

The Legal News.

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JUDICIAL TOPICS IN ENGLAND.

The tour of the Lord Chief Justice in the United States has not only afforded some amusement to the English comic papers, but has caused some alarm to the bar. Says the *Law Times*: "Vested interests, of course, are nothing in these days. At any moment professional or trade security may be threatened. The recent judicial tour in America has not tended to increase the confidence of the bar in the stability of existing institutions. But it was nevertheless scarcely credible that immediately after the reform in our procedure and the erection of Royal Courts, at a vast expense, the head of the law should contemplate entire subversion of the judicature. It is to be hoped that the bar committee will soon be in a position to put the drag on the well-known radical tendencies of prominent members of both bench and bar." This uneasiness seems to have been excited by the reports of some of his lordship's speeches in the United States, and also by the rumor that a scheme of district courts was to be proposed in England. His brother judges even seem to have caught the alarm, and they hold out sturdily against any hint of innovation, for we read that at a meeting of the English Judges, held at the Royal Courts of Justice on Tuesday, December 11th, "the proposal of Lord Chief Justice Coleridge, that the courts should either sit half an hour earlier in the morning or the same time later in the afternoon, was voted down by a large majority."

A MISCHIEVOUS INNOVATION.

Of late years a silly innovation has crept into the Montreal journals: we refer to the publication of a statement of the number of actions taken out by each professional firm during the year. This may please a vanity not at all to be commended, on the part of a few, but it cannot be justified on any sound principle. The number of suits

instituted is a poor test of a lawyer's brains or capacity, not to speak of honesty; and it is not surprising to those who are well informed, to see counsel who are admittedly the leaders of the bar placed a long way down in the list, while their students and their students' students to the fifth generation head the roll. If such a publication has any effect, it is decidedly a mischievous one: it is to encourage the institution of frivolous cases, and to create such a state of things as we sometimes witness, when out of twenty suits decided in one day, more than half are dismissed with costs. It is the part of a wise and conscientious counsel to prevent litigation, not to cultivate it. Dr. Johnson—grand old Samuel, who is passing out of the fashion of this generation—once framed a prayer to be used before entering on the study of the law. It is dated September 26, 1765, and as some of our readers may never have seen it, and it expresses in a few well-chosen words the point of this paragraph, we venture to quote from it:—
 "Almighty God, the Giver of wisdom, without whose help resolutions are vain, without whose blessing study is ineffectual, enable me, if it be Thy will, to attain such knowledge as may qualify me to DIRECT THE DOUBTFUL, and INSTRUCT THE IGNORANT, to prevent wrongs, and TERMINATE CONTENTIONS, and grant," etc.

EX PARTE PUBLICATIONS.

And while we are flourishing the censor's whip, we may as well add a word concerning another abuse which has existed so long that it can hardly be considered a novelty. We do not think that in any other place in the world the newspapers indulge so freely in *ex parte* statements of legal proceedings. It often happens that before an action is served upon the unfortunate defendant he finds the highly colored statements of the declaration selling on the street. Before he knows what are the precise charges against him, the world at large, with the aid of the telegraph, has a grossly exaggerated version served up to it. This system has been the cause of much mischief in the past—not that the judges who under our system have to try the cases, are affected by such statements