davidson	1982	v. Drain	1072	v. Fauconer	104, 575, 966, 1177, 1274, 1275
v. Davis		v. Drake	2529	v. Fearshire	1320
6 C. & P.	826, 850	v. Draper	56, 1981	v. Feilding	986, 1182, 1644, 1992
5 Mod.	520	v. Dredge	2081, 2513	v. Feiton	2250
v. Davison	56, 195, 1981	v. Drew	825, 837	v. Fennell	826, 832
v. Davin	1382	v. Drummond	1431, 1445	v. Fenwick	1364, 1395, 1837, 1909, 1991, 2096, 2328, 2569
v. Dawber	2056	v. Duffy	367, 451, 986, 1248, 1981, 1982	v. Ferguson	1781
v. Day	1398	v. Dunn		v. Fernley	523, 1177, 1330, 1703, 1981
v. Dean	1003	4 C. & P.	829	v. Ferrers	105, 232, 672, 681, 1480, 1621, 1671, 1983, 2239
v. Dean of St. Asaph's	1981	1 Moo. Cr. C.	326	v. Ferryfrystone	1364, 1375
v. Debenham	1601, 1633	v. Dunne	2056	v. Fiennes	575, 1364
v. De Berenger		v. Durham & Crowder	2056	v. Fisher	1836
Gurney	719, 1073	v. Dyer		v. Fitzgerald	1641
4 M. & S.	2574	1 Cox Cr.	579	v. Fitzharris	896
v. Deer	327	6 Mod.	1698	v. Fitzpatrick	1364, 2250
v. Deiamere	986, 1364, 1982	v. Dyke	2059	v. Flaherty	2070
v. De la Motte	694, 957, 1982, 1991, 1992	v. Dytche	142, 907	v. Flannagan	863, 890
		v. East Farleigh	1195		
		v. Easton	2102		
		v. Edgar	2070		
		v. Edge	1182, 1214		
		v. Edmonds	700, 2097		
		v. Edwards			
		8 C. & P.	761, 1263		
		3 Cox Cr.	2070		

TABLE OF CASES.

Section	Section	Section	Section
1743	R. v. Fletcher	R. v. Gibney	R. v. Hamp
186, 1870	4 C. & P. 2100	v. Gibson	v. Hampden
248	18 How. St. Tr. 1182	Car. & M. 2393	8 How. Cr. Tr. 1880
2070	1 Stra. 680	L. R. 18 Q. B. D. 21	9 How. St. Tr. 194
1808	v. Folson 708		1009, 1304
347	v. Forbes	v. Gilles 1881	v. Hankins 1206, 2307
880	7 C. & P. 818, 1265	v. Gilham 840, 847, 848, 2394	v. Hanson 1732
848	Holt N. P. 1878, 1893		v. Harcourt 1005
1804	v. Ford	v. Gilie 824, 834, 860	v. Hardwick 829
90, 1305,	5 Cox Cr. 761, 764, 1262	v. Gla'arn 1268	v. Hardwicke 1070, 1079
1844	2 Salk. 820, 833	v. Glead 2235	v. Harby 9, 50, 763, 762,
1362	v. Forderingsbridge 272	v. Ginster 1440, 1441, 1723	773, 780, 895,
826, 832	v. Forster 1442	v. Goldshede 850	1048, 1070, 1310,
1818	v. Forster 318	v. Goode 1160, 1543	1732, 1981, 2105,
140, 2200	v. Forsyth 2161	v. Gooders 819, 848, 1300,	2374
134, 1374,	v. Forsythe 160, 1404	1933, 1981	v. Hargrave 2000
177, 1408,	v. Foster	v. Goodwin 818	v. Harney 1406
82, 1485	7 C. & P. 1067, 1676,	v. Gordon	v. Harringworth 1288,
101, 1503	1747	11 How. St. Tr. 816	1309, 1302
75, 1440	1 Lew. 1828	21 How. St. Tr. 1182,	
	v. Fowke 932, 1981	1219, 1732,	v. Harris
	v. Fox 583	1851, 2214, 2535	5 B. & Ald. 2048
	v. Francis 818, 834, 966,		1 Cox Cr. 837
	1078, 1177, 1006,	v. Gould 858	4 Cox Cr. 1400
	1783, 2364	v. Grahme 367, 1901	8 Cox Cr. 2513
	v. Francis	v. Gray 354	4 F. & F. 246, 893
	3 Esp. 76	v. Granatelli 2183, 2256	Mood. Cr. C. 1849
	L. R. 2 C. C. R. 302,	v. Grant 392	v. Harrison
	321, 1181	v. Green	5 How. St. Tr. 1901
	v. Frederick 609	5 C. & P. 848, 865	12 How. St. Tr. 104,
	v. Freind 735, 985, 1128,	6 C. & P. 835	600, 966, 1364, 1374,
	1732, 1981,	7 How. St. Tr. 298,	1406, 2250
	2038, 2214	14 How. St. Tr. 517,	
	v. Frith 1983	1826, 2032,	v. Hart 6
	v. Frost	2072, 2081	v. Harvey 1666, 2372
	4 St. Tr. n. a. 867,	v. Greenwich 1608	v. Harwood 826
	1079, 1864,	v. Greep 523	v. Hassall 2065
	1896, 1981, 2372	v. Grey 785, 1177,	v. Hassett 847
	22 How. St. Tr. 1938	1864, 2286	v. Hastings 8, 10, 28, 43,
	v. Fulde 521	v. Griffiths 1375	784, 806, 906, 1043,
	v. Fuller 153	v. Griffin 2394	1329, 1867, 1871,
	v. Furley	v. Griggs 2231, 2230	1873, 1880,
	1 Cox Cr. 837	v. Grimwood 1639	2082, 2066
	3 State Tr. n. a. 1842	v. Gannell 268	v. Hathaway 9, 266, 321,
	v. Furse 414, 786, 1182,	v. Guthrie 2143	1751, 1917
	1214, 1268, 1280	v. Guttridge 1186, 1188	Hawkins 194, 575,
	v. Fussell 1981	v. Gwyn 1219	1864
	v. Gahagan 2096	v. Hadwen 916	v. Haworth 840, 850, 1206,
	v. Gallagher 580	v. Hadfield 1988	1206, 1278
	v. Gandfield 394, 1142	v. Hagan	v. Hay 2394, 2396
	v. Garbett 823, 850, 856,	8 C. & P. 1406	v. Hayes 1991, 1992
	2271, 2276	12 Cox Cr. 106	v. Hayman 1827
	v. Gardiner 2040	1 Jobb Cr. C. 1390	v. Hayward 2298
	v. Gardner 1684	v. Hailey 1676	v. Hazy 276, 2069
	v. Garner	v. Haines 1238	v. Hearn 832
	1 Den. Cr. C. 824,	v. Hains 194, 1215, 1218	v. Hearne 2100
	829, 832	v. Hake 1393	v. Heath 278, 667, 994,
	2 F. & F. 363	v. Hale 2024	1018, 1605,
	v. Garnet 2250, 2394	v. Hales 89, 1992	1910, 1917
	v. Gascoigne 1864	v. Hall	v. Hedge 50, 763, 1981
	v. Gavin	1 Cox Cr. 2513	v. Heesom 363, 1406
	15 Cox Cr. 844, 847	12 Cox Cr. 1196	v. Helehill 1877
	7 How. St. Tr. 9	2 Leach Cr. 884, 848	v. Hemp 1982
	v. Gay 1450	Bell Cr. C. 2235	v. Hensley 1991
	v. Gaynor 786, 2043	8 Cox Cr. 2236	v. Heselstine 451
	v. Gazard 2372	v. Hamilton	v. Hewett 832, 855
	v. Geering 216, 363	4 How. St. Tr. 576, 1605	v. Higgins 2100
	v. George 580	12 Man 1387	v. Higginson 1933
	v. Gibbons 829		v. Hinditch
			5 C. & P. 1873
			12 Cox Cr. 2358

TABLE OF CASES.

R.

R. v. Hill	Section	R. v. Hunter	Section	R. v. Kiddy	Section
2 Den. & P. C. C.	492, 495, 496, 1822	3 C. & P.	2211	v. Killen	1819
20 How. St. Tr.	2286	4 C. & P.	1200	v. Kimber	848
v. Hind	1432	v. Hnrly	2529	v. King	664
v. Hindmarsh	2081	v. Hutchinson	1432	5 C. & P.	681
v. Hinks	521, 680	v. Hyde	1390	1 Q. B.	1219, 2373
v. Hinley	326, 1182, 1196	v. Ings	781, 1157	2 T. R.	2370, 2280
v. Hodgkiss	988	v. Ireland	935, 1364, 1991	v. Kinglake	838
v. Hodgson	318	v. Ivy	818, 416, 785, 1224, 1598, 1650, 2227, 2285, 2333	v. Kingston	759, 760, 1487, 2286, 2309, 2313, 2380
1 Lew. Cr. C.	840	v. Jackson	1013, 2043	4 C. & P.	735, 745
1 Mood. Cr. C.	62, 200, 986	1 Lew. Cr. C.	680	20 How. St. Tr.	318
R. & R.	1850, 1858	6 Cox Cr.	2036	v. Kinloch	1205, 1208
v. Holden	1262, 2079	25 How. St. Tr.	1117, 2106	v. Kirkwood	575, 2250
v. Holland	1850, 2079	Ridgeway's Rep.	2106	v. Kitson	2043
v. Hollingsberry	1072, 1327	v. Jacobs	854	v. Knightley	2372
v. Hollingshead	1851	v. James	986	v. Knowles	735, 1123, 1329, 1364
v. Hoimes	824, 837	1 C. & P.	2181	v. Knox	207, 285, 1672
9 Br. C.	62, 200, 398, 1006, 1023	4 Cox Cr.	575	v. Labouchere	580
1 C. & K.	1821	8 How. St. Tr.	2158	v. Lafone	2250
12 Cox Cr.	1006	1 Show.	1072	v. Lake	847, 848, 866
2 F. & F.	1246	v. Jankowski	2060, 2289	2 Leach Cr. L.	88
L. R. 1 C. C. R.	1508	v. Jarvis	2250	Peake N. P.	2119
8 Cox Cr.	461	v. John	238, 318	v. Lambert	985, 995, 1018, 1849, 1667, 2250
6 T. R.	609	7 Cox Cr.	832, 2266	v. Langhorn	2513
v. Holy Trinity	1278	10 Cox Cr.	2069	v. Langmead	748
7 B. & C.	1667	v. Jellyman	1440, 1441	v. Langton	575, 1177, 1364, 2250
Settl. Cas.	2081	v. Jenkes	858	v. Langher	832
v. Hone	248	v. Jenkin	1075	v. Laver	580, 979, 1177, 1327, 1328, 1981, 1982, 1991, 2018, 2286
v. Hood	824, 837, 855	v. Jenkins	1442	v. Leary	1614
v. Hooper	835, 855	1 Cox Cr.	2059	v. Leatham	1212, 2282
v. Hope	782	L. R. 1 Cr. C. R.	1362, 1440, 1441	v. Ledbetter	1387
v. Hopes	1858	R. & R.	858	v. Lee	1387
v. Hopkins	318	v. John	1075	v. Lenehan	1208
8 C. & P.	2163	7 C. & P.	1442	v. Leveron	2325
10 Cox Cr.	1667	East Cr. L.	2239	v. Levy	2529
v. Hornbrook	2081	v. Johns	2239	v. Lewis	849, 850, 1349
v. Horner	248	v. Johnson	21, 1182, 1195, 1198, 1994, 2148, 2152	6 C. & P.	950
v. Horton	824, 837, 855	v. Johnston	843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848	7 How. St. Tr.	950
v. Hoetmen	835, 855	v. Jolliffe	2098	4 Esp.	986
v. Hough	782	v. Jones	2056, 2576	v. Lilburne	575, 1364, 1684, 1834, 2038, 2250, 2251
v. Howard	1858	2 Camp.	2100	v. Lillyman	1135, 1136, 1138, 1760
v. Howland	318	2 C. & P.	2298	v. Lincoln	519, 785, 1141, 1177, 1364, 2032
v. Howland	2163	1 Den. Cr.	1991	v. Lindsay	1605
v. Howe	1667	5 How. St. Tr.	195, 1981, 1982	v. Lisie	1816
v. Howell	1440	31 How. St. Tr.	195, 1981, 1982	v. Little	905
1 Denison Cr. C.	354	Peake N. P.	2098	v. Llanfaethly	1212
3 State Tr. n. s.	2073	R. & R.	836	v. Lloyd	1432
v. Howes	855	v. Jordan	2514	4 C. & P.	839
v. Hnbbard	1439	v. Kahalewai	2346, 2349	6 C. & P.	357
v. Hnbert	867	v. Kalabeen	848	7 C. & P.	609
v. Hucks	1451	v. Kamakaua	830		
v. Hudson	1837	v. Kea	2063		
v. Huggins	1981	v. Kearney	1981		
v. Hughes	1981	v. Keenan	1981		
1 C. & K.	2043, 2363	v. Kelsey	2059		
14 Cox Cr.	2513	v. Kenilworth	1194, 1195, 1196		
1 Cr. & D.	847, 1279	v. Kennedy	782		
1 Leach Cr. L.	1339	v. Kerne	1838		
v. Hulet	575, 680, 1476, 2070	v. Kerr	847		
v. Hulme	2281	v. Kidd	59, 351, 1864		
v. Hunt	867, 966, 1040, 1079, 1182, 1243, 1963, 2097				
1 State Tr. n. s.	867, 966, 1040, 1079, 1182, 1243, 1963, 2097				
2 Cox Cr.	1442				

TABLE OF CASES.

Section

1819
1981
848

664
681
2373
2280

898
759,
2286,
2360
5, 745,
318
1208
2250
2043
2372
1329,
1364
285,
1672
580
2250

847,
866
88
2119
1018,
2250
2513
748
1364,
2250
832
1177,
1981,
2018,
2288
1614
2282
1387
1387
1208
2325
2529

850,
1349
950
988
1364,
2088,
2251
1136,
1700
1141,
2082
1605
1816
905
1212

1432
839
357
609

	Section
R. v. Lockhart	850
v. Londonderry	1938
v. Long	
6 C. & P.	847
Old Bailey	221, 1984
v. Long Backby	160
v. Louie	1442, 1445, 1448
v. Lovat	25, 685, 986, 1882
v. Love	2086
v. Lovett	1981, 2520
v. Lowick	195, 1981
v. Luce	2264
v. Luckhurst	829, 836
v. Luffe	
8 East	2063
8 T. R.	612
v. Lundy	1142, 1750
v. Lydeard St. Lawrence	1486
v. Lyons	580
v. McBerny	847
v. McCafferty	
25 N. Br.	886, 858
10 Cox Cr.	2038
v. M'Donall	995
v. McDonnell	852
v. M'Donough	1982
v. Macfarlane	1981
v. McGovern	1327
v. M'Guire	
2 East Pl. Cr.	2024
1 Leach Cr. L.	1839
v. Macguire	575, 702, 819, 1364, 1991
v. McHugh	850
v. McIntosh	1981
v. Mackay	1442
v. McKenna	952, 1005
v. MacLane	2574
v. McLean	850
v. M'Naghten	672
v. M'Naughton	1933
v. Macclesfield	1850, 1364, 1825, 1877, 1982, 2260, 2261, 2269, 2281
v. Magill	848
v. Maguire	998
v. Maillonx	367, 1029
v. Mallings	579
v. Mallory	4, 1070
v. Maloney	1262
v. Mansfield	
14 Cox Cr.	822, 886
1 Q. B.	2063
v. Marshall	1408
v. Martin	
2 Camp.	1634, 1661
6 C. & P.	200, 986
12 Cox Cr.	1163, 1802
1 Law. Cr. C.	318
2 M. & Rob.	986
6 State Tr. n. s.	1827, 2119
v. Maskall	664, 986, 1612, 1732, 1981
v. Matthews	
4 Cox Cr.	1262
15 How. St. Tr.	1991

	Section
R. v. Mawbey	1674
v. May	347
v. Mayhew	2042
v. Mead	
2 B. & C.	1432
1 Burr.	2239
2 Ld. Raym.	2259
v. Megson	1136, 1138, 1700
v. Melville	4, 377, 672, 735, 1078, 1219, 1362, 2223
v. Merceron	850
v. Merthyr Tlvdll	1246
v. Metheringham	1193
v. Mick	847, 848
v. Middlesex	1350
v. Middlezoy	1208
v. Mill	825, 839
v. Millard	818
v. Millhouse	579
v. Millen	820
v. Millier	1667
v. Millis	2082, 2083
v. Mills	1666
v. Milne	1911
v. Milton	1582, 1592, 1684
v. Minton	1430
v. Mitchel	302, 367, 818
v. Mitchell	
6 Cox Cr.	794
17 Cox Cr.	1072, 1890, 1445
v. Mobbs	363
v. Mockford	2081
v. Moders	575, 1364
v. Mogg	363
v. McClinn	811, 896, 1430
v. Moir	1262
v. Mompesson	2250
v. Moody	838
v. Mooney	1440, 1442
v. Moore	
2 C. & P.	216, 318
2 Den. Cr. C.	825, 829, 832, 837
v. Moores	2059
v. Mordant	1364
v. More	1911, 2250
v. Morgan	
14 Cox Cr.	1442
1 Leach Cr. L.	1818
1 Moo. & Rob.	1994, 1999
v. Morley	1364, 1667
v. Morris	
4 How. St. Tr.	1177
1 Leach	2529
v. Morre	1349
v. Morten	
4 M. & S.	1194, 1195, 1196
2 Moo. & Rob.	837
v. Mosey	858, 859
v. Motherwell	1346, 1661
v. Mndie	2040
v. Muilins	761, 969, 2056, 2060
v. Murlis	1894

	Section
R. Murphy	
A. M. & O.	2015
8 C. & P.	4, 440, 770, 774, 786, 1249, 1258, 1259, 1280, 1889
19 How. St. Tr.	195, 1106, 1981
v. Mnscoit	2032, 2040
v. Nan-e-quis-a-ka	605
v. Natrass	854
v. Nayler	2250
v. Neal	2059
v. Netherthong	1894, 2145
v. Neville	382, 1066
v. Newman	1271, 1839
v. Newton	
1 C. & K.	2168
Dyer	2032
15 L. T.	1292
2 Moo. & Rob.	2086
v. Nicholas	
2 C. & K.	1760, 1821
6 Cox Cr.	1442
v. Nichols	1982
v. Nicholson	1873
v. Noakes	2069
v. Noble	247
v. Noel	966, 1117
v. Norfolk	
1 How. St. Tr.	516, 575, 819, 1364, 2250
Jardine's Cr. Tr.	1818, 1837, 2082
v. Norwood	2084, 2085, 2086, 2088
v. Nnndocomar	960, 1223, 1837, 2198, 2212, 2265, 2375
v. Nnnez	2032, 2040
v. Nntley	1503
v. Oakhampton	600
v. Oates	518, 527, 1864, 1405, 1838, 1909, 2250
v. O'Brien	157, 367, 461, 1841, 2374
v. O'Coigly	986
v. O'Connell	367, 461, 789, 1079, 1182, 1368, 1669, 2097, 2119, 2150, 2374, 2529
v. O'Connor	
27 How. St. Tr.	195, 1980, 1982
4 St. Tr. n. s.	157, 367, 1981
v. Oddy	194, 326
v. O'Doherty	367, 667, 1346, 2494
v. O'Donnell	580, 1981
v. Offord	1988
v. Oldroyd	905
v. Ollis	321
v. Onbie	986
v. Osborne	1760
v. Osman	1440, 1441
v. Overton	1005

TABLE OF CASES.

R.

	Section		Section		Section
R. v. Owen	850	R. v. Primelt	326	R. v. Roden	263
v. Oxford	232, 681, 1983	v. Pritchard	1160	v. Roebuck	321
v. Paakaula	852, 860	v. Proud	331	v. Rogan	985
v. Padstow	2447	v. Prunty	1406, 1828	v. Rogers	2089
v. Page		v. Furnell	2250, 2264	v. Romp	882
4 B. & Ad.	318	v. Quelch	1684	v. Rook	612, 2063
2 Cox Cr.	200	v. Quin	761	v. Rookwood	523, 979, 986, 1177, 1982
v. Pah-Mah-Gay	1818	v. Radford	840, 2394		
v. Pain	818	v. Raleigh	575, 1364, 1430, 1837, 2036	v. Rooney	216, 414
v. Palne	1864, 1375, 2100	v. Ramsden	762, 2125	v. Rorke	1021
v. Palmer		v. Rankin	367	v. Rosewell	367, 769, 1732, 1857, 1982, 2250
Annual Register	457, 1159	v. Rastrick	1195	v. Rosser	2570
6 C. & P.	1899	v. Randnitz	1684	v. Row	829
v. Parker		v. Rawden		v. Rowan	285, 986, 1962
Car. & M.	2040, 2042	2 A. & E.	1195, 1196	v. Rowland	580
1 Cox Cr.	988	8 B. & C.	2447	v. Rowley	2098
8 Cox Cr.	829	v. Read	2061	v. Rowton	55, 57, 58, 59, 194, 195, 216, 1609, 1614, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1985, 1986
3 Dougl.	1124	v. Reading			
Leigh & C.	832	7 C. & P.	1667	v. Rnnd	2066
v. Parmenter	2339	7 How. St. Tr.	523, 575, 986, 1910, 2250, 2280	1 Cowp.	2066
v. Parratt	836			1 Leach Cr. C.	818, 819, 884
v. Parris	607	Lee t. Hardw.	607, 612, 2063, 2239	1 Leach Cr. L.	2236
v. Partridge	836	v. Reaney	1441	v. Rndge	1008, 1982
v. Patch	26	v. Reardon	216, 331, 347, 357, 363, 1135	v. Russell	367, 1364, 1732, 2032, 2094, 2375
v. Payne	580	v. Reason		v. Ruston	498, 811, 1818
v. Peacock	803	12 Cox Cr.	824, 839	v. Ryan	62
v. Pearce	367	16 How. St. Tr.	1167, 1326, 1327, 1829, 1430, 1450	v. Ryle	1709
v. Pedley	728	v. Redman	1163	v. Ryton	2188
v. Peel	1440	v. Redmond	1981	v. Sadler	2199
v. Pegler	2230	v. Reed	1352	v. Saffron Hill	1196, 1196
v. Peltier	1875, 1442	v. Rees	848, 1667	v. Salisbury	218
v. Pembroke	1364, 1480, 1718	v. Reeve	832	v. Salmon	457
		v. Regan		v. Sandys	860
v. Penn and Mead	2250	4 Cox Cr.	354	v. Sansome	848, 865
v. Perkins	508, 1440, 1443, 1821	16 Cox Cr.	1236, 2154	v. Saunders	321, 2153
v. Perry		v. Regicides; see Regicides' Trial.		v. Scaife	1408
2 Cox Cr.	359	v. Renwick	818	5 Cox Cr.	1405
14 How. St. Tr.	867, 2081	v. Rhodes		1 Moo. & Rob.	1452
v. Petcherini	1732, 1850	1 Leach Cr. L.	1641	v. Scammonden	2433
v. Peters	195, 811	1 Q. B.	321, 2272	v. Schlesinger	728
v. Petherston	1646	v. Richards		v. Scot	
v. Petrie	1803, 1909, 1910	5 C. & P.	836, 847, 855	5 How. St. Tr.	1991
v. Pettit	848	1 Moo. & R.	1278, 1667	v. Scott	
v. Phillips	2514	v. Richardson		1 D. & B.	822, 842, 843, 846, 849, 850, 852, 2260, 2266, 2270
v. Phillips	318, 1021	2 Cox Cr.	416	v. Scroop	735, 1991, 2250
v. Philippotts	745, 748	3 F. & F.	216, 331	v. Searle	681
v. Picton	660, 1157, 1271, 1674, 1697, 1981, 1982	3 F. & F.	2374	v. Semple	818
		v. Richmond	1177	v. Serjeant	2239
v. Piercy	166	v. Riggs	1374	v. Serva	1817
v. Pike		v. Riley	62, 200, 398	v. Seven Bishops	773, 1364, 1991, 1992
3 C. & P.	1489, 1443	v. Rivers	848, 849		
1 K. B.	850, 2281	v. Roberts		v. Sewel	529
v. Pikesley	1349, 1667	2 C. & K.	2042	v. Sexton	804, 839
v. Pinney	2119	1 Camp.	203, 321	v. Shaftesbury	1840, 2360
v. Pitcher	986	v. Robins	200, 1022	v. Sharpe	867
v. Plumer	1073, 2152	v. Robinson		v. Shaw	
v. Plunket	896, 1177, 1364, 2250	Annual Register	460	6 C. & P.	829, 839, 2286
		5 Cox Cr.	1205, 1206	10 Cox Cr.	2042
v. Pook	1726	L. R. 1 Cr. C. R.	850		
v. Pountney	829	v. Robotham	1350		
v. Povey	690				
v. Powell	2380				
v. Pressley	1328				
v. Preston	1825				
v. Friddle	520, 1270				

TABLE OF CASES.

Section	R. v. Shaw	Section	R. v. St. Gilles	Section	R. v. Thistlewood	Section
208	16 Cox Cr. 950, 1022		1814, 1821		525, 1886,	
321	1 Lew. Cr. C. 660		v. St. Martin's 735, 747, 749,		1982, 2427	
988	v. Shearea 1981, 1991, 2036		753, 754, 762		v. Thomas	
2089	v. Sheehan 2056, 2059		v. St. Peter 2063		2 Leach Cr. L. 843,	
883	v. Shellard 1292		v. Stafford 894, 960, 986,		6 C. & P. 1828	
119, 2063	v. Shepherd		1177, 1399, 1067,		7 C. & P. 838	
523, 979,	7 C. & P. 838		1909, 1982, 2036,		Dyer 824, 2286	
96, 1177,	1 Cox Cr. 1998, 1994,		2038, 2250		v. Thompson	
1982	2007, 2026		v. Standsfield 9, 106, 818		12 Cox Cr. 609	
216, 414	v. Sherfield 1177, 1364,		v. Stannard 55		13 Cox Cr. 1406, 2079	
1021	2032		v. Stapleton 960		1 Leach Cr. L. 836,	
99, 1732,	v. Sheridan 1179		v. Steal		860	
982, 2260	v. Sheriff of Chester 1868		18 Jnst. P. 848		2 Q. B. 825, 826, 832,	
2670	v. Sherman 580		1 Leach Cr. C. 1160		888, 847, 860	
829	v. Sherrington 855		v. Steele 1439, 1445		v. Thornton 838, 847	
86, 1962	v. Shilmin 579		v. Stenson 321		v. Throckmorton 575, 1864,	
580	v. Shrewsbury 2190		v. Stephens		2250	
2098	v. Shrimpton 55, 58, 193,		16 Cox Cr. 831		v. Tidd 2059	
7, 58, 59,	196		3 State Tr. n. s. 1182		v. Tinkler 21	
16, 1609,	v. Sidney 1807, 1837, 1991,		v. Stephenson 1408		v. Tippett 2070	
31, 1982,	1992, 2033, 2094		v. Steptoe 2100		v. Tissington 62, 200, 216,	
185, 1986	v. Silverlock 2012		v. Stimpson 1873		1982, 2629	
2066	v. Simmonds 2079		v. Stockdale 2094		v. Tolson 790	
818, 819,	v. Simpson		v. Stockland 2083		v. Tong 523, 526, 575, 580,	
884	1 Lew. Cr. C. 1440		v. Stoke-upon-Trent 2440		318, 1076, 1477,	
2236	1 Moody Cr. C. 829,		v. Stokes 761		2032, 2036	
08, 1982	886, 838		v. Stone		v. Tooke 59, 196, 728, 1073,	
34, 1732,	v. Simmonsto 2086		1 East 2089		1782, 1795, 1871,	
94, 2875	v. Simons		25 How. St. Tr. 4, 1079,		1963, 2139	
11, 1818	6 C. & P. 2339		1174, 1339		v. Toole 667, 826, 847	
62	19 How. St. Tr. 2355		v. Stourbridge 1196, 1196		v. Tower 1263, 1641,	
1709	v. Skeen		v. Strafford 575, 1177, 1364,		2018, 2056	
2188	Bell Cr. C. 850		1880, 2032, 2375		v. Towey 4, 2042	
2199	8 Cox Cr. 2281		v. Streater 1850		v. Townshend 1851	
96, 1196	v. Slaney 703, 2201		v. Stripp 848		v. Trant 1430	
218	v. Slaughter 829, 840, 847		v. Stroner 918, 2079		v. Travers 1821	
457	v. Silngsby 1177		v. Stroud 2250		v. Treble 21	
880	v. Sloggett 823, 850, 2260		v. Stubbs 2056, 2059		v. Triganzie 194, 196	
948, 865	v. Smith		v. Sullivan 2070		v. Troop 1827	
31, 2153	8 Burr. 291, 2273		v. Sunderland 318		v. Truman 2086	
1408	2 C. & K. 1781		v. Sutton 1662, 1800, 2570		v. Tubby 848, 849, 850	
1405	2 C. & P. 318		v. Swatkins 847, 860		v. Tucket 232	
1452	4 C. & P. 318		v. Swendsen 1177, 1981,		v. Tuffs 2070	
2433	10 Cox Cr. 1442		2289, 2250		v. Turberfield 258	
728	16 Cox Cr. 1442		v. Tandy 1963, 1991, 1992		v. Turner	
1991	Holt N. P. 1875		v. Tarbot 986		2 C. & K. 2158	
2, 842,	Mood. Cr. C. 609		v. Tarrant 1328		6 How. St. Tr. 575,	
46, 849,	Old Bailey 26		v. Taverner 318		1028, 1616,	
2, 2260,	R. & R. 1387, 1393		v. Tawell 392		1982	
6, 2270	1 Stark. 850, 1349		v. Taylor		32 How. St. Tr. 59,	
1, 2250	23 U. C. C. P. 1442		1 C. & P. 2079		1836, 1981	
681	Williams 1130		8 C. & P. 825, 826,		1 Lew. Cr. C. 1477	
818	v. Smith & Davis 2068		1259, 1329		1 Mood. Cr. C. 1388	
2239	v. Somerset 519, 819, 1864		5 Cox Cr. 854		v. Tutchin 1177	
1817	v. Souci 848		6 Cox Cr. 1994		v. Twelve Bishops 2250	
3, 1364,	v. Sourton 2063		13 Cox Cr. 1829, 1691,		v. Twyn 575, 1991, 2250	
1, 1992	v. Southey 689		1696, 1700		v. Tyler 829, 855	
529	v. Southwood 347		McNally 1982		v. Tylney 2298	
04, 839	v. Sparkes 2394		Peake N. P. 1830		v. Udall 575, 1364, 2217,	
0, 2390	v. Spencer		Pelham 579		2250	
367	1 C. & P. 1676		Skinner 1364, 1384		v. Ulmer 1406	
9, 839,	7 C. & P. 829		v. Teal		v. United Kingdom	
2286	v. Spilsbury 499, 1349,		2 Camp. 986		El. T. Co. 792	
2042	1439, 1442		9 East 527		v. Unkles 2070	
	v. Spoilen 811, 1812, 2079		11 East 21, 1010, 1015		v. Upchurch 829, 836	
	v. Squires 1123		v. Tellicote 1328		v. Upper Boddington 2211,	
	v. St. George 952		v. Thanet 1963		2308	
			v. Thelwall 1986		v. Upton 2066	

TABLE OF CASES.

R.

	Section		Section		Section
R. v. Upton St. Leonards	1880	R. v. Wealand	1828	R. v. Winslow	363
v. Van Bntchell	1441	v. Weaver	1219, 1646, 2629	v. Winsor	580
v. Vandercomb	351	v. Webb		v. Wintonn	811, 1364
v. Vane	785, 1219, 1901	4 C. & P.	849	v. Withers	445
v. Vanghan		6 C. & P.	2059	v. Withers	2821
13 How. St. Tr.	351,	11 Cox Cr.	524	v. Wobnrm	2218, 2223
499, 986, 1177,		1 Moo. & Rob.	457,	v. Wood	
1606, 1839, 2032,			2212	14 Cox Cr.	1188, 1700
2088, 2266		3 Stark.	1842	Dears. & B.	2089
Salk.	367	v. Webster	2042	1 F. & F.	254
v. Verelet	2168	v. Weeks	216, 318	5 Jur.	988
v. Vernon	829, 889	v. Weightman	1981	Romilly	867
v. Vice-Chancellor	1351,	v. Weller	1849	v. Woodbnrne	818, 847
	2215	v. Wellings	1406	v. Woodcock	1364, 1438,
v. Vickery	2222	v. Wells	2059		1442, 1451, 2239
v. Vincent		v. Welton	1406	v. Woodfall	2366
119 C. & P.	1780	v. Westbeer	1364	v. Woodhead	918, 2079
3 State Tr. n. s.	2079	v. Weston	576, 1364	v. Woodley	2200
v. Virrier	2040	v. Whalley	1163, 1802	v. Woods	
v. Voke	364	v. Wheeler	846, 849, 850	5 Br. C.	21, 1442
v. Wainwright	1726	v. Wheatland	2043	1 Cr. & Dix	1044
v. Wakefield	2062, 2239	v. Wheelley	848, 849, 850	v. Worsenham	1858, 2250
v. Wakeman	1018, 1329,	v. Wheeling	2070	v. Worth	1461, 1464,
	1667	v. Whelan	1046		1524
v. Walker		v. Whitbread	2079	v. Wo Sow	2056
6 C. & P.	850	v. White		v. Wrangle	2429
28 How. St. Tr.	499,	2 Cox Cr.	1021	v. Wright	
933, 1164,		17 How. St. Tr.	819,	1 Lew. Cr. C.	839, 848
1732, 2210			848, 1981	17 N. Br.	1066, 1677
1 Leach Cr. U.	1818	Leach Cr. C.	492, 1816,	R. & R.	681, 1921
2 Moo. & Rob.	1136,		1817	v. Wylie	818
	1193, 1700	R. & R.	2070	v. Wyse	2061
v. Walkley	838, 2100	v. Whitebread	518, 935,	v. Yates	2042
v. Walkling	579		986, 1002, 1177,	v. Yewin	946
v. Wall			1961, 2036, 2250	v. Yore	2239
28 How. St. Tr.	1933,	v. Whitehead		v. Yongg	2230
	1981, 1982	3 C. & K.	221, 1984	v. Zelgert	223
Russell	1374	1 C. & P.	254, 821	v. Zulneta	280
v. Wallace	1684	L. R. 1 C. C. R.	497,	R. Co. v. Yelser	456
v. Walter	1349		811, 1819, 1822	v. Yerger	456
v. Ward	1981	v. Whyley	216, 305	Rabeke v. Baer	2063, 2527
v. Warden of the Fleet	980,	v. Widdup	850	Rachal v. Rachal	1513
	1270, 2296	v. Wiggins	761	Rachfield v. Careless	2475
v. Warickshall	819, 822,	v. Wilbain	2004	Rackemann v. Impr. Co.	2442
	823, 825, 834,	v. Wild	833, 840, 847	Radam v. Microbe De-	
	858, 859	v. Wilkes		stroyer C.	1978
v. Waring	73, 76	7 C. & P.	2056, 2059	Radcliff v. Ins. Co.	1684
v. Warringham	829, 838,	19 How. St. Tr.	2264	Radcliffe v. Fursman	2294
	800	v. Wilkins	1789	Radford v. McDonald	2065
v. Warner	2016	v. Wilkinson	1327	v. R. Co.	1387
v. Warwick	523	v. Williams		v. Rice	1021, 1040
v. Wason	6	7 C. & P.	1821	v. State	1433
v. Wasson	2239	8 C. & P.	2025, 2236	Raeff v. Moore	2309
v. Watkins	1667	1 Cox Cr.	579	Rafe v. State	832
v. Watkinson	2318	8 Cox Cr.	760, 761,	Rafferty v. State	321
v. Watson			905	Raffles v. Michelhaus	2466
1 Camp.	2152	1 Lew. Cr. C.	2018	Ragan v. Smith	2153
3 C. & K.	761, 1828	v. Williamson	221, 1984	Ragland v. Green	1304
32 How. St. Tr.,		v. Willis	818, 986, 1981	v. State	679
and 2 Stark.	4, 260,	v. Willshire	2506	v. Wickware	2210
	882, 786,	v. Wilson		Ragsdale v. State	247
	791, 979, 986,	Ber. N. Br.	2139	Raiford v. State	2000
	1073, 1079, 1234,	8 Cox Cr.	1406	Ralling v. Com.	1362, 1431,
	1285, 1270, 1280,	2 F. & F.	152, 1781		1432
	1836, 1854, 1963,	2 Green (Sc.)	773	Railroad v. Atkins	1408
	1261, 1982, 2272,	Holt N. P.	848, 849	v. J. M.	1141
	2300, 2374, 2375	1 Lew. Cr. C.	238	Railroad Bank v. Evans	1681
2 T. R.	1199	v. Wink	1142	Railroad Co. v. Ayres	1694,
v. Watt	2269	v. Winkworth	352		1696

Section	Section	Section	Section
303	Railroad Co. v. Bixby	719	Randall v. Northwestern
11, 1304	v. Burke	786	Tel. Co.
445	v. Foreman	1943	v. State
2321	v. Kenney	3507	v. Van Rensselaer
18, 2223	v. Schultz	1922, 1926,	v. Venable
		1951	v. Wadsworth
38, 1700	v. Tax Case	1850	Randegger v. Ehrhardt
2089	Railroad & Tel. Cos.		
254	v. Board	2580	Randel, re
988	Railway v. Pool	782	v. Chesapeake & D. C.
867	Railway Co. v. Amos	613	Co.
1, 1468, 847	v. Crowder	1750	Randle v. Blackburn
4, 1438,	v. Jones	455, 456	Randolf v. Bloomfield
51, 2239	v. Richardson	455	Randolph v. Adams
2356	Railway P. & F. C. Ass.		v. Doss
18, 2079	v. Robinson	1770	v. Easton
2200	Raines v. Perryman	1247	v. Gordon
	v. Philip	1320	v. Loughlin
	v. State	897	v. McCain
31, 1442	Raines Adm'r v. Raines'		v. Woodstock
1044	Cred'rs	1463, 1464	18, 20, 1263
38, 2250	Raine v. Hines	2110	Rands v. Thomas
1, 1464,	v. Potter	770	527
1524	Rainale v. St. John C. R.		Rank v. Shewey
2058	Co.	1750	Rankin v. Crow
2420	Rains v. State		v. Fidelity Ins. T. & S.
	88 Ala.	2276	D. Co.
39, 848	152 Ind.	1976	v. McKenzie
3, 1677	7 Tex. App.	2089	v. Maxwell
31, 1921	Rainwater v. Elmore	1839	Rankine v. Clarke
818	Raisler v. Springer	1974	Ranney v. Donovan
2061	Raleigh Hosiery Co. v.		v. R. Co.
2042	R. Co.	2599	461, 1872
946	Raleigh & G. R. Co. v.		Ransbottom v. State
2239	Bradshaw		1873
2230	Ralph v. Br...	1218, 2	Ransome v. Christian
223		2222, 2,	Raper v. R. Co.
260		2,	458, 461
456			Raphael v. Bank of
3, 2527	v. Hensler	1067	England
1513	v. R. Co.	664	stapley v. Klugh
2475	Ralston v. Lothain	7	791
2442	v. Miller	1586	Rapp v. Le Blanc
	Ralston's Case	818	905, 907
1978	Raiya v. Atkins	2468	Rarden v. Cunningham
1684	Ramadge v. Ryan	1984, 2349	571
2294	Rambert v. Cohen	735	Raridan v. R. Co.
2065	Rambler v. Tryon	283, 1738,	917, 1018,
1387		1917, 1938	Rasi v. Furnel
1, 1049	Rambousek v. Su-		1085, 1302
1433	preme Council	2525	1387,
2309	Ramey v. State	898	v. State
832	Ramsay's Estate	1676	Rash's Estate
321	Ramsbottom v. Buck-		Rass v. Sebastian
2466	hurst	2450	2027
2153	v. Phelps	1081, 1082,	Rastetter v. Reynolds
1304		1084	2464
679	v. Tunbridge	2429	Ratcliff v. Courier-Journal
2210	Ramedell v. Clark	2432, 2518	73,
247	Ramsey v. Smith	1620	207
2060	Rencliffe v. Parkyns	1311,	v. Ratcliffe
2, 1431,		2141, 2145	v. Trimble
1432	Rand v. Dodge	1291, 1458	v. Waies
1408	v. Huff	1778	610, 2063,
1141	Randall v. Atkinson	1390	2336, 2341
1681	v. Chase	702, 1578	Ratcliffe v. Blessey
1694,	v. Glover	2349	1858
1698	v. Holenbake	73, 74, 200,	Ratigan v. Judge
		406	1938
	v. News Ass.	406	Ratliff v. Ratliff
			697, 1082,
			1225, 2016
			Ratteree v. Chapman
			v. Neison
			1225
			Raub v. Blairstown C.
			Ass'n
			2169
			v. Carpenter
			1988
			v. Nisbett
			1073
			v. Van Horn
			1850
			Rauch v. Scholl
			392
			Rauh, re
			2210
			Raulhac v. White
			1718
			Rawley v. Brown
			2515
			v. Doe
			1230, 1278,
			1651
			Rawlins v. Rickards
			1523
			Rawlins v. State
			896, 791
			Rawles v. Ford
			133, 923,
			923, 1615
			v. State
			133, 923,
			928, 1615
			Rawls v. Ins. Co.
			1061, 1947
			Ravenscroft v. Giboney
			1267
			Rawson v. Curtiss
			1240
			v. Haigh
			1788
			v. Ins. Co.
			266, 1081
			Rawstone v. Preston Co.
			2319
			Ray v. Bell
			1037
			v. Camp
			288
			v. Castle
			1526
			v. Coffin
			1141
			v. Com.
			2236
			v. State,
			50 Ala.
			1144, 1966
			1 Greene Ia.
			1850,
			2056, 2059
			35 Tex. Cr.
			9354
			Rayburn v. Lumbers Co.
			301
			Raymond v. Cummings
			1058
			v. Day
			302
			v. Lowell
			1951
			v. R. Co.
			2381, 2383
			Rayner v. Ritson
			1858
			Raynes v. Bennett
			2336
			v. Towgood
			2257
			Raynham v. Canton
			1271, 1684
			Raynor v. Lee
			1651
			v. Norton
			786, 783,
			1298, 1814
			v. R. Co.
			235, 1951
			Razor v. Razor
			944, 1890
			Rea v. Missouri
			1225
			Rea's Assignment
			2124
			Read v. Bailey
			1976
			v. Barker
			1414
			v. Bertrand
			1193
			v. Brookman
			2349
			v. Com.
			1206
			v. Gamble
			1179, 1224,
			1650, 2094
			v. Passer
			1 Esp.
			1206, 1644
			Peake N. P.
			2083
			v. Randel
			2126
			v. Rice
			1083
			v. Staton
			1267
			v. Sutton
			2450
			v. Vailey L. & C. Co.
			1943
			Reading v. Metcalf
			1299
			v. Mullen
			1225
			v. Weston
			1778
			Reading & C. R. Co. v.
			Latahaw
			456
			Readman v. Conv. y
			283
			Real v. People
			987, 1270
			v. State
			784
			Ream v. State
			1873
			Reavis v. State
			1476
			Reber v. Herring
			682
			Record v. Saratoga Springs
			2390
			Rector v. Bernaschina
			2442
			v. Rector
			291, 894,
			933, 2105
			v. Welch
			1680

TABLE OF CASES.

RED

	Section		Section		Section
Red v. State	987, 1033, 1130, 1732	Reed v. State	Nebr., 92 N. W. 1116	Renard v. Levinstein	2312
Redd v. State		15 Ob.	318, 1213, 1249, 1625	Renard v. Bay City	2180
63 Ark.	568	v. Tacoma Ass'n	2443	v. Pageot	1738
65 Ark.	700, 1269, 1410	v. Taylor	1938	Renfro v. State	1108, 1618
68 Ala.	106, 107, 106, 851	v. Thompson	2354	Reniger v. Fogossa	2032
69 Ala.	826, 833, 833, 856, 861, 1446	v. Williams	75, 210, 967	Reniham v. Dennin	2380, 2381, 2384
99 Ga.	1446	v. Willson	2581	Rennell v. Kimball	392
Redden v. Spruce	736, 747	Reeder v. Holcomb	561, 1784	Renner v. Bank	1106, 1273
Reddick v. State	2272	Reel v. Reel	1736, 1738	v. Thornburg	2020
Reddin v. Gates	770, 792	Rees v. Bowen	1053, 1215, 2158	Rennick v. Chloe	1680
Redding v. Redding's Est.	318, 702, 2018	v. Lawless	1065, 1299, 1651	Reno M. & L. Co. v. Westerfield	1909
Redding's Lessee v. M'Cubbin	1564	v. Walters	2139	Rens v. Relief Ass'n	1725
Redfern v. Redfern	2218, 2257	v. Williams	1816	Rensch v. Cold Storage Co.	1078
v. Smith	1163	Reese v. Hershey	461	Renshaw v. First National Bank	695
Redfield v. R. Co.	1951	v. Mining Co.	661	Repass v. Richmond	377, 1124
Redfield's Estate	2383	v. Reese	697	Reppard v. Warren	1677, 2163
Redford v. Birley	259, 367, 658, 1079, 1729, 1730, 1978	v. State	363	Republic v. Ah Wong	507
v. R. Co.	1669	v. Strickland	2433	v. Edwards	2056
Redford's Adm'r v. Peggy	2007, 2048	Reeside, The	2440	v. Hang Cheong	831
Redgrave v. Redgrave	2063	Reeve v. Dennett	442, 443, 457	v. Kahakanila	2236
Redington v. Cable Co.	1007	v. Wood	2239	v. Kuhla	2085
Redlich v. Baueries	1550, 1558	Reeves v. Brayton	529	v. Lanning	987
Redman v. Gouid	1681	v. Herr	610, 2386	v. Parsons	222, 2060, 2269
Redmond v. Com.	1434	v. Reeves	1267	v. Tokuji	987, 2071
Reece v. Trye	2294	v. State	1219, 1308	v. Toyotaro	754
Reed v. Anderson	2125	Reffell v. Reffell	2410	v. Tsunikioki	218, 1841
v. Brashers	1871	Reformed Church v. Ten Eyck	1033	v. Walpa	398, 1644, 2085
v. Clark	987, 1770, 2494	Reformed Presb. Church v. McCormick	2467	v. Yamane	218, 1393
v. Com.	1873, 1912	Regan v. McCormick	1681	Republican Publ. Co. v. Miner	1971
v. Deere	2447, 2456	Regicides' Trial	367, 1909, 2036, 2038	Republican Val. R. Co. v. Arnold	1943
v. Dick	451, 1747, 1978	Regier v. Sbreck	2036, 2038	Resolutions of the Judges	1262, 1349
v. Dickey	1082	Regnier v. Cabot	1028, 1612	Respublca v. Gibbs	987, 2255, 2256
v. Dodson	1651	Rehden v. Wesley	1377	v. M'Carty	2038
v. Gold	1387	Reid v. Batte	2447	Retan v. R. Co.	458
v. Haskins	1141	v. Colcock	1911	Reusens v. Lawson	378, 1082, 1267, 1566, 2105, 2427
v. Ins. Co.	1141	v. Diamond P. G. Co.	2442	Reuter v. Stuckart	2138, 2141, 2144
117 Ga.	2103	v. Dodson	1269	Reval v. Fox	2083
95 U. S.	2465	v. Ins. Co.	1975	v. State	276
v. Jackson	1593	v. Ladue	841	Reyburn v. Belotti	703
v. James	1894, 2211	v. Langlois	2317	Reynell v. Sprye	2298, 2312
v. King	906	v. Linck	252	Reynolds, ex p.	2251, 2271
v. Lamb		v. Margison	1279	v. Adams	283, 1738
6 H. & N.	18	v. Reid		v. Boston Rubber Co.	2463
6 Jur. n. s.	1219, 1640	17 N. J. Eq.	692, 1618	v. Burgess S. F. Co.	1862
v. McCord	1053	21 N. J. Eq.	2046	v. Dechaums	1974
v. Madison	1750, 1755	v. Warner	1058, 2020	v. Fitzpatrick	1404
v. Moseley	2505	Reifenider v. R. Co.	1951	v. Greenbaum	1010
v. New	718	Reilly v. Fitzgerald	1483, 1484	v. Hinrichs	2154
v. Peck	616	v. Relly's Succession	610	v. Ins. Co.	379, 1871
v. R. Co.		Reily v. London	2220	v. Kingsbury	1655
45 N. Y.	283, 488, 1719	Reiner v. Crawford	2410	v. Manning	1062
71 Wis.	1678	Reinhard v. Keenbartz	885	v. Powers	1404, 1668
v. Rice	1456	Reinhart v. Miller	1802	v. Quattlebum	1187, 1196, 1204
v. Smith	2308	Reinlinghaus v. Merchant's L. Ass'n	1974	v. R. Co.	1106
v. Spaulding	1126, 1128, 1129, 2016	Reinochi v. State	357, 851	v. Reynolds	2048
v. State		Reins v. People	2354	v. Robinson	681
147 Ind.	1885	Reitan v. Goebel	406	v. Rowley	2322
62 Miss.	549, 683, 1988	Reitz v. State	168, 1154		
		Rema v. State	2089		
		Rembert v. Brown	1938, 1978		
		Remick v. Rumery	1547		
		Remsen v. Brinckerhoff	1511		
		Remy v. Olds	457		

Section	Section	Section	Section
2312	Reynolds v. Shanks	Rich v. Flanders	Richmond v. Richmond
2180	v. State	v. Minneapolis	913,
1738	68 Ala. 1434, 1435	v. Trimble	1028, 1109
08, 1618	61 Ind. 1240	Richard v. Breim	v. State 1141
2052	147 Ind. 392, 1006	v. State	v. Sundburg 1028
30, 2381,	1196, 2336, 2497	Richards v. Bassett	v. Thomaston 1784
2384	1 Kelly 111, 247	v. Burden	Richmond's Appeal
392	58 Nebr. 1244, 2606	v. Foulke	Richmond L. & M. W.
06, 1273	v. Stille 1651	v. Geilaty	v. Ford 461, 561
2020	v. Tompkins 2349	v. Hicks	Richmond P. & P. Co. v.
1680	v. Whelan 2463	v. Jackson	Racks 480
1909	Reynolds v. State 2079	v. Lewis	Richmond U. P. R. Co. v.
1726	Rhea v. Deaver	v. Morgan	R. Co. 1540
	v. State	v. Pearl	Richmond & D. R. Co.
	100 Ala. 923	v. Richards	v. Childress 2220
1078	10 Yerg. 1476	v. Skiff	v. Garner 1698
	Rheinhardt v. State 1873, 1877	v. State	v. Hammond 1760
	Rhind v. Wilkinson 1298	91 Tenn. 580, 1841	v. Hissong 2464
77, 1124	Rhinehart v. Whitehead 1976	82 Wis. 906, 911	v. Jones 1296, 1300,
77, 2163	Rhodes v. Fuller 233, 1671	v. Stewart 1212	1301, 1361
507	v. Sellin 1204, 1297, 1298,	Richards Co. v. Hiltelhelst 2440	v. Vance 1096
2066	1392, 1417,	Richards Iron Works v.	Richmond & O. R. Co. v.
831	2105, 2307	Giennon 1234	Powers 2552
2236	1538, 1556	Richardson, re 2065	Rickards v. Murdock 1947
2085	Rhodes v. Gani 728	v. Allan 907, 917	Rickerson v. Ins. Co. 2464, 2466
987	v. McLean 1195, 2105	v. Anderson 564, 1271, 1684	v. State 1043
30, 2269	Rhode Island H. T. Co.	v. Babcock 1014	Rickerstricker v. State 605
37, 2071	v. Thorndike 1644, 2088,	v. Bank 2465	Ricketts v. Rogers 2556
754	2506	v. Bly 2500	Rickey v. Zeppenfeldt 1951
18, 1841	Rhodes v. Barch	v. Debuys 1876	Rickman v. Carstairs 2459
14, 2085	v. Com. 64	v. Disborow 2032	Riddle v. Germanton
18, 1893	Ky., 64 S. W.	v. Dorman's Ex'x 1547	v. Hudgins 2432
	48 Pa. 1781	v. Emery 1548, 1549	Ridenhour v. R. Co. 506, 507
1971	v. Riggs 1812	v. Foster 2445	Rideout v. Newton 1062
	v. U. S. 664	v. Golden 787, 1891	Rideout's Trusts 2063
	Rhodes Furn. Co. v.	v. Green 2006	Rider v. Miller 1938
	Weedon 944	v. Hitchcock 1959	v. People 274, 968
	Ricard v. Williams 1778, 2522	v. International Pot-	Ridgeway v. Darwin 2122
7, 2255,	Ricards v. Safe Deposit	tery Co. 1062	Ridgway v. Phillip 783, 1058
2256	& T. Co. 2528	v. Kelly 1029	Ridier v. Ridier 1951
2038	Rice, re 1290	v. Learned 607	Ridley v. Gyde
458	v. Com.	v. McGoidrick 715	9 Bing. 1788
8, 1082,	100 Pa. 2061	v. McLemore 2349	1 M. & Rob. 1262
7, 1566,	102 Pa. 265, 2079	v. Milburn 1339	v. R. Co. 1640
26, 2427	v. Coolidge 2042	v. Newcomb 2016	Rie v. Rie 2067
3, 2141,	v. Cunningham 1028, 2109,	v. Richardson	Riegel v. Wilson 1407
2144	2159	v. Richardson	Rieger's Succession 1391
2083	v. Gunn 1697	4 Port. 2009	Riehl v. Evansville Foun-
276	v. Howard 906	50 Vt. 2067, 2069	dry Ass'n 1066
703	v. Keib 619	v. Robbins 112	Rigby v. Logan 1521, 1532
8, 2312	v. Mfg. Co. 2415	v. Roberts	Rigden v. Woicott 406
1, 2271	v. Oatfield 806, 907, 1802	23 Ga. 1012, 1605	Rigg v. Cook 1777, 1778
3, 1738	v. Rice	196 Ill. 2184	v. Curgenvon 2066
2463	50 Mich. 1938	v. State	v. Wilton 1904, 1417
1862	104 Mich. 2239	90 Md. 460, 1005	Riggins v. Brown 1668, 2008
1974	47 N. J. Eq. 2220	34 Tex. 398	Riggs v. Com. 390
1404	N. J. Eq., 25 Atl. 1278,	44 Tex. Cr. 2343	v. Myers 2477
1010	1279	v. Stewart 1877	v. Powell 693, 707, 2006
2154	v. State	v. Stringfellow 693	v. State 1750
9, 1871	35 Fla. 62, 200	v. Turnpike Co. 38	v. Tayce
1655	3 Heisk. 836, 858	v. W. & R. T. Co. 283	2 Cr. C. C. 1195
1062	7 Humph. 1644	v. Watson 2472, 2478	1 Pet. 2105
4, 1668	v. Waddill 18, 2388	v. Whitworth 1186	9 Wheat. 728, 1195,
1187,	v. Ward 787	Riebelien & O. N. Co. v.	1196, 1268
6, 1204	v. Withers 2113	Boston M. Ins. Co. 1078	748, 1560
1106	Rice's Succession 1680	Richerson v. Sternburg 1777	v. Weise 2143
2048	Rich v. Eldredge 657, 1589	Richley v. Farrell 1225, 1705	Rigney v. Piaster 2437
681	v. Jackson 2417	Richman v. State 2261, 2271	v. Boehm 1548, 1566
2322	v. Jones 660	Richmond v. Patterson 1188,	v. Com. 246
		1644	

TABLE OF CASES.

RIL

	Section		Section		Section
Riley v. Hall	2016	Robb's Appeal	2237, 2236	Roberts' Case	2023
v. Iowa Falls	438	Robb's Estate	1491, 2463, 2527	Roberts' Will	1371
v. Johnston	1911	Robbins v. Butler	1066	Robertson v. Allen	1253, 1316
v. State		v. Fletcher	406	v. Archer	2118
88 Ala.	1841, 1898	v. R. Co.		v. Baldwin	1896
132 Ala.	406	165 Mass.	1896	v. Blair	1092
Rindkopf, re	1898	180 Mass.	1856, 2218	v. Brost	815
v. Malone	2165	v. Robbins	2046	v. Com.	1021
Riney v. Vanlandingham	1137	v. Smith	1141	v. Knapp	714, 1943
Ring v. Grout	2536	v. Spencer		v. Lucas	1195
v. Lawless	1958	121 Ind.	1111	v. Lynch	1275
Ringgold v. Galloway	1195,	140 Ind.	1065	v. People	1360, 1354
	1846, 2427	v. State	1898	v. Rowell	2409
v. Ringgold	2123	v. Townsend	1678	v. Showler	2556
v. Tyson	529, 531	v. Willmar	1943	v. Stark	1943, 2026
Ringhouse v. Keener	1605	v. Windover	2349, 2554	v. State	
Rio Grande W. R.		Roberson v. State		42 Ala.	2230
Co. v. Utah N. Co.	20, 770	40 Fla.	216, 218, 278, 987,	130 Ala.	1850
Rio Grande & E. P. R.			1977, 2513	Robichaux v. Bouillet	2232
Co. v. Bank	1215	Tex. Cr., 49 S. W.	811, 1135,	Robin v. King	2235, 2336
Riordan v. Guggerty	93, 1236,		1157	Robinson v. Preston	1664
	1890, 2008,	Roberts, re	1350	Robins v. State	222, 1168
	2016	v. Allatt	2379	Robins v. Wolsley	1374, 1487
Rios v. State	2286	v. Austin	2445	Robinson v. Adams	283, 1938
Ripley v. Hebron	2630	v. Bank	2169	v. B. & W. R. Co.	1391
v. Warren	2578	v. Boston	1021	v. Blakely	1018, 1362,
Ripon v. Bittel	18, 262, 1693,	v. Bradshaw	1206		1487
	1700	v. Brown Co.	1943	v. Bien	1072
v. Davies	2312	v. Com.		v. Burton	75, 210, 987,
Ripon College v. Brown	1674,	Ky., 20 S. W.	968, 987		1965
	2465	94 Ky.	1164	v. Cahalan	1661, 1680, 2169
Rippe v. R. Co.	794	v. Dixon	377, 1195	v. Clifford	1271
Rippetoe v. People	967	v. Dover	461, 1245	v. Craig	2133, 2141, 2144
Ripple v. Ripple	2110	v. Daxon	1244	v. Cutter	2116
Rippy v. State	247	v. Eddington	1672	v. Dana	497
Rishton v. Nesbitt	1501, 1502	v. Garen	2210	v. Davis	1100
River v. State	160, 1154	v. Haskell	1225	v. Devone	1770
River v. Ins. Co.	1330	v. Hughes	2355	v. Dewhurst	1566, 1567,
Ritchey v. People	496	v. Johnson			1568, 1569
Ritchey v. Holbrooke	2254	Ky., 64 S. W.	987	v. Dibble's Adm'r	1551
v. Kinney	1230	58 N. Y.	687	v. F. & W. R. Co.	65, 199
v. Richards	1350	v. Machine Co.	2442	v. Ferry	2119
v. Stenius	2276	v. Medberry	1086, 1779	v. Fire Co.	568
Rither's Case	2250	v. Miles	906	v. Gilman	
Rittenhouse v. R. Co.	1124	v. Phillips	1512	43 N. H.	1408
Ritter v. Daniels	715	v. Port Blakeley		7 Sbepl.	2183
v. People	1018	Mill Co.	1750	v. Gillman	1577, 2109
v. State	1213, 1230	v. Porter	620	v. Hoyt	1551
Rivard v. Rivard	682	v. R. Co.		v. Hutchinson	
River Steamer Co., re	1061, 1062	29 Hun	2220	26 Vt.	233, 1738
Riveroau v. St. Ament	2098	128 N. Y.	463, 1943	31 Vt.	1085, 1041
Rivers' Case	2483	v. Rice	1523	v. Markis	1404
Rivers v. State	2236	v. Roberts	1131	v. Johnson	1675
Rives v. Lamar	1729	v. Simpson	2211	v. May	2375
v. Parmley	1676	v. Spencer	1203	v. Morino	1976
Rixey v. Bayes	948, 987	v. Stantou	2141	v. N. B. R. Co.	456, 461
Rixford v. Miller	2530	v. State		v. N. Y. EL R. Co.	19, 463
Roach v. Martin	1651	68 Ala.	63, 111, 246,	v. Neal	2222, 2223
v. State			247, 1329	v. Philadelphia & R.	
4 Tex. App.	2000	122 Ala.	1841	R. Co.	2212
41 Tex.	1840	55 Ga.	2059	v. Prescott	1681
Roanoke v. Shull	1951	94 Ga.	2201	v. R. Co.	1867, 1976
Roark v. Greeno	682	44 Tex.	2059, 2060	v. Reynolds	907
Rohards v. McLean	1213	v. Tennell	1291, 1295,	v. Robinson	
Robb v. Hackley	1124, 1125,		1801, 2121	22 Ia.	1458
	1126, 1127,	v. Trawick		16 Mich.	2067
	1128, 1131	18 Ala.	1938	203 Pa.	1081, 1738
v. Hewitt	2061	17 Ala.	1738	22 R. I.	2340, 2341
v. Starkey	1200	v. Unger	1225	1 Sw. & Tr.	2045, 2007

Section		Section		Section		Section	
2023	Robinson v. Sootney	2122	Roe v. Jeffery	579	Rollins v. Board	1230, 1674	
1371	v. Smith	1600	v. Jerome	1084	v. Henry	1257, 1651, 1664	
258, 1316	v. State		v. Jones	1404	v. Humphrey	2825	
2118	16 Fla.	923, 1111,	v. Philippi	1678	Rollofson v. Nash	1779	
1896	68 Ga.	1613, 1965	v. Rawlings	1476, 1994,	Roman v. Smith	1289	
1022	114 Ga.	1329, 1375		2006, 2017, 2137	Romans v. Hay	2337	
616	66 Ind.	300, 1476	v. Reade	2522	Romberg v. Hughes	2803	
1021	84 Ind.	318	v. Strong	1596	Romer v. Conter	1676	
714, 1943	1 Lea	7	v. Taylor	229, 1738	Romertze v. Bank	1261, 1293	
1195	53 Md.	17	Roe & McDowell v.		Ronan v. Dugan	133	
1275	57 Md.	391	Doe & Irwin	1195, 1267,	Roney v. Moss	1651	
350, 1354	12 Mo.	1730		2105	Ronkendorff v. Taylor	1219,	
2409	12 Mo.	2071	Roebke v. Andrews	1777, 1779		1640, 2535	
2556	Tex. Cr., 57 S. W.	2070	Roebeck v. Curry	1247	Roof v. Pulley Co.	2440	
943, 2026	v. Talmadge	610	Roehl v. Hlanmesser	1195	Rook v. Wilson	2477	
	v. U. S.	2053	v. Porteous	2536	Rooks v. State	1842	
	v. Vaughton	1349	Roelker, re	2203	Rooney v. S. & D. C. Co.	461	
	v. Woodford	285, 288	Roesel v. State	837, 862	Roop v. Clark	1681	
	Robison v. Robison	619	Roesner v. Darrah	1730, 2235	v. State	867, 987	
235, 2336	Robson v. Alexander	850	Rogero v. Zippel	1684	Rossa v. Loan Co.	1719, 1722	
	v. Doyle	2257, 2281	Rogers, vs	2210, 2271	Roosevelt Hospital v.		
	v. Hamilton	1082	Rogers v. Allen	157	R. Co.	792, 794	
	v. Kemp		v. Barnett	1275, 1389	Root v. Boston El. R. Co.	1010	
	4 Esp.	1783, 1795, 2309	v. Brent	1871	v. Hamilton	2277	
	5 Esp.	2306, 2309,	v. Burton	736, 749, 753	v. King	209, 406, 987,	
		2312, 2315	v. Cady	2575	v. Lowndes	405, 406	
	v. Roche	1993	v. Crain	1722	v. Wood	1029	
	v. Warwick	2819	v. Custance	1208	v. Wright	2204, 2207,	
210, 987,	Roby v. Title Co.	1215	v. Dare	2317		2312	
1985	Rocco v. Parczyk	1003	v. De Bardeleben Co.	1481	Roots v. Merriwether	1084	
980, 2169	v. State	2364	v. Diamond	1302	Roper v. State	2812	
	Roch v. Coleman	821	v. Dibble	586	v. Terr.	21, 363	
141, 2144	v. R. Co.	1719	v. Ins. Co.	1725	Ropes v. Kemps	1680	
2116	v. Ware	1554, 1560	v. Lamb	64	Rosamond v. M'Ilwain	1225	
	Rochester v. Chester	1918, 1941,	v. Lewis	928	Rose v. Allen	1802	
		1948	v. Moore	1104, 1106,	v. Blakemore	2272	
	Rocky's Estate	2008, 2016	v. Old	1108, 1109	v. Brown	618	
	Rockford v. Hildebrand	2159	v. Pell	2534	v. Bryant	1466	
	v. Russell	792	v. People	284	v. First Nat'l Bank	2008,	
	Rockford C. R. Co. v.		v. Raborg	1404, 1406		2015	
	Blake	437	v. Ritter	704, 2008, 2016	v. Illmely	2566	
	Rock Island & E. I.		v. Rogers		v. Lewis	1205	
	R. Co. v. Gordon	2570	v. State		v. Mitchell	398, 1730, 2340	
	Rock Island & P. R. Co.		60 Ark.	1909	v. Otis	1061	
	v. Brewing Co.	1198	99 Ind.	1230	v. Rose	1062	
	v. Potter	2155	89 Md.	851	v. St. Louis	438	
	Rockland v. Farnsworth	1066	40 Tex. Cr.	398	v. State	2056	
	Rockville & W. Turnpike		44 Tex. Cr.	2273	v. Supreme Court	2384	
	Co. v. Van Ness	1074	v. Stevenson	1352, 1677	v. Williams	2444	
	Rockwell v. Taylor	1756	v. Stokes	64	Roseboom v. Billington	1466	
	Rockwood v. Poundstone	664,	v. Tillman	1185	Rosecrance v. Rosecrance	2046	
		907	v. Tyley	2008, 2016	Rosekrans v. Antwerp	2569	
	Roddy v. Finnegan	581, 2276	v. Venis	2579	Rosenbaum v. Shoffner	437	
	Rode v. Phelps	1350	v. Walker	1671	v. State	1008, 1797,	
	Roden v. Brown	1244	v. Wood	1594		2594	
	v. State	2512	Rogers, Trial of	520	Rosenberg v. Jett	2525	
456, 461	Rodgers v. Crook	1198, 1254	Rohr v. Alexander	2520	Rosendale v. McNulty	2271	
19, 463	v. Rodgers	1671, 2530	Rohrer v. Morningstar	529	Rosendorf v. Hirschberg	1192	
22, 2223	v. State	2578	Roland v. District	2451	Rosenthal v. Bilger	774	
	Rodimon v. Reding	1141	Roles v. Mintzer	377	v. Bishop	89	
	Rodriguez v. State	2276	Rolf v. Dart	1279	v. Ehrlicher	1609	
	v. Tadmlre	258	Rolfe v. Hampden	657, 1292,	v. Walker	95, 1201	
	Rodriguez' Estate	1233		1364	Rosevelt v. Gardner	529	
	Roe v. Bank	2444	v. Rolfe	1072, 2115	Rosine v. Bonnabel	1271, 1272,	
	v. Davis	1256	v. Rumford	1806		1680	
	v. Day	2120	Roller v. Bachmen	2349	Roskee v. Pulp Co.	451	
	v. Ferrars	1053	v. Kling	1029, 1081, 2500	Ross, re	1934, 1938	
	v. Harvey	291, 1204, 1210,	Rollings v. State	1977	v. Anstill	2578	
		2219, 2264					

TABLE OF CASES.

ROM

	Section		Section		Section
Ross v. Bank	1750	Rowe v. Hibernia S. & L. Soc.	2408	Rude v. Whitechurch	2122
v. Boswell	2691	v. Howden	1858	Rudolph v. Lane	1198
v. Bruce	1906	v. Polkinghorne	89	v. R. Co.	1164
v. Brussie	1770	v. Smith	1888	Rudedill v. Stingerland	923, 1986
v. Buhler	1909	v. Such	1671	Rufus v. State	826, 860, 861
v. Campbell	1678	v. U. S.	86	Ruffus v. State	246
v. Clare	1651, 2141	Rowell v. Fuller's Estate	797, 2016, 2030	Ruggles v. Bucknor	2168
v. Com.	1041	v. Lowell	688	v. Coffin	1878
v. Demoss	1911	Rowland v. Ashby	1849	v. Gatton	1538, 1639, 1662
v. Eapy	2445	v. Blaksley	2118	v. Nevada	258
v. Gibbs	2312, 2319	v. M'Gee	2103	Ruis v. Dow	2311
v. Goodwin	1239, 1687	v. Miller	2680	v. Terr.	1396
v. Hayne	911, 1779, 1899	v. Plummer	619, 2246, 2327	Rule v. State	2110
v. Knight	1084	v. R. Co.	1676, 1722	Ruiff v. People	18 N. Y. 2081
v. Kornrumpf	1235	v. State	2239	46 N. Y.	412, 792, 2272
v. Lapham	78	v. Walker	1718, 1722	Rumpel v. R. Co.	199
v. Loomis	1481, 2105	Rowletta v. Daniel	1235, 1651	Rumrill v. Ash	290
v. McQuiston	228, 232, 233, 1461, 1740	Rowley v. Ball	1300	Rumsey v. R. Co.	1350
v. Miner	321	v. Berrian	2165, 2168	v. Telephone Co.	1550, 1560
v. R. Co.		v. Bigelow	321	Rundle v. Beaumont	1858
6 All.	454, 455	v. Horne	255	v. Foster	2300
53 Ga.	1914	v. Hughes	1777	Runkle v. Barnham	291
v. Reddick	2575	v. McHugh	2235	v. Gates	1788
v. Ross	607	v. R. Co.	1694, 1698, 1923	Runnels v. State	862
v. State		Rowt's Adm'r v. Kile's Adm'r		Ruynan v. Price	1081, 1083, 1950
62 Ala.	364	Gilmer	68, 142	Rupert v. Penner	1225, 2529
74 Ala.	276, 2060	1 Leigh	238, 609, 702, 2002, 2008, 2016, 2017	Rupp v. Howard	1719
116 Ind.	581	Roy v. Goings	2354	Ruppe v. Steibach	285
Tex. Cr., 45		Royal v. Chandler		Ruschenberg v. So. Electric Co.	1750
S. W.	905	79 Me.	1138	Rush v. French	18, 20, 773, 915, 1195, 1894, 1885, 1889, 1890
8 Wyo.	1976, 2079	81 Me.	1567	v. Landers	2047, 2673
v. White	1777	83 Me.	1567	v. Magee	681, 1938
v. Williamson	2105	Royal Ins. Co. v. Duffus	17	v. R. Co.	1164, 2354
Ross' Ex'r v. Kiger	2477	Royal Soc'y of Good Fellows v. McDonald	1044, 1646	v. Smith	1894
Rousseau v. Bleau	2311	Royalton v. R. & W. T. Co.	1195, 1651	Rusher v. State	2183, 2264
Rosser, re	2282	Royce v. Ganan	1339	Rushing v. Rushing	620
Rossignol v. Tricke	2064	Rosek v. Redzinski	2201	Rushou v. Halle	2477
Rosted v. R. Co.	1580	Rean v. Garduer	1964	Rushworth v. Pemuroke	1388
Rotau v. State	246	v. Perry	64	Rusk v. Hill	770
Both v. Smith	1830, 1668	Rubino v. Scott	392	v. Sowerwine	1195
Rothwell v. Jamison	1496	Ruble v. McDonald	2354	Rusling v. Rusling	1738
Rothrock v. Gallagher	1028, 1408	Ruby v. Van Valkenburg	1195	v. R. Co.	682
v. Perkinson	1684	Ruch v. Rock Island	736, 754, 2098	v. Steamboat War Eagle	604, 2241, 2242
Rothwell v. King	2296	Rucker, ex p.	2195	Russell, re	1160
Rouch v. R. Co.	1783	v. Beaty	928, 1041	v. Baptist Theol.	
v. Zehring	228, 688, 1938	v. Bolles	661	Uulon	2066
Rounds v. State	786, 784, 770, 779, 786, 1830, 1669, 2098	v. Eddings	1867, 1877	v. Brossseau	570, 1278
Roupell v. Haws	818	v. M'Neely	1212, 1225, 1651	v. Buckley	95
Rouse v. Whitel	2115	v. Reid	1889	v. Burlington	1948
Roush v. Roush	1878	v. State	966	v. Coffin	736, 1106, 1108, 1109, 1802, 1804
Roussin v. Parks	1651	Ruckman v. Lumber Co.	561	v. Cowles	1770
Routh v. Bank	1219, 1676, 1680	Rucks v. Renfrow	1712	v. Cowley	1862
v. Holcu	529	Rudd v. Dewey	1082	v. Crutteuden	963
Roveua, The	1641	v. Frank	2303	v. Edwards	1681
Rowan v. Chenoweth	1549, 2118	v. Robinson	1074	v. Farrell	406
Rowe, ex p.	987, 2255, 2282	v. Rouds	1780	v. Fraser	1194
v. Barnes	1681	Ruddock, ex p.	1676	v. Frisbie	1777
v. Brenton		Ruddock Co. v. Johnson	1067	v. Hayden	717, 720
8 B. & C.	380, 1224, 1674, 2111, 2139				
3 M. & Ry.	1464, 1873				
v. Canney	2354				
v. Haslaud	158, 2581				
v. Henderson	2573				

SAN

TABLE OF CASES.

