

THE BARRISTER.

Until within a few years of the abolition of the Order of the Coif there were always appointed a certain number of them as counsel to the Crown, who acted like the Attorney-General, not only as the legal advisers of the Crown, but as the Crown advocates or public prosecutors, and who were called the King's serjeant's. The King's serjeant was at the head of the law in every county, sitting in the County Court with the sheriff, and judging and determining all suits and controversies between the people within the district. We have an authentic record of the institution in the words of the old form of the crier's proclamation on an arraignment of prisoners, calling on "anyone who can inform my lords the Queen's Justices, the Queen's Serjeants, or the Queen's Attorney-General, of any treasons, murders, felonies or misdemeanours done or committed by the prisoners at the bar, or any of them, let him come forth and he shall be heard, for the prisoners now stand upon their deliverance."

At the present day the English Bar recognizes no clients but solicitors. But in the days when the serjeants congregated in the Parvis of St. Paul's, or at their allotted pillars, it was otherwise. Every member of the Order communicated directly with the suitor who sought his aid. In his own chambers, at his accustomed pillar, or in the Parvis, or wherever else he could be most serviceable, the old serjeant was at the proper time always to be found at his post. The serjeant, when retained, gave his legal aid to his client, and stood by him in the hour of trial.

Below the rank of the Coif the legal right to practice in the

Courts could only be derived from the Judges. The more skilled "apprentices of law" seem to have been habitually resorted to by the suitors, and were called "Counsellors," although they had not the privilege of appearing in Court.

The ancient costume of the Order of the Coif, according to Chief Justice Fortescue, consisted not only of the coif, but of a long priest-like robe, with a furred cape about the shoulders, and a hood. Fortescue says: "A serjeant-at-law is clothed in a long robe not unlike the sacerdotal habit, with a furred cape, *capicium penulatum*, about his shoulders, and a hood over it, with two lapels or tippets, such as the Doctors of law use in some Universities with a coif, as is above described." The priest-like robe, the furred cape and the other ornaments of a serjeant, are still worn by the Judges, as well by those who actually belong to the old Order, as by the Judges appointed since the Judicature Act, and who have not taken the degree of serjeant-at-law. The furred cape and hood from a very early period formed part of the robes of the Judges and serjeants, being delivered to them as soon as the Coifs were put on their heads. Fortescue tells us that in his day this furred cape differed only in the case of the serjeants from that worn by the Judges in the circumstance that the Judge's cape was furred with minever, whilst the serjeant's cape was usually furred with white lambskin or budge.

With regard to the colour of the robes of the Judges and serjeants there seems to have been much variation. At a call of serjeants in October, 1555, every