

A BOOK ABOUT LAWYERS.

at their tables, in their chambers, in the House of Commons; lawyers in love, lawyers on the stage, married lawyers, henpecked lawyers; lawyers pleading, singing, fighting, jesting, dying. We are even told what they wore, what they ate and drank, when they rose, and when they went to bed. A curious entertainment this. The muse is not great and high and inspiring. There are no battles, and state-manship, and things of nations; less heroic, perhaps because the sight is from a valet-de-chambre's standpoint. Those with the fine black eyes and full-bottomed wigs, have removed these tedious coverings with their flowing robes, or perhaps their collars of ss. My Lord High Chancellor Eldon becomes "handsome Jack Scott," and elopes with pretty Miss Bessie Surtees, of Newcastle. Lord Thurlow is no longer the savage old peer, with overhanging white eyebrows, giving from the woosack that justly celebrated democratic reproof to the Duke of Grafton, which American schoolboys delight to declaim; but "lazy, keen-eyed, loquacious Ned Thurlow," perplexed where to find a horse on which to ride his first circuit, taking the animal on trial, riding him the circuit, and returning him on its completion, "because the animal, notwithstanding some good points, did not altogether suit him."

So Mr. Jeaffreson leads the reader through the book. The chapters are aptly designated; and, if one topic tires, the reader can skip to another, or, taking up the book at any point, cannot fail to find much that is clever, curious, and amusing. For let us be as studious as we may of the dignity of history, and let our reverence for the fountain-heads and sages of the law be however so deep, there is for all this a lurking—nay, rather an eager—curiosity to know what clothes these fine historic personages wore, what wine they liked best, how their wives treated them, and how many dollars or pounds they left behind to their descendants. Is gossip any the less amusing because it is of the great? Rather the contrary; and the appetite increases in proportion as its subject is higher in the world. Let others give the philosophical reason for this. Suffice it for the present that the fact exists; and that those students who have pored with diligence over the learned judgments of Mansfield and Ellenborough, and read with admiration the eloquence of Erskine, will be none the less likely to be amused by a narrative of the dress, the manners, the foibles, or the wit of these great lawyers.

Anecdotes of the bench and bar have been published in considerable numbers before this. Lord Campbell's works on the Lord Chancellors and Chief Justices abound with them. The author of "Law and Lawyers," Mr. Polson, has given many; and they are to be found strewn here and there through the memoirs of the distinguished men and histories of the periods; but it is thought that there has been nowhere so full, so well assorted, and so readable a collection as that of Mr. Jeaffreson. As

a matter of course, there is much to be found here that is by no means new, and not a little that is familiar, and almost hackneyed. Still this is necessary, from the nature of the book; for, in a work that pretends to completeness, the omission of these familiar histories would detract from its value, and constitute a serious defect. For one who desires an agreeably written compendium of the familiar life and manners of English lawyers of the past, there is no more readable book than the one "at bar."

While this "Book about Lawyers" contains some topics of a local nature which the English profession would feel more essentially its own, there are many matters which are calculated to give it a peculiar interest to the American lawyer. The separation for two centuries of our courts from those of the mother country, one of which has been that of divorce, together with the dissimilar natures of institutions and society, has produced in the courts and professions essential difference of practice and etiquette. Our early colonial courts were modelled on the English; our early lawyers were bred in the English inns. The English courts were their models in practice. Where, then, is the change? Not, as one might think, entirely in the new, but in the mother country. Mr. James Russel Lowell, in the preface to his "Biglow Papers," has conclusively shown, that a very large number of words and phrases, which are commonly regarded as provincial Yankeeisms, are in fact of ancient English origin, from which the modern English speech has varied, and which are preserved in this country in the true vernacular form. Indeed, any one in the habit of reading the older English poets, and especially Spenser, will readily observe how often he happens upon phrases which he has hitherto thought the native fruit of "down East." So the student of the ancient customs of the English profession will find in them quite as many resemblances to American, as to modern English, practice and etiquette. To give some of these. It is the leading principle of English professional etiquette, that the client must consult the barrister only through the medium of an attorney; but in the days of Sir Matthew Hale, and even afterwards, this was far from being the case. At this time clients were in the habit of addressing their counsel personally, and taking their advice; and, in the seventeenth century, almost always insisted on having personal interviews; and though their attorney or solicitors usually conducted them to the counsel's chambers, and were present during the conference, no member of the inferior branch of the profession deemed himself affronted or ill used if a client chose to confer with his advocate without the presence of a third person. Long, too, in the eighteenth century, barristers were in the habit of acting without the co-operation of attorneys, in cases where no process required the employment of the latter. "They were accustomed," says Mr. Jeaffreson, "to receive