Section	Section	Section	Section
Russell v. Jackson	2286, 2296, 2314, 2317, 2329, 2330, 2334	Ryerson v. Abington	905, 1021, 1028, 1060, 1961
v. Mandell	1706	v. Grover	730, 749
v. R. Co.	6	Ryman v. Crawford	1988
4 Gray	714, 720	S.	
17 N. Y.	726, 728, 745, 747, 754	Sabine v. Strong	1409
v. Rider	1861	Sabins v. Jones	183
v. Russell	990	Saccharin Co. v. Chemicals & D. Co.	2212
v. Southard	2437	Sachra v. Manilla	1976
v. State		Sackman v. Thomas	2336
53 Miss.	680	Sackridar v. Supervisors	1350
62 Nebr.	1977, 2596	Sacrider v. Brown	1635
Nebr., 92 N. W.	1977, 2264	Safe Deposit & T. Co. v. Berry	682, 1938
v. Stocking	1588	v. Turner	289, 1074, 1203
v. Tunn	1518	Saffold v. Horne	620, 2245, 2230
v. Walker	1390, 1300	Safford v. Grant	581
Russian Steam-Nav. T. Co. v. Silva	2464	v. People	305
Rut v. B. M. Co.	2145	Safter v. H. S.	367, 1003
v. Mansfield	1066	Sagar v. Hogmire	1938
Rustell v. Macquister	406	Sage v. Ins. Co.	1858
Ruth v. Ford	607	v. State	
Rutherford v. Com.	21, 1803	91 Ind.	669, 1938
v. Foster	2512	127 Ind.	928, 1016, 1807
v. Morris	1738, 1938	Sailor v. Hertzog	1062, 1778, 2629
Ruthven v. Clarke	1212	Saint v. Taylor	2110
Rutland v. Hathorn	2349	Salazar v. Taylor	570, 696
Rutland's Case	2426	Sale v. Elchberg	1700
Rutland & B. R. Co. v. Lincoln	607	Salem v. Lynn	1784
v. Thrall	1195, 1206, 1248	v. Webster	65, 1719
Rutledge v. Evans	1867	Salem Bank v. Gloucester Bank	2016
Rutter v. Baldwin	2332	Salem I. R. Co. v. Adams	460
v. Chapman	2596	Salem L. & T. Co. v. Anson	1230
v. Collins		Salem S. & L. Co. v. Griffin	468
96 Mich.	1806	Salisbury v. Com.	1839, 1841
108 Mich.	1807	Salladay v. Dodgeville	2552
v. Hedden	1864	Salles v. St. Louis	1943
Rutsen v. Farr	21	Salley v. R. Co.	1416
Ryall v. Hannum	2463	Sally v. Capps	1256
Ryan v. Blindley	6	v. Gnter	1216
v. Bristol	1951	Salmer v. Lathrop	1388, 2465
v. Cooka	2435	Salmon v. Claggett	2268
v. Couch	1840, 1841	v. Rance	1665
v. Lynch	1850	Salmon's Estate	2475
v. Miller	2063	Salt Lake City v. Smith	18
v. People		Salte v. Thomas	1240, 1639
21 Colo.	1031, 1378, 1398	Salter v. Ely	2502
79 N. Y.	276, 967, 987	v. Turner	1216, 2529
v. State		Saltern v. Melnhish	1193, 1199
100 Ala.	2071, 2073, 2081	Saltmarsh v. Bower	2124
60 N. J. L.	318	v. Tuthill	529
97 Tenn.	987, 1800	Salvo v. Duncan	1976
Ryberg v. Smith	905	Sam v. State	
Ryder v. Alton	1352	1 Swan	1800
v. Bateman	1850	33 Miss.	2071, 2072
v. Fash	1651, 2141	Sammis v. Wightman	2573
v. Fletcher	2202	Samonset v. Meenager	1195
v. Jacobs	1957	Sampla v. Consol. L. & R. Co.	1750
v. State	1921, 2501	v. Frost	2300, 2302
v. Wombwell	2494, 2553	v. Wynn	66, 73
		Sampson v. Grimes	1209
		v. Marr	1235, 1644
		v. Noble	1647
		v. Overton	1633
		v. Sampson	1779
		v. State	820, 851, 852
		v. White	1306, 2048
		Sams A. C. Co. v. League	2498
		Samson v. Yardly	1864
		Samuel v. Borrowscale	1235, 1236, 1318, 1651
		v. People	2370, 2276
		v. Withers	1035, 1856
		Samuels v. Griffith	1029, 1035, 1873, 1879
		San Antonio & A. P. R. Co. v. Gray	1760
		San Diego Land Co. v. Neale	714
		San Fernando C. M. & R. Co. v. Hanniphrey	1859
		San Joaquin Co. v. Budd	2578
		San Pedro L. Co. v. Reynolds	1074, 1230
		Sanborn v. Gerald	2498
		v. Ins. Co.	1531
		v. Nellson	1061, 1062
		v. School District	2169
		Sanchar's Case	2250
		Sanches v. People	390, 681, 728, 900
		Sandage v. Mfg. Co.	2433
		Sandberg v. State	7, 1644, 2529
		Sandell v. Sherman	944
		Sanders v. Johnson	18, 73, 74
		v. Karnell	1256
		v. Leigh	1013
		v. Munson	2465
		v. O'Callaghan	282
		v. Palmer	2554
		v. Pepon	1676
		v. Pottitzer B. F. Co.	2425
		v. Reister	
		v. State	
		105 Ala.	1124, 1263, 1842
		131 Ala.	276
		113 Ga.	841, 2183
		v. Wakefield	761
		Sanderson v. Nashua	1037, 1041, 1802
		v. Osgood	2018
		Sandford v. Remington	2309, 2315
		Sandilands, re	2456
		Sandringham, The	1639, 1641
		Sands v. Hम्मel	1521
		v. R. Co.	1890
		v. Robinson	2360, 2363
		Sandwich v. State	2281
		Sandwich Mfg. Co. v. Nicholson	571
		Sanford v. Rowley	66, 1612
		Sanger v. Merritt	2141
		Sanitary District v. Culerton	2354
		Sankey v. Cooc	2020
		Sanson v. Rumsey	291

TABLE OF CASES.

SAN

	Section		Section		Section
Santisolma Trinidad, The	1001, 1009, 1012, 1346	Sawyer v. Cox	2169	Schell v. Stephens	1481
Saph v. Atkinson	700, 1993	v. Effert	72, 209	Schenck v. Ins. Co.	1947
Sappenfeld v. R. Co.	268	v. Garston	1180, 1913	v. Schenck	408
Sarbach v. Jones	498	v. Miller	1849	v. Stevenson	2263
Sargeant v. Sargeant	1076	v. H. Co.	2354	Schenley v. Com.	1003
Sargent v. —	2340, 2354	v. Sawyer	1083, 2067	Schettler v. Jones	1551, 1680
v. Adams	2473	v. Shoe Co.	262, 1961	Schiffelma v. Schief-	
v. Burton	1998	v. State	201, 232	feila	906, 1729
v. Hampton	2304	v. Steele	2354	Schierbaum v. Schemme	1081, 1785
v. Johns	2308	v. Stephenson	2364	Schillenger v. McCann	580
Sarie v. Arnold	561	Sax v. Davis	1414	Schilling v. Verona	1780
Sartell v. Scott	1507	Say & Seal's Case	2300	Schinta v. People	210
Sartin v. State	162	Sayer v. Glossop	693, 1212, 1214, 1219, 1245, 2529	Schloff v. R. Co.	468
Sartorius v. State	1842	v. Kitchen	2125	Schlater v. Winpenney	1021, 1040
Sass v. Thomas	2573	v. Wagstaff	783, 808	Schles v. Guckenheimer	2036
Sascer v. Farmers' Bank	1523, 2581	Sayles v. Bradley & M. Co.	1213	Schiel v. Struck	1006
Sasse v. State	1104, 1802, 1803	v. Briggs	1267, 1248, 2460	Schlenker v. State	1890, 1896, 1906
Sassenberg v. Huseman	2000	v. Fitzgerald	1117	Schley v. Lyon	1248, 1273, 1275
Sasser v. Herring	1604, 1606, 1602	Saylor v. Com. Ky., 30 S. W.	303, 987, 1435, 1441, 1480, 2377	Schlicht v. State	2588
v. Sasser	1062	Ky., 33 S. W.	1043	Schloes v. Inman	1604
Sater v. R. Co.	1943	Ky., 57 S. W.	276	Schlotter v. State	1807
Sather v. Rogers	1676	Sayre v. Durwood	18, 770	Schlottman v. Hoffman	2472
Satterlee v. Bliss	2318	v. Mohny	1067	Schmertz v. Hammond	901
Satterwhite v. Hicks	1082	v. Pollard	1350	Schmuck v. Noel	1416, 1933
Saults v. Eaket	2434	Sayres v. Allen	1890	Schmidt, ex p.	2363
Saunders v. Bates	2510	v. Com.	397	v. Dunham	907, 908
v. Baxter	400, 1807	Scagel v. R. Co.	1686	v. Ins. Co.	
v. Blythe	2410	Scaggs v. R. Co.	1951	1 Gray	1800, 2670
v. Duval	2125	v. State	1749	41 Ill.	1947
v. Ferrill	1816	Scalf v. Land Co.	1660, 2608	r. Packard	377
v. Fuller	2349	Scales v. Desha	657	v. Wambacker	748
v. Gallagher	392	Scales v. Kelly	2300, 2317	Schmid v. Frank	2336
v. Harris	1225, 1651, 1652	v. Key	2630	Schmisseur v. Beatrice	1065, 2506
v. McCarthy	1063	v. Shackelford	1002	Schmitt v. R. Co.	1010
v. People	987	Scalf v. Collin Co.	1921, 1988	Schmits v. R. Co.	1415
v. R. Co.		Scammon v. Scammon	1379	Schmuck v. Hill	501
6 S. D.	2500	Scanlan v. Childs	1625	Schnable v. Doughty	1890
99 Tenn.	1021, 1041, 1389	v. Hodges	1105	Schnee v. Schne	1736
Saunderson v. Judge	95	v. R. Co.	2580	Schneider v. Bray	2215
v. Piper	2473, 2477	v. Wright	1325	r. Cochrane	1675
Sauntry v. U. S.	245, 1800	Scanlon v. Walsh	2627	v. Manning	681, 1958
Saurin v. Starr	1368	Scannell v. R. Co.	987	Schneider Br. Co. v.	
Sausy v. R. Co.	65, 1109	Scarborough v. Baskin	1048	A. I. M. Co.	677
Sauter v. R. Co.	1098	v. Scarborough	2087	Schnek v. Hagar	64
Sauvé v. Dawson	701, 1901, 1993, 2008, 2016	v. Smith	1263	Schnell v. Tooner	246
Savage v. Blanchard	1391	Scarlet v. Patterson	1225	Schoeffler v. State	606, 862
v. D'Wolf	1300	Scates v. Henderson	2300	Schoep v. Ins. Co.	928, 1078
v. State	1890	Scattergood v. Wood	2477	Schoepflin v. Coffey	2494
Savannah F. & W. R. Co.		Schaefer v. Gliden	1951	Schofeld, ex p.	2260, 2271
v. Gray	285	v. Kienzle	2165	v. Anderson	1890
v. Holland	1780	v. R. Co.	1213, 1391, 1530	v. Schiffer	321
v. McConnell	2509	v. State	2059, 2071	Schoneman v. Fegley	93
v. Quo	1910	Schafer v. Schafer	1666	Schoolcraft v. People	108, 140
v. Wainwright	1719, 2220	Schaidler v. R. Co.	682	Schoonmaker v. Wil-	
v. Wideman	1985	Scharf v. Keener	1481, 1573	brahm	458
Savary v. State	20, 1157	Schaser v. State	21, 347, 1896	Schoonover v. Myers	1607
Saveland v. Green	1236	Schattgen v. Holnback	2554	v. Rowe	406
Savery v. Spaulding	1086	Schaub v. Griffin	2531, 2532	Schott's Goods	2421
Saville v. Farnham	2355	Schauer v. Porter	2364	Schradsky v. Stinson	463
Sawrey v. Murrell	905, 911, 1883, 1890	Scheerer v. Harber	751, 1810	Schreyer v. Mills Co.	291
Sawyer v. Birchmore	2317	Scheerer v. Agee	2501, 2512	Schrimper v. Heilman	406
v. Boston	463	Schell v. Plumb	1041, 1098	v. R. Co.	2433
				Schroeder v. R. Co.	2220
				Schubert Lodge v.	
				Schubert Verein	1278, 2169

TABLE OF CASES.

Section
1481
1947
408
2356
1003
51, 1680
06, 1739
1081,
1786
889
1780
210
468
1021,
1040
2636
1006
0, 1896,
1936
73, 1275
2689
1664
1807
2472
901
0, 1933
2963
07, 908
0, 2670
1947
877
748
2336
1065,
2606
1010
1415
601
1890
1736
2215
1675
1, 1968
677
64
246
09, 862
8, 1078
2494
0, 2271
1890
321
93
06, 140
458
1607
406
2421
463
291
406
2433
2220
8, 2169

Section	Section
Schubkagel v. Dierstein	2800
Schuchardt v. Allene	94
Schuenke v. Pine River	487
Schuler v. Board	1943
Schultes v. Hodgson	2350, 2358
Schultz v. Bower	1168
v. Catlin	2349
v. Lindell	1946
v. R. Co.	940, 960, 1023
v. Schultz	1726
v. Terr.	1013, 2512
Schulz v. Modisett	682
Schumacher v. Pima Co.	1230
Schwalbe, The	1750
Schwartz v. Baird	1319
v. Oathmer	1267
v. State	3060
v. Wilmer	1955
v. Yearly	782, 1908
Schwarzbach v. Protec- tive Union	1061, 1947
Schweinfurth v. R. Co.	460, 1163
Schwerdtle v. Macer Co.	2575
Schwerin v. De Graff	877, 392
Sciple v. Northcutt	2111
Seefeld v. Parlin & O. Co.	2163
Seoggin v. Dalrymple	1654, 1503
Scotia, The	2573
Scotland Co. v. Hill	17
Scott, re	2282
v. Baber	803
v. Balley	98, 1208, 1556
v. Bank	1777
v. Bassett	
174 Ill.	1225
180 Ill.	1225, 1076
104 Ill.	1225
v. Blanchard	1681
v. Clare	1366
v. Com.	2339
v. Crouch	1257
v. D. Y. M. Society	2535
v. Delany	2135
v. Donovan	1141, 1184
v. Fletcher	64
v. Harris	2311, 2329
v. Hartley	2440
v. Hawk	
105 Ia.	1613, 1736
107 Ia.	1511
v. Hooper	1817
v. Hyde	2629
v. Jones	1249
v. London & St. K. Docks Co.	2509
v. Lloyd	529
v. Loomis	1267
v. Lord Oxford	406
v. McCann	1390
v. McKee	1938
v. McKinnish	73, 406
v. Maddox	2052, 2523
v. Mortelinger	406
v. New Orleans	458, 792
v. O'Neil	1540
v. People	1852
v. R. Co.	645, 1230, 1639, 1700

Section	Section
Scott v. Rattiffe	1006
v. Rivers	1213
v. Sampson	70, 73, 74, 307, 309
v. Scott	
191 Ill.	1777
17 Ind.	1244, 2067
17 Md.	2578
v. State	
48 Ala.	1186, 1188
113 Ala.	960, 2183
49 Ark.	1270
63 Ark.	2050
64 Ind.	1022
Tax. Cr., 47	
S. W.	1131
v. U. S.	1003
v. Walthman	200, 1294
v. Wilson	1416
Scottish U. & N. I. Co. v. Stubbs	437
Seovill v. Baldwin	298
Seoville v. R. Co.	2008
Seranton v. Danenbaum	2572
v. Stewart	2312
Scribner v. Crane	1511
v. M'Laughlin	586, 1878
Scripps v. Foster	2388
v. Reilly	406, 1808
Scroggin v. McClelland	2530
Scruggs v. State	2349
Soulin v. Harper	1243
Souther v. Union Nat'l Bank	2461
Scurr v. Brunell	2250
Seaborn v. State	862
Seale v. Chambliss	944, 1738
Seale v. Edmondson	1976
v. State	62
Sealy v. State	400, 1026, 1028, 1037
Searcy v. Miller	985, 1817, 1820, 2214
Searle v. Lord Barrington	1460
v. Price	2067
v. R. Co.	463, 1943
v. Richardson	1856
Sears v. Dillingham	1304, 1316
v. Hoyt	1778
Seaton v. Kendall	603
Seattle v. Doran	1335
Seattle & M. R. Co. v. Gilchrist	463, 1943
v. Roeder	714, 1168
Seaver v. Dingley	321
v. R. Co.	1976
Seavy v. Dearborn	736, 745, 747, 907, 944, 1019, 1023
Seawell v. R. Co.	1755
Sebree v. Dorr	1187
v. Smith	1063, 191
Seckinger v. Mfg. Co.	560
Second Nat'l Bank v. Herman	5, 2536
v. Smith	5, 2536
Secrist v. Green	1651
Securities Co. v. Richard- son	1061

Section	Section
Security Co. v. Graybeal	1549
Sedgwick v. Tucker	681, 613, 2336
v. Waterman	1199
v. Watkins	2230
Seefeld v. R. Co.	1168
Seefel v. Norman	1879
Seely v. K. C. Star Co.	1367
Seely v. Blair	1965, 1986
v. Cole	406, 1206, 2604
v. Wells	1680
Segond v. Roach	1054, 1185
Selbert v. McManus	451
v. Ragedale	1284
Selbies v. Blackhead	1917, 1923, 1976
Seldenspinner v. Metrop. L. Ins. Co.	1072
Selfert v. State	1432, 1434, 1725, 2386
Selford v. Pa. R. Co.	1961
Seller v. Bank	2437
Selp v. Deshler	406
Seluel v. Register	1196
Seltz v. Refrig. Co. v. Selts	2434 1406, 2336, 2339
Seltz Brewing Co. v. Ayres	2498
Selby v. Clarke	1812
v. Crew	2267
v. Harris	1691
Selden v. State	2307, 2330
Self v. State	837
Selife v. Isaacson	1841
Seliger v. Bastian	1951
Sellar v. Clelland	1196, 1877
Sellers v. Sellers	1041, 1511
Selleck v. Janeville	
100 Wis.	678, 789, 1835
104 Wis.	792
Sellen v. Norman	98, 2517
Seller v. Jenkins	1014, 1019, 1020, 1021, 1038, 1040
Sellman v. Bowen	2063
v. Cobb	1207
v. Wheeler	1721, 1963
Sells v. Haggard	1414
Selma R. & D. R. Co. v. Kelth	657
Selover v. Bryant	906
v. Rexford's Ex'r	736, 764
Selph v. State	910, 952, 2079, 2080, 2484
Selvidge v. State	857
Selwood v. Mildmay	2474
Selwyn's Case	803
Selz v. Belden	581
Sample v. Callery	2550
Senior, ex p. v. State	2252, 2271, 2276 1391
Tentney v. Overton	1312
Jergant v. Biddle	1417
v. George	1664
Sergeon v. Sealey	233, 1671
Series v. Series	2404
Sessions v. Little	1777
v. Reynolds	1239, 1676, 2167

TABLE OF CASES.

523

	Section		Section		Section
Sessions v. Trevitt	2326	Shamburgh v. Comma-	529	Shaw v. State	
Setchell v. Keigwin	1561	gere		79 Miss.	1840
Seton v. Ins. Co.	1271	Shamp v. White	1124	82 Tex. Cr.	782
Settle v. Allison	1311, 1312, 1513, 1681	Shane v. Charlestown	1943	v. San Prairie	252
Seurer v. Horst	463, 720	Shank v. Groff	2437	v. Van Rensselaer	2320
Seven Bishops' Trial	773, 1364, 1901, 1992	Shanklin v. McCracken	2337	Shawneetown v. Mason	508
Seventh D. A. P. A.		Shanks v. Hayes	1013	Shawyer v. Chamberlain	2165
v. Fisher	1552	v. Lancaster	2141	Shea v. Glendale E. F. Co.	457
Sever v. Lyon	2575	Shanley's Appeal	1938	v. Lindson	716
Severance v. Carr	581, 770, 777	Shannon v. The Common-		v. Lelsy	2435
v. Hilton	06, 73, 76, 1898	wealth	585	v. Minnie	1956
v. Severance	2502	Shano v. Bridge Co.	1168	v. Murphy	1085
Severin v. Zack	1988	Shantz v. Stoll	613	v. R. Co.	2508
Severn v. Olive	2203	Shapter v. Pillar	1958	Sheaffer v. Eakman	1778
Sewall v. Evans	2520	Sharkey v. Bankston	1225	Sheahan v. Barry	206, 213
v. Robbins	995	Sharland v. Ins. Co.	1073, 1725	v. Collins	73, 74, 209, 987
Seward v. Wilmington	1164	Sharman v. Morton	1911	Shean v. Phillips	2317
Sewell v. Cohoes	293	Sharon v. Davidson	1818	Shear v. Van Dyke	751
v. Gardner	906	v. Sharon	987, 2311	Shearer v. Buckley	252, 1718
v. Moore	1674	Sharp v. Carter		Shearm v. Burnand	1205
v. R. Co.	714	v. Emmet	1028	Shearman v. Atkins	1450
v. Stubbs	1256	v. Hall	1076	Shears v. State	347, 987, 988
v. Vincent	276	v. Illicks	1032	Shedden v. Heard	1263, 1260
Sexsmith v. Jones	1269	v. Ins. Co.	1647	v. Patrick	1483
Sexton v. Appleyard	1248	v. McIntire	1712	Sheehan v. Davis	1186, 2169
v. Brock	1889, 1416	v. Petit	1658	v. Hennessey	1554
v. Hollis	1584, 1587	v. Scoging	979, 986, 1982	v. Kearney	1739, 1938, 2500, 2502
v. Lamb	379, 571	v. Sharp	2271	Sheeler v. Speer	18
v. McGill	1235, 1313	v. State	579	Sheer v. Sheer	2421
v. Ferrigo	1525, 1675	v. Treese	784	Sheets v. Dufour	1676
v. Pickering	1676, 2168	v. Wickliffe	1651	Sheffield v. Sheffield	1900, 2067, 2039
Seymour v. Alkire		Sharpe v. Hall	1906	Shelburne v. Inchiquin	2462, 2470
v. Beach	1674	v. Lamb	2182	Shelden v. Merrill	1651
v. Fellows	1	v. Orme	1651, 1858	v. Warner	415
v. Merrills	73, 209	v. State	2513	Sheldon v. Benham	1521, 1635, 2025
v. Osborne	1161, 1856	Sharpless v. Knowles	1651	v. Bigelow	1037, 1971
v. Wilson	581	Shattuck v. Myers	75, 210, 987	v. Booth	571
Seymour's Case	1193, 1199, 1267	v. People	987	v. Coates	1210
Shank's Estate	2231	v. State	2168	v. Frink	1790
Shackelford v. R. Co.	1954	v. Stoneham R. Co.	2364, 463	v. Perkins	2349, 2354
v. State	1829, 1405	Shaner v. Alterton	1943	v. R. Co.	455
Shackelford v. Hooper	1664	Shanfelter v. Baltimore	2286	Shellabarger v. Nafus	1009
Shad v. Livingston	2437	Shaughnessy v. Fogg	2572	Shelling v. Farmer	2212
Shaddock v. Clifton	1063, 2232	Shaul v. Brown	2313	Shelp v. U. S.	986, 1854
Shadwell v. Shadwell	1859	Shaver v. Ehle	1888, 1856	Shelton v. Ellis	2416
Shaeffer v. State	689, 1938	v. McCarthy	1900	v. Hampton	907
Shafer v. Ean Claire	252, 1270, 2884, 2569	Shaw v. Boom Co.	1938	v. Reynolds	1249
v. Hausman	1969	v. Broom	571	v. State	1976
v. Lacock	1078, 2509	v. Charlestown	1084	Shenkenberger v. State	1447
Shaffer v. Clark	2027	v. Emery	720	Shepard v. Ashley	30
v. Gaynor	1687	v. Emery	928	v. Giddings	1213
v. McCrackin	1245, 1549, 1556	v. Fisk	2354	v. Parker	987
v. State	78, 1620	v. Lindsey	787	v. Potter	1873
Shaffner v. Com.	192, 363	v. Markham	1206	v. Pratt	1069
Shafter v. Evans	1951	v. Mason	1213	v. R. Co.	
Shaftesbury Case	526, 1712	v. Moore	1817	85 Mo.	2220
Shahan v. Swan	1867	v. Pershing	1196, 1311, 2141, 2143	117 N. Y.	463
Shailer v. Bumstead	228, 233, 1076, 1081, 1736, 1790	v. R. Co.	250	v. State	821
Shakespeare v. Bangh-		v. Roberts	15, 2592	Shephard, re	2194
man	392	v. Schoonover	608, 1778	v. Carriel	1635
Shaller v. Brand	2117, 2138, 2141, 2146	v. State		Shepherd v. Brenton	2354
		60 Ga.	106, 363, 397	v. Camden	1168, 2354
		83 Ga.	792	v. Currie	2518
		102 Ga.	106, 890, 821, 967, 987, 1839, 1841		
		56 Ind.	2682		

TABLE OF CASES.

Section

Section	Section	Section	Section
1840	Shepherd v. Goss 1304, 1312	Shock v. M'Chesney 406	Shute v. Mfg. Co. 451
782	v. Hamilton Co. 1330	Shockey v. Mills 581, 770	Shutesbury v. Hadley 1219,
252	v. Snodgrass 805	Shockley v. Morgan 1909	1644, 1677
2220	v. Thompson 1566, 1587	Shocraft v. State 1142	18, 1582
508	v. Turner 1586	Shoemaker v. Bryant L. & S. M. Co. 969	Shutte v. Thompson 283, 795
2165	Sheppard v. Yocum 1029, 1108, 1109	Shoenberger v. Hackman 1248	Sias v. Consol. Light- ing Co. 2079
467		Shook v. Pate 790, 1587	Siberry v. State 133 Ind. 2115
716	Shera, re 2083	Shorb v. Kinzie 80 Ind. 2008, 2021	149 Ind. 2115
2435	Sherborne v. Naper 2083	Shore v. Bedford v. Wilson 2312	Sihle v. State 1476
1956	Sherburne v. Rodman 581	Shores Lumber Co. v. Stitt 2464	Sibley v. Smith 2220
1085	Sherer v. Piper 1062	Shorey v. Hnassey 917	v. Waffle 2301
2508	Sherlock v. R. Co. 463	Short v. Currie 1677	Sichel v. Lambert 1645
1778	Sherman v. Barrett 2200	v. Kingsmill 1271	Sickles v. Dallas C. Bank v. Mather 1538,
3, 218	v. Blodgett 1959	v. Lee 1464, 1466, 1471, 1472, 2168	1544, 1547, 1558
200,	v. Goble 1654	v. Mercler 2260, 2271	Sidebottom v. Atkins 2271
987	v. Needham 1352	v. State 4 Harr. 2268	Sidecum v. R. Co. 438, 2220
2317	v. R. Co. 720, 1943	63 Ind. 153, 1152	Sidelinger v. Backlin 923, 1124,
751	v. Sherman 2380	v. Tinsley 2341	1125, 1141
1718	v. Stafford Mfg. Co. 2115	v. Yelverton 392	1259, 1884
1205	v. Story 1350	Short Mountain Coal Co. v. Harly 1960	1842
1450	v. Transp. Co. 1312, 1320	Shorten v. Judd 166, 792,	Sieber v. R. Co. 1951
987,	v. Wilder 367	Shorter v. Sheppard 1188, 1225,	Siebert v. People 111, 143, 274,
988	Sherrard v. Cudney 1665	1267, 2105	569, 946, 1726,
1280	Sherrill v. Stato 281, 460	Shortz v. Unangst 1198	2183, 2264
1483	v. Tel. Co. 1974	Shotter v. Friend 2032	1406
2169	Sherron v. Hughes 1415, 1893	Shotwell v. Harrison 1651,	463, 2581
1654	Sherwin v. Bugbee 1244	1681, 2088,	Siegler v. Mellinger 1951
1938,	Sherwood v. Adderley, 1257	2573	Siemens v. Electric R. Co. 2354
2502	v. Houston 657, 1681	Shouler v. Bonander 1195, 2105	Sievers v. P. B. & L. Co. 283,
18	v. Sherwood 2477	Shove v. Martine v. Wiley 735, 736, 747,	437, 1951
2421	v. Sioux Falls 1158	749, 753, 1560	Sievers-Carson H. Co. v. Card 1669
1676	v. State 1842	Showan v. Lee 79 Mich. 463	Sigafus v. Porter 18, 2498
2007,	v. Titman 15, 398	86 Mich. 1247	Sigfried v. Levay 728, 2135
2039	Shields v. Baucher 1484, 1501	Shreve v. Clero 1384	Siglin v. R. Co. 283
2402,	v. Buchanan 1665	Shrewsbury's Case 2250, 2286,	Sigsworth v. Coulter 1028
2470	v. Cunningham 1021	2371	v. McIntyre 1955, 2463
1651	v. Lewis 1198, 1201	Shrewsbury Peerage Case 1489,	Signa Iron Co. v. Brown 1074
415	v. McGrath 1911	1644,	v. Greene 1074
685,	v. Millet 1890	1662, 1670	Sikes v. Marshall 1518
2025	v. State 104 Ala. 2183, 2264	326	v. Paine 571, 1951
1971	149 Ind. 992, 1076,	728	Sill v. Reese 704, 1239
571	2497	1198	Silliman v. Whitmer 2477
1210	32 Tex. Cr. 62	1978	Sills v. Brown 681, 1374,
1700	Shifflet v. Morelle 1651, 2105,	1951	1949
2354	2143	1189	Silva v. Low 1009
455	Shifflet's Case 824, 830, 838,	73, 76	v. Pickard 1129
1000	840, 854, 855, 865,	1774	v. Rankin 1195
2212	2100	398	Silver Lake Bank v. Hard- ing 1681
1864	Shilling v. Ins. Co. 1768	728	Silverman v. Blake 1312
2416	Shillinger v. Shillinger 2067	1198	Silverstein v. O'Brien 464,
907	Shimer v. R. Co. 720	1951	1041, 1456
240	Shinglemeyer v. Wright 2374	1189	Silverthorn v. Fowle 1955
976	Shinkle v. Crock 693, 2048	73, 76	Sim v. Russell 229, 232
447	Shinners v. Merrimack Locks 283	1951	Simmons v. Carrier 716
30	Shipley v. Reasoner 1064, 1067	1189	v. Havens 1896
213	v. Todhunter 95, 2152	73, 76	v. Holster 73, 74, 259,
987	Shipman v. Seymour 321	1774	2260
873	Shipp v. Com. 331	398	v. Leonard 1302
969	Shippy v. People 321	1168, 1803	v. Norwood 2232
220	Shirley v. Fearne 1304, 2110	2067	v. Parsons 529
463	v. Todd 1084	571	v. R. Co. 1943
821	Shirwin v. People 62, 200, 398	689, 1938,	v. Radall 2525
194	Shisser v. Burlington 1404	1958	v. Simmons 2045, 2046,
935	Shitler v. Bremer 702, 728	2063	2056
354	Shiver v. Johnson 1290, 1513	2341,	
354	Shiverick v. Gunning Co. 2580	2391	
518	Shobe v. Bell 2349	1003	
		586	
		928	

TABLE OF CASES.

SIM

	Section		Section		Section
Simmons v. Spratt	1665	Sinks v. Reese	1240	Sloan v. R. Co.	1018, 1021, 1026, 1029, 2264
v. State		Sinnott v. Colombet	1700, 2582	v. Somers	2098
129 Ala.	1388	v. Mullin	1951, 1963	v. Wolfsfeld	2081
32 Fla.	1263	Sinton v. Butler	456	Sloan S. M. & L. Co. v.	
115 Ga.	1072	Sioux City & P. R. Co. v.		Gntthall	1896
v. Steamboat Co.	1951	Finlayson	571,	Slocovich v. Ins. Co.	561, 665, 677, 790, 1706
v. Threshour	2450		1693, 2320		
v. Trumbo	2680	Sirk v. Emery	463	Slocum v. Bracy	1195
v. Wood	1676	Sirrine v. Briggs	719, 1247	v. Knosby	2278
Simms v. Express Co.	2536, 2573	Sisier v. Shaffer	15	v. Newby	1911
Simon v. Brown	1664	Sisson v. R. Co.	671, 719, 1704	Sloman v. Herne	1077, 2294
v. Home Ins. Co.	762	Sitler v. Gehr	1490, 1491, 1493, 1644, 1646, 2529	v. Kelly	2256
v. State		Sitterlee v. State	1781	Slope v. Thomas	1188
106 Ala.	1976	Sivell v. Hogan	770	Slossen v. R. Co.	456
31 Tex. Cr.	2063	Sivewright v. Sivewright	1841	Sluby v. Champlin	156, 1513
Simonds v. Clapp	1777	Sixth Av. R. Co. v. EL		Sly v. Sly	1461
Simons v. Cook	1681	R. Co.	1906, 1943	Small v. Belyea	1750
v. People	390, 1442	Sizer v. Burt	1908, 2105	v. Champney	233, 1671
v. Simons	2046, 2067, 2086	Skaggs v. State		v. Prentice	95
		108 Ind.	571, 811, 1399	v. R. Co.	2098
v. Vulcan Co.	321	31 Tex. Cr.	246, 248	v. Reeves	1371
Simonson v. R. Co.	728	Skeggs v. Horton	1267, 2052, 2106	v. Rose	1466
Simpkins v. Rogers	1086			v. Siocumb	2184
Simpson, ex p.	2065	Skellie v. James	1911	v. Williams	1072
v. Dall	1195	Skellinger v. Howell	900, 907	Smallcombe v. Bruges	1081
v. Dinsmore	2529	Skelton v. R. Co.	678	Smalley v. Appleton	568
v. Norton	1194	Skilding v. Warren	629	v. Hale	344
v. Robinson	406, 1072	Skinker v. Flohr	1225	v. Morris	2354, 2356
v. Smith		Skinner v. Brigham	1293, 2132	Smalls v. State	
1 Stark. Evid.	1894	v. Conant	1540	99 Ga.	238
27 Kan.	2268	v. Denning	1350	102 Ga.	195
v. State		v. Henderson	1196	Smart v. Prujean	2452
111 Ala.	177, 391	v. Judson	2216, 2266, 2260, 2279	v. Williams	1224, 1275, 1306, 1518, 1650
6 Baxt.	2054				
78 Ga.	949	v. Lewis	1511	Smartle v. Williams; see	
31 Ind.	506	v. B. Co.	2319	Smart.	
v. Stewart	2529	v. Shw	1729	Smethurst v. Barton Sq.	
v. Thornton	1280	v. Skinner	2245, 2515	Chnrch	20
v. Union Stockyards		Skipp v. Hooke	2576	Smets v. Plunket	64
Co.	1550	Skipper v. State	907, 1011, 1013	Smick v. Beawick	2312
v. Waldby	1249			Smiley v. Cockrell	1186
v. Westenberger	64	Slack v. Buchanan	1062	v. Dewey	1244, 1558
Sims v. De Graffenreid	1306, 1513, 2141	v. Harris	1951	v. Gambill	1736
		v. Moss	629	Smith, ex p.	1160
v. Gray	1225	Sladden v. Sergeant	1263		
v. Hurdley	6	Slade v. Tucker	2300	7 Ch. D.	2287
v. Jones	1890	Slane Peerage Case	1379	2 D. & Ch.	2260
v. Kitchen	208	Slaney v. Wade	1463, 1573	112 Fed.	2282
v. Meacham	1573	Slater v. D. S. & H. Co.	1971	v. Andrews	1640
v. Sims		v. Hodgson	2139	v. Asbell	1033, 2491
2 Mill	1193	Slatterie v. Pooley	1180, 1256, 1256, 1257, 1260	v. Assur. Co.	911
75 N. Y.	522, 987, 1116			v. Axtell	1195, 1266, 1280
Sinclair v. Baggaley	2520	Slattery v. Slattery	586	v. Bank	
v. Roush	1943, 2356	Slaughter v. Birdwell	2205	171 Mass.	1254
v. Stevenson	762, 1200, 1661, 2447	Slavens v. R. Co.	266	45 Nehr.	716
		Slayback v. Witt	2503	32 Vt.	2408, 2420
v. Wood	1188, 1624	Sledge v. Scott	1966	v. Barger	2201
Singer v. Bennett	1240	Sleep v. Heymann	2165	v. Battens	2520
Singer Mfg. Co. v. Cramer	1013	Sleeper v. Van Middleworth	928	v. Beadnall	850
v. McFarland	2016	Slinghoff v. Bruner	1304, 2102, 2500	v. Beattie	736
Singer & T. S. Co. v. Hntchinson	782			v. Benef. Soc.	143, 1081
Singleton v. Barrett	2432	Sloan v. Ault	1549	v. Betty	1085
v. Bremer	2149	v. Cohurn	1086	v. Biggs	1893
v. State	1037	v. Courtenay	1696	v. Blagge	1681
Sinking Fund Com'rs v. Bank	2109	v. Pelsler	760	v. Blakey	1362, 1457, 1458, 1461, 1465, 1524
Sinkler v. Siljan	1029	v. Petris	406	v. Bonsall	1658

TABLE OF CASES.

Section	Section
1028,	Smith v. Bradford 610, 2237
2364	v. Brannan 1314
2098	v. Brockett 1681, 2464
1681	v. Brown
	151 Mass. 1194, 1234,
1896	1275
1, 605,	2 Mich. 521
1, 1706	v. Brownlow 1592
1195	v. Burnham 1367, 1856
2276	v. Bye 1867
1911	v. Caldwell 2297
7, 2294	v. Capital Bank 1389
2256	v. Carolin 1300
1188	v. Castles 987
456	v. Chapman 1566, 1569
3, 1513	v. Cheatham 2352, 2353
1461	v. Clark 93
1750	v. Cleveland 1354
3, 1671	v. Coffin 1828
95	v. Coker 1225
2098	v. Com.
1371	21 Gratt. 2072, 2081
1466	Ky., 60 S. W. 398
2184	Ky., 67 S. W. 1439
1072	90 Va. 580
1081	v. Cook 2341
568	v. Cox 1253
344	v. Cramer 1783
1, 2356	v. Crane 852, 2269,
	2271, 2282
338	v. Culbertson 2349, 2354
195	v. Cushman 1225, 1651
2452	v. Dall 2105
1275,	v. Dawley 905, 1750
1518,	v. De Wrults 1084
1650	v. Doe 2462, 2465, 2470
	v. Doherty 615
20	v. Dreer 15
64	v. Dudley 1267
2312	v. Duncan 1072
1186	v. Eames 2349
1, 1558	v. Earl Ferrers 270, 266,
1736	1807
1160	v. East India Co. 2375
	v. Easton 1236, 2154
2287	v. Ehanert 907
2260	v. Fell 2319
2282	v. Felts 1384
1640	v. Fenner 1738, 2005,
2491	2016
911	v. First Nat'l Bank 1244
1, 1280	v. Forrest 1866, 1867,
	1568, 1570
1254	v. Fuge 1647, 2529
716	r. Garden 1651
2420	v. Gardner 2518
2201	v. Garris 1195
2520	v. Gerow 18
850	v. Gibbon 1513
736	v. Gifford 1058
1, 1081	v. Gillett 20
1085	v. Glenn 1567
1893	v. Griffith 1591, 1624
1681	v. Hall 77, 401
1458,	v. Hawley
1524	8 S. D. 1388
1658	14 S. D. 758
	v. Henderson 2529
	v. Henry 335, 1021

Section	Section
Smith v. Hickenbottom 568, 681,	Section
1938	
v. Hine 928, 1618, 1669	
v. Holbrook 1802	
v. Holden 1782	
v. Holebrook 1212	
v. Hollings 1800	
v. Hughes 2413	
v. Hunt 2117	
v. Hntchings 770	
v. Ins. Co. 1878	
v. Jackson 763	
v. Jeffries 2465, 2466	
v. Johns 736, 747	
15 John. Ch. 2117	
6 Rand. 1312, 2049	
v. Keyser 1304, 1312,	
1386, 1513	
v. Kimball 2463, 2477	
v. King 2018, 2220	
v. Lane 736	
v. Large 1250	
v. Law 1555	
v. Lawrence 1665	
v. Lindsey 2105	
v. Long 615, 2297	
v. Lowe 2098	
v. Lyon 1076	
v. McClain 2442	
v. McDonald 2219	
v. McWaters 1226	
v. Madison 2143	
v. Martin	
17 Conn. 1080, 1082,	
1459	
2 Overt. 1225	
v. Mayer 1873	
v. Mayfield 1058	
v. Merrill 2336	
v. Merwin 2195	
v. Meyers 620	
v. Millidge 1318, 1651	
v. Montgomery 1725	
v. Morgan	
2 Moo. & R. 761	
38 Me. 1124	
v. Morrill 1062	
v. Morrow 1778	
v. Mosler 1239	
v. Monnts 1300	
v. Nat'l Ben. Soc'y 340	
v. Neilson 2110	
v. New Orleans C. & B. Co. 2016, 2145	
v. Nowells 1587	
v. Olsen 2594	
v. Paul 2355	
v. Paul Boyton Co. 1066,	
1677	
v. Palmer 1256	
v. People	
74 Ill. 1852	
2 Mich. 1028, 1029,	
1037	
v. Phila. Traction Co. 283,	
1890	
v. Powers 1082, 1564	
v. Potter 1271, 1684	

Section	Section
Smith v. Prewit 1587	
v. Price 905	
v. Proctor 2235, 2236, 2237	
v. Putnam 1778	
v. R. Co.	
137 Mass. 1040	
44 N. H. 619	
63 N. H. 455	
70 N. H. 93	
68 N. C. 719	
10 R. I. 252, 455	
6 Sm. & M. 1195	
v. Rankin 1311, 2141	
v. Read 2256	
v. Redden 1680	
v. Reed 1202	
v. Rents 1537, 1539	
v. Rich 1674	
v. Richardson 19	
v. Royalton 1003	
v. Ruckecker 73, 74	
v. Russell 270	
v. Sainsbury 701	
v. Sanford 750, 1555, 1558	
v. Scudder 2232	
v. Scully 749	
v. Shakopee 2572	
v. Sherwood 252, 461	
v. Shinn 1502	
v. Shmway 73	
v. Sleep 1192	
v. Smith	
3 Bing. N. C. 1081	
10 Ir. R. Eq. 1196	
119 Cal. 2046	
106 Ga. 1189	
2 Greenl. 803	
77 Ind. 2245, 2336	
157 Mass. 1938, 1958	
167 Mass. 770	
125 Mich. 916	
43 N. H. 1270	
50 N. H. 2351	
163 N. Y. 1538, 1552,	
1555	
116 N. C. 2260	
117 N. C. 1958	
2 Pen. 2374	
Rice 1195, 1664	
1 Tex. 1644	
v. Sparrow 586	
v. State	
9 Ala. 142, 273, 1476	
55 Ala. 203, 257, 1921,	
1578	
59 Ala. 2059	
79 Ala. 2276	
88 Ala. 246, 363, 1985	
103 Ala. 1781	
118 Ala. 205	
129 Ala. 287	
133 Ala. 2073, 2513	
136 Ala. 1442	
137 Ala. 821, 1974,	
2276	
59 Ark. 2354	
25 Fla. 247	
23 Ga. 1012, 1700	
28 Ga. 1568	

TABLE OF CASES.

S.M.I.

	Section		Section		Section
Smith v. State		Smithwick v. Anderson	529	Soloman v. American	
63 Ga.	276	v. Evans	923, 1965	Merc. Exch.	1971
72 Ga.	1375	Smitson v. S. P. Co.	662	v. R. Co.	1943
77 Ga.	2008, 2131	Smock v. Pierson	923, 928,	v. Solomon	1056
106 Ga.	2511		1615	v. State	2060
109 Ga.	1013	Smoot v. Fitzhugh	1651, 1684	Solomon R. Co. v. Jones	
110 Ga.	1451	v. Russell	1676	30 Kan.	1066
116 Ga.	1451	Smucker v. Penna. R. Co.	2145	34 Kan.	736, 748, 754,
4 G. Greene	1852	Smuggler U. M. Co. v.			1668, 2096
9 Humph.	1440, 1442	Broderick	1951	Solun v. R. Co.	2509
10 Ind.	836	Smyth v. Caswell	2008, 2016	Solyer v. Romanet	2575
143 Ind.	949	v. Chamberlayne	2063	Somers v. Somers	1085
4 Lea	1842	v. New Orleans C.		v. State	1350
64 Me.	987	& B. Co.	2576, 2580	v. Wright	1540
64 Md.	1270	v. Sandeman	1208	Somerset v. France	380
56 Mis.	923	v. Smyth	1834	Somerville v. Richards	1673
75 Miss.	2:3	Snapp v. Pierce	1247	Somerville & E. R. Co.	
17 Nebr.	2071	Sneed v. Ewing	2083	v. Doughty	952, 2115
42 Nebr.	1669	v. State	1403	Somes v. Brewer	2413
2 Oh. St.	460	Snell v. Bray	278, 613	v. Sklauer	233, 338,
41 Tex.	1825	v. Eckerson	1549		1738
42 Tex.	278, 1167,	v. Gregory	907	Sommerville v. Stephen-	
	1168	v. U. S.	232, 1621, 1639	son	1225, 1254
Tex. Cr., 50 S. W.	987,	Snellgrove v. Baily	1193	Son v. Terr.	118, 389, 390
	1106	Snelling's Will	681	Songster v. Payzant	2143
Tex. Cr., 73 S. W.	398	Snider v. Burks	1309, 1310,	Sonneborn v. Bern-	
Tex. Cr., 74 S. W.	398		1320, 1513, 2016	stein	406, 1111,
10 Wyo.	2056	v. State	1626, 1938, 2501		1125, 1126
v. Stevens	1705	Snoddy v. State	2059	Sonoma Co. v. Stofen	460
v. Strong	791	Snodgrass v. Branch Bank	1246	Sontag, ex p.	2361
v. Taggart	1797	v. Chicago	714	Soper v. McClout	463
v. Tebbitt	1495	Snow v. Batchelder	1062	Sopwith v. Sopwith	2066
v. Terr.	792, 1750	v. Benton	232, 233	Soquet v. State	687, 1691
v. Thomas	1712	v. Carr	1213	Sorenson v. Sorenson	93, 2215
v. Townsend	1239	v. Gould	2310, 2314	Sorg v. Congregation	561, 1976
v. U. S.		v. Grace	928, 1950	Sornberger v. R. Co.	1158
Aris., 45 Pac.	1680	v. Moore	1040	Sorrelle v. Craig	692, 923,
161 U. S.	246, 987,	v. Paine	581		987, 1612,
	1616	v. Phillips	1065		1871, 1985
v. Utesch	907	v. R. Co.	1921, 1942, 1943	Soto v. Kroder	1239
v. Valentine	1339	v. State	1476	Sonlard v. Allen	1677, 1678
v. Veysey	1186	Snow Hardware Co. v.		Soule v. Bruce	64
v. Walton	694, 696, 704,	Loveman	751, 1541	Sonle's Case	2239
	2004, 2006, 2007	Snowball v. Goodricke	1076	Sonlh v. Deaton	378
v. Whittier	208, 252, 1768,	Snowden v. Coal Co.	18, 458	v. State	1404
	1789, 2594	v. U. S.	1761	Sonlh Bend v. Hardy	62, 75,
v. Wilkins	377	Snowdon v. Smith	73		200, 210,
v. Wilson		Snyder v. Albion	436		987, 2270, 2277
3 B. & Ad.	2463	v. Bonbright	1354	v. Turner	2220
1 Dev. & B.	1225	v. Bowman	2159	Sonlh Branch R. Co. v.	
v. Wilton	2132	v. Com.	863, 1042, 1616	Long's Adm'r	1074
v. Winter	1859	v. Electr. Co.	2509	Sonlh Chicago B. Co. v.	
v. Wyman	78, 209, 406	v. Holt Mfg. Co.	1951	Taylor	2105
v. Yaryan	210, 967	v. Iowa City	2203	Sonlh Covington & C. S.	
v. York	1820	v. Natione	811, 1828	R. Co. v. Beatty	1117
v. Young	1243, 1248	v. R. Co.	1943	v. Stroh	2220
Smith's Case		v. Snyder		Sonlh Omaha v. Fennell	784
12 Co.	575	6 Binn.	607, 770	v. Wrzensinski	1078,
10 Gratt.	824, 830,	50 Ind.	803		1456
	861, 865	v. Wise	1681	Sonlh School District v.	
Smith's Ex'r v. Smith	96	Sociedade Feliz, The	1641	Blakelee	1587
Smith Charities v. Con-		Sodusky v. McGee	987	Sonlh Sea Co. v. Bnmp-	
nolly	1320	Sofferstein v. Bertels	1013	stead	2275
Smitha v. Flournoy's		Solander v. People	1079, 1750,	v. Dolliffe	2297
Adm'r	2573		2056, 2273	Sonlh Staff. T. Co. v. Ebb-	
Smithes v. Campbell	1350	Solari v. Snow	1066	smith	1859
v. Garth	1350	Solary v. Webster	2465	Sonlh & N. Ala. R. Co. v.	
Smithles v. Harrison	209	Solita v. Yarrow	1994	McLendon	1974
Smiths v. Shoemaker	1257, 2520	Solly v. Hind	917	Southall v. —	2256

TABLE OF CASES.

Section

1971
1943
1058
20601066
754,
2098
2509
2575
1065
1350
1540
380
18732115
2413
338,
17381254
3,390
21431111,
1126
460
2361
463
20661691
2215
1976
1158
923,
612,
1985
1239
1678
64
2239
378
1404
75,
210,
2277
22201074
2105
117
2220
784
2078,
456587
275
297
859974
256

Section	Section	Section	Section
Southampton v. Graves 1858	Southwestern R. Co. v. Papot 1234	Spenceley v. Schulenburg 2312, 2317	
Southampton Case 526, 1712	Southwick v. Southwick 2245, 2341	v. Willmot 377, 1003, 1006	
Southard v. Curley 2498	v. Stevens 415, 1254	Spencer v. Billing 1249	
v. Rexford 987, 2268, 2270	Southworth v. Bennett 987	v. Boardman 1205	
Southeria v. Meadum 1225, 1651	Sovereign Camp v. Grandon 1672, 2384, 2390	v. Com. 318	
Southern Bell Teleph. Co. v. Jordan 676	Sowden v. Quartz Mining Co. 561	v. Curtis 2579	
Southern Bell T. & T. Co. v. Mayo 900	Sowell v. Bank 1304	v. Klunard 1911	
v. Watts 199	Sowers v. Dukes 1943, 1951	v. Langdon 1681	
Southern Car & F. Co. v. Jennings 1404	v. Terr. 2061	v. Peterson 661	
Southern Express Co. v. Thoruton 702	Spalding v. Hedges v. Lowe 581	v. Robbins 987	
v. Womack 1192	v. People 2497	v. State 20 Ala. 1072	
Southern Georgia & F. R. Co. v. Ayres 1195	Spanagel v. Dallinger 1086, 2102	69 Md. 233	
Southern I. C. Line v. R. Co. 665	Spangler v. Jacoby v. State 1350	v. White 907	
Southern Ins. Co. v. Estes v. White 1270	Sparf v. U. S. 905, 2363	Spencer O. M. Co. v. Johnson 770	
Southern Iron Works v. Central of G. R. Co. 1567	Spargo v. Brown 1456	Spendlow v. Smith 2250	
Southern Kansas R. Co. v. Michaels 688, 2220	Sparhawk v. Bullard v. Sparkawk 582, 1510	Sperry v. Moore's Estate 1390	
v. Painter 1040, 1051	Sparke v. Middleton 2290, 2304	Speyerer v. Bennett 1388	
v. Robbins 65, 199, 461	Sparks v. Com. 111	Spiers v. State 2089	
Southern L. & T. Co. v. Benbow 2098	v. Rawls 1339	Spicer v. State 851, 2265	
Southern Life Ins. Co. v. Wilkinson 657, 1503, 1975	v. Sparks v. State 2297, 2312	Spiegel v. Hays 987, 1270	
Southern M. I. Co. v. Hudson 1947	59 Ala. 784, 2484	Spiers v. Brown 371	
Southern Pacific Co. v. Arnett 1951	111 Ga. 2513	Spies v. Illinois v. People 105, 238, 691, 923, 1079, 1157, 1985, 2276, 2354	
v. Hall 22 J., 791, 1976	Sparr v. Wellman 1053	Spigener v. State 2364	
v. Huntsman 792	Sparrow v. Hovey 254	Spiro v. Nitkin 987	
Southern Pac. R. Co. v. Tomlinson 2507	Sparta v. Lewis 2498	Spittle v. Waiton 497	
Southern R. Co. v. Brantley v. Bush 944	Spaulding v. Lithograph M. Co. 458	Spitz's Appeal 2239, 2336	
v. Covenia 2257	v. Merrimack 1003	Spiva v. Stapleton 720	
v. Crowder 2566	v. R. Co. 15, 905, 1405, 1407	Spivey v. Platon 2336	
v. Hagan 961	v. Sherman 252	v. Rose v. State 254, 1781	
v. Hubbard 2580	v. Vincent 1681, 1684	26 Ala. 246	
v. Kinchen 2124	Spaunhorst v. Link 1029	58 Miss. 246	
v. McLellan 1078	Spear v. Coate 1564, 1566	Spokes v. Hotel Co. 2268	
v. Mauzy 461, 1951	v. Coon 1387, 1415	Spoonmore v. Cables 1263	
v. Posey 458	v. Drainage Com'rs v. Richardson 1943	Sporrer v. Eifer 6	
v. White 2325	v. Richardson 34 N. H. 1974	Spottiswood v. Weir 1234, 2019	
v. Williams 1029, 1037	37 N. H. 681, 682, 770, 772	Spradling v. Conway 610	
v. Wilson 1873	v. State 1841	Spraggins v. State 396	
Southern R. N. Co. v. Russell 2279	v. Sweeney 995	Spragins v. White 2556	
Southern St. R. Adv. Co. v. Mfg. Co. 2406	Spearhacker v. Larrabee 252	Sprague v. Craig 64	
Southey v. Nash 1840	Spears v. C. B. & Q. R. Co. 2552	v. Kneeland v. Sea 1086	
Southwark v. Ins. Co. 2103	v. Forrest 923	Spratt v. Spratt 229	
Southwark Bank v. Com. 1350	v. Ins. Co. 64	Sprigg v. Beaman 1911	
Southwark & V. W. Co. v. Quick 2318, 2319	v. R. Co. 2509	Sprigge v. Sprigge 2523	
Southwest School District v. Williams 1420, 1583, 1586	Speck v. Gray 617	Spring v. Ins. Co. 1513	
Southwest Va. M. L. Co. v. Chase 2034, 2053	Speer v. Athens 1350	Spring City G. Co. v. R. Co. 714	
	v. F. R. Co. 1350	Spring Garden Mut. Ins. Co. v. Riley 745	
	v. Speer 1198	Spring Valley v. Gavin 1023	
	Spegail v. Perkins 1681, 2165	Springbok, The 367	
	Spellings v. Parks 75	Springer v. Byram 1072, 2381	
	Spence v. Mitchell 18, 1391	v. Chicago 1158, 1162, 1164, 1168	
	v. Repass 586	v. Ford 2509	
	v. Sanders 1547, 1554, 1561	v. Hall 2008, 2016, 2018	
	v. Smth 1778	v. State 2060	
	v. State 833	Springfield v. Coe 1951	
		v. Dalby 1896	
		v. Schmook 463	
		Springfield C. R. Co. v. Hoeffner 1719, 2570	
		v. Puntteney 1750, 1951	

TABLE OF CASES.

SFR

	Section		Section		Section
Springfield C. R. Co. v. Welsh	770, 1750, 1951	St. Louis M. & M. Co. v. Montana Co.	1862	Stamper v. Griffin 12 Ga.	1035, 1106, 1263, 1283
Springfield & S. R. Co. v. Calkins	730, 1943	St. Louis O. H. & C. R. Co. v. Fowler	463, 1081, 1640	20 Ga.	1293, 2130
Spring v. R. Co.	736	St. Louis P. Ins. Co. v. Cohen	1213, 1244	v. Walker	1035
Sprouse v. Com.	2265	v. Homer	2436	Stampfill v. Bullen	1290, 1651
Sprowl v. Lawrence	2581	St. Louis S. W. R. Co. v. Dobbins	2220	Stampoff v. Steffens	1166
Sprull v. Cooper	2042, 2054	St. Louis V. & T. H. R. Co. v. Haller	463	Standage v. Creighton	1063
Spruck v. Crook	2334, 2358	St. Louis & C. R. R. Co. v. Eakins	1248	Standard Elevator Co. v. Crane El. Co.	1657
Spurr v. Trimble v. U. S.	1275 321, 1109, 1618	St. Louis & I. M. R. Co. v. Silver	770, 1890, 1893	Staudard L. & A. Ins. Co. v. Tinney	1404
Squier v. Evans	2433	St. Louis & S. F. R. Co. v. Brown	671	Standard Oil Co. v. Bretz	1240
Squire v. State	2086, 2506	v. Burrows	1722, 2509	Standback v. Thornton	1320
Squires v. Abbott v. State	736, 738, 1270, 2277	v. Kilpatrick	1254	Standen v. Bains	1587
St. Andrews v. St. Brides	2063	v. McLelland	1078	v. Edwards	290
St. Bernard Coal Co. v. Southard	1369	v. Mathews	1354	v. Standen	1476, 1603
St. Clair v. U. S.	770, 794, 905, 1647	v. Rits	1951	Standish v. Washburn	35, 442, 451
St. Cross v. Walden	2462	v. Weaver	283, 905	Stanford v. Bates	1062
St. Denis v. Grenier	1898	St. Louis & S. W. R. Co. v. Elgin C. M. Co.	571	v. Murphy	2337
St. Devereux v. Much Dew Church	2088	St. Louis & Tenn. R. P. Co. v. McPeters	1624	v. Pruet	1684, 1703
St. George v. Biddeford	232, 233	St. Martin v. Desnoyer	2354	Stanger v. Searie	1998, 2018
St. John v. Kidd v. Lofland	1239 678	St. Paul F. & M. Ins. Co. v. Brunswick G. Co.	1066	Stanglein v. State	1644, 2086, 2166
v. McConnell	529	v. Gotthelf	1560	Stanhuber v. Graves	1677, 1873, 2309
v. Redmond	1676	St. Paul & M. Trust Co. v. Harrison	2464	Stanley v. Addison	2054
St. John Gaslight Co. v. Clerke	1706	St. Paul & S. C. R. Co. v. Murphy	1943	v. Anderson	1195
St. Joseph & D. C. R. Co. v. Chase	263, 456	St. Peter's Church v. Beach	1267	v. Green	1082
St. Katherine's Hospital	1598	St. Regis Lumber Co. v. Hotchkiss	1576	v. Ins. Co.	987
St. Legar v. Adams	1658	Stants v. Bergen	619	v. Stanley	112 Ind., 27 Wash., 761, 2336
St. Louis v. Foster v. R.	1877 291	Stace v. Griffith	2376	v. State	27 Wash. 1730
v. Rauken	1943	Stack v. R. Co.	2220	26 Ala.	257
v. State	390	Stackhouse v. Horton	1938	38 Ala.	1219
St. Louis A. & T. H. R. Co. v. Bauer	1951, 2447	Stackus v. R. Co.	2552	39 Tex. Cr.	521
St. Louis Bridge Co. v. Miller	2220	Stacy v. Graham	953, 959, 1031, 1106, 1103, 1985	v. Sutherland	1249, 2354
St. Louis Iron M. & S. R. Co. v. Ayres	1943	v. Publishing Co.	1974	v. White	14 East 378, 1080, 1476, 1778
v. Cady	2575	Stadacona Ins. Co. v. Rainsford	1074	160 Ill.	2408, 2410
v. Cantrell	2349	Stafford v. Fargo	913, 1887, 1890	v. Wilkerson	1530
v. Edwards	1941, 1943	v. Journal Am.	76	Stanley P. Co. v. Thomson	907
v. Faisat	1261	v. Rice	629	Stansbury v. Marks	2214
v. Greenthal	233, 1750	v. State	106	Stanton v. Embery	463
v. Hall	1943	Stagg v. Pomeray	1392	v. Parker	987, 1985
v. Harper	1410	Stahl v. Duluth	738	v. State	2354
v. Henderson	1521	Stahle v. Spohn	1040	v. Willson	610
v. Jacobs	1943	Stainer v. Droitwich	1364, 1644, 1670, 1703	Stanwood v. McLellan	749
v. Lawrence	465	Staines v. Stewart	1736	Stapleton v. Crofts	601, 619, 2333
v. Magness	2575	Stalker v. State	318	v. Monroe	15
v. Murphy	1550, 1552	Stall v. State	949	v. Stapleton	604
v. Stroud	199	Stallings v. Hallum v. State	2297 257	Star Kidney P. Co. v. Greenwood	2212
v. Sweet	1668	Stambangh v. Smith	438, 1978	Star Mining & M. Co. v. White Co.	1862
v. Warren	507	Stambro, re	703, 839	Starace v. Rossi	2582
St. Louis K. & A. R. Co. v. Chapman	1943	Stammers v. Dixon	2556	Starchman v. State	1157, 2183, 2264
St. Louis K. & N. W. R. Co. v. Clark	463			Starin v. Kelly	581
St. Louis M. Life Ins. Co. v. Graves	1978			Stark v. Boswell	1083
				Starke v. Wolf	1913
				Starkey v. People	1362, 1438
				Starks v. People	894, 950, 1108, 1109
				v. Sikes	950

TABLE OF CASES.

Section

5, 1108,
33, 1983
33, 2130
1095
90, 1651
1166
1063

1657

1404
1240
1320
1587
290
6, 1603
35, 442,
451
1062
2337
4, 1703
3, 3018
4, 2086,
2166
7, 1873,
2309
2054
1195
1082
987

1, 2336
1730

257
1219
521
9, 2354

1, 1080,
5, 1778
3, 2410
1580
907
2214
463
7, 1985
2354
610
749
1, 619,
2333
15
604

2212

1862
2582
2183,
2264
581
1083
1913
1438
9, 950,
1109
950

Starksboro v. Hineshrgh 1415
Starkweather v. Converse 1066,
1073
v. Maginnis 2432
v. Martin 2105
Starr v. People 460
v. State 106
v. Tracy 2222
v. U. S. 21, 276
Staser v. Hogan 233, 1021, 1041
State v. Aaron 2071
v. Abatto 390, 826
v. Abbey 1684, 1703, 2535
v. Able 2098
v. Ahley 987
v. Abbott
85 Kan. 987
59 Nebr. 1350
8 W. Va. 111, 247,
1732
v. Ahrahams 1852
v. Ahrams 2277
v. Accola 2354
v. Adams
78 Ia. 1669
30 Kan. 216, 238,
1803, 2056
44 Kan. 457, 1853
14 La. An. 1963
76 Mo. 107, 108
49 S. C. 916, 1003
v. Adamson 987
v. Adler 2511
v. Ah Lee 1443, 1803
v. Ah Lol 1749
v. Aiken 1079
v. Albert
50 La. An. 833
73 Mo. 2130
v. Albright 247
v. Alcorn 1461
v. Alexander
109 La. 838
66 Mo. 111, 247, 2354
v. Alford 396, 1875
v. Algood 1350
v. Allen
47 Conn. 266
1 Hawks 656, 858, 702,
704, 705, 3006
57 Ia. 2059
100 Ia. 1111
37 La. An. 957, 1407
107 N. C. 1890, 2276
56 S. C. 318, 1232
v. Aloe 2592
v. Ames 343, 581, 968,
1079
v. Anderson
Ida., 59 Pac. 2061
98 Mo. 824, 832
10 Or. 682, 1048,
1726, 1852, 1976
v. Andre 2062
v. Andrews
29 Conn. 1802
64 Kan. 1350
35 Or. 852
v. Angel 580

Section
State v. Angelo 1028
v. Annice 526, 2085
v. Anslinger 59
v. Anthony
6 Ida. 987
1 McC. 609
v. Antonlo 318
v. Apple 949
v. Araah 2062
v. Archer
73 Ia. 1108, 1109
54 N. H. 1938
v. Ardoin 2512
v. Armington 2085
v. Armstrong
4 Minn. 2086, 2239
Mo., 66 S. W. 832
v. Arnold
12 Ia. 988
13 Ired. 222, 1154
55 Mo. 2232
47 S. C. 1442, 1750
v. Arthnr 278
v. Asbell 143, 457, 1975
v. Asbury 580
v. Ashworth 1441, 1445,
1447, 1448
1398
v. Atkins
v. Atkinson
33 S. C. 784
40 S. C. 2183, 2264,
2265
v. Aughtry 2349, 2497
v. Anguste 832
v. Austin
104 La. 1951
113 Mo. 1674
v. Avery
113 Mo. 994, 1890
R. I. 363, 1026, 2008
v. Ayer 2354
v. Azoff 2354
v. B. & M. Railroad 97, 378
v. Babcock 987, 2278
v. Bable 728
v. Bach Lignor Co. 2282
v. Bacon
13 Or. 987
14 S. D. 1350
v. Baden 2060
v. Badger 1750
v. Bailey
54 Ia. 2272
Wash., 71 Pac. 507
v. Bailly 987
v. Bailor 2062
v. Baird 1680
v. Baker
106 Ia. 2062
110 Mo. 2514
136 Mo. 1018
58 S. C. 828
33 W. Va. 2264
v. Baldoer 2062, 2272
v. Baldwin
38 Kan. 273, 394, 687,
736, 738, 1041,
1690, 1700, 1730,
1963, 1974, 1977

Section
State v. Baldwin
15 Wash. 1398, 1445,
1446
v. Ballou 1873
v. Banks
40 Ia. An. 2056
106 La. 1404, 1669
111 La. 1398, 1404
78 Mo. 2272
73 Mo. 581
v. Baptiste
28 La. An. 681, 1841
105 Ia. An. 278
v. Barfield 63
v. Barker
46 La. An. 246
68 N. J. L. 987
28 Oh. St. 1432
v. Barnes 1909
v. Barrett 1978, 2079, 2080
v. Barringer 2512
v. Barron 142, 278
v. Barrow 1326, 1681
v. Barrows
52 Conn. 2298, 2321,
2327
76 Me. 580
v. Barry 1938
v. Bartlett
47 Me. 2450
55 Me. 414, 2272
v. Bartmess 247, 905, 1029,
1669, 2278, 2277
v. Bassett 1378
v. Bates
10 Conn. 194
38 La. An. 2349
48 La. An. 347
22 Utah 2579
25 Utah 825
v. Batson 2016
v. Battle 391
v. Banerkemper 770, 2062,
2528
v. Baxter 142, 2079
v. Bayonne 2056
v. Bazile 2497
v. Beahont 1908
v. Beach 1354
v. Beal 923, 2277
v. Beau 944
v. Beard 398
v. Beatty 278, 2354
v. Beaty 57
v. Beanceleigh 1890, 2277
v. Beaudet 21, 140
v. Bebb 1135
v. Beck
48 La. An. 246
25 Nev. 1350
v. Bedard 1136
v. Beebe
115 Ia. 78
17 Minn. 2364
v. Behrman 1398, 1645,
2167
v. Beird 198, 248
v. Belcher 1362, 1442,
1750, 2245

TABLE OF CASES.

OTA

State v. Belding	Section	State v. Boswell	Section	State v. Brooks	Section
v. Bell	1882	691, 223, 923,		23 Mont.	199
42 Ia.	2042	v. Boughner	1285	v. Brookshire	1841, 1842
136 Mo.	2501	v. Bowe	852, 1046	v. Broughton	821, 852,
v. Bellard	1755	v. Bowen	2372		2360, 2363
v. Belton	1921	v. Bowman	683	v. Brown	
v. Benjamin	944	v. Bowser	398, 667	1 Pen. Del.	1051
v. Benner	10, 278, 770,	v. Boyd		30 Fla.	1350
	773, 774, 1021,	89 La. An.	905, 1106,	48 Ia.	984
	2363		1106	88 Ia. 1969,	1274, 2062
v. Bennett		Mo., 76 S. W.	987, 985,	25 Ia.	3395
31 Ia.	2332		1265	22 Kan.	111, 247
75 N. C.	133	v. Boyland and Mc-		55 Kan.	200, 1615
40 S. C.	2349	Curry	357	111 La.	390, 1036,
v. Berger	351	v. Brabham	1120		1442, 2276
v. Berkley	2595	v. Bradford	630	64 Mo.	111, 1750
v. Berlin	2352	v. Bradley		73 Mo.	836
v. Bernard	949	6 La. An.	111, 143	188 Mo.	273
v. Berning	1890	2 Rich.	609, 2236	171 Mo.	2556
v. Bernstein	660	84 Vt.	107, 108	N. J. L., 48 Atl.	2061
v. Berry	499, 851	67 Vt.	107, 728, 851,	76 N. C.	278
v. Bertin	1803		1978	125 N. C.	1138
v. Bertoch	2332	v. Bradneck	1750	28 Or.	953, 1028,
v. Best		v. Brady			1732, 1974, 2363
106 N. C.	1493	95 Ia.	754	3 Strobb.	2058, 2059
111 N. C.	383, 2349	100 Ia.	321, 1230	v. Brownlee	2060
v. Beste	2349	Ia., 91 N. W.	2513	v. Bruce	278, 923
v. Beswick	1354, 2582	87 Mo.	1890	r. Brundige	1960, 2513
v. Betsall	2056, 2057	v. Brandenburg	907	v. Brunell	78
v. Bonerman	689, 1938	v. Branham	852, 1326,	v. Bruner	580
v. Bickle	293		1328, 1329	v. Brunetto	1382, 1398,
v. Biggerstaff	1755	v. Branum	1890		1438
v. Bilansky	949, 987	v. Branstetter	2354	v. Brunson	2016
v. Billings	2072	v. Brant	894	v. Bryan	205
v. Birchard	1135	v. Brantley	1010	v. Bryant	
v. Bird	2349	v. Braskamp	1010	55 Mo.	246, 783
v. Birdwall	105, 246, 247,	v. Brassfield	205, 2062	93 Mo.	1938
	396	v. Breanx	580, 1978	v. Buchier	1974
v. Bishop	142, 1476	v. Breckouridge	312, 1249	v. Buck	
v. Black		v. Breeden	923, 950	120 Mo.	1354
143 Mo.	580, 2056	v. Brent	1270	74 Vt.	20
15 Mont.	987, 1270,	v. Brette	2355	v. Buckley	
	1853	v. Brewer	1131	54 Ala.	1350
121 N. C.	949	v. Brick	823, 857	40 Conn.	78
v. Blackburn	1127, 1446	v. Bridgman	216, 396,	v. Buckman	286
v. Blake	2280		399, 402, 2235	v. Buffington	2241, 2339
v. Blakesley	1003	v. Brien	248, 590	v. Bnie	2042
v. Blanchard	1750	v. Brierly	838	v. Buila	1890, 2277, 2513
v. Bliss	2513	v. Briggs		v. Bullari	194, 987, 988
v. Blitz	987	68 Ia.	398, 852	v. Brulli	1976
v. Blise	205, 2042	9 R. I.	2234, 2235	v. Burke	1878
v. Blodget	1182	v. Brin	2059	v. Burks	905, 2349
v. Bloom	59, 923, 2277	v. Brink	2081	v. Burlingame	2232
v. Bloor	905	v. Brinyea	1938	v. Burlingham	2236, 2239
v. Bine		v. Briscoe	1983	v. Burnett	1447
136 Mo.	2497	v. Britt	133, 188	v. Burham	1157
17 Utah	56	v. Brittain		v. Burras	
v. Blythe	507	89 N. C.	2354	Ia., 78 N. W.	778, 811
v. Bodie	111, 247	117 N. C.	833, 2358	110 Ia.	2062
v. Bodly	1312	v. Britton	2086	119 Ia.	770, 1807
v. Bogue	580	v. Broadbent	821	30 Ia. An.	63, 246
v. Bohan	1433	v. Brockman	826, 830, 838	19 Wash.	154
v. Boise	1350	v. Bronstine	1938	v. Burrell	2278, 2282
v. Bokien	321, 1807, 1853	v. Brooks		v. Burt	2239
v. Boiden	1079	39 La. An.	247	v. Burton	
v. Bonser	357	92 Mo.	841, 1385,	63 Kan.	248, 247, 248
v. Boomer	1209, 1855, 1959		1834, 1862,	2 Marv. (Del.)	987
v. Borden	607		1890, 2277	v. Burwell	2349
v. Bostwick	836			v. Butler	2268, 2270, 2271

TABLE OF CASES.

