

to have an inquiry made, and information laid before the Court as to those matters also.

The mode of making such inquiries, and of obtaining information in cases like this by a reference to a master, is common and well settled in England; but here, as this Court has now no officer belonging to it denominated a master in Chancery, I deem it proper in this, the first case of the kind which has been brought before me, to take such a comprehensive view of the office of the auditor as may enable me to see how far the powers and duties of a master in Chancery in England, in making all such special investigations, have devolved or been conferred upon the auditor here, in addition to those with which he has been expressly clothed by the Act of Assembly under which he is appointed. 1785, ch. 72, s. 17.

In England, the officers called masters in Chancery are assistants and associates to the Chancellor; and two of them at a time, by turns, usually sit with him in Court. They have the power to administer oaths, take affidavits, and acknowledgments of deeds, recognizances, &c. 1 *Harri. Prac. Chan.* 73. It is the duty of a master to execute the orders of the Court upon references made to him by it, acting either in exercise of its original jurisdiction, or under the authority of any Act of Parliament. The heads of reference that may be made to a master are almost as numerous as the matters subject to the jurisdiction of the Court. For example,

56 a case may be *referred to a master to take accounts between parties of every description; to inquire into the claims of creditors, legatees, and next of kin; to inquire into repairs to be done; to inquire and state what would be a sufficient allowance for the maintenance and education of an infant, or for the maintenance of any one, the amount of which, as claimed, was left uncertain, *Abraham v. Alman*, 1 *Russ.* 509; to inquire into the value of an estate for the purpose of enabling a party to elect, to assist the Court in fixing upon a price, or in making an investment, *Wilson v. Mount*, 3 *Ves.* 191; *Radnor v. Shafto*, 11 *Ves.* 454; to inquire whether it would be most for the benefit of an infant, or *feme covert*, to take under a will, or against it, *Wilson v. Townshend*, 2 *Ves. Jun.* 696; *Ebrington v. Ebrington*, 5 *Mad.* 117; *Gretton v. Haward*, 1 *Swan.* 413; or to inquire into the value of an annuity, and of the estate upon which it is charged. *Jones v. Collier*, *Amb.* 731. Where the plaintiff's claim was founded on a variety of deeds, wills and other instruments, the general purport only of which was stated in the bill, it was referred to a master to state a case of the rights claimed by the plaintiff under those instruments, *Pauncefort v. Lincoln*, 1 *Dick.* 362; and so too, where the bill had not minutely charged every particular circumstance, which, as matters of evidence, it would not have been proper to charge, and yet it appeared that the case turned upon it, and no notice or opportunity had been