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and the cloaths of a widow, and ornaments and jewels proper for her station, and the cloathing of the family,) shall be included in an inventory to be taken and returned as aforesaid, and shall be considered as assets in the hands of an executor or administrator.

C H A P. 8.

Accounts of administration, and the conduct of executors and administrators relative to paying and collecting debts.

1. EVERY executor or administrator shall, within fifteen calendar months after the date of his or her letters, return to the court which granted them a full account of his or her administration; provided nevertheless, that if the said party shall, within four calendar months after the said date, make oath, (or affirmation, as the case may require,) that he or she hath reason to apprehend, and doth apprehend, that the personal estate and assets which are or shall be in his or her hands, will be insufficient to discharge the just debts of, and claims against, the deceased, the court may, at discretion, allow a further time, not exceeding eighteen calendar months in the whole, from the said date, for returning the said account.

2. The orphans court granting the letters shall have power to make allowance to any collector, executor or administrator, for property of the deceased which hath perished, or been lost, without the fault of the party; and no profit shall be made, and no loss shall be sustained, by an executor or administrator, in the increase or decrease of the estate under his management; but the executor or administrator shall return an inventory and account for such increase, and may be allowed for such decrease, on the settlement of the final or other account.

3. In case any executor or administrator shall not have money sufficient to discharge the just debts of, and claims against, the deceased, the orphans court granting the letters shall, on his application, made after the return of an inventory, direct a sale of the whole property therein contained, or of such part, or to such amount, as the court may think proper, and the court shall direct the manner and terms of sale, provided that no credit exceeding twelve months be given, in any case, and that where credit is given, bond with security shall be taken; the court shall have power, in case it shall suspect any fraud, collusion, connivance or improper management, to affect the said sale, or that it was unreasonably made, or that the property was sold much under its value, to compel the said executor or administrator to account for all such deficiencies as may have arisen by such executor's or administrator's misconduct, the court always observing the inventory as their rule for ascertaining such deficiency.

4. The said court shall have power to direct a sale as aforesaid, in case it shall deem a sale advantageous for the persons interested in the administration, either *ex officio*, or on application of any of the said persons.

5. Executors and administrators shall have full power and authority to commence and prosecute any personal action whatever, at law, or in equity, (as the case may require,) which the testator or intestate might have commenced and prosecuted, except actions of slander, and for injuries or torts done to the person; and they shall also be liable to be sued in any court of law or equity, (as the case may require,) in any action (except as aforesaid,) which might have been maintained against the deceased; and they shall be entitled to, or be answerable for costs, in the same manner as the deceased would have been, and they shall be allowed for the same in their accounts, provided the court awarding costs against them shall certify, that there were probable grounds for instituting, prosecuting or defending, the action on which a judgment or decree shall have been given against them.

6. In no action against an executor or administrator shall he be compelled to put in special bail.

7. As in pleading it is extremely difficult for executor and administrators, as well as the opposite parties, to guard against error or mistake, which may operate unjustly against them, in no action, brought against an executor or administrator, shall it be necessary for him to plead *pleas administravit*, or any thing relative to the assets, or for the plaintiff or plaintiffs to reply to such plea; provided nevertheless, that any executor or administrator, sued in chancery, may be compelled, as usual, to say in his answer, whether or not he hath assets to answer all just claims against the deceased; and provided also, that if the said executor or administrator shall answer that he hath not assets as aforesaid, the proceedings shall be as they are at present; that is to say, an account may be taken of the assets under the direction of the court.

8. And if the verdict of the jury on the issue joined be against the executor or administrator, or if he shall be willing to confess judgment, and the debt or damages which the deceased (if he or she were alive) ought to pay, be ascertained by verdict, or confession or otherwise, the court, before whom the action was brought, shall thereupon assess the sum which the executor or administrator ought to pay, regard being had to the amount of assets in his hands, and the debts due to other persons; and if it shall appear to the said court that there are assets to discharge all just claims against the deceased, the judgment shall be for the whole debt or damages found by the jury, or confessed, or otherwise ascertained, and costs; and if it shall appear to the court that there are not assets to discharge all such just claims, the judgment shall be for such sum only as bears a just proportion to the amount of the debt, or damages and costs, regard being had to the amount of all the just claims, and of the assets; that is to say, as the amount of all the said claims shall be to the assets, so shall the amount of the said debt, or damages and costs, be to the sum required, for which judgment is to be given.

9. And in no case shall the court proceed to assess as aforesaid, and to pass such judgment against an executor or administrator, until the time limited by law, or by the orphans court, for the executor or administrator to pass his account shall have expired; provided, that the said executor or administrator shall make oath, (or affirmation, as the case may require,) that he hath not assets to discharge all such just claims; and the account settled by the orphans court, in which the debt or damages sued for ought to be stated, shall be evidence to shew the amount of assets and claims; and the court before whom the suit is brought against the executor or administrator for the recovery of a debt or damages, shall have power, when the real debt or damages are ascertained, to refer the matter to an auditor, to ascertain the sum for which judgment shall be given; and in case the judgment shall be for a sum inferior to the real debt or damage and costs, it shall go on and say, "that the plaintiff be entitled to such further sum as the court shall hereafter assess on discovery of further assets in the hands of the defendant;" and the court, at any time afterwards, when applied to by the plaintiff, on three days notice to the defendant or his attorney, may assess and give judgment for such further proportionable sum as the plaintiff shall