Section	Section	Section	Section
193	State v. Buits 1730	State v. Cater 437	State v. Coatney 933
841, 1842	v. Byers 1396	v. Cather 58, 1974	v. Coats 905, 2071
821, 852,	v. Byrd 63, 111, 246,	v. Caudle 1006	v. Cobbs 2349
360, 2363	247, 2512	v. Cavanaugh	v. Cochran
	v. Byrne 1136	96 Ia. 1910	2 Dev. 1623
1051	v. Cadotte 621, 2130	52 Ia. An. 364	147 Mo. 106
1350	v. Caddy 1129	v. Caveness 1985	v. Coella
934	v. Caldwell 1230	v. Casean 1028	3 Wash. 1041
974, 2062	v. Carly 1126, 1126	v. Center 2339	6 Wash. 1164
2395	v. Calh 106 Ia. 1263	v. Chaffin 111	v. Coffee 2363, 2364
111, 347	9 W. Va. 667	v. Chamberlain 291, 1690,	v. Coggins 1159
100, 1615	20 W. Va. 2079	2273	v. Cohen 1273, 2497
20, 1036,	v. Cake 1677, 1680	v. Chambers	v. Cohn 1243, 2277
42, 2276	v. Calder 1853, 2059	87 Ia. 2239	v. Colbert 1677
11, 1750	v. Caldwell 3 Ia. An. 2355	45 Ia. An. 851	v. Colby 396, 526, 1644,
836	50 Ia. An. 830	v. Champion 1678	1645, 2060,
273	v. Calkins 2016	v. Chandler	2109, 2167
2556	v. Call 321	3 Hawks 522	v. Coie
2061	v. Callaghan 1445	5 La. An. 246	9 Humph. 2576
278	v. Callahan 21, 1126,	v. Chaney 1186	63 Ia. 569
1138	2059, 2060	v. Chaunte 68	38 Ia. An. 1842
3, 1028,	v. Callaway 390, 397, 1730	v. Chapman	94 N. C. 561, 683
4, 2363	v. Callegari 1363	66 Ia. 2062	19 Wis. 1249
26, 2059	v. Callian 967	6 Nev. 2059	v. Coleman 1876, 1938
2060	v. Cameron 579, 2272	v. Chase 390	v. Coley 691, 1621
178, 923	v. Campbell 7 N. D. 149, 1013	v. Chanvet 2059	v. Collett 2059
0, 2513	1 Rich. L. 1362, 1367,	v. Chavis 63, 246	v. Collins
78	1374	v. Chee Gong 728, 770, 1803	3 Dev. 290
580	v. Candler 16, 570, 705	r. Cheek 570, 705, 762	20 Ia. 949
1, 1398,	v. Cannon 49 S. C. 862	v. Cherry 62, 200, 894, 987,	32 Ia. 246, 247, 1029,
1438	52 S. C. 499	1104, 1871	1035, 1263, 1398
2016	v. Cardinas 1239, 1273,	v. Chicago M. & S.	66 N. H. 1219, 1273,
205	1651	P. R. Co. 1354	2257, 2498
16, 783	v. Cardoza 758, 759, 761,	v. Chilea 688	121 N. C. 2100
1938	762, 1007	v. Chingren 987, 2567	15 S. C. 759, 762
1974	851, 2100	v. Chitenden 928	v. Colston 382
1354	v. Carlisle 2272	v. Chretien 2354	v. Colwell 756
20	v. Carnagy 396, 652, 1003	v. Christian 246, 1985	v. Comer 2364
1350	v. Carr 25 La. An. 2273	v. Christmas 232, 1621	v. Compagnet 111, 246, 247
78	5 N. H. 705, 1680,	v. Church 1852, 2582	v. Comstock 2062
286	2163	v. Chyo Chiagk 580, 2056,	v. Concannon 2056
2339	2060	2059	v. Conerly 1021
2042	28 Or. 852, 834, 855	v. Cincinnati T. & J.	v. Conkle 949, 967
2513	37 Vt. 824, 830	Co. 7, 1665	v. Connelly 2061
7, 988	v. Carrick 661, 1129,	v. Clancy 2497	v. Conness 1712
1976	1144, 1445,	v. Clara 1350	v. Conway 1407
1878	1447, 1450	v. Clarissa 833	v. Cook
2349	v. Carroll 852	v. Clark	75 Conn. 792
2232	v. Carron 205	12 Ired. 662, 1976	92 Ia. 2062
2239	v. Carson 987, 2277	69 Ia. 1136, 1138	17 Kan. 569
1447	v. Carter 1 Houst. Cr. C. 4, 25	100 Ia. 1037	30 Kan. 1853
1157	Ia., 96 N. W. 987	34 Kan. 2349, 2354	15 Rich. L. 851
8, 811	45 La. An. 246	60 Kan. 520, 521	v. Coolidge 1696
2062	51 La. An. 1124, 1893	54 N. H. 2088	v. Cooper
1807	106 La. 1072, 1448	15 S. C. 678	32 La. An. 247, 396
246	107 La. 1448	v. Claude 246	71 Mo. 1108, 2277
154	8 Wash. 1034	v. Cleaves 2272	83 Mo. 1037
2282	15 Wash. 1014	v. Cleavland 2535	85 Mo. 2354
2239	v. Cartwright 2354	v. Clemens 2059	103 Mo. 2085, 2086
248	v. Case 1614	v. Clements 1230, 2059	101 N. C. 2572
987	v. Casey 925, 987	v. Clifford 852	Tenn. Ch., 53
2349	v. Cass 2439	v. Clifton 1616	S. W. 1239, 1680,
2271	v. Cassidy 2062	v. Clinton 923, 987, 2003,	2105, 2167
		2006, 2008,	v. Corcoran
		2016, 2277	7 Ida. 905
		v. Clough 2168	38 La. An. 1755
		v. Clyburn 1873	v. Cornhauser 330
		v. Coates 195, 1021, 1126,	v. Cosgrove 246, 247
		1985, 2056	v. Coas 825

TABLE OF CASES.

OTA

	Section		Section		Section
State v. Costello	499, 933	State v. D'Angelo	141, 246, 296	State v. Dilley	1874
v. Costner	2273	v. Daniel		v. Dillon	581
v. Coudler	1403	31 La. An.	1441	v. Diskin	1072
v. Coudotte	273, 2039	49 La. An.	2100	v. Divine	1354
v. Congut	1493	v. Darnell	830, 841	v. Dixon	
v. County Commis- sioners	1871	v. Dart	1362, 1723	47 La. An.	687
v. Coupenhaver	2334	v. David	652, 1842, 1974, 3012, 3079, 3584	131 N. C.	1447, 2150
v. Couper	2494	v. Davikson		v. Dockstader	290
v. Courtright	3042	77 N. C.	2239	v. Dodson	
v. Cousins	267, 288	9 S. D.	1021, 1041	4 Or.	247
v. Covington	2100	60 Vt.	1716, 2073, 3081	16 S. C.	609, 2100, 2245
v. Cowan	626, 832, 652, 867, 1473, 2071, 2100	v. Davis		v. Doherty	682
v. Cowell	351	3 Brov.	2239	v. Dolan	1974
v. Cox	2277	6 Ida.	106, 851	v. Dollar	2293
v. Crab	2056	110 Ia.	1839	v. Dominique	1750
v. Cracker	507, 1821	117 Ind.	1225	v. Donehey	1350
v. Craemer	218	77 Ired.	140	v. Donelson	194, 268, 2100
v. Craine	1441, 1446	34 La. An.	860	v. Donnelly	267, 2056
v. Cram	2100	29 Mo.	1028	v. Donovan	
v. Crawford		141 Mo.	2061	61 Ia.	2097
35 Ark.	1350	63 N. C.	862	10 N. D.	2259
99 Mo.	106, 140	77 N. C.	142	v. Doon	2354, 2355
39 S. C.	326	67 N. C.	1021	v. Dooris	2167
Wash., 71 Pac.	246	109 N. C.	1645	v. Donette	736
v. Credle	1254	125 N. C.	838	v. Douglas	
v. Creson	57	69 N. H.	106, 108, 216, 564	53 Kan.	506
v. Crocker	1186, 1566, 1651	55 S. C.	1974, 1977	26 Nev.	2060
v. Crofford	359	104 Tenn.	1732	v. Douglass	
v. Cronin	1442	v. Dawson	2056	34 Ia. An.	1404
v. Crook	1029	v. Deal		81 Mo.	1890
v. Cross		24 Fla.	1350	20 W. Va.	2183, 2306
72 Conn.	862, 1936	41 Ore.	1037, 1051, 1076, 1890	v. Dove	923, 1125, 1126
68 Ia.	1271, 1976, 1983	v. Debolt	2497	v. Dowd	1853
44 W. Va.	2183	v. Dee	949	v. Downs	
v. Croits	784	v. Deering	1974	148 Ind.	2577
v. Cronse	1021	v. Degonia	2615	50 La. An.	583
v. Crow	1275	v. De Graff	852, 3008, 3012	82 N. C.	833, 855, 657
v. Crowder	2535	v. De Hart	200, 396, 2056	113 N. C.	835, 855
v. Crowley		v. Delanerville	1028	v. Drawdy	609
13 Ala.	396	v. Delaney	136, 160, 451	v. Dreany	1203
33 La. An.	390	v. De Maio	1909	v. Driscoll	1142, 1750
v. Cruise	1129	v. Demareste	247	v. Dnbols	
v. Cuellar	564, 1678	v. Denis	505, 1696	54 Ia.	2071
v. Cummins	905, 2259	v. Dennin	1126	49 Mo.	153
v. Cunningham		v. Dennis	273, 1442	v. Dndley	2235
31 Mo.	2056	v. Depass	111	v. Dndoussat	987, 1128, 1129
72 N. C.	232	v. Depnty	953	v. Dnestrow	233, 390, 770
v. Curran	2062	v. Derrick	862, 1876	v. Duffey	62, 923, 1010, 1014, 1839
v. Curtis	1270, 2277	v. Desforges	1109	v. Duffy	
v. Cushenberry	728, 1615	v. Desmond	276, 357	57 Conn.	944, 1909
v. Cushing		v. Desroches	351, 1753, 3097	15 Ia.	2261, 2271
29 Mo.	1010	v. De Wolf	811, 1104, 1124, 1135, 1136, 1136, 1195	124 Mo.	1157
14 Wash.	111, 247, 1157, 1615	v. Dexter	195, 321, 1072, 2530	v. Dufour	276, 1144
17 Wash.	84, 111, 220, 247, 1157, 1398, 1977, 2497	v. Dickey	1072	v. Dumphrey	63, 111, 246, 247, 580
v. Dale		v. Dickinson	1396, 1432, 1725	v. Dnnan	
109 Ia.	1855	v. Dickson		6 Ired.	109, 140, 142, 1476
141 Mo.	728	6 Kan.	1853	64 Mo.	861
v. Daley	1781	78 Mo.	106, 276, 2071	116 Mo.	1476, 1755
v. Dalton		v. Diets	2059	142 Mo.	2497
27 Mo.	59, 1013, 1028	v. Dildy	833	8 Rob. La.	1896
20 R. I.	1441	v. Dill	246, 988	7 Wash.	2276
v. Danforth	166, 1154, 2062			v. Dunn	
				109 Ia.	416
				116 Ia.	1855
				80 Mo.	2354

Section
1874
581
1072
1354

687
17, 2150
290

247
00, 2345
482
1974
2203
1750
1350
16, 2100
17, 2056

2097
2259
4, 2355
2167
736

506
2060

1404
1890
3, 2306
5, 1126
1853

2577
585

3, 857
5, 855
609
1205
1, 1750

2071
153
2235
1, 1129
0, 770
1010,
1839

1909
2271
1157
1144
246,
7, 580

142,
1476
861
1755
2497
1896
2276

416
1855
2354

State v. Dunwell	Section 2575
v. Duplochain	1116
v. Durham	221, 1212, 2233
v. Durnam	243, 2060
v. Dussenberry	2061
v. Dwire	1010
v. Dyer	
59 Mo.	2239
159 Mo.	923, 967, 2377
v. Earnest	1969
v. Easterlin	2044
v. Eastwood	363, 2265
v. Eaton	
3 Harringt.	1349
75 Mo.	111, 2079, 2080
v. Ean	2060
v. Eddon	63, 1442
v. Edwards	
34 La. An.	105
106 La.	651, 862
19 Mo.	1270, 2569
79 N. C.	1621
112 N. C.	1974
2 Nott & McC.	2260,
	2271
51 W. Va.	2183, 2264
v. Effer	2277
v. Egan	923, 1985
v. Ehinger	1960
v. Eisenhour	1877
v. Ekanger	967, 2270
v. Etkins	111, 246, 247,
	1013
v. Ellington	949
v. Elliott	
15 La.	2100, 2115
45 La.	111, 247, 604,
	935, 1442, 1443
68 N. C.	1021
v. Ellis	246
v. Ellsworth	950, 953, 1029
v. Ellwood	194, 749, 792,
	995, 1270
v. Elmer	2273, 2276
v. Emery	363
v. Emory	1776
v. En	278
v. England	131
v. Engle	1652
v. English	239
v. Enke	2062
v. Enochs	2261, 2262
v. Epstein	1072, 1750, 1810
v. Erh	1938
v. Erving	1195
v. Estomp	1072, 1750
v. Evans	
6 Hamph.	2576
55 Mo.	1476
124 Mo.	1439, 1440,
	1442
136 Mo.	276, 2239
166 Mo.	1671
33 W. Va.	111, 246,
	247, 581, 1626
v. Everitt	1852
v. Fahy	2042
v. Falle	111
v. Fairfax	2595

State v. Fairland	Section 2273
v. Fannon	1842
v. Farmer	13, 967, 2277
v. Farrington	726, 1855,
	1690, 2016
v. Fasset	2384, 2363
v. Faulkner	21, 2042, 2270,
	2296
v. Favre	2276, 2254
v. Fay	2276
v. Felster	689
v. Feiker	111, 246
v. Feiter	
25 La.	232, 233, 675,
	661
32 La.	1384
v. Feltes	495, 499, 821,
	933, 2071
v. Ferguson	
71 Conn.	195, 967
2 Hill S. C.	1431
9 Nev.	923
v. Feuerhaken	2059
v. Field	
14 Me.	246
119 Mo.	1350
v. Flaster	2450
v. Finch	716
v. Findley	1230, 2535
v. Finley	761, 1382, 1442
v. Fisher	
33 La. An.	111, 247
162 Mo.	949, 2276
v. Fitchette	343
v. Fitzgerald	
63 La.	1396, 2062,
	2096
130 Mo.	106, 143,
	1707, 1896
68 Vt.	286, 2306
v. Fitzhugh	1072, 1433
v. Fitzsimmons	1625, 1839,
	1842
v. Fitzsimon	200, 1761
v. Flanagan	2081
v. Flanders	
118 Mo.	1205
36 N. H.	656, 726,
	1969
v. Flemming	651, 2497
v. Fletcher	140, 457,
	1442, 1476
v. Flint	261, 460, 1126,
	1128, 1129
v. Floyd	63
v. Flynn	
124 Mo.	326
36 N. H.	2183, 2264
v. Foley	
130 Mo.	258
144 Mo.	118, 1072
15 Nev.	522, 523
45 N. H.	1620
v. Folwell	216, 414, 1977
v. Fontenot	
46 La. An.	363, 390,
	692, 770
50 La. An.	248, 1976
v. Fooks	1398, 2395

State v. Foot You	Section 1447
v. Foote	675
v. Forbes	247, 784,
	1839, 1841
v. Force	830, 856, 855
v. Ford	
37 La. An.	21, 246,
	247, 1841
3 Strubbh.	21, 216, 290,
	349, 1985
v. Forschner	62, 200, 396,
	923, 926, 1616
v. Foraythe	1051
v. Fortner	836, 651, 654
v. Foster	
30 Kan.	2044
23 N. IL	2276
v. Fouk	2513
v. Fontain	2062
v. Fournier	143, 923, 967,
	1723, 2100
v. Fowier	276
v. Fox	
79 Md.	2590
79 Mo.	2349
25 N. J. L.	655, 793
v. Francis	1350
v. Frank	
60 Nebr.	1350
61 Nebr.	1350
109 La.	952
v. Franks	153, 236, 560
v. Frannburg	1443
v. Frazier	
6 Baxt.	655
109 La.	508
v. Frederic	276
v. Freeman	
5 Conn.	2354
4 Jones L.	354
100 N. C.	1131
43 S. C.	1051
v. French	2082
v. Frow	1836
v. Frey	2239
v. Frierson	247
v. Fritz	2016
v. Froiseth	2252
v. Frage	
28 La. An.	2349
44 La. An.	1106
v. Farbeck	1164
v. Ferguson	278
v. Gabriel	1755
v. Gailor	238
v. Galla	1890
v. Gallagher	2086
v. Gallehugh	1750
v. Gannon	1807, 2559
v. Gardner	1938
v. Gardiner	
1 Root	2235
88 Minn	2270
v. Garic	63, 246
v. Garland	987, 1044
v. Garrand	396, 1434, 1442
v. Garrett	
Busbee	987, 2272
71 N. C.	2265

TABLE OF CASES.

57A

	Section		Section		Section
State v. Garrington	149, 2373	State v. Grant		State v. Hall	
v. Garrison	276, 1442, 2497	22 Mo.	830	14 S. D.	708
v. Garth	1439	79 Mo.	104, 109, 391, 922, 1124, 1131, 1245	S. D., 91 N. W.	684, 1639
v. Garvey				v. Hallock	384
35 La. An.	652, 940	144 Mo.	967	v. Halstead	1264, 1282
26 La. An.	654, 940	v. Granville	1406	v. Hamilton	923
11 Minn.	661	v. Grate	1814	v. Hancock	1163
v. Gates		v. Graton	2555	v. Hand	1680
130 Mo.	1978	v. Graves	1090, 2275, 2276	v. Haney	2064
28 Wash.	104, 2061			v. Hanley	882
v. Ganbert	1877	v. Grear		v. Hanna	150, 216, 2091
v. Gay	2254	29 Minn.	499, 933	v. Hannett	391
v. Gaylord	1890, 2278	29 Minn.	2071, 2073	v. Hardin	2056
v. Geddes	390, 818, 2059	v. Grobe	154, 268	v. Harding	347
v. Geddis	689	v. Green		v. Hargrave	1342
v. Gedlicke	1722	23 Conn.	390, 397	v. Hargroves	784
v. Geer	2241	Kirby	338	v. Harkins	2064, 2069
v. Gemmill	1195	45 La. An.	946, 247	v. Harlan	105, 2079
v. George		92 N. C.	118, 238	v. Harman	632, 1349
8 Ire.	1126, 1131, 1132	48 S. C.	520, 770, 2064, 2100	v. Harper	
60 Minn.	1875, 1395	v. Greenburg	922, 957	101 N. C.	2355
v. German	2071	v. Greenleaf	1807, 1854, 1978	35 Oh. St.	1432
v. Gessell	967, 1842			v. Harr	791
v. Gigher	580	v. Greenwade	351	v. Harris	2059
v. Gilbert	1072, 1075	v. Gregor	111	v. Harrington	561
v. Gilcrease	2100	v. Gregory		v. Harris	
v. Gille	1447	5 Jones L.	855	100 Ia.	235
v. Gillick	1655	29 La. An.	952, 1943	5 Ired.	570, 705
v. Gilman	821, 843, 852	v. Griffin		45 La. An.	111, 247
v. Gln Pon	1618	48 La. An.	890	49 La. An.	274
v. Giroux	1955	87 Mo.	1652	51 La. An.	280
v. Glvens	2006, 2018	v. Grimmell	3385	59 Mo.	248, 247
v. Glass		v. Griswold		78 Mo.	247
5 Or.	1978	87 Conn.	2183, 2264, 2277	150 Mo.	1079
50 Wis.	852, 2275	73 Conn.	2273	63 N. C.	1975
v. Glave	2273	v. Grover	840, 842, 867	v. Harrison	
v. Gleim	934, 937, 2497	v. Groves	2474	111 La.	111
v. Glenn	1350	v. Grubb	1974	66 Vt.	918, 2079
v. Glyndon	821	v. Gruff	861	6 W. Va.	2349, 2354
v. Glynn	948, 953, 1029	v. Guild		r J. Arnold	153, 194, 218, 326
v. Goddard	1124, 2018	149 Mo.	728, 2513	v. Hartley	1803
v. Goetz	347	10 N. J. L.	275, 836, 855, 2071	v. Harvey	
v. Goff	105, 237, 918	v. Gunagy	2062	113 Ia.	166, 1134
v. Goforth	2226, 2497	v. Gny		28 La. An.	1398, 1405
v. Goin	2514	106 La.	923	131 Mo.	693, 728, 904, 2512
v. Gonce	2085, 2086	107 La.	1034	v. Haswell	2349, 2354
v. Gonsoulin	1574	89 Mo.	106, 111, 247	v. Haskins	2535
v. Goodbier	953, 1036, 1037, 1046	v. Haab	967	v. Hastings	
v. Goode	1807	v. Hack	142, 940, 957, 1478	24 Minn.	1350
v. Goodrich	111, 247, 953	v. Haddonfield & C.		53 N. H.	701, 2008, 2016, 2020
v. Goodwin	394, 894, 728	Turnpike Co.	2572	v. Hasty	1855, 2273
v. Gore	1842	v. Hagan		v. Hatcher	852, 1667, 2243
v. Gorham		45 La. An.	1839, 1842	v. Hatfield	
60 Me.	2163	54 Mo.	836	5 Head	2281
57 Vt.	851, 862	164 Mo.	832, 852	73 Mo.	2205
v. Gosey	2079, 2296	v. Hagood	1250	45 W. Va.	905, 1890
v. Gossett	832, 861, 2100	v. Hahn	1706	v. Hathaway	716
v. Gottfreedson	347	v. Haines	592	v. Hathorn	1890
v. Goyette	2582	v. Hairston	52, 1496	v. Hawkins	2116
v. Grady	2354	v. Hale	957, 1072	v. Haworth	861, 1037
v. Graf	2059	v. Halford	1136	v. Hayden	
v. Graham		v. Hall		45 Ia.	1657, 1669, 2060
45 Mo.	254	9 Nev.	247	51 Vt.	681, 1936
74 N. C.	559, 2285	N. C., 44 S. E.	561		
131 N. C.	354				
23 Utah	360				

708			
7. 894,	State v. Hayes		
1629	104 Ia.	2068	
384	14 Utah	218	
1284, 1325	v. Haynes		
923	71 N. C.	142, 1476,	
1167		1873	
1620	7 N. D.	1008, 1008	
2064	v. Hays		
682	22 La. An.	228, 233	
214, 2091	33 Mo.	4, 247, 276	
391	v. Hayward		
2064	62 Minn.	108, 222,	
247		233, 232, 261,	
1392		1728, 1726	
784	I Nott & McC.	2042	
2064, 2069	v. Heaton	2088, 2239	
108, 2079	v. Hancock	52, 1022	
632, 1349	v. Head	1198	
	v. Healey	258	
	v. Heatherton	2062	
2355	v. Hood	2042	
1432	v. Height	2252, 2264,	
791		2263, 2282	
2059	v. Heidenbrand	7	
581	v. Heim	106	
	v. Henderson		
235	84 Ia.	2060	
570, 705	22 S. C.	1028	
111, 247	29 W. Va.	2016	
276	v. Hendricks		
290	173 Mo.	1126, 1750	
249, 247	15 Mont.	76, 1620	
247	v. Hennessy	2059	
1079	v. Henry		
1975	107 Ala.	1044	
	3 Jones L.	58, 200	
111	51 W. Va.	248, 1188	
918, 2079	v. Henson	267, 1066	
249, 2354	v. Herbert	660, 1911,	
153, 124,		2304, 2319	
216, 326	v. Hernia	851	
1803	v. Herron	2513	
	v. Horsom	722	
66, 1134	v. Hess	218	
298, 1405	v. Hico	56	
293, 728,	v. Hicks		
24, 2512	27 Mo.	248	
249, 2354	6 S. D.	2059	
2535	v. Higdon	205	
	v. Higgins	1354	
	v. Hillberg	82, 298,	
		1616, 2060	
	v. Hildreth	1732	
	v. Hill		
	2 Hill S. C.	1375, 1402	
	46 Ia. An.	2514	
	91 Mo.	2061	
	134 Mo.	1072	
	65 N. J. L.	851, 2130	
	2 Speer	1223	
	48 W. Va.	2056	
	52 W. Va.	983, 987,	
		1270, 2196	
	v. Hilfmantel	1712, 2215	
	v. Hinkle		
	6 Ia.	39, 238, 390,	
		569, 2273	
	33 Or.	1079	
	v. Hinton	2056	

	Section	
State v. Hobbs		852
v. Hoeker	1380, 2077	
v. Hochett	1978	
v. Hodge	2552	
v. Hodges	318, 2513	
v. Hodgkins	2065, 2086	
v. Hoffman	2513	
v. Hogan		
67 Conn.	276	
115 Ia.	247	
120 Ind.	2041	
v. Hogard	2041	
v. Hogue	69	
v. Holcomb	142, 205	
v. Holden	791, 791	
v. Holland	2052	
v. Hollenback	260, 398	
v. Hollis	247	
v. Holt	1934	
v. Holmes		
35 W. Va.	321, 2272	
22 Wash.	1453	
v. Hooker	1377, 2098	
v. Hooks	2068	
v. Hooper	706, 709	
v. Hopkins		
50 Vt.	915, 1236,	
	1841, 1871, 1890,	
	3154	
56 Vt.	760, 1878	
13 Wash.	831, 832	
v. Hopkirk	660, 728	
v. Hopper	111, 276	
v. Hoppiss	1897	
v. Hora	2016, 2167, 2569	
v. Horne	85, 106, 1014,	
	1028, 2276	
v. Horton	1755	
v. Hossack	792, 968,	
	2130	
v. Houghton	744	
v. Houser	1374, 1397,	
	1398, 1404	
v. Houston		
78 Ala.	1974	
1 Bail.	313, 318	
r. Houx	967	
v. Howard		
19 Kan.	521	
4 McC.	2042	
91 Me.	1219, 2109,	
	2464	
118 Mo.	498, 811	
9 N. H.	923, 1111,	
	1818, 1965	
17 N. H.	2354	
22 N. C.	268, 1732	
Or., 72 Pac.	1044	
35 S. C.	1884, 1890	
32 Vt.	1714, 1725,	
	2056	
v. Howell	95, 2520	
v. Hoyt		
46 Conn.	1700	
47 Conn.	106, 232, 238,	
	1621, 2339	
13 Minn.	1029	
123 Mo.	2534	
v. Huckins	1853	

	Section	
State v. Hudson		
80 Ia.	278, 280	
110 Ia.	2072	
v. Hudson Co. Elec-		
tric Co.	2679	
v. Hudspeth		
180 Mo.	396, 1690,	
	2273	
159 Mo.	692, 1730	
v. Huff		
101 Mo.	280	
1 Nov.	267, 2277	
v. Huguet		
53 Ia.	2322	
10 Ia.	326, 2042	
29 Ia. An.	2097	
71 Ia.	1018, 1021,	
	1841	
4 S. D.	1029	
v. Huff		
26 Ia.	1349, 2059	
18 K. I.	78, 2272, 2273	
45 W. Va.	1951	
v. Humason	326, 1404	
v. Hunnaker	1029, 1873	
v. Hunt		
112 Ia.	1802	
128 N. C.	105	
v. Hunter	791, 1136, 1164	
v. Huntly	1732	
v. Hurd	398, 2239	
v. Hurst	669	
v. Hunsay		
Busbee	2239	
7 Ia.	1141	
v. Hutchison	394, 1718,	
	2062	
v. Huxford	1974	
v. Hyde	580	
v. Hyer	2056, 2057, 2060	
v. Hlymer	106	
v. Ice	2272	
v. Imlay	1135, 1138	
v. Irwin		
1 Hayw.	1387	
Ida., 71 Pac.	967	
v. Isaacson	106, 457, 1659	
v. Isenhart	1645, 1798,	
	1878	
v. Isham	1273, 2555	
v. Jackson		
12 Ia. An.	248, 296	
23 Ia. An.	246, 247	
37 Ia. An.	248	
44 Ia. An.	247, 923, 987	
106 Ia.	1046	
111 Ia.	1382	
17 Mo.	63, 246, 247	
25 Mo.	2273, 2278	
106 Mo.	560, 2056,	
	2059	
112 Mo.	321	
9 Mont.	1045	
65 N. J. L.	398	
9 Or.	506, 507	
v. Jacobs		
5 Jones	2265	
6 Jones	571, 1978	
107 N. C.	1131	

TABLE OF CASES.

STA

	Section		Section		Section
State v. Jacobs		State v. Jones		State v. Kingsley	
20 S. C.	1044, 1873	50 N. H.	228, 233, 1938	39 Ia.	2062
21 R. I.	2071	68 N. C.	1977	108 Mo.	1334
v. Jaeger	1061	29 S. C.	736, 1040, 1108, 1109, 1329, 1374, 1667, 2098	v. Kinley	56, 59, 1029
v. Jagers	1440			v. Kinney	1138, 1761
v. James		6 Wash.	1350	v. Kirby	
45 Ia.	276	v. Jordan		62 Kan.	184, 231, 581
31 S. C.	1974	87 Ia.	835	1 Strobb.	824, 832, 1475
v. Jamison		34 La. An.	1404	v. Kirkman	953, 1021, 1028
74 Ia.	321	v. Josev	279	v. Kirkpatrick	
110 Ia.	341	v. Judd	2511	32 Ark.	1331
v. Janvier	246, 247	v. Junean	507	63 Ia.	923, 2277
v. Jarvis	2060	v. Justus	442, 457	v. Kiasock	1842, 2062
v. Jay	835	v. K.	2276	v. Kline	
v. Jeandell	406, 777	v. Kahrlich	58, 57, 290	54 Ia.	390
v. Jefferson		v. Kaiser	1755	109 La.	1398, 1404
8 Ired.	62, 200, 398, 1062	v. Kane	1963	v. Klinger	689, 1938
	21, 1434	v. Kartz	1354	v. Klitzke	2276
125 N. C.	334	v. Kean	2088	v. Knapp	59, 200, 220, 398, 1005, 1135, 1136, 1164
v. Jeffries		v. Keenan	1614, 2201	v. Knight	
v. Jenkins		v. Keeler	2081	43 Me.	662, 790, 791, 795, 900, 901, 907, 1978, 2363
5 Vt.	833, 857	v. Keene		Wis., 95 N. W.	928
139 Mo.	2086	50 Mo.	246, 247	v. Knighten	2061
v. Jerome	78, 1983	100 N. C.	683	v. Knock	1076
v. Jersey City	2144	v. Kellar	2060	v. Knowles	821, 2071
v. Jeswell	1398	v. Kellerman	2056	v. Knutson	2062
v. Jim	1009, 1013, 1015	v. Kelley		v. Kodat	2237, 2341
v. Johnson		50 La. An.	2513	v. Koontz	2008, 2016
29 La. An.	772	57 N. H.	233	v. Koplan	2056
30 La. An.	63, 141, 834, 860	46 S. C.	792, 1037	v. Kornstett	832
41 La. An.	1615	65 Vt.	347	v. Kohns	2060, 2061
47 La. An.	851, 905, 1028, 1037, 1131	v. Kelly	1853	v. Kraft	2196, 2215
48 La. An.	949	v. Kemp	398, 1072	v. Krause	1672
50 La. An.	2272	v. Kenilworth	2044	v. Kremling	761
40 Kan.	987, 1985	v. Kennade	246, 2278	v. Kuhlman	2060
12 Minn.	7, 903, 1018, 2065, 2086, 2231	154 Mo.	2511	v. Labnzan	247, 780
26 Minn.	2582	177 Mo.	1079, 2383	v. La Grange	2513
76 Mo.	107	v. Kent		v. Lallyer	2071, 2073
118 Mo.	1442, 1448	4 N. D.	967, 1070	v. Lamb	
33 N. H.	334	5 N. D.	218, 276, 390, 1807, 1853, 1890, 2270, 2276	28 Mo.	852, 867, 2071
12 Nev.	1398	v. Kenyon	1618	141 Mo.	1908
67 N. C.	2265	v. Kervin	246	v. Landry	2272
43 S. C.	770, 905	v. Kessler	1447	v. Lang	1116
66 S. C.	1976	v. Ketchey	1938	v. Langford	
28 Vt.	62, 133, 200, 987	v. Kidd	2298, 2311	Busbee	397
Winston	1618	v. Klesowetter	1350	45 La. An.	1138
v. Jones		v. Kilbarn	681, 1079	v. Lanier	928
3 Dev. & B.	1781	v. Kilgore	1018, 2079	v. Lapage	12, 57, 193, 216, 302, 357
33 Ia.	821	v. Kimball	2081	v. Larkin	390, 923, 987
64 Ia.	104, 233	v. Kindle	1398	v. Larkins	106, 689, 1890, 2276
89 Ia.	1157	v. King		v. La Rose	1066
115 Ia.	2059	117 Ia.	398, 505, 506, 507, 508, 1828	v. Lattin	664
41 Kan.	1976, 1978	Ia., 96 N. W.	2513	v. Landerbeck	2349
38 La. An.	1442	47 La. An.	111, 247	v. Lantenschlager	681
47 La. An.	851, 1842, 2119	88 Minn.	934, 987, 2354	v. La Vigne	2008,
51 La. An.	1877	78 Mo.	58, 276		2016, 2020
51 Me.	580	79 Mo.	987	v. Lavin	1062
54 Mo.	826, 841, 855	83 Mo.	59, 1985	v. Lawhorn	2099, 2276, 2277
61 Mo.	1135, 1136, 1138	84 N. C.	1873	v. Lawlor	390, 1022, 2059, 2060
64 Mo.	911, 1867, 2058	86 N. C.	581	v. Lawrence	
153 Mo.	1807, 2285	9 S. D.	1618, 1853, 2062	57 Me.	2272
171 Mo.	384, 851, 852, 861	24 Utah	1405	70 Vt.	1873
		v. Kingsbury	149, 1021, 1041	v. Lawson	1347

TABLE OF CASES.

Section

2062
1354
1029
1761

581
1475
10281331
2277
2062390
1404
1938
2276
398,
1164791,
907,
1363
928
2061
076
2071
2062
2341
2016
056
832
061
215
672
761
060
780
513
373071
908
272
16
97
38
28
16,
57
87
99,
76
56
54
19
21
8,
20
2
7
2
0071
908
272
16
97
38
28
16,
57
87
99,
76
56
54
19
21
8,
20
2
7
2
0071
908
272
16
97
38
28
16,
57
87
99,
76
56
54
19
21
8,
20
2
7
2
0071
908
272
16
97
38
28
16,
57
87
99,
76
56
54
19
21
8,
20
2
7
2
0071
908
272
16
97
38
28
16,
57
87
99,
76
56
54
19
21
8,
20
2
7
2
0071
908
272
16
97
38
28
16,
57
87
99,
76
56
54
19
21
8,
20
2
7
2
0071
908
272
16
97
38
28
16,
57
87
99,
76
56
54
19
21
8,
20
2
7
2
0

Case Name	Section
State v. Laxton	56, 194, 357, 1131, 1611, 1618
v. Laycock	1877
v. Leabo	84 Mo. 1730, 2511
89 Mo.	1385
v. Leblanc	507
v. Ledford	18
v. Lee	65 Conn. 132
69 Conn.	272, 2501, 2512
95 Ia.	988
22 Minn.	52, 55, 1614, 1983, 1986
13 Mont.	1396
80 N. C.	784, 1896
121 N. C.	1449
58 S. C.	947
v. Lee Doon	1803, 1842, 1853
v. Lehman	2270
v. Lenihan	1620, 2062
v. Lents	2354
v. Letonrean	321
v. Lovers	2059
v. Levy	506, 507
v. Lewenthal	1230
v. Lewis	45 Ia. 233, 2072
96 Ia.	352
56 Kan.	2276
80 Mo.	1270
136 Mo.	2501
20 Nev.	233, 689, 1933, 1938
N. C., 45 S. E.	963
31 Wash.	1853
v. Libby	2066
v. Liedtke	1350
v. Lightfoot	106, 383
v. Lindoen	457
v. Lingle	1807, 2570
v. Lluney	1873
v. Lipscomb	832
v. Litchfield	2056, 2057, 2287
v. Lockerby	1620
v. Lockett	784, 1730
v. Lockwood	5 Blackf. 1206
58 Vt.	1841
v. Lodge	1033
v. Lohr	987
v. Long	1 Hayw. 825, 2071
21 Mont.	1350
v. Lopes	1502
v. Lord	2534
v. Lowhorne	836, 855
v. Lucas	57 Ia. 660, 728
124 N. C.	1893
v. Lucey	118, 276, 1974
v. Ludwig	143
v. Lull	37 Me. 759, 770, 786
48 Vt.	246
v. Lurch	1890
v. Luy	1351
v. Lynde	754, 1273

Case Name	Section
State v. Lyon	736, 748, 749
v. Lyons	Ida., 64 Pac. 276
44 Ia. An.	1874
v. Lytle	105, 658, 660
v. McAfee	1181
v. McAllister	390, 318, 1871
v. McAnley	2332, 2336, 2341
v. McBride	1350
v. McCall	354
v. McCann	Or., 72 Pac. 950, 1750
16 Wash.	1079
v. McCarty	987
v. McCanley	1207, 1235
v. McClain	49 Kan. 667
137 Mo.	851
v. McClellan	1117
v. McClintic	2062
v. McConkey	2349
v. McConnell	1350
v. McCord	2241
v. McCormick	1531, 2354
v. McConry	1755
v. McCoy	109 Ia. 1136, 1270
2 Speer	1189
15 Utah	792, 1951
v. McCullum	833, 1072
v. McCune	62
v. McDaniel	665, 851, 905, 2183
v. McDonald	57 Kan. 988, 2056
65 Me.	1330
25 Mo.	2086
8 Or.	1029
v. McDonough	200, 1938
v. McDowell	Dudley 78, 1620
129 N. C.	821, 1976
v. McFarlain	950
v. McGahey	1807, 2079
v. McGee	81 Ia. 194, 988
55 S. C.	1890
v. McGilvery	2088
v. McGinn	2062
v. McGonigle	246, 247, 1853
v. McGrath	2242
v. McGraw	1890
v. M'Gregor	78, 204
v. McGrew	609
v. McGulre	87 Mo. 2529
15 R. I.	2277
v. McIver	63, 198
v. McKean	2060
v. McKenzie	18 Ia. 2060
144 Mo.	861
v. McKinstry	1005
v. McKinney	31 Kan. 1853
111 N. C.	1131
v. McKinzie	1890
v. McKnight	1434, 1974

3813

Case Name	Section
State v. McLain	2059
v. McLanghlin	44 Ia. 1029, 2062
76 Mo.	1890
149 Mo.	293, 692, 988, 1615, 1976
126 N. C.	2098
v. McLelland	1350
v. McLeod	1415, 2354
v. McMahan	1259
v. McManns	524
v. McNally	106, 108, 111
v. McNamara	2355
v. McNeely	246, 396
v. McNeil	1374, 1398
v. McNinch	1391, 1884
v. McO'Brien	1593, 1597, 1598
v. McPherson	2363
v. M. & L. Railroad	65, 97, 249, 376,
v. Mace	105, 363, 907, 949, 1442, 1447
v. Mack	524
v. Maddox	1750
v. Madison	47 Ia. An. 2097
50 Ia. An.	1404
49 W. Va.	246
v. Ma Foo	2514
v. Magers	35 Or. 2568
36 Or.	782
v. Magone	18, 580, 1079
v. Magoon	50 Vt. 918, 1873,
68 Vt.	2079
v. Mahon	1072
v. Maier	2100
v. Main	677, 1938
561, 571, 1699,	
2451, 2567, 2580	
v. Mairs	923
v. Mallett	2264
v. Mallon	276
v. Maloy	111, 247, 749
v. Mandich	2497, 2513
v. Manley	2168, 2535
v. Mannion	1399
v. Marceaux	347, 1974,
2272	
v. March	987
v. Marchbanks	770
v. Marcks	1135, 2056,
2061	
v. Marion Co. Court	1671,
2577	
v. Markins	398, 399
v. Marks	923, 1612, 1618,
1985	
v. Marler	1029, 1036
v. Marsh	1 Jones 2258
70 Vt.	143, 144, 1207,
1974, 2570	
v. Marshall	8 Ala. 2294, 2297
105 Ia.	2497
36 Mo.	2276

TABLE OF CASES.

STA

	Section		Section		Section
State v. Marshall		State v. Miller		State v. Morphy	
137 Mo.	667, 1493,	71 Mo.	923, 1943	v. Morris	1976
	1503, 2081	100 Mo.	967, 1270	47 Conn.	153, 1698,
Phillips	1135, 1138	144 Mo.	149		2581
v. Martin		186 Mo.	928, 1690	41 La. An.	2349
2 Ired.	2079	47 Wis.	354	84 N. C.	396, 571,
89 Mo.	1878	v. Millican	2349		1367, 1365
74 Mo.	863	v. Millmeier	105, 1977, 2081	v. Morrison	
124 Mo.	987, 1970,	v. Mills		64 Kan.	1442, 1750
	1750	88 Mo.	1890	49 W. Va.	246
47 S. C.	2081	91 N. C.	1028	v. Morse	
v. Marvin	898, 2088,	v. Mims		67 Mo.	62, 923, 987
	2235	26 Minn.	821, 2354	35 Or.	150
v. Mason		36 Or.	248, 664, 907,	v. Mortensen	1072, 1725,
36 La. An.	580, 2056		1951		1803, 2595
155 Mo.	2576	v. Minard	276	v. Mortimer	858
v. Mathers	2183	v. Miner	2513	v. Morton	
v. Mathews	2273	v. Minnick	2577	107 N. C.	1028, 1042,
v. Mathis	1230	v. Minor	580, 2056		1131
v. Matlock	1398, 1644	v. Minot	1157	8 Wis.	316
v. Matthews		v. Minton	318, 693, 2016	v. Moses	2351
44 Kan.	2419	v. Misenheimer	2086	v. Motley	824, 858
88 Mo.	1263	v. Missio	1672, 2535	v. Mowry	238, 458, 1048
69 N. C.	934	v. Mitchell		v. Moxley	1157
v. Maulsby	1131	68 Ia.	1136, 2082	v. Moy Looke	1703
v. Maxey	1750	119 N. C.	1398, 2540	v. Mulch	961
v. Maxwell	1963	Phillips	824, 839	v. Mulholland	
v. May		49 S. C.	2100	16 La. An.	890, 1018
4 Dev.	139, 142, 1362,	56 S. C.	2277	115 Ia.	2062
	1476	v. Mix	318, 1010, 1013	v. Mulkern	1136
142 Mo.	923, 1079	v. Moelchen	57, 396, 968,	v. Mullen	247
v. Mayberry	1202, 1205		1977, 2100	v. Mullins	1072
v. Maynes	1984	v. Moffitt	1350	v. Munco	218
v. Mayor	1680	v. Molier	2042	v. Munson	821, 851
v. Mead	1350	v. Molise	1750	v. Murphy	
v. Meares	2061	v. Montgomery		45 La. An.	890, 967,
v. Medbury	2086	8 Kan.	1750		2377
v. Medicott	672, 1362,	28 Mo.	949	116 Mo.	1187
	1440, 1853	v. Moody	1434, 1913	84 N. C.	326
v. Mellor	1354	v. Moon	2089	9 Nev.	1876
v. Melton		v. Moore		16 R. I.	1898, 1750
37 La. An.	1750, 1963	25 Ia.	894, 2059	48 S. C.	1985
130 N. C.	852, 1644,	61 Ia.	2061	v. Murray	851, 1072
	2086, 2231	86 La. An.	1755	v. Masgrave	21, 1010,
v. Melvern	2276	52 La. An.	2026		1164, 1974
v. Melville	1671	61 Mo.	2529	v. Musick	293
v. Menard	738	117 Mo.	851, 2513	v. Myers	1959
v. Merkle	364	156 Mo.	1397, 1732	v. Nagle	457, 655, 832,
v. Merrill	57	160 Mo.	833		851, 1365
v. Merriman	852, 2277	37 Nebr.	1350	v. Napoleon	246
v. Metcalf	2079	104 N. C.	1808	v. Nash	
v. Mewherter	2310	129 N. C.	177	7 Ia.	1398
v. Meyer		32 Or.	194, 1079,	10 Ia.	580, 949
64 N. J. L.	1432		1807, 2276	8 Ired.	949
65 N. J. L.	1432	v. Moothart	359	45 La. An.	63, 246, 651
v. Meyers		v. Moran		v. Nat	949
99 Mo.	682	34 Ia.	2059	v. Neal	1671
46 Nebr.	496, 1138	15 Or.	1803, 2363	v. Neal	
v. Meyenburg	463	v. Mordecai	1157	21 Utah	1185, 1136
v. Michael	506, 508,	v. More	398	23 Utah	166, 396
	1821	v. Morea	1820	v. Neill	612
v. Middleham	2079, 2336	v. Morey		v. Neleon	
v. Middleton	276	25 Or.	246	56 Ia.	1614
v. Mikesell	2059	2 Wis.	2089	59 Kan.	967
v. Milam	1388	v. Morgan		3 La. An.	338, 851
v. Miles	1985	40 Conn.	78	32 La. An.	2354
v. Milier		9 V. C.	1976	132 Mo.	505, 507
65 Ia.	2061	13 N. C.	2270, 2281	19 R. I.	2155
67 Mo.	2595	22 Utah	276, 390	13 Wash.	1109

TABLE OF CASES.

Case Name	Section	Case Name	Section	Case Name	Section
State v. Nestaval	949	State v. Painter	2062	State v. Pettaway	2063
v. Nett	246	v. Palmer		v. Pettis	1781
v. Nettlebush	1447, 1448	88 Mo.	2377	v. Pettit	246, 928, 1815
v. Nettleton	2016	161 Mo.	1958	v. Pfefferle	457, 987, 1370, 2277
v. New Orleans Water-works Co.	1388, 1408	v. Pancoast	967		664, 1523
v. Newlin	1938	v. Parham	1445	v. Phair	
v. Newman	233	v. Parish		v. Phelps	
v. Newton	1346, 2427	Busbee	561, 1327	74 Mo.	824, 841
v. Nichols	2058, 2061, 2276	23 Ia.	1855	5 S. D.	2059
v. Niles	1135, 1136	79 N. C.	1124, 1129, 1131	2 Tyler	2237
v. Noakes	20, 784, 1976	83 N. C.	133, 1021	11 Vt.	626, 636
v. Nocton	1442	v. Park	967	22 Wash.	1853
v. Noe	2006	v. Parker		v. Phillips	
v. Nolan	933	33 Ind.	1673	118 Ia.	1442, 1451
v. Nordstrom	2264, 2265	7 La. An.	59, 195, 923, 967, 1374, 1671, 1985	24 Mo.	276, 1045
v. Norris		89 Mo.	1974	v. Pierce	
1 Hayw.	905	96 Mo.	1029, 1974	90 Ia.	106
27 Wash.	351	172 Mo.	988, 1434	85 Minn.	561
v. Northrup	56, 290	132 N. C.	852	91 N. C.	738
v. Norton	105, 111	v. Parks	691, 1612, 1985	v. Pike	
v. Novak	821, 622, 839, 2100, 2497	v. Parrotty	2235	65 Me.	363, 678, 2354
v. Nowell	2281, 2282	v. Paterno	248	20 N. H.	20, 349
v. Nagent	216, 297, 1852	v. Patrick	2061	49 N. H.	571, 656, 1927, 1934, 1938, 1941
v. Nausenholts	967	v. Patterson			
v. Nye	1350	2 Ired.	204, 605, 953, 967, 1022, 1028, 1362	v. Pippin	398
v. Ober	2273, 2276	52 Kan.	2056	v. Place	360
v. O'Brien		73 Mo.	824, 832, 1852, 2071	v. Plant	1820
61 Ia.	967, 2098, 2377	86 Mo.	205, 1890, 2062	v. Platt	1350, 2492
16 Mont.	852, 1263	68 N. C.	852	v. Plunkett	2345
7 R. I.	1490	74 N. C.	1091	v. Plym	2506
v. O'Day	1852	45 Vt.	1446, 2511	v. Poehemus	1985
v. Odell	2054, 2059, 2060	v. Pataa	264	v. Pollard	923, 1750
v. O'Donnell	414	v. Payne		v. Polson	1398
v. Ogden	200, 770, 949, 958	6 Wash.	967, 1270	v. Pomeroy	
v. O'Hara	2276	10 Wash.	2079	23 Kan.	1780
v. Olds	1398	v. Peace	1013, 1014	130 Mo.	2163, 2264
v. Olin	1712, 2196, 2215, 2270	v. Peach	2513	30 Or.	2513
v. Oliver		v. Pearce		v. Porter	
2 Houst.	1399	56 Minn.	1432, 2272	34 Ia.	728, 1750, 1938, 1976
55 Kan.	1416	15 Nev.	59, 246, 1614, 1963	103 Ia.	1642
39 La. An.	1795	v. Peel	662, 688, 689	76 Mo.	1890
78 Miss.	1680	v. Peffers	2276	32 Or.	56, 218, 247, 821
v. O'Neal	57, 290, 1907	v. Penney	851	v. Potter	
v. O'Neale	691, 922, 1612, 1985	v. Pennington	1877, 2575	18 Conn.	826, 830, 832, 855
v. O'Neil	1700, 1907	v. Penny	1225	Ida., 57 Pac.	1404, 1416
v. O'Reilly	792	v. Peres	398, 1135, 2060	13 Kan.	246
v. Osborn	1182	v. Perkins		42 Vt.	2066, 2059
v. Osborne		3 Hawks	1071	52 Vt.	4, 398, 1644, 2072, 2073, 2081, 2109, 2167, 2168
28 Ia.	2089	66 N. C.	923, 1111, 1612	v. Potts	
96 Ia.	987	v. Perry		78 Ia.	926
v. O'Shea	1434, 1446, 1447	Busbee	2070	100 N. C.	1938
v. Ostrander	1035, 1639	136 Mo.	218	v. Powell	
v. Owen		121 N. C.	1145, 1692	61 Kan.	2513
73 Mo.	2027	v. Peterson	770, 861, 1135, 1186, 1157, 1693, 1976	7 N. J. L.	672, 2346
76 Mo.	2277	v. Peterson		v. Power	1442, 1725
v. Owens		36 Minn.	1060	v. Powers	
109 Ia.	1104, 1108	129 N. C.	2105	25 Conn.	2575
22 Minn.	2040	v. Petrich	1624	130 Mo.	1977
v. Owaley	2918			72 Vt.	2116
v. Oxford	2364			v. Prater	967, 1079, 2198
v. Page	822			v. Prather	507
v. Pagala	232, 1219, 1674, 1652			v. Pratt	
v. Pain	105, 620, 988			98 Mo.	1896
				121 Mo.	987, 1270

TABLE OF CASES.

STA

State	Section	State	Section	State	Section
<i>v. Prendible</i>	781, 987	<i>v. Revells</i>	838, 1241	<i>v. Romain</i>	987
<i>v. Price</i>	2955	<i>v. Reynolds</i>	2845	<i>v. Roseum</i>	367
<i>v. Prins</i>		<i>v. Rhodes</i>		<i>v. Ross</i>	
113 Ia.	318	111 N. C.	105	39 La. An.	1876
117 Ia.	318, 928	44 S. C.	933	Mo., 76 S. W.	1808
<i>v. Privitt</i>	681	<i>v. Rice</i>		<i>v. Rosenbergs</i>	2513
<i>v. Probasco</i>	987, 1270, 2277	7 Ida.	568, 2079	<i>v. Rosier</i>	268
<i>v. Prudhomme</i>	580, 2056, 2265	49 S. C.	1079, 1108, 2450	<i>v. Ross</i>	505
<i>v. Pruett</i>	111, 247, 1678	<i>v. Richards</i>		<i>v. Roswell</i>	2085, 2086
<i>v. Pucca</i>	2194	28 Ia.	1185, 1136	<i>v. Rothchild</i>	280
<i>v. Pugh</i>	1750	72 La.	2062	<i>v. Rome</i>	1131
<i>v. Pugsley</i>	987	<i>v. Richie</i>	1621	<i>v. Roy</i>	1652
<i>v. Pulley</i>	1045	<i>v. Richmond</i>	2654	<i>v. Royal</i>	2349
<i>v. Punson</i>		<i>v. Ricks</i>	246	<i>v. Rozum</i>	278, 267, 2277
124 Mo.	148, 144	<i>v. Riddle</i>	246	<i>v. Rugau</i>	287, 1276, 2277
	1726, 1730	<i>v. Rider</i>	246	<i>v. Ruhl</i>	1021, 1029, 1036, 1896, 1999
133 Mo.	571, 852, 950, 1045	20 Mo.	63, 111, 229, 2277	<i>v. Rush</i>	2354
<i>v. Quarles</i>	2252, 2281, 2282	95 Mo.	228, 2277	<i>v. Russell</i>	
<i>v. Quinlan</i>	2060	<i>v. Ridgely</i>	522	90 Ia.	2059
<i>v. Quinn</i>	905	<i>v. Riggs</i>		39 La. An.	2056
<i>v. R. Co.</i>	1350	39 Conn.	396, 406	18 Mont.	1442, 2079
<i>v. Raby</i>	398, 2237	110 La.	2354	88 Wis.	2302
<i>v. Rachman</i>	2056	<i>v. Riley</i>	1755	<i>v. Rutherford</i>	1908
<i>v. Railroad</i>	92	<i>v. Riney</i>	580	<i>v. Rutten</i>	994
<i>v. Rainsbarger</i>	660, 1976, 2236	<i>v. Ripley</i>	267, 1750	<i>v. Ryan</i>	
<i>v. Ramsey</i>		<i>v. Rivers</i>	321	70 Ia.	2272
49 La. An.	1750, 1755	<i>v. Roach</i>	679	30 La. An.	111, 247, 610
82 Mo.	1974	<i>v. Robbins</i>		<i>v. Sadler</i>	1072, 1432, 1442, 1750
<i>v. Rand</i>	276	109 Ia.	232, 1948	<i>v. Saidell</i>	166, 1045, 1154, 1614
<i>v. Randolph</i>	922, 987, 1985	6 Ired.	2088	<i>v. Sale</i>	248, 1447, 1476
<i>v. Rankin</i>	949	<i>v. Roberts</i>		<i>v. Salge</i>	1842
<i>v. Raper</i>	364	1 Dev.	826, 837	<i>v. Salverson</i>	1230
<i>v. Rash</i>	397, 1878	15 Mo.	680	<i>v. Sammel</i>	2230
<i>v. Rathburn</i>	118	62 N. H.	2535	<i>v. Sanders</i>	
<i>v. Rawls</i>	4, 735, 1072	<i>v. Robertson</i>		66 Mo.	1166, 1802
<i>v. Raymond</i>		41 Kan.	1850	76 Mo.	343
30 Ia.	342, 2042	30 La. An.	246, 247	84 N. C.	390
53 N. J. L.	354	111 La.	851, 1877	52 S. C.	1003
<i>v. Reader</i>	2059	121 N. C.	398, 2097, 2100	<i>v. Sanford</i>	2513
<i>v. Reashy</i>	2265	26 S. C.	1807, 2277	<i>v. Sannerud</i>	2529
<i>v. Reavis</i>	347, 967, 2056	<i>v. Robinson</i>		<i>v. Sargent</i>	
<i>v. Red</i>	821, 2277	51 La. An.	1072	32 Me.	15, 1020
<i>v. Reddick</i>	668, 675	52 La. An.	63, 852, 965, 1270, 1750, 2100	32 Or.	1135, 1138
<i>v. Reddington</i>	506, 1828, 1852	117 Mo.	568, 838, 2272	<i>v. Sater</i>	923, 987
<i>v. Reed</i>		20 Nebr.	1350	<i>v. Satterfield</i>	2494
3 Ida.	1808	16 N. J. L.	216, 318, 406	<i>v. Sattley</i>	2494
53 Kan.	398, 987, 1439	32 Or.	398, 852, 1899, 1974	<i>v. Sauer</i>	
49 La. An.	1018	20 W. Va.	2354	38 Minn.	2497
50 La. An.	390, 580	13 Wash.	934	42 Minn.	987, 2277
49 Mo.	1018, 1043	<i>v. Robison</i>	1850	<i>v. Saunders</i>	
42 Mo.	278, 1044, 1126	<i>v. Rockett</i>	1270	68 Ia.	318, 1240
29 Mo.	1029, 1036	<i>v. Rodman</i>	276, 285	37 La. An.	246
137 Mo.	247, 1445	<i>v. Roe</i>	1108	14 Or.	194, 987, 1398, 1435, 1447, 1452, 1890, 2277
29 Vt.	82, 200	<i>v. Rogers</i>		<i>v. Savage</i>	347, 580, 987, 1684, 2059
<i>v. Regan</i>	1853	54 Kan.	1079	<i>v. Sawtelle</i>	16, 507, 2183
<i>v. Reik</i>	1009	112 N. C.	852, 1700	<i>v. Sayers</i>	1890
<i>v. Reidel</i>	1398, 1679	119 N. C.	1398, 2497, 2540	<i>v. Seates</i>	855
<i>v. Reinhart</i>	278, 331, 1290	22 Or.	1350	<i>v. Schaefer</i>	2349
<i>v. Reinheimer</i>	1620, 1669, 1974, 2062	<i>v. Rolla</i>	2079	<i>v. Schaffer</i>	391
<i>v. Reitz</i>	571, 660, 1977	<i>v. Roller</i>	2060	<i>v. Schlagel</i>	2059, 2060
<i>v. Renard</i>	2185	<i>v. Rollins</i>	246, 933, 1005	<i>v. Schmidt</i>	1750
<i>v. Reno</i>	1853			<i>v. Schneider</i>	1770
<i>v. Renwick</i>	987, 2042				
<i>v. Renton</i>	194, 367				

TABLE OF CASES.

Section

987

367

1876

1808

2513

286

505

2086

280

1131

1662

2349

2277

2277

936,

699

354

059

056

079

302

908

994

272

47,

610

42,

50

54,

14

76

42

30

30

92

23

90

93

13

19

0

8

7

4

4

7

7

Section	Section
State v. Schnepel	1653, 2277
v. Schooley	1267
v. Schroyer	923
v. Schweitzer	3008, 2167
v. Scott	
1 Hawks	289
4 Ired.	247
24 Kan.	111, 244, 247
12 La. An.	1442
24 La. An.	1897
48 La. An.	1021
49 La. An.	2501
39 Mo.	2071
45 Mo.	3008, 2016
172 Mo.	225, 357
91 N. C.	1021
28 Or.	2059
v. Seals	2066
v. Seawell	1603
v. Seecrest	540, 561
v. SeEVERS	133, 280, 923
v. SELLER	2061
v. Senn	852, 2349
v. Severson	811, 1821
v. Sexton	
147 Mo.	1451, 1750
10 S. D.	1012, 1696
v. Seymore	276, 390,
	394, 728, 1976
v. Seymour	1911
v. Shackelford	851
v. Shadwell	
22 Mont.	246, 248,
	987, 1983
28 Mont.	111, 248
v. Shafer	
22 Mont.	246, 1614
26 Mont.	363
v. Shaffer	1033, 1439,
	2550
v. Shannehan	1034, 1035
v. Shattuck	2536
v. Shaw	
59 N. H.	93, 367, 376
73 Vt.	276, 987, 1913
v. Shea	2512
v. Shean	205, 1620,
	1876, 2062
v. Sheets	569
v. Shelton	
64 Ia.	389, 1974
2 Jones L.	1362, 1442
16 Wash.	995, 2512
v. Shepherd	105
v. Sheppard	266, 390,
	396, 1003
v. Sheridan	2264
v. Sherman	2572
v. Sherwood	2045, 2505
v. Shettleworth	1135, 1136
v. Shields	
45 Conn.	62, 200,
	923, 987
112 Ia.	2184
13 Mo.	923
13 S. D.	1157
v. Shinborn	413, 750,
	1977, 2011, 2016
v. Shive	157

Section	Section
State v. Shonhansen	901
v. Shores	1912
v. Shrove	1852
v. Shuff	669, 2501
v. Shuford	363
v. Sibley	
Mo., 31 S. W.	967, 1135
131 Mo.	923, 924
v. Simas	858
v. Simms	232
v. Sims	580, 1876, 2100
v. Simon	905
v. Simons	569, 675
v. Simons	291
v. Simpson	
91 Me.	2575
N. C., 45 S. E.	852
v. Sioux Falls Brewing	
Co.	2582
v. Skidmore	105, 111
v. Slack	15, 903, 918,
	987, 1270, 2079
v. Slamon	288, 2183, 2264
v. Sloan	
55 Ia.	2239
47 Mo.	111, 247
22 Mont.	56, 107
v. SINTZ	580
v. Smalley	106, 354
v. Smalls	1350
v. Smallwood	
75 N. C.	285, 2079
78 N. C.	2349
v. Smarr	142
v. Smith	
49 Conn.	104, 451, 1725,
	1890, 2044
5 Day	301, 318
54 Ia.	166, 1154, 2062
74 Ia.	1398, 2259
84 Ia.	2062
99 Ia.	736, 2060, 2385
102 Ia.	363, 1388, 2060
106 Ia.	104, 2059
48 La. An.	1442
106 La.	1938
32 Me.	1976
56 Minn.	1157
78 Minn.	460, 2079
72 Miss.	830, 835
80 Mo.	1877
114 Mo.	293
125 Mo.	923, 987, 2277
137 Mo.	1852
164 Mo.	111, 247, 1908
68 N. J. L.	794
75 N. C.	1807
86 N. C.	580
44 Oh. St.	1350
Phillips	1974
12 Rich.	246, 247
8 S. D.	580, 949
7 Vt.	923
26 Wash.	1142
v. Snider	1135
v. Snover	
63 N. J. L.	59, 1646
64 N. J. L.	398, 399
65 N. J. L.	398

3817

Section	Section
State v. Snow	2575
v. Snowden	2304
v. Soper	
Ia., 91 N. W.	321
16 Me.	2374
148 Mo.	232, 688, 1700,
	1890, 1698,
	1699, 1938, 2511
v. Sorter	852, 905, 1853,
	2098
v. South Kingston	2580
v. Southall	321
v. Southern	944, 967, 2277
v. Spangler	246
v. Sparrow	1639, 1842
v. Spaulding	238, 1219, 1639
v. Speaks	569
v. Speight	691, 1614
v. Spell	247
v. Spence	700
v. Spencer	
45 La. An.	1874
73 Minn.	1141
21 N. J. L.	232, 233
15 Utah	2059
v. Spendlove	63, 111
v. Spengler	1078
v. Spiers	284
v. Spillers	821, 2100
v. Spotted Hawk, see	
State v. Yellow Hair.	
v. Sprague	
149 Mo.	2056
64 N. J. L.	1003, 1618
v. Spray	351
v. Squires	2264, 2307
v. Stade	1684
v. Stair	696, 1157, 1168
v. Staley	
14 Minn.	824, 832, 834,
	1021, 1028, 1042
45 W. Va.	1108, 1874
v. Stallings	923
v. Standard Oil Co.	2257
v. Standley	2062
v. Stanley	2059
v. Staples	280, 987, 1408
v. Starnes	287, 1117
v. Starr	1028
v. Staton	761, 1131
v. Stearns	2577
v. Stebbins	2056
v. Steeves	905, 1263, 1349
v. Stegman	2016
v. Steifel	580, 1852
v. Stein	960, 1263
v. Steinborn	2421
v. Sterrett	
68 Ia.	1983, 2326
71 Ia.	194, 968, 988
v. Stevens	
67 Ia.	2272
56 Kan.	357
S. D., 92 N. W.	952,
	1959
v. Stevenson	2059
v. Stewart	
51 Ia.	580
9 Ired.	2079

TABLE OF CASES.

STA

State	Section	State	Section	State	Section
State v. Stewart		State v. Testerman	343, 2377	State v. Tulley	2059, 2062
65 Kan.	276	v. Tottston	363, 2365	v. Turley	
45 La. Au.	246	v. Thaden	2371	142 Mo.	321
142 Mo.	680	v. Thawley	246, 1446	153 Ind.	2276, 2281
v. Stico	360	v. Thibeau	1003	v. Turner	
v. Stickley	689	v. Thibodeaux	2100	19 Ia.	2071
v. Sloan	1750			76 Mo.	194, 1890
v. Stoffels	2264, 2273	47 Conn.	78, 1354	110 Mo.	1890
v. Stokely	2349	111 Ind.	1842, 1908	119 N. C.	1079
v. Storms	851, 861, 862	58 Kan.	276	29 S. C.	246
v. Stowell	2062	28 La. Au.	906	36 S. C.	692, 935, 1612, 1807, 1985, 2277
v. Strong	293	30 La. Au.	1781	Wright	1671
v. Stroope	2535	111 La. Au.	247	v. Turpiu	63, 111, 246, 247
v. Stuckey	1033, 1448	88 Mo.	2595	v. Tuten	1807
v. Suddnth	1135	99 Mo.	1669, 2363	v. Tweedy	1450
v. Sullivan		138 Mo.	111	v. Twitty	194, 318, 1128, 1131, 1684
61 Ia.	1450	98 N. C.	2258, 2278	v. Ulrich	2231, 2339
43 S. C.	1977	3 Strobb.	1128	v. Ulsemer	481
v. Summar	923, 928, 968, 1820	v. Thomason	1125, 1128, 1131, 1514	v. Umble	1442, 2060
v. Summer	1874	v. Thompson		v. Underwood	2354
v. Sumpter	1842	89 Conn.	1079	v. Upham	290
v. Surry	69	79 Ia.	1195	v. Upton	2059
v. Swafford	2303	87 Ia.	2059	v. Usery	988
a. Swayze	1890, 1896	106 La.	1807	v. Vaigneur	293, 821, 822, 843, 850, 852, 856, 857, 881, 2071
v. Swett	206	80 Me.	561, 2008, 2018, 2020	v. Vale Mills	1686
v. Swift		132 Mo.	1750, 2016	v. Valentine	1376, 1410, 1887
57 Conn.	1208	141 Mo.	7, 1750, 1819	v. Vallery	246, 2100
120 Ia.	2513	97 N. C.	106, 354	v. Van Buskirk	2296, 2363
10 Nev.	1350	14 Wash.	357, 811	v. Van Deyn	1350
v. Symmes	1157	v. Thomson	223, 1154	v. Van Houten	318
v. Tackett	63	v. Thornhill		v. Van Tassel	232, 852, 960, 2183, 2497
v. Talbert	1750	174 Mo.	59, 987	v. Van Winkle	
v. Talbott	987, 1041, 1045, 2260	Mo., 78 S. W.	960	1 Dutch.	1681
v. Tall	903, 2327	v. Thornton		80 Ia.	276, 847, 2059
v. Tarter	111	26 Ia.	2059	v. Van Zant	1732
v. Tasby	247	10 S. D.	2485, 2512	v. Vance	
v. Tate		v. Thurtell	347	32 La. Au.	246, 247
50 La. Au.	1671	v. Tice	893, 1079, 2008	17 Ia.	2119
156 Mo.	1852	v. Tighe	861, 1750, 1974, 2079	v. Vandergraft	1144
v. Tatro	835	v. Tilghman	1398	v. Vandiver	987
v. Taylor		v. Tilly	63, 1750	v. Vann	233, 862, 1732
Ia., 61 Pac.	363	v. Timberlake	1405	v. Vanghan	
38 Kan.	1853	v. Timmens	205, 2062	152 Mo.	1335
45 La. Au.	628, 923, 987, 2277	v. Tindall	2354	22 Nev.	246, 363
64 Mo.	111	v. Tippet	194	v. Vickers	247, 905
98 Mo.	923, 987, 2277	v. Tipton	1141	v. Vicknair	826, 2056
118 Mo.	987, 1270	v. Tisdale	2582	v. Vincent	
134 Mo.	278, 968, 1003, 1126, 1128, 1131	v. Tobie	2058	24 Ia.	923, 1125, 1126, 1127, 1128, 1129, 1157, 1975, 1976
136 Mo.	140	v. Toby	1144	S. D., 91 N. W.	861
88 N. C.	905	v. Todd	1821	v. Vines	
3 Or.	1263	v. Toland	2579	34 La. Au.	218
54 S. C.	821	v. Tomblin	1398, 1404	93 N. C.	1963
56 S. C.	787, 1032, 1442, 1840	v. Tompkins	2008, 2016, 2027	v. Vitium	2529
57 S. C.	82, 1618, 1974, 1978	v. Toombs	1807	v. Von Sachs	836
70 Vt.	278, 2535	v. Tosuey	981	v. Wackernagel	347
v. Teeter	242, 2277	v. Totten	142, 1476	v. Wagner	1436, 1747, 1748
v. Teipuer	2203	v. Tough	581	v. Waldron	1398
v. Teissedre	1853	v. Townsend			
v. Tennehom	720	19 Or.	2059		
v. Terline	1810	7 Wash.	1852		
v. Terrell	569, 667, 1433, 1438	v. Tozier	57, 290		
v. Terry	1076	v. Traveler's Ins. Co.	2578		
		v. Traylor	925, 2277		
		v. Trusty	851		
		v. Tuffy	1350		

TABLE OF CASES.

Section	Section	Section	Section
2062	State v. Walker	State v. Wells	State v. Williams
321	77 Mo. 1732	11 Oh. 1872, 1874, 1877	67 N. C. 1362, 1438, 1447
2381	78 Mo. 1750, 1788	1 N. J. L. 86, 63, 1349	97 N. C. 1451
2071	98 Mo. 890, 2088, 2089	v. Welsh 1275, 9109	129 N. C. 1128
1690	80 La. An. 1696	v. Welsor 878, 1441	97 Vt. 978
1690	34 Vt. 894, 832	v. Wentworth	49 W. Va. 1619, 1673
1079	v. Wallace	65 Mo. 2951, 2270, 2978	v. Williamson
248	9 N. H. 398, 1644, 2529	37 N. H. 131, 220, 835, 1766, 2531	48 Conn. 2058, 2059
812,	44 S. C. 142	v. West	87 Mo. 1684
985,	v. Wallis 2410	1 Houst. Cr. 1180	106 Mo. 669, 1938
1277	v. Wallman 2349	45 La. An. 1478	65 S. C. 967, 1270, 9276
1871	v. Walsh	46 La. An. 76	v. Willingham 949, 1691, 1963
247	44 La. An. 111, 2278	95 Mo. 1690, 2277	v. Willis
807	5 Nov. 106	116 Wis. 2235, 2236	71 Conn. 815, 622, 623, 855, 889, 1048
450	v. Walters	v. Westfall 396	9 Ia. 2059
126,	45 Ia. 387	v. Wetherell 2025	119 Mo. 2245
684	7 Wash. 2513	v. Whalen	v. Wilmbusee 1852
1339	v. Walton 321	96 Ia. 2349, 2354	v. Wilson
461	v. Walts 254	148 Mo. 770	22 Ia. 2088
2060	v. Ward	v. Wheat 1194, 1398, 1406	10 Ired. 2063
354	49 Conn. 155, 967, 1104, 1106	116 Ia. 1136	24 Kan. 1375, 1387
290	103 N. C. 1131	94 Mo. 205	23 La. An. 1433
2059	39 Vt. 560	108 Mo. 2061	43 La. An. 247
988	61 Vt. 177, 354, 451, 728, 1841, 1974	v. Wheelshon 1131, 1668, 1669	109 La. 507
1323,	v. Warner	v. Whit	72 Minn. 321
352,	13 Lea 2381	v. White 1807	137 Mo. 2513
161,	74 Mo. 1135	19 Kan. 2394, 2327	143 Mo. 391
2071	v. Warren	46 La. An. 1405	31 N. J. L. 2235
586	124 N. C. 133, 987	68 N. C. 142, 1476	15 R. I. 1354, 1608
10,	41 Or. 952, 1651	15 S. C. 1029, 1051	v. Wiltsey 2191
667	v. Wart 2059	70 Vt. 367, 1219, 2464	v. Windahl 105, 792
100	v. Washington	10 Wash. 800	v. Wlndoor 1041
363	49 La. An. 1817, 1826	v. Whiteacre 791, 794, 1385	v. Wines 2272
350	104 La. 1135	v. Whitesall 62, 200	v. Wing 1398, 1405
318	v. Waters 1781	v. Whitfield	v. Wingo 2058
260,	v. Watkins 10, 40, 390	70 N. C. 828, 839	v. Winkley 1044, 1045, 2084, 2085, 2086
197	v. Watson	92 N. C. 1131, 1132	v. Winner 2081
161	81 Ia. 778, 2062	v. Whiton 1908	v. Winston 838, 857
2059	102 Ia. 987	v. Whitson 1450, 2511	v. Winter 1694, 1938
732	65 Mo. 987, 1118, 1951, 1978, 2277	v. Whitt 1442	v. Wintangerode 218, 414
247	31 Mo. 2056	v. Whittier 506	v. Wisdom
19	36 La. An. 248, 1842	v. Whitworth 1841	119 Mo. 9, 275, 852
44	v. Watt 833	v. Wickliff 133, 772	8 Port. 347, 1781
287	v. Way	v. Wiewers 1157	v. Wiseman 2286
332	5 Nebr. 398	v. Wiggins 1319	v. Witham 15, 133, 142, 216, 298, 2277
35	6 Vt. 2061, 2088	v. Wilcox 247, 968, 987, 1003, 1031	v. Wolcott 2056
63	v. Wayman 1198	v. Wilkerson 1976, 2497	v. Wolf
205	v. Wayne 238	v. Wilkins 1205, 1254	112 Ia. 56
26	v. Weaver 106, 880, 2273	v. Williams 1135	118 Ia. 1136
26	v. Webb	30 Ia. 2088	v. Wolf 318, 326
28,	6 Ida. 968	120 Ia. 2513	v. Wong Gee 218
27,	18 Utah 861, 1873, 2026	2 Jones L. 1010, 1015	v. Wong Quong 2089
76	v. Weber 728, 1873	7 Jones L. 2081	v. Wood
61	v. Webster 238	40 La. An. 111, 246	49 Conn. 328
18	v. Weedon 923	46 La. An. 248	17 Ia. 2042
53	v. Welch	111 La. 505, 524, 780, 1826, 1978	124 Mo. 2354
29	26 Mo. 2234, 2235	54 Mo. 276	53 N. H. 687, 1700, 1796, 2263
26	22 Mont. 390, 1196	136 Mo. 343	59 Vt. 1368, 1431
17	33 Or. 949, 1029	152 Mo. 2520	v. Woody 1015
7,	v. Weldon 499, 498, 571	65 N. C. 1807	v. Woodruff 166, 660, 893, 1154, 2016
18	v. Wells		v. Woods 1874, 1898
28	46 Ia. 1013		
76	49 Ia. 2069		
61	54 Kan. 987		

TABLE OF CASES.

