

there walking up and down in close communion with attorneys; and there are sprucely-dressed strangers from the country, either hobbling in and out of the various courts, or else standing still, with their necks bent back, and their mouths open as they stare at the wooden angels at the corners of the oaken timbers overhead.

The courts here are, as it were, a series of ante-chambers ranged along one side of the spacious Hall; and as you enter some of them, you have to bob your head beneath a heavy red cloth curtain. The judge, or judges, are seated on a long, soft-looking, crimson-covered bench, and costumed in wigs that fall on either side their face, like enormous spaniel's ears and with periwigged barristers piled up in rows before them, as if they were so many mediæval medical students attending the lectures at some antiquated hospital. Then there is the legal fruit-stall, in one of the neighboring passages, for the distribution of "apples, oranges, biscuits, ginger-beer"—and sandwiches—to the famished attendants at court; and the quiet old-fashioned hotels, for the accommodation of witnesses from the country, ranged along the opposite side of Palace Yard.

How different is all this from the central criminal court at the Old Bailey! There we find a large boiled-beef establishment, with red steaming rounds in the window, side by side with the temple of justice, and a mob of greasy, petty larceny-like friends of the "prisoner at the bar," and prim-looking policemen, gathered round the court doors and beside the gateway leading to the sheriff's entrance at the back, waiting the issue of that day's trials. Then within the court, upon the bench there are the aldermen, reading the daily papers, or writing letters, attired in their purple silk gowns trimmed with fur, and with heavy gold S collars about their neck; and the under-sheriffs in their court-suits, with their lace frills and ruffles—the latter encircling the hand like the cut paper round bouquets—with their black rapiers at their side, and all on the same seat with the full-wigged judges; and the barristers below crowded round a huge loo-table, that is littered with bags and briefs; and the jury packed in their box at one side of the little court—which, by the by, seems hardly bigger than a back parlour—with a long "day-reflector" suspended over their heads, and throwing an unnatural light upon their faces; whilst in the capacious square dock, facing the bench, stands the prisoner at the bar awaiting his doom, with the Governor of Newgate seated at one corner of the compartment, and a turnkey at the other.

This again is all very different from the shabby-genteel crowd, with its melange of "tip-staffs" and sham attorneys, gathered about the insolvent court, and the neighboring public houses, in Portugal Street; that, too, utterly unlike the quaint, old-fashioned tribunals in Doctor's Commons; these, moreover, the very opposite to the petty county courts, that have little to distinguish them from private houses, except the crowd of excited debtors, and creditors, and pettifoggers grouped outside the doors; and those on the other hand, entirely distinct from the still more insignificant police courts, with their groups of policemen on the door-step, and where, at certain hours, may be seen the sombre-looking prison van, that is like a cross between a hearse and an omnibus, with the turnkey conductor seated in a kind of japan-leather basket beside the door at the end of the vehicle.

Farther, there are the several prisons scattered throughout the metropolis, and forming an essential part of the legal capital: the gloomy, yet handsome prison pile of Newgate, with its bunch of fetters over each doorway—the odd polygon-shaped and rampart like penitentiary, perched on the river bank by Vauxhall—the new prison at Pentonville, with its noble, portcullis-like gateway—the city prison at Holloway, half castle, half madhouse, with its tall central tower, reminding one of some ancient stronghold—besides the less picturesque and bare walled Coldbath Fields, and Tothill Fields, and

Horsemonger Lane, and the House of Detention, and Whitecross Street, and the Queen's Bench—not forgetting the nameless hulks, with their grim-looking barred port holes.

These, however, constitute rather the legal institutions of London than the legal localities; and that there are certain districts that are chiefly occupied by lawyers, and which have a peculiarly lugubrious legal air about them, a half-hour's stroll along the purlieus of the inns of court is sufficient to convince us.

Of this legal London, Chancery Lane may be considered the capital; and here, as we have before said, everything smacks of the law. The brokers deal only in legal furniture, the publishers only in Fearne on Remainders and Impey's Practice, and such like dry legal books—and the stationers in skins of parchment and forms of wills, and law-lists and almanacs, and other legal appliances. Then the dining rooms and "larders" so plentiful in this quarter, are adapted to the taste and pockets of lawyer's clerks; and there are fruiterers, and oyster-rooms, and "off restaurants," bakers, and "cocks," and "rainbows," for barristers and attorneys to lunch at; and "sponging-houses," barred like small lunatic asylums, and with an exercising yard at the back like a bird cage, and patent offices; and public-houses, frequented by bailiffs' followers and managing clerks; and quiet looking taverns, which serve occasionally as courts for commissions "de lunaticis."

Now, the people inhabiting the legal localities of the metropolis are a distinct tribe, impressed with views of life and theories of human nature widely different from the more simple portion of humanity. With the legal gentry all is doubt and suspicion. No man is worthy of being trusted by word of mouth, and none fit to be believed but on his oath. Your true lawyer opines, with the arch-diplomatist Talleyrand, that speech was given to man not to express, but to conceal his thoughts; and we may add, it is the legal creed that the faculty of reason was conferred on us merely to enable human beings to "special plead," i. e., to split logical hairs, and to demonstrate to dunderhead jurymen that black is white.

What beauty is to a Quaker, and philanthropy to a political economist, honor is to your gentlemen of the long robe—a moral will-o'-the-wisp, that is almost sure to mislead those who trust to it. The only safe social guide, cries the legal philosopher, is to consider every one a rogue till you find him honest, and to take the blackest view of all men's natures in your dealings with your friends and associates; Believing that there is no bright side, as has been well said, even to the new moon, until experience shows that it is not entirely dark. In legal eyes, the idea of any one's word being as good as his bond is stark folly; and though, say the lawyers, our chief aim in life should be to get others to reduce their thoughts to writing towards us, yet we should abstain from pen, ink and paper as long as possible, so as to avoid "committing ourselves" towards them. Or if, in the frank communion of friendship, we are ever incautious enough to be betrayed into professions that might hereafter interfere with our pecuniary interests, we should never fail, before concluding our letter, to have sufficient worldly prudence to change the subscription of "Yours sincerely," into "Yours, without prejudice."

That lawyers see many examples in life to afford grounds for such social opinions, all must admit; but as well might surgeons believe, because generally dealing with sores and ulcers, that none are healthy; and physicians advise us to abstain from all close communion with our fellows, so as to avoid the chance of contagion, because some are diseased. Nor would it be fair to assert that every lawyer adopts so unchristian and Hobbesian a creed. There are many gentlemen on the rolls, at the bar, and on the bench, who lean rather to the chivalrous and trusting than the cynic and skeptical view of life; and many who, though naturally inclining towards the Brutus philosophy, and preferring stoical justice