

LAWYERS' WIGS.

preserve a sense of honour and that tradition of merit which has all the beneficial effect of pedigree; but the original motive of uniform was the more vulgar one, increased efficiency, increased power of distinguishing between friend and foe. The proof of the fact is that in a night attack, when ordinary uniform would be indistinguishable, able commanders always try to devise a new one, a white sleeve, or a cross, or other mark which can be recognised when there is very little light. Uniform has other uses, the greatest, perhaps, being that it marks the soldier from the civilian, and therefore, by making the armed man specially visible, makes him also specially responsible; but its main use is the increase it affords of direct power to the soldier to do the work for which he is educated, privileged, and paid. No such advantage can be claimed for most ceremonial uniforms, for those worn by deputy lieutenants, courtiers, diplomatists, or even, with all respect be it spoken, barristers and judges. They could do their work as efficiently in ordinary costume as in special dress, and the popular defence of their robes needs examination before it is accepted. It is said, again, that the robes and the wigs increase the respect with which judges and the counsellors are regarded by the multitude, and as it is well that the multitude should respect the ministers of the law, it is well that the latter should wear dresses which inspire respect. The argument deserves more attention than the analogy from uniform, because, to begin with, its two main propositions are undeniably true. Nothing, no one sentiment man has ever evinced, is quite so valuable as respect for law. That is, we hope and believe, the feeling, or, to say what we really mean, the faith which as civilisation advances will be the sufficient substitute for "reverence" in its social sense, "loyalty," "obedience," and many other sentiments which, once real and beneficial, are now becoming unreal and therefore mischievous. It is also true that the masses of half-civilised men do respect authority in fine clothes, or rather in exceptional clothes, more than authority in ordinary dress; do feel more inclined to obey a "Red Judge," than a judge in a frock-coat; do hesitate more to criticise a decision given by a man in a wig than one delivered by a man without one. But this is not quite the whole case. If this reverence for clothes, inborn as it seems to be in some Western races, is founded in any noble feeling, *cadit questio*, let us cultivate custom, but if it is founded in a base proclivity of the human mind, then not even the value of reverence for law, not even the aid the false respect lends to the administration of justice, is a sufficient excuse for pandering to such a depravation of instinct. The American Democrat is then right, who holds all such things degrading; and not the Continental Democrat, who holds them degrading or ennobling according to their social intent, who, for example, like most Reds, would have all men dressed alike, *unless* hon-

oured with a function from the people. The point is not what it is supposed to be, the effect of clothes in securing the obedience of the multitude—which we admit to the full, and might, possibly, exaggerate—but the effect of exceptional clothes worn by officers of the state or of the law in elevating to the multitude. If that is not secured, the case of the clothes will ultimately be lost, for the sentiment of equality, as far as it goes—and it goes a wonderfully little way—does ennoble men, and is not lightly to be disregarded. There is this much to be said even for the election of judges, in itself the most fatal custom democracy has instituted, that it does force the ordinary man to consider what the law he helps to make really is, and why its exponent, whom he has helped to appoint, is deserving of his sedulous respect, a consideration much more to his mental and moral advantage than blind fear of the judge's power.

We confess we do see grave reason to believe, though we shall irritate many sober thinkers by saying so, that the system of official clothing will stand this supreme test; that the special robe worn by the judge, or the barrister, or the policeman does actually elevate and not simply blind those it is intended to affect, does appeal to a certain nobleness and not to a certain baseness in their inner nature. We doubt whether the feeling which we English are compelled to describe by a Latin word, solemnity, be not a sound instead of an unhealthy state of mind, whether it does not often mean, whether in church or court, or ceremonial, supposing it always to be real and not factitious, that the better nature of the man is struggling to the front, that his brain and heart are quickened and raised under it, instead of being debased or deteriorated. Any severe call on a man, even if it be only a call to self-defence, makes him, or should make him, more of a man, would make him, if he were in the mental condition we all desire to see him reach; and there is no call quicker or more certain of a response than that made by any real solemnity. If that is true—and we all acknowledge it in connection with worship, though half of us seek the exciting means in a simplicity which, so to speak, reveals God, and the other half in a magnificence which honours Him—the case for the clothes is won, for nothing produces solemnity like a sudden change in the ordinary circumstantial and surroundings of life. We could produce it, for example, most effectually in a court of justice without any change of clothes, by merely altering the colour of the atmosphere. We do not doubt that if every criminal were tried under red light, or blue light, or green light, or any light to which mankind are unaccustomed, the effect on him, on the bar, on witnesses would be one of awe; that there would be greater reluctance to tell lies, greater fear of resistance to law, greater disposition to realise the divinity, so to speak, of the whole machinery, than if there were no such diver-