

LEGAL ANTIQUES.

While sauntering along the streets of an old but flourishing city one day, when the Dog-star was ruling all nature with its fiery sway, I chanced upon an imposing building; something within my breast caused me to pause and gaze upon the structure with an unusual amount of interest. Over the chief entrance was the statue of a lady evidently belonging to a bye-gone day; her dress, although appropriate to the season (if comfort only was to be considered), was yet rather scant, and such as would have incurred the severe condemnation of the Lord Chamberlain, had he sat in judgment upon it. Methought that perhaps at some time during the ages past her soul abode in the breast of an ostrich—for as a bandage was across her eyes she could not see, and judging from the coolness and calmness with which she stood, she thought that she herself could not be seen; she was like naked truth. In one hand was a sword of such mighty proportions that it would have taxed all her strength to wield it; and I afterwards found that in consequence she oftentimes neglected to strike when she should have smitten, and sometimes she smote when from knowledge obtained after she had lifted it on high she would have had mercy. In her other hand she held a pair of balances; from the accumulation of dust and cobwebs on these, I fear she could not always weigh with scientific accuracy—they would not always be "equal scales, whose beam stands firm, whose rightful cause prevails." The sculptor had so placed the bandage above her slender nose, tip-tilted, that when she chose she could see on one side.

But I am like many another, slandering her whose name was Justice, called in her early days by those world civilizers, the Greeks, Themis, the daughter of Heaven and Earth. The building was a temple erected for her honor, and containing the work-rooms of her ministers and servants, but which, alas! were often turned into dens of thieves.

I entered the building and found therein divers spacious apartments, each one of them a veritable old curiosity shop, filled with relics of the past, memorials of the day and objects affecting the future. I quickly found that of the numbers trooping into the building many hurried through unmindful of their surroundings, and as if everything was naught, while others who had brains behind their eyes saw many a wonder, many a thing of beauty, many a thing *monstrum, horrendum, informe*.

In some of the rooms I found

The old laws of England; they
Whose reverend heads with age are grey,
Children of a wiser day;

in others, creatures green, untried, but powerful to hurt, armed cap-a-pie, as was Minerva when she sprang from Jove's almighty head; but if they had issued from the head of any Jove, it was but from the head of a nodding Jove. There was stowed away an immense amount of rubbish, as the Rev. Mr. Gascoigne would say; but then "I don't see that law rubbish is worse than any other kind of rubbish. It is not so bad as the rubbishy literature that people choke their minds with. It doesn't make one so dull," as Mr. Rex would respond.