

The *Spectator*, however, does not omit to mention some defects of this highly gifted judge: "Sir George Jessel had not, like the great Jewish contemporary who achieved a still higher fame in politics, any unique insight into other men. He was not skillful in the use of social weapons. He had no great stores of banter or wit at his command. His speeches in Parliament were not of the first order, even for the speeches of a solicitor-general. He was not as persuasive as Sir Henry James, nor anything like as lucid in the exposition of political issues as Sir Farrer Herschel. Marvellous as his powers were, they were probably never shown to less advantage than during his short Parliamentary career. For in the forms of things he was not a master. He was deficient in tact, in the art of literary and popular exposition; and appeals to feelings he either despised or could not understand."

THE AFFIRMATION BILL.

On the 6th April, an influential deputation waited upon the Archbishop of Canterbury, on the subject of the Affirmation Bill. A memorial has been signed by 13,650 of the clergy, setting forth that the deliberate removal of the name of the Almighty from the oath, as proposed by the Parliamentary Oaths Act, 1866, Amendment Bill, was dishonoring to the Almighty, and utterly opposed to the spirit of the Constitution and of the law of England. The deputation represented that the *onus probandi* for any change in the oath lay with those who introduced this Bill. Unless some very much stronger grounds were shown, they thought there was no sufficient reason for any alteration of the Parliamentary Oath in the direction which the Bill proposed. They could not but feel that the recognition of the Supreme Being pervaded the whole of our constitution and laws—in the coronation of our Sovereign, in the public action of the judges of the land, as well as in the forms of prayer which in both Houses of the Legislature were offered up to the Supreme Being at the commencement of their proceedings. Although it was said that this change was to remove the last religious disability on the entrance of any member into the House of Commons, yet all previous legislation on this subject had been to relieve the conscientious religious scruples, whether of Quakers,

Moravians, or Jews. But in this case the removal of the disability was to meet the case of one who had publicly admitted that he had no such conscientious religious scruples. The Archbishop, in replying, expressed sympathy with the views of the deputation, but remarked that the absence of the formula would not necessarily imply unbelief. Declarations had already in several instances been substituted for oaths. It was by a declaration that a clergyman repudiated the crime of simony, and by a declaration that he declared his assent to the Thirty-nine Articles and to the Book of Common Prayer.

NEW BOOKS.

A HISTORY OF THE CRIMINAL LAW OF ENGLAND, by Sir JAMES FITZJAMES STEPHEN, K.C.S.I., D.C.L., a Judge of the High Court of Justice, Queen's Bench Division. (New York, Macmillan & Co.; Montreal, W. Drysdale & Co.)

Last year we reproduced an article from *Nineteenth Century*, written by Sir James F. Stephen, giving a brief sketch of the history of English Criminal Law. (See 5 L. N., 209, 219, 225.) The learned Judge wrote that paper as an outline of an important work which he was about to produce on the history of the criminal law. That work is now before us, in the form of three considerable volumes. We need not say anything as to the peculiar merits of Mr. Justice Stephen as a legal writer; he is well known to the profession by his *Digest of Criminal Law*, and as one of the principal commissioners appointed to prepare a draft Criminal Code. Of the present work he says:—

"It is longer and more elaborate than I originally meant it to be, but, until I set myself to study the subject as a whole, and from the historical point of view, I had no idea of the way in which it connected itself with all the most interesting parts of our history, and it has been matter of unceasing interest to see how the crude, imperfect definitions of the thirteenth century were gradually moulded into the most complete and comprehensive body of criminal law in the world, and how the clumsy institutions of the thirteenth century gradually grew into a body of courts and a course of procedure which, in an age when everything is changed, have remained substantially unaltered,