STA

	Section		Section		Section
State v. Woodside	1911	Steadman v. Arden	1858	Steinbrunner v. R. Co.	1698,
v. Woodson	111, 247	Stegald v. State	1398, 1404		1899
v. Woodward	249	Steam Stone Cutter Co. v. Scott	714	Steinburg v. Meany	1890
v. Wooldard	2086	Steamboat Albatross v. Wayne	1960	Steiner v. Snow	1653
v. Workman	609, 619, 2100	Steamboat Clipper v. Logan	1977	v. Trainum	1291, 1960
v. Worthing	609	Steamboat Neptune, The	6	Steinham v. U. S.	2064
v. Worthingham	2063	Steamboat Thames v. Erskine	2164	Steinhofel v. R. Co.	1750
v. Worthington	1144,	Steamboat Wisconsin v. Young	1195	Steinke v. Graves	1633
	1781, 2100	Steamboat Co. v. Brockett	1078	Steinke's Will	1736
v. Wrard	216	Steamship Ville du Havre	265	Steinkeller v. Newton	761, 1213
v. Wright		Stearman v. R. Co.	905	Steinman v. McWilliams	72, 73
112 Ia.	226, 1447,	Stearns v. Bank	905, 907	Steinmetz v. Versailles & O. Turnpike Co.	2575
	1676, 1938	v. Cox	406	Steinway, re	1858
40 Ia. An.	581	v. Doe	150, 1214,	Steketes v. Kimm	1244, 1729
48 Ia. An.	1062		1335, 1874	Stell v. Prickett	1567
134 Mo.	676, 2501	v. Field	662	Stembridge v. Southern R. Co.	1978
141 Mo.	109	v. Gosselin	581	Stennett v. Ins. Co.	1947
41 N. J. L.	2523	v. Hendersass	1469	Stennil v. Brown	1881, 2164
75 N. C.	953, 1026,	v. Vincent	1890	Stephan v. Metzger	750, 1198,
	1042	Stebbing v. Spicer	2529		1539
14 Or.	1350	Stebbins v. Anthony	2239	Stephen v. Gwenap	1456
2 Pen. Del.	905	v. Duncan	1268, 1306,	v. State	532, 1135,
v. Wylde	2086		1320, 1513		1138
v. Wyse	247, 987,	v. Miller	89	Stephens, re	797
	1003, 2277	v. Sackett	585, 1258	v. Bernays	9
v. Yandle	2513	Stecher Lith. Co. v. Inman	1072	v. Com.	1003
v. Yanz	1750	Steel v. Pope	1877	v. Cotterell	2237
v. Yellow Hair	776, 987,	v. Williams	1195	v. Foster	1884
	1674, 2059, 2512	Steele v. Dart	803	v. McCloy	1778
v. Yerger	153	v. Helm	1938	v. Mattox	2313
v. Yokum		v. Logan	2354	v. People	263, 396, 747,
11 S. D.	246, 2512	v. Lord	1198		967, 1008, 1028,
14 S. D.	248	v. Peopie	56, 318	v. State	609
v. York	625, 832	v. Price	271, 1736, 2106	v. Vroman	1053
v. Young		v. Queen	1681	v. Westwood	1680
39 N. H.	580	v. R. Co.	2509	v. Williams	1779
104 Ia.	1442	v. Schricker	1335	Stephenson v. Baumister	1681
52 La. An.	633	v. State		v. Cook	2245
107 La.	1476	63 Ala.	194	v. Doe	1239, 1651
99 Mo.	1051, 1263	31 Fla.	111, 246, 247	v. Kilpatrick	254
119 Mo.	852	76 Miss.	932	v. State	1188
133 Mo.	580	v. Stewart	2317	v. Stephenson	1738
87 N. J. L.	651, 861	Steele-Smith G. Co. v. Potthast	2063	Stapp v. State	2155
9 N. D.	2497	Steen, ex p.	2159	Steptoe v. Flood	2349
67 Vt.	418	v. Santa Clara V. M. & L. Co.	987	Sterling v. Detroit	792
v. Zdanowicz	489, 2252,	Steele v. Aylesworth	944	v. Potts	1195
	2276	Steenerson v. R. Co.	1700, 2566	Stirling L. Co. v. Stinson	1073
v. Ziegler	2512	Steeple v. Downing	1651	Stern v. Loewenthal	406
v. Zellers	111, 247, 1329,	Steeple v. Newton	987	v. People	1668
	1898, 1839,	Steer v. Little	769, 770, 771,	v. Stanton	782
	1890		772	Sternan v. Marx	1966
State Bank v. Brewer	736, 1913	Steffen v. Bauer	613	Sternberg v. Callanan	1275
v. Brown	1521	Stegall v. Stegall's Adm'r	1492,	Sternheim v. Brncky	1705
v. Carr	770		1605, 2043	Stewart v. Bull	1516, 1521,
v. Dutton	1632	Stein v. Ashby	2085		1537
v. Emminger	1280	v. Bowman	1483, 1487,	Stettin v. Galliver	1275, 1651
v. Hutchinson	1768,		2283, 2286	Stettin's Will	2591
	2287, 2339	v. Fogarty	2044	Stettiner v. White	751
v. Rhoads	529	v. Leeper	1300	Stevell v. Lowry	2158
State National Bank v. Butler	2415	v. Stein	1383, 1674	Stevens v. Beach	944, 1003,
Southam v. Ferguson	613, 2123	Steinbach v. Ins. Co.	759, 907,		1007
v. Stone	770		912	v. Hambley	392
Stuffer v. Young	38, 89,			v. Ginn	2059, 2497
	228, 344, 392			v. Dudley	1873
Stauschfeld v. Juttar	2536			v. Ellsworth	718
Stayner v. Drotwich	1364, 1644,			v. Hatch	2408
	1670, 1703				
Stead v. Heaton	1465, 1476				

TABLE OF CASES.

Section
1698,
1899
1890
1653
91, 1960
2056
1750
1633
1736
51, 1213
73, 73

2578
1858
14, 1729
1867

1978
1947
91, 2164
0, 1198,
1539
1456
2, 1135,
1136
797
8
1003
2337
1884
1778
2313
96, 747,
3, 1028,
3, 1874
609
1033
1880
1779
1681
2345
9, 1651
254
1188
1738
2155
2349
792
1195
1073
406
1868
782
1966
1275
1305
1521,
1537
1651
2391
751
2158
1003,
1007
392
2497
1873
718
2408

Section
1312, 1985
1041, 1511
1777
1072
2356
1554
3 B. & Aid. 2447
2 J. B. Moore 2447
8 Tannt. 2447, 2486
v. R. Co. 1621
v. Reed 2083
v. State
Ala., 38 So. 851, 1974
3 Ark. 2570
78 Ga. 2339
50 Kan. 1188
19 Nehr. 1853
v. Stevens
150 Mass. 861
86 N. J. Eq. 2505
v. Vancieve 233, 1735,
1738
v. Webb 1807
v. West 1956, 1963
v. Whitcomb 2322
Stevenson v. Com. 1043
v. Dunlap 1298,
1300
v. Ebervale Coal Co. 861
v. Gunning's Estate 1106,
1108, 1109,
2027
v. Hoy 377, 1968
v. McReary 2083
v. Moody 1168, 1677,
1681, 2373
v. Morris 2396
v. Stewart 38, 39, 392
v. U. S. 106
Stevison v. Earnest 1188, 2183
Steward v. Scott 1239
Steward v. Allison 530, 1352,
1632, 1635

v. Anderson
111 Ia. 418, 1974
59 Ind. 2409
v. Bank 1871
v. Blease 2132
v. Butler 1257
v. Cheatham 1777
v. Conrad's Adm'r 18
v. Equit. M. L. Ass'n 1693
v. Everts 1721
v. Hood 901, 913, 1389
v. Lispernard 229
v. Massengale 1254, 2222
v. Morris 8, 747, 751
v. Mnhhead 1062
v. People 38, 1126,
1194, 1195
2507
v. Nashville
v. R. Co.
11 Ia. 2354
141 Ind. 2433
78 Minn. 792
v. Redditt 689, 1932
v. Rossiter 1388
v. Sherman 2119

Section
1871
v. State
42 Fla. 1003
58 Ga. 2238
19 Oh. 111, 776, 1951,
1976
Tex. Cr., 67 S. W. 1117
v. Stewart
177 Mass. 1737
41 Wis. 609
v. Swanzy 1271, 1677
1861, 1884
v. Trenier
v. Valley R. Co. 2167
1074
Steyner v. Droitwich 1179, 1598
Stice, ex p. 880, 2368,
2279
Stickney v. Stickney 2340, 2341
Stier v. Oskaloosa 2572
Stiles v. Eastman 1141
v. Homer 1521
Still v. Hoste 2474
v. Hntto 2531
Stille v. Lynch 621
Stilling v. Thorp 1698
Stillingfleet v. Parker 1273
Stillwater Turnpike Co. v.
Coover 1951
Stillwell Mfg. Co. v.
Pheips 681, 660
Stinehouse v. State 1890
Stinson v. R. Co. 463
v. Russell 2188
Stipp v. Claman 1878
Stirling v. Sterling 1818
v. Wagner 1174
Stith v. Peckham 2437
Stittgen v. Randle 2372
Stobart v. Dryden 1033, 1431,
1432, 1505
Stober v. McCarter 610, 2337,
2336, 2337
Stockbridge v. Quicke 1844,
1645
v. W. Stockbridge 1267,
2139, 2141
Stockbridge Iron Co.
v. Cone Iron Works 1682
v. Hndson Iron Co. 2417,
2498
Stockdale v. Bushby 2474
v. Escant 1212
v. Hansard 2375
v. Young 1188, 1189, 1195,
2522
Stocken v. Collin 2152
Stocker v. Foster 1576
Stockett v. Watkins 1083
Stockflesh v. De Tastet 815, 850,
2183
Stocking v. State 2058, 2081
Stoekley v. Cisna 1573
Stockman v. Hampton 1211,
1252
983
Stocks v. Ellis
Stockslager v. M. L. & S.
Institution 2526
Stockton v. Demuth 965, 907,
1043

Section
1586
Stockton v. Williams
Stockton C. H. & A. W. v.
Ins. Co. 451
Stockwell v. Blamey 1082
v. R. Co. 1151, 1160, 1802
v. Silloway 1223
Stoddard v. Ham 2413
v. Mix 1195
v. Winchester 661
Stoddard Mfg. Co. v.
Miller 2466
Stodder v. Hoffman 608
Stoddert v. Manning 2322, 2323
Stoever v. Whitman 1223, 1257,
1644, 1883
1009
Stoffer v. State
Stoher v. St. L. I. M. &
S. R. Co. 437
Stokes v. Carne 1647
v. Dawes 1573, 1605,
1870, 2143
v. People 21, 105, 106, 110,
111, 247, 389,
987, 1005
v. State
8 Baxt. 2265
18 Ga. 923, 1985
Stokes v. R. Co. 2307, 2309
Stoll v. Daly Min. Co. 199, 249,
250, 1984
Stoip v. Blair 377, 1123, 1128,
1127, 1128, 1131
Stolze v. Term. Co. 463, 714
Stomne v. Hanford P. Co. 871
Stone v. Blackburn 588
v. Bosawen Mills 1876
v. Carter 1876
v. Com. 1066
v. Covell 714, 718
v. Fitts 1851
v. Goss 2212
v. Hnhbard 2025
v. Huffine 950
v. Ins. Co.
88 Ia. 64
71 Mich. 460, 779
v. Langworthy 88, 201, 1244
v. Moore 1719
v. Nash 1662
v. Pendleton 201, 481
v. People 1855
v. R. Co.
N. H., 55 Atl. 93, 199
88 Wis. 1721
v. Sanborn 1198, 2104
v. State
105 Ala. 841, 861
Ga., 4 S. E. 342, 527,
1871, 2042,
2059, 2060
4 Hnmph. 363, 390
v. Tipper 715
v. Vance 529
v. Varney 65, 73, 74
v. Watson 865, 1722
Stoner v. Ellis 1084, 1678
Stones v. Byron 1911
v. Menhem 1163
Stoops v. Smith 2465

TABLE OF CASES.

STO

	Section		Section		Section
Stoppert v. Nierle	64, 133, 1010, 1013, 1141	Stratton v. Hawks	1230	Studebaker Mfg. Co. v. Dickson	1166
Storer's Will	681	v. Henderson	1611	Stakeley v. Butler	2094
Storv v. Bank	3008	v. Oregon City	2677	Stall v. Stall	
v. Finnagan	1681, 2144	v. State	920	Nebr., 96 N. W. 197 Pa.	1091, 2334
v. Lord Lenoix	1634, 2316, 2319	Straus v. Heins	1230	Stamm v. Hammel	166
v. State	249	Straw v. Greene	2115	Stamora v. Shaw	1651
Storm v. Green	1344	Strawbridge v. Clarend		Stamp v. Hughes	1312, 1513
v. U. S.	944, 1884	Tel. Co.	1199	v. Napier	529
Storms v. Storms	2327	Street v. Broadbas	2346	Starbridge v. Franklin	2505
Storr v. Scott	1040	v. Brown	1958	Stardevant's Appeal	223, 2491
Storris v. Grand Trunk El. Co.	1951	v. Nelson	1249	Sturdy v. Armand	2455
Storrs v. Wetmore	2322	Streeter v. Bartlett	1290	Sturges v. Buchanan	1206, 2119, 2153
Story v. De Armond	2359	v. Sawyer	785	Sturges v. Hart	1195
v. Gammell	2419	Stroppone v. Lenoix	2465	Sturgis v. Baker	2120
v. R. Co.	288, 1807	Strickland v. Hudson	1388	v. Robbins	15, 944
v. Saunders	905, 912, 913, 1024, 1124, 1502, 1673	Strickler v. Todd	16	v. Work	2477
v. State		Strimpfler v. Roberts	89, 1219, 1240, 1680	Sturla v. Freccia	1405, 1632, 1635, 1634, 1661, 1970, 1672, 1674
99 Ind.	413, 1157	Stringer v. Marshall	15	Sturm v. Ina. Co. v. Jeffree	18, 1390
69 Miss.	390, 1263	Stringfellow v. State	770, 779, 2071	Sturtevant v. Robinson	1267, 2107
Stondenmire v. Brown	1354	Stroble v. New Albany	2552	v. Wallace	1073
v. Williamson	1691, 1993, 1894, 1997	Strode v. Churchill	1681	Styles v. Decatur	438
v. Wilson	844, 1770	v. Russell	2426, 2470	v. Gray	1325
Stough v. Ogden	2525	v. Washer	7	Suddeth v. State	821
Stout v. Rassel	667	Strohauer v. Volts	2433	Suddith v. Boone	568
v. Rigney	1226	Strohm v. R. Co.	643	Sudlow v. Warshing	1851, 2026
v. Slattery	2183	Strom v. R. Co.	2319	Suffolk v. Green	2257
v. Wood	586	Strong v. Brewer	893, 1779	v. Greenville	1176, 1199
Stoval v. Coles	1859	v. Dodds	2304	Sugar C. C. M. Co. v. Peterson	451
Stover v. Borwell	2063	v. Rannels	1681	Sugar Pine D. & L. Co. v. Garrett	1201
v. People	2273	v. State	321	Sugden v. St. Leonards	112, 271, 1129, 1267, 1362, 1420, 1576, 1714, 1733, 1736, 2052, 2106
Stow v. Converse	65, 64, 66, 73, 1983	v. Stevens Point	813	Suggert v. Kitchell	1290, 2048
v. Grand Rapids	1350	v. Stewart	1082	Sullivan v. Collins	
v. People	1195	Strosser v. Ft. Wayne	1936	20 Colo.	2444
Stowe v. Bishop	1951	Strother v. Barr	4, 1174, 1246, 2091	107 Wis.	1890
v. Querner	1189	v. Christy	1651	v. Com.	457
Stowell v. Flagg	529	v. Lucas	2006, 2006, 2016, 2573	v. D. & H. Canal Co.	458
v. Hazelett	1063	v. State	2512	v. Foley	1938
Strachan, re	1856, 2319	v. Willan	1647	v. Goldman	2515
v. Jones	1842	Stroud v. Com.	1755	v. Hense	379, 1225, 1651, 2580
Strahan, re	2281	v. Springfield	1544, 1570, 1587, 2141	v. Knyheadall	95, 668, 669
Strain v. Fitzgerald	2106	Stroud Election Case	2267	v. Lear	1943
v. Murphy	1225	Struckmeyer v. Lamb	2323	v. Nicoulin	1882, 2183
Strait v. State	657	Strudgeon v. Sand Beach	232, 1721, 2320	v. Norris	913, 1124, 1389
Straker v. Graham	2352, 2353, 2354	Strudwick v. Brodnax	907, 913, 918, 1389	v. O'Leary	406, 987
Stranahan v. East Had-dam	1062	Strunk v. Ochiltree	1029	v. Oshkosh	252
Strang v. People	391, 932, 930, 987, 1095, 1135, 2079	Strutbers v. R. Co.	714	v. R. Co.	2510
v. State	318	Strutton v. Com.	1807	v. Richardson	1239, 2145
v. Wilson	529	v. Fitzgerald	2195	v. Salt Lake	199
Strange v. Crowley	2105	v. Havens	1267	v. State	
v. Donobue	1777	v. Lovell	2320	66 Ala.	1612, 1807
Stranham v. Cullington	1364	v. People	406	102 Ala.	1447
Strata Mercella's Case, Abbot of	1152, 1154, 1160, 1211, 1347	v. Swansy	158	38 Ark.	830
Stratford v. Ames	1244, 1391	Stabbings v. Curtis	1661	101 Ga.	1750
v. Sanford	774	Stabbs v. Houston	1890	38 Nebr.	1750, 2071
Straton v. Rastall	2432	Stable v. Beachboard	229, 1938		
Stratton v. Dole	206, 213, 1623	Stuckey v. Bellah	689, 1958		
		Stuckslager v. Neel	1549, 1560		
		Studdy v. Sanders	2313, 2529		
		Studebaker B. M. Co. v. Endom	1960		

TABLE OF CASES.

Section

1196
2094
1091
2984
166
1951
2, 1813
529
2505
2, 2491
2455
2, 2119,
2153
1195
2120
15, 944
2477
1, 1632,
1661,
1, 1674
1, 1390
1208
1267,
2107
1073
438
1225
821
568
2026
2257
1199
431
1201
1, 271,
1267,
1420,
1714,
1736,
2106
2048
2464
1890
457
458
1938
2515
1651,
2560
1, 669
1943
2183
1389
967
252
2510
2145
199
1807
1447
830
1750
2071

Sullivan v. State 8 Tex. App. 1996,
v. Sullivan 92 Me. 96
114 Mich. 1310
Sulphur Mines Co. v. Thompson 1778, 1964
Summer v. Crawford 1021
Summerbell v. Summerbell 2047
Summerhill v. Darrow 1503
Summerlin v. R. Co. 566, 1978
Summerour v. Felber 1291
Summers v. Ins. Co. v. M'Kim 1947
v. Moseley 1894, 2192, 2300
v. State 2306
Summersett v. Adamson 1254
Summersville v. Summersville 2083, 2085
Summons v. State 4, 1362, 1888,
1395, 1397,
1396, 2096
Sumner v. Blair 38, 1696
v. Cooke 819, 2336
v. Sebec 1644, 2159
11 Fla. 2058
Fla., 23 So. 1012
Sun Ins. Co. v. Earle 1201
Sun Mut. Ins. Co. v. Barrel Co. 377
Sun Printing & P. Ass'n v. Edwards 2442, 2465
v. Schenck 74
Sunberg v. Babcock 1244
Sunbury & E. R. Co. v. Cooper 1950
Supplee v. Hall 2398
Supplee v. Lewis 1244
Supreme Council v. Brashers v. Conklin 1671
1496
Supreme Lodge v. Fletcher v. Jagers 1671
1384
Supreme Tent v. Steensland 1073, 2537
Sarber v. State 1072
Sartees v. Hubbard 1202,
1204, 1234
Sasewind v. Lever 738
Sussex v. Temple 1082, 1257
Sussex Peerage Case 544, 1271,
1476, 1528,
1578, 1697, 1933
Sutch's Estate 1890, 2054, 2431
Sutcliffe v. Iowa S. F. M. Ass'n 1081, 1750
Suter v. Page 916
Suther v. State 205, 2062
Sutherland v. Hankins v. Ins. Co. 2245
v. Williams 2510
v. Young 699
1644
Sutor v. McLean 1404
v. Wood 1003
Sutter v. Ross 1058
Sutton v. Devonport v. Gregory 291
1518

Section

Sutton v. Griebel 2410
v. Johnson 194
v. Lumber Co. 2442
v. McLoud 1195, 1196,
1235
v. People 2514
v. R. Co. 968, 2578
v. Sadler 2500
v. Sachomish 1635
v. Walters 1877
Suttrill v. Dry 2358
Swain v. Cheney 282, 443, 1541,
1546, 1540
v. Comstock 2572
v. Lewis 1206
Swainscot M. Co. v. Walker 377
Swan v. Com. 351
v. Gilbert 1959
v. Middlesex 801, 714,
1640, 1942, 1943
v. People 1013, 1014
v. Polk 2027
v. State 150
v. Thompson 207
v. Thurman 1530
Swaney v. Parrish 1290, 1312
Swank v. Phillips 15
Swann v. Buck 1350
Swanson v. Mellen 661
Swarts v. Chickering 745, 1898
Swearengen v. Gulick 1195
Sweet v. Rogers 1893
Sweeney v. Hjul 1877
Sweeney v. State 1683
Sweet v. Gilmore 957, 967, 1985
v. Sherman 1106
v. Spencer 1779
v. Tuttle 1960
v. Wright 1963
Sweetland v. Porter 2529
Sweetser v. Bates 253, 392
v. Lowell 2012
Sweigart v. Richards 704
Swanson v. Bender 692
Swordferger v. Hopkins 1458,
1968
Sweet v. Shumway 451, 860,
1022
Swicard v. Hooks 2529
Swift v. Dean 586
v. Dickerman 404, 406
v. Fitzhugh 1196, 1213,
1225, 1651, 2109
v. Ins. Co. 266, 1715
v. M'Ternan 1640
v. Madden 1037, 1263
v. Perry 1911
v. Rutkowski 1156
v. Short 905, 907
v. Stevens 1196
v. Swift 4 Hagg. Eccl. 2252
9 La. An. 382
v. Tyson 6
v. Willey 1304
v. Withers 1040
Swigart v. State 222, 1166
Swindell v. Harper 406
v. Warden 1779

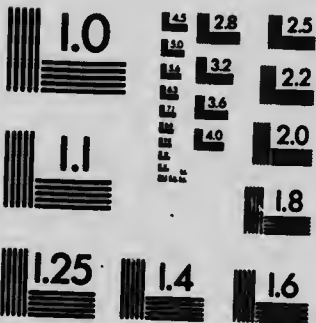
Section

Swing v. Sparks 1543
Swink v. French 1308
Swinnerton v. Stafford 2189
Swinney v. Booth 728
v. Patterson 281
Swire v. Bell 1510
Swisher's Case 1441
Switzer v. Boulton 1407
v. Knapp 2105
Swope v. Donnelly 112
Swygert v. Taylor 2141
Sybray v. White 1070
Sydeman v. Beckwith 1918,
1994
Syers v. Jonas 2440
Sykes v. Beck 1218, 1244,
1272, 1878
Sykes' Goods 1736
Sylvester v. Casey 283
v. Crapo 1064
v. Paper Co. 2442
v. State 71 Ala. 276, 1974
Fla., 35 So. 294, 770,
905, 961, 1907,
42 Tex. 2099
Sylvius v. Kosak 78
Syme, ex p. 2047
Symmons v. Blake 2257
Symonds v. Carter 406
v. Lloyd 406
2465
T.
T. F. Oakes, The 457
Tabb v. Cabell 1066
Tabor v. Judd 1018, 1913
v. Van Tassel 1066
v. Ward 7
Tacey v. Noyes 1141
Tackett v. May 2333
Tacoma R. & P. Co. v. Hays 905
Taft v. Com. 1943
v. Fiske 1064, 1067
v. Simpson 2164
Taggart v. Bosch 1890
Tagliasco v. Molinari 1513
Tague v. Caplice Co. 1066
Tait v. Hall 658, 1777
Takamori v. Kanai 2327
Talbot v. Bradford 1378, 2194
v. Clark 18, 588
v. Cusack 735, 745, 747,
746, 749, 750
v. Janson 1676, 1680
v. Marshfield 2512
v. Peoples 1271
v. Seeman 1884, 2573
v. Wilkins 1329
Talcott v. Goodwin 1228, 1651
v. Harris 1073
Taliaferro v. Ives 1539
Tall v. Baltimore S. P. Co. 1951
Tallahassee F. M. Co. v. R. Co. 2432
Talley v. Moore 1302
Tallman v. Dutcher 586
Tally v. Butterworth 2050



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TABLE OF CASES.

TAL

	Section		Section		Section
Tally v. Cross	2027	Taylor v. Com.		Taylor v. Terr.	2513
Talmadge v. Baker	207	3 Bush	987	v. Tncker	1547, 4815
v. Northrop	2352, 2354	Ky., 34 S. W.	2273	v. U. S.	
Taney v. Kemp	2223	Ky., 42 S. W.	833	7 D. C. App.	228, 689,
Tankard v. Railroad	791	109 Pa.	1938	89 Fed.	451, 1160
Tanner v. Taylor	735, 749, 760	90 Va.	1160, 2354	v. Webb	1086
Tanner & D. E. Co.		v. Cook	704	v. Willams	261, 289, 1063
v. Hall	1195	v. Cox	2141	v. Witham	1464
Taplin v. Atty	1208	v. Davis	1555	v. Wood	2269, 2270
Tappen v. Davidson	1511	v. D'Egville	2452	v. Youngs	1651
Tarbell v. Forbes	392, 2106	v. Felsing	1010, 2498	Taylor's Trustees	2528
v. Tarbell	2356	v. Fomby	1587	Taylor's Will	797
Tarbox v. State	321	v. Forster	2301	Taylor, B. & H. R. Co. v.	
Tarkio v. Cook	1684	v. Garnett	2354	Warner	225, 792
Tarpley v. Blabey	406	v. Glger	2349, 2354, 2355	Taylorville v. Stafford	283, 458
v. Poage	2083	v. Glenn	1566, 1568	Taylor-Woolfenden Co.	
Tarr Co. v. Kimbrough	1078	v. Greeley	2354	v. Atkinson	1555
Tarrant v. Ware	1302, 1304, 2049	v. Henry	2451	Tays v. Carr	2325
Tarsney v. Turner	908	v. Holcomb	1352	Teacabout v. People	845, 846, 852, 1719
Tate v. Fratt	1876	v. Horsey	349	Teagle v. Deboy	406
v. Humphrey	406	v. Hnut	2435	Teague v. Williams	406, 2097
v. Penne	1195, 2063	v. Jeffries	1678	Teasley v. Bradley	1062
v. R. Co.	1943	v. Jones	1650	Teass v. St. Albans	2515
v. Southard	1587	v. Lawson	1839	Tebbetts v. Haskins	1943
v. Tate	2067	v. Lewis	1664	Tebbs v. White	1225, 1651
v. Tate's Ex'r	1461, 2327	v. Lumbering Co.	1951	Tebo v. Augusta	678, 682, 1721
Tatbam v. Wright	1304	v. Lusk	1779	Tedens v. Schumers	59, 923, 1109
Tatum v. Goforth	1347	v. Lnther	529	Tedrowe v. Esher	1086
v. Lofton	2222	v. McConigle	1592	Teed v. Martin	1275, 1647
v. Mohr	368, 1312	v. McIrvin	1195, 1709, 2260	Teegarden v. Lewis	2503
v. State		v. McKee	1681	Teele v. Boston	463, 714
33 Ala.	257	v. Mallory	1406	Teese v. Huntington	691, 923, 928, 1985
131 Ala.	141, 279	v. Massey	749	Tefft v. Wilcox	681, 1944, 1951
v. Young	1651, 1680	v. Meekly	1300	Teil v. Roberts	1203, 1219
Taulman v. State	2239	v. Meyers	1320	Telegraph Co. v. Cooper	1951
Taunton Bank v. Richard-		v. Monroe	438, 458, 1923, 1951	Telford v. Ruskiu	2212
son	1196	v. Peck	1246, 1256	Telta v. Foster	2083
Taunton Case	2287	v. Pegram	1738, 2315, 2500, 2530	Tempel v. Hnuter	2536
Taussig's Ex'rs v. Glenn	1074, 2529	v. People	1963	Temperance Hall Ass'n v.	
Taylor v. Riggs	1180, 1196, 2105	v. Preston	1669	Giles	458
Taylor, ex p.	1644	v. R. Co.		Temperley v. Scott	2103
rs		80 Ia.	754, 1521	Temple v. Com.	2271, 2276, 2280, 2282
60 Kan.	1350	Ky., 41 S. W.	283, 456	Templeton v. Lockett	1977, 2139
9 Paige	1603, 2083	48 N. H.	687, 1718, 1974	v. People	390
v. Adams	1186	v. Robinson		Tenant v. Rnmfield	1651
v. Archbishop of York	2250	2 All.	334, 1086	Tenbroke v. Johnson	1540
v. Auditor	1678	29 Mo.	2083	Ten Eyck v. Runk	1257
v. Bank		v. Roulstone	2312	v. Whitbeck	2503
5 Lelgh	1684	v. Secnry M. F. I.		Tennant v. Dudley	1062
7 T. B. M.	1206, 1681, 1684	Co.	1947	v. Hamilton	451, 464, 1061
v. Barclay	2566, 2569	v. Sbenwell	2083	Tennessee C. I. & R. Co.	
v. Batten	1859	v. Sbnfford	1587	v. Haley	949, 1117
v. Beatty	1064	v. Smith	1614	v. Hansford	664
v. Beck	529, 531	v. Star Coal Co.	461, 684, 1951	v. Linn	254
v. Beckham	1350, 1351	v. State		Tennessee & C. R. Co. v.	
v. Blacklow	2290	42 Ala.	1781	Danforth	1521
v. Brewer	2414	110 Ga.	398, 1263, 2059	Teuney v. Evans	2222, 2354
v. Briggs	2463	Miss., 30 So.	1842	v. Rapid City	1124, 1944
v. Burnside	1658	37 Nebr.	821	v. Tuttle	65
v. Buttrick	2500	v. Steamer Robert		Tenney's Case	1836
v. Cayce	1877	Campbell	2154	Tennis v. R. Co.	1750
v. Clark	1195	v. Slater	2578	Terpening v. Holton	1189
v. Cole	1065	v. Swett	2083	Terre Haute v. Hudnt	571
v. Colvin	1195	v. Taylor	582		

Section	Section	Section	Section
2513	Terre H. & I. R. Co.	Texas & P. R. Co.	Thomas v. Dyott
547, 4815	v. Brunker	v. Watson	v. Gage
228, 689,	v. Clem	U. S., 23 Snp.	v. Glendinning
1938	v. Stockwell	455, 456,	v. Grand Lodge
451, 1160	v. Voelker	664, 1951	v. Graves
1086	Terrill v. Allen	112 Fed.	v. Hamilton
289, 1063	v. Beecher	1415	v. Harding
1464	Territory v. Chavez	v. Wilder	v. Hargrave
269, 2270	6 N. M.	1417	v. Herrall
1651	8 N. M.	Texas & St. L. R. Co.	v. Isett
2528	v. De Gntman	v. Eddy	v. Jenkins
797	967, 983, 987	v. Kirby	v. Kean
v.	505, 506,	Thacher v. Phinney	v. Kinsey
225, 792	508, 923,	581, 1225,	v. Lawson
283, 458	987, 2277	1651	v. Loose
1555	v. Egan	Thalheim v. State	1890, 2054, 2431
2325	v. Evans	331, 1890,	v. McCormack
845, 846,	v. Godfrey	2115, 2148	v. McDaneld
852, 1719	v. Hall	1681	v. McDonald
406	v. Hanna	Thalheimer v. Crow	1083, 1086
406, 2097	v. Hart	Thalheimer v. Brinckerhoff	v. Mallinckrodt
1062	v. Lercro	95	714, 1943
2515	v. Lincero	Thams v. Sharp	v. Miller
1943	v. McClin	1651	v. Morgan
225, 1651	v. McGinnis	1670	v. Newton
682, 1721	v. McKern	Tharpe v. Pearce	v. People
59, 923,	v. Maldonado	1186, 1681	59 Ill.
1109	v. O'Connor	v. State	39 Mich.
1086	v. O'Hare	318, 2098	67 N. Y.
275, 1647	v. Padilla	Thatcher v. Kautcher	248, 1616, 2511
2503	v. Pino	v. Olmstead	v. Porter
463, 714	v. Pratt	1385, 1705,	v. Price
691, 923,	v. Rehberg	2132, 2596	v. R. Co.
928, 1985	v. Roberts	455	v. Ribble
944, 1951	v. Williams	v. R. Co.	v. Scntt
203, 1219	Territt v. Woodruff	v. Stickney	v. Sellman
1951	1684, 1703	v. Waller	v. Springville
2212	Terry v. Belcher	1364, 1404	v. State
2083	v. Birmingham N.	1195, 1201	100 Ala.
2536	Bank	v. Boyle	106 Ala.
v.	v. Rodahan	v. Crossman	107 Ala.
458	v. Sickles	v. Davis	117 Ala.
2103	v. State	v. Deen	27 Ga.
171, 2276,	118 Ala.	v. Gallup	59 Ga.
280, 2282	120 Ala.	v. Ins. Co.	103 Ind.
1977, 2139	13 Ind.	10 Pick.	318, 367, 702,
390	Terryberry v. Woods	70 Me.	2007, 2015, 2276
1651	2518	v. Lombard	40 Tex.
1540	1388	v. Street	43 Tex.
1257	Tesney v. State	v. Thayer	689, 1938
2503	396, 664, 988	Theaker's Case	v. Stevens
1062	Tessman v. United	2220	v. Steward
451, 464,	Friends	Theakston v. Marson	v. Tanner
1061	1644, 1678	Theisen v. Dayton	v. Thomas
949, 1117	Tetley v. Easton	2304	2 Camp.
664	2212	Theodore Körner, The	2 La.
254	Tetlow v. Savonrnin	2319	6 T. R.
1521	Tetrault v. O'Connor	Theford's Case	v. Turnley
222, 2354	1960	1661	v. Wallace
124, 1944	Tewksbury v. Howard	Thibanit v. Sessions	v. Wheeler
65	v. Schulenberg	73, 406	Thomas' Goods
1836	v. Tewksbury	Thiede v. Utah	Thomas Frnit Co. v. Start
1750	v. Dane's Ahr.	84, 397, 987,	Thomas Iron Co. v. Allen-
1189	2069	1852, 1910	town M. Co.
571	4 How. Miss.	Thiel v. Kennedy	1862
	2067	Thiele v. Newman	Thomason v. Insurance Co.
	Texas Land Co. v. Wil-	Thielmann v. Burg	716
	liams	2576	Thomason v. Driskell
	1299, 1651	Third G. W. Turnpike Co.	v. State
		v. Loomis	Thommon v. Kalbach
		Third Nat. Bank v. Coshy	1074, 2118
		v. Owen	Thompson, re
		v. Robinson	v. Anderson
		Thistlewaite v. Thistle-	v. Bennett
		waite	22 U. C. C. P.
		1777	697,
		Thoen v. Roche	2017, 2139
		Thom v. Wilson	194 Ill.
		Thomson v. Anslay	2500
		v. Bank	
		v. Carey	
		v. Com.	
		v. Connell	
		v. Crosswell	
		v. Dakin	
		v. David	
		v. Degraffenreid	
		v. Denning	
		v. Dunn	

TABLE OF CASES.

THE

	Section		Section		Section
Thompson v. Bertrand	568	Thompson v. The Philadelphia	1641	Throckmorton v. Chapman	985, 289
v. Blackwell	3098	v. Thompson		v. Coum.	104
v. Blanchard	905, 907	9 Ind.	291, 1198, 2105, 2524, 2593	v. Holt	67, 1735, 1736, 1737, 1738, 1873
v. Boston	463, 464	4 Ont. L. R.		Throgmorton v. Davis	406, 1667
v. Bowie	96	9 Pa. St.	1658	Thruston v. Clark	2257
v. Boyle	719, 720	v. Trevanlon	612, 1364, 1714, 1747, 1749	Thum Co. v. Tloczynski	2312
v. Brannon	9141	v. Updegraff	1738, 1782	Thunder v. Warren	2447
v. Bryant	2433	v. Utah	9220	Thurland's Case	2250
v. Bullock	2141	v. Watson	2054	Thurman v. Bertram	1161
v. Cashman	2312	v. Wilson	1313	v. Cameron	2167
v. Church	64	v. Woolf	1490	v. Virgin	923, 967, 1985, 2201
v. Clendeney	75, 210	Thompson's Case		Thurmond v. Trammell	2098
v. Clibley	2444	20 Gratt.	833, 855, 860	Thursby v. Myers	1658, 2141
v. Cody	2433	9 Op. Att'y-Gen'l	1350	Thurston v. Cavenor	1770
v. Com.		Thompson Co. v. Gunderson	2354	v. Cornell	581
8 Gratt.	2354	Thomson v. Ansten	1061, 1062, 2094	v. Masterson	2141
Ky., 26 S. W.	580	v. Gaillard	1973, 1662	v. Murray	1770
1 Metc. Ky.	609	v. Hines	1651	v. Stalford	1352
v. Davitta	289	Thomson-Houston El. Co. v. Palmer	1213, 2567	Tibbet v. Sme	1072
v. Didion	1072	Thornington v. Smith	2463	Tibbets v. Flanders	656, 2098
v. Ewing	2215	Thorn v. Kemp	1195, 1842	v. Sterberg	753, 762
v. Exum	377	v. Knapp	406	v. Sumner	377
v. F. W. & R. G. R. Co.	2592	v. Moore	907	Tice v. Bay City	252
v. Fry	1257	Thorburn v. Hand	1890	Tichborne v. Lushington	270, 1023, 2220, 9298
v. Gaffey	463	v. R. Co.	1185, 1230	Tichborne Case, see R. v. Castro.	
v. Gregor	1035	v. Savage M. Co.	1862, 2221	Tickel v. Short	1073
v. Halstead	1511	Thorndell v. Morrison	2063, 2066	Tickner v. Roberts	5, 2165
v. Ish	1984, 2391	Thorndike v. Boston	1784	Ticknor v. Calhoun	1225
v. Ives	1225	Thorne v. Mason	1249	Tiffany v. McCumber	1194
v. Kilborne	2303	v. Rolff	2039	Tift v. Jones	1841
v. Lambe	2122	Thornton v. Adkins	2266	Tiget v. State	579
v. Libby	2434	v. Britton	1406	Tigner v. McGehee	1678
v. McCready	406	v. Hook	1890	Tile Co. v. Snyder	282
v. Mapp	1247	v. Lane	1662	Tiley v. Cowling	607
v. Mawhinney	1779	v. State		Tilghman v. Fisher	1196
v. Miles	2132	113 Ala.	149, 728, 1974	Tilk v. Parsons	1729
v. Missouri	7	107 Ga.	198, 1750	Tillard v. Shebbeare	1275
v. Mosely	67, 341, 2211	117 Wis.	2265	Tiller v. State	1005
v. Nye	210, 211	v. Stephen	2104	Tillett v. R. Co.	1951, 9552
v. Owen	917, 1303, 1511	v. Thornton	1304, 1736, 1697	Tilley's Case	1409
v. Patton	2437	Thornton's Ex'rs v. Thornton's Heirs	917	Tillinghast v. Walton	803
v. Porter	1554, 1555, 1561	Thoroughgood's Case	2405	Tillotson v. Warner	1267
v. R. Co.		Thorp v. Craig	1675	Tilton v. Bowley	987, 1141, 2276
110 Ky.	2141	v. Goewey	2304	Tilly v. Fisher	1205
91 Mich.	283	v. Leibrecht	907	Tilson v. Terwilliger	1086
22 N. J. Eq.	2371, 2375	Thorp v. Gisborne	702	Tilton v. American Bible Society	9462, 2472
v. Richards	1947, 1890	v. Macauley	2260	v. Beecher	15, 783, 949, 1045, 1073, 1243, 1260, 1368, 1699, 1775, 1807, 1671, 1897, 1911, 2094, 2102, 2113, 2226, 2242
v. Ruis	1548	Thrall v. Todd	1194, 1195	v. Miller	451
v. Schnyler	2168	Thrasher v. Ballard	1681	Timberlake v. Thayer	1842
v. Smith	2465	v. Ingram	1681	Timmings v. Timmings	2067, 2069
v. State		Thrawley v. State	63, 451, 1157, 1618	Timmons v. Timmons	1725
99 Ala.	748, 905	Threllfall v. Webster	1858	Timothy v. State	399, 451, 1693
100 Ala.	988, 1270, 1899, 2276	Thresher v. Bank	785, 1911	Tindle v. Nichols	2363
106 Ala.	1404, 1405, 1406, 2098	Threshers' Trials, The	660, 1982		
15 Ind.	1040	Throckmorton v. Tracy	1252, 2462		
38 Ind.	1136, 1138				
37 Tex.	1819				
30 Tex. App.	2079				
33 Tex. Cr.	1138, 2061				
Tex. Cr., 74 S. W.	821, 823				
v. Stewart					
3 Conn.	9164				
5 Litt.	1777				

THE

TRE

TABLE OF CASES.

Section	Section	Section	Section
285, 289	Tingle v. U. S. 987	Tomb v. Sherwood 1062	Townsend v. Downer 1651
104	Tingley v. Cowgill 613, 652	Tomblor v. Reitz 2406	27 Vt. 1651
735, 1736,	v. Land Co. 1530	Tome v. R. Co. 797, 2006,	32 Vt. 1651, 1664, 2141,
737, 1738,	v. Providence 1943	2016	2143, 2522
1873	Tinklepaugh v. Rounds 1040	Tom. Institute v. Davis 794, 1960	64, 194, 341
406, 1867	Tinkler v. Walpole 1647,	Tomer v. Densmore 1876	v. Graves 2454
2257	1650	Tomkies v. Reynolds 1777	v. Hargreaves 1304
2212	Tinrin v. Price 1316	Tomlinson v. Croke 1364	v. Johnson 1082
2447	Tinsley v. Carey 772	v. Derby 458, 461, 655	v. Lawrence 1856, 1859
2250	Tioga v. South Creek 2063, 2064	v. Earnshaw 451	v. Phillips 1670
1161	Tipper v. Com. 1781	v. Greenfield 2581	v. Pepperell 1621, 1938
2167	Tipton, ex p. 1350	Tompkins v. Crane 1085	v. State 133, 987
967, 1985,	v. State 2100	v. Saltmarsh 1142	Townsend's Succession 773,
2201	Tischler v. Apple 1890	v. Wiley 1405	1391, 1672
2098	Tisdale v. Ins. Co. 28 Ia. 1877	Toms v. Beebe 2311	Townsend Mfg. Co. v. Foster 738
658, 2141	116 N. Y. 1064, 1067	v. Whitmore 1086	Townshend v. Ecangroom 2417
1770	Tisman v. District 1016	Toohy v. Plummer 1263, 1669	Townslay v. Simrell 1675
591	Titford v. Knott 703, 2016	Tooker v. Beanfort 1670	Towson v. Moore 1738
2141	Title v. Grevett 529, 2222	Toole v. Nichol 1890, 1893	Traber v. Hicks 1234
1770	Title v. Foxall 1211	v. Toole 2067, 2336	Trabing v. N. & I. Co. 1021
1352	Tidlow v. Titlow 1736, 1938	Tooley v. Bacon 18	Trabue v. Com. 987
1072	Tittle v. State 150	Toomer v. Gadsden 1548	v. Sayre 95
656, 2098	Titus v. Ash 953, 1022, 1026,	Toomes v. Etherington 1671	Traction Co. v. Lambertson 688,
753, 762	1028, 1111	Toomes' Estate 569, 1938,	1721
377	v. Gage 228, 232, 1899	2395	Tracy v. Eggleston 1566
252	v. Gunn 747	Toomey v. Kay 777, 1956	v. Jenks 1352
270,	v. Kimbro 1239	Toode v. Kent 1943	v. McManns 1971
1023,	v. State 117 Ala. 967, 1441,	Topeka v. Martiusan 1168	v. People 396, 1438,
220, 2298	2497	v. Sherwood 458, 1951	1443
	7 Baxt. 62, 200, 987,	Topeka Water Co. v. Whiting 461	Tracy Peerage Case 285, 2024
	1035, 1263,	735, 748,	Trader v. McKee 1681
	1329	749, 750	Traders' Ins. Co. v. Catlin 1947
	v. Sumner 406	Toplitz v. Hedden 18, 1263	Trainer v. German Am. S. L. & B. Ass'n 751
	Tia-koo-yeh-lee v. U. S. 987	Torbert v. Wilson 1681	Trambly v. Ricard 2415
	Tobin, re 1303	Toronto G. R. Co. v. Taylor 2319	Trammell v. Hemphill 2098
	v. Brimfield 437	Torque v. Carrillo 2355	v. Hudmou 1456
	v. Portland F. M. Co. 1389	Torre v. Summers 211, 987	v. McDade 770
	v. Seay 1215, 1664	Torrey v. Burney 748, 1254,	v. Roberts 1290, 1513
	v. Shaw 261, 291, 1198,	1958	v. Thirmond 1225, 1651,
	1963, 2105	v. Nixon 112	2143
	v. Shea 406	Torris v. People 852	Transportation Line v. Hope 1951
	Todd, ex p. 1658, 2110	Totmar v. Forsaith 1141	Tranue v. Brown 1513
	in re 1955	Tottou v. James 1225	Tranum v. Wilkinson 1651
	v. Keene 379	v. U. S. 2375	Trapp v. Druecker 1951
	v. Munson 2311	Touchard v. Keyes 1651	Trask v. People 1852, 2183,
	v. Neal 1633	Toulmin v. Austin 1676	2264
	v. Ockerman 1267, 1674	Tousley v. Barry 1083	Travelers' Ins. Co. v. Sheppard 64, 728, 770,
	v. Rowley 201	Towdy v. Ellis 1247	771, 792, 1481,
	v. Stafford 529	Tower v. Whip 2006	1747, 1750,
	v. Weed 1778	v. Wilson 1206, 1268	1770, 1840
	Toland v. Paine F. Co. 437,	Towers v. Moor 2426	Travelers' Protective Ass'n v. West 1750
	561, 2218	Towle v. Blake 1721, 1722	Travers v. McMurray 911
	T. L. v. Burke 1777	v. Pacific Imp. Co. 65	v. U. S. 862
	Toledo St. L. & K. C. R. Co. v. Bailey 65	v. Sherer 715	Travis v. Barkhurst 1779
	Toledo W. & W. R. Co. v. Chew 1275	Town v. Needham 586	v. Brown 1040, 2005,
	Toledo & A. A. R. Co. v. Johnson 1651	Town Council v. Owens 2268	2007, 2008, 2016,
	Toler v. State 279	Towne v. Towne 266	2020, 2026, 2027
	Toll v. Lee 1286	Towner v. Lucas 2435, 2439	v. Ins. Co. 6
	v. State 367	Towns v. Alford 770, 774	v. January 2307, 2309
	Tolson v. Posey 1640	v. Riddle 1877	v. Stevens 987, 2259
	Tolman v. Emerson 2139, 2141,	Townsend v. Atwater 1108, 2312	Treadwell v. Wells 736
	2144	v. State 1213	Treager v. Mining Co. 1078
	v. Johnstone 1003, 1116	Townsend v. Briggs Cal., 32 Pac. 1890	Treasurer v. Moore 2373
	2144	99 Cal. 223, 1698	Treasurers v. Witsall 1221, 1677
	Tolson v. Coasting Co. 1951	v. Bush 529, 531	
		v. Covington 1290	

TABLE OF CASES.

TRE

	Section		Section		Section
Treat v. Browning	73, 74, 1040, 1630, 2196	True v. Plimley	406	Tupper v. International B. & T. Co.	751
v. Merchants' Life Ass'n	1960	v. Sanborn	377	Turberville v. State	1841
Trees v. Eakin	1878	v. True	2067	Turberville v. Savage	986
Tregany v. Fletcher	2578	Truman v. Loder	2413	Turley v. Logan	1350
Treleaven v. Dixon	608	Trull v. Trus	38, 377	Turbuli v. Com.	2239
Tremain v. Barrett	2203	Trulock v. State Ark., 69 S. W. 1 Ia.	657, 660, 2595	v. O'Hara	1126
v. Edwards	1544	Truman v. Lore	530, 1347	v. Payson	1074, 1681
Tromblay v. Harnden	393, 451	Truslove v. Burton	2148	v. Richardson	682, 715
v. M. R. C. Co.	1976	Trustees v. Hogg	2116	Turner v. Beiden	1133, 1779
Trentham v. Blinthenthal	1261	v. Jessup	2465	v. Cates	1314
v. Waidrop	1674	Trustees Canandargua Academy v. McKechnie	2169	v. Child	2118
Trenton B. Co. v. Woodruff	603	Trusty v. Com.	2277	v. Coe	2232
Trenton Pass. R. Co. v. Cooper	770, 1750, 2509	Tnhbs v. Garrison	716, 1943	v. Com. 216, 279, 390,	1144
Trenton Potteries Co. v. Title G. & T. Co.	1947, 1951	Tnberson v. State	2056	v. Crisp	1466
Treon v. Brown	529	Tncker v. Barrow	850	v. Fish	2580
Trepp v. Barker	616	v. Constable	261	v. Grand Rapids	1890
Treich v. Ottenburg	2504	v. Finch	2304	v. Hardin	1086
Trevor v. Colgate	2165	v. Hanniker	1807	v. Hearst	283
Trewitt v. Lambert	1243	v. Hood	1142	v. Jenkine	2115
Tribette v. R. Co.	456	v. Hya**	697, 2008, 2015, 2016	v. Johnson	1300
Trin v. State	507	v. Kellogg	704, 2016	v. Keller	581
Trimbie v. Am. Sngar Ref. Co.	1858	v. McDonald	1690	v. King	928, 1489
v. Shaffer	1247	v. McMahon	2065	v. McKee	728
v. State	1853, 2089	v. People	117 Ill. 1644, 2086 122 Ill. 1398, 1644, 1878, 2086	v. Moore	1225, 1306, 1513
v. Tantlinger	664	v. R. Co.	561, 1943	v. Newburgh	663
v. Terr.	1012, 1135, 2060	v. Seaman's Aid Soc'y	2462, 2463, 2476	v. Overall	612
v. Trimbie	2085	v. Smith	1564, 1566, 1568	v. Pearte	586
Trimby v. Vignier	1271	v. South Kingston	2343	v. Poston	2132
Trimbletown v. Kemmie	18, 1033, 1085, 1256, 2105	v. State	71 Ala. 612 89 Md. 1953, 2512	v. R. Co.	158 Mass. 438, 792 15 Wash. 1944
Trimmer v. Trimmer	2098	v. Tucker	11 Jr. 2067 74 Miss. 923, 927	v. Reynolds	1890
Trinity Co. Lumber Co. v. Denham	966	v. Welch	1026, 1032, 1247	v. Seacock	1484, 1487
Trinity House v. Barge	2279	v. Whitehead	1737	v. State	124 Ala. 154, 1109 114 Ga. 2513 102 Ind. 218 4 Ia. 1807 60 Miss. 2241 89 Tenn. 1157 39 Tex. Cr. 150
Triplett v. Gill	1633	v. Wilamonicz	529	v. Strip	1290, 1651
Tripp v. Garey	1352	Tackwood v. Hanthorn	1640	v. Turner	1304, 1312
Trischet v. Ins. Co.	2120	Tador v. Com.	111, 1156	v. Tyson	1458, 2141
Trist v. Johnson	1208	v. Tador	1299	v. U. S.	794
Trogdon v. Trogdon	2437	Tador Iron Works v. Weber	789, 944, 1158	v. Warren	2306
Trogdon's Case	4, 321	Tafts v. Du Bignon	1062	v. Water Co.	2354
Troop v. Union Ins. Co.	2463	v. Hatheway	289	v. Yates	1072, 1213
Trott v. R. Co.	1976	Tug R. C. & S. Co. v. Brigel	2410	Turner's Appeal	1042, 1958, 2296
v. Skidmore	1512	Tugwell v. Hooper	2312	Turner's Estate	2304
Trotter v. Maclean	95, 1524	Tulley v. Alexander	2237	Turner F. L. Co. v. Burns	1566, 1567
v. Trotter	1271	Tullidge v. Wade	19	Turney v. Barr	2355
v. Watson	1086	Tullis v. Kidd	569, 687, 1984	v. Thruay	2066
Troughton v. Getley	2218	v. Rankin	675, 1976	v. State	770, 771
Troup v. Sherwood	923, 986, 1985	v. State	280	Turnipseed v. Goodwin	1536
Trout v. R. Co.	2495	Tulloch v. Hartley	5	v. Hawkins	1225
Trowbridge v. Addoms	1676, 2184	Tulloch v. Cunningham	1911	Turnley v. Hanna	1388
v. Sickler	1391	Tullios v. Lane	2215	Turnpike Co. v. Hearn	68
v. Spinning	2573	Tully v. Canfield	1225, 1226	v. McNamara	2184
v. State	609	v. R. Co.	1168	Turnre v. Turnre	1511
Trowel v. Castle	2110	Tunks v. Vincent	93, 2215	Turpin v. Brannon	1778
Troxdale v. State	1011	Annstall v. Cohn	2008, 2016	v. State	111, 247
Troyer v. State	1807	Tupling v. Ward	2268	Turquand v. Guardians	1862
Trnax v. Slater	1083			v. Knight	2296
Trnby v. Byers	1313			Turrell v. Morgan	2134, 2596
v. Seybert	1048, 1063, 1066			Turrentine v. Grigaby	2060
True v. Builard	2445				

UNI

TABLE OF CASES.

Section		Section		Section		
	Turton v. Benson	1062	Underhill v. Hernandez	2566,	United States v. Beavers	2195,
751	Tuschinski v. R. Co.	1352		2569		2207
1841	Tustin v. Faught	1651	v. Van Cortlandt	787	v. Bell	2281, 2282
986	Tuthill v. Davis	529	Union v. Hnddlestone	1206	v. Benner	1674
1350	Tutt v. Hawkins	2421	v. Thurman	1511,	v. Biens	2349
2259	Tuttle v. Burgett's Adm'r	2442		1738	v. Breedmeyer	923
1126	v. Com.	396	v. Waidron	1976	v. Britton	1268, 2105
4, 1681	v. Rainey	704, 2016	Ungles v. Graves	1312, 1513	v. Ilrooks	318
92, 715	v. Russell	235, 932, 933	Union v. Plainfield	1503	v. Brown	2282, 2364
3, 1779	Tatton v. Darke	1698	Union Bank v. Commis-		v. Burns	238, 318, 2582
1314	Twaites v. Smith	2048	sioners	1350	v. Bnrr	367, 2038, 2260,
2118	Tway v. State	2061	v. Knapp	1521, 1539		2271, 2371, 2374,
2232	Twemlow v. Oswin	2531	v. Stone	95, 289		2375, 2376
0, 1144	Twentyman v. Barnes	1862,	Union Central L. I. Co.		v. Butler	1854
1466		2221	v. Cheever	266, 1081,	v. Cameron	1381
2580	Twiggs v. State	852		1807	v. Castro	1239
1890	Twohig v. Leamer	1371, 2098	v. Smith	748	v. Charles	2363
1086	Twombly v. Leach	631, 1951	v. Prigge	1555	v. Chaves	2573
283	Twomey v. Swift	1951	Union Electric Co. v.		v. Chnn Hoy	2540
2115	Twomley v. R. Co.	461	Theater Co.	1555	v. Collins	133, 166
1300	Twyman v. Com.	1079	Union Elev. Co. v. R.		v. Coolidge	2364
581	v. Twyman	2067	Co.	714, 1943	v. Cooper	2371, 2375
3, 1489	Tyler v. Beversham	2426	Union Guaranty & T. Co.		v. Craig	317, 987, 1732,
728	v. Flanders	1501	v. Robinson	1078		1781
5, 1513	v. Hamilton	1062	Union Ins. Co. v. Pollard	1496	v. Crandell	406
663	v. Mather	1082	v. Smith	1951	v. Crose	276, 711, 987,
612	v. Mtnal D. M. Co.	703	Union Nat'l Bank v. Mill-			1040, 1144, 1530,
586	v. Nelson	396	ing Co.	1675		1635, 1639, 1969,
2132	v. Pomeroy	1022	Union Pacific R. Co.			1974, 2265
8, 792	v. R. Co.	754	v. Botsford	1159, 2220	v. Curtis	1854
1944	v. Stephens	1299	v. Carr	1350	v. Darnand	2008
1890	v. Stevens	2349, 2354	v. Elliott	1750	v. Davis	949
3, 1487	v. Todd	2011, 2015, 2016	v. Jones	1244	v. Des Moines N. & R.	
	v. Trahne	1271	v. McDonald	2495	Co.	1350
	v. Tyler	2312	v. Novak	561, 688, 1719,	v. Dickinson	769, 772, 773,
	v. Ulmer	1078		1951		774, 923, 1021,
	Tyler's Estate	1512	v. O'Brien	779		1022, 1028
2513	Tylden v. Bullen	1313	v. Porter	2509	v. Doebler	14, 318, 977,
218	Tynan v. Paschal	1736	v. Reed	1651, 1652		1198, 1200, 1205,
1807	Tyner v. State	276, 2091	v. Reese	1007		2104
2241	Tyree v. Magness	1192, 1194,	v. Yates	6, 1693, 1696	v. Dow	1854
1137		1195	Union R. & T. Co.		v. Dumas	1674
150	Tyrrell v. Painton	2503	v. Shacklet	1273	v. Dunbar	1236
1651	Tyrwhite v. Kynaston	1644	Union R. T. & S. T. Co. v.		v. Edwards	2286
1312	Tyrwhitt v. Wynne	21	Moore	1908	v. Eighteen	952
2141	Tyson v. Chestnut	1704	Union Sheet M. W. v.		v. Farrington	2364
794			Dodge	1960	v. Fanikner	688
2306			Union S. N. Bank v. Sim-		v. Flemming	291, 2273
2354			mons	1029	v. Ford	1042
1213			Union Stock Y. Co. v.		v. French	1371
1958,			Conover	2507	v. Fries	367, 652, 1909,
2296			Union Water Co. v. Crary	1873		2038, 2354
2304	Udderzook v. Com.	792, 1977,	Unis v. Charlton's Adm'r	1026,	v. German	2495
1566,		2566		1028,	v. Gibert	867, 1286, 1641,
1567	Ueland v. Dealy	18	United B. Mnt. Aid Soc.	1031		2079, 2081
2355	Ugda v. R. Co.	2509	v. O'Hara	568	v. Glassware	1684
2066	Uhle v. Walters	2464	United States v. Addatte	609	v. Graff	824, 843, 845,
0, 771	Uhl v. Com.	923, 1985	v. Amedy	2163,		849, 851, 852,
1536	Uhler v. Adams	334		2525		1182
1225	Uihlein v. Matthews	2463	v. American Bell		v. Gray	1620
1388	Ullman v. Babcock	702	Tei. Co.	2498	v. Griego	398, 2081
68	Ulmer v. State	2056	v. Angeli	1404	v. Groesbeck	398
2184	Ulrich v. Litchfield	2470	v. Babcock	95, 1073, 1182,	v. Grundy	2222
1511	v. McConaughy	1389, 1847		2056, 2200	v. Gnitean	106, 232, 682,
1778	v. People	437, 460, 782,	v. Ball	2100		987, 1041, 1160,
1, 247		830	v. Bank of U. S.	1681		1976, 1984, 2214,
1862	v. Ulrich	2526	v. Bassett	2086, 2239		2337, 2372
2296	Ulrick v. Dakota L. & T.		v. Battiste	2559	v. Gnmn	2572
2596	Co.	2354			v. Hanway	1854
1060	Underhill v. Dnrham	1193, 1633				

TABLE OF CASES.

UNI

	Section		Section		Section
United States v. Harris		United States v. One Case		United States Express Co.	
D. C.	682	of Hair Pencils	18, 586	v. Henderson	2259
5 Utah	2086	v. Ortiz	704, 797,	v. Hutchins	1013, 1014
v. Holmes		2016, 2017		United States Fidelity &	
1 Cliff.	58, 228, 232,	v. Pagliano	790	G. Co. v. Dampkib-	1263
	233, 568, 1028,	v. Palmer	2163, 2566	United States Ins. Co. v.	
	1040, 1041,	v. Peay	398	Wright	321
	1124, 1845	v. Percheman	1239, 1677,	United States Life Ins. Co.	
1 Wall. Jr.	1836		1680	v. Kleigast	1073,
v. Holtaciaw	570, 705	v. Porter	1212		1671
v. Horn	2059	v. Randall	278	v. Ross	1391, 1387
v. Howe	2203	v. Reed	457	v. Vocke	1073, 1671
v. Hunter	2200, 2267	v. Reid	6, 380, 2354	United States Mail Line	
v. Hutchings	2566	v. Reyburn	1212, 1269	Co. v. Mfg. Co.	571
v. Hutton	1859	v. Reynolds	2573	United States Mutnal Acc.	
v. Insurgents	1854		1395, 1398,	Ass'n v. Kittcnring	2442
v. James	2255, 2281	v. Rio Grande D. & I.	1405	United States Nat'l Bank	
v. Johns	1677, 1680, 1684	Co.	2580	v. Venner	2529
v. Jones		v. Ross	41	United States Sugar Refin.	
10 Fed.	2016	v. Rondenhus	301, 318	v. Allis Co.	290
2 Wheeler	523	v. Sacramento	2595	Universities v. Richardson	1684
v. Jourdine	1620	v. Saline Bank	2258	University of Illinois v.	
v. Kershaw	3059, 3060	v. Schindler	285, 953,	Spalding	2000, 2016,
v. Kessier	2056		1022		2018
v. Kimball	852, 2270	v. Schneider	1441	Unsell v. State	347, 851
v. King	1747	v. Schow	2086	Unthank v. Turnpike Co.	1248
v. Kirkwood	842, 852, 2363	v. Seufert B. Co.	1168	Upton v. Raiford	1779
v. Klein	1354	v. Shriver	2286	Upton v. People	232, 235, 1938
v. Lambell	1195, 1267	v. Simpson	2086	v. Winchester	406
v. Larned	2005	v. Six Lots of Ground	2375	v. Winchester	392
v. Lead Co.	2264	v. Smith		Ury v. Houston	1225
v. Lee	2313	4 Day	787, 2275, 2279	Usener v. State	1350
v. Lee Hnen	936, 2273,	5 Utah	398	Ushers v. Pride	1674, 2167
	2498	v. Smith and Ogden	2201,	Uthermoblen v. Boggs	
v. Lee Seick	2066		2371	R. M. & M. Co.	507
v. Lefler	529	v. Snyder	321	Uxbridge v. Staveland	2256
v. Lew Poy Dew	1674, 1678	v. Stevens	78		
v. Lodge	1195	v. Stewart	1854		
v. Long	1212	v. Stone	824, 830, 861,		
v. Lynn	1212		865		
v. Lyon	1909	v. Sutter	1239		
v. McCann	1944	v. Tilden	2211		
v. McCarthy	2271, 2282	v. Troax	2056		
v. McGlue	672	v. Trumbull	2372, 2566		
v. McMasters	18	v. Twenty-Eight			
v. McMillan	2008	Packages	2257		
v. McRae	2256, 2258	v. Vanickle	923, 987, 1985		
v. Macomb	1362, 1375,	v. Venable C. Co.	1530		
	1398, 2098, 2105	v. Warner	1620		
v. Marks	1674	v. Wary	1195		
v. Mathias	2008	v. Watkins	747		
v. Miles	2086	v. Whitaker	988		
v. Mitchell		v. White	923, 1985, 2098		
2 Dall.	194	v. Wiggins	1239, 1677, 1680		
2 Wash. C. C.	1641,	v. Williams	2071, 2072,		
	1674, 2125		2081		
3 Wash. C. C.	1641,	v. Winchester	4, 1202		
	1674	v. Wood			
Wharton's St. Tr.	2038	14 Pet.	342, 2043		
v. Moses	318, 2374	3 Wash. C. C.	2098		
v. Mullaney	2018, 2194,	v. Woods	1270		
	2276	v. Zunker	1398		
v. Mulvaney	2071	United States Bank v.			
v. Muaser	398	Burson	1549		
v. National Lead		United States Brewing			
Co.	1959	Co. v. Rnddy	278, 907		
v. Neverson	108, 987, 1127	United States Express			
v. Nott	826, 859, 865	Co. v. Donohoe	2056, 2058		
v. Old Settlers	1350				

Section	Section	Section	Section
2259	Vananken v. Hornbeck 1198	Van Skilke v. Potter 1693	Vernon v. Kirk 1511
3, 1014	Van Bokkelen v. Bordell 987	Van Straaten v. People 2513	v. Tacker 1106, 1109, 1612
1263	Van Buren v. State 833	Van Syckel v. Dalrymple 2435	Vernon Irrig. Co. v. Los Angeles 1587
321	Van Henskirk v. Mulock 1684	Van Syoc v. State 2089	Vernon S. R. Co. v. Savannah 1640
1073, 1671, 1387, 3, 1671	Vance v. Campbell v. Com. 6	Van Velsor v. Hingham 2143	Verran v. Baird 451, 792
571	v. Kohlberg 1219, 1225, 1275	Van Winkle v. Crowell v. R. Co. 2319	Verry v. Watkins 210
2442	v. Reardon 1644, 2108	Van Worden v. Winslow 688	Versan v. McGregor 2135
2529	v. Schnyler 2168	Van Wyck v. McIntosh 1005, 2015, 2016	Viberg v. State 987
290, 1684	v. Smith 1086	Van Wycklen v. Brooklyn 1918, 1921, 1978	Viearo v. Com. 1978
2016, 2018, 47, 851, 1248, 1779, 5, 1938, 406, 392, 1225, 1350, 4, 2167, 507, 2256	56 Ark. 1841 70 Ark. 519, 1270 v. Vance 8 Greenl. 2069 2 Metc. 1108, 1109 Vance v. State 987, 2277 Van Cleef v. Fleet 1670 Van Cort v. Van Cort 2235 Van Cortlandt v. Tozer 1225, 1651 Vanderberg's Petition 1350 Vandercreek v. O'Connor 716 Vander Donckt v. Thelusion 564 Vandergriff v. Piercy 1195, 1225 Vanderhoven v. Romaine 2437 Vanderpoel v. Gorman 2536 Vanderslice v. Philadelphia 463 Van Derveer v. Sutphin 74, 406 Vandervort v. Fouse 285 Van Dervort v. North-western F. Co. 1651 Vandervoort v. Thompson 1681 Vanderwerken v. Glenn 1074 Van Deusen v. Newcomer v. Turner 1567 Vandevanter v. State 2497 Vandewall v. Tyrrell 1635 Vandine v. Burpee 571, 1943 Van Dyne v. Thayre 1257 Vandyke v. R. Co. 1531 v. Thompson 1514 Van Dyne v. Thayre 1313 Vane v. Evanston 1164, 1168 Vane's Case 2239 Van Etten v. Howell 2444 Van Eyck v. People 1079 Van Gunden v. V. C. & I. Co. 2143 Van Horn v. Smith 2124 Van Huss v. Rainbolt 1880, 1938 Vankoughnet v. Denison 1584, 1665 Van Lehn v. Morse 2433 Van Meter v. People 2595 Vann v. Edwards 2518 Van Ness v. Bank of U. S. v. Hadsell 1679, 1199 Van Nostrand v. Board 2474 Van Omeron v. Dowick 1684 Van Sandan v. Turner 2578 Van Sickle v. Brown 581 v. Gibson 1486 v. People 2016 Vansickle v. Shenk 64, 1086	Varidon v. Vardon 1061 Varicas v. French 1404 Varick v. Briggs v. Jackson 1082, 1257, 901 Varnedoe v. State 784 Varner v. Johnston 1273 Vase's Case 1442, 1445, 1448 Vasse v. Mifflin 1201, 1208 Vastbinder v. Metcalf 736 Vates v. Cornelius 569 Vaughan v. McCarthy v. Martin v. Parker v. Phebe v. R. Co. 735, 759, 2110, 1605 3 H. & N. 456 63 N. C. 93 v. State 58 Ark. 16, 1398, 1404, 1405, 2059, 2098 3 Sm. & M. 457 v. Worrall 586 Vaughan's Case 838 Vaughn v. Clarkson v. Griffith v. Perrine v. State 1681, 1684, 987 130 Ala. 293, 2155 88 Ga. 111 Vaughtou v. R. Co. 4, 285 Vanlx v. Merriwether 1195 Vausant v. Runyon 2442 Vanx Peerage Case 1670, 1674 Vawter v. Hultz 64, 581 Veck v. Holt 1213 Vedder v. Wilkins 1196 Veerhnsen v. R. Co. 1951 Vega S. S. Co. v. Consol. Elev. Co. 1354 Veiths v. Hagge 1549, 2118 Velott v. Lewis 1408 Velten v. Carmack 2433 Venable v. R. Co. 1625 Venafra v. Johnson 1349 Vent v. Pacey 2294 Venzke v. Venzke 2046 Verdier v. Verdier 747 Verdin v. Wray 398 Vergin v. Saginaw 290 Verholf v. Van Honwen-leugen 1644 Vermillion Co. v. Vermillion 18, 571, 682	Vernon v. Kirk 1106, 1109, 1612 Vernon Irrig. Co. v. Los Angeles 1587 Vernon S. R. Co. v. Savannah 1640 Verran v. Baird 451, 792 Verry v. Watkins 210 Versan v. McGregor 2135 Viberg v. State 987 Viearo v. Com. 1978 Vicary v. Farthing 1644, 2352 Vick v. Whitfield 73, 209 Vickers v. People 1612, 1842 Vickery v. Benson 1655 Vickroy v. McKnight 1225, 1226, 1651 v. Skelley 704, 1678, 1991 Vicksburg & M. R. Co. v. O'Brien 736, 738, 747, 1078, 1749, 1750 v. Putnam 1698, 2551 Vidal v. Duplantier 1239 Viellesse v. Green Bay 438, 1158 Vietti v. Nesbitt 439 Vigns v. O'Bannon 1174 Vilas v. Downas v. Reynolds 463, 791 Viles v. Moulton 11 Vt. 1195 13 Vt. 1709 v. Waltham 1714, 1727 Ville de Varsovie, The 520 Villere v. Armstrong 1312 Villiers v. Villiers 1193, 1233, 1268 Vinal v. Burrill 1235 v. Gilmau 736, 754 v. Green 1521, 1561 Vincent v. Cole 1179, 2447 v. Dixon 406 v. State 1821 Vincent's Appeal 2086 Viney v. Barsa 318 Vining v. Baker 2515 Vinton v. Peck 2005, 2008, 2012, 2016, 2024, 2027 Violet v. Rose 702 Violette v. Rice 2463 Virden v. Dwyer 2235 Virginia C. C. Co. v. Kirven 1072 Virginia Coal & I. Co. v. Keystone C. & I. Co. 2105 Virginia & T. R. Co. v. Henry 1640 Vischer v. R. Co. 2109 Viser v. Bertrand 2067, 2069 Visher v. Webster 8 Cal. 1082 13 Cal. 1086 Vivian's Appeal 1710 Vizard v. Moody 1244 Voelkel v. Supreme Tent 1073 Vogel v. Gruaz 2296, 2374 v. Osborne 1066, 1067 Vogely v. Bloom 1460

TABLE OF CASES.

