

There is a suspicion current in the public mind that the law is a highly profitable profession in a pecuniary sense. The few instances of large fortunes made by it do not bear out the impression, although they serve to give color to it. Sir Samuel Romilly, a professional income of £15,000 a year, toward the close of his life. Lord Erskine, who would accept no business for years before his elevation to the bench except special retainers, at £300 each, made in this way the most handsome professional income of £48,000 in 1807. Large single fees are comparatively rare, but the accumulations of long practice are what render eminent practitioners rich. Warren Hastings paid his leading advocate somewhat over £4,000 for his services on a trial reaching through many years. Daniel Webster, when he made \$12,000 in a certain year by his profession, entered in his diary, "a poor year," but he made amends by other entries, amounting sometimes to \$30,000, and once to \$30,000 a year. Brownlow, who was a prothonotary in the age of Queen Elizabeth, made what would now be the princely income of £6,000 a year. This gentleman used very properly to close his year's accounts with "Laud Deo," and, if his profits were unusually large, he wrote "Maxima laus Deo." Sir Matthew Hale writes that, in his day, a thousand pounds a year was a great deal for a common lawyer to make. Bulstrode Whitelock, who made £2,000 by his private practice, is cited as remarkably successful. The largest fee paid their council by the bishops who were tried in the reign of James II. was £20 only; and the fees of the trial altogether amounted to no more than £240 10s. Sir Matthew Hale was even more expensively moderate in his charges. When those who came to ask his counsel gave him a piece, he used to give back the half, and to make ten shillings his fee in ordinary matters that did not require much study. According to Pepys, that entertaining diarist, £1,000 a year was looked upon as a good income for a barrister in the days of Charles II. But Roger North records that his brother, while Attorney General, made £1,000 in one year, though this was largely from the bad practice of taking fees in private causes, while holding an office from the Crown. Lord Bacon, who was James' Attorney General, and receiving a salary of £81 per year, made £8,000 per annum in his profession; and of that income (almost royal in those days), the greater part was fees paid him for attending to the King's business. Walpole says that Charles York made in his first year at the bar £121, second year £201, third and fourth, from £300 to £400; fifth, £700; sixth, £800; seventh, £1,000; eighth, £1,600; tenth, £2,500. This was one hundred years ago. A Scotch barrister, at the same period, who made as much as £500 per annum by his profession, was esteemed notably successful.

The fees of lawyers are sometimes regarded as extortionate, even in this era of high charges. There appears to be no established etiquette of the profession, as in the case of medical services, to regulate this matter, and attorneys are allowed much freedom in estimating the value of their labor. The requirements of clients are so singularly various, and the natural extent of the labor employed upon their cases so indeterminate, that no common standard seems possible for measuring professional services. "You charge me a hundred sequins," said a man to a sculptor, for a bust that you made in ten days. "You forget," replied the artist, "that I have been thirty years learning to make that bust in ten days." To be prepared skillfully to conduct a law case to a successful issue, may involve years of hard and studious preparation; and although justice is proverbially costly, when it comes through the courts of law, there are few successful clients who will quarrel with the bridge which carries them safely over.—Cincinnati Commercial.

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