

is all we expect from him. As for Dryasdust a reliable thorough old lawyer, not showy, but true, he has previously drawn the pleadings, and advised on evidence and consequently knows the case almost as thoroughly as we do ourselves.

Entering the civil court, we find ourselves in a large square hall one side of which is occupied by the bench, whilst round the other walls are ranged rows of highbacked, uncomfortable pews, gradually descending as in a class room. The centre space or pit immediately beneath the judge is filled by a large baize covered table, round which sit the members of the bar in lively conversation, the sedateness of their wigs and the vivacity of their countenances forming as odd a contrast as their talk in which racing and law, politics and scandal jostle for predominance. As the judge's door opens, silence instantly obtains, and Manisty, J., a quiet slow old man, as yet blissfully ignorant of the Adams-Coleridge case, takes his seat and begins work. In those days Manisty was considered an exceptionally good lawyer, but weak in his appreciation of facts and wanting in capacity for business. In an appeal court he might have made a reputation—at *nisi prius* he was lost.

We need not recapitulate the various proceedings of an assize trial, which differs in little but its surroundings from an American trial by jury. There is more form and circumstance amongst the Englishmen, but there is also much more rapid despatch of business. Everybody is in a hurry, for the time allotted to the Assize is quite inadequate to the proper trial of the causes set down. Out of the sixteen on the list, probably seven or eight will be tried out, and, of the rest, some will be settled, others sent to a reference and two or three made *remanets* for Gloucester, at which city, being the last place in the circuit, the judges can sit indefinitely and clear off the arrears of the whole circuit. This, of course, applies only to the civil business. On the criminal side, the judge must make a complete jail delivery before leaving each town, no matter how long it takes him or how the other appointments of the circuit are deranged.

As our case is not reached on the first day

we have still to stay over, and, indeed, we are in no very great hurry to get away, for we are pleasantly lodged in an old-fashioned, homely hotel, and there is sure to be a race meeting, a county cricket match, or regatta or some kind of festival going on at Assize time, not to mention the minor attractions of the theatre, refreshingly provincial, or the glee club. This last institution deserves, at least, a passing notice. From time whereof the memory of man runneth not to the contrary, the singing men of the cathedral have been accustomed to meet in a tavern once a week and there sing glees and catches together. These meetings are now held in the large hall of an ancient inn and here on the usual night, the good burghers of Worcester are wont to assemble, smoking their long pipes, drinking their clear red ale or fragrant whiskey, and listening to those cheerful old madrigals and glees which are the most truly national music England can boast and which seem never to lose their charm. Long may the good old custom be kept up, not for the sake of gain, for not one copper do the singers receive, but as a living mark of that mild and tolerant feeling which is hereditary with the ecclesiastics of Worcester.

But the pleasantest holiday must end. On third and last day our case is reached, fairly well tried and a special verdict taken. The judge orders the legal points, which are intricate, to be argued before him in London after the circuit is closed, and suspends till then the entering up of judgment. This means more briefs, more fees and considerable delay, but, as our client happens to be a corporation, we do not feel that extreme disgust at the result, which our friend Jones, the solicitor on the other side, vigorously expresses. The judge may be, as he says, an old woman—he may even be right when he calls the barristers sharks, but our corns are not trodden on and why should we grumble? Anyway, the Assize is over and we have only to pay our reckoning at our inn and go home.

—A. B. M. in *Central Law Journal*.

A COUNTRY LAWYER ON LAW REFORM.

To the Editor of the LEGAL NEWS:

SIR,—I am what is called a country law-