VOG

	Section		Section		Section
Voght v. State	1354	Wagner v. County Com'rs	1861	Walker v. Kendall	2110
Vogt v. Baldwin	1051	v. Haak	1079	v. Kennison	2549
Volant v. Soyler	2307, 2322	v. Jacoby	2027	v. McMillan	783
Volker v. Blank	1521	v. Supreme Lodge	1244	v. Meetze	1362, 1729
Volusia Co. Bank v. Bigelow	749, 753, 944, 1558, 1779, 1858	Wagoner v. Ruple	2008, 2018	v. Moore	1609, 1614
Von Mumm v. Vittemann	2540	v. Terr.	1442, 1445	v. Newhouse	1225
Von Pollnitz v. State	1750	Wagstaff v. Wilson	1063	v. O'Connell	1750
Von Sachs v. Kretz	1083, 1230	Walling v. Toll	2117	v. Ontario	1154
Von Storch v. Griffin	77	Wain v. Workers	2454	v. R. Co.	
Von Tobel v. Stetson & P. M. Co.	912	Wait v. Krewson	1541	104 Mich.	1969, 1977
Voorhies v. Hennessy	2437	v. Pomeroy	2419	71 N. H.	1807
Vosburg v. Putney		Waite v. High	1078, 1195, 1213	v. Rogers	681
78 Wis.	888	v. Teeters	1415	v. Sanborn	2237, 2336, 2341
86 Wis.	1976	Walshman v. Weaver	73, 74	v. Sawyer	587
Vosburgh v. Thayer	1538, 1552	Wake v. Leak	586	v. State	
Vose v. Mandy	2158	Wakefield v. Day	1168, 1287, 2105	49 Ala.	276
Voss v. Bender	1911	v. Ross	1817	52 Ala.	1362, 1439
Vowles v. Young	278, 1481, 1486, 1489, 1495, 2235	Wakefield's Case	2199, 2202	58 Ala.	1977
Vrooman v. King	1082, 1085	Wakelin v. London & S. W. R. Co.	2507, 2510	97 Ala.	492, 495
Vye v. Alexander	278, 697, 1185, 2016	v. Walthal	2047	107 Ala.	1509
Vyn v. Keppel	1085	Wakeman v. Marquand	1913, 2118	134 Ala.	507
		v. Smith	2250	Aia. 35 So.	1442
		Walbridge v. Kennison	1062	39 Ark.	1445
		v. Knipper	1409	6 Blackf.	64, 153, 923, 927, 987, 1417
		Walburn v. Terr.	198	34 Fla.	820
		Walcott v. Gibbs	2167	116 Ga.	2276
		v. Heath	1560	102 Ind.	1821
		v. Keith	1779	138 Ind.	851
		v. Kimball	1084	7 Tex. App.	2265
		Waldele v. P. Co.	1362, 1431, 1749	v. Steele	2008
		Walden v. Canfield	2576	v. Stilson	719
		v. Finch	1022, 1028, 1031	v. Walker	
		v. Grant	1351, 1878	34 Ala.	18, 1958
		v. Sherburne	1078, 2118	6 Coldw.	1225, 1226
		Waldheim v. Miller	2485	14 Ga.	1874, 1898, 1938
		Waldo v. Russell	1239, 1312	3 Ill.	1303
		v. Spencer	1664	117 Ia.	1869
		Waldron v. Priest	1539, 1536	67 Pa.	2141
		v. Turpin	2185	18 S. & R.	1388
		v. Tuttle		v. Westfield	458
		3 N. H.	2534	v. Wildman	2294, 2296, 2317
		4 N. H.	1481, 1484, 1778, 2138, 2141	v. Wilsher	1061, 1062
		v. Waldron	21	v. Wingfield	1219, 1487, 1642
		v. Ward	1911, 2290, 2327	v. Witter	2555
		Waldrop v. State	2086	Walker's Case	218, 347
		Wales v. Wales	398	Walkerton v. Erdman	1388
		Walker v. Bank	1875	Walkley v. Clarke	1779, 2103
		v. Barron	92, 379	Walkup v. Com.	1408
		v. Bayers	2139	v. Pratt	1081, 1502
		v. Beauchamp	1483	Wall v. Beedy	1779
		v. Boston	714, 720, 1943	v. Dimitt	1758
		v. Brantner	1461	v. Dovey	1540
		v. Broadstock	1458, 1458	v. Williams	18
		v. Com.	1839	Wallace v. Collins	1267
		v. Copley	2207	v. Cook	1641
		v. Curtis	1230, 1525	v. Finch	714
		v. Dnnspangh	770, 1257	v. Goodall	71
		v. Ebert	2408, 2415	v. Grizzard	1126, 1127, 1131
		v. Fields	716	v. Harris	285
		v. Fletcher	1862	v. Oil Co.	663, 681
		v. Forbes	1271	v. R. Co.	949, 1040, 1896
		v. Griffith	1350	v. Schaub	720
		v. Hunter	1303, 2749	v. Small	1062
				v. Souther	1051

W.

Section
2110
2549
783
62, 1739
09, 1614
1225
1750
1154
69, 1977
1807
681
36, 2341
587
278
62, 1439
1977
492, 495
1509
46, 2497
507
1442
1445
33, 923,
37, 1417
620
2276
1621
851
2265
2008
719
8, 1958
25, 1226
4, 1898,
1938
1303
1669
2141
1388
458
6, 2296,
2317
1, 1062
9, 1487,
1642
2555
16, 347
1388
9, 2103
1408
1, 1502
1779
1758
1540
18
1267
1641
714
71
7, 1121
285
63, 681
0, 1896
720
1062
1051

Section	Case Name	Section
352, 987, 2271, 2276, 2277	Wallace v. State	
1194	v. Tumlin	
247, 581	v. U. S.	
1938	v. Whitman	
457	v. Wren	
1389	Wallace M. & Co. v. Lober	
2529	Wallbridge v. Jones	
1213, 1681	Waller v. Cralle	
1194,	v. School District	
1195	v. State	
2103	Walling v. Com.	
1725	v. Morgan Co.	
1530	v. State	
1842	Wallingford v. Tel. Co.	
1582	Wallingford & Oxford v. Abbott Walkelin	
1837	Wallis v. Beauchamp	
1186	v. Delancey	1309, 1312, 1513
2410	v. Littell	
406	v. Mease	
1858	v. Murray	
2257	v. Portland	
692	v. White	
2220	Wallop, ex p.	
1878	Walls v. Atcheson	
2464	v. Bailey	
1658, 2048	Walmsley v. Read	
1770	Walmsley v. Robinson	
2474	Walpole v. Cholmondeley	
1271	v. Ewer	
68	Walrod v. Webster Co.	
1676,	Walrond v. Van Moses	
2165		
1067, 1560	Walser v. Wear	
18, 774	Walsh v. Agnew	
1951, 1976	v. Ins. Co.	
1680	v. Kattenburgh	
232, 238, 1157	v. People	
664	v. R. Co.	
1384	v. Rogers	
2220	v. Sayre	
1458	v. Wheelwright	
2319	Walsham v. Stalton	
2294	Walsingham v. Goodricke	
2104	Walson v. Moore	
1362, 1398, 1431	Walston v. Com.	
1547, 1550	Walt v. Walsh	
1257	Walter v. Bollman	
	v. Brown	
1388	Walterhouse v. Walterhouse	
363	Walters v. People	
7	Walthall v. Walthall	
1073	Waltber v. Ins. Co.	
1082	Walthol v. Johnson	
1320, 1513	Walton v. Conlson	
1730	v. Green	
1257, 1664	v. Hale	
529	v. Shelly	
	v. State	
205,	Ark., 75 S. W.	
2311		
150, 2277	41 Tex. Cr.	
2032	Wambagh v. Schenck	
1267	Wambold v. Vick	

Section	Case Name	Section
1258	Wandless v. Cawthorne	
18	Wanamaker v. Megraw	
2220	Wanek v. Winona	
1065	Wangner v. Grimm	
2416	Wanner v. Lewis	
1354	Wantlan v. State	
73, 209	Waples v. Houston	
285, 291, 1858	Ward v. App. Ct.	
1234	v. Beals	
2354	v. Blackwood	
68, 528	v. Brown	
2525	v. Cheney	
613	v. Colyhan	
406	v. Dick	
1960, 2241, 2245	v. Dickson	
1778	v. Edge	
	v. Miller	
2020	7 Gray	
1225, 1651	15 Pick.	
1705	v. Garmons	
2576	v. Henry	
64, 256, 1623	v. Herndon	
571, 1951	v. Kilpatrick	
1548, 1557	v. Leitch	
1239	v. Moorey	
2552	v. Odell Mfg. Co.	
2270	v. People	
1476	v. Pomfret	
	v. R. Co.	
19 S. C.		19 1
53 S. C.		1944
664, 716, 720	v. Reynolds	
1951	v. Salisbury	
1085, 2450	v. Saunders	
2222, 2223	v. Sharp	
1960	v. Shirley	
	v. State	
28 Ala.		923, 1985
50 Ala.		836
70 Ark.		2339
8 Blackf.		1448, 2098, 2349
		1877
112 Ga.		2261, 2271
2 Mo.		2444
	v. Stont	
	v. Sykes	1404
	v. Thompson	2349
	v. Ward	1013
	v. Wells	1312
	v. Wilcox	1304, 2525
	v. Young	905
	Ward's Estate	1541
	Ward v. Warde	2317
	Wardell v. Fermour	1290, 1313
	Warden v. R. Co.	461
	Warder v. Fisher	1018, 1048
	Wardlaw v. Hammond	1215
	Ware v. Allen	2410
	v. Brookhouse	1567, 1779
	v. Morgan	1213, 1245
	v. State	
	96 Ga.	1072
	35 N. J. L.	2235
	v. Ware	689, 1021, 1026, 1028, 1041, 1124, 1690, 1936
	Ware Cattle Co. v. Anderson	457
	Warener v. Kingsmill	1681

Section	Case Name	Section
1106	Warfield v. R. Co.	
1267	Warfield's Will	
1313	Warner v. Bowles	
1073	v. Tel. Co.	
1083, 1133, 1779	v. Warren	
1676	Wark v. Willard	
1615	Warlick v. Peterson	
167, 1151, 1154	v. White	
2032	Warner v. Harret	
1350	v. Beers	
1208	v. Campbell	
4, 1680, 2064, 2086, 2088, 2505, 2573	v. Com.	
643	v. Dyett	
15, 1651, 1676, 1871	v. Hardy	
	v. R. Co.	
65 96	44 N. Y.	
1290, 1300,	31 Oh. St.	
1651		
1821	v. State	
64, 1104	v. Warner	
1141	v. Willey	
694, 2529	Warren v. Anderson	
987	v. Com.	
1681	v. Flagg	
916	v. Gabriel	
1476	v. Greenville	
2456	v. Lynch	
1240	v. McDonald	
529	v. Merry	
1362, 1368, 2098	v. Nichols	
2349	v. Spencer Water Co.	
833, 837	v. State	
95, 2152	v. Warren	
561	v. Water Co.	
463	v. Wheeler	
283, 1722	v. Wright	
1381	v. Younger	
1661, 1858	Warriner v. Giles	
406	Warwick v. Fonlkes	
607	v. Warwick	
2081	Warwickshire Case	
1053, 1073, 1671	Wasey v. Ins. Co.	
1078	Wash v. Cary	
1700	Washburn v. Cuddihy	
506	v. People	
463, 1168, 1800, 2570	v. R. Co.	
64, 2067	v. Washburn	
1503	Washington v. Bank	
2336	v. Bedford	
938	v. Cole	
	v. State	
1021, 1045	63 Ala.	
2242	17 Tex. App.	
1591	Washington Bank v. Prescott	
283, 437	Washington C. & A. T. v. Case	
1678	Washington Co. v. R. Co.	
1126, 1127	Washington Fire Ins. Co. v. Davison	
1873	Washington Ice Co. v. Bradley	
1704, 1943	v. Webster	
2507, 2552	Washington & G. R. Co. v. Harmon's Adm'r	

TABLE OF CASES.

WAS

	Section		Section		Section
Washington & G. R. Co. v.		Watson v. Simpson	1727	Wehr v. Smith	
McLane	1730	v. St. P. C. R. Co.	2109	4 Bing. N. C.	343, 406
Wason v. Barnham	1092	v. State	1195, 1306	1 C. & P.	2296
v. Walter	2375	v. Tindal	1651	v. St. Lawrence	1312
Wass v. Stephens	2554	v. Twombly	963, 1005	v. State	
Wassels v. State	2595	v. Walker	743, 749, 1271,	100 Ala.	1841, 2100
Wast v. R. Co.	949		2163	Ala., 34 So.	1254
Waterbury v. Sturtevant	1069	v. Watson	1347	73 Miss.	390, 2497
v. Waterbury T. Co.	283, 900	Watt v. Jones	2573	29 Oh. St.	967, 1106,
Waterford v. Hensley	2034	v. Kilburn	1320, 1513		1108, 1873
Waterhouse v. Schiltz B. Co.	352	v. People	1977	v. Wilcher	1306, 2141
Waterman v. Davis	1206	Wattles v. Conner	1513	Webber v. Eastern	
v. Raymond	1680	Watts v. Fraser	376, 1234, 2150	R. Co.	1947
v. Whitney	228, 233, 1736,	v. Howard	1523	v. Davis	2529, 2535
	1782, 1790	v. Lawson	1062	v. Hlanke	923, 928, 1612,
Waters v. Bellamy	2061	v. Owens	1573, 2063		1985
v. Jones	73	v. People	2513	v. Jackson	906
v. Waters	699, 754, 758,	v. Sawyer	754, 763	Webber v. Com.	2281
	1669, 1936, 1951, 2098	v. Smith	529, 2222	v. Kansas City C. R.	
v. State	2575	Waugh v. Fielding	1971	Co.	2496
Waters' Heire v. Harrison	1379	Wau-kon-chaw-neck-kaw		v. St. P. C. R. Co.	1722
Waterson v. Seat	1377	v. U. S.	1021	Webber Wagon Co. v. Keil	283
Watertown v. Cady	1350	Wax's Estate	889, 1938,	Webster v. Burke	2054
Waterville v. Hughan	1212		2315	v. Calden	1666
Watkins v. Holman	1872, 1684	Way v. Butterworth	2363	v. Clark	736, 745, 747, 746
v. Nash	2409	v. Cross	1556	v. Harris	1631, 2143
v. Paine	1234	v. Harriman	608	v. Hastings	1350
v. Rist	1673	Waybright v. State	276	v. Lee	1890, 2222
v. Smith	1573	Wayland v. Ware	1335, 1641,	v. Little Rock	1350
v. State	928		1676	v. Lumber Co.	1552
v. U. S.	1387, 1396, 1893	Wayman v. Hilliard	1062	v. Mann	1410
v. Wallace	561	Waymire v. State	1219	v. Paul	1456
Watmore v. Dickinson	1962	Weatherford M. W. &	1890	v. Rees	1684
Watris v. Trendall	581, 1944	N. R. Co. v. Duncan	290, 379	v. Smith	1779
Watrous v. Cunningham		Weatherhead v. Sewell	1040,	v. Vickers	529
65 Cal.	1521		1215, 1656	v. Yorty	229, 230, 1302,
71 Cal.	1538, 1552	Weatherby v. Brown	1387		1303
v. McGrew	1573, 2144	Weathers v. Barkdale	923, 987	Webster Mfg. Co. v. Mnl-	
Watry v. Ferber	62, 75, 200, 212	Weaver v. B. & O. R. Co.	905	vanny	571
Watson v. Adams	2531	v. Bronley	739	Wedgwood's Case	1644, 2529
v. Anderson		v. Cone	561	Weed v. People	106, 216
11 Ala.	770	v. Cryer	2063	v. Weed	2450
13 Ala.	1928	v. Leiman	1498, 1644	Weeks, re	2375
v. Billings	1676	v. Meath	2280	v. Argent	2312, 2321
v. Bissell	1779	v. Pratt	1640	v. Hall	1111
v. Brewster	1493, 1503	v. R. Co.	481	v. Lyndon	416, 457, 1951
v. Cheshlre	581	v. Robinett	1339	v. McBeth	1737
v. Com.	2276	v. State		v. McNulty	289, 2098
v. Coulson	2141	77 Ala.	1072	v. Maillardet	2410
v. Cowles	969	43 Tex. Cr.	273, 1073	v. Smith	1350
v. Cresap	570	v. Traylor	953	v. Sparke	1584, 1587, 1591,
v. England	2531	v. Whilden	2003, 2008		1623
v. Gilday	1388, 2098	Webb v. Atkinson	253, 1072	Weems v. Weems	1938
v. Ins. Co.	913	v. Danforth	529	Weems' Lessee v. Disney	1564
v. King		v. Den	1354	Weguelin v. Weguelin	1414,
3 C. B.	1063	v. Drake	1729		1415
4 Camp.	1641, 1672	v. Dye	1302, 1511	Wehrkamp v. Willet	987, 1985
1 Stark	158, 2531	v. East	2268	Weidler v. Farmers'	
v. Little	1666	v. Feathers' Est.	770	Bank	38, 40, 1871
v. Lyons	613	v. Holt	1676	Weldman v. Kohr	1082
v. Miller	760	v. Kelsey	2578	v. Symes	2018
v. Mining Co.	1963	v. Page	2203	Weldner v. Phillips	392
v. Moore	74, 406	v. Petts	1364	Weigand v. Refining Co.	2494
v. R. Co.		v. Plummer	2430	Weigel v. Weigel	2067
53 Minn.	1976	v. Powers	371	Weigel's Succession	2067
76 Minn.	1387, 2103	v. R. Co.	456	Weightnovel v. State	278, 1072,
57 Wis.	463, 1943	v. Richardson	1502, 1778		1722, 1725
v. Richardson	95, 1492, 1805			Weil v. Silverstone	913, 1389
v. Roode	1202			Weller v. Monroe Co.	1188

TABLE OF CASES.

Section	Section	Section	Section
343, 406	Weill v. Kenfield 1350	Wells v. Stevens 2450	West Jersey Traction Co. v. Board 1677, 1680
3286	Weinhurg v. Sompf 2334	v. Tryon 1651	West Newbury v. Chase 714
1312	Weinkie v. R. Co. 1750	v. Tucker 2237	West Pub. Co. v. Law- yers' Coop. P. Co. 371, 460,
841, 2100	Weinrich v. Porter 1779	v. Walker 1293	1230
1254	Weir v. Hale 1195	v. Wells 1736	1750
390, 3497	v. Metise 1031, 1037	v. Wilson 1225, 1651	Westall v. Osborne 39
967, 1106,	Weis v. Tierna. 1278	Welman, re 1350	Westbrook v. State 406
108, 1873	Weisbrod v. H. Co. 1186	Weibach I. G. L. Co. v. 2218	Westfield v. Scripps 1890
306, 2141	Weissham v. Hoeker 2437	New Sunlight I. Co. 2507	Westerman v. Foster 7, 2245
1947	Weisenberg v. Appleton 252	Welsh v. Argyle 1518, 1521,	Western Assur. Co. v. Mohlman Co. 1693,
3529, 3535	Weiser v. Heintzman 6	v. Barrett 1522, 1673	1696
928, 1612,	Weitman v. Thiot 2141	v. State 1135	v. Ray 763
1985	Welch v. Abbot 1028	96 Ala. 1476	Western Coal & M. Co. v. Berberich 192', 1951
906	v. Com. 760	Nebr., 62 N. W. 770,	Western Gas C. Co. v. Danner 791
2281	v. Greene 1913, 1978	1135	Western Home Ins. Co. v. Richardson 1943
2496	v. R. Co. 1913, 1978	Wendell v. Abbott 1225, 1651,	Western Loan & S. Co. v. Walsman 1347
1722	178 Mass. 1976	v. Safford 1710	Western Mfg. Co. v. Rogers 2435
283	182 Mass. 1605	Wendit v. R. Co. 1890	Western Maryland R. Co. v. Mauro 1462
2054	v. Ricker 377, 393, 1058	Wenegar v. Bollenbach 1067	Western R. of Alabama v. Arnett 1951
1666	v. Sackett 2408	Wenner v. Thornton 1350	Western Stone Co. v. Whalen 249
747, 748	v. State 104 Ind. 276, 1021,	Wenning v. Teeple 2506	Western Twine Co. v. Wright 95, 1236,
651, 2143	1041	Wentworth v. Crawford 1890	2154
1350	Tex. Cr., 46 S. W. 1038	v. Lloyd 2322	Western Union T. Co. v. Atl. & Pac. S. T. Co. 1674
890, 2222	Tex. Cr., 60 S. W. 150	v. Head 2475	v. Bates 1236
1350	v. Stipe 770, 1938	Werbiskie v. McManus 1269,	v. Blance 1236
1552	v. Welch 18 Ala. 2067	1552	v. Fatman 1236
1410	9 Rich. 1502	1719	v. Hopkins 1236
1456	Welcome v. Batchelder 736	882, 1974	v. Morris 676
1684	Weld v. Boston 1784	Wertheim v. Contin. R. & T. Co. 2300	Western & A. R. Co. v. Beason 1750
1779	v. Brooks 1392	Wertz v. May 809, 1108,	v. Busey 1407, 1415
529	Weiden v. Buck 585	1387	v. Calhoun 463
230, 1302,	Welder v. Carroll 1570	1333	v. Cox 1698, 1807
1303	Weldon v. Burch 2279	Wescott v. Wescott 52 Ala. 782, 1750, 1737	v. Denmead 2206
571	v. State 1135, 1138,	Werner v. R. Co. 58, 63, 246, 247	v. Hyer 2546
644, 2329	1138, 1821	West v. Bank 1623	v. Morrison 288
106, 216	Welland v. Middletown 1640	v. Beck 2526	v. Roberson 2573
2450	Welland Canal Co. v. Hathaway 1957	v. Druff 205	v. Stafford 688, 791
2375	Wellar v. People 918, 2079, 2080	v. Lynch 987	Westfeldt v. Adams 1568, 1588
1312, 2321	Wellcome, re 2498	v. Price 1778	Westfield v. Warren 1382, 1420,
1111	Wellford v. Eakin 1312, 1320	v. R. Co. 463	1503
457, 1951	Wellington v. R. Co. 1672	v. Smith 1062, 2556	Westfield Cigar Co. v. Ins. Co. 885, 1246
1737	Wellman v. Jones 748	v. State 76 Ala. 1476	Westinghouse Co. v. Tilden 1234
389, 2098	Wells, re 1302	42 Fla. 563	Westmacott v. Westmacott 1645
2410	v. Adams 1195	22 N. J. L. 4, 1244,	Westmore v. Sheffield 1938
1350	v. Burbank 382	2006, 2008,	Westmoreland v. State 2100
587, 1591,	v. Compton 1066	2016, 2529	v. Westmoreland 2525
1623	v. Davis 875	1 Wis. 2084, 2085,	Weston v. Barnicoat 1729
1938	v. Eastman 1951	2086, 2191, 2192,	v. Foster 1951
1564	v. Fisher 2341	2201, 2205	v. Penniman 1647
1414,	v. Fletcher 2230	v. U. S. 832	Westover v. Ins. Co. 2329, 2387,
1415	v. Greas 2536, 2569	West Chester & P. R. Co. v. McElwee 283	2391
987, 1985	v. Hatch 1541, 1542, 1548	West Chester & W. P. R. Co. v. Chester Co. 1640	Westphal v. R. Co. v. Westphal 905
40, 1871	v. Ins. Co. 1402, 1409	West Chicago St. R. Co. v. Carr 1719, 1722	2046
1082	v. Iron Co. 770	v. Dougherty 966	
2018	v. Jackson I. M. Co. 1269	v. Fishman 684, 1974	
392	v. McMaster 2168, 2576	v. Kennedy-Cahill 437, 438	
2494	v. Martin 1225	v. Kennely 458, 1719	
2067	v. Mfg. Co. 1388	v. Lieserowitz 1011, 2498	
2067	v. Miller 1195	West Feliciana R. Co. v. Thornton 1275	
278, 1072,	v. State 131 Ala. 987	West Jersey T. Co., re 2169	
722, 1725	22 Ind. 1219		
913, 1389			
1188			

TABLE OF CASES.

WET

	Section		Section		Section
Wetherbee v. Dunn	1890, 2167, 2168	Whipp v. State	2239	White v. McQueen	2584
v. Ezekiel	2313	Whipple v. Preece	1890	v. Merrill	1060
v. Norris	654, 691	v. Rich	1041	v. Murrland	75, 133, 210
Wetherbee's Ex'rs v. Wetherbee's Heirs	672, 678, 688	v. Stevens	18	v. Old Dominion S. S. Co.	1062
Wetherell v. Hollister	792	v. Walpole	463, 716	v. Pease	2553
Wetherston v. Edgington	1298	v. Whipple	1943	v. Perry	610, 2235, 2336
Wetmore v. Mell	1750, 1770	Whitacre v. M'Ilhaney	1275	v. R. Co.	142 Ind. 1012, 1013
Weyand v. Stover	1350	Whitaker v. Arnold	1387	61 Wis.	2220
v. Tipton	1664	v. Brown	1083	v. Rosenthal	321
Weyman v. People	321	v. Campbell	1951	v. Ross	1730
Weymouth Case	1712	v. Hamilton	1938	v. Sayward	406
Whaley v. State	276	v. Marsh	1408	v. Smita	1778
Whann v. Hall	1320	v. Salishury	898, 899, 907, 1302	v. Smith	A. M. & O. 1898
Wharam v. Rontledge	2125	v. State	142, 276	46 N. Y.	1064
Wharram v. Wharram	1267	v. Wheeler	1086, 1779	v. State	103 Ala. 1974
Wharton v. State	3570	Whitbread v. Gurney	2294, 2319	111 Ala.	276, 293, 988, 1618
Wharton Peerage Case	1662	Whitcher v. Davis	2218	114 Ala.	923
Wheat v. Ragudale	1240	v. McLaughlin	1644	133 Ala.	561, 851
v. Smith	1351	v. Morey	2098	Ala., 34 So.	368, 1821
Wheatley v. State	2260	v. R. Co.	458	70 Ark.	836
v. Williams	2308	v. Shastnck	253	56 Ga.	784
Wheelden v. Wilson	581	Whitcomb v. Whiting	1077	100 Ga.	93, 1447, 1873
Wheeler v. Ahlers	93, 318	Whitcomb's Case	2195	3 Heisk.	858
v. Bnck	392	White, re	2528	31 Ind.	279
v. Campbell	617, 1777, 1971, 2336, 2433	v. Allen	762	53 Ind.	581
v. Hatch	736, 747	v. Bailey	1890, 1958	52 Miss.	497, 1840, 2056, 2270
v. Hill	2311, 2313	v. Ballou	1951	32 Tex. Cr.	499
v. Jenison	1013, 1404	v. Beal & F. G. Co.	321, 1640	v. Strother	1481
v. Le Marchant	2286, 2319, 2380, 2394	v. Bird	2306	v. Suffolk & C. R. Co.	2552
v. McCorrysten	1086	v. Bisbing	1373	v. Terr	105, 111, 247
v. McFerron	1404	v. Brown	1195	v. Tolliver	704, 2153
v. Moody	1239	v. Burney	1195	v. Tripp	93
v. Packer	392	v. Chonteau	1461	v. Tucker	581
v. R. Co.	1722	v. Clay	2110	v. U. S.	1633, 1639
v. Smith	1389, 1878	v. Clements	1213	v. Waney	6
v. Standley	2141	v. Collector	167	v. Wheaton	1086
v. State	112 Ga. 1442	v. Collins	1051	v. White	82 Cal. 770
158 Ind.	106, 2381	v. Com.	80 Ky. 142, 194, 195, 460, 1618	45 N. H.	2067
34 Oh. St.	233, 1671	80 Ky.	508, 1828	5 Rawle	2354
v. Styles	1066	96 Ky.	463	v. Whitney	1560
v. Thomas	905	v. Concord R.	2410	v. Wilkinson	750, 751, 1530
v. U. S.	505, 506, 507	v. Corlies	1066	v. Wilson	2454
v. West	1067	v. Creamer	1075	v. Wood	1304
v. Wheeler's Estate	607	v. Dowling	1075	v. Woodruff	1086
Wheeler & W. M. Co.	v. Barrett 1890	v. Dwinel	1651	White Deer Creek Impr. Co. v. Sassaman	1943
v. Bnckhont	2012	v. Englehard	1675	White Memorial Home v. Haeg	585
v. Tinsley	616	v. Everest	2222	White S. M. Co. v. Gordon	2008, 2015
Wheeling v. Trowhridge	613	v. Farris	2141	Whiteacres v. Thnrland	2250
Wheeler v. State	2079	v. Flemming	95	Whiteford v. Burckmyer	1005, 1028, 1272, 1675
Wheelock v. Godfrey	689, 2390	v. Fox	2089	Whitehall v. Smith	1195
Wheelton v. Hardisty	2494	v. Fnassell	986	Whitehead v. Scott	1249, 1770
Wheelwright v. Dyal	2464	v. Graves	233	Whitehous v. Bickford	1633, 2109, 2139
Wheian v. Lynch	1704	v. Harlow	2211	Whitelaws v. Sims	1938
Wheless v. Rhodes	1966	v. Helmes	2048	Whiteley v. China	201, 1943
Whereatt v. Ellis	1856	v. Hermann	463	v. King	1736
Whetston v. State	149	v. Herrman	1233		
Whetstone v. Bank	1966	v. Hiuton	1350		
Whicher v. Whicher	803	v. Holladay	1299, 1301		
Whigenant v. State	1966, 1977	v. Hutchings	1225, 2143		
Whilden v. Bank	1213, 1236	v. Kearney	2 La. An. 1680		
Whisler v. Whisler	1557	9 Roh.	1219		
Whiskey Cases	2280	v. Lisle	1592		
		v. McLean	1010		
		v. McPherson	561		

Section
2584
1060
133, 210
S.
1062
2553
135, 2336
1012, 1013
2220
321
1730
406
1778
1898
1064
1974
276, 293,
988, 1618
923
561, 851
568, 1821
836
784
447, 1873
858
279
581
197, 1840,
056, 2270
499
1481
2552
111, 247
704, 2153
93
581
633, 1639
6
1086
770
2067
2354
1560
751, 1530
2454
1304
1086
1943
585
on 2008,
2015
2250
1005,
1028,
272, 1675
1195
249, 1770
1633,
1109, 2139
1938
201, 1943
1736

Whitelocke v. Baker	1482, 1486
v. Musgrove	1513, 2529
Whiteman v. Whiteman	2477
Whitesell v. Crane	716, 1943
Whiteside v. Hoskins	1245
v. Lowney	2591
v. Watkins	1195
Whitfield v. Aland	761
v. Fausset	1177, 1189
v. Whitfield	
40 Miss.	1943
44 Miss.	2336
Whitford v. Tatin	1201, 1212
Whiting v. Barney	2295, 2312
v. Nicholl	2531
Whitley v. State	
38 Ga.	1438, 1445, 1447
78 Miss.	855
Whitley Grocery Co. v.	
Roach	1530
Whitman v. Freese	1969
v. Heneberry	2138
v. Morey	905, 917, 918, 1045, 2115
v. R. Co.	1951
v. Shaw	1573, 2139
v. State	
69 Ind.	133
80 Md.	2577
Whitmore v. Napier	1257
Whitmore v. Ainsworth	1969
v. Ball	1800
v. Bowman	1943
v. Johnson	2110
Whitnash v. George	1077
Whitner v. Beiknap	2575
Whitney v. Bacon	1567
v. Bailey	285
v. Boston	714, 1005
v. Bunnell	2008
v. Com.	855, 857
v. Fox	6
v. Gross	97, 199
v. Houghton	
125 Mass.	416
127 Mass.	1072
v. Pierce	2201
v. R. Co.	1976
v. Spatt	2572
v. State	
10 Ind.	1182
154 Ind.	950, 987, 1005
53 Nebr.	2073, 2497
v. Sterling	1624
v. Thatcher	719
v. U. S.	2566
v. Wagener	1779
v. Wheeler	1737
v. Whitman	2349
Whiton v. Ins. Cos.	1597, 1662, 1684
Whitrong v. Blaney	1664
Whitsett v. R. Co.	1976
Whittaker v. Com.	2060
Whittit v. Miller	1644
Whittelsey v. Kellogg	1956
Whittemore v. Brooks	1313, 1316
v. Farrington	2417

Whittier v. Franklin	68, 201, 1621, 1977
v. Varney	334
Whittingham v. Bloxham	1873
v. Bargoynne	2257
Whittle v. State	
79 Miss.	2042
43 Tex. Cr.	2018
Whitton v. Whitton	1644
Whittack v. Waters	1644
Whitwell v. Johnson	2153
v. Winslow	1737
v. Wyer	2115
Whizenant v. State	1966, 1977
Whorley v. Tennessee	
C. Expos. Co.	463
Whyman v. Garth	1288, 1299, 1301
Wiborg v. U. S.	1079
Wichita v. Stallings	2354
Wichita & W. R. Co. v.	
Kuhn	616, 1943
Wick v. Baldwin	1106
Wickenkamp v.	
Wickenkamp	15, 1195, 1896
Wicktorwitz v. Ins. Co.	1078
Wickliffe v. Hill	2167
Wicks v. Dean	2306
v. Smalbroke	521
Widdifield v. Widdifield	1249, 1257
v. Jones	2528
Widdows' Trust, re	1071,
Wiedemann v. Walpole	1073, 2061
Wiehl v. Robertson	1079
Wiggin v. Day	321
v. Plumer	89, 224
Wiggins v. Fleishel	1299, 1301, 1651
v. Guier	1678
v. Henson	1977
v. Holley	2105
v. McLean	2159
v. Pryor	1245
v. Utah	111
Wigginton v. Com.	2071
Wigglesworth v. Dallison	2440
Wight v. Rindskopf	580
Wightman v. Providence	1807
Wigley v. Solicitor	1644
Wiheu v. Law	1646
Wike v. Lightner	1985
Wikel v. Board	2566
Wilber v. Eicholtz	2016
v. Goodrich	1681
Wilberding v. Dnbuque	252
Wilbur, re	2532
Wilbur v. Flood	987, 1270
v. R. Co.	1674
v. Selden	1404, 1521, 2098
v. Strickland	1086
v. Wilbur	1190
Wilburn v. Hall	1681
v. State	1194
Wilcocks v. Phillips'	
Ex'rs	728, 1271
Wilcox v. Cate	2434
v. Forbes	792
v. Hunt	5

Wilcox v. Jackson	1239, 2166
v. Leake	1944
v. Lucas	2418
v. Ray	1678
v. Smith	2535
v. State	2061
v. Wilcox	792, 794
Wild's Case	2462
Wildberger v. Cheek's	
Ex'rs	2477
Wiide v. Armsby	2525
Wilder v. De Cou	1955
v. St. Paul	1651, 1665
v. State	2354
Wiids v. R. Co.	461
Wiley v. Bean	1312
v. Givens	1257
Wiifong v. Johnson	2442
Wilbelmi v. Leonard	1045, 1890
Wilhite v. Barr	1678
Wilkerson v. Ailen	2105
v. Eilers	1045
v. State	1434, 2339
Wilkes v. Heaton	1877
v. Market Co.	1949
Wilkie v. Chadwick	2195, 2199
Wilkins v. Babbershall	1026, 1028
v. Bent	2349
v. Earle	382, 1013
v. Flint	290
v. Jones	2473
v. Malone	2252, 2282
v. Metcalf	416, 1730, 1974
v. Missouri Valley	1722
v. Moore	2327
v. State	1404
v. Stidger	1075, 2593
v. Wilmington	1719
Wilkinson v. Adam	2463
v. Jett	1674
v. Moseley	461, 568, 681, 1722
v. Pearson	233, 1738, 1938, 1958
v. State	791, 1874
v. Wilkinson	1392
Wilkinson's Est.	2518
Will v. Mendon	438, 1722, 1974
Willamette F. C. &	
L. Co. v. Gordon	1275
Willard v. Darrah	2474
v. Fralick	2097
v. Goodenough	928, 1111, 1985
v. Harvey	1216, 2450
v. Mellor	1704
v. Pettitt	1874
v. State	821
v. Sullivan	995
Willanme v. Gorges	89
Willcox v. Gottfrey	2061
Williford v. Bailey	18, 1406
Williet v. Goetz	68
Williett v. Andrews	1195, 1267
v. St. Albans	457, 714
Willey v. Portsmouth	252, 657, 771, 1219

TABLE OF CASES.

WIL

	Section		Section		Section
William v. Gwyn	1167	Williams v. Miles	2106, 2523	Williams v. Thorp	1062
v. State	2100	v. Miller	529	v. Turner	1028, 1029, 1391, 2210
William Jarvis, The	6	v. Miner	406	v. U. S., 3 D. C.	
William & Mary Col- lege v. Powell	603, 610, 2237	v. Montgomery	2354	App.	507, 1821
Williams v. Allen	1876	v. Mndie	2294	1 Ind. Terr.	1270
v. Ashton	2525	v. Nally	1158, 1700	Ind. T., 69 S. W.	987
v. Averitt	1878	v. People		168 U. S.	154, 1616
v. Baldwin	2235, 2237, 2336	54 Ill.	111	v. Wager	754
		101 Ill.	2071	v. Walbridge	529
v. Bass	1225, 1651, 2105, 2141	166 Ill.	216, 347, 2497	v. Walker	917
		196 Ill.	2513	v. Ward	1212, 2098
v. Benton	1202	v. Phillips	2337	v. Waters	1268
v. Binmenthal	2313	v. Poppleton	261, 1951	v. Wetherbee	1225, 1318, 1651, 1676
v. Broadhead	1388	v. Price	1062		
v. Brooklyn El. R. Co.	1807	v. Putnam	1675	v. Wilcox	18
v. Brown	682, 720, 1944	v. Qnebroda R. L. & C. Co.	2298	v. Wilkes	1681, 2164
		v. R. Co.		v. Williams	
v. Brickell	1236, 1256	103 Ky.	571	3 Beav.	1955
v. Brummel	1267	68 Minn.	1719, 1722	1 Hagg. Cons.	
v. Callender	73	155 N. Y.	2495		238, 866, 2067, 2081
v. Cannon	1966	v. Rawlins	803	108 Ia.	1195
v. Carpenter	1674	v. Riley	2245	Ky., 71 S. W.	617
v. Case	1195	v. Robbins	534	L. R. 1 P. & D.	2067
v. Casebeer	258	v. Sills	1295	142 Mass.	2051
v. Chapman	1028, 1031, 1035	v. Smith	1675	47 Md.	1938
v. Cheney	1065, 1387	v. Southern P. Co.	1750	67 Mo.	616
v. Com.		v. Sontter	657	102 Wis.	89
Ky., 50 S. W.	987	v. Spencer	689	v. Young	2319
Ky., 68 S. W.	580, 2042	v. State		Williamson v. Fischer	791, 794
29 Pa.	153, 852	44 Ala.	2086, 2231	v. Mosley	2141
91 Pa.	2042	52 Ala.	1076	v. Nebers	1738
v. Conger	2006, 2016	54 Ala.	2086	v. People	1034
v. Culver	1003, 1076	61 Ala.	2016, 2018	v. R. Co.	1756
v. Dewitt	1969, 2442	74 Ala.	246	v. State	2089
v. Donaldson	2119	81 Ala.	1072	Willies v. Farley	1779
v. East India Co.	1339, 2079, 2089, 2534	98 Ala.	2265, 2276	Williford v. State	2079
		109 Ala.	506, 1821	Willingham v. State	
r. Eikenberry	1086	123 Ala.	1966	104 Ala.	1219
v. Eldridge	770	63 Ark.	824, 862	130 Ala.	247
v. Ensign	1778	69 Ark.	855, 2100	Willink v. Miles	2168
v. Fambro	63	32 Fla.	1890	Willis v. Bailey	1858
v. Farrington	2268, 2279	40 Fla.	2513	v. Bernard	13, 1730
v. Fitch	2294	42 Fla.	580	v. Gammill	2334
v. Floyd	1300	Fla., 34 So.	682	v. Jernegan	1073
v. Gilman	15	19 Ga.	1398	v. Londerback	2110
v. Goodall	2450	57 Ga.	2071	v. Peckham	2203
v. Greaves	1464	69 Ga.	1329, 2071, 2236	v. Quimby	270, 785
v. Hart	1086	100 Ga.	2183, 2264	v. Singer	704
v. Harter	1082	3 Heisk.	63, 111, 246, 247	v. State	
v. Hathaway	714	8 Humph.	357	134 Ala.	1230
v. Hayes	1877	16 Ind.	1205	67 Ark.	1079
v. Heath	1225	6 Lea	1350	93 Ga.	838
v. Herrick	1603	12 Lea	499	43 Nehr.	933
v. Hill	1225	64 Md.	437, 1976	v. Ward	613
v. Hillegas	2141	72 Miss.	833	v. West	1911
v. Hollingsworth	75	73 Miss.	1020, 1021, 1038	Willman v. Worrall	694
v. Innes	1070	79 Miss.	1124	Willock v. Wilson	1681
v. Ins. Co.	1206	35 Tex.	1840	Willoughby v. Dewey	1186
v. Jarrot	1269, 2158	42 Tex.	2060	v. R. Co.	1890
v. Johnson		v. Stoughton	1234	Willoughby's Case	2220
112 Ind.	2384, 2389	v. Suffolk Ins. Co.	2566	Wills v. Lance	2570
1 Stra.	2235	v. Tannont	655, 660	v. M'Dole	1201, 1281
v. Judy	1064	v. Taylor	1350	v. Russell	1890
v. Kelsey	736, 745, 747, 2103	v. Tel. Co.	1078	v. State	
		v. Thomas	1061, 1062	73 Ala.	2595
v. Kerr	1273			74 Ala.	1263
v. McKee	1908			Wills Point Bank v. Bates	2349

Section
1062
1, 1029,
1, 2210

7, 1821
1270
987
4, 1616
754
529
917
2, 2098
1268
1, 1318,
1, 1676
18
1, 2164

1955

8, 866,
2081
1195
617
2067
2051
1938
616
89
2319
1, 794
2141
1738
1034
1756
2089
1779
2079

1219
247
2168
1858
1730
2334
1073
2110
2203
3, 785
704

1230
1079
838
933
613
1911
694
1681
1186
1890
2220
2570
1281
1890

2595
1263
2349

Willson v. Betts	Section 704, 1311, 1320, 1321, 2130, 2137, 2141
Wilmer v. Israel	1543
Wilmington v. Burlington	1501
Wilmot v. Maccabe	1862
v. Vanwart	1921
Wilson, ex p.	2264
v. Barnett	86
v. Banman	565
v. Beachamp	2008, 2016
v. Berryman	2354
v. Boerem	1362, 1432
v. Bowie	2125
v. Brownlee	1487, 1503
v. Calvert	2100
v. Carson	726, 1271
v. Coleman	669
v. Com.	
Ky., 54 S. W.	763
Ky., 60 S. W.	1439
Ky., 64 S. W.	1270
v. Conine	2110
v. Derr	907
v. Granby	458, 1719
v. Harris	1078
v. Hays' Ex'r	1873
v. Hodges	2531
v. Hoffman	1680
v. Irish	2016
v. Kirkland	2008
v. McClure	2427
v. M'Veagh	1664
v. Markley	1350
v. Mitchell	2086
v. Noonan	72, 73, 209, 581, 1668
v. Owens	2573
v. Patrick	1133, 1779
v. People	1852
v. Potter	2537
v. Powers	2410
v. R. Co.	
31 Minn.	1236
18 R. I.	1951
52 S. C.	784
v. Rastall	2288, 2290, 2294, 2303, 2317, 2321, 2380, 2394
v. Robinson	406
v. Rowe	1567
v. Royston	1312, 1320, 1876
v. Runyon	923, 1985
v. Sax	1078
v. School District	1674, 1680
v. Seattle	1335
v. Smelser	1770
v. Smith	1651, 2187
v. Southern Pac. Co.	1750
v. Southern R. Co.	720
v. Spring	1876, 2110
v. State	
52 Ala.	1839, 1840, 1842
73 Ala.	205, 1966, 2062
110 Ala.	105, 852
30 Fla.	110, 111
16 Ind.	62, 200, 987
41 Tex.	568, 2081

Wilson v. State	Section 43 Tex. 45 Tex. 12 Tex. App. 39 Tex. Cr. 41 Tex. Cr. 3 Wis. v. Stevens v. Terry v. Thornbry v. Thorpe v. Tronp v. U. S. 149 U. S. 162 U. S. v. Van Leer v. agar ersville S. Dist. v. lson Halst. 26 Or. Prob. v. Woodruff v. Woodside v. Wright v. Young Wilt v. Bird v. Cutler v. Vickers Wilton v. Humphreys v. Railroads v. Webster Wimber v. R. Co. Wimberly v. State Wims v. State Winans v. Dunham v. R. Co. Winch v. Norman Winchell v. Edwards v. Latham v. Winchell Winchelsea v. Wanchope Winchester v. Charter v. Fournier Winchester F. Ins. Co. v. Foster Winchester & P. M. Co. v. Craway Windsor v. Brown Windsor Case Wineland v. Coonce Winemiller v. Thrash Winfield v. State Wing v. Abbott v. Angrave v. Earle Wingo v. Caldwell Winklemans v. R. Co. Winkles v. Guenther Winkley v. Kaime Winn v. Patterson v. Swayne	2081 2089 2089 2272 2252 1985 2477 1784 1859 2529 2298 2272 278, 792, 821, 826, 851, 852, 861, 2513 694, 695, 1698 1890 1661 1539, 1546, 1549 2444 564 1779 1141 1225 1246 1062 1651, 1681, 1684, 2159 1976 112, 917 1858 1730 283, 1951 2071 394 1215, 1110 2012, 2020 280 1896, 2115 1873 1304 89, 334, 1082, 1086 2290 2334 1086 1195 1712 1681 2110 857 1195, 1267 2532 2462 1778 782 2525 2477 1195, 1274, 1275, 1311, 1651, 2143 2250
-----------------	---	---

Winne v. Lloyd	Section 1281
v. Nickerson	1557, 1568
Winnepesaukee C. M.	
Ass'n v. Gordon	2451
Winner v. Bauman	1543, 1557, 1560
Winnipisogee Lake	
Co. v. Young	2572, 2575
Winona v. Burke	2572
v. Huff	1198, 1208, 1225, 1287
Winona & S. P. R. Co.	
v. Denman	1943
Winsett v. State	2079
Winship v. Clendenning	1225
v. Neale	963
Winslow v. Morrill	1166
v. Newlan	1029
v. State	1254, 2071, 2072, 2073, 2081
Winsmore v. Greenback	2239
Winsor v. Dilloway	1549
v. Regina	580
Winston v. Gwathmey	2141, 2164
v. Moseley	901, 905, 907
v. Prevost	1225
Winter v. Bandel	1640
v. Burt	716
v. Butt	905
v. Jndkins	1301
v. Mixer	1842
v. Montgomery	716
v. R. Co.	1719
Winters v. Earl	2437
v. Laird	1225
v. State	2501
v. Winters	18, 2329, 2391
Winterton v. R. Co.	1873
Winthrop v. Grimes	1186
v. Ina. Co.	1955, 2463
Wintle, in re	1646
Winton v. Saidler	529, 531
Wisconsin Central R. Co.	
v. Cornell Univ.	2569
Wisconsin River L. Co.	
v. Walker	907, 1213
Wisconsin Trust Co. v. Wisconsin M. & F. Co.	2531
Bank	2056
Wisdom v. People	
v. Reeves	1382, 2140, 2148
v. State	852, 2089, 2363
Wise v. Ackerman	458
v. Bigger	1350
v. Foote	615, 770, 1938
v. Schloesser	276
v. State	246
v. Wakefield	18, 900, 1985
v. Wynn	1490, 1491, 1501
Wiseman v. Green	2477
v. Risinger	1186
Wisener v. Manpin	1838, 1841
Wishart v. Downey	291, 1293
Wisner v. Wirth	1681
Wiswall v. Ross	1871
Witcher v. Richmond	406
Withers v. Fiscus	2349

TABLE OF CASES.

WIT

	Section		Section		Section
Withers v. Gillespy	1391, 2118,	Wood v. Hammerton	988, 1933	Woodruff v. Whittlesey	64, 1086
v. Moore	2125	v. Harrell	1275	v. Banks	1219, 1680, 2109
Wilmington v. Warren	2358	v. Hickok	2053	v. Burke	1213
Witbneel v. Gartman	2462	v. Knapp	1678	v. De Figanieri	2219
Witnell v. Gartham	1596	v. Lents	2239	v. Gevecke	2098
Witlow v. State	2238	v. McGaire	1697	v. Gammert	89, 224
Witzmark v. R. Co.	463, 1978	v. Mackinson	1893	v. Keyes	2098
Wittenberg v. Molyneaux	1404	v. Maguire	2183	v. M'Fberan	1842
v. Onsgard	662, 2220	v. Mann	1985	v. Milier	2267
Witter v. Casaletts	1858	v. Matthews	928	v. Monroe	1672
v. Latham	1194, 1195	v. R. Co.	1978	v. People	62, 200, 398
Witz v. Fite	2442, 2540	v. Sawyer	228, 657	v. Pindall	1198
Wixom v. Goodcell	1890	v. State		v. Polhemus	1347
Woburn v. Heushaw	2327	46 Ga.	923	v. R. Co.	571
Woeckner v. Motor Co.	199, 1951	92 Ind.	247, 1871	76 Ala.	2059, 2236
Woy Ho v. U. S.	1107, 2066	58 Miss.	568, 689, 1922,	101 Ga.	1225
Wogan v. Small	770, 1958	1935, 1938		63 Ind.	1329
Wohlford v. People	581	32 Tex. Cr.	396	26 Tex. App.	521
Wolcott v. Heath	736	v. Strickland	4, 1205	v. Woods	
v. Hall	73, 74	v. Swift	1388	2 Curt. Eccl.	1336, 1832,
Wolf v. Carothers	1085	v. Trust Co.	530, 991, 1352	2096, 2098	
v. Frank	211	v. U. S.	216, 341	4 Hare	2294
v. Goddard	1665	v. Wageman	1134	Woodside v. State	1397, 1398
v. Perryman	75, 209	v. Weld	842, 843, 852	v. Roberts	1239, 1587,
v. Williams	1980	v. Welder	1651	1690	
v. Wolf	2268	v. Willard		Woodward v. Blne	269, 1492
v. Wyeth	2098	36 Vt.	794	v. Buchanan	377
Wolf's Case	851	37 Vt.	1565, 1566,	v. Goulstone	1576, 1736
Wolfe v. Hanver	907	v. Wood	1567, 1568	v. Heist	1669
v. R. Co.	2135	v. Zibble	2067	v. Leavitt	89, 224, 2349,
v. Underwood	1246	Wood River Bank v.	1081	v. Republic	205
v. Washburn	2450	Kelley	1028, 1029	v. State	657, 728, 1977
Wolferman v. Bell	2525	Woodard v. Bellamy	77, 206	v. Sullivan	233
Wolff v. Smith	74	v. Cntler	18	Woodworth v. Barker	1196
v. Wolff	2046	v. Eastman	1021	v. Gorsline	1387
Wolfe v. Minnis	1807	v. Spiller	2016	v. Thompson	1064, 1067,
Wolford v. Farnham		Woodbeck v. Keller	2042	v. Woodworth	1969
44 Minn.	624, 2240	Woodbridge v. Austin	1271	Woolacott v. Case	2536
47 Minn.	1230	v. Spooner	2444	Woodlridge v. Wilkins	1239
Wolfsen v. Allen B. Co.	1623	Woodburn v. Sterling	1777	Woolery v. Woolery	1085, 1777
v. U. S.	216, 331,	Woodbury v. Anoka	1166	Woolfolk v. State	
	580	v. District	1890	81 Ga.	852, 2264
Wolgrave v. Coe	2250	v. Obear	672, 681, 683	85 Ga.	2100
Wollaston v. Hakewill	1256, 1300	v. Woodbury's		v. Woolfork	2067
	1388	Estate	1558	Woolley v. R. Co.	2319
Wolters v. King	2442	Woodcock v. Bennet	2123	v. State	
v. Rossi	1388	v. Houldsworth	93, 2152	Tex. Cr., 56 S. W.	2277
Wolverbampton N. W.		v. Johnson	112, 229, 1938	Tex. Cr., 64 S. W.	2273,
Co. v. Hawksford	1256	v. Worthington	1858	2363	
Wolverton v. Com.	18, 1267	Woodcraft v. Kinaston	1216	Woolner v. Devereux	1858
v. State	2086	Woodford v. McClenahan	694, 702	v. Spalding	682
Wolverton Mortgaged		Woodford's Case	959	Woolse v. Walley	2256
Estates, re	2472	Woodhead v. Foulds	1347	Woolsey v. Bohn	1549, 1558
Womack v. Dearman	2164	Woodhull v. Holmes	529	v. Williams	1502, 2529
v. Hughes	1649, 1650,	Woodin v. People	1976	Woolverton v. Van Syckel	2235
	1651	Woodman v. Coolbroth	18,	Woolway v. Rowe	1049,
v. White	1275		770, 1225	Wooster v. Bntler	1080, 1082
Wood v. Allen	2464	v. Dana	700, 709, 2004,	v. State	1587, 1665
v. Brewer	658, 1951	v. Segar	2005, 2008, 2016	v. Nall	78, 1620
v. Brodiey	613	v. Segar	1309, 1313, 1320	v. Nall	2125
v. Carpenter	1081	Woodnoth v. Lord		v. Wilkins	1432, 1436
v. Chetwood	2336	Cobham	1516	Worcester v. North-	
v. Cole	803	Woodruff v. Garner	1389	borongb	665, 1635, 1641
v. Cullen	1213	v. Hndley	1512, 2131	Worcester Case	1712, 1842
v. Drury	1316	v. Ins. Co.	714		
v. Finson	377	v. State	736, 1219, 1230,		
v. Fitz	2158		1387, 1398, 1662		
v. Graves	1066				

TABLE OF CASES.

Section
4, 1086
571
0, 2109
1213
2219
2098
89, 224
2098
1842
2287
1672
00, 398
1198
1347
571
9, 2236
1225
1329
521
1, 1832,
3, 2088
2294
1, 1398
1587,
1680
1, 1492
377
1, 1736
1669
2349,
2354
205
1977
233
1196
1387
1067,
1969
2046
2536
1239
1777
2264
2100
2067
2319
2277
2273,
2363
1858
682
2256
1558
2529
2235
1049,
1082
1665
1620
2125
1436
1641
1842

Section	Section
Worcester National Bank	
v. Cheney	2577
Word v. McKinney	1239, 2159
Wordev v. R. Co.	1693, 1698
World v. State	203, 1620
Wormley's Case	748, 1028
Wormley v. Hamburg	7
Wormsdorf v. R. Co.	251
Worrall v. Jones	2218
Worrell, re	2235
Worsham v. Warsham	2048
Worth v. Gilling	201, 251
v. McConnell	2005
v. Norton	1205, 1208
v. R. Co.	105, 140
Worthen v. Badgett	1350
Worthington v. Mencer	492, 493, 494, 495
v. Scribner	2374
v. State	1432, 1440, 1445, 2097
Wottrich v. Freeman	564, 610
Wray v. Carpenter	2349
v. Doe	1680
Wren, ex p.	1350
v. R. Co.	905
Wright v. Ahbott	2354
v. Bales	6
v. Barnard	1672
v. Beckett	899, 900, 903, 905, 907
v. Boston	1784
v. Bragg	2102
v. Bundy	530, 1678
v. Bunyard	1200
v. Carillo	2132
v. Carpenter	1168
v. Collier	1674
v. Com.	1502
v. Crawfordsville	75, 85, 203, 1608
v. Cumpsty	1003, 1006, 1388
v. Deklyne	1126, 1127
v. Express Co.	492, 493, 2494
v. Fort Howard	770
v. Gaff	1890
v. Hardy	681, 1951
v. Hawkins	2572, 2575
v. Hessey	2016
v. Hicks	1029, 1031
v. Holdgate	2063
v. Howard	568
v. Kelly	1350
v. Littler	1018, 1026, 1033, 1431
v. McKee	64
v. Mayer	2290, 2294
v. Morse	1062
v. People	2203
v. Sharp	
1 Browne	1544
1 Salk.	20
v. Sherrard	2137
v. Southern Pac. Co.	561, 1951
v. State	
136 Ala.	1960
Ala., 34 So.	318

Section	Section
Wright v. State	
88 Md.	1182
50 Miss.	1198, 1750, 1326, 1327, 1349
43 Tex.	2059
9 Yerg.	246, 1476
v. Tatham	10, 21, 28, 29, 260, 267, 1304, 1305, 1362, 1370, 1388, 1511, 1583, 1714, 1730, 1773, 1774, 1917, 1933
v. Telegraph Co.	2349, 2353, 2354
v. Terr.	2512
v. Vernou	2319
v. Williams' Estate	561
v. Wilkin	770
v. Woodgate	406
v. Wright	
58 Kan.	736, 754, 1960
6 Tex.	2085
Wrigley v. Cornelius	272
Wrisley Co. v. Burke	961
Wroe v. State	987, 1033, 1270, 1447, 1618
Wrye v. State	2231
Wunderlich v. Ins. Co.	2124
Wyatt v. Gore	1243, 2375
v. State	833, 855
Wyckoff v. Wyckoff	1198, 1267, 2052, 2106
Wyland v. Griffith	2312
Wyles v. Berry	1067
Wyllis v. Wansau	1976
Wyllie v. Gazan	1955
Wyman v. Gould	1938
v. R. Co.	463, 1943
v. Wilcox	1554
Wymark's Case	1185, 1215, 1224
Wyndham v. Chetwynd	582
v. Wycombe	211
Wynehamer v. People	1354
Wynn v. Harman	1664, 2168
Wynne v. Anhnrrn	1249
v. Glideweli	1085
v. Middleton	1223
v. State	457, 1157, 1978
v. Tyrwhitt	1472, 2145
Wyse v. Wyse	1938
Wytheville B. & I. Co. v.	
Teeger	1379
X.	
Xenos v. Wickham	2408
Y.	
Yaeger v. R. Co.	18
Yahn v. Ottumwa	1976
Yakima Nat'l Bank v.	
Knips	2525, 2535
Yale v. Comstock	1888
Yanke v. State	1621, 1938, 2277
Yankee v. Thompson	1188, 1651

Section	Section
Yarborough v. Hood	
v. Moss	1392
v. State	1058
Yarborough v. Arnold	1684, 1779
v. State	
105 Ala.	923, 928, 1128, 1132, 1938
115 Ala.	2497
70 Miss.	2272
Yardley v. Arnold	586
Yates v. Carnsew	2104
v. Olmsted	2294
v. People	437
v. Pym	2440
v. Shaw	1058
v. State	
47 Ark.	857, 858
Fla., 29 So.	521
v. Thomson	5
v. Yates	570, 2008, 2012, 2016
Yeager v. Spirit Lake	
v. Weaver	252
v. Wright	619, 620
Year Book	
23 Ass. 11	657
44 " 30	2405
20 Edw. I, 258	2426
20 " 68	2426
20 & 21 " 20	1177
33 & 35 " 331, 547	2426
13 & 14 Edw. III, 80	
14 " "	25
41 " "	10, 6
47 " "	3, 5
4 Edw. IV, 8, 9	2405
28 " "	28, 1
7 H. IV, 61, 5	2569
8 " 6, 8	2190
9 " 24	2190
7 H. V, 5, 3	1177
9 " 15, 3	2405
1 H. VI, 7, 31	2426
8 " 26, 15	2426
9 " 16, 8	1917
9 " 59, 8	2405
10 " 25	2475
11 " 43, 46	575, 2190
18 " 17, 8	2426
19 " 11	1650
20 " 20, 16	657
28 " 6, 1	1364, 2190
39 " 34, 36	2426
14 H. VII, 29, 4	1364
20 " 11, 21	1364
14 H. VIII, 17, 6, and 7	2405, 2426
14 " 25, 7	2405
27 " 2, 6	575, 2190
Yearsley's Appeal	1550
Yearwood's Trusts	2063
Yeates v. Reed	1621
v. Waugh	2027
Yeatman v. Armistead	1722
v. Dempsey	2195
Yeaton v. Fry	1389, 1681
Yeats v. Pim	2430
Yellow River R. Co. v.	
Harris	1674, 2167

TABLE OF CASES.

YER

	Section		Section	Z.	Section
Yerkes v. Northern Pacific		Young v. Holloway	2319	Zabrickie v. State	206, 2061
R. Co.	581	v. Holmes	291, 1199	Zalesky v. Ina. Co.	2451
Yotman v. Day	619	v. Honner	2336	Zane v. Fink	613, 2240
Yewin's Case	1022	v. Hurst	1549	v. Onastiva	377
Yoch v. Ina. Co.	770, 2415	v. Johnson	133, 1106, 1976	Zang v. Wyant	1557
Yocum v. Barnes	1320	v. Jones	1549	Zanone v. State	987
Yoder v. Reynolds	16	v. Makepeace	166, 569, 1154	Zebly v. Storey	1081
Yoe v. People	1700, 1807	v. Miller	2500	Zeehandelaar, ex p.	2210
Yoes v. State	1013	v. Montgomery	913	Zehner v. Lehigh C. & N.	
Yoki v. First State Bank	1066	v. Perkins	1466	Co.	905
Yolo Co. v. Colgan	1350	v. Power	1777	Zelch v. Hirt	392
Yordan v. Hess	2304	v. R. Co.	2552	Zell v. Com.	1126, 1871
York v. Gregg	1651	v. Richards	607	Zellerbach v. Allenberg	1213
v. Pease	391, 770, 1873	v. Ringo	1651	Zerbe v. Miller	334
York Co. v. Central R. Co.	16	v. Shlienberg	1490, 1573, 2531	Zerby v. Wilson	1300
v. Toronto G. R. & C.		v. Slaughterford	1821	Zibball v. Grand Rapids	2098
Co.	1062	v. State		Zibble v. Zibble	1738
York & M. R. Co. v. Winans	2576	68 Ala.	624, 626, 833, 661	Zickefoose v. Knykendall	2349
Yorks v. Mooberg	561	114 Ga.	1442	Zierenberg v. Labonchere	73
Yost v. Conroy	1921, 1942, 1943, 1960	90 Md.	851	Zimm v. Rice	568
Yoter v. Sanno	2374	36 Or.	1494, 1502	Zimmerman v. Bank	1018, 1041
Yonmans v. Carney	1890	v. Stockdale	1308	v. Brannon	561
Yong v. Bank	1684	v. Thayer	1682	v. Helser	1271
v. Bennett	73, 1877, 2115	v. Webb City	252	v. Kearney Co. Bank	1021
v. Brady	1028, 1041, 1673	v. Wood	907, 913, 1369	v. Marchland	581
v. Chandler	1681	v. Wright	1063	v. State	1254
v. Clapp	95	v. Young	1842	Zimmerman Mfg. Co. v.	
v. Clark	460	Young Men's Ch. Ass'n v.		Dolph	2434
v. Com.		Rawlings	967	Zipp v. Colchester R. Co.	1205
4 Binn.	1690	Young Women's Christian		Zirkle v. Leonard	1938, 2477
6 Bush	247, 923, 928, 987, 1965	Home v. French	2532	Zitake v. Goldberg	1666, 1668
6 Bnsh	826, 830	Younger v. Guilbean	1226	Zitner v. Merkel	68, 210, 1983
Ky., 42 S. W.	111	Younger v. State	1006, 2513	Zoldoeko v. State	363, 2061
v. Dearborn	2096	Yonngs v. R. Co.	208, 249, 1616	Zollicoffer v. Turney	2222, 2223
v. Doherty	340, 2517	Yonnie v. Walrod	2434	Zonch v. Parsons	2413
v. Foster	2063, 2505	Yount v. Howell	2163	Zube v. Webber	1951
v. Gilman	607	Yrisarri v. Clement	2163, 2566	Zucker v. Karpeles	782
v. Gregorie	1269	Yull v. White	1461	Zurawski v. Reichmann	406
v. Grote	2419	Yundt v. Hartrumft	1012	Zwicker v. Zwicker	2408
		Yung's Estate	1644		

YER

Section

206, 2061
2451
113, 2240
377
1857
987
1021
2210
f.
805
392
126, 1871
1213
334
1300
2098
1738
ll 2349
re 73
568
018, 1041
581
1271
k 1021
581
1254
2434
1205
338, 2477
166, 1668
68, 210,
1983
163, 2081
222, 2223
2413
1951
782
406
2408

INDEX OF TOPICS

INDEX OF TOPICS

A.		
Abortion, procuring of, as evidence of paternity	282	
other offences, as evidence of intent	359	
motive for	391	
dying declarations of woman in eye-witness of marriage in	2085, 2086	
who is accomplice in	2060	
marital privilege in	2239	
Absence of entry or record, how proved	1290, 1244, 1678, 1957, 1978	
of maker of regular entries	1521, 1561	
of deponent	1404	
of declarant of facts against interest	1456	
of pedigree declarant	1481	
presumption of death from	2531	
Absent Witness, expected testimony of, received to avoid postponement	807, 1398	
impeached like others	888, 1034	
testimony at a former trial; see FORMER TESTIMONY.		
effect of admission of affidavit of	2595	
Abstract of Title-Deeds, production of original	1223	
as hearsay	1705	
as giving substance of deed	2105	
whether preferred to oral testimony	1273	
Acceptance; see BILL OF EXCHANGE.		
Accessory; see ACCOMPLICE.		
Accident; see NEGLIGENCE; INTENT; HIGHWAY; MACHINE; PREMISES; CORPORAL INJURY; RES GESTÆ.		
Accomplice, as disqualified by his guilt	526	
as disqualified by interest	580	
as impeached	967	
Accomplice (continued).		Section
confession of crime by, as hearsay		1476, 1477
corroboration required		2058
restoring credit by consistent statements		1128
as affected by judgment of conviction of principal		1389
see also CO-INDICTEE.		
Account, voluminous, proved by summary		1230, 1244
assented to, as an admission		1070
rendered, as an admission		1073
see also BILL OF ACCOUNT.		
Account-books; see BOOKS OF ACCOUNT.		
Accused; see DEFENDANT.		
Acknowledgment of deed of married woman; see WIFE.		
of deeds in general, whether certificate is conclusive		1347, 1352
whether admissible		1676
Acorns; see POISON.		
Act, of the Legislature; see STATUTE; LEGISLATIVE JOURNAL; RECITAL.		
Adjournment of Court, for a view		1803
as affecting publicity of trial		1835
Administrator, admissions of		1076, 1081
see also WILL; EXECUTOR.		
Admiralty, rules of evidence applicable in		6
seal of foreign court of, presumed genuine		1681, 2164
Admissibility, general theory of multiple, of the same fact for different purposes		18
conditional, of a fact not yet appearing relevant		14, 40
objection to, time and form of		18
judge to determine		2550
Admissions of a Party		
1. Whether admissible		
general theory		1048-1058
death not necessary		1049

INDEX OF TOPICS.

Admissions of a Party (continued).	Section	Admissions of a Party (continued).	Section
prior question not necessary . . .	1051	of execution of recorded deed . . .	1053
personal knowledge; infants . . .	1053	whole must be proved . . .	2007, 2008, 2009
made to third persons . . .	1056	may be proved . . .	2115, 2119
not conclusive . . .	1058, 2588	by express stipulation; see	
putting in the whole . . .	1058, 2007	JUDICIAL ADMISSION.	
implied admissions . . .	267, 1090	Adultery, character of third per-	
offer of compromise . . .	1061	son as evidence . . .	68
in pleadings . . .	1063	intercourse with third persons,	
by reference to a third person . . .	1070	as evidencing paternity . . .	133, 134
by flight, concealment, etc. . .	372-384	venereal disease, as evidence	
by silence . . .	1071	of . . .	168
by failure to produce evidence . . .	285-292	plan, as evidence of . . .	238, 239
in a third person's document . . .	1073	other offences, as evidence of	
corporation books . . .	1074	intent or motive . . .	360, 308
depositions used . . .	1075	privilege of husband or wife	
husband or wife . . .	2232	in . . .	2235, 2230
other parties to the cause . . .	1076	against self-crimination in . . .	2257
injured person, co-defendant,		proof beyond a reasonable	
etc. . .	1076	doubt . . .	2408
privies in obligation . . .	1077-1079	who is accomplice in . . .	2060
joint promisor . . .	1077	confession of respondent in . . .	2067, 2074
agent, partner, attorney,		Advancement to child	
wife, etc. . .	1078	shown by words accompanying	
co-conspirator . . .	1079	transfer . . .	1777
privies in title . . .	1080-1087	parol evidence to rebut pre-	
decendent, insured, etc. . .	1081	sumed intent . . .	2475
grantor, indorser, etc. . .	1082-1087	Adverse possession; see Pos-	
producing the original of a doc-		SESSION.	
ument admitted correct . . .	1235, 1255	Advertisement, in newspaper,	
land . . .	1778, 1779	as evidencing knowledge . . .	255
2. <i>Whether sufficient</i>		see also NOTICE.	
loss of a document . . .	1196	Affection; see CRIMINAL CON-	
contents of a document . . .	1255	VERSATION; ALIENATION OF	
dispensing with the attesting		AFFECTIONS; MENTAL CON-	
witness . . .	1800	DITION, STATEMENTS OF.	
specimens of handwriting . . .	2013, 2021	Affidavit, in interlocutory pro-	
divorce charge . . .	2067	ceedings . . .	4
accused in general . . .	816, 2070	whether <i>lex fori</i> is applicable	
bigamy, adultery, etc. . .	2086	to the taking of . . .	5
execution of a document . . .	2132, 2596	excluded at common law . . .	1384, 1708
3. <i>Sundries</i>		exceptions . . .	1709
before grand jury, not privi-		admissible by statute . . .	1710
leged . . .	2368	of a third person, as an admis-	
interpreter as agent to make . . .	668	sion . . .	1075
of genuineness of a writing, as		of common source of title . . .	1335
qualifying a witness . . .	700	of attesting witness to will . . .	1312
by plea of guilty, admissible in		of party, to loss of document . . .	1196
a civil case . . .	815	filed original required . . .	1216
distinguished from confessions		jurat as evidence of . . .	1676
from judicial admissions . . .	2588	of juror impeaching verdict . . .	2348
of agent, as <i>res gesta</i> . . .	1797	of absent witness' testimony	
of a third person, as to facts		admitted . . .	2595
against interest . . .	1458	of denial of document's genu-	
in a party's books of account . . .	1557	ineness . . .	2596

INDEX OF TOPICS.

Section	Section	Section
1653	Affidavit (continued).	
17, 2008,	presumed genuine, in official	
2009	files	2158
115, 2110	from identity of name	2529
	Affirmation; see OATH.	
	Against Interest, statements of	
	facts,	
66	exception to the Hearsay rule	1455
133, 184	proprietary interest	1458
	landlord and tenant	1473
168	pecuniary interest	1490
238, 239	endorsements, receipts	1460, 1406
	sundry interests	1461-1463
300, 308	penal interest; confession of	
	crime	1476
35, 2280	no motive to misrepresent	1464
2257	separate entries	1465
	time of statement	1466, 1467
2498	mode of proof	1468, 1469
2060	death or absence of declarant	
37, 2074	qualification	1456
	Age, as affecting an infant's dis-	
	qualification	
	as evidenced by appearance	506
		222, 257,
		660, 1154,
		1168
1777	of a witness, as impeaching	
	him	934, 1005
2475	of a person incapable of child-	
	bearing	2528
	of a document; see EXECU-	
255	TION OF DOCUMENTS.	
	as excusing absence of attest-	
	ing witness	1315
	of deponent	1406
	statement of age, as hearsay;	
	see FAMILY HISTORY.	
	testimony to one's own	667
4	Agency, course of business in,	
	as evidence of a transaction	94, 372,
		377, 379
8	proof of, without producing in-	
1, 1708	strument	1249
1709	opinion testimony to	1960
1710	proof of authority to execute	
	ancient deed	2144
1075	presumption of continuance of	2530
1395	see also AGENT.	
1312	Agent, fraud by, as evidence of	
1196	party's guilt	280
1216	disqualification of opponent as	
1676	witness to a transaction with	
2348	a deceased	578
	wife or husband testifying to	
2595	acts as agent	616
2596	offer of compromise by	1061
	admissions by, in general	1076
	Agent (continued).	
	admissions by, <i>as res gesta</i>	1797
	notice to produce to	1206
	words accompanying acts as	1777
	privileged communications of	2301, 2317
	parole agreement to hold only as	2438, 2443
	see also AGENCY.	
	Agreement, collateral, shown by	
	parole	2435, 2442
	see also CONTRACT; ASSENT;	
	DOCUMENT.	
	Alibi, mode of evidencing	186
	failure to prove, as evidence of	
	guilt	279
	burden of proof of	2512
	Alien, disqualification as a wit-	
	ness	516
	necessity of interpreter	811
	qualifications of interpreter	571
	credibility impeached by his	
	race	936
	conclusiveness of Immigration-	
	inspector's certificate	1354
	adequacy of cross-examination	
	in foreign language	1303
	see also RACE; INTERPRETER;	
	OATH.	
	Alienation of affections, ex-	
	pressions of husband or wife	
	showing feelings	1730
	marital privilege in	2230
	see also CRIMINAL CONVER-	
	SATION.	
	Allegans eam turpitudinem,	
	as excluding testimony	525
	Almanac, used in evidence	1608
	judicially noticed	2566
	Alteration, of entries, fraudulent	
	intent in; see FRAUD.	
	expert witness to	570, 2027
	shown by parole	2441, 2455
	liability on altered document	2419
	time of, presumed	2525
	Ambiguity in a document	2472
	Ambassador, deposition of	1884, 1407
	privilege of	2372
	Ancestors, insanity of, as evi-	
	dence	233
	declarations of, as evidence;	
	see FAMILY HISTORY; AD-	
	MISSIONS.	
	Antient Document, as evidence	
	of possession of land	157
	calling the attesting witness to	1311
	proof of genuineness; see EXECU-	
	TION OF DOCUMENTS.	

