

AN OLD CIRCUIT LEADER.

enabled him to act with surprising readiness and tact on the suggestions of his juniors, or those he found on his briefs. Again, he was no rhetorician, but he spoke with ease and fluency—and he had the qualities of sagacity, sound judgment, quickness and dexterity in handling a cause in the highest degree. Add to this that his self-possession and presence of mind never failed him, that he had great powers of ridicule and sarcasm, and an unerring knowledge of the temper and tastes of a Welsh jury. No one will be surprised to hear that a man so qualified became as powerful an advocate as ever practised at the Bar. Besides all these professional advantages, he was in his private capacity the darling of his countrymen; and he was also an especial favourite of the Judges of the circuit, whom he won not only by his frank and pleasant modes of conducting the business, but by the admirable dinners and very choice wines with which he regaled them and the principal members of the Bar on every assize Sunday at Ystrad, his seat in the neighbourhood of Carmarthen. He continued on the circuit till Serjeant Heywood and Mr. Balguy had been removed from it by death. As we have stated they were succeeded *pro tempore* by the well known Queen's Counsel, Mr. Nathaniel Clarke, who was, he said, quite astonished by John Jones's ability as counsel, and added that he believed Erskine himself did not conduct a cause more winningly.

After this description of the man and his powers, the reader will better understand a current tradition that on some occasions, after one of John Jones's felicitous replies, the jury, as soon as the Judge's summing up had closed, without waiting for the officer to take their verdict, would call out, "My lord, we are all for John Jones, *with costs.*"

The mention of Ystrad leads at once to recollections of that beloved abode and its pleasant hospitalities. No house in the principality entertained more frequent guests, and it may be confidently said, that no guest ever left without feeling that he had had a most agreeable visit, and had found his host one of the pleasantest of men. Of him it might be truly said:—

"A merrier man,
Within the limit of becoming mirth,
I never spent an hour's talk withal."

In an able article in the *Carmarthen Journal*, published the day after his death, it was observed—

"In his private and public capacity he had few equals, and by his talents and public services he acquired a high reputation, and wielded a personal influence greater than any man in this or the neighbouring counties—probably the greatest influence of any private gentleman in the principality."

On the abolition of the Welsh Judicature Mr. Jones retired from the Bar, but his talents were not lost to the community, for he continued to discharge with great ability the duties of Chairman of the Carmarthenshire

Quarter Sessions to the time of his death. The magistrates of the county and the profession testified their high sense of his services in this capacity by presenting him with a service of plate, on which they recorded their sense of his judicial services.

John Jones was for many years in Parliament and was engaged in many arduous struggles to gain that object. In 1818 he unsuccessfully contested the borough of Carmarthen, but was returned for the borough in the next year; and after some other contests he was returned member for the county of Carmarthen in 1837, and retained that seat till his death.

In politics John Jones was the intimate and attached friend of Sir Robert Peel, and, generally speaking, adopted his line of policy. Accordingly, when Sir Robert, in the year 1829, to the great and bitter indignation of his party, abandoned the anti-catholic principles which he had so often and so solemnly professed, and in conjunction with the Duke of Wellington brought forward, and carried, the great Act of Parliament for the Relief of Roman Catholics, Mr. Jones was persuaded, not a little against his own inclinations, to follow Sir Robert Peel in his tergiversation. His conduct in this respect was most disastrous to his own private fortunes. In South Wales there were scarcely any Roman Catholics, but there were a great number of persons bitterly and obstinately opposed to their relief. Amongst them was Mrs. Jones, of Tyglin, the daughter of his great uncle Mr. Jones, the proprietor of the estate. By his will he bequeathed it to his daughter in such terms as were decided by the Court of King's Bench to amount to a gift of an estate-tail, with remainder, "to my nephew, John Jones, now at Eton School." His daughter, on hearing that her cousin had been persuaded to give his vote in the House of Commons in favor of Roman Catholic relief, fell into a frenzy of passion, and vowed most solemnly that, if she could prevent it, not an acre of the Tyglin Estate should ever go to John Jones. And she immediately sent for her solicitor, and instructed him if possible to cut off the entail which had been made in his favor. This was done, and unfortunately, for Mr. Jones, too well done, for the Court of Queen's Bench, in a law-suit which took place after her death, between John Jones and a stranger to whom she had bequeathed the estate, decided after solemn argument that she had the power to cut off the entail and to deprive Mr. Jones of the estate in favour of her own devise—and thus, by this calamitous vote, Mr. Jones was deprived of an estate with a rental of at least £3,000 a year.

Mr. Jones died in the year 1842. His funeral was attended by an immense concourse of mourners of every class. All the shops of the town of Carmarthen were closed, business was entirely suspended, and everything was done by the inhabitants to manifest the depth and sincerity of their regret. But eminent