INDEX OF TOPICS.

	Section		Section
Animal, character of, as evidence	68, 201	Appliances; see MACHINE.	
trespass of another, as evidence	142	Appointment, to office, production of original	1228
brands on, as evidence	150, 1647, 2152	of officer, presumed	2538
conduct of, as evidence of ownership or crime	177	Argument, distinguished from evidence	1
as evidence of the animal's disposition	201	improper statements by counsel in	1800
symptoms of injury, etc., as evidence of cause	457	offering evidence after argument begun	1878
fright of, as evidence of dangerous object	461	Arbitration, distinguished from an admission	1056
proof of owner's knowledge of viciousness	251, 282	Arbitrator, former testimony before, whether admissible	1873
injuries to, as evidencing a highway defect	458	award in another cause, as reputation	1594
condition at other times, as evidence	437	as a witness	1912
produced before the jury	1154, 1161	not to impeach award	2358
disposition or pedigree of, evidenced by reputation	1621	Arrest, belief of officer as to probable cause	258
printed stock-book, to prove pedigree	1706	conduct under, as evidence of guilt	273, 1072
value of; see VALUE.		resistance to, as evidence of guilt	276
Anonymous crimes, as evidence of intent	303	submission to, as evidence of innocence	293
Answer of Witness, to a leading question	772	confession made under	851
non-responsive	785	impeachment of a witness by silence under, as an admission	1072
prepared beforehand in a deposition	787	Arsenic; see POISON.	
by reference to other testimony	787	Arson, threats as evidence of	105-109
see also QUESTION; EXAMINATION; OBJECTION.		materials and tools, as evidence of	149, 238
Answer in Chancery, as a party's admission	1065, 1076	other offences, as evidence of intent	854
original's production not required	1215, 1218	motive for, as shown by circumstances	891, 892
giving discovery, scope of; see DISCOVERY.		as shown by conduct	896
proof of bill and answer together	2111	proof beyond reasonable doubt, in insurance	2498
responsive parts are evidence	2121	see also INSURANCE.	
presumed genuine, in official files	2158	Assault; see also RAPE; INDICENT ASSAULT; HOMICIDE.	
from identity of name	2529	Assent, shown by parol evidence; see PAROL EVIDENCE RULE.	
Apparatus, possession of, as evidence of a crime	86	see also CONTRACT.	
defects of, as evidence of negligence	441-461	Assessment, privilege against disclosure of	2374
Appeal, evidence excluded because not transmissible on	1168	Assessor's books, production of original	1240
Appearance, as evidence of age	212, 257, 1154	admissible as official records or as admissions	1640
as evidence of health	228	copy of whole required	2109
as evidence of competence	1154	Assignment, of patent of invention	1226

INDEX OF TOPICS.

<p>Section</p> <p>1226</p> <p>2538</p> <p>1</p> <p>1806</p> <p>1878</p> <p>1056</p> <p>1873</p> <p>1594</p> <p>1912</p> <p>2358</p> <p>258</p> <p>73, 1072</p> <p>276</p> <p>293</p> <p>351</p> <p>982</p> <p>1072</p> <p>105-109</p> <p>149, 238</p> <p>354</p> <p>101, 392</p> <p>398</p> <p>2498</p> <p>2374</p> <p>1240</p> <p>1640</p> <p>2109</p> <p>1226</p>	<p>Assignment (continued).</p> <p>record of Section 1657</p> <p>Assignee in bankruptcy; see BANKRUPT.</p> <p>Assignor, admissions of, against assignee 1062</p> <p>see also VENDOR.</p> <p>Assumpsit; see CONTRACT; BILL OF EXCHANGE; LOAN; NOTE.</p> <p>Acylium; see SANITY.</p> <p>Atheism; see RELIGIOUS BELIEF.</p> <p>Attendance as witness; see WITNESSES, ix.</p> <p>Attested Copy; see CERTIFIED Copy.</p> <p>Attesting Witness</p> <p>1. <i>Rule requiring attesting witness to be called</i></p> <p>history of the rule 1287</p> <p>kind of document 1290</p> <p>who is an attesting witness 1292</p> <p>document used for other purposes 1293</p> <p>execution not disputable because of estoppel, admission, etc. 1294-1298</p> <p>attester preferred to maker 1299</p> <p>to admissions 1300</p> <p>to opponent's testimony 1301</p> <p>attester denying or not recollecting 1302</p> <p>other witnesses not excluded 1302, 1303</p> <p>number of attesters required to be called 1304, 2049</p> <p>number of signatures to be proved</p> <p>of attesters 1306</p> <p>of maker 1320</p> <p>proof of signature dispensed with 1321</p> <p>excuses for not calling the attester 1308, 1319</p> <p>death 1311</p> <p>ancient document 1311, 2138</p> <p>absence from jurisdiction 1312</p> <p>inability to find 1313</p> <p>name unknown 1314</p> <p>illness, loss of memory, imprisonment 1315</p> <p>incompetence by interest, etc. 1316</p> <p>refusal to testify 1317</p> <p>copy of recorded document 1318</p> <p>2. <i>Rule permitting attestation to be evidence</i></p> <p>exception to the Hearsay rule 1505</p> <p>attester must be deceased, etc. 1506</p>	<p>Attesting Witness (continued).</p> <p>who is an attester Section 1509, 1510</p> <p>implied purport of attestation 1511, 1512</p> <p>proof of maker's signature also 1513</p> <p>attester may be impeached or supported 1514</p> <p>using the depositions given at preliminary probate 1417</p> <p><i>prima facie</i> effect of 2500</p> <p>3. <i>Sundries</i></p> <p>disqualified by confession of falsehood 528</p> <p>by interest 581</p> <p>testifying without recollection 747</p> <p>may be impeached by proponent 917</p> <p>by self-contradiction 1088</p> <p>opinion to sanity 1936</p> <p>privilege of attorney, as attester of physician 2315, 2329</p> <p>parol evidence to explain signature of 2390</p> <p>attestation as a required formality 2406</p> <p>Attorney, testimony to value of services of 2456</p> <p>improper consultation with witness before trial 715</p> <p>offer of compromise by 788</p> <p>pleading drafted by, as an admission 1061</p> <p>admissions by, in general 1063</p> <p>judicial admissions 1062, 1078</p> <p>admissibility as a witness 2594</p> <p>notes of testimony taken by 1911</p> <p>consultation with sequestered witness 1669</p> <p>exclusion from court while a witness 1840</p> <p>office of, judicially noticed 1841</p> <p>power of; see AGENCY.</p> <p>privileged communications of; see ATTORNEY AND CLIENT.</p> <p>see also COUNSEL.</p> <p>Attorney and Client, Communications between,</p> <p>history and policy of the privilege 2290, 2291</p> <p>statutes 2292</p> <p>irrespective of litigation 2294</p> <p>non-legal purposes 2296</p> <p>prosecuting attorneys 2296</p> <p>conveyancing 2297</p> <p>criminal transaction 2298</p> <p>persons not attorneys 2300</p>
---	---	---

INDEX OF TOPICS.

Attorney and Client (continued).		Bank-note, forgery of, as evidence of intent	Section	Section
attorneys' clerks and agents	2301	expert witness to, qualifications of		318
client's belief	2302	person whose name is forged, not a preferred witness		570, 705
attorney as a friend	2303	Bank-officer, as an expert witness to genuineness of notes		570
time of consultation	2304	not a preferred witness		1839
communications, not conducted	2306	<i>prima facie</i> evidence of knowledge of insolvency		1854
documents	2307-2309	communications to, not privileged		2286
relevancy of communication	2310	Bankrupt, admissions of		1081, 1082, 1086
confidential nature	2311	declarations of intent by		1728, 1733
third person present	2311	privilege of husband or wife of		2235
joint attorney; opponent's presence	2312	against self-crimination by		2257, 2260, 2282
identity of client	2313	Barrator, other acts, to evidence a common		203
purpose of suit	2313	Bastardy, third person's character, as evidence		68
execution of will or deed	2314	third person's intercourse, as evidence		133
attorney as attesting witness	2315	resemblance of child, as evidence of paternity		166, 1154
communications by third persons	2317	procurement of abortion, as evidence of paternity		282
client's agents	2317	prior intercourse, as evidence of motive		398
client's documents	2318	mother's complaint in travail		1141
attorney's communications	2320	uncorroborated complainant in		2061
privilege is the client's	2321	using the mother's examination		1417
who may claim	2321	family hearsay as evidence		1492
inference from claim	2322	parent's testimony to		2063
termination of client's relation	2323	proof beyond a reasonable doubt		2498
indirect disclosure by attorney	2325	presumption of legitimacy in		2527
third person overhearing	2326	Battery; see HOMICIDE; SCHOOL-MASTER.		
waiver by testifying	2327	Beer, meaning of, judicially noticed		2582
by agent or assignee	2328	Belief, testifying to one's own belief or intent		581
by deceased client's representative	2329	belief as distinguished from knowledge		658
Authentication of a document; see EXECUTION.		testifying to another person's belief or intent		661
Authority as agent; see AGENCY.		belief in genuineness of handwriting		698
person in, obtaining a confession; see CONFESSION.		belief or impression as showing sufficient memory		726
of officer, presumed	2535	conduct and circumstances as evidence of; see KNOWLEDGE.		
judicially noticed	2576			
Autoptio Preference; see REAL EVIDENCE.				
Award; see ARBITRATOR.				
B.				
Balloon, loss by, presumed negligent				
	2508			
Ballot, production of original				
	1240			
disclosure of, privileged	2215			
mistake shown by parol	2421			
must be in writing	2452			
Bank, books of, original required				
	1223			
attested copy admitted	1683, 1710			
incorporation of, proved by repute	1625			
see also BOOKS OF ACCOUNT.				

INDEX OF TOPICS.

Section		Section		Section
318	Belladonna; see POISON.		Bill of Exchange (continued).	
370, 705	Beneficiary of insurance; see INSURANCE.		production of original; see ORIGINAL DOCUMENT.	
1839	Best Evidence, history and meaning	1173-1175, 1286	indorsement on, as statement against interest	1460, 1466
570	rule for producing originals; see ORIGINAL DOCUMENT.		delivery in escrow, shown by parol	2409, 2420
1839	rule for attesting witness; see ATTESTING WITNESS.		collateral agreement, shown by parol	2443-2445
1854	rule against hearsay; see HEARSAY RULE.		signed by mistake	2415-2419
2286	official documents as best evidence	1335	parol acceptance	2451
1082,	Bias, impeaching one's own witness by proof of	901	presumption of title from possession of	2516
1096	mode of evidencing, in general	943-948	of payment	2517, 2518
8, 1783	relationship, employment, etc.	919	protest of, as evidence; see NOTARY.	
2235	expressions and conduct	950, 1730	Bill of Lading, assent presumed	2537
2282	details of a quarrel	951	shown by parol	2415
203	preliminary inquiry	953	terms varied by parol	2432
68	contradiction by other witnesses	1005, 1022	presumption of excepted loss in	2309, 2337
173	restoring credit by consistent statements	1128	see also CONTRACT.	
1154	see also INTEREST; CORRUPTION.		Bill of Legislature; see STATUTE; LEGISLATIVE JOURNAL.	
282	Bible, as evidence of pedigree; see FAMILY HISTORY.		Birth, register of; see REGISTER OF MARRIAGE, BIRTH, AND DEATH.	
398	Bigamy, other offences, as evidence of intent or motive	360, 398	date of; see AGE.	
1141	disqualifying the wife as witness	605	declaration of, by deceased person; see FAMILY HISTORY.	
2061	eye-witness of marriage required	2085	reputation of	1605
1417	admissions of defendant sufficient	2086	see also RACE.	
1492	proof by husband or wife, privileged	2231	Birthmark, as evidence of events in pregnancy	159
2063	valid marriage presumed	2506	Black; see RACE.	
2496	Bill in Chancery, as a party's admission	1065	Blackmail, other offences as evidence of intent	352
2527	must be read with the answer	2111	Blank, delivery of document having a	2410, 2419
582	see also CHANCERY.		interpretation of a	2473
581	Bill of Discovery; see DISCOVERY.		indorsement in	2445
658	Bill of Exceptions, must exhibit grounds of objection	17, 18	Blindness, as disqualifying a witness	500
661	as evidence of former testimony	1668	as excusing production of attesting witness	1316
698	Bill of Exchange, evidence of forgery of; see FORGERY.		Blockade by belligerent, evidence of intent to evade	367
726	authority to accept, other transactions as evidence of	377	Blood, witness' experience with, as qualifying him	568
	impeaching one's own instrument	529	opinion testimony to	1975, 1977
	admissions of parties to	1084	Bloodhound; see ANIMAL.	
			Blotter-press copies, as originals	1234
			Bodily Injury; see CORPORAL INJURY.	
			Body, inspection of	2194, 2220, 2265

INDEX OF TOPICS.

Bona Fides; see KNOWLEDGE; MOTIVE; INTENT.	Section	Boundaries (continued).	Section
Bond, proof of execution of; see EXECUTION OF DOCUMENT.		of county or town, judicially noticed	2575
as impeaching the obligor-witness	960	Brands on animals, as evidence of ownership	150, 2152
production of original; see ORIGINAL DOCUMENT.		register of	1647
as part of the court files	1215	Breach of Promise of marriage, character of plaintiff as in issue or mitigating damages	75, 77
indorsement on, as statement against interest	1460, 1466	acts of nunchastity, as excusing or mitigating	206, 213
Bookkeeper, entries of; see REGULAR ENTRIES.		prior relations, as evidence	398
aiding recollection by entries; see RECOLLECTION.		defendant's wealth, provable by rep	1623
Books of science, used in evidence	1690	plaintiff. act, as <i>res gestæ</i>	1770
of history, used in evidence	1597, 1690	uncorroborated complainant in circumstantial evidence sufficient	2061
see also DOCUMENT; BOOKS OF ACCOUNT; PRINTED MATTER.		Bribery, by a party, as evidence of guilt	278
Books of Account, wife of party as witness to	612	other offences, as evidencing intent	343
used to aid recollection; see RECOLLECTION.		used to impeach one's own witness	901
of a bank, original required	1223	attempt to, as impeaching a witness	960, 962
of parties or deceased persons, as hearsay; see REGULAR ENTRIES.		contradiction as to, not collateral	1005, 1022
of a corporation or partnership, as admissions	1074	Bridge, defective; see HIGHWAY.	
production of original	1223	Brief of Evidence, to prove former testimony	1668
inspection of, before trial; see DISCOVERY.		Building; see PREMISES.	
putting in the whole	2118	Burden of Proof, and Presumptions	
making evidence by inspection	2125	1. <i>General Principles</i>	
privileged from production	2193, 2205, 2286	production of evidence by the parties	2483
Borrowing; see LOAN; DEBTOR.		evidence sought by the judge <i>ex mero motu</i> ; questions to witnesses by the judge	2484
Boundaries, evidenced by possession	378	<i>burden of proof</i> ; first meaning: risk of non-persuasion	2485
surveyor's testimony not required	1339	test for this burden; negative and affirmative allegations; facts peculiarly within a party's knowledge	2486
deceased persons' declarations exception to Hearsay rule	1563, 1564	second meaning: duty of producing evidence	2487
death of declarant	1565	test for this burden	2488
no interest to misrepresent	1566	shifting the burden of proof	2489
declarations on the land	1567	effect on inference from failure to call witness	291
declarant's knowledge	1568	<i>presumptions</i> ; legal effect of a presumption	2490
maps, surveys	1570		
opinion testimony to	1963		
ancient deed-recital of	1573		
reputation about			
kind of reputation	1583-1591		
form of reputation	1592-1595		
official surveys, to prove	1665		

INDEX OF TOPICS.

Section		Section		Section
	Burden of Proof (continued).		Burden of Proof (continued).	
2575	presumptions of law and	2491	execution and contents of docu-	2519
150, 2152	presumptions of fact	2492	ment: letters and telegrams	
1647	conclusive presumptions;	2493	execution of deeds (delivery,	2520
	rebuttable presumptions	2494	date, seal)	2521
75, 77	conflicting presumptions;	2495	ancient documents	2522
	counter presumptions	2496	lost grant or other document	
206, 213	<i>prima facie</i> evidence; suffi-	2497	lost will (contents and revo-	2523
398	cient evidence for the jury;	2498	cation)	2524
	scintilla of evidence	2499	spoliation of documents	2525
1623	direction of a verdict, ino-	2500	alteration of documents	2526
1770	tion for a nonsuit, and	2501	gifts (wife's separate estate,	2527
2061	demurrer to evidence, dis-	2502	child's advancement)	2528
	missed	2503	legitimacy	2529
2000	waiver of motion by sub-	2504	chastity; child-bearing	
	sequent introduction of	2505	identity of person (from name,	2530
278	evidence	2506	etc.)	2531
343	<i>measure of persuasion</i> : proof	2507	continuity; in general	2532
901	beyond a reasonable doubt;	2508	life and death	2533
960, 962	rule for criminal cases	2509	survivorship	
105, 1022	proof by preponderance of evi-	2510	seaworthiness	2534
	dence; rule for civil cases	2511	regularity; performance of	
1668	2. Burdens and Presumptions	2512	official duty and regularity	2535
	<i>in Specific Issues</i>	2513	of proceedings	2536
	sanity: testamentary and other	2514	appointment and authority	2537
	civil causes; suicide	2515	of officers	2538
	criminal causes	2516	of foreign law	2539
	undue influence and fraud: tes-	2517	contracts	
	tamentary causes	2518	statute of limitations	2447
	confidential relations of	2519	malicious prosecution	860
	grantee or beneficiary	2520	reduction of agreement to	484, 497,
	fraudulent conveyances	2521	writing	508, 560,
	against creditors	2522	confessions	584, C.1
	marriage: consent, from co-	2523	qualifications of witness	149, 153,
	habitation or ceremony	2524		238
	capacity, as affected by in-	2525	Burglary, tools, etc., as evidence of	
	tervening death, divorce,	2526	possession of stolen goods, as	
	or marriage	2527	evidence of	153, 2513
	negligence and accident: con-	2528	other crimes as evidence of	
	tributory negligence	2529	intent	351
	loss by bailee	2530	motive for	391
	defective machines, vehicles,	2531	evidence of identity	413
	and apparatus	2532	Business, course of, as evidence	
	death by violence	2533	of a transaction	94, 382
	crimes: innocence, malice,	2534	amount of, as evidence of ui-	462
	guilt, etc.	2535	sance, value, etc.	461
	self-defence, alibi	2536	stock of goods in, as evidence	
	possession of stolen goods	2537	of amount of	462
	capacity (infancy, intoxica-	2538	loss of patronage of, as evi-	
	tion, coverture)	2539	dence of injury	402
	ownership: possession of land	2540	entries in the course of; see	
	and personalty	2541	REGULAR ENTRIES.	
	possession of negotiable in-	2542	Bystander, exclamations of, dur-	
	strument	2543	ing <i>res gestæ</i>	1755
	payment: lapse of time	2544		
	possession of instrument	2545		

INDEX OF TOPICS.

C.

	Section
Calendar, used in evidence	1698
Calling a Witness	
out of the usual order; see	
EXAMINATION, III.	
as preventing impeachment;	
see IMPEACHMENT.	
Canada, conflict of laws of Em- pire, Dominion, and Provinces	6
Capacity, physical, as evidence	
of an act done	83-85
instances of human conduct, to evidence	220
of a weapon, machine, etc., as shown by its effects	441-461
presumption of, in marriage	2506
in testamentary cases	2500
in criminal cases	2514
mental, of a party; see SANITY;	
UNDUE INFLUENCE; TESTATOR.	
testimonial, of a witness; see	
WITNESS, I, <i>Qualifications</i> .	
Capital of a State or county, noticed	2575
Car; see VEHICLE.	
Carefulness, presumption of	2507, 2510
jury may use general knowl- edge to determine	2570
opinion as to	1949
see also NEGLIGENCE; SKILL.	
Carriage; see VEHICLE.	
Carrier, wife of plaintiff, as wit- ness against	612
loss by, presumed negligent	2508
see also BILL OF LADING.	
Case closed, calling a witness after; see EXAMINATION.	
Cash, regular entry to prove payment of	1539, 1549
Cattle, brands as evidence	150
see also ANIMALS.	
Cattleguard; see HEIGHT; SUF- FICIENCY.	
Cause of an illness, injury, ex- plosion, accident, etc., as evidenced by its effects	437-461
expert opinion as to	1976
Census, as evidence of population	1671
judicially noticed	2577
Ceremony of marriage, pre- sumed valid	2506
Certificate	
admissible when made by au- thority	
sundry officers	1674

	Section
Certificate (continued).	
private persons	1674
notary's protest	1675
deed-acknowledgment; oath	1852, 1676
certified copy	1677-1683
printed copy	1684
authenticated by seal or signa- ture	2162
presumed correct	2534
whether conclusive for	
married woman's acknowl- edgment	1847
election	1851
oath or acknowledgment	1852
of land-grant; see DEED.	
of entry of land-title; see DEED.	
of location of land-patent; see DEED.	
of marriage	
constitutionality of, as evi- dence	1398
made evidence by party's possession	268
admissible as a public docu- ment	1645
not required in bigamy, etc.	2088
presumed genuine, from cus- tody	2159
Certified Copy	
1. <i>Public Documents</i>	
scope of authority to certify	1677
time and manner of certi- fying	1677
certificate of effect or non- existence	1678
authentication of certified copy	1679
kinds of documents thus prov- able,	
sundry public records	1680
judicial records	1681
probate of wills	1681
lost deeds	1682
copy of whole required	2107-2111
attested by seal	2162
whether preferred to sworn copy	1273
excusing from production of attesting witness	1318
2. <i>Private Documents</i>	
bank-books, corporation rec- ords, parish registers, etc.	1664
see also COPY.	
rules in, distin- guish from rules at law	4

INDEX OF TOPICS.

Section		Section
1674	Chancery (continued).	6
1675	trials in Federal Courts of	1417
1852,	special rule for depositions	
1676	for cross-examining to char-	986
1677-1683	acter	2047
1684	for one witness to a bill	
	bill or answer in, as an admis-	1065
2162	sion	2110
2534	proving the whole of a decree	2111
	of bill, answer, and deposition	
	responsive parts of answer as	
	evidence	2121
1847	history of subpoena in	2190
1851	discovery from opponent in	1856, 1857,
1852		2218, 2219
	Character, distinguished from	
	reputation	52, 1608
	1. <i>As evidence or in issue</i>	52
	<i>Accused's character</i> as rele-	
	vant to show an act done	
	or not done	55
1898	good character always ad-	
	missible for him	56
268	presumption of	290
	bad character not admis-	
	sible against him	57
1045	prosecution may rebut	58
2088	kind of character	59
	time and place of character	60
2159	accused as witness	61
	failure to prove, as evidence	
	of bad character	290
1677	<i>Animal</i>	68
1677	<i>Complainant in rape</i> and sim-	
	ilar crimes	62
1678	for chastity, presumption of	2528
1679	<i>Deceased in homicide</i> , to evi-	
	dence aggression	63
	<i>Parties in civil cases</i> in gen-	
	eral	64
1680	in negligence	65
1681	in defamation	66
1681	in malpractice	67
1682	<i>Plaintiff</i> , in mitigation of dam-	
-2111	ages	70-76
2162	in issue for sundry purposes	77-80
	<i>Third persons</i> in general	68
1273	<i>Witness Impeached</i>	
1318	one's own witness	900
	actual character	920
	kind of character	922
	other traits than veracity	924
1664	time of character	927
	place of character	930
	mode of evidencing by con-	
4	duct; see <i>infra</i> , 2.	
	Character (continued).	
	mode of evidencing by repu-	
	tation; see <i>infra</i> , 2.	
	character as to sanity, skill,	
	etc.; see IMPEACHMENT.	
	attesting witness	1514
	<i>Witness Supported</i>	
	good character, in general	1104
	attesting witness	1514
	2. <i>Mode of evidencing by Con-</i>	
	<i>duct</i>	
	of an accused in a criminal	
	case	192-197,
		215-218
	privilege not to disclose	
	crimes	2268-2277
	of a deceased in homicide	198
	of a negligent party in a	
	civil case	199
	of a complainant in rape	200
	of an animal	201
	of a party, to show character	
	in issue	202-208
	of a party, to mitigate dam-	
	ages	209-218
	of a witness, in impeach-	
	ment	
	by other witnesses	979
	by conviction of crime	980
	by cross-examination to	
	misconduct	981
	privilege for disgracing	
	answers	985
	privilege for crimes	2268, 2277
	rumors of misconduct	988
	contradiction by other	
	witnesses	1005
	of a witness, in support	
	good character	1104
	impeaching the impeach-	
	ing witness	1111
	explaining away had re-	
	pute	1112
	denial of crime	1116
	consistent statements	1124
	3. <i>Mode of evidencing by Repu-</i>	
	<i>tation</i>	
	general principle of repu-	
	tation	1608-1610
	extent and place of repu-	
	tation	1612-1616
	time of reputation	1617, 1618
	kind of character that may	
	be thus proved	
	chastity, common offender,	
	etc.	1620

INDEX OF TOPICS.

<i>Character (continued).</i>	<i>Section</i>	<i>Chattel (continued).</i>	<i>Section</i>
sanity, temperance, etc.	1621	inspection or production of, compellable	2194, 2221, 2264
animals	1621	Cheat , other acts, to evidence a common cheat	203
solvency	1623	to evidence intent	321
sundry facts	1624-1628	see also FALSE REPRESENTATIONS .	
limitation of number of witnesses	1908	Check , evidence of forgery of; see FORGERY .	
qualifications of a witness to repnte	601	parol transaction collateral to instrument	1255, 1245, 2443
4. Mode of evidencing by Personal Opinion		see also BILL OF EXCHANGE; PAYMENT; DOCUMENT .	
defendant's moral character	1981, 1983	Chemical Matters , witness' experience as qualifying him	568
witness' moral character; belief on oath	1982, 1985	opinion testimony to	1975
skill, care, competence	1984	Chief , case in; see EXAMINATION, III .	
Charge to Jury , right of judge to give	2495, 2537, 2559	examination in; see DIRECT EXAMINATION .	
party offering evidence after	1879	Child , resemblance of, to show paternity	166, 1154
Charge and Discharge statements taken together	2117	appearance of, to evidence age	222, 1154
Chastity , character of complainant in rape, etc., to show consent	62	capacity to testify	505-509
character of the woman in seduction, etc., as mitigating damages or in issue	75-80	to take the oath	1820, 1821, 1825
conduct, to evidence rape-complainant's character for	200	to testify, though not capable of perjury	1832
mitigation of damages, as affected by lack of	210-213	corroboration required as witness	2066
character in issue, as involving acts of unchastity	204-206	presumption of advancement to	2526
provable by reputation	1620	of gratuitous services by	2526
presumption of	2528	see also ADVANCEMENT; AGE; INFANT .	
of a witness, in impeachment; see IMPEACHMENT .		Childbearing , presumption against	2528
Chattel , possession of stolen; see STOLEN GOODS .		Chinese as witness; see RACE .	
failure to produce, as evidence	291	Chose in action , admissions of assignor	1082
value, as evidence of price agreed	392	Church , register of; see REGISTER OF MARRIAGE, BIRTH, AND DEATH .	
marks, as evidence of identity	150, 413	law of; see ECCLESIASTICAL LAW .	
sales of other goods, as evidence of value	463	Circumstantial evidence, defined	25
condition or quality of, as shown by effects, etc.	437-461	relative value of	26
qualifications of a witness to value; see VALUE .		general theory of	38
whether production in court is necessary	1181, 1182	classification of	43
words accompanying delivery of	1777	may be proved by the same kind	41
inspection of, before trial	1862	criminal's identity as evidenced by traces	148
obtained by illegal search	2183	sufficiency for <i>corpus delicti</i>	2081
		proof beyond reasonable doubt	2497

INDEX OF TOPICS.

Section		Section		Section
104, 2221, 2264	City charter, ordinance, bound- ary, etc., judicially noticed ordinance proved by printed copy	2675	1084	Co-obligee, admissions of 1081
203 321	Civil cases, parties in, character of	68	1778	Co-obligor, admissions of 1077
ONS.	Claim of Title, as part of <i>res gesta</i>	1778		Co-party, admissions of 1076 see also CO-DEFENDANT; CO-INDICTEE; PARTY.
5, 1245, 2443	Classification of the rules of evidence	3		Co-promissee, admissions of 1061
	of the rules of admissibility	11		Co-promisor, admissions of 1077
	of circumstantial evidence	43		Co-tortfeasor, admissions of 1079
	of the rules of relevancy	24		Cohabitation, as evidence of marriage 268, 2083
	of prospectant evidence	51		as evidence of adultery, etc.; see ADULTERY; INCEST; MARRIAGE.
568 1976	Clergyman, confession to, not excluded 840			presumption of marriage from 2506
	privileged communications to entries of; see REGULAR EN- TRIES; REGISTER. 2394			Coin, evidence of counterfeiting; see COUNTERFEITING.
	Clerk using an entry to aid recol- lection; see RECOLLECTION.			expert witness to genuineness of 570
	entries of a deceased; see REGULAR ENTRIES.			Collateral evidence, admitted to rebut other collateral evi- dence 16
36, 1154 22, 1154 505-509 0, 1821, 1826	of public officer or court; see CERTIFIED COPY.			inadmissible when irrelevant 39
	of an attorney, admissions of 1063			of crimes, to show intent, etc. 216, 300
	signature presumed genuine 2164			contradiction of witness by; see CONTRADICTION; SELF- CONTRADICTION.
	communications to, not privi- leged 2286, 2301, 2317			privilege of a witness against disgrace by 986
1832	Client; see ATTORNEY; PARTIES.			contents of a document col- laterally in issue 1262
2066	privileged communications of; see ATTORNEY AND CLIENT.			attesting witness to a docu- ment collaterally in issue 1291
2526 2326	Close of Case, evidence offered after; see EXAMINATION, III.			Collision, other instances, as evi- dencing a defect 458 see also NEGLIGENCE.
ANT. 2528	Clothing, as evidence of identity 413, 660			Color, as impeaching a witness or evidencing race; see RACE.
	testimony to value of; see VALUE.			Color of Title, deed admitted as 1653, 1655, 1778, 2132
1082	exhibition to jury 1157			Commerce, facts of, judicially noticed 2580
	Co-conspirator, admissions of, in general 1079			Commercial Agency, commu- nications to, not privileged 2286
	as part of <i>res geste</i> 1797			Commercial Lists used in evi- dence 1702
	Co-defendant, impeached 967, 968			Commission, mode of taking tes- timony on; see DEPOSITION.
	admissions of 1076			former testimony before, whether admissible 1373
	husband or wife of, privileged 2236			certificate of; see CERTIFICATE.
	accused's failure to call 2273			Commitment to an insane asy- lum; see SANITY.
25 26 38 43	see also DEFENDANT; CO-INDICTEE.			Common Carrier, loss by, pre- sumed negligent 2508
41	Co-indictee, disqualification as witness 580			
	wife of, disqualification as a witness 609			
148 2081 2497	impeachable when called by co-party 916			
	impeached by his situation 967			
	admissions of 1076			
	see also ACCOMPLICE.			

INDEX OF TOPICS.

Common Carrier (continued).		Conclusiveness (continued).	
bill of lading by, burden of proof for	2587	of judicial notice	2567
Common law, trials at, in Federal courts	6	of judicial admission	2580
see also CHANCERY.		of ordinary admission	1088
Common Offender, other acts to evidence character	208	distinguished from parol evidence rule	2458
prior conviction, to increase sentence	196	Condition, of a human being as to health, etc.; see HEALTH; SANITY.	
provable by reputation	1620	of a highway, machine, plow, weapon, etc., as evidenced by effects, etc.	437-452
Communications, privilege for; see PRIVILEGE, II.		Condition Precedent, shown by parol evidence	2408, 2420
Comparison of Hands; see HANDWRITING.		burden of proof of performance of	2587
Competence, of evidence; see ADMISSIBILITY.		Conditional admissibility	14, 40
of employee; see EMPLOYEE.		Conduct, as evidence; see CHARACTER; CONSCIOUSNESS OF GUILT, OF INNOCENCE; INTENT; DESIGN; IDENTITY; KNOWLEDGE; SANITY; MARRIAGE; DEMEANOR.	
of physician; see PHYSICIAN.		Confession of Crime, rules of, applicable to accused persons only	815
of persons in general; see SKILL; NEGLIGENCE.		history of the rules	817-820
of witnesses in general; see WITNESS, I, <i>Qualifications.</i>		what is a confession	821
Complaint, of rape; see RAPE.		principles of exclusion	822-826
admissions in pleading	1063	person in authority	827-830
failure to make, as an admission	284	nature of the inducement	831-841
Compromise, offer to, as an admission	1061	under arrest or on examination by magistrate	842-852
Compulsory Process.		time and ending of the inducement	853-855
to obtain witnesses		confirmation by subsequent facts	856-859
history	2180	burden of proof	860
constitutional guaranty	2191	judge and jury	861, 862
use against Executive	2369	sundry rules	863
exemptions from; see PRIVILEGE.		value of confessions	866
to compel answers; see PRIVILEGE.		of perjury, as impeaching a witness	959
to compel bodily exposure	2194, 2216, 2220, 2265	of judgment, as an admission	1061
confession obtained by; see CONFESSION.		of principal or co-conspirator	1079
Compurgation; see WAGER OF LAW.		report of prior testimony used as	1328
Concealment, as evidence of guilt	276	of crime by a third person, as hearsay	1476
of a document	291, 1198, 1199	whether alone sufficient to convict	
Conclusiveness, of official certificates or records	1345-1352	respondent in divorce	2067
of magistrate's report of testimony	1349	accused in general	2070
of enrolled statute	1350	bigamy, etc.	2086
of certificate of election	1351	whole must be proved	2097, 2099
of certificate of election	1351	may be proved	2115, 2119
constitutionality of statutes declaring	1353		
of presumption	2492		

INDEX OF TOPICS.

Section		Section		Section
2567	Confession of Crime (continued). distinguished from self-crimi- nation	2266	Constitutional Rules (continued). validity of admission of absent witness' testimony.	2595
2590		2394		effect of waiver by judicial admission
1058	Confidential Communication, confession not privileged as privileged kinds; see PRIVI- LEGE.	823, 841	Construction of other machines, buildings, etc., as evidence of danger, etc.	437, 451, 461
2453				of a document; see PAROL EVIDENCE RULE, D.
	Confidential Relations of gran- tee, presuming fraud from	2503	Consul, privilege of	2372
437-492	Conflict of Laws, rule of evi- dence applicable, in general	5	certificate of	1674
408, 2420		6	Contempt, for not obeying com- pulsory process	
2537	between U. S. and State laws of evidence	6	power of officer summoning	2193
14, 40	stamped documents and cer- tified copies	1680, 1681, 2184	excuse of witness	2204
	between Dominion and Provin- cial laws of evidence in Canada	6	refusal to disclose irrelevant matter	2210
	between Imperial and Cana- dian laws of evidence	6	exemption of executive from process	2369
	Conflict of Presumptions	2493	proof beyond a reasonable doubt	2493
	Confrontation, right of; see HEARSAY RULE, I.		Contents, of a document; see WILL; DOCUMENT.	
815	Congress, privilege of member of	2375	Continuance, absent witness' testimony admitted to avoid	2595
817-820	see also LEGISLATURE.		Continuity, presumption of	2590
821	Consciousness of guilt, as evi- dence, general theory	173	of physical or external condi- tion	225, 437
822-826	conduct, as evidence of	265-293	Contradiction of a witness, to impeach him	
827-830	see also KNOWLEDGE.		one's own witness	907
831-841	Consciousness of innocence, as evidence	174, 293	general theory	1000
842-852	Consent, presumption of, to marriage	2505	collateral facts excluded	1001
853-855	see also CONTRACT; BILL OF LADING.		material facts	1004
856-859	Consideration, words as <i>res</i> <i>gestæ</i>, to show	1777	facts of bias, skill, etc.	1005
860	recital of, varied by parol	2433	cross-examination	1006
861, 862	presumption of	2520	supporting the witness	1007
863	Consistent statements by a wit- ness; see WITNESS, III.		of an explanatory statement	952, 1046
866	Conspirator; see CO-CONSPIRATOR.		<i>falsus in uno</i> , as a rule for re- jecting testimony	1003
959	Constitutional Rules, in general	7	falsity must be wilful and ma- terial	1013, 1014
1061	affecting legislative power to alter the law of evidence	7	Contributory Negligence, not presumed	2507, 2510
1079	forbidding <i>ex post facto</i> laws	7	see also NEGLIGENCE.	
1328	requiring formalities for en- acting a bill	1350, 2592	Contract, course of business as evidence of	94, 372
1476	whether testimony may be de- clared conclusive	1353	intention as evidence of	112
2067	sanctioning right of confronta- tion	1397	belief as evidence of	272
2070	requiring full faith and credit to State records	1631	other transactions, as evidence of terms of	377, 379
2086	for compulsory process	2191	value of goods or services, as evidence of price agreed in	392
2099			utterances of, as <i>res gestæ</i>	1770
2119			meaning of, by opinion evidence 1969, 1971	

INDEX OF TOPICS.

Contract (continued).	Section	Conviction of Crime (continued).	Section
putting in the whole	2105, 2115	of principal, used against ac-	
discharge by parol	2441, 2455	cessory	107
condition precedent, shown by		of third person, to exonerate	
parol	2408, 2410,	accused	14
	2420	of accused, to increase sentence	19
of warranty, shown by parol	2434	Copy of a Document	
burden of proof in	2536	1. <i>When must the original be</i>	
jury or judge to interpret	2556	<i>produced; see ORIGINAL</i>	
calling the attesting witness;		DOCUMENT.	
<i>see ATTESTING WITNESS.</i>		2. <i>Rules for proof of copy, when</i>	
production of original; <i>see</i>		<i>original's non-production is</i>	
ORIGINAL DOCUMENT.		<i>excused</i>	
interpretation of; <i>see PAROL</i>		nature of copy-testimony	120
EVIDENCE RULE, D.		copy preferred to recollec-	
Conversation, by an interpreter,		tion of contents	1268-127
testimony to	668	party's admission	125
by telephone, testimony to	669	witness' admission	125
meaning of, proved by opinion		public record	126
evidence	1969	record of conviction	127
whole must be proved	2097, 2099	foreign statute	127
may be proved	2115, 2119	duplicate, distinguished from	
Conversion; see TROVER.		copy	123
words accompanying the tak-		kinds of recollection-wit-	
ing, as <i>res gesta</i>	1777	nesses	127
Conveyance, of property, as evi-		examined and sworn copies	127
dence of a weak case	282	copy of a copy	127
privilege for advice in drafting	2297	personal knowledge of cor-	
record of; <i>see RECORDED CON-</i>		rectness	127
VEYANCE.		cross-reading	127
Conviction of Crime		press-copies, etc.	1280, 201
<i>Disqualification by</i>	519	photographic copies	797, 201
general principles	519	calling the copyist	128
kind of crime	520	3. Official or certified copy	
judgment controls	521	when admissible; <i>see CER-</i>	
conviction in another juris-		TIFIED COPY.	
diction	522	not preferred to sworn copy	127
removal of disqualification		4. Sundries	
by pardon, etc.	523	copy of printed matter, as a	
statutory changes	524	sample to identify	44
proving by cross-examina-		of paper used to aid recollec-	
tion without copy	1270	tion	749, 76
whole of the record	2110	of lost document judicially	
<i>Impeachment by</i>		established	134
general principle	980, 987	of lost ancient deed	214
asking on cross-examination	980, 1270	of printed decisions and	
producing a record-copy	1270	statutes	168
restoring credit after	1106, 1116,	proving the whole of the origi-	
	1117	nal	
identifying by name	2529	lost documents	2105-210
<i>Sundries</i>		public records	2108, 210
of witness, excusing absence		judicial records	211
of a deponent	1409	furnished on demand before	
of an attesting witness	1316, 1506	trial; <i>see DISCOVERY.</i>	
of a declarant of facts		authentication by seal or signa-	
against interest	1456	ture	216

INDEX OF TOPICS.

Section		Section		Section
1079	Copyright, infringement of, other acts showing intent	371	Corporation (<i>continued</i>).	
142	summary of contents, to prove infringement	1230	poration, proved by certified copy	1680
196	Coroner, confession made on examination before	242	proved by reputation	1625
	report of former examination of witness before, whether preferred	1326, 1340	seal, presumed genuine	2169
	whether admissible	1667	privilege against self-crimination	2259
1204	former testimony before, without cross-examination	1374	officer liable to subpoena <i>duces tecum</i>	2200
1266-1271	inquest of death, as evidence testifying before, as a waiver of privilege	1671	discovery from	2218
1255	Corporal Injury, repairs of premises after, as evidence of negligence	2376	negotiable instrument signed by officer of	2444
1259	appearance of a wound, as indicating distance of assailant	457	Corpus delicti, as negatived by survival of the alleged deceased	138
1269	opinionative testimony to	663	proof required, to corroborate confession	2070
1270	qualifications of witness to	688	direct testimony required	2081
1271	exhibition to the jury, whether allowable	1157, 1158	Correspondence, acquaintance with, as qualifying a witness to handwriting	702
1272	whether compellable	2220	putting in the whole	2104, 2120
1273	expressions of pain caused by <i>res gestae</i> statements after	1718	reply-letter presumed genuine	2153
1274	inspection of, before trial	1747	Corroboration of a Witness	
1278	privilege against inspection of	1862	1. Modes of supporting an Impeached Witness; see WITNESS, III, RESTORATION OF CREDIT.	
1279	opinion testimony to	2194, 2220, 2265	2. Kinds of witnesses required to be Corroborated though unimpeached	
1280, 2019	inspection of, compellable	2194, 2220, 2265	treason	2036
797, 2019	privilege for communications to physician	2380	perjury	2040
1281	presumption of negligence from	2507-2510	sundry crimes	2044
	See also NEGLIGENCE; ILLNESS; DAMAGES.		divorce	2046
	Corporation, disqualification of opponent as witness to a transaction with a deceased officer of	578	chancery	2047
	books and records of, as admissions	1074, 1076	wills	2048-2052
	as official records	1061	usage or custom	2053
	as regular entries	1542, 1547	sundry civil cases	2054
	original books not produced	1223	accomplice	2056
	conclusive proof of proceedings	1346, 2451	prosecutrix in rape, bastardy, etc.	2061
	inspection before trial	1858	parent bastardizing issue	2062
	copy of whole required	2109, 2116	surviving claimant	2065
	proved by certified copy	1683, 1710	children, Chinese, etc.	2066
	certificate or charter of incorporation		confessions	
			divorce respondent	2067
			accused	2070
			3. Sundries	
			confession, corroborated by subsequent facts	856
			utterances identifying a time or place	416
			Corruption of a witness, as impeaching him	956-964
			of one's own witness	901

INDEX OF TOPICS.

Corruption (continued).	Section	Creditor, of partnership, repute as evidence of knowledge of	Section
willingness or offer to testify falsely	957-958	of an insolvent, transfers as evidence of intent to defraud	333
confession of false testimony	959	debtor's admissions used against	1061, 1062, 1094
attempt at subornation	960, 962	indorsement of payment, by, as statement against interest	1400, 1406
receipt of money	961	utterances showing to whom credit was given	1777
sundry corrupt conduct	963	possessor's utterances, used against	1779
preliminary inquiry to witness	964	presumptions applicable to sale in fraud of	2504
contradiction by other witnesses	1005, 1022	Crime, by a third person, as exonerating an accused	139-142
Counsel, comment of, on failure to produce evidence	285-291	evidence admissible, though it involves	215
cross-examination by more than one	783	other crimes, as evidence of intent, knowledge, or design	300-367
statements by, as admissions	1003, 1006	constitutionality of statute defining	1354
notes of testimony taken by	1600	privilege not to disclose; see SELF-CRIMINATION.	
reading scientific books to jury	1700	confession of, by a third person	1476
stating facts in argument	1806	see also CONVICTION OF CRIME; CRIMINAL TRIAL; INTENT; DEFENDANT.	
in offering evidence or questioning witness	1808	Criminal Conversation, character of plaintiff as mitigating damages	75, 76
taking the stand as witness	1911	conduct of plaintiff as mitigating damages	210
claiming privilege for witness	2270	conduct of defendant at other times, to show motive	398
authority to make judicial admissions	2504	expressions of husband or wife showing feelings	1730
See also ATTORNEY AND CLIENT; ATTORNEY.		eye-witness of marriage required	2085
Counter-claim, agreement of, shown by parol	2436	marital privilege in	2239, 2338
Counterfeiting, possession of materials, as evidence of other crimes, as evidence of intent	153, 238	Criminal Intent; see INTENT.	
Counterpart, as equivalent to original	1232	Criminal Trial, rules of evidence in, the same as in civil trial	4
County ordinance, boundary, etc., judicial notice of	2575	in Federal courts, rules applicable in	6
Course of business, as evidence of an act done	92	injured person's admissions in exhibition of weapons or wounds to jury	1076
Court, record of; see JUDICIAL RECORD.		history of rule for original documents in	1177
adjournment of, as affecting publicity	1835	notice to produce original in	1205
exclusion of witnesses from	1837	right of confrontation in	1397
seal of, presumed genuine	2184	list of witnesses to the accused in	1850
officers and rules of, judicially noticed	2578		
see also VIEW; TRIAL; JUDGE.			
Coverture, presumption of coercion during	2514		
see also MARRIAGE.			
Credibility of a witness; see IMPEACHMENT; WEIGHT; WITNESS, III.			
Credit, knowledge of falsity of representations as to, evidenced by repute	256		

INDEX OF TOPICS.

Section		Section
254	Criminal Trial (continued).	
333	eye-witnesses of crime re-	
1081, 1082, 1096	quired	2076
1400, 1466	proof of <i>corpus delicti</i>	2070, 2081
1777	tender of witness' expenses in	2201
1770	marital privilege in	2230
2504	patient's privilege in	2395
130-142	proof beyond a reasonable	
215	doubt in	2407
300-367	burden of proof in general	2511-2514
1354	see also DEFENDANT; CHARACTER;	
1476	CRIME.	
ME;	Cross-examination	
NT;	I. <i>Right to a Cross-examination</i>	
75, 76	theory and art of	1362, 1365, 1367, 1368
210	constitutional guarantee of	1307
308	exclusion of testimony or depo-	
1730	sition not subjected to cross-	
2085	examination; see HEARSAY	
239, 2338	RULE, I.	
4	admission of testimony or	
6	deposition of absent person	
1076	already cross-examined; see	
1157	HEARSAY RULE, I.	
1177	exceptional admission of hear-	
1205	say statements made out of	
1397	court; see HEARSAY RULE,	
1850	II, III.	
	testimony excluded for insuffi-	
	ciency of	1390-1393
	testimony excluded for non-	
	responsive answers	1392
	right to cross-examine to ad-	
	missibility of a confession	801
	showing document to oppo-	
	nent before	1861
	what witnesses may be sub-	
	jected to	
	witness sworn by mistake	1893
	called but not sworn	1893
	sworn but not questioned	1893
	producing or proving a docu-	
	ment	1893, 1894
	one's own witness	914
	<i>voir dire</i>	1384
	of a deposition, excluded	
	if direct answers are excluded	1893
	or not offered	1893
	of non-taker using the whole	1893
	II. <i>Mode of interrogation</i>	
	theory and art of	1367, 1368
	putting hypothetical questions	
	on	686
	specifying grounds of recollec-	
	tion on	730
	Cross-examination (continued).	
	use of a memorandum of recol-	
	lection on	753, 762, 764
	use of a deposition to refresh	
	recollection	761
	leading questions on	773
	misleading questions on	780
	intimidating and annoying	
	questions on	781
	repetition of questions on	782
	multiple cross-examiners	783
	length of	783
	non-responsive answers on	785
	improper offer of evidence	
	on	1806
	III. <i>Order of Topics and Wit-</i>	
	nesses (<i>Cross and Direct</i>)	
	order and time of examina-	
	tion	1807
	postponement and waiver	1884
	offering documents	1884
	putting in one's own case	1885-1891
	who may be cross-examined;	
	see <i>supra</i> , I.	
	stating the purpose of a ques-	
	tion on	1871
	re-cross-examination	1807
	recall for re-cross-examination	1890
	see also EXAMINATION.	
	IV. <i>Methods of Using for Im-</i>	
	peachment	
	to impeach rape-complainant	
	as to chastity	200
	to impeach a witness	
	general theory	878
	one's own witness	914
	breadth of scope	944
	bias or quarrels	951
	conviction of crime	980, 1270
	other misconduct	981-983
	rumors of misconduct	988
	testing a witness' grounds	
	of knowledge	994
	testing a witness' recollec-	
	tion	995
	manner of questioning	780, 781
	leading questions	773
	repetition of questions	782
	collateral facts	1006
	self-contradictions	1023
	by preliminary warning	1025
	expert witness, to value	463
	to handwriting	2015
	to scientific books	1700
	experts in general	991

INDEX OF TOPICS.

Cross-examination (<i>continued</i>).			
restoring credit after . . .	1106, 1117, 1131		
privilege not to criminate . . .	2268, 2277		
to impeach a party as witness accused	880, 2277		
civil opponent	916		
account-books	1554		
V. Sundries			
to contents of a document	1255, 1259		
prior deposition	1262		
Crossing of railway; see HIGHWAY; NEGLIGENCE; REPAIRS.			
Cross-reading of a document copied	1279		
Cruelty, other persons' conduct, as a standard of	461		
by husband to wife; see HOMICIDE.			
Cumulative witnesses excluded	1907		
Curative admissibility	15		
Custodian's certified copy; see CERTIFIED COPY.			
Custom, as evidence of doing an act	92		
other instances, as evidence of tenor	376, 379		
in other factories, etc., as evidence of safety, etc.	461		
witness' experience in	565		
concerning land-rights; see REPUTATION.			
proved by opinion	1954		
by one witness	2053		
judicially noticed	2580		
see also HABIT; USAGE.			
Customers, names of, as privileged	2212		
Customs Dues; see IMPORTATION.			
D.			
Damages, character of plaintiff in mitigation of	70-76		
conduct, to prove character in mitigation of	209-213		
opinion testimony to	1942		
impeaching a verdict determined by average	2354		
amount of, as evidenced by other transactions; see CONTRACTS; VALUE.			
other defamatory utterances, to increase; see DEFAMATION.			
Danger, of machine or place, evidence of owner's knowledge of	262		
other instances of injury, etc., as evidence of	451-461		
opinion as to	1949		
risk of fire; see INSURANCE.			
Date; see TIME.			
Daughter; see SEDUCTION.			
Daybook of regular entries	1548, 1558		
Deaf-mute may be a witness	498		
interpreter's qualifications	571		
necessity of interpreter	811		
impeachment of	934		
Death, as evidenced by lack of news	158		
of opponent, not necessary for using admissions	1049		
of attesting witness	1311		
of declarant of facts against interest	1456		
of pedigree-declarant	1481		
of maker of regular entries	1521, 1561		
statement of time or place of; see FAMILY HISTORY.			
reputation of	1605		
register of; see REGISTER OF MARRIAGE, BIRTH, AND DEATH.			
as excusing lack of cross-examination	1390		
as allowing use of deposition	1403		
provable by coroner's inquisition	1671		
as affecting marital privilege	2237, 2341		
patient's privilege	2387, 2391		
client's privilege	2323, 2329		
presumed, to validate a marriage	2506		
negligence presumed from	2510		
absence raises presumption of	2531		
De bene esse; see DEPOSITION.			
Debt, prior indebtedness, as evidence	382		
as evidence of motive	392		
see also PAYMENT; CONTRACT; CREDITOR.			
Debtor, indorsement of payment by, as statement against interest	1460, 1466		
utterances in possession, used against creditor	1779		
see also CREDITOR.			
Deceased Declarant; see DYING DECLARATION.			

INDEX OF TOPICS.

Section		Section
252	Deceased by Homicide, character of, to evidence self-defence	
151-401	threats of, to evidence self-defence	63, 216
1949	survival of, to negative <i>corpus delicti</i>	110, 247
	suicidal plans of, to evidence an accused's innocence	133
3, 1558	acts of violence by, to evidence self-defence	143
498		198, 248
571	Deceased Person in General, disqualification of surviving opponent as witness	578
811	disqualification of wife of	610
934	admissions of	1081
158	character of, to prove negligence	65
1049	use of account-books for or against	1554
1311	hearsay statements of, admissible	
1456	dying declaration; see DYING DECLARATION.	
1481	facts against interest; see AGAINST INTEREST.	
1561	pedigree; see FAMILY HISTORY.	
	attesting witness; see ATTESTING WITNESS.	
1605	regular entries; see REGULAR ENTRIES.	
	private boundaries; see BOUNDARIES.	
1390	ancient deed-recitals; see RECITALS.	
1403	disinterested persons in general	1576
	see also DEATH.	
1671	Deceased Witness, former testimony of; see FORMER TESTIMONY.	
2341	Decision; see JUDICIAL DECISION.	
2391	Declaration, of intent, used to interpret a document	2471
2329	of deceased person; see DECEASED PERSON.	
2506	Dedication	
2510	words accompanying, as <i>res gesta</i>	1777
2531	opinion evidence of intent of	1967
382	Dedimus Potestatem; see DEPOSITION.	
392		
1466		
779		
	Deed, execution or delivery of, as evidenced by possession of it	157
	mode of proving forgery of; see FORGERY.	
	impeaching one's own possession under, as evidence of boundaries	529
	original must be produced; see ORIGINAL DOCUMENT.	378
	calling the attesting witness; see ATTESTING WITNESS.	
	recitals in, as admissible; see RECITALS.	
	land-grant of government	1225, 1239
	certificate of acknowledgment of, whether conclusive	1349, 1352
	registration of, whether conclusive	1352
	contents of lost deed, recited in another	1573
	as showing reputation of boundary	1592
	execution of, proved by certificate of acknowledgment	1676
	words accompanying gift by	1777
	location of description in, by opinion	1965
	substance of contents of lost	1957, 2105
	thirty years old, presumed genuine	2137-2146
	filed in official records, presumed genuine	2159
	privilege for title-deeds	2211
	recital of consideration in, varied by parol	2433
	condition precedent, shown by parol	2408, 2420
	absolute in form, shown by parol to be security only	2437
	interpretation of	2458
	burden of proof of capacity of grantor	2500
	presumption from confidential relations	2503
	presumption of delivery, date, seal, etc.	2520
	of lost grant	2522
	of alteration before execution	2525
	of identity of grantor or grantee	2529
	see also DOCUMENT; EXECUTION; HANDWRITING; RECORDED CONVEYANCE.	

INDEX OF TOPICS.

De facto officer, document made by	Section 1633
celebrant of marriage	2503
appointment presumed	2535
Defamation, character of plaintiff, to evidence innocence	66
character of plaintiff, to mitigate damages	70-74
acts of plaintiff, to justify or to mitigate damages	207, 209
other acts, to evidence intent	367
other utterances, to evidence malice	403-406
other persons' libels, as a standard of criticism	461
meaning of, by opinion evidence	1971
whole of an utterance to be proved	2097, 2115, 2119
proof of charge beyond reasonable doubt	2498
testimony before grand jury, not privileged	2363
official reports, privileged	2375
Defect; see NEGLIGENCE.	
presumption of, from accident	2509
Defendant	
character of accused, as evidence	55-57
time of character	60
kind of character	57-59
accused as witness	61
character of a civil defendant	64-67
threats of accused, to prove crime	105
mode of evidencing character by conduct	
of accused	192-196
of civil party negligent	199
of deceased in homicide	198
of character in issue	202
of character to mitigate damages	209
mode of evidencing skill or strength	220, 221
sanity	228, 231
mental capacity	228
knowledge or belief; see KNOWLEDGE.	
consciousness of guilt; see CONSCIOUSNESS OF GUILT.	
history of accused's disqualification as witness	575
statutory abolition of the same	579
co-defendants as witnesses	580

Defendant (continued).	Section
wife of, as witness	60
testifying to his own intent	58
confessions of; see CONFESSIONS.	
admissions of; see ADMISSIONS.	
impeachable like other witnesses, when called for himself	890
when called for the opponent	916
may impeach a co-defendant	916
admissions of a co-defendant	1076
statements when found with stolen goods	1777, 1781
silence of, as an admission	1071
prejudice to, by exhibition of wounds, etc.	1157
magistrate's report of examination of	1326, 1349
expressions of intent or motive	1732
right to be present at a view	1803
opinion testimony to capacity of confession of accused, sufficiency of	2070
examination of accused before magistrate; see DEPOSITION; FORMER TESTIMONY.	
privilege against self-crimination	2276
see also CO-INDICTEE.	
Definition, of evidence	1
Degree of probative value required for relevancy	38
of evidence; see BEST EVIDENCE; COPY.	
Delay, in complaining or suing, as evidence	284
Delivery by mail, express, or telegraph	95
of a deed, as evidenced by possession of it	157
of a document, proved without production	1248
of a deed, shown conditional by parol evidence	2408, 2420
Demand for a document; see NOTICE TO PRODUCE.	
Demeanor, of accused, as evidence of guilt	273, 274
under the right of confrontation	1395, 1399
of a witness, as affecting credibility	946
Demurrer to evidence	2495, 2589
to claim barred by statute of limitations	2538

INDEX OF TOPICS.

Section		Section
609	Dentist, privileged communication to	2382
581	Deposition	
	I. <i>Right of Cross-examination of Deponent</i>	
	notice required	1377-1383
	plural depositions	1379
	issues and parties the same	1386-1388
	either party may use	1389
	non-responsive answers	1392
	sweeping Interrogatories	1392
	II. <i>Right of Confrontation of Deponent</i>	
	constitutional guarantee	1397
	excuses for non-attendance (death, illness, non-residence, imprisonment, etc.)	1402-1413
	proof of the excuse	1414
	witness present in court	1415
	opponent's deposition	1416
	deposition used to impeach deponent	1416
	malicious prosecution	1416
	chancery depositions	1417
	probate and bastardy examinations	1417
	chancery and <i>dedimus potestatem</i>	1417
	<i>perpetuam memoriam</i>	1412, 1417
	III. <i>Sundries</i>	
	objection to, time of making	18, 486
	used to aid recollection	761, 764
	mode of interrogation in; see QUESTION.	
	prepared beforehand to suggest answers	787
	officer taking, not to be party's agent or kinsman	803
	transcription of answers to be literal	804
	reading over and signing	805
	used to refresh the recollection of one's own witness	904
	used by opponent, as preventing impeachment	912, 913
	discrediting its mode of preparation	996
	impeachment by self-contradiction	1031
	annexing a copy of a document to	1185
	producing original	1215
	cross-examination on a prior deposition	1262
	taking an attesting witness' deposition	1312
	Deposition (continued).	
	magistrate's report of examination preferred	1326, 1349
	written deposition required to be used	1331
	mode of taking	1376, 1380, 1401
	statement in, to evidence pedigree	1495
	certificate of taking of	1676
	certified copy of; see CERTIFIED COPY.	
	liability of deponent for perjury	1832
	cross-answers excluded	
	when direct answers are	1893
	when taker does not offer	1893
	non-taker using may not impeach	1893
	putting in the whole	2103, 2111, 2115
	power of officer to compel answer	2195
	persons privileged to testify by attendance from a distance not required	2205, 2206 2207
	see also DISCOVERY; EXAMINATION.	
	Deputy Officer, document made by	1633
	Description, in deed, interpretation of; see PAROL EVIDENCE RULE, D.	
	Design, as evidence of an act done	102-113
	conduct, preparation, etc., as evidence of	237-240
	other crimes, as evidence of	300-367
	statements of	1725, 1735
	Destruction of evidence, as indicating guilt	278
	of document, as evidence of contents	291
	as excusing production	1193
	of other property, as evidence of a nuisance	451
	Detective, impeached by his interest or bias	949, 969
	confession made to; see CONFESSIO.	
	De ventre inspiciendo, writ of	2220
	Devisee, admissions of	1081
	see also WILL; EXECUTOR.	
	Diagram, as a mode of testifying	790
	Dictionaries, used in evidence	1699
	judicially noticed	2582
	Difficulty, of work, etc., as shown by instances	460

INDEX OF TOPICS.

Diligence in search for lost document.	Section 1194	Discovery (continued).	Section
in search for attesting witness	1313	from opponent in chancery at the trial	2218
Diplomatic Officer; see AMBASSADOR; CONSUL.		under statutes	2218
Direct Evidence, defined	25	under client's privilege	2318
Direct Examination		Discretion of the trial Court; see JUDICIAL DISCRETION.	
specifying grounds of knowledge on	655	Disgracing Answers, privilege against	984, 987, 2216, 2256
specifying grounds of recollection on	730	Disease; see ILLNESS.	
leading questions on; see QUESTION.		Disinheritance, as evidence of testator's insanity	229
contradicting answers made on struck out, if cross-examination is not had	1390	parol evidence of intent	2475
order of topics on	1883	Disorderly house; see HOUSE OF ILL-FAME.	
putting in documents on	1883	Distance, of a weapon, as shown by effects	457
irrelevant matters, conditionally received on	1871	of a person, sound, sight, etc., as shown by instances	460
what constitutes calling a witness on	1892	as excusing absence of an attesting witness	1312
cross-examination to facts asked for on	1885-1891	of a deponent	1407
see also EXAMINATION; CROSS-EXAMINATION.		opinion testimony to	1977
Directing a verdict	2495	of witness' residence exempting from attendance	2207
Disbarment, proof beyond reasonable doubt	2498	judicially noticed	2581
Discharge of contract, shown by parol	2441, 2454	Divorce, as qualifying wife as witness	610
charge and discharge entries	2117	as affecting marital privilege	2237, 2341
Discovery		one witness to a charge	2046
general principle as to discovery		corroboration required	2066
common law	1845	confession of respondent	2067
chancery	1846	eye-witness of marriage	2085, 2086
policy of the rule	1847	inspection of party, on charge of impotency	2220
exceptions to the rule		presumed, to validate a later marriage	2506
list of witnesses in criminal cases	1850-1855	Docket, original's production required	1215, 1217
discovery in chancery	1856	certified copy allowed	1681
statutory interrogatories to opponent	1856	conclusive	2450
names of witnesses in civil cases	1856	Document, possession of, as evidence of payment	156
documents inspected before trial	1857-1860	execution or delivery, as evidenced by possession of it	157
shown on cross-examination	1861	possession of, as evidence of knowledge	260
inspection makes evidence exclusion for failure to allow inspection	1210	failure to produce, as evidence of contents	291
premises, chattels, and body, inspected before trial	1862	marks on, as evidence of identity	415
		impeaching one's own	529
		execution of, witness' personal observation of	666

INDEX OF TOPICS.

Section

2218
2218
2318

984, 987,
16, 2256

229
2475

457

460

1312
1407
1977

2207
2581

610

7, 2341
2046
2066
2067
5, 2086

2220

2506

5, 1217
1681
2450

156

157

260

291

415
529

666

Document (continued).
proof of genuineness by handwriting; see **HANDWRITING**.
of predecessor, as qualifying a witness to handwriting 704
third person, as party's admission 1073
used to aid recollection; see **RECOLLECTION**.
showing to opponent before cross-examination 1861
to witness on cross-examination 1185
original must be produced; see **ORIGINAL DOCUMENT**.
dying declaration reduced to writing 1445, 1450
kinds of copy allowed or preferred; see **COPY**; **CERTIFIED COPY**.
execution proved by attesting witness; see **ATTESTING WITNESS**.
by other methods, see **EXECUTION**.
putting in on direct or cross examination 1883, 1884
impeachment of witness who proves 1893
discovery of, before trial; see **DISCOVERY**.
taken to jury-room 1913
expert testimony to
ink, paper, spelling 2024
decipherment 2025
imitations, forgeries 2026
erasures, alterations, date 2027
putting in the whole
sundry instances 2102, 2116
depositions 2103, 2111, 2115
separate documents 2104, 2120
lost deeds, etc.; abstracts 2105
lost wills 2106
public records 2107
judicial records 2110
bill and answer in chancery 2111
account-books 2118
chancery answer, responsive parts 2121
answers to interrogatories 2124
document inspected by opponent 2125
obtained by illegal search 2183
lacking revenue-stamp 2184

Section

Document (continued).
privilege for title-deeds, trade-secrets 2211, 2212
production by opponent at trial 2219
by witness 2193, 2200
under self-crimination privilege 2264
under client's privilege 2307, 2318
parol evidence to vary terms; see **PAROL EVIDENCE RULE**.
possession of, as presuming payment 2518
spoliation of, as creating a presumption 2524
execution of, presumed 2519
delivery, date, seal, consideration; signature presumed 2519
alteration of, presumption as to interpretation of
for the Court 2556
by expert testimony to technical words 1955, 1956
by parol evidence; see **PAROL EVIDENCE RULE**, **D**.
see also **CONTRACT**; **DEED**; **EXECUTION**; **JUDICIAL RECORD**; **PUBLIC DOCUMENT**; **RECORDED CONVEYANCE**.
Dog, character of, as evidence 68
conduct of, in tracing an accused 177
as evidencing disposition 201
see also **ANIMALS**.
Domain, inquisition of 1670
Domicil, declarations of
by a voter 1712
by other persons 1727, 1784
presumed to continue 2530
Doubt, proof beyond a reasonable 2497
Dramatic expression by a witness 789
Drawee, parol agreement collateral to instrument 2448
see also **BILL OF EXCHANGE**.
Drawing, used to illustrate testimony 790
Drinking; see **INTOXICATION**; **INTEMPERANCE**; **LIQUOR**; **LIQUOR-SELLING**.
Driving a vehicle; see **VEHICLE**; **NEGLIGENCE**.
Drug; see **POISON**; **PHARMACIST**; **OPIUM**.
Drunkenness; see **INTOXICATION**; **INTEMPERANCE**; **LIQUOR**; **LIQUOR-SELLING**.

INDEX OF TOPICS.

<i>Duces tecum</i> , see <i>SUBPENA</i> .			
Duplicate original document, production of	1232	Section	
Juress making acts voidable	2423		
see also <i>CONFESSION</i> .			
Dying Declaration			
constitntionality of admitting	1398		
history and principle	1430, 1431		
restricted to certain criminal cases	1432		
death must be declarant's	1433		
subject of declaration	1434-1436		
consciousness of speedy and certain death	1438-1442		
theological belief	1443		
recollection, leading questions, etc.	1445		
impeachment	1033, 1446		
opinion rule	1447		
producing the whole	1448		
the original	1449		
written report of magistrate	1450		
judge and jury	1451		
accused may use	1452		
E.			
Ecclesiastical Courts , rules of evidence in	2032, 2045, 2067, 2250		
Effect of a machine , place, weapon, experiment, etc., as evidencing the cause or ori- gin	437-461		
Ejectment ; see <i>DEED</i> ; <i>TITLE</i> ; <i>POSSESSION</i> .			
Election , offences against, other acts evidencing intent	367		
certificate of, conclusive	1351		
books of, as evidence	1640		
results of, judicially noticed	2577		
see also <i>VOTE</i> ; <i>BALLOT</i> .			
Electric Wires ; see <i>NEGLI- GENCE</i> ; <i>MACHINE</i> ; <i>HIGH- WAY</i> .			
Elevator , defective; see <i>NEGLI- GENCE</i> ; <i>OWNER</i> ; <i>MACHINE</i> .			
Embezzlement , possession of money, as evidence of	154		
other embezzlements, as evi- dence of intent	329		
motive for	392		
Embracery ; see <i>BRIBERY</i> .			
Eminent Domain , view by jury in	1168		
			Employee , character of, to evi- dence negligence 65
			character of, as affecting em- ployer's liability 80, 249
			intemperance of, as constitut- ing incompetence 96
			acts of negligence, to evidence character 199, 208
			to evidence employer's knowledge 250
			on vehicles, bridges, etc., standard of conduct of 461
			as a biased witness 949, 969
			appearance of, as indicating competence 1154
			presumption of negligent in- jury to 2500
			Engine ; see <i>SPARKS</i> ; <i>MA- CHINE</i> ; <i>SPEED</i> .
			Enlistment , register of, as evi- dence 1641
			Enrolment , of a statute, whether conclusive 1350
			of a deed; see <i>RECORDED CONVEYANCE</i> .
			of a judicial proceeding; see <i>JUDICIAL RECORD</i> .
			Enticement for prostitution , character of complainant to show consent 62
			other offences as evidence of intent 349, 360
			Entry . In a book, to aid recol- lection; see <i>RECOLLECTION</i> . made by a public officer; see <i>PUBLIC DOCUMENT</i> . in docket or minutes; see <i>JU- DICIAL RECORD</i> . as a statement of facts against interest; see <i>AGAINST IN- TEREST</i> . made in the course of business; see <i>REGULAR ENTRIES</i> . Equivocation in a document 2472
			Equity , rebutted by declarations of intent 2475
			procedure in; see <i>CHANCERY</i> .
			Erasure , exper' testimony to 2027
			Error , impeaching a witness; see <i>CONTRADICTION</i> . of ruling, as ground for new trial 21
			Escape , as evidence of guilt 276
			refusal to, as evidence of inno- cence 293

INDEX OF TOPICS.

<p>Section 65 80, 249 96 199, 208 250 461 49, 969 1154 2509 1641 1350 62 9, 360 2472 2475 2027 21 276 293</p>	<p>Excheat, inquisition of 1070 Execrow, shown by parol evidence 2408, 2420 Estoppel, distinguished from an ordinary admission 1056, 1058 from a judicial admission 2589 Evidence, defined 1 rules of, whether alterable by the Legislature 7 distinguished from argument 1 admissible for one purpose but not for another 13 admissible conditionally on other facts being shown 14 inadmissible, when received, is not to justify other inadmissible evidence 15 offer of and objection to, mode of making 17, 18 ruling upon an objection to 19 circumstantial and testimonial, distinguished 25 fabrication of, as indicating guilt 278 failure to produce, as indicating a weak case 285-291, 2273 <i>prima facie</i> 2494 sufficient for jury 2494 preponderance of 2498 demerit to 2495 judge's right to determine sufficiency and admissibility 2550 order of topics of, in trials; see EXAMINATION. primary; see BEST EVIDENCE; ORIGINAL DOCUMENT. conclusive; see CONCLUSIVENESS. Examination of Premises, chattels, etc.; see DISCOVERY; PARTY'S PRIVILEGE; REAL EVIDENCE. Examination of Witness I. <i>Before a Magistrate</i> magistrate's report of former testimony, whether required 1326, 1340 whether admissible 1667 former testimony before, without cross-examination 1375 dying declaration under oath 1450 testimony proved by magistrate's report 1667 by stenographer's notes 1669 see also DEPOSITION.</p>	<p>Examination of Witness (continued). Section II. <i>Right of Cross-examination</i>; see CROSS-EXAMINATION, I. III. <i>Order of Examination at Trial</i> trial Court's discretion controls 1867 length of time immaterial 1864 <i>putting in the case at large</i> case of proponent in chief order of topics 1870 party testifying first 1870 facts conditionally relevant 1871 reading documents 1883 case of opponent in reply 1872 case in rebuttal 1873 case in surrebuttal 1874 later stages 1875 <i>after case closed</i> one case closed 1876 both cases closed 1877 argument begun 1878 charge given 1879 jury retired 1880 verdict rendered 1881 <i>examination of a witness on the original call</i> direct examination 1883 putting in documents 1883 cross-examination 1884 postponement 1884 offering documents 1884 putting in one's own case 1885-1891 see also CROSS-EXAMINATION. whose is the witness 1892 re-direct examination 1896 re-cross-examination 1897 later stages 1897 <i>recall</i> for re-direct examination 1898 for re-cross-examination 1899 IV. <i>Sundries</i> effect of death or illness preventing cross-examination 1390 refusal to answer on cross-examination 1391 non-responsive answer 1392 of opponent or witness before trial; see DISCOVERY. at a former trial, used to aid recollection; see RECOLLECTION. mode of putting questions on; see QUESTION.</p>
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INDEX OF TOPICS.

Examination of Witness (continued). Section

specific topics on direct examination; see **DIRECT EXAMINATION**.

specific topics on cross-examination; see **CROSS-EXAMINATION**.

confession made under oath on; see **CONFESSION**.

of a party as witness; see **WITNESS**.

admissibility of prior examination; see **DEPOSITION**; **FORMER TESTIMONY**.

Examined Copy; see **COPY**.

Exception to a ruling upon evidence, mode of taking 20

bill of, as evidence of testimony 1668

Exclamations of pain or suffering 1719

as *res gesta* of violent injury 1745

Execution of Document

general principle 2129-2139

proof not needed when execution admitted 2131

whether signature or contents is involved 2134

rule of presumption 2135

I. Modes of proving execution by age

thirty years old 2138

natural custody 2139

unsuspicious appearance 2140

possession of the land 2141, 2142

recorded deeds and old copies 2143

authority to execute 2144

kinds of documents 2145

presumption; statutory denial 2146

attesting witness dispensed with 1311

by contents

in general 2148

illiterate's letter; typewriting 2149

printed matter 2150, 2151

postmark; brand 2152

reply-letter by mail 2153

reply-telegram 2154

reply-telephone 2155

identity of name 2156, 2529

by official custody

judicial records and files 2158

sundry official records 2159

by seal

general principle 2161

Execution of Document (continued). Section

statutory regulation 2162

seal of State 2163

seal of court or clerk 2164

seal of notary 2165

sundry official seals 2166

official signatures 2167

official title 2168

corporate seal 2169

by other modes

by handwriting; see **HANDWRITING**.

by possession 157

by parties' belief 271, 272

by opponent's admission 2132, 2596

spoliation 2132

by sundry circumstantial evidence 2131

by presumption 2135

by attesting witness; see **ATTESTING WITNESS**.

by certificate of acknowledgment; see **CERTIFICATE**.

by certified record-copy; see **CERTIFIED COPY**; **RECORDED CONVEYANCE**.

of a will, by testator's belief 271

by testator's expressions 1734

by record of probate 1658, 1681

II. Sundry rules

production required, even though execution is presumed 1187

execution must be proved, though original is lost 1188

order of proof as between execution and loss 1189

execution provable, without producing original 1248

calling the attesting witness; see **ATTESTING WITNESS**.

writer not a preferred witness 1336

written statements against interest 1472

pedigree entries 1496

showing document to opponent before cross-examination 1861

Execution of Judgment; see JUDICIAL RECORD; SHERIFF.

Executive

acts of, proved by certified copy 1680

by printed copy 1684

privilege of, in substantive law 2368

as witness 2370

INDEX OF TOPICS.

Section	Section	Section
2162	Executor, admissions of 1076, 1081	Expert Witness (continued).
2163	rebutting intention of gift to 2475	hypothetical questions to;
2164	waiver of client's privilege by 2329	see HYPOTHETICAL QUES-
2165	of patient's privilege by 2301	TION.
2166	Ex parte proceedings, rules in,	testimony by quotation of
2167	distinguished 4	scientific books 1700
2168	see also AFFIDAVIT; DEPOSITION.	tested on cross-examina-
2169	Expedients; see DEED.	tion 1700
	Expenses of witness, tender of	inspection of injured person
157	amount of 2201	by 2220
271, 272	expert witness 2202	limitation of number of 1908
132, 2506	Experiment, as evidence of plan-	amount of fee demandable
2132	ning crime 238	by 2203
	of the quality or condition of a	see also OPINION RULE.
2131	thing 445	Explanation, logical principle of
2135	to test a witness' knowledge	of flight as evidence of guilt 277, 281
	or skill 993	Ex post facto law, prohibition
	as allowable in court 1154, 1160	of, as affecting rules of evi-
	Expert Witness	dence 7
	1. <i>Qualifications</i>	Express package, delivery of, as
	general requirements 555-561	evidenced by course of busi-
	stating the grounds of opinion 562, 655	ness 95
	foreign law 564, 690	Extortion, other offences as evi-
	custom and usage 565	dence of intent 352
	value 567, 711	Extrinsic Testimony, rule for,
	medical matters (sanity,	as distinguished from cross-
	blood, etc.) 568, 687	examination 878
	handwriting and paper	to prove bias of a witness 943
	money 570, 693	to prove crimes or other mis-
	sundry topics of testimony 571	conduct of a witness 979
	mode of securing unbiased	to prove errors 1001
	experts 562	to prove self-contradiction 1020
	see also KNOWLEDGE.	Eye-witness, called by the State,
	2. <i>Impeachment</i>	may be impeached 918
	by another expert 562, 1984	of a crime, required to be called 2077
	by cross-examination to in-	
	stances of unskilfulness 991	
	by contradiction on particu-	
	lar facts 1005, 1022	
	by reputation 1621	
	see also IMPEACHMENT.	
	3. <i>Sundries</i>	
	failure to call, as evidence	
	of a weak case 290	
	cross-examination to other	
	sales as evidence of value 463	
	improbabilities in scientific	
	testimony 662	
	proving voluminous records	
	by summary 1230	
	testimony to forgery of bank-	
	note 1339	
	ex parte investigations out of	
	court 1385	
271		
1734		
58, 1681		
1167		
1188		
1189		
1248		
1336		
1472		
1496		
1861		
1680		
1684		
2368		
2370		

INDEX OF TOPICS.

False demonstratio non nocet	Section 2476	Federal Law, conflict between	Section 6
False Arrest; see ARREST.		State law and	2573
False Claim, of cause of action,		judicially noticed	1681
mode of evidencing intent	340	requiring full faith and credit	1718, 1730
as impeaching a witness	963	Feelings, expressions of	1718, 1730
False Pretences; see FALSE		see also BIAS.	
REPRESENTATIONS.		Fees of witness, tender in advance	2201
False Representations, repute		amount of	2202
as evidence of knowledge	256	expert witness	2203
other false representations as		Fellow-servant; see EMPLOYEE.	
evidence of intent	320	Felony, as disqualifying or im-	
Falseness, as evidence of guilt		peaching a witness; see CON-	
as impeaching a witness	963, 1008	VICTION OF CRIME.	
Falsity, as impeaching a wit-		Files; see JUDICIAL RECORDS;	
ness; see CONTRADICTION;		PUBLIC DOCUMENTS.	
FALSUS IN UNO; PERJURY;		Fire; see ARSON; SPARKS;	
SELF-CONTRADICTION.		PREMISES.	
Falsus in uno, general principle	1008	Fire Insurance; see INSURANCE.	
falsity must be wilful and ma-		Flight, as evidence of guilt	276, 281
terial	1013, 1014	Flowage of water, other in-	
Family, insanity of, as evidence	232	stances as evidence	451
Family History, statements about		Food, effect of, as indicating	
exception to the Hearsay rule	1480	nature or quantity	457, 460
death of declarant	1481	Footprint, as evidence of identity	413
<i>ante litem motam</i>	1483	compelling defendant to make	2265
declarations by non-relatives	1487	Foreign Language; see INTER-	
by neighborhood-reputation	1488	PRETER; ALIEN.	
by different sorts of relatives	1489	Foreign Law, when applicable	
proof of relationship	1490, 1491	in its rules of evidence	5
illegitimate child	1492	proved by expert witness	564, 690,
own age	1493	1953	
identification by	270, 413,	proved by treatises	1697
	1494	statute proved without copy	1271
form of declaration (Bible,		proved by official printed	
will, etc.)	1495	copy	1684
proving the writing	1496, 1497	crime by, not privileged	2258
place of birth or death, etc.	1500	similarity of, presumed	2536
issue of pedigree	1503	judge or jury to determine	2558
age, other modes of proving;		not judicially noticed	2573
see AGE.		Foreign C.acer, document made	
ancient deed's recital of pedi-		by	1633
gree	1573	Foreman, entries of, to aid recol-	
Family Relationship, as bias-		lection; see RECOLLECTION.	
ing a witness	940	character and conduct of, as	
as raising presumption of gra-		employee; see EMPLOYEE.	
tuity	2526	Forfeiture, privilege not to dis-	
Father, reputation of, as miti-		close	2256
gating damages in seduction	75, 210	Forgery, of a will, character of a	
presumed instead of son, from		third person as evidence of	68
identity of name	2529	skill in handwriting, as evi-	
statements of, to evidence pedi-		dence of	87
gree; see FAMILY HISTORY.		possession of materials, as evi-	
testimony to bastardy	2063	dence of	153, 238
see also BASTARDY; LEGITIMACY;		of evidence, as indicating	
MOTHER.		guilt	278

INDEX OF TOPICS.

<p>Section 6 2578 1681 18, 1780 2201 2202 2208 276, 281 451 157, 460 413 2205 5 14, 690, 1953 1697 1271 1684 2258 2536 2558 2573 1633 2256 68 87 3, 238 278</p>	<p>Forgery (continued). other forgeries, as evidence of intent 300 evidence of a motive for 302 of identity 413 proof of, without producing document 1249 notice to produce original docu- ment 1205 testimony of person whose name is forged, not required 1339 of bank-notes, incorporation proved by repute 1623 affidavit of bank-officer 1710 expert testimony to handwrit- ing of 2026 Former Testimony offered in impeachment, as a self-con- tradiction 1030, 1032 death, absence, etc., as allowing the use of 1403-1418 used as an admission 1075 magistrate's report preferred 1330, 1340 issues and parties the same 1386 mode of proving judge's notes 1660 magistrate's report 1330, 1340, 1607 bill of exceptions 1608 stenographer's notes 1669 juror's or attorney's notes 1669 printed report 1703 memorandum to aid recollec- tion; see RECOLLECTION. whole must be proved 2098, 2103 may be proved 2115 Fornication; see ADULTERY; CRIMINAL CONVERSATION; PROSTITUTION. Foundation, laying a, for im- peaching by self-contradiction; see IMPEACHMENT. for using a copy of a document; see ORIGINAL DOCUMENT. Fraud, by a party, as evidence of a weak case 280 as evidence of intent 344 confession obtained by 841 as impeaching a witness 963 privilege against self-crimina- tion in 2257 making acts voidable 2423 under the parol evidence rule 2432, 2439 degree of proof 2498 presumed from grantee's con- fidential relations 2503</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Section</p> <p>Frauds, statute of; see STATUTE OF FRAUDS. Fraudulent Transfers, other transactions as evidence of intent 333 admissions of debtor or cred- itor 1082 opinion evidence of intent 1967 presumptions applicable to 2504 Fright of horses, as evidence of dangerous object 461 <p style="text-align: center;">G.</p> <p>Gaming, other acts as evidence of intent 367 conclusive evidence of, under statute 1354 Gas, see NUISANCE; EXPERT WITNESS. Genealogy proved by family hearsay; see FAMILY HIS- TORY. proved by reputation of com- munity; see REPUTATION. General Character; see CHAR- ACTER. General Interest, matters of; see REPUTATION. Genuineness, of a document; see DOCUMENT. Gestation, intercourse within the time of, in bastardy 133 Gesture, as a mode of expres- sion for a witness 780 Gift, plans, as evidence of 112 words accompanying 1777 presumption of 2526 see also DEED. Girl; see CHILD; RAPE; SEDUC- TION. Good Faith, see KNOWLEDGE; MOTIVE; INTENT. Goods; see CHATTELS; BUSI- NESS; VALUE. Government, land-grant of; see DEED. records of; see PUBLIC DOC- UMENT. privilege for communication to 2374 Grand Jury, witnesses before, indorsed on indictment 1850 right to compel answers 2252 testifying before, as a waiver of privilege 2276</p> </p>
---	---	---

INDEX OF TOPICS.

<p>Grand Jury (continued).</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">privilege for vote and opinion 2360</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">for witness' testimony 2362</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">not to impeach indictment 2364</p> <p>Grant, presumption of lost 2322</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">see also DUMB; GRANTOR; GRANTER.</p> <p>Grantee, from an insolvent, innat- tic, thief, etc., repete as evi- dencing knowledge of 253-255</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">grantor's admissions, used against 1082</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">producing original deed of 1224</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">utterances in possession, used against creditor 1770</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">deed delivered in escrow to 2408, 2420</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">presuming fraud from confi- dential relations of 2500</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">presuming identity from name 2520</p> <p>Grantor, admissions of 1082</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">opinion testimony to capacity of 1958</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">burden of proof of sanity of 2500</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">see also GRANTER.</p> <p>Guardian, admissions of 1076</p> <p>Guilt, see DEFENDANT; CON- SCIOUSNESS OF GUILT.</p> <p>Gun; see WEAPON</p> <p style="text-align: center;">II.</p> <p>Habeas Corpus ad testificandum 2190</p> <p>Habit, as evidence of doing an act 92</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">as evidence of marriage 268</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">other instances, to evidence a habit 376</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">of other persons, as evidence of care 461</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">as a source of aiding recollec- tion of a witness 747</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">see also CUSTOM.</p> <p>Habitual criminal, prior convic- tions as increasing sentence 196</p> <p>Handwriting</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">I. <i>Style of, to evidence author-</i> <i>ship of a document</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 4em;">general theory 90, 383</p> <p style="padding-left: 4em;">jury's perusal of specimens</p> <p style="padding-left: 6em;">kinds of documents 2016-2018</p> <p style="padding-left: 6em;">press-copies 2019</p> <p style="padding-left: 6em;">photographic reproductions 797, 2019</p> <p style="padding-left: 6em;">mode of proving genuine 2020, 2021</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">II. <i>Qualifications of Witness to</i> <i>by experience, in general 570</i></p>	<p>Handwriting (continued).</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">by seeing the person write 604-607</p> <p style="padding-left: 4em;">number of times 604</p> <p style="padding-left: 4em;">how long beforehand 605</p> <p style="padding-left: 4em;">quantity of writing 606</p> <p style="padding-left: 4em;">after-acquired knowledge 607</p> <p style="padding-left: 4em;">impression or belief 608</p> <p>by seeing known genuine docu- ments 699-708</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">express or implied admis- sions 70., 701</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">acting on the document 702</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">correspondence seen 702</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">clerks seeing accounts, etc. 703</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">custodian seeing records, etc. 704</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">bank-notes and paper money 705</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">number and time of speci- mens seen 707</p> <p>by expert comparison of hands</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">general principle 700</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">history 1901-1994</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">lay witness excluded 1907, 2004</p> <p style="padding-left: 4em;">exception for act of writ- ing seen 2005</p> <p style="padding-left: 4em;">exception for ancient documents 2006</p> <p style="padding-left: 4em;">refreshing the memory 2007</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">expert testimony, whether admissible 2008</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">selection of specimens 2009</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">photographic copies 797, 2010</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">studying the specimens 2011</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">kind of skill required 2012</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">mode of proving specimens 2013</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">giving the grounds of belief 2014</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">testing on cross-examina- tion 2015</p> <p style="text-align: center;">III. Sundry topics</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">ink, paper, spelling, etc. 2024</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">deciphering illegible writing 2025</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">imitations, forgeries 2026</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">erasures, alterations, etc. 2027</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">defendant's skill in imitating, as evidence of forgery 87</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">reference to, in aid of recollec- tion; see RECOLLECTION.</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">effect of proving attesting wit- ness, or maker's hand; see ATTESTING WITNESS.</p> <p>Health, as evidenced by appear- ance 228</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">prior condition of 225</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">witness' experience as qualify- ing him 568</p> <p>Hearing a sound, instances of 469</p>
---	--

INDEX OF TOPICS.

Section		Section	
604-607	Hearsay, as the basis of a witness' knowledge	657, 688	
605	nature of	1361	
606	Hearsay Rule		
607	I. <i>General principle</i>	1361-1363	
608	history	1364	
699-708	cross-examination, right of		
	theory and art	1367, 1368	
	opportunity, equivalent to actual cross-examination	1371	
70., 701	sundry tribunals	1373	
702	coroner	1374	
703	committing magistrate	1375	
704	deposition	1376-1381	
705	notice	1378	
	plural taking	1379	
	statutes	1380-1383	
707	affidavit	1384	
700	<i>ex parte</i> investigations, etc.	1385	
901-1994	issues and parties the same	1386-1388	
907, 2004	either party may use deposition	1389	
2005	insufficiency of cross-examination	1390-1393	
2006	witness' death or illness	1390	
2007	witness' refusal or party's default	1391	
2008	non-responsive answer	1392	
2009	sundries	1393	
97, 2010	confrontation, right of		
2011	absent witness' testimony, in general	1395	
2012	constitutional requirement	1397	
2013	witness unavailable in court	1401-1418	
2014	deceased	1403	
2015	out of jurisdiction	1404	
2024	not found	1405	
2025	ill	1406	
2026	imprisoned	1407	
2027	privileged	1407	
87	beyond statutory distance	1407	
	insane	1408	
	disqualified	1409	
	statutes	1410-1413	
	proving the excuse	1414	
	witness present in court	1415	
	rule not applicable	1416	
	exceptions to the rule	1417	
223	II. <i>Exceptions to the Rule, general principle of</i>	1420-1426	
225	dying declarations; see DYING DECLARATIONS.		
568	facts against interest; see AGAINST INTEREST.		
469	pedigree statements; see FAMILY HISTORY.		
	Hearsay Rule (continued).		
	attesting witness; see ATTESTING WITNESS.		
	entries in the course of business; see REGULAR ENTRIES.		
	private boundaries; see BOUNDARIES.		
	ancient deed-recitals; see RECITALS.		
	deceased persons in general; see DECEASED PERSONS.		
	reputation; see REPUTATION.		
	public documents, official statements; see PUBLIC DOCUMENTS.		
	scientific books; see LEARNED TREATISES.		
	price-lists, directories, etc.; see COMMERCIAL LISTS.		
	affidavits; see AFFIDAVIT.		
	voter's statements; see VOTER.		
	mental condition, physical pain; see MENTAL CONDITION.		
	<i>res geste</i> ; see RES GESTÆ.		
	III. <i>Rule not applicable (Res Geste)</i>	1768-1797	
	words a part of the issue		
	contract, libel, etc.	1770	
	words a verbal part of an act	1772-1786	
	general principle	1773-1776	
	payment, sale, loan, gift, entry, etc.	1777	
	possession, in prescriptive title	1778	
	possession, in presumption of ownership	1779	
	accused found with stolen goods	1781	
	testator revoking a will	1788	
	bankrupt evading creditors	1782	
	domicell	1784	
	accused's intent	1785	
	words used as circumstantial evidence	1788-1792	
	in proving search for lost document	1196	
	third person's knowledge, good faith, reasonableness, etc.	1789	
	speaker's state of mind	1790	
	identifying a time, place, or person	1791	
	impeaching a witness by self-contradiction	1018, 1792	

INDEX OF TOPICS.

Hearsay Rule (continued).		History (continued).	
<i>res gestæ</i>	1795-1797	of patient's privilege	2390
history and meaning of the		of penitent's privilege	2394
term	1795	of parol evidence rule	
agent's and conspirator's ad-		intent and mistake	2405
missions	1797	varying the terms	2426
IV. <i>Rule applied to Court Offi-</i>		interpretation	2462, 2470
<i>cers: see JUROR; JUDGE;</i>		History, Books of, used in evi-	
COUNSEL; INTERPRETER.		dence	
Height, as evidenced by other		as representing reputation	1597
conditions or effects	488, 451,	as scientific treatises	1693, 1699
	461	judicially noticed	2580
Heir, admissions used against	1081	Homicide, character of deceased	
Heredity of illness, as evidence		in, to evidence self-defence	63, 246
of insanity	223	accused's threats, as evidence	
Highway, evidencing owner's		of	102-105
knowledge of danger of	252	deceased's threats, as evidence	
repairs, as evidence of negli-		of aggression	110, 247
gence	283	survival of alleged deceased, as	
condition at another time or		negating <i>corpus delicti</i>	138
place, as evidence of de-		threats of a third person, as evi-	
fect	437	dencing innocence of the	
injuries of other persons, as evi-		accused	140
dence of defect	458	suicidal plans of deceased, as	
similar precautions, as evi-		evidencing innocence of the	
dence of safety	461	accused	143
see also DEDICATION.		possession of booty or tools, as	
History of the rules of evidence		evidence of	154, 238
in general	8	traces of blood, etc., as evi-	
of interest as a disqualifica-		dence of	149
tion	575	acts of violence, on an issue of	
of rule for confessions	817, 865	self-defence	198, 248
of rule for producing docu-		conduct as evidence of ac-	
mentary originals	1177	cused's sanity	228
of attesting-witness rule	1287	other acts of violence, to show	
of hearsay rule	1364	defendant's intent	363
of dying declarations	1430	circumstances showing a mo-	
of statements against interest	1476	tive	390
of statements of pedigree	1480	conduct as evidence of malice	396, 397
of regular entries	1518	weapon, clothing, etc., as evi-	
of statements about boundaries	1563	dence of identity	413
of use of record-copy of deed	1650	dying declarations in	1432
of <i>res gestæ</i> phrase	1795	marital privilege in	2239
of the oath	1815	burden of proof of self-defence	
of separation of witnesses	1837	in	2512
of opinion rule	1917	Horse, character of, as evidence	
of handwriting testimony	1991-1994	of behavior	68
of rules of number	2032	fright of, as evidence of dan-	
of compulsory process	2190	gerous object	461
of party opponent's privilege	2217	see also ANIMALS.	
of marital privilege	2227, 2333	House; see PREMISES; PROP-	
of privilege against self-crimi-		ERTY.	
nation	2250	House of Ill-fame, character of	78
of confidential communica-		character of inmates of	78
tions	2285	other acts, as evidencing char-	
of client's privilege	2290	acter	204

INDEX OF TOPICS.

Section		Section	
2390	House of Ill-fame (continued).		
2394	other acts, as evidencing intent	367	
	provable by reputation	1620	
2405	Husband; see also CRIMINAL		
2426	CONVERSATION; HOMICIDE.		
162, 2470	testimony of, as disqualified or		
	privileged; see MARITAL		
	RELATIONSHIP.		
1597	notice to, as evidence of wife's		
393, 1699	knowledge	261	
2580	admissions of, against wife	1078, 1086	
	statements of, to evidence ped-		
	igree; see FAMILY HIS-		
63, 246	TORY.		
	expressions of affection or dis-		
102-105	like	1730	
110, 247	communications by or to, as		
	privileged; see MARITAL		
	RELATIONSHIP.		
138	presumption of coercion by	2514	
	Hypothetical Question		
140	general theory	672	
	when allowed or required	674-680	
	form and scope	681-683	
143	on cross-examination	684	
	I.		
154, 238	Ice, as a highway defect; see		
	HIGHWAY; NEGLIGENCE.		
149	Identity, mistaken, as evidence	142	
398, 248	of accused or other party, as		
	evidenced by traces	148, 149	
228	by other crimes	218, 414	
363	by family history or hearsay	270, 1404	
	by voice, stature, etc.	660	
390	by witness' former recog-		
396, 397	nition	744, 1130	
	by photograph	790, 1154,	
		1156	
413	of voice, as shown by utter-		
1432	ance	222	
2239	of person, place, chattel, etc.,		
	in general	410-416	
2512	of brand or mark on stock or		
68	timber	150	
	of maker of attested document	1513	
461	of a time or place, as shown		
	by utterances	1791	
78	opinion testimony to	1977	
78	of document, shown by ink,		
	paper, etc.	2024	
	original required	1244	
204	presumption of, from identity		
	of name	2529	
	from traces, tools, etc.	2529	
	Idiot; see SANITY; INTER-		
	PRETER; WITNESS; OATH.		
	Illegality in obtaining evidence,		
	not to exclude it	2183	
	Illegible document, production		
	of original	1229	
	expert testimony to	2025	
	Illegitimacy, character of third		
	person as evidence	68	
	adultery, as evidence of	134	
	non-access, as evidence of	137	
	as evidenced by family hear-		
	say; see FAMILY HISTORY.		
	by neighborhood-reputation	1605	
	see also LEGITIMACY; BASTARDY.		
	Ill-fame, bouse of; see HOUSE		
	OF ILL-FAME.		
	Illiterate, signature by mark,		
	whether identifiable	693	
	as attesting witness	1512	
	Illness, as evidenced by appear-		
	ance	223, 437	
	prior and subsequent condition		
	of	225, 437	
	insured's knowledge of, as evi-		
	denced by declarations	266	
	symptoms, as indicating cause		
	of	457	
	witness' experience in, as		
	qualifying him	568, 687	
	as impeaching a witness	934, 1005	
	as excusing absence of attest-		
	ing witness	1315	
	of deponent	1406	
	of declarant of facts against		
	interest	1456	
	of maker of regular entries	1521	
	of witness summoned	2205	
	as excusing lack of cross-ex-		
	amination	1390	
	expressions of suffering in	1718	
	privilege for communications		
	to physician	2380	
	see also PHYSICIAN; POISON;		
	HEALTH.		
	Imbecile; see IDIOT.		
	Immateriality of evidence,		
	cured by other immaterial		
	evidence	15	
	see also IRRELEVANCY.		
	Impeaching one's own instru-		
	ment, forbidden	529	
	Impeachment of a Witness		
	general principles	875-881	
	persons impeachable	884-918	
	bearsay witnesses (dying		

INDEX OF TOPICS.

Impeachment of a Witness (cont'd). Section	Impeachment of a Witness (cont'd). Section
declarant, attesting-witness, etc.)	Interest, in criminal cases
. 884-888,	rewards, employment, etc.
1446, 1514 967, 968
. 889-892	<i>moral character, evidenced by</i>
accused as witness	misconduct
impeaching an impeaching	general principles
witness	extrinsic testimony
. 894	record of conviction
one's own witness	cross-examination
general principles	privilege against disgracing
by moral character	answers
. 896-899 984
by bias, interest, or cor-	rumors, on cross-examina-
ruption	tion
. 901 988
by prior self-contradiction .	by reputation
. 902-906	by personal opinion
by contradiction with	belief on oath
other witnesses 1985
. 907, 908	<i>skill, memory, knowledge, as</i>
who is one's own witness .	tested on cross-examination .
. 909-918	expert to handwriting
necessary witness 2015
. 917, 918	<i>contradiction by other witnesses</i>
using opponent's deposi-	collateral matters
tion 1000-1007
. 913	bias, corruption, skill,
book of regular entries by	knowledge, memory
clerk or party 1005
. 1531, 1557	<i>falsus in uno</i>
expert witness and scientific 1008-1015
books	of an explanatory statement .
. 1700 1046
<i>moral character</i> in general . . .	<i>self-contradiction</i>
. 920-940 1017-1046
general principles	general principles
. 920, 921 1017
kind of character	collateral matters
. 922-926 1020-1028
time of character	bias, corruption, skill, knowl-
. 927-929	edge
place of character 1022
. 930	preliminary warning neces-
<i>insanity, etc.</i>	sary
. 931-936 1025-1039
insanity	what is a self-contradiction
. 932 1040-1043
intoxication	opinion
. 933 1041
disease, age, etc.	silence, omission to claim or
. 934	speak
religious belief 1042, 1043
. 935	explaining the contradiction . .
race 1044
. 936	putting in the whole
<i>experience</i> 1045, 2098
. 938	joining issue
<i>bias, interest, and corruption,</i> 1046
<i>modes of evidencing</i>	showing the writing to the
. 943-969	witness
general principles 1259-1263
. 943	distinguished from admis-
cross-examination	sions
. 944 1051
demeanor as evidence	party's admissions; see Ad-
. 946	missions.
<i>bias</i> from circumstances and	testimony before grand jury,
conduct	not privileged
. 948-950 2363
details of a quarrel	<i>sundry modes</i>
. 951, 952	by annoying questions
preliminary inquiry to wit- 781
ness	by repetition of questions . . .
. 953 782
opinion as to another's bias . .	Implied admissions
. 1963 1060
<i>corruption</i>	self-contradictions
. 956-964 1042
willingness or offer to swear	Importation, other transactions
falsely	as evidence of fraud in
. 957, 958 841
confession of false testimony . .	Impression, as distinguished
. 959	from knowledge
attempt at subornation 658
. 960, 962	
receipt of money	
. 961	
sundry corrupt conduct	
. 963	
preliminary inquiry to wit-	
ness	
. 964	
<i>interest, in civil cases</i>	
. 966	

INDEX OF TOPICS.

Section
967, 968
969

777-988
77, 978
979
0, 1270
81-988

984

988
8-1621
1980
1985

00-996
2015
0-1015
0-1007

1005
-1015
1046
-1046
1017
-1023

1022

-1030
-1043
1041

1043
1044
2098
1046

-1263

1051

2363

781
782
1060
1042

841

658

Impression (*continued*).
 as sufficient for a hand-writing-witness 698
 as sufficient in point of memory 726
 as opinion testimony 1969
Imprisonment, as excusing absence of an attesting witness 1315
 of a deponent 1407
 see also CONVICTION OF CRIME.
Inadmissible evidence, as justifying other inadmissible evidence 15
Incest, other offenses, as evidence of intent or motive 360, 398
 who is accomplice in 2060
 eye-witness of marriage 2085, 2086
Incompetent evidence; see ADMISSIBILITY; IRRELEVANCY.
 employee; see EMPLOYEE.
 physician; see PHYSICIAN.
 persons in general; see SKILL; NEGLIGENCE.
Inconsistency, as impeaching a witness; see SELF-CONTRADICTION.
Indecency, of exhibition to jury as ground for exclusion 1159
 as ground for exclusion 2180
Indecent Assault, plaintiff's character, as mitigating damages 75, 212
 see also RAPE.
Indecent Exposure, other offenses, as evidence of intent 360
Indemnity against self-crimination 2281
Indians, as witnesses; see RACE.
Indictment, as disqualifying a co-indictee 580
 as impeaching a witness 949, 980, 982, 987
 list of witnesses indorsed on 1850
 privilege for grounds of 2364
 for assent of grand jurors to 2364
Indorsement, of witnesses on the indictment 1850
 of bill of exchange; see BILL OF EXCHANGE.
Indorser, parol agreement collateral to instrument 2443
 see also BILL OF EXCHANGE.
Inducement to a confession; see CONFESSION.
Inductive form of inference 30

Industry, facts of, judicially noticed 2580
Infamy, disqualifying a witness 519
 privileged from disclosure 984, 2216, 2265
 see also CONVICTION OF CRIME.
Infant, disqualification as a witness 505
 admissions of 1063
 dying declarations of 1445
 presumption of incapacity for crime 2514
 see also AGE; CHILD.
Inference, modes of 30, 476
 from failure to produce evidence 285-291
Infidel; see RELIGIOUS BELIEF.
Information, list of witnesses indorsed on 1850
 received by a person; see KNOWLEDGE.
Informers, privilege for communications by 2374
Infringement; see COPYRIGHT; PATENT.
Inheritance, proof of; see FAMILY HISTORY.
Injury, repairs after, as evidence of negligence 283
 see also CORPORAL INJURY; ILLNESS; NEGLIGENCE; HIGHWAY; MACHINE; PREMISES.
Ink, expert witness to nature of 570
 identification of document by 2024
Innocence, consciousness of, as evidence 174, 298
 presumption of 2511
 applied to bigamy 2506
 see also DEFENDANT.
Inquisition.
 of domain, by the homage 1670
 of escheat, by the crown 1670
 of title, by the sheriff 1670
 of pedigree, by the heralds 1670
 of lunacy, by commission 1671
 of death, by the coroner 1671
 of population, by the census 1671
 in Europe, history of 2250
Insanity.
 see SANITY.
Insolvency, as evidence of non-payment 80, 224
 purchaser's knowledge of, evidenced by reports 523

INDEX OF TOPICS.

Insolvency (continued).	Section	Insurance (continued).	Section
as a motive for crime or fraud	392	proof of arson beyond reasonable doubt	2498
debtor's admissions	1081, 1082, 1086	presumption of accident, from death	2510
opinion testimony to	1950	see also ARSON.	
prima facie evidence of banker's knowledge of	1354	Intemperance, as evidence of misconduct	96, 203
as evidenced by reputation	1621	as impeaching a witness	934
see also FRAUDULENT TRANSFERS.		proved by reputation	1621
Inspection, of memorandum used to aid recollection	753, 762	see also INTOXICATION; LIQUOR-SELLING; NEGLIGENCE.	
of corporal injury, by jury or witness	2194, 2220, 2285	Intent, criminal, general theory of	242, 302
of document of opponent, as making it evidence	2125	other crimes, as evidence of	309-367
at trial, not privileged	2193, 2219, 2264	forgery and counterfeiting	309
of chattels or premises, not privileged	2194, 2221, 2264	false pretences	320
trial by	2555	possession of stolen goods	324
of document, premises, chattels, as permissible; see REAL EVIDENCE.		embezzlement	329
of documents, premises, chattels of opponent before trial; see DISCOVERY.		fraudulent transfers	333
Instruction to the jury, where a fact is in part inadmissible	13	sundry frauds	340
directing a verdict	2495	larceny and kidnapping	346
Instrument; see DOCUMENT.		robbery, burglary, and extortion	351
Insurance		arson	354
insured's declarations, to show knowledge of illness	266	rape, abortion, incest, etc.	357
as evidence of motive for negligence	282, 392	homicide and assault	363
as evidence of bias or interest	949, 969	miscellaneous offences	367
other fraudulent acts as evidence of intent	340	civil cases	370
proofs of loss in, as an admission	1073	declarations, as hearsay evidence of; see MENTAL CONDITION, DECLARATIONS OF.	
as <i>res gestae</i>	1770	testifying to one's own intent	581, 1965
as coroner's official statement	1671	testifying to another person's intent	661, 1964
admissions of insured against beneficiary	1081	presumption of, in criminal cases	2511
inspection of policy before trial	1858	jury to determine, in libel	2557
materiality of risk or representations	1946, 1947	of party to a document; see PAROL EVIDENCE RULE.	
privilege for communications to physician	2389, 2390	proof of, by parol evidence; see PAROL EVIDENCE RULE.	
application signed by mistake	2415	information or notice, as evidence of; see KNOWLEDGE. see also MOTIVE.	
burden of proof of conditions in policy of	2537	Intention, see DESIGN; INTENT; MOTIVE.	
policy in a single document	2452	Intercourse; see BASTARDY; RAPE; SEDUCTION; INCEST.	
		Interest	
		as <i>disqualifying a witness</i>	
		history	575
		general principle	576
		civil parties	577
		survivors	578
		accused	579

INDEX OF TOPICS.

Section	Interest (continued).	Section	Interpreter (continued).	Section
2498	co-indictees	580	must be sworn	1810, 1824
2510	testimony to one's own in- tent	581	form of oath for	1818
96, 203	attesting witness of a will	582	Interrogation, mode of; see QUESTION; EXAMINATION.	
934	<i>voir dire</i>	583	Interrogatory, mode of framing; see QUESTION.	
1621	mode of proving Interest	584-587	to opponent before trial; see DISCOVERY.	
DR-	time of Interest	583	notice of deposition; see DEPO- SITION.	
242, 302	husband and wife; see MARI- TAL RELATIONSHIP.		order of topics; see ORDER OF EXAMINATION.	
309-367	husband or wife of co-defend- ant	609	non-responsive answer to	785, 1392
309	dying declarant	1445	sweeping Interrogatory	1392
320	<i>as impeaching a witness</i>		Intimidation of witness, as evi- dence of guilt	278
324	one's own witness	901	on cross-examination, forbid-	781
329	parties and others in civil cases	966	Intoxication, as evidence of an act done	85
333	accomplices and co-indictees	967	other instances, as evidencing	
340	accused	968	a common drunkard	203
346	bonds, rewards, employ- ment, etc.	969	conduct, as evidence of	235
351	restoring credit by consist- ent statements	1128	prior condition, as evidence of	235
354	<i>as excusing absence of an attest-</i> <i>ing witness</i>	1316	as disqualifying a witness	499
357	of a deponent	1409	qualifications of witness testi-	
363	of a deceased declarant	1456	fy to	571, 660
367	Interest, statements against party's admissions, see ADMIS- SIONS		confession made during	841
370	<i>hearsay exception; see AGAINST</i> INTEREST.		of a witness, in impeachment	933, 993, 1005
81, 1965	Interlocutory proceedings, rules in, distinguished	4	as shown by appearance	1154
81, 1964	International affairs, privileged against disclosure	2375	presumption of incapacity for crime during	2514
2511	not judicially noticed	2574	see also INTemperance; LIQUOR; LIQUOR-SELLING; NEGLIGENCE.	
2557	Interpretation <i>judge's function</i>	2556	Invalidating one's own Instru- ment, forbidden	529
575	<i>opinion rule</i>		Invention, privilege against dis- closure of	2374
576	expert interpretation of tech- nical words	1955	see also PATENT; TRADE SECRET.	
577	location of deed-descriptions	1956	Irrelevancy of evidence, cured by offering other irrelevant evidence	15
578	<i>by parol evidence; see PAROL</i> EVIDENCE, RULE D.		distinguished from multifari- ousness	42
579	Interpreter, qualifications of testimony to conversation with	571, 668	not the subject of privilege	2210
	proof of former testimony given through	751	Issue, facts not in, distinguished from facts not admissible	2
	necessity for	811	Issues, offering former testimony on the same	1386
	adequacy of cross-examination without	1393	of pedigree, to admit family hearsay	1503
	admissions of, as agent	1077	proving character in; see CHARACTER.	
	sworn translation of deposi- tion	1710		

INDEX OF TOPICS.

J.	Section	Section
Jail; see CONVICTION OF CRIME; IMPRISONMENT.		
Joint defendant, etc.; see CO-DEFENDANT, ETC.		
Journal; see BOOKS OF ACCOUNT; LEGISLATIVE JOURNAL; NEWSPAPER.		
Judge to determine qualifications of witness	487, 497, 587	
to determine admissibility of a confession	861	
questions to a witness by a judge	784	
witness called by, may be impeached	910, 918	
decree in another cause, as reputation	1504	
testimony by a	1805, 1909	
privilege for	2372	
notes of testimony taken by	1686	
evidence offered after charge given by	1879	
power to determine privilege-claim	2271, 2322, 2376	
admissibility of evidence	2550	
negligence	2552	
reasonableness	2553	
malicious prosecution	2554	
construction of documents	2556	
criminal intent	2557	
foreign law	2558	
<i>nul tiel record</i>	2555	
may seek evidence	2484, 2569	
may not use private knowledge	2569	
may take judicial notice; see JUDICIAL NOTICE.		
see also JUDICIAL DISCRETION; MAGISTRATE.		
Judgment of conviction of crime, as affecting a witness; see CONVICTION OF CRIME.		
offer to confess, as an admission	1061	
theory of conclusiveness	1347	
of conviction of crime, used against accessory	1389	
sheriff's recital of contents	1664	
proving the whole	2110	
see also JUDICIAL RECORD.		
Judicial Admission, as affecting Inference from failure to produce evidence	291	
Judicial Admission (continued), distinguished from other admissions	1057, 2588, 2590	
of contents of a document	1257	
of execution of a document	2182, 2595	
effect as conclusive upon the party making	2590	
exclusive of evidence by the party benefiting	2591	
validity as a waiver of unconstitutionality or other illegality	2592	
effect on subsequent trials	2593	
form and tenor of the admission; who is authorized	2594	
testimony of an absent witness, admitted to avoid a continuance	2596	
Judicial Decision		
report of, mode of proof		
by official printed copy	1684	
by private printed copy	1703	
judicially noticed	2579	
Judicial Discretion, scope of	16	
ruling upon objections	18	
admitting experiments, etc.	444	
determining a witness' qualifications	496, 507, 561, 660	
allowing leading questions	770, 776	
admitting a confession	862	
controlling the scope of cross-examination	944, 983	
search for a lost document	1194	
admitting testimony after the proper time	1867	
limiting the number of witnesses	1908	
relieving from stipulation	2593	
Judicial Notice		
general theory	2565	
anomalous meanings	2566	
mode of proceeding	2557-2569	
specific facts noticed		
domestic and foreign law	2572, 2573	
international affairs; seal of State	2574	
official and judicial seals	2161-2169	
boundaries, capitals, countries, etc.	2575	
official authority and identity	2576	
elections, census, etc.	2577	
officers and rules of court	2578	
judicial proceedings	2579	
commerce, industry, history, science, etc.	2580	

INDEX OF TOPICS.

Section		Section
	Judicial Notice (continued).	
7, 2598,	times, distances	2581
2590	meaning of words	2582
1257		
2, 2595	Judicial Record, what consti-	
	ntes	2450
2590	original admissible instead of	
	a copy	1186
2591	custody presumes genuineness	2158
	original need not be produced	1215, 1249
2592	notarial record, perjury	1216, 2553
2593	dockets	1217
	copy of, preferred to recollec-	
	tion	1267, 1268
2594	certified copy	1273
	copy of a copy	1274
	sealed attestation of copy	2162
2596	conclusive proof of the facts	
	adjudged	1316, 1347,
		2450
	of contents of lost document	
1684	re-established	1275, 1347,
1703		1660, 1681
2579		
16	answer in chancery; see	
18	ANSWER.	
444	provable by certified copy	1681
	by inspection	2556
8, 507,	whole must be proved	2110, 2116
31, 660		
0, 776	Jurat, as evidence of oath taken	1676
862	see also CERTIFICATE OF OATH;	
	PUBLIC DOCUMENT; NOTARY.	
4, 983	Jurisdiction, conviction of crime	
1194	in another; see CONVICTION	
	OF CRIME.	
	absence from, as presuming	
1867	death	2531
	document out of	1213
1906	attesting witness out of	1312
2593	subpoena to witness out of	2207
	Jury, fraud in packing, evidence	
2565	of intent	367
2566	determination of witness' qual-	
2569	ifications	497, 587,
		1187
2573	memorandum of recollection	
	shown to	754, 763
2574	determination of admissibility	
2169	of confession	861
	of dying declaration	1451
2575	withdrawal during arguments	
2576	of admissibility	801, 1808
2577	improper sampling of liquor by	
2578	verdict admitted as reputation,	
2579	in another cause	1593
	not to be impeached by juror	2348
2580	notes of former testimony	
	taken by	1669
	Jury (continued).	
	view by, evidence not to be	
	received at	1802
	defendant's presence at	1803
	general rules for	1162-1168
	evidence not to be offered to,	
	after retirement	1880
	after verdict	1881
	documents taken to jury-room	1913
	juror may be witness	1910
	must be sworn	1800
	showing specimens of writing	
	to	2001, 2016
	privilege for communications	
	between	2346
	sufficient evidence for	2494
	right to determine law	2558, 2559
	to construe documents	2556
	to determine intent	2557
	negligence	2552
	reasonableness	2553
	admissibility of evidence	861, 1451,
		2550
	right to use general knowledge	2570
	see also BRIBERY; GRAND JURY;	
	JUDGE.	
	Justice of the Peace, docket	
	of, original required	1215, 1217
	certified copy allowed	1681
	seal not presumed genuine	2164
	examination of accused or wit-	
	ness; see EXAMINATION.	
	record conclusive	2450
	office judicially noticed	2578
	see also PUBLIC OFFICER; JUDGE.	
	K.	
	Kidnapping, other offences as	
	evidence of intent	349
	King, testimony of, admitted	
	without calling	1384, 1674
	without being sworn	1825
	privilege of	2368-2372
	Knife; see WEAPON.	
	Knowledge, or Belief	
	<i>Circumstances or Reputation as</i>	
	<i>evidence of</i>	
	of accused, as to deceased's	
	aggression	245
	of employer, as to employee's	
	incompetence	249
	of owner, as to animal's	
	vice	251
	of owner, as to defect of place	
	or machine	252

INDEX OF TOPICS.

Knowledge, or Belief (continued).	Section	Land (continued).	Section
of purchaser, as to seller's insolvency	253	parties' admissions of title to; see ADMISSIONS.	
of possessor, as to stolen goods	254, 259	testimony to value of; see VALUE.	
of creditor or debtor, as to partnership	255	see also PROPERTY; PREMISES.	
of maker of representations, as to falsity	256	Land-grant of government; see DEED; LAND-OFFICE.	
of liquor-seiler, as to buyer's condition	257	Landlord, tenant disputing title of	1473
of prosecutor or arrester, as to probable cause	258	Landmark; see BOUNDARIES.	
of utterer, as to forged paper	259	Land-office, producing original of documents in	1239
of possessor, as to contents of sundry persons	260	conclusiveness of rulings of	1347
information or reputation, as <i>res gesta</i>	1789	records of, in general	1659
Conduct, as evidence of		register of, to prove a deed's execution	1651
of sundry facts known or believed	266, 267	certificates of	1674, 1678
of consciousness of guilt	273-291	reports of title	1672
of consciousness of innocence	293	surveys of	1665
<i>prima facie</i> evidence defined by statute	1354	copy of whole required	2109
Declarations, as evidence of; see MENTAL CONDITION, DECLARATIONS OF		Language; see INTERPRETER; INTERPRETATION.	
Other crimes, evidence of		Lapse of Time, as presuming loss of document	1196
general theory	301	as presuming payment	2517
sundry crimes (forgery, embezzlement, etc.)	309-367	Larceny, possession of stolen goods as evidence of	152, 2518
Testimony to a third person's	661	possession of money, as evidence of	154
Qualifications of a witness as to; see WITNESS, I. Qualifications.		other crimes as evidence of intent	346
Impeachment of a witness as to; see IMPEACHMENT.		motive for	391, 392
		evidence of identity of goods	413
		owner's complaint after	1142
		accused's explanations after notice to produce original document in	1143
		proof of, without producing document stolen	1205
		words accompanying the taking, as <i>res gesta</i>	1249
		testimony of owner to non-consent	1777, 1781
		presumption from possession of goods	2089
		Latent Ambiguity in a document	2513
		Law, distinguished from fact	2472
		foreign statute proved without copy	1, 2549
		by expert	1271
		<i>prima facie</i> evidence of, under statute	564, 690, 1953
		proved by official printed copy	1354
			1684

L.

Land, words during possession or entry, as <i>res gesta</i>	1777, 1778
public divisions of, judicially noticed	2575
possession of, as evidenced in various ways; see POSSESSION.	
contracts or customs concerning; see CONTRACTS; CUSTOM.	
declarations or reputation about boundaries of; see BOUNDARIES.	

INDEX OF TOPICS.

Section	Law (continued).	Section	Legitimacy (continued).	Section
	proved by private printed copy	1703	valid marriage presumed, to assist	25
	by treatises	1697	presumption of	2527
	presumption of	2491	see also BASTARDY; ILLEGITIMACY; MARRIAGE.	
	judicially noticed	2572, 2573	Length of a witness' examination	783
	judge or jury to determine	2549, 2558, 2559	of a hypothetical question	683
			of a trial	1864
1478	Laws, conflict of; see CONFLICT OF LAWS.		Lessee, declarations of, made during possession	1778
	Lawsuit; see LITIGATION.		see also LEASE.	
	Leading Questions		Letter, delivery of, as evidenced by mailing	95
1239	allowable only in discretion	770, 776	third person's, as evidence of sanity	228
1347	kinds of questions that are leading	771	receipt of, as qualifying a witness to handwriting	702
1659	exceptions to the rule	776	failure to reply to, as an admission	1073
1651	on cross-examination	773	of husband or wife, showing feelings	1730
1678	impeaching one's own witness	915	putting in other letters in answer	2104, 2120
1665	Learned Treatises, used in evidence	1690-1700	received by mail in reply, as genuine	2133
2100	Lease, course of business as evidencing terms of	94, 372, 377, 157	see also DOCUMENT.	
	ancient, to show seisin	157	Letter-press copies, as originals	1234
1196	production required, in proving tenancy	1246	Lex fori, rule of evidence in, applicable	5
2517	see also DEED; POSSESSION.		Liability, facts of civil liability as privileged	2223
2, 2518	Ledger, as a book of regular entries	1548, 1558	of criminal liability	2250
154	Legatee, admissions of	1081	Libel; see DEFAMATION.	
346	Legislative Journal, whether original's production is required	1219	License to sell liquor, as evidence of sale	238
1, 392	whether receivable to overthrow enrolment of statute	1350	refusal to produce, as evidence of non-possession	291
413	admissible to prove facts recorded	1602	to practise medicine, as qualifying a witness	569
1142	provable by printed copy	1684	to marry; see MARRIAGE.	
1143	judicially noticed	2577	Lie; see FALSEHOOD; PERJURY.	
1205	Legislature, power of, to alter rules of evidence	7, 1353	Lien, privilege for documents held under	2211
1781	power to compel answer from witness	2193, 2252	Life, presumption of continuance of	2531
2089	privilege of member of	2375	of survivorship	2532
2513	see also STATUTE; LEGISLATIVE JOURNAL; CONSTITUTIONAL RULES.		Life Insurance; see INSURANCE.	
2472	Legitimacy		Life Table, used in evidence	1698
2549	birth during marriage, as evidence of	164	judicially noticed	2566
1271	resemblance of child, as evidence of	166	Light, distance or quality of, as shown by instances	460
690,	as evidenced by parents' conduct	269	Limitations; see STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS.	
1953	by parents' statements; see FAMILY HISTORY.			
1354	by reputation	1605		
1684				

INDEX OF TOPICS.

Line of survey; see BOUNDARIES; SURVEY.	Section	Loss of a document; see ORIGINAL DOCUMENT.	Section
Liquor, effect of, as indicating nature	457	of a ship, as evidenced by lack of news	156, 2531
sample of, as indicating nature	439	Lost Grant, presumption of	2522
improperly used as sample by jurors	1159	not to excuse from proof of loss of specific deed	1196
selling to a minor; see AGE.		Lottery, other acts as evidence of intent	367
meaning of terms, judicially noticed	2582	Lunacy, inquisition of	1671
see also INTOXICATION; LIQUOR-SELLING.		see also LUNATIC; SANITY.	
Liquor-selling, possession of liquor, as evidence of	163	Lunatic, knowledge of purchaser from, as evidenced by reports	253
other sales as evidence of common selling	203	disqualification of opponent as witness	578
as evidenced by license or tax-payment	238	admissions of	1053
to minor or intemperate, evidence of knowledge of	257	capacity to take the oath	1822
other sales, as evidence of intent	367	to be a witness	492
other keeping, as evidence of continuous keeping	382	see also SANITY.	
burden of proof of license for privilege not to produce license for	2375		
inference from refusal to produce	291		
presumption from possession of liquor	2513		
see also INTOXICATION; LIQUOR.			
List, of witnesses before trial	1850		
Litigation, fact of, as biasing a witness	949		
pleadings in other, as admissions	1065-1067		
kind of, in pedigree hearsay	1503		
Loan, words accompanying, as <i>res gestae</i>	1777		
fact of, shown by possession of money	89, 224		
lack of money, as evidence of motive for	392		
see also CONTRACT; CREDITOR; PAYMENT.			
Locomotive; see MACHINE; SPARES; SPEED.			
Log, marks on, as evidence of ownership	150, 2132		
register of	1647		
Log-book of ship, as a book of regular entries	1523		
as an official register	1641		
Logical theory of relevancy	30		
		Machine, evidencing owner's knowledge of danger of	252
		repairs of, as evidence of negligence	283
		condition at another time or place, as evidence	437
		other instances of operation, as evidence of condition of	451
		similar injuries, as evidence of defect in	458
		similar precautions, as evidence of safety of	461
		negligence presumed from accident at	2509
		see also EMPLOYEE; NEGLIGENCE.	
		Magistrate, confession made to	342-352
		examination of accused or witness; see EXAMINATION.	
		see also PUBLIC OFFICER.	
		Magnifying-lens, used by witness or jury	795, 1152
		Mail, course of, as evidence of an addressed letter's delivery	95
		of a reply-letter's genuineness	2153, 2519
		fraud in, other acts as evidencing intent	341
		proof of loss of letters sent by	1201, 1203
		Maker, parol agreement collateral to instrument	2443
		see also BILL OF EXCHANGE; NOTE.	

INDEX OF TOPICS.

Section		Section
156, 2531	Malice, as evidenced by an accused's threats	106
2622	as evidenced by other assaults, etc.	333
1106	as evidenced by hostile expressions or conduct	306
367	as impeaching a witness; see BIAS.	
1671	presumption of, in criminal cases	2511
	see also MALICIOUS MISCHIEF; MALICIOUS PROSECUTION; INTENT; MOTIVE.	
253	Malicious Mischief, evidence of intent in	367
576	Malicious Prosecution, character of plaintiff as mitigating damages	75, 209
1053	evidence of prosecutor's belief	253
1822	conduct as showing malice	306
492	former testimony in	1416
	testimony before grand jury, not privileged	2363
252	burden of proof in	2539
	judge or jury to determine probable cause	2554
283	Malpractice, character of defendant in	67
437	other persons' conduct, as standard of care, etc.	461
451	party's skill proved by reputation	1621
453	by particular instances of its exercise	208
461	by opinion	1984
2500	privilege for communications to physician	2385, 2389
42-852	see also NEGLIGENCE; ABORTION; HOMICIDE.	
	Map, used to illustrate testimony	790
5, 1152	as an official survey	1665
95	as a declaration of boundary	1570
3, 2519	as reputation of boundary	1592
341	see also BOUNDARIES; SURVEY.	
1, 1203	Marital Relationship	
2443	I. Disqualification of husband or wife as witness for the other	
TE.	history and general principle	600-604
	who is excluded	605
	on whose behalf excluded	606-610
	exceptions to the rule	612-617
	statutory abolition	619, 620
	impeachment of witness by	940
	bastardizing the issue	2063
	VOL. IV. — 45	
	Marital Relationship (continued).	
	II. Privilege not to be witness against the other	
	history and policy	2227, 2228
	paramour, bigamist, disputed marriage	2230, 2231
	agent's admissions	2232
	production of documents	2233
	what testimony is prohibited	
	husband or wife not a party	2234, 2235
	co-indictes, co-defendant	2236
	person deceased or divorced	2237
	exceptions by necessity	2239
	by statute	40
	whose is the privilege	2241
	waiver	2242
	inference from claiming it	2243
	statutory abolition	2245
	III. Privilege for communications	
	history and policy	2332, 2333
	statutes	2334
	scope of the privilege	2336-2338
	third persons	2339
	who may claim; waiver	2340
	death and divorce	2341
	see also HUSBAND; WIFE; MARRIAGE; DIVORCE; LEGITIMACY.	
	Mark, illiterate's signatures by; see ILLITERATE.	
	on logs, as evidence	150
	register of	1647
	Market Reports, admissible in evidence	1704
	Market Value; see VALUE.	
	Marksman; see ILLITERATE.	
	Marriage, breach of promise of; see BREACH OF PROMISE.	
	birth during, as evidence of legitimacy	164
	prior coverture, as evidence	382
	certificate of, as evidence	268, 1645
	habit and repute, as evidence	268, 2083
	reputation, as evidence	1602, 2083
	utterances of the parties as <i>res gestæ</i>	1770
	proof of marriage in fact	2082
	admissions	2086
	register of, as evidence; see REGISTER OF MARRIAGE, BIRTH, AND DEATH.	
	contracted in jest	2414
	statement concerning, as hearsay; see FAMILY HISTORY.	
	presumption of consent	2505
	of capacity	2506

INDEX OF TOPICS

Marriage (continued).			Mental Condition (continued).	
presumption of legitimacy	Section		intent in domicile	Section
of coercion	2327		intent in bankruptcy	1732
of identity	2514		motive or reason	1732
husband or wife privileged	2529		bias, malice, affection, etc.	1730
by; see MARITAL RELATIONSHIP.			opinion and belief	1731
privileged communications in;			accused person's statements	1732
see MARITAL RELATIONSHIP.			Testator	
see also FOREIGN LAW; LEGITIMACY;			ante-testamentary state-	
HUSBAND; WIFE.			ments of intent	1735
Married Woman; see MARITAL			post-testamentary state-	
RELATIONSHIP; WIFE; BAS-			ments of contents, etc.	1736
TARDY; MARRIAGE.			intent to revoke	1737
Master; see EMPLOYER;			undue influence or fraud	1738
SCHOOLMASTER; CAPTAIN.			intelligence or sanity	1739, 1740
Materiality, distinguished from			<i>Sundries</i>	1790
admissibility	2		see also KNOWLEDGE; INTENT;	
Mayhem, ascertained by inspec-			MALICE; MOTIVE; SANITY.	
tion	1152		Microscope, used by witness or	
Meaning; see INTERPRETATION.			jury	795, 1152
Means of action, as evidence of			Midwife as a witness; see EX-	
an act done	83		PERT WITNESS; OPINION RULE.	
Measures, false, other acts evi-			Military records, as evidence	1641
dencing intent	341		privilege against disclosure of	
Medical Books, used in evi-			secrets	2375
dence	1690-1700		Mill; see MACHINE; SPARKS.	
Medical Matters, witness' ex-			Mine; see PREMISES.	
perience or knowledge as			Minister Plenipotentiary; see	
qualifying him	568, 687		AMBASSADOR.	
see also PHYSICIAN; EXPERT WITNESS;			Minister of Religion; see	
OPINION RULE.			PRIEST.	
Medical Treatment; see MAL-			Minor; see CHILD; LIQUOR-	
PRACTICE; PHYSICIAN; SKILL.			SELLING; AGE.	
Memorandum to aid recollec-			Minutes of clerk of court; see	
tion; see RECOLLECTION.			JUDICIAL RECORD.	
Memory, modes of refreshing or			Miscarriage; see ABORTION;	
aiding; see RECOLLECTION.			PERSONAL INJURY.	
discrediting a witness by his			Misconduct of a juror	2354
lack of; see IMPEACH-			Mistake, proof of, by parol evi-	
MENT.			dence; see PAROL EVI-	
Mental Capacity			DENCE RULE.	
see SANITY; WILL.			by circumstantial evidence;	
Mental Condition			see INTENT.	
see SANITY; INTENT; MALICE;			Mistress; see PARAMOUR.	
MOTIVE; KNOWLEDGE.			Mob, violence by, other acts as	
Mental Condition, Declara-			evidencing intent	367, 1790
tions of			Model, used to illustrate testi-	
exception to the Hearsay rule	1714		mony	790
<i>Pain and Suffering</i>			Money, possession of, as evi-	
to a physician or layman	1719		dence of loan or pay-	
before litigation	1721		ment	80, 224
past events	1722		as evidence of larceny	154
<i>Design, Intent, Motive, etc.</i>			lack of, as evidence of motive	392
design or plan to act	1725		evidence of counterfeiting; see	
			COUNTERFEITING.	

INDEX OF TOPICS.

<p>Section 1737 1738 1739 1730 1731 1732 1735 1736 1737 1738 1740 1740 1152 1641 2875 2854 1790 790 224 154 392</p>	<p>Money (continued). testimony to genuineness of; see PAPER MONEY; HAND- WRITING. receipt of, as impeaching a wit- ness; see CORRUPTION. payment of, mode of proving; see PAYMENT. see also VALUE. Morphine, use of, as disqualify- ing a witness 499, 500 as impeaching a witness 934 Mortality Table, used in evi- dence 1698 judicially noticed 2566 Mortgage, other transactions as evidence of debtor's intent; see FRAUD, FRAUDULENT TRANSFERS, FALSE REPRESENTATIONS. agreement to hold deed as, shown by parol 2437 admissions of mortgagor or mortgagee 1082, 1779 production of original; see ORIGINAL DOCUMENT. see also DEED; SALE. Mother, statements of, to evi- dence pedigree; see FAM- ILY HISTORY. insanity of, as evidence 232 testimony to bastardy 2063 see also LEGITIMACY; BASTARDY. Motion, for a nonsuit or verdict to exclude all evidence 2495 to produce documents, on trial; see ORIGINAL DOCUMENT. before trial; see DISCOVERY. see also OBJECTION. Motive, in general, as evidence of an act 117-119 1. <i>Circumstances creating a motive</i> general principle 389 motive for murder 300 motive for other acts and crimes 391 pecuniary circumstances as a motive 392 legal liability as a motive 393 2. <i>Conduct exhibiting a motive in general</i> 394 3. <i>Prior and subsequent motive</i> hostility 396, 397 sexual passion 398-402</p>
---	---

<p>Motive (continued). malice in defamation 403-406 4. <i>Sundries</i> third person's motive, to evi- dence accused's innocence 141 testifying to another person's motive 661 to one's own motive 581 proof by opinion testimony 1903 by declarations; see MEN- TAL CONDITION, DECLARATIONS OF. by reputation or informa- tion; see KNOWLEDGE. Multiple admissibility 13 Municipal Corporation; see CORPORATION; PUBLIC DOC- UMENT. ordinance or charter of, judi- cially noticed 2572 Murder; see HOMICIDE. Mutual Mistake, under parol evidence rule 2417 clear proof of 2498</p>	<p>Section</p>
---	----------------

N.

<p>Name, as evidence of identity 270, 413 use of false, as evidence of guilt 276 testimony to knowledge of 667 identity of, as raising pre- sumption 2529 Nationality, as evidenced by corporal traits 167 as disqualifying a witness 516 Naval register, as evidence 1641 Necessity, opinion testimony to 1900 Negative instances, as evidenc- ing cause or condition 448 observation, as showing that a thing did not occur 664 Negligence, character for, to evidence an act 65 character for, as in issue 80 habit of, as evidence 93, 97 particular acts, as evi^{ce} of character 199, 208 employee's acts and repute, as evidencing employer's knowledge 249, 250 other instances as evidence of habit of 376 other spark-emissions, as evi-</p>	<p>Section</p>
---	----------------

INDEX OF TOPICS.

Negligence (continued).	Section	Notary (continued).	Section
dence of a defective locomotive	452	power to compel testimony	2195
other persons' conduct, as evidencing a standard	461	see also PUBLIC OFFICER.	
constitutionality of statute making liable without negligence	1354	Note, Promissory, forgery of; see FORGERY.	
making prima facie evidence of negligence	1354	payment of; see PAYMENT.	
proved by opinion evidence of conduct	1949	agent's authority to make; see AGENCY.	
of character	1984	impeaching one's own	599
presumption of	2507-2510	presumption of title from possession of	2516
judge or jury to determine	2552	of payment	2517, 2518
jury may use general knowledge to determine	2570	admissions of assignor, indorser, etc.	1084
see also REPAIRS.		production of original; see ORIGINAL DOCUMENT.	
Negotiable Instrument; see BILL OF EXCHANGE; NOTE; PAYMENT.		indorsement on, as statement against interest	1460, 1466
Negro; see RACE.		protest of, as evidence	1675
Newspaper, notice in, as evidencing knowledge	255	signed by mistake	2415
quotations of prices, as evidence of value	719, 1704	delivery in escrow, shown by parol	2400, 2420
affidavit of publication of notice in	1710	collateral agreement, shown by parol	2443-2445
communications to, not privileged	2286	Note or memorandum, of testimony; see FORMER TESTIMONY.	
see also PRINTED MATTER.		of a transaction, used to aid recollection; see RECOLLECTION.	
New trial, motion for, as confirming an exception	20	Notice (a state of mind); see KNOWLEDGE.	
error of ruling as ground for validity on, of former judicial admission	2593	Notice (a communication) to produce a document as permitting use of copy	
Night, evidence of power of vision at	460	notice to opponent	1202
Noise; see SOUND.		when not necessary	1203
Non-access, as evidence of illegitimacy	137	when sufficient	1204-1206
parent's testimony to	2063	exceptions to the rule	1207
see also BASTARDY.		procedure of giving notice	1208
Nonsuit, motion for a	2495	notice to third person	1212
Notary, using an entry to aid recollection; see RECOLLECTION.		as compelling opponent's production of original	2219
record of protest, producing the original of	1240	as obtaining discovery before trial	1858
whether conclusive	1352	to fix liability for dishonor of bill, evidenced by mailing	95
regular entries of transactions by; see REGULAR ENTRIES.		to quit, as an admission of tenancy	1072
personal knowledge required	1635	notice to produce a	1206
certificate of protest	1675	to take deposition	1378
of deed-acknowledgment	1676	sundries	
seal presumed genuine	2165	publication of, proved by affidavit	1710
		giving of, as res gestae	1770, 1789
		Novation, shown by parol	2441

INDEX OF TOPICS.

<p>Section 2195</p> <p>539</p> <p>2516</p> <p>7, 2518</p> <p>1084</p> <p>0, 1466</p> <p>1675</p> <p>2415</p> <p>0, 2420</p> <p>3-2445</p> <p>1202</p> <p>1203</p> <p>-1206</p> <p>1207</p> <p>1208</p> <p>1212</p> <p>2210</p> <p>1858</p> <p>95</p> <p>1072</p> <p>1206</p> <p>1378</p> <p>1710</p> <p>1789</p> <p>2441</p>	<p>Nuisance, provable by other instances 451</p> <p>provable by reputation 1620</p> <p>Nul Tiel Record, original required in 1216</p> <p>tried by inspection 2355</p> <p>Number of witnesses; see WITNESSES, VII.</p> <p>Nunouptive Will, proved by two witnesses 2050</p> <p>Nurse, as a witness; see EXPERT WITNESS; OPINION RULE.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">O.</p> <p>Oath</p> <p>1. <i>At Common Law</i></p> <p>history 1815</p> <p>theory 1816</p> <p>kind of belief 1817</p> <p>form of oath 1818</p> <p>time of administration and of objection 1810</p> <p>capacity</p> <p>mode of ascertaining 1820</p> <p>infants 1822</p> <p>lunatics, idiots 1821</p> <p>distinguished from testimonial capacity 1823</p> <p>persons subjected to interpreters, peers, etc. 1824</p> <p>whether a witness merely sworn is impeachable 1893</p> <p>2. <i>Under Statutes</i></p> <p>abolition or dispensation 1827</p> <p>form, capacity, proof, etc. 1829</p> <p>3. <i>Sundries</i></p> <p>history of, in parties' disqualification 575</p> <p>confession made on examination under 842</p> <p>statement out of court under oath, excluded 1362, 1364</p> <p>belief on, by witness to character 1985</p> <p>Objection to evidence, time and form of 18</p> <p>to witness' qualifications 486, 586</p> <p>by party, claiming privilege for witness 2196, 2270</p> <p>renewal of, at close of case 2496</p> <p>Obligor impeaching his own obligation 529</p> <p>admissions of co-obligor 1077</p> <p>Obscenity of pictures, standard of 461</p>	<p>Section 793</p> <p>17</p> <p>1806</p> <p>1061</p> <p>1228</p> <p>2168, 2534</p> <p>2534</p> <p>665</p> <p>1684</p> <p>1042</p> <p>1072</p> <p>2475</p> <p>463</p> <p>561</p> <p>658</p> <p>726</p> <p>1041</p> <p>1732</p> <p>2214</p> <p>2215</p> <p>557</p>
--	---	--

INDEX OF TOPICS.

<p>Opinion Rule (<i>continued</i>).</p> <p>history Section 1917</p> <p>theory 1918-1922</p> <p>practical tests 1923-1927</p> <p>hypothetical questions 672-684</p> <p><i>rule applied to specific topics</i></p> <p>insanity 1933-1938</p> <p>value and damages 1940-1944</p> <p>insurance risk 1946-1947</p> <p>care, safety, prudence, duty, skill, or propriety of human conduct or a place, machine, or apparatus 1949-1951</p> <p>law</p> <p>foreign law 1953</p> <p>trade usage 1954</p> <p>technical words in docu- ments 1955</p> <p>location of deed-descriptions 1956</p> <p>contents of a lost document 1957</p> <p>testator's or grantor's ca- pacity 1958</p> <p>accused's capacity 1958</p> <p>solveny 1959</p> <p>possession, ownership, neces- sity, authority, etc. 1960</p> <p>state of mind</p> <p>intent, motive, purpose, in general 1963</p> <p>another person's intention 1964</p> <p>one's own intention 1965, 1966</p> <p>intent in dedication, voting, etc. 1967</p> <p>meaning of a conversation, etc. 1969</p> <p>impression or understanding 1970-1971</p> <p>sundry topics</p> <p>corporeal appearances 1974</p> <p>medical and surgical matters 1975</p> <p>probability and possibility 1976</p> <p>capacity and tendency 1976</p> <p>cause and effect 1976</p> <p>distance, time, speed, size 1977</p> <p>weight, direction, form, iden- tity 1977</p> <p>miscellaneous topics 1978</p> <p>character</p> <p>moral of a defendant 1981, 1983</p> <p>of a witness 1982-1985</p> <p>care, competence, or skill 1984</p> <p>handwriting; see HANDWRITING.</p> <p>rule enforced for dying declara- tions 1447</p> <p>for books of regular entry 1533</p> <p>for declarations about bound- aries 1569</p>	<p>Optum, use of, as disqualifying Section a witness 500</p> <p>as impeaching a witness 934, 1005</p> <p>Opponent, called as witness, whether he may be im- peached 916</p> <p>destruction of a document by 1198, 1199, 1207</p> <p>deposition of, when absent 1416</p> <p>taking but not using a wit- ness' deposition 1389</p> <p>see also ADMISSIONS; DEFEND- ANT; PARTIES.</p> <p>Opportunity in general, as evi- dence of a crime or other act 131-134</p> <p>Oral admission of a party; see ADMISSIONS.</p> <p>Order of topics of testimony; see EXAMINATION, III.</p> <p>Ordinances, judicial notice of 2572</p> <p>certified copy of 1680</p> <p>printed copy of 1684</p> <p>Original Document</p> <p>history of the rule requiring production 1177</p> <p>general principle 1179</p> <p><i>scope of the rule, as to writings</i></p> <p>uninscribed chattels 1181</p> <p>inscribed chattels 1182</p> <p>all kinds of writings 1183</p> <p>books of account or regular entry 1532, 1558</p> <p><i>production required</i></p> <p>what is production 1185</p> <p>original always usable 1186</p> <p>proving exsention also 1187, 1188</p> <p>order of proof 1189</p> <p>copy also offered 1190</p> <p><i>excuses for not producing</i></p> <p>loss or destruction 1193-1198</p> <p>detention by opponent; no- tice to produce 1199-1210</p> <p>possession by third person 1211-1213</p> <p>irremovable documents 1214</p> <p>judicial records (pleadings, wills, etc.) 1215-1217</p> <p>other official documents 1218-1222</p> <p>books of banks, abstracts, etc. 1223</p> <p>of regular entry 1532, 1558</p> <p>recorded conveyances 1224-1227</p> <p>appointments to office 1228</p> <p>illegible documents 1229</p> <p>voluminous records, etc 1230</p> <p>absence of entries 1320</p>
---	--

INDEX OF TOPICS.

Original Document (continued).	Section
<i>what is the original</i>	
duplicates and counterparts	1232
printed matter	1234, 1237
copy acted on as original	1235
telegraphic dispatches	1236
wills, etc.	1238
land-grants, etc.	1239
tax-lists, ballots, etc.	1240
records, accounts, etc.	1241
memorandum to aid recollec- tion	749, 760
handwriting shown by pho- tograph	797
ledger and day book	1558
<i>not applicable where contents are not in issue</i>	
document read aloud, etc.	1243
identity or effect of a docu- ment	1244
payment, receipts	1245
ownership, tenancy, sale, gift	1246, 1247
execution, delivery, publica- tion	1248
conversion, forgery, larceny, agency, etc.	1249
miscellaneous instances	1250
dying declarations	1449
pedigree statements	1497
<i>exceptions to the rule</i>	
collateral facts	1252-1254
opponent's admission of con- tents	1082, 1255-1256
deed-recitals, disclaimer of title	1257
witness' admission on <i>voir- dire</i>	1258
witness' admission on cross- examination	
self-contradictory docu- ment	1259
record of conviction	1270
foreign statute	1271
<i>rules for proof of copy</i>	
copy preferred to recollection	1268
preferable kinds of recollec- tion	1272
preference for examined or sworn copy	1273
copy of a copy	1274
personal knowledge of cor- rectness	1278
loss proved by affidavit	1709
whole must be copied	2105

Original Document (continued).	Section
proof of lost will	2052
of lost ancient deed	2143
see also COPY; CERTIFIED COPY.	
Overruling an objection	18
Overt Act; see HOMICIDE; TREASON.	
Owner of an animal, mode of evidencing knowledge	251
of a dangerous place or ma- chine, mode of evidencing knowledge	252
admissions by; see ADMIS- SIONS.	
complaint by, after robbery or larceny	1142
declarations of, about bound- aries; see BOUNDARIES.	
testimony in larceny required	2089
Ownership by adverse posses- sion; see POSSESSION.	
as evidenced by prior ownership	328
admissions of; see ADMIS- SIONS.	
production of deed, in proof of fact of	1246
opinion testimony to	1959
presumption of, from posses- sion	2515
continuity of	2530
possessor's declarations to confirm	1779
see also TITLE.	
Oyer and Profert when excused	1192
as a means of inspection be- fore trial	1858, 1859

P.

Pain, expressions of	1718
Paper to aid recollection; see RECOLLECTION. see also DOCUMENT; NEWSPAPER.	
Paper Money, expert qualifica- tions of witness	570, 705
Paramour, as furnishing a mo- tive; see MOTIVE. as qualified to testify	605, 2230
Pardon, promise of, as exclud- ing a confession	834
as restoring a witness' credit	1116
a witness' competency	523
as removing privilege against self-crimination	2280

INDEX OF TOPICS.

Parentage; see LEGITIMACY;		Parol Evidence Rule (continued).	
PATERNITY; FAMILY HISTORY.		(b) signing a document having blanks or capable of alteration; writing one's name not as a signature . . .	2419
Parish Register; see REGISTER OF MARRIAGE, BIRTH, AND DEATH.		delivery of a document; escrow; deeds or negotiable instruments delivered to bona fide holders, contrary to intent of maker . . .	2420
Parol Evidence Rule		unilateral acts; foregoing principles applied to wills and ballots	2421
Introduction		3. Voidable acts	
not a rule of evidence	2400	motive as making an act voidable; mistake, fraud, duress, infancy, and insanity	2423
lex fori not applicable to	5	B. Integration of Legal Acts (varying the terms of an instrument).	
rules defining the constitution of legal acts	2401	general theory of the rule against varying the terms of an instrument	2425
A. Creation of Legal Acts		history of the rule	2426
general principle; intent and expression; subject, tenor, and delivery	2404	1. Unilateral Acts	
history of the principle	2405	official documents (surveys, appointments, assessments, etc.)	2427
1. Subject, tenor, delivery, in general		2. Bilateral Acts	
transactions of jest, friendship, charity, and pretence	2406	no integration at all; casual memoranda	2429
terms must be definite; document void for uncertainty	2407	partial integration; general test for applying the rules; "collateral agreements"	2430
act must be final; delivery, as applied to deeds; conditions precedent; escrows	2408	incorrect tests; fraud, in Pennsylvania	2431
delivery as applied to negotiable instruments	2409	receipts and releases; bill of lading	2432
delivery, as applied to contracts in general; conditions precedent and subsequent; assent of third persons; blanks; dates	2410	recital of consideration in a deed	2433
publication as applied to wills	2411	warranty in a sale; insurance warranties	2434
2. Intent and mistake		agreements not to sue, or not to enforce, or to hold conditional only	2435
intention and mistake in general; test of reasonable consequences	2413	agreements of counterclaim, set-off, renewal, or mode of payment	2436
intent not to be bound at all	2414	agreement to hold a deed absolute as conditional only; agreement to hold in trust	2437
terms of an act; (a) signing a completed document; individual mistake, not known to or induced by the second party	2415	agreement to hold as agent or surety only	2438
individual mistake known to or induced by the second party	2416	fraud	2394
mutual mistake; general principle	2417		
mutual mistake as affecting bona fide holders for value	2418		

INDEX OF TOPICS.

Section		Section		Section
	Parol Evidence Rule (continued).		Parol Evidence Rule (continued).	
	trade usage and custom	2440	usage of trade or locality, when to apply	2464
2419	novation, alteration, and waiver; subsequent agree- ments	2441	parties' mutual understand- ing; identifying a descrip- tion	2465
	miscellaneous applications of the rule to admit or ex- clude "collateral" agree- ments	2442	individual party's meaning; deeds and contracts	2466
2420	rule applied to negotiable instruments; general prin- ciple	2443	wills	2467
	agreements affecting the ex- press terms of the docu- ment	2444	2. Sources of Interpretation	
2421	agreements affecting the im- plied terms	2445	general principle: all extrin- sic circumstances may be considered	2470
	rule binding upon the par- ties to the document only burden of proof; who must produce the document	2446 2447	exception for declarations of intention	2471
2423	8. Writing Required by Law at common law: judicial records	2450	exception for equivocation or latent ambiguity	2472
	corporate acts and records; negotiable instruments	2451	blanks and patent ambigu- ities	2473
2425	under statutes; wills; bal- lots; insurance policies	2452	exception for erroneous de- scription	2474
2426	conclusive certificates, dis- tinguished	2453	exception for rebutting an equity (legacies and ad- vancements)	2475
	C. Solemnization of Legc. Acts writing as a formality; stat- ute of frauds	2454	<i>falsa demonstratio non nocet</i> ; general principle	2476
2430	discharge and alteration of specialties, etc.	2455	application to deeds and wills sundry rules; interpretation of statutes	2477 2478
2431	other formalities than writ- ing; signature, seal, at- testation, registration, stamp	2456	Particular Instances of conduct as evidencing human char- acter, etc.; see CHARACTER; STRENGTH; HEALTH; NEG- LIGENCE.	
2432			of injury, work, speed, etc., as evidencing cause or condi- tion of a thing	447-461
2433	D. Interpretation of Legal Acts general nature of interpreta- tion; standard and sources of interpretation	2458	Parties	
2434	"Intention" and "Mean- ing," distinguished	2459	character of	
2435	1. Standard of Interpretation general principle; four standards, — popular, lo- cal, mutual, individual	2461	to prove an act	
2436	rule against "disturbing a plain meaning," or, forbid- ding explanation except of ambiguities; history and general principle	2462	in criminal cases	55-61
	application of the rule to wills, deeds, etc.	2463	in civil cases	64-67
2437			in issue	70-80
2438			to mitigate damages	70-76
2394			conduct of, to evidence char- acter	192-213
			to evidence consciousness of weak case	277-291
			failure to testify or produce evidence	285-289
			common law disqualification as witnesses	577
			testifying to their own in- tent	581
			admissions by; see ADMIS- SIONS.	

INDEX OF TOPICS.

<i>Parties (continued).</i>	Section	<i>Patent of Invention (continued).</i>	Section
books of account of; see BOOKS OF ACCOUNT.		infringement of, privilege for trade secret	2212, 2374
agent or kinsman of, not to take deposition	803	Patent of Land; see DEED;	
impeachment of their own wit- ness; see IMPEACHMENT.		LAND-OFFICE.	
whether impeachable, when tes- tifying for themselves	890	Paternity, other intercourse as	
when called by the opponent	916	evidence of	133
exhibiting injuries to jury	1158	child's resemblance, as evi- dence of	166, 1154
affidavit of, to lost document	1196, 1225, 1700	see also BASTARDY; NON-ACCESS.	
former testimony of same	1388	Patient, physician's testimony	
books of account kept by; see REGULAR ENTRIES.		to illness of	638
exclusion from court during testimony	1841	expressions of pain by	1718
disclosure of documents or tes- timony before trial; see DIS- COVERY.		privilege for communications to physician	2390
testifying first on their own side	1869	Payee, parol agreement of, col- lateral to instrument	2443
answer to interrogatories as evidence	2124	see also BILL OF EXCHANGE;	
claiming privilege for witness	2196, 2270	NOTE.	
privileged not to testify	2217	Payment, possession of money,	
discovery; statutes	2218	as evidence of	69, 224
production of documents	2219	possession of instrument, as evidence of	156
premises, chattels, bodily ex- posure	2220, 2221	offer of, as an admission	1061
parol evidence rule, restricted to	2446	production of receipt for	1245, 1254
understanding of, to affect a document; see PAROL EVI- DENCE RULE.		indorsements of, as statements against interest	1461, 1466
burden of proof upon; see BURDEN OF PROOF.		books of account as evidence of	1539, 1549
Partner, admissions of	1077	words accompanying, as <i>res</i> <i>gesta</i>	1777
Partnership, knowledge of, as evidenced by repute	254	agreement as to mode of, shown by parol	2436, 2444
books of, as evidence	1074	presumption of	2517, 2518
proof of, without producing instrument	1249, 1257	see also CONTRACT; MONEY.	
provable by reputation	1624	Pedigree, hearsay statements of; see FAMILY HISTORY.	
Passengers, behavior of, as evi- dence of danger	461	of an animal, proved by reputa- tion	1621
Pastor; see CLERGYMAN.		by registry	1706
Patent Ambiguity in a docu- ment	2472	inquisition of, by the heralds	1670
Patent of Invention, producing original of assignment	1226	Peer, whether required to be sworn	1825
execution of assignment of, proved by record	1657	Penalty, privilege not to disclose	2257
inspection of machine before trial	1161, 1862	Penitent, privilege for commu- nications to priest	2394
		Perambulations as evidence of boundary	1563
		Performance of official duty, presumed	2534
		of contract, burden of proof of	2537
		Perjury, other falsities, as evi- dencing intent in	342
		confession of, as disqualifying a witness	527
		as impeaching a witness	959

INDEX OF TOPICS.

Section		Section		Section
212, 2374	Perjury (continued).		Plaintiff, character of, as evi-	
	producing original of chancery		dence	64-67
	answer in	1216	character of, as in issue or as	
	penalty for, as a requirement	1831	mitigating damages	70-80
	two-witness rule	2040	mode of evidencing character	
	testimony before grand jury,		by conduct	192-218
133	not privileged	2363	see also PARTIES.	
	see also FALSHOOD.		Plan, used to illustrate testi-	
166, 1154	Perpetuum memoriam; see		mony	790
xxx.	DEPOSITION.		see also DESIGN; SURVEY.	
	Personal Injury; see CORPORAL		Flat, used to illustrate a witness'	
	INJURY.		testimony	790
	Pharmacist, privileged commu-		see also SURVEY.	
	nications to	2382	Platform; see PREMISES.	
	Photograph, of a person, as used		Plea of truth as evidence of	
	to identify him	660	malice; see DEFAMATION.	
	used by a witness to illustrate		Pleading, distinguished from	
	testimony	790-797	evidence	2
	of handwriting	797, 2010	from judicial admission	2589
	Physician, character of, as de-		as a party's admission	1064
	fendant in malpractice	67	original in court records not	
	conduct, as evidencing negli-		produced	1215
	gence or incompetence of	199, 200,	statement in, to evidence ped-	
		208	igree	1495
89, 224			see also JUDICIAL RECORD.	
	mode of treatment by another,		Pledge; see MORTGAGE.	
	as a standard of care	461	Poison, evidence to show knowl-	
	qualified to be an expert wit-		edge of	87
	ness	569, 687	possession of, as indicating	
	hypothetical question to; see		criminal design	238
	HYPOTHETICAL QUESTION.		nature of, as shown by samples	439
	witness to value of services of		symptoms, as indicating nature	
	patient's expressions of pain		of	457
	to	1718	witness' experience as qualify-	
	character for skill	1984	ing him	568
	amount of fee demandable as		see also HOMICIDE.	
	expert	2203	Poles, telegraph or telephone;	
	privileged not to attend court	2206	see NEGLIGENCE; HIGHWAY.	
	inspection of injured person by	2220	Police-officer obtaining a con-	
	privilege for patient's commu-		fession; see CONFESSION.	
	nications to	2380	Policy of insurance; see INSUR-	
	see also MALPRACTICE; OPINION		ANCE.	
	RULE; POISON.		Poll-book; see ELECTION.	
	Picture, of a person or place, to		Population, as evidenced by	
	illustrate testimony	790	census	1671
	Pier; see PREMISES.		judicially noticed	2577
	Piracy; see ROBBERY; COPYRIGHT.		Possession of tools, as evidence	
	Pistol; see WEAPON.		of a crime	88, 238
	Place		of money, as evidence of loan	
	value at another, as evidence		or payment	80, 224
	of value	463	as evidence of larceny	154
	character of a witness at an-		as evidence of motive for	
	other	929, 1615	crime, etc.	392
	of birth, death, etc., as evi-		of a document, as evidence of	
	denced by family hearsay	1501	knowledge	260
	judicially noticed	2575, 2581	as an admission	1073
	see also PREMISES.			

INDEX OF TOPICS.

Possession (continued).			
of a document, by opponent, as excusing non-production	1199		
of receipts, etc., as evidence of payment	156		
of land, as evidenced by a lease or deed	157		
under ancient document, as evidencing genuineness	2141		
of forged documents, as evi- dence of intent	309		
of stolen goods, as evidence of larceny, etc.	152, 153		
as evidence of intent	324		
accused's explanations	1143		
presumption from	2513		
possessor's declarations of facts against interest	1458		
assessment-books as evidence of	1640		
statements about boundary, by a possessor; see BOUNDA- RIES.			
reputation about	1587		
opinion testimony to	1960		
by grantor, raising presump- tion of fraud in sale	2504		
presumption of ownership from	2515		
of payment from	8251		
of continuance of	382, 2530		
Adverse Possession			
ancient documents, as evi- dence of	157		
knowledge of claim, as evi- denced by repute	255		
possession of part, as evi- dencing possession of whole	378		
oral admissions of title	1257		
statements made during, as <i>res gesta</i>	1778		
as affecting presumption of ownership	1779		
Possibility of doing or happen- ing, as evidenced by instances	446-461		
Posting in the mail; see MAIL;			
POSTMARK.			
on a wall or fence, original not required	1214		
Postmark, as evidence	151		
presuming genuineness of	2152		
Poverty, as evidence of non- payment	89		
as evidence of motive for a crime or transaction	392		
		Power, physical, as evidence of an act	85
		instances of physical, as evi- dence	220
		Power of Attorney; see AGENCY.	
		Power of Legislature, to make rules of evidence	7
		Preamble of statute; see RE- CITAL.	
		Pregnancy, events in, as evi- denced by birthmark	167
		see also BASTARDY.	
		Premises	
		owner's knowledge of defect, evidenced by prior condition or injury	252
		repairs, as evidence of negli- gence	283
		condition at another time or place, as evidence	437, 438
		instances of condition or qual- ity, as evidence	451
		marks on, as evidence of iden- tity	416
		similar injuries, as evidence of defect	453
		similar precautions, as evi- dence of safety	461
		photograph of, to illustrate tes- timony	790
		inspection of, compellable at trial	1162, 2194, 2221
		before trial	1162, 1862
		presumption of defect, from accident	2509
		Preparation, as evidence of crime	238
		Preponderance of evidence	2498
		Prescription of title, by posses- sion; see POSSESSION.	
		of physician, as privileged	2383
		President, privilege of	2368-2372
		Press Copies, as originals	1234
		Presumption; see BURDEN OF PROOF.	
		conclusive; see CONCLUSIVE- NESS.	
		Presumptive evidence, as mean- ing circumstantial evidence	25
		Pretences, false; see REPRESENTA- TIONS.	
		Price; see SALES; VALUE.	
		Price-current, as qualifying a witness to value	719
		as admissible in evidence	1704

INDEX OF TOPICS.

Section		Section
85	Priest, confession to	840
220	privilege for communications to	2394
	see also MARRIAGE.	
7	Prima Facie Evidence, statutes making	7, 1354
	sufficient to go to jury	2404
167	Primary Evidence; see BEST EVIDENCE; ORIGINAL DOCUMENT; COPY.	
	Principal, admissions of, against surety	1077
	agent's admissions against	1078
252	undisclosed, shown by parol	2438
	see also AGENT.	
283	Printed Copy of public document	
	sundry documents	1684
37, 438	reports of decisions	1684, 1708
	statutes	1684
	see also COPY.	
451	Printed Matter, as a duplicate	
416	original	1234, 1237
	sample copies as evidence	440
458	proving genuineness of newspapers	2150
461	official statutes and reports	2151
	see also BOOK; MAIL; NEWSPAPER.	
790	Prior and Subsequent; see TIME.	
2194,	Prison, escape from, as evidence of guilt	276
2221	Private statute, judicial notice of	2572
1802	Privies in Interest, admissions of; see ADMISSIONS.	
2509	Privilege	
238	I. From Attending	
2498	no privilege in general	2192
	illness	2205
	sex and occupation	2206
	officers of government	2206, 2371
2383	distance from place of trial	2207
2372	subpoena	2199
1234	expenses	2200
	II. From Testifying	
	no privilege in general	2192-2194
	officers having compulsory power	2195
25	privilege personal to witness	2196
	party may not object	2196
	privileged topics	
	irrelevant matters	2210
	documents of title, etc.	2211
	trade secrets	2212
719	customers' names	2212
1704	official secrets	2375

Privilege (continued).	Section
theological opinions	2214
political votes	2215
disgracing facts	984, 986, 2216, 2255
bodily exposure	2216
party interested	2217
opponent compellable	2218
production of documents	2219
bodily exposure	2220
premises and chattels	2221
interested witness	2222
civil liability in general	2223
husband and wife; see MARITAL RELATIONSHIP.	
self-crimination; see SELF-CRIMINATION.	
privileged communications	
in general	2285
clerks, bankers, trustees, newspapers, etc.	2286
telegrams	2287
attorney and client; see ATTORNEY AND CLIENT.	
husband and wife; see MARITAL RELATIONSHIP.	
petit jurors	
communications	2346
impeaching a verdict	2348-2356
arbitrators	2358
grand jurors	
vote and opinion	2361
witness' testimony	2362
grounds for indictment	2364
number of votes	2364
official communications	2368-2376
government and informer	2374
physician and patient	2380-2391
priest and penitent	2394-2396
offer of compromise	1061
III. Sundry Rules	
as permitting proof by copy, for privileged document	1212
as excusing production of attesting witness	1317
as allowing use of deposition	1407
claim of, on cross-examination, as excluding the direct testimony	1391
Probable cause for prosecution or arrest, evidence of belief of	258
in malicious prosecution, burden of proof of	2539
judge or jury to determine	2554

INDEX OF TOPICS.

	Section		Section
Probate; see WILL; JUDICIAL RECORD; CERTIFIED COPY; ATTESTING WITNESS.		Prostitution, enticement for, character of complainant as evidence	62
Proceedings, presumption of regularity of	2534	house of; see HOUSE OF ILL-FAME.	
Process; see COMPULSORY PROCESS; JUDICIAL RECORDS.		other offences as evidence of intent to entice for	349, 390
Production of evidence in general, failure to make, as showing a weak case	285-291	Protest; see NOTARY.	
<i>of document or chattel</i>		Prudence, opinion as to	1949
<i>which party is bound to produce</i>	2447	Public Corporation; see CORPORATION.	
<i>by opponent at trial</i>	2219	Public Document	
<i>by witness</i>	2193	1. Admissible to prove the facts stated therein	
<i>subpoena duces tecum</i>	2200	general principles	1631
<i>privilege against self-crimination</i>	2264	whether conclusive, or preferred to other testimony	1335, 2427, 2453
<i>of attorney and client</i>	2307, 2318	official duty of maker	1632
<i>of government officials</i>	2373	deputies, de facto officers, etc.	1633
<i>before trial, on discovery</i>	1855, 1859	publicity of document	1634
proof by copy; see ORIGINAL DOCUMENT.		officer's personal knowledge	1635
Proof, required in proving a document	1177, 1858	constitutionality of using as evidence	1398
see also PRODUCTION OF DOCUMENTS.		registers and records	
Profits, amount of receipt of; see CONTRACTS; SALES; VALUE.		sundry kinds	1639
Promise as excluding a confession; see CONFESION.		assessment and electoral registers	1640
Proof, distinguished from admissibility	12	military and naval registers	1641
distinguished from relevancy	29	registers of marriage, birth, death	1642-1646
Proofs of loss, in insurance, as an admission	1073	certificates of marriage	1645
privilege waived by sending physician's certificate	2390	registers of title (ships, stock-brands, timber-marks)	1647
Property, conveyance of, as evidence of a weak case	282	registers of conveyances deeds and mortgages	1648-1656
sales of other, as evidence of value	462	assignments of invention-patent	1657
qualifications of a witness to value	567, 711	wills	1658
presumption of ownership from possession of	2515	government land-grants	1659
see also POSSESSION; CUSTOM; CONTRACT; PREMISES; OWNERSHIP.		judicial records	1660
Prosecution, may show accused's bad character in rebuttal only	57, 58	corporation records	1661
malicious; see MALICIOUS PROSECUTION.		legislative records	1662
failure to institute, as evidence	284	executive proclamations	1662
may impeach eye-witnesses called by it	918	returns and reports	
list of witnesses of, before trial	1850	sundry kinds	1664
		sheriff's returns and recitals	1664
		surveyor's returns	1665
		former testimony reported	
		judges' notes	1666
		magistrates' reports	1667
		bills of exceptions	1668
		stenographers' notes, etc.	1669
		inquisitions and reports	
		domain, escheat, and title	1670
		pedigree in heralds' books	1670

INDEX OF TOPICS.

Section	Public Document (continued).	Section
62	lunacy	1671
	coroner's inquest of death	1671
	census of population	1671
	miscellaneous kinds	1672
449, 860	<i>certificates</i>	
	miscellaneous kinds	1674
	notary's protest	1675
1949	deed-acknowledgments; oaths	1676
	certified copies	1677-1683
	printed copies	1684
	2. Proving Contents and Execution of Public Documents	
	whether removable for use in evidence	1186, 2182, 2183
1631	production of original not required	1218-1222
5, 2427, 2433	provable by examined or sworn copy	1273
1632	by certified or office copy	1677-1683
1633	certified copy preferred to others	1273
1634	by printed copy	1684
1635	any copy preferred to recollection	1267, 1268
1398	see also COPY; CERTIFIED COPY.	
1639	whether the whole must be proved	
1640	lost or destroyed record	2107
1641	record accessible	2108
2-1640	sundry public records	2109
1645	judicial record	2110
1647	genuineness, how proved	
3-1656	by seal	2161-2169
	by official custody	2158, 2159
1657	by certificate of attestation	1677, 2162
1658	privileged as State secrets	2368-2372
1659	see also CERTIFICATE; EXECUTION; JUDICIAL RECORD; RECORDED CONVEYANCE; NOTARY; PAROL EVIDENCE RULE.	
1660	Public Interest, matters of; see REPUTATION.	
1661	Public Officer, impeaching his own certificate	529
1662	having power to compel testimony	2195
1664	privileged from testifying	2368-2372
1665	regularity of proceedings presumed	2534
1666	judicially noticed	2577
1667	see also JUDICIAL RECORD; PUBLIC DOCUMENT.	
1668	Publication, in newspaper, as evidencing knowledge	255

Publication (continued).	Section
of libel or slander; see DEFAMATION.	
proving the fact of, without producing document	1249
affidavit of	1710
of testimony in newspaper, forbidden	1636
see also PRINTED MATTER; NOTICE; BOOK.	
Publicity of trial, as a security for truth	1634
exceptions to the rule	1636
Publisher; see PUBLICATION; PRINTED MATTER; COPYRIGHT.	
Pupil; see SCHOOLMASTER.	
Purchaser; see GRANTEE; CREDITOR; SALES.	
Putting in the Case; see EXAMINATION, III.	

Q.

Qualifications of a witness; see WITNESS, I, Qualifications.	
Quality of a chattel, place, weapon, etc., as evidenced by its effects, etc.	437-461
as evidenced by sales or rentals	462
Quarrels; see MOTIVE; INTENT; BIAS.	
Question to a Witness, in hypothetical form	672-684
in leading form	769-770
allowable only in discretion	770, 776
kinds of leading questions	771
exceptions to the rule	776
put to one's own witness	915
in misleading form	780
with intimidating or annoying manner	781
repetition of	782
multiple examiners	783
by the judge	784, 2484
topics of, for impeachment or other purposes; see DIRECT EXAMINATION; CROSS-EXAMINATION.	
witness' prior knowledge of	788
continuous narration by witness without	785
stating the purpose of	1871
as a foundation for impeachment	

INDEX OF TOPICS.

Question to a Witness (cont'd).	Section
by expressions of bias or corruption	983, 984
by self-contradiction	1035
by a writing	1250
by admissions of a party	1051
impeaching a witness sworn but not questioned	1393

R.

Race, evidenced by corporal traits	167, 1154
disqualifying a witness	516
impeaching a witness	936
evidenced	
by reputation	1805
by family hearsay	1502
corroboration required for Chinese	2066
see also ALIENS.	
Railroad; see NEGLIGENCE; EMPLOYEE; PREMISES; HIGHWAY; SPARKS; MACHINE; CARRIER; RATES.	
Rape, character of complainant as evidence	62
of plaintiff in indecent assault	75
other persons' intercourse as evidence of paternity	133
acts of unchastity, to show complainant's consent	199
other intercourse, as evidencing defendant's intent or motive	357, 398
infant or imbecile witness in conduct of complainant, to impeach credibility	498, 508
restoring credit of complainant	967
complainant's outcry or information, received	1103
details of complaint, admissible	1134
who is accomplice in	1700
uncorroborated complainant in marital privilege in	2061
marital privilege in	2239
Rates of charge by railroad, conclusiveness of official schedule	1354
Ratification; see AGENCY.	
Rationality of the rules of evidence	9
Re-Cross-Examination; see CROSS-EXAMINATION; EXAMINATION, III.	

Re-Direct Examination; see EXAMINATION, III; DIRECT EXAMINATION.	Section
Reading a prepared paper, by witness	787
a deposition to deponent before signing	808
skill of a witness in, impeachment of	907
Real Evidence (or Autoptie Proferencia)	
defined	2
general principle and instances	1150-1153
color, resemblance, appearance, etc., to show age, paternity, etc.	1154
exhibition of body as privileged	1154
weapons, clothes, etc., in criminal cases	1157
corporal injuries, in civil cases	1158
indecent exhibition	1158
experiments, insanity, etc.	1160
physical inconvenience of production	116
view by jury	1162-1163
jury's view as evidence	116
whether an inscribed chattel must be produced	118
of premises, chattels, etc., discovery before trial	190
not privileged	20, 222, 226
Reason for an act, hearsay statement of	172
Reasonable Doubt, proof beyond Reasonableness	240
other persons' conduct, as evidence of	46
information received, as evidence of	178
judge or jury to determine	255
see also KNOWLEDGE; NEGLIGENCE.	
Rebuttal, of irrelevant evidence, by other irrelevant evidence	1
accused's bad character in	5
scope of testimony in	1869, 187
Recall of a witness by opponent, whether it prevents impeachment	911-91
to ask as to a self-contradiction	103
see also EXAMINATION.	
Receipt, of land-office receiver, original required	123
production of original, in proving payment	124

INDEX OF TOPICS.

Section		Section		Section
	Receipt (continued).		Recollection (continued).	
	admissible as statement against interest	1456	self-contradiction by failure of preference of copy of a document, to recollection of contents; see COPY.	1037, 1043
787	varied by parol	2482	failure of recollection of attesting witness	1302, 1315
	presumption of payment	2518	refreshing recollection by report of prior testimony	1328
805	Receiver of stolen goods, knowledge as evidenced by repute as evidenced by other possession	324	by seeing specimens of writings	1307
991		324	books of account and journals, original of	1307
24	Recital in a deed, of another deed's contents	1257	Record of stock and dividends	1307
1150-1152	in a statute, whether concisive	1352	of business, made by witness not having personal knowledge	1306
	whether admissible	1602	of a predecessor, as qualifying a witness to hand writing	704
1154	in a sheriff's deed, whether concisive	1351	of recollection of a witness; see RECOLLECTION.	
	whether admissible	1604	of conviction of crime, to impeach a witness, see CONVICTION OF CRIME.	
1155	in an ancient deed, of boundary or lost deed	1573	judicial; see JUDICIAL RECORD.	
	of pedigree	1573	official, in general; see PUBLIC DOCUMENT.	
1157	in a will, as evidence of pedigree; see FAMILY HISTORY.		of conveyance; see RECORDED CONVEYANCE.	
1158	of consideration, varied by parol	2433	voluminous, proved by summary	1230, 1244
1159	Recollection		absence of an entry in, how proved	1230, 1244, 1078, 1057, 1078
1160	general principles	725-730	Recorded Conveyance	
	"impression," "belief," etc.	727-729	record-book admissible, instead of copy of it	1186, 1055, 2373
1161	examining to grounds of recollection	730	conveyance on file in public office	1219
1162-1167	record of past recollection	734-754	production of original deed not required	1224-1227
1168	history and general principles	734-739	preference for certified copy	1273
	must be written	744	copy of a copy	1274
1162, 2221, 2264	contemporaneous	745	mode of proving copy	1277
	accuracy sworn to	746, 747	production of attesting witness excused	1290, 1318
1729	witness not the writer	748	record admissible to prove contents and execution	
2407	original	749, 750	deeds, etc., lawfully recorded	1648-1651
	transactions by several persons (book-keeper and salesman, etc.)	751, 752	record in another jurisdiction	1652
461	showing to opponent	753	unauthorized record	1653
	handing to jury	754	proof of other matters recorded	1654
1789	present recollection refreshed	753-764	certified and sworn copies	1655
2553	general principle	758		
EVIDENCE.	witness not the writer	759		
15	original	760		
58	contemporaneous	761		
1869, 1873	depositions used	761		
	showing to opponent	762		
911-913	handing to jury	763		
1036	use by cross-examiner	764		
	sundry rules			
	refreshing the memory of one's own witness by his prior self-contradiction	905		
1230	cross-examination to test	995		
1245	contradicting by showing failure of	1005, 1022		

INDEX OF TOPICS.

Recorded Conveyance (cont'd).	Section	Regular Entries	Section
whole of record must be copied	2109	exception to the Hearsay rule	151
kinds of certified copies admissible	1677-1683	history and statutes	1518, 151
certificate of acknowledgment, as evidence	1676	as an aid to recollection; see RECOLLECTION.	
assignment of invention-patent will	1657	I. <i>Regular Entries in general</i>	1521-153
government land-grant	1659	death, absence, etc., of entrant	152
copy of ancient deed recorded	2143	kind of business	152
presumption of delivery, notice, seal, etc.	2520	dnty to superior	152
Referee as witness	1912	regularity	152
Refreshment of Memory; see RECOLLECTION.		contemporaneousness	152
Refusal, to submit to a test, as evidence of guilt	275	no motive to misrepresent	152
to escape, as evidence of innocence	276, 293	oral reports	152
to produce witness or document, as evidence of a weak case	285-291	personal knowledge	153
Register, official, in general; see PUBLIC DOCUMENT.		salesman and bookkeeper acting jointly	153
Register of Deeds; see RECORDED CONVEYANCE.		form of entry	153
Register of Land-Office; see LAND-OFFICE.		impeaching credit	153
Register of Marriage, Birth, or Death		production of original	153
production of original required	1219, 1223	II. <i>Parties' Account-Books</i>	
preferred as proof of birth	1335	no clerk	153
admissible as a deceased person's regular entry	1523	cash payments	1539, 154
as an official record	1642, 1646	goods delivered to third person	154
certified copy of, by custodian	1682, 1683	special contracts	154
sworn copy of, by custodian	1710	kind of business	1542, 154
not required in bigamy	2088	of book	1548, 15
copy of whole required	2109	of item	1543, 154
presumed genuine, from official custody	2159	contemporaneousness	154
identitly shown by name	2529	regularity	154
kept in a family, as evidence; see FAMILY HISTORY.		honest appearance	154
Register of Ship, whether conclusive	1352	reputation for correctness	154
whether admissible	1641, 1647	suppletory oath; cross-examination	154
Registration of Title or Deed,		use by or against surviving party	154
proved by copy	1239	personal knowledge	154
whether conclusive	1352	party and salesman jointly acting	154
whether admissible	1647	form of entry	154
as a required formality	2456	impeaching the book	154
as presuming delivery of deed	2320	using the entries as admissions	154
no notice of prior deed	2520	production of original; ledger and day-book	154
see also RECORDED CONVEYANCE.		effect of statutes	154
		books of deceased clerk	154
		Regularity of official proceedings presumed	253
		Regulations, of department, judicial notice of	257
		Relationship, hearsay statements, as evidence of; see FAMILY HISTORY.	
		Release, varied by parol	243
		see also DOCUMENT.	
		Relevancy, distinguished from admissibility	

INDEX OF TOPICS.

Section		Section	
1517	Relevancy (continued).		Reputation (continued).
1518, 1519	general considerations affect-		ancestry, legitimacy, birth,
	ing the rules of	27, 28	death, etc. 1005
1521-1533	distinguished from weight or		4. Moral Character of Party or
1521	proof	29	Witness
1523	logical theory of	30-36	reputation distinguished from
1524	of facts admitted condition-		character 52, 920
1525	ally on further evidence	14, 40,	see also CHARACTER.
1526		1871	as mitigating damages in defa-
1527	no privilege for irrelevant mat-		mation 209
1528	ters	2210	of deceased in homicide, to
1530	Religious Belief, as disqualify-		evidence accused's belief
	ing a witness	516, 518	246
1530	as influencing a confession	840	of employee, to evidence em-
1531	as impeaching a witness	935	ployer's knowledge 249
1531	as requisite for an oath	1817	of lunatic, insolvent, or part-
1532	disclosure of, privileged	2214	ner, to evidence purchaser's
	Renewal, agreement for, shown		knowledge 253-255
1538	by parol	2436, 2445	of arrested person, as evidenc-
1539, 1540	Repairs, of a machine or place,		ing probable cause 258
1540	to evidence negligence	283	qualifications of a witness to . .
1541	Repetition, of questions to a		witness to, cross-examined as
1542, 1547	witness	782	to rumors 988, 1111
1548, 1558	of defamatory utterances; see		<i>prima facie</i> evidence of crime,
1543, 1549	DEFAMATION.		under statute 1354
1550	Reply to letter by mail, as gen-		constitutionality of using, as
1547	uine	2152	evidence 1308
1551	to telegram	2153	of honesty, required for a par-
1552	see also LETTER.		ty's account-book 1552
1554	Report, of an official	1664-1672	place and extent of reputation . .
1554	of a judicial decision		1608-1616
1554	by officially printed copy	1684	time of reputation 1617-1619
1555	by private printed copy	1703	kind of character reputed
1555	of testimony, kinds of; see		(chastity, sanity, temper-
1556	FORMER TESTIMONY.		ance, etc.) 1620, 1621
1556	prohibition of publication of		witness' or party's charac-
1557	of a clerk or bookkeeper; see		ter; see also CHARACTER.
1557	REGULAR ENTRIES.		5. Sundry Facts provable by
1558	see also PUBLIC DOCUMENT.		Reputation
1560	Representations, knowledge of		solvency, wealth 1628
1561	falsity of, as evidenced by		partnership 1624
2534	repute	256	incorporation 1625
2572	as evidenced by other false		miscellaneous facts 1626
2432	representations	320	party's knowledge of a fact
12	Reputation		repnted 1789
	1. Land-boundaries and Land-		see also KNOWLEDGE.
	customs		Res Gestæ, other crimes ad-
	matter must be ancient	1582	mitted when a part of 218
	kind of reputation	1583-1591	complaint in rape, as part
	form of reputation	1592-1595	of 1134, 1760
	2. Events of General History		in robbery or larceny 1142, 1762
	ancient matters of general in-		declarations about private
	terest	1597-1609	boundary 1563, 1571
	3. Marriage and other Facts of		statements of mental or phys-
	Family History		ical condition 1715-1740
	marriage	1602-1604	of the circumstances of an
			injury or affray 1745-1756
			of intent or motive 1714-1740

INDEX OF TOPICS.

<i>Res Gestæ</i> (continued).	Section	S.	Section
charge made in travail by bastard's mother	1764	Safety of machine, premises, etc., as evidenced by other instances	451, 461
statements about boundary	1764	opinion as to	1949
declarations by an accused	1782, 1765	Sales, course of business in, as evidence of a transaction	94, 372, 377, 379
exclamations in a mob or riot	1790	of liquor; see LIQUOR-SELLING.	
sundry applications	1757, 1796	of other property, as evidence of value	463
utterances a part of the issue or verbal acts; see HEARSAY RULE, III.		as qualifying a witness to value	714
general theory of doctrine	1745, 1768, 1796	as evidence of intent; see FRAUD; FALSE REPRESENTATIONS; FRAUDULENT TRANSFERS.	
history of phrase	1795	price, etc., as evidence of a motive	392
Res ipsa loquitur	24, 2309	decrease of, as evidence of nuisance, etc.	462
Resemblance of child, as evidence of paternity	166, 1154	production of instrument, in proof of fact of	1247
see also IDENTITY.		buyer's utterances, used against seller's creditor	1779
Residence, evidenced by prior residence	382	intent of debtor in	1967
presumed to continue	2530	presumption of fraud applicable to	2504
see also DOMICIL.		books of account, as evidence of; see REGULAR ENTRIES.	
Resistance, as evidence of guilt	276	warranty in, shown by parol	2434
Return		statute of frauds applied to	2454
of sheriff	1664, 1670	see also GRANTOR.	
of surveyor	1665	Salesman, using entry to aid recollection; see RECOLLECTION; REGULAR ENTRIES.	
of sundry officers	1672	Sample, as evidence of an entire lot	439
Revocation, testator's utterances as evidence	1734, 1782	Sanity (or Insanity), conduct as evidence of	228-235
Reward, as impeaching a witness	969	hereditary, as evidence of	232
as excusing a confession	835	capacity of insane person to testify	492-497
Riot, other acts, as evidencing intent	367	witness' experience in or knowledge of	568, 688
see also MOB.		witness' insanity, in impeachment	932
Road; see HIGHWAY.		inspection of insane person by tribunal	1160
Robbery, possession of goods or money, as evidence of	153, 154, 2513	insanity excusing absence of an attesting witness	1816
other crimes, as evidencing intent	351	of a deponent	1408
motive for	392	of a declarant of facts against interest	1456
owner's complaint after, as <i>res gestæ</i>	1142, 1762		
proof of identity in; see IDENTITY.			
Roentgen-ray photograph	795		
Roman Catholic as a witness; see RELIGIOUS BELIEF.			
Rules of Court, judicially noticed	2578		
Ruling upon objections	19		
error of, as ground for new trial	21		
Rumors, on cross-examination of a witness to reputation	988, 1111		
distinguished from reputation, to prove character	1611		

INDEX OF TOPICS.

	Sanity (continued).		Section
	of a maker of regular entries	1521, 1561	
	insanity disqualifying dying declarant	1445	
1461	provable by reputation	1621	
1949	by inquisition of lunacy	1671	
	by declarations of testator	1738-1740	
372,	by opinion testimony	1933-1938	
379	by inspection	2220	
	burden of proof of	2500, 2501	
	presumed to continue	2530	
463	hypothetical question as to;		
	see HYPOTHETICAL QUESTION.		
	see also LUNATIC.		
714	Schoolmaster, evidence of		
	standard of discipline of	461	
	Science, men of, as witnesses;		
	see EXPERT WITNESS.		
	instruments and tabulated data		
	of, used by a witness	665, 795	
392	books of, physician's testi-		
	mony based on	688	
462	used in evidence	1690-1700	
	judicially noticed	2566	
1247	Scintilla of evidence	2494	
	Scrip, of land grant; see DEED.		
1779	Seal, official, as authenticating a		
1967	document		
	general principle	2161, 2162	
2504	seal of State	2163	
	of court or clerk	2164	
	of notary	2165	
2434	of sundry officers	2166	
2454	official signatures	2167	
	title to office	2168	
	attested copy under seal	1679, 1680, 1681	
	corporate seals	2169	
	history of, as making docu-		
	ments indisputable	2426	
439	form of	2456	
	judicial notice of foreign	2566	
235	Search, evidence obtained by		
232	illegal	2183	
	for lost document	1194	
497	for attesting witness	1313	
688	Seaworthiness, presumption of	2533	
	Secret of trade, as privileged	2212, 2374	
	of State	2375	
932	of friendship	2285	
	see also PRIVILEGE.		
1160	Security, agreement to hold deed		
	as, shown by parol	2437	
1816	Sedition, other acts as evidenc-		
1408	ing intent	367	
	other persons' utterances, as a		
1456	standard of loyalty	461	

	Sedition (continued).		Section
	putting in the whole of an		
	utterance	2097, 2115,	
		2119	
	see also DEFAMATION; TREASON.		
	Seduction, character of the		
	woman as in issue or miti-		
	gating damages	75, 76,	
		77, 79	
	Intercourse of third person, as		
	evidence of paternity	183	
	acts of unchastity, as defeat-		
	ing prosecution or mitigat-		
	ing damages	205, 210	
	other intercourse, as evidenc-		
	ing intent or motive	360, 398	
	who is accomplice in	2060	
	uncorroborated complainant	2061	
	marital privilege in	2289	
	proof beyond a reasonable		
	doubt	2498	
	Self-contradiction, as impeach-		
	ing a witness		
	one's own witness	902-906	
	general theory	1017	
	collateral facts excluded	1020	
	material facts	1021	
	bias, knowledge, skill, etc.	1022	
	preliminary question to wit-		
	ness	1025-1039	
	what is a self-contradiction	1040-1043	
	opinion	1041	
	silence, omission to claim or		
	speak	1042	
	explaining away the incon-		
	sistency	1044	
	joining issue on the explana-		
	tion	1046	
	putting in the whole	1045	
	distinguished from a party's		
	admissions or confessions	821, 1051	
	Self-Crimination, privilege against		
	history	2250	
	policy	2251	
	application to grand jury, leg-		
	islature, etc.	2252	
	constitutional sanction	2252	
	distinguished from confession-		
	rule	823, 850,	
		2266	
	kinds of facts protected		
	civil liability	2254	
	infamy	2255	
	forfeiture	2256	
	penalty	2257	
	foreign crime	2258	

INDEX OF TOPICS.

<p>Self-Crimination (continued).</p> <p>third person's crime 2260</p> <p>facts tending to criminate 2260</p> <p>facts furnishing a clue 2261</p> <p>form of disclosure protected</p> <p>testimony 2263</p> <p>documents and chattels 2264</p> <p>bodily exposure 2265</p> <p>confessions 823, 850, 2266</p> <p>opponent's proof of document by copy 1207, 1209</p> <p>mode and effect of making claim</p> <p>cross-examination to character 2268</p> <p>judge's warning 2269</p> <p>claim by party or counsel 2270</p> <p>judge determines claim 2271</p> <p>inferences from claim 2272, 2273</p> <p>waiver of privilege</p> <p>by contract 2275</p> <p>by voluntary testimony 2276-2278</p> <p>criminality removed</p> <p>by acquittal or lapse of time 2279</p> <p>by pardon 2280</p> <p>by statutory amnesty 2281</p> <p>testimony not to be used 2282</p> <p>Self-Defence, burden of proof of 2512</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">see also HOMICIDE.</p> <p>Sentence, increase of, by prior convictions 106</p> <p>of conviction of crime, as affecting a witness; see CONVICTION OF CRIME.</p> <p>Separate Estate, wife as witness to 614</p> <p>presumption of gift to or from 2526</p> <p>Separation of Witnesses</p> <p>history, statutes 1837</p> <p>probative effect 1838</p> <p>demandable as of right 1839</p> <p>mode of procedure 1840</p> <p>persons to be included 1841</p> <p>disqualification for disobedience 1842</p> <p>party testifying first on his own side 1869</p> <p>Servant; see EMPLOYEE; SERVICES.</p> <p>Service of writ, proof of, without production 1249</p> <p>Services Rendered, value as evidence of price agreed 392</p> <p>capacity or quality, as shown by effects 460</p>	<p>Services Rendered (continued).</p> <p>price of other, as evidence of value 463</p> <p>qualifications of a witness to value 507, 711</p> <p>Services, as disqualifying a witness 516</p> <p>Set-off, agreement for, shown by parol 2436, 2445</p> <p>Settlement, offer of, as an admission 1061</p> <p>Sever; see HIGHWAY.</p> <p>Sex, as disqualifying a witness 517</p> <p>Show, debtor's admissions used against 1077</p> <p>deed of, conclusiveness 1354</p> <p>return of process</p> <p>conclusiveness 1847</p> <p>admissibility 1664, 1670</p> <p>as witness 1912</p> <p>Ship; see VESSEL.</p> <p>Ship, log-book of; see LOG-BOOK.</p> <p>Shipping-Register; see REGISTER.</p> <p>Shooting, as a crime; see HOMICIDE.</p> <p>Shopbooks, parties'; see REGULAR ENTRIES.</p> <p>Shorthand; see STENOGRAPHER.</p> <p>Showers at a view by a jury 1167, 1802</p> <p>Sidewalk; see HIGHWAY.</p> <p>Sign, dying declaration by making 1445</p> <p>testimony by making; see DEAF MUTE.</p> <p>Signature</p> <p>modes of evidencing genuineness; see HANDWRITING.</p> <p>forgery of; see FORGERY.</p> <p>of deponent to deposition 805</p> <p>of attesting witness or maker of document 1320, 1511, 1513</p> <p>proof of, not always necessary 2134</p> <p>as a formality required 2456</p> <p>by illiterate's mark; see ILLITERATE.</p> <p>of official, as presuming genuineness 2164, 2167</p> <p>time of 2520</p> <p>Silence, as an inconsistency impeaching a witness 1041</p> <p>as an admission by a party 1071, 1072</p> <p>as impeaching complainant in</p> <p>rape 1134</p> <p>in robbery 1142</p>
--	---

INDEX OF TOPICS.

Section		Section
468	Similar Instances, of human conduct; see NEGLIGENCE; CHARACTER.	
67, 711	of effects of a machine, weapon, place, etc., to evidence cause, condition, or quality	441-461
516	Similar Statements by a witness; see WITNESS, III.	
6, 2445	Skill, as evidence of an act done	88, 87
1061	instances of, as evidence	199, 221, 461
517	of a witness; see EXPERT WITNESS.	
1077	opinion as to another person's	1949
1354	Slander; see DEFAMATION.	
1347	Slave, as a witness	516
1, 1670	ancestry of, as evidenced by color	167
1912	see also RACE.	
	Smoke; see NUISANCE.	
	Snow, as a highway defect; see HIGHWAY.	
	as a kind of weather; see WEATHER.	
	Sodomy, other offences, as evidencing intent	360
1802	Solvency, as evidence of payment.	89
	false statements as to; see FALSE REPRESENTATIONS.	
1445	as evidenced by prior condition	382
	by reputation	1623
	by opinion	1959
	see also DEBTOR; BANKRUPT; INSOLVENCY; PAYMENT.	
	Sound, distance or quality of, as shown by instances	460
805	Sovereign; see KING; EXECUTIVE.	
	Space; see DISTANCE.	
1511,	Sparks from a locomotive, as evidence of negligence or cause	452
1513	presumption of negligence from	2509
2134	Specialty, discharged by parol	2426, 2455
2456	Specimen of handwriting; see HANDWRITING.	
	Speed, expert qualifications of witness to	571
	opinion testimony to	1977
2167	Spoilation of evidence in general, as indicating guilt	278
2520	of documents, as evidence of contents	291

Spoilation (continued).	Section
of execution	2132
as creating a presumption	2524
Spouse; see MARITAL RELATIONSHIP; HUSBAND; WIFE.	
Spy, as impeached by his interest	969
whether corroboration is needed	2060
Stains; see BLOOD.	
Stamp, law requiring, whether <i>lex fori</i> is applicable	5, 6
exclusion of documents lacking	2184
required formality of	2456
Standard of handwriting; see HANDWRITING.	
State, statute of, when applicable	6
seal of, presumed genuine	2163
secrets of, privileged	2213, 2375
judicial notice of foreign	2506
conducting a prosecution; see PROSECUTION; DEFENDANT.	
see also FOREIGN LAW.	
State of Mind; see BELIEF; INTENT; MOTIVE; KNOWLEDGE; MENTAL CONDITION.	
Statute, Federal or State, applicable in Federal trials	6
mode of proof	
by official printed copy	1684
by private printed copy	1703
by expert, without copy	1271
copy of whole required	2109
enrolment, conclusiveness of	1350
interpretation of	2478
judicial notice of	2572
constitutionality of; see CONSTITUTIONAL RULES.	
recital in; see RECITAL.	
see also LAW; FOREIGN LAW.	
Statutes, cited in this book	
on witness' qualifications	488, 524, 576, 577, 579, 602, 619
on view by jury	1163
on a witness' examination in writing	1326
on attesting witnesses	1290, 1310, 1320
on dying declarations	1430
on statements of facts against interest	1455
on statements of pedigree	1480
on regular entries	1519
on oaths	1828

INDEX OF TOPICS.

Statutes (continued).			Strength (continued).	
on separation of witnesses	1837		of deceased, to evidence self-defence	246
on marital privilege	2240, 2245, 2334		expert qualifications of witness to	571
on privilege against self-crimination	2252, 2281		Strychnia; see POISON.	
on privilege for communications to attorney	2292		Subornation, as evidence of guilt	278
to physician	2380		other crimes as evidencing intent in	343
to priest	2395		as impeaching a witness	960-962
specific statutes; see the TABLE OF STATUTES CITED, ante, p. 3633.			Subpoena, history of	2190
Statute of Frauds, whether <i>lex fori</i> is applicable	5		officers having power to issue	2195
provisions requiring numbers of witnesses	2049, 2050		general practice	2199
general policy of	2091		<i>duces tecum</i>	2200
requiring formality of writing	2454		necessary for proving third person's detention of document	1212
Statute of Limitations, other defamatory utterances barred by	403-406		cross-examination of witness under	1894
indorsement of payment, as removing the bar	1460, 1466		expenses	2201
annuls privilege against self-crimination	2279		Subscribing Witness; see ATTESTING WITNESS.	
burden of proof of	2538		Sue, agreement not to, shown by parol	2406, 2435, 2444
see also TIME.				1718
Stenographer, notes of testimony taken by	1669		Suffering, expressions of	1718
see also RECOLLECTION.			Sufficiency of highway, cattle-guard, machine, etc., as shown by effects	461
Stipulation; see JUDICIAL ADMISSION.			of a search; see SEARCH.	
Stock; see ANIMALS; BUSINESS; CORPORATION; VALUE.			of evidence, judge to determine	2551
Stockholder, books of corporation used against	1074		Suggestion to a witness, by leading questions	769-779
admissions of	1076		by other improper modes	786-788
Stolen Goods, possession of, as evidence of larceny, etc.	152, 153		Suicide, deceased's intention of, as evidencing innocence of an accused	143
knowledge of receiver or possessor of, as evidenced by repute	254		motive for	391, 394
as evidenced by possession of other goods	324		presumption of insanity from presumed instead of accident	2500
accused's explanation of possession	1143, 1777, 1781		from taking morphine	2510
presumption from possession of	2513		Summary of voluminous records or accounts	1230, 1244
see also LARCENY.			Superstitious tests of guilt	9
Street, defective; see HIGHWAY.			Suppletory Oath for books of account	1554
Strength, as evidence of an act done	84, 225		Supporting a witness' credit; see WITNESS, III.	
instances of conduct, to prove	220		Suppression of evidence, as indicating guilt	278
			Surety, principal's admissions used against	1077
			using principal debtor's statement against	1474

INDEX OF TOPICS.

	Section		Section
Surety (<i>continued</i>).		Tally-book of voters; see ELEC-TION.	
parol agreement to hold only		Tax , payment of, as evidence of	
as	2438, 2443	liquor-selling	238
Surgeon ; see PHYSICIAN.		fraud in, other acts as evi-	341
Surrebuttal , scope of testimony		books of assessment or collec-	
in	1874	tion of; see ASSESSOR'S	
Surrender to arrest, as evidence		Books.	
of innocence	298	privilege against disclosure of	2374
Survey , as evidence of adverse		Tax-Collector , conclusiveness	
possession of a whole tract	378	of deed of	1254
as illustrating testimony	791	admissibility of recitals of	1664
not to be impeached	1346	Tax-Let , production of original	1240
whether conclusive	2427	Teacher ; see SCHOOLMASTER.	
as containing declaration or		Telegram , delivery of, as evi-	
reputation of boundary; see		denced by dispatch of orig-	
BOUNDARIES.		inal	95
as an official document	1665	production of original	1223, 1296
judicially noticed	2575	received in reply, as genuine	2154
Surveyor , records of a predeces-		not privileged	2287
sor, as qualifying a witness		Telephone , testimony to conver-	
to handwriting	704	sations by	669
official, not required in proving		authenticating a conversation	
boundaries	794	by	2155
testimony not required	1339	Tenancy , production of lease, in	
opinion testimony to bound-		proof of	1246
ary; see BOUNDARIES.		disputing landlord's title	1472
declarations about boundaries;		declarations made during pos-	
see BOUNDARIES.		session	1778, 1779
official return of	1665	Tendency , of a machine,	
as regular entry; see REGU-		weapon, place, etc., as evi-	
LAR ENTRIES.		denced by its effects, etc.	437-461
Survivor disqualified as a wit-		Tender of witness' expenses	2201
ness	578	Test , see EXPERIMENT.	
use of account-books by or		Testator , conduct as evidence of	
against	1554	sanity	229
testimony must be corrob-		belief, as evidence of will's	
rated	2065	execution	271
Survivorship , presumption of	2532	statements of execution, con-	
Sustaining an objection	18	tents, revocation, undue in-	
a witness' credit; see WITNESS,		fluence, etc.	1734-1740
III.		opinion testimony to legal ca-	
Swearing ; see OATH.		pacity of	1958
Switch ; see PREMISES.		intent or mistake of; see	
Sworn Copy ; see COPY.		PAROL EVIDENCE RULE, D.	
System , of evidence, analyzed	3	burden of proof of insanity	2500
of conduct, as evidencing a		of undue influence	2502
crime	304	presumption of advancement	
		by	2526
		see also WILL; SANITY.	
T.		Testimonial evidence, defined	25
Table of weights, etc., used in		relative value of	26
evidence	1698, 1704,	general theory of	475
	1706	rules for admissibility of; see	
of mortality, used in evidence	1698, 2566	WITNESS.	
of interest, used in evidence	1672		

INDEX OF TOPICS.

<p>Testimonio; see DEED.</p> <p>Testimony; see WITNESS; EVIDENCE; EXPERT WITNESSES; FORMER TESTIMONY; EXAMINATION; QUESTIONS.</p> <p>Theological belief; see RELIGIOUS BELIEF.</p> <p>Thing; see CHATTEL; PREMISES; HIGHWAY; ANIMALS; WEAPON; MACHINE.</p> <p>Think; see BELIEF.</p> <p>Third person, crime of, as evidencing accused's innocence . . . 130</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">character of, as evidence of his act 68</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">threats of 140</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">letter of, as evidencing testator's sanity 228</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">flight of, as evidence of guilt 276</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">fraud of, as evidence of a weak case 280</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">admissions of; see ADMISSIONS.</p> <p>Threatening Letters; see EXTORTION.</p> <p>Threats of an accused, as evidence of doing the act . . . 105</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">of a deceased, as evidence of self-defence 110, 247</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">as excluding a confession; see CONFESSION.</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">of a third person, as evidencing innocence of the accused . . . 140</p> <p>Timber, marks on, as evidence of ownership 150, 2152</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">register of, as evidence 1647</p> <p>Time of possession of money, as evidence of payment 89</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">of threats of an accused 108</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">of intercourse in bastardy 133</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">of possession of stolen goods . . . 152</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">of health, strength, etc. 225</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">of sanity 233</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">of intoxication 235</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">of defect in highway 252</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">of possession, coverture, debt, etc. 382</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">of intercourse in sexual offences . . 398</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">of other defamatory utterances . . 403-406</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">of utterances, as evidencing identity 416</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">of other injuries or assaults, as evidencing cause 437-461</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">of other weather-conditions 438</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">of work done, or things seen or heard, as shown by other instances 460</p>	<p>Time (continued).</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">of other spark-emissions 456</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">of values 463</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">of qualifications of witness . . . 483, 493, 583</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">of objection to a witness' qualification 486, 586</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">of seeing specimens of handwriting 697, 707</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">of memorandum in aid of recollection 745, 761</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">length of, for a witness' examination 783</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">of character of a witness 928</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">of condition of an object 1154</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">as presuming loss of document . . . 1196</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">of notice to produce an original . . 1208</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">of plural depositions 1379</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">of birth, death, etc., proved by family hearsay 1501</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">of certifying a copy 1677</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">of recording a deed 1649</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">of hearsay expressions of pain . . . 1718</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">of <i>res gestæ</i> utterances 1750, 1776</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">identified by a person's utterances 1791</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">opinion evidence to 1977</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">of putting in testimony 1867-1900</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">of execution of ancient document 2137</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">of execution of deed, proved by parol 2410</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">lapse of, presuming payment 2517</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">of execution of document 2520</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">of alteration of document, presumed 2525</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">of death, not presumed 2531</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">of survival, not presumed 2532</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">what is a reasonable, judge or jury to determine 2553</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">judicially noticed 2581</p> <p>Title, by adverse possession; see POSSESSION.</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">documents of; see DOCUMENT; RECORDED CONVEYANCE; DEED.</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">registration of; see REGISTRATION OF TITLE.</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">in ejectment, affidavit denying common source of 1385</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">disclaimer of, as a fact against interest 1458</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">proved by reputation 1567</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">assessment-books as evidence of 1641</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">official register of 1647</p>
---	---

INDEX OF TOPICS.

<i>Title (continued).</i>	<i>Section</i>	<i>Trial (continued).</i>	<i>Section</i>
inquisition of, by the sheriff . . .	1670	new trial, motion for, to con-	
abstract of; see ABSTRACT.		firm an exception	20
deeds of, privilege for	2211	material error of ruling, as	
presumption of, from posses-		ground for	21
sion	2515	demeanor during, an evidence	
from lost grant	2522	of guilt	274
to office, presumption of	2535	publicity of, as a security for	
admissions of; see ADMIS-		truth	1834
sions; see also OWNERSHIP.		exclusion of spectators	1835
Tombstone, as evidence of pedi-		prohibition of printed re-	
gree; see FAMILY HISTORY.		ports	1836
Tools, possession of, as evidence		separation of witnesses during	1837
of a crime	83, 238, 318	by inspection	2555
see also MACHINE.		see also INSPECTION; WITNESS;	
Traces as evidence of criminal's		PLEADING.	
identity	148, 149	Trover, notice to produce docu-	
Tracks; see FOOTPRINTS; PREM-		ment converted	1205
ISES.		proof of conversion, without	
Trade, secret of, as privileged	2212, 2374	producing original	1240
see also CUSTOM; USAGE.		Trust, agreement to hold prop-	
Trade Journal; see NEWSPAPER.		erty in, shown by parol	2437
Transcript of stenographic notes		Trust-Combination, proved by	
of testimony; see FORMER		repute	1626
TESTIMONY.		Trustee, admissions of	1076
Transfers, in fraud of creditors,		communications to, not priv-	
mode of evidencing intent	833	ileged	2286
admissions of debtor or cred-		Truth of defamatory words; see	
itor	1082	DEFAMATION.	
Translation, required for alien's		Turntable; see PREMISES.	
testimony	811	Typewriting, manifold copies	
see also INTERPRETER.		by, as originals	1284
Travail, complaint in, by bas-		proving genuineness of	2140
tard's mother	1141		
Traveller; see HIGHWAY.			
Treason, other acts of, as evi-			
dencing intent	367		
confession of, as dispensing			
with two witnesses	818		
accused's expressions of loyalty			
list of witnesses before trial	1732		
two witnesses to overt act	1850		
	2036		
Treatise, scientific, used in evi-			
dence	1690-1700		
Treaty, judicial notice of	2573		
proof by copy; see PUBLIC			
DOCUMENT.			
Tree, family, as evidence of pedi-			
gree; see FAMILY HISTORY.			
Trespass, by battery, evidence of			
intent in	364		
to property, evidence of intent			
in	367		
evidence of malice in	397		
Trial, at common law in Federal			
court, rules for	6		

INDEX OF TOPICS.

Unskilfulness; see SKILL; NEGLIGENCE.	Section	Veneral disease, as evidence of adultery	Section
Usage, among conveyancers,		Veracity, character for; see CHARACTER.	
proved by repute	1625	Verbal Act; see HEARSAY RULE, III.	
as proved by opinion	1954	Verdict, in another cause, as	
by one witness	2033	reputation	1503
varying the terms of an agreement	2440	not to be impeached by jurors	2343
interpreting a document	2462, 2464	direction of a	2495
see also CUSTOM; HABIT.		see also JUDICIAL RECORD.	
Use of machinery, premises, etc., as evidence of safety, etc.	461	Vessel, loss of, as evidenced by	
Usury, impeaching an instrument for	529	lack of news	156, 2631
shown by parol evidence	2414	safety of, custom of other owners, as evidence	461
terms of a contract of; see CONTRACT.		presumption of unseaworthiness of	2533
Utterance of other forged documents; see FORGERY.		log-book of; see LOG-BOOK.	
of libel or slander; see DEFA- MATION.		Victiousness, of an animal, evi- dence of owner's knowledge of	251
as identifying a time or place	416	see also ANIMAL.	
see also HEARSAY RULE, III.		View by Jury, general principle	1162
		allowable on any issue	1163
		trial Court's discretion	1164
		by part of jury	1165
		unauthorized view	1166
		showers	1167
		view as evidence	1168
		evidence not to be taken at	1802
		defendant's presence at	1803
		Violence of deceased; see HOMICIDE	243
		Voice, as identified by utterance	222
		as identifying a person	660
		by opinion testimony	1977
		Void, parol evidence to show a transaction	2406, 2423
		Voir Dire, for ascertaining a witness' qualifications	465, 497, 508, 560, 583
		admissions of a document's contents on	1258
		right of cross-examination on	1384, 2550
		examining into religious belief on	1820
		Vote, refusing to receive, evi- dence of intent in	367
		fraudulently casting, evidence of intent in	367
		declarations concerning, by a voter	1712
		disclosure of, privileged	
		elector	2215
		juror	2346, 2361
		member of Legislature	2375
		see also BALLOT.	
V.			
Vacuum-ray photograph	795		
Value, of an article sold, as evi- dence of price agreed	392		
of property taken, as evidenced by other sales	463		
witness' experience or knowl- edge as qualifying him to testify to	567, 711-721		
impeached by inconsisten- cies	1040		
provable by jury's view	1163		
by books of assessors	1641		
by opinion testimony	1940-1943		
jury may use general knowl- edge of	2570		
of evidence; see WEIGHT.			
see also SALES; DAMAGES.			
Varying the terms of a docu- ment; see PAROL EVIDENCE RULE.			
Vehicle, injuries to, as evidence of a highway defect	458		
character of driver of; see NEGLIGENCE.			
standard of conduct as passen- gers, employees, etc.	461		
Vendor; see GRANTOR.			
Vendee; see GRANTEE.			

INDEX OF TOPICS.

Section
168

W.

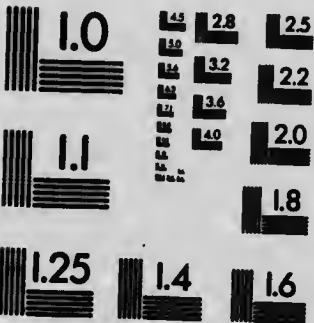
	Section
Wager of law, in the history of rules of evidence	575
Wagon; see VEHICLE.	
Waiver of inadmissibility, by offering other inadmissible evidence	15
of objection	18
of right of confronting accusers	1396, 1415, 2592
of privilege, not to testify against husband or wife	2342, 2340
against self-crimination	2275
of attorney and client	2327
of physician and patient	2388
of motion to direct verdict	2496
of proof; see JUDICIAL ADMISSION.	
of right to absent witness' testimony	2505
Warrant of land-entry, original required	1289
see also JUDICIAL RECORD; LAND OFFICE.	
Warranty, distinguished from an admission	1056
shown by parol	2484
Water, other instances of effect of, as evidence	451
Wealth, provable by reputation by assessors' books	1623, 1640
Weapon, deceased's carrying of a, as evidencing self-defence as evidence of identity	246, 418
other instances of its effects, as evidence	451
exhibition to the jury	1157
Weather, as shown by conditions at other times or places	438
record of conditions of	1623, 1639
Weight, of evidence, distinguished from relevancy	12, 29
of circumstantial evidence	26
of confessions	861, 866
of testimony wilfully false	1008
no rules of law for	2034
Weights, fraudulent, other acts evidencing intent	341
Whisky, judicially noticed	2582
Whole of an Utterance, put in evidence	
general principle	2094
I. <i>Compulsory Completeness</i>	
precise words required	
conversations, etc.	2097

	Section
Whole of an Utterance (<i>cont'd.</i>)	
former testimony	2096
all parts required	
conversations, etc.	2099
confessions	2100
whole of a writing required	
depositions, etc.	2103
separate writings	2104
lost deed or contract	2105
abstract of title	2106
lost will	2106
public records	2107-2109
judicial records	2110
bill and answer in chancery	3111
II. <i>Optional Completeness</i>	
remainder may be put in	2118
conversations, admissions, confessions, etc.	2115
undry writings	2116
charge and charge statements	2117
account-books	2118
separate utterances	2119
letters of a correspondence	2120
answer in chancery made evidence	2121-2124
opponent's inspection making the whole admissible	2125
self-contradiction	1045, 2098
dying declaration	1448
Widow, as a witness; see MARITAL RELATIONSHIP.	
Wife, notice to, as evidencing husband's knowledge	261
testimony of, as disqualified or privileged; see MARITAL RELATIONSHIP.	
communications by or to, as privileged; see MARITAL RELATIONSHIP.	
admissions of, against husband	1078, 1086, 2282
acknowledgment of execution of deed, conclusive	1847
statements of, to evidence pedigree; see FAMILY HISTORY.	
expressions of feelings towards husband	1730
presumption of gift by or to	2526
of accomplice, to corroborate him	2059
presumption of coercion by husband	2514
see also CRIMINAL CONVERSATION; HUSBAND; MARRIAGE.	



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INDEX OF TOPICS.

Will, attestation of, whether <i>lex fori</i> is applicable to	Section 5	Witness	Section
Will, forgery of, character of third person as evidence	68	I. Qualifications and Disqualifications.	
skill in drafting, as evidence of authorship	87	general theory	475
testamentary plans, as evidence of execution or contents	112	time	483
execution of, as evidenced by testator's belief	271	burden of proof	484
spoliation of, as evidence of contents	291	mode of proof	485
production of original; see ORIGINAL DOCUMENT.		time of objection	486
kinds of copy admissible; see COPY; CERTIFIED COPY.		judge determines	487
calling the attesting witness; see ATTESTING WITNESS.		statutory enactments	488
undue influence evidenced by other instances	338	Federal rules	6
using testimony given at preliminary probate	1417	insanity, etc.	492-501
record of probate, to prove execution	1658	deaf-mutes	498
certified copy of	1681	intoxication	499
testator's statements of contents, execution, revocation, undue influence, etc.	1734-1740, 1782	disease, etc.	500
recital in, as evidence of pedigree; see FAMILY HISTORY.		blindness	
interpretation of; see PAROL EVIDENCE RULE, D.		infancy	505-509
proof of, by two witnesses		alienage, race, color	516
personality	2048	sex	517
realty	2049	religion	518
nuncupative wills	2050	theological belief; see OATH.	
holographic wills	2051	infamy (conviction of crime) as a disqualification	519-524
revocations, alterations, etc.	2051	kind of crime	520
contents of lost will	2052, 2106	judgment of crime	521, 522
testimonial evidence required	2090	pardon, reversal, etc.	523
made in a single document	2452	statutory changes	524
proof of, by age of document	2137-2146	turpitude self-confessed, as a disqualification	525-531
publication of	2411	accomplice	526
reading over to testator	2421	perjurer	527
intent or mistake of testator; see PAROL EVIDENCE RULE, D.		attesting-witness	528
lost will, clear proof of	2498	repudiating one's own instrument	530
burden of proof of	2500, 2502	experience as a qualification (expert capacity)	555-571
presumption of revocation of	2523	general principles	555-562
see also TESTATOR; DOCUMENT; EXECUTION; SANITY.		foreign law	564-566
Wires; see NEGLIGENCE; PREMISES; HIGHWAY; MACHINE.		value	567
		medical and chemical topics	568, 569
		sanity	568, 569
		handwriting and paper money	570
		sundry topics of expert testimony	571
		opinion in general; see OPINION.	
		interest as a disqualification	575-587
		history	575
		interest in general	576
		civil parties	577
		survivor against deceased, lunatic, etc.	578
		accused	579
		co-indictees and co-defendants	580
		testimony to one's own intent	581

INDEX OF TOPICS.

Section	Witness (continued).	Section
475	attesting witness of a will	582
483	time of interest; voir dire	583
484	burden of proof	584
485	mode of proof	585
486	time of objection	586
487	judge determines	587
488	<i>marital relationship as a dis-</i>	
6	<i>qualification</i>	<i>600-620</i>
92-501	history	600
498	policy; statutes	601, 602
499	general principles	603, 604
500	mistress, bigamous marriage	605
	for whom is the spouse dis-	
	qualified	606-610
05-509	exceptions based on neces-	
516	sity	612
517	exceptions based on statutes	613-617
518	statutory abolition	619, 620
	<i>knowledge as a qualification</i>	<i>650-721</i>
	<i>knowledge as requiring ob-</i>	
0-524	<i>serva-tion</i>	<i>650</i>
520	distinction between experi-	
1, 522	ence and knowledge	558, 651
523	knowledge of a class of	
524	things	653
	burden of proof of knowl-	
5-531	edge	654
526	witness specifying grounds	
527	of knowledge	655
528	personal observation required	
	knowledge amounting to a	
530	belief or impression	658
	knowledge based on insuf-	
5-571	ficient data	659
5-562	identity, age, etc.	660
4-566	state of mind	661
567	scientific improbabilities	662
3, 569	speculative injuries	663
3, 569	that a thing would have	
570	been observed	664
	scientific instruments or tables	665
	subordinates' records or scien-	
	tific books	665
	one's own age	667
5-587	another person's name	667
575	interpreted conversations	668
576	telephone conversations	669
577	hypothetical questions	672-684
	party's admissions	1053
	medical matters (sanity, dis-	
578	ease, etc.)	687-690
579	foreign law	690
580	reputation	691, 692
	handwriting	693-709
	by seeing the act of writing	694-698

Witness (continued).	Section
by seeing genuine docu-	
ments	699-708
by expert comparison	709
value	711-721
general principles	711-713
land	714
services	715
personalty	716
sundry rules	717-721
dying declarant	1445
keeper of books of ac-	
count	1530, 1555
officer making public docu-	
ment	163
notary	1635
<i>recollection; see RECOLLEC-</i>	
<i>TION.</i>	
II. Examination	
mode of interrogation in	
general	768-788
leading questions	769-779
misleading questions	780
annoying questions	781
repetition of questions	782
multiple examiners	783
length of examination	783
judge's questions	784
narration without questions	785
non-responsive answers	785
improper suggestions	786
prepared deposition	787
answering by reference	788
prior conference with at-	
torney	788
non-verbal testimony	789-797
gesture, etc.	789
models, maps, diagrams	791
photographs	792-797
written testimony	
sundry modes	799-801
depositions	802-806
see also DEPOSITIONS.	
absent witness' testimony	807
see also JUDICIAL ADMIS-	
SIONS.	
interpreted testimony	811, 812
aliens, deaf-mutes, per-	
sons ill or inaudible, in-	
terpreters, translations	811
confessions; see CONFESSIONS.	
testimony under duress	815
<i>direct examination; see Ex-</i>	
<i>AMINATION, III.</i>	
<i>cross-examination, in general;</i>	
<i>see CROSS-EXAMINATION.</i>	

INDEX OF TOPICS.

Witness (continued).	Section	Witness (continued).	Section
of one's own witness; see IMPEACHMENT.		experts	1908
to show bias or corruption; see IMPEACHMENT.		character witnesses	1908
to contents of a document; see ORIGINAL DOCUMENT.		other witnesses	1908
to one's own case; see EX- AMINATION, III.		<i>required number</i>	
refusal to answer on; see PRIVILEGE.		treason	2036
III. <i>Impeachment and Discredit</i> ; see IMPEACHMENT.		perjury	2040
IV. <i>Restoring Credit</i>		sundry crimes	2044
general principles	1100	divorce	2046
good character in support	1104-1110	chancery bill	2047
discrediting the impeaching witness	1111	will of personaity	2048
explaining away a self-con- tradiction	1044, 2115	of realty	2049
a contradiction	1007	nuncupative will	2050
explaining away the bad rep- utation	1112	holographic will	2051
explaining away the miscon- duct	1116	revocation, alteration, etc.	2051
explaining away the bias, etc.	1119	contents of lost will	2052
corroboration by similar con- sistent statements	1122-1144	usage or custom	2053
witnesses in general	1122-1132	miscellaneous civil cases	2054
contradiction of	1005	single witness need not be be- lieved	2034
party's admissions	1133	eye-witnesses of a crime	2079
rape complainant	1134-1140	<i>corpus delicti</i>	2081
bastard's mother in travail	1141	VIII. <i>Kinds of Qualified Wit- nesses excluded or required to be corroborated for special reasons</i>	
owner of goods robbed	1142	judge	1909
possessor of stolen goods	1143	juror	1910
accused in general	1144	counsel or attorney	1911
utterances identifying a time or place	416	referee, arbitrator, sheriff	1912
supporting a contradicted witness	1007	opinion witness; see OPINION RULE.	
an attesting witness	1514	accomplice	2056
V. <i>Witnesses required to be called before others</i>		prosecutrix in rape, bastardy, etc.	2061
attesting witness; see ATTEST- ING WITNESS.		parents bastardizing issue	2063
magistrate's report of testimony	1326, 1349	surviving claimant against de- ceased	2065
<i>sundry witnesses</i>		children	2066
maker of document, sur- veyor, etc.	1339	Chinese	2066
official certificates	1345-1353	confessions	
VI. <i>Separation of Witnesses</i> ; see SEPARATION OF WITNESSES.		respondent in divorce	2067
VII. <i>Number of Witnesses</i> excessive number may be re- jected		accused	2070
		<i>corpus delicti</i>	2072, 2081
		marriage in fact	2082
		bigamy	2085
		admissions	2086
		owner in larceny	2089
		wills, contracts, etc.	2090
		statute of frauds	2091
		IX. <i>Securing Attendance and Testimony</i>	
		compulsory process	
		history	2190
		constitutional guarantee	2191
		duty to give testimony	2192

INDEX OF TOPICS.

Section	Witness (continued).	Section	Witness (continued).	Section
1908	production of documents	2193	mitted to avoid postponement	815
1908	inspection of premises, chatels, body	2194	duress c ^o , as not excluding testimony	815
2036	officers having power to compel	2195	to contents of a document; see ORIGINAL DOCUMENT.	
2040	persons exempt from process	2368-2372	to a copy of a document; see COPY.	
2044	liability to suit or arrest	2195	discovery of names of witnesses; see DISCOVERY.	
2046	notice and summons	2199	list of witnesses before trial	1850
2047	subpoena <i>duces tecum</i>	2200	indorsement of witnesses' names on indictment	1850
2048	tender of expenses	2201, 2202	to execution, showing document to opponent	1861
2048	expert's fees	2203	Women qualified as witnesses	517
2049	ability to attend	2204	exempt from attendance	2208
2050	illness	2205	Words , interpretation of; see PAROL EVIDENCE RULE, D.	
2051	merchants' books	2205	meaning of judicially noticed as verbal acts; see HEARSAY RULE, III.	2582
2051	sex and occupation	2206	defamatory; see DEFAMATION.	
2052	officials	2206, 2371	Work , capacity of, as evidenced by instances	460
2053	official records	2373	see also SERVICES.	
2054	distance from trial	2204	Workman ; see EMPLOYEE.	
2034	process upon the Executive	2368-2372	Wound ; see CORPORAL INJURY; WEAPON.	
2079	X. Privileged Testimony ; see PRIVILEGE.		Writ , proof of service of, without production	1249
2081	XI. Sundry Topics		see also JUDICIAL RECORD.	
	rules for witnesses in Federal courts	6	Writing ; see HANDWRITING; DOCUMENT.	
	testimonial evidence, defined	25, 26, 475		
1909	accused as witness	61		
1910	intimidation of, as evidence of guilt of party	278		
1911	failure to produce, as evidence of a weak case	285-292		
1912	subornation of, other attempts as evidence of intent	342		
2056	testimony of another, as a basis; see HYPOTHETICAL QUESTION			
2061	attesting witness; see ATTESTING WITNESS.			
2063	absent witness' testimony ad-	807		
2065				
2066				
2066				
2067				
2070				
2072, 2081				
2082				
2085				
2086				
2089				
2090				
2091				
2190				
2191				
2192				
			X-ray photograph	795

