

LORD CAIRNS.

vented the bills from being carried. In June, 1859, Sir Hugh Cairns resigned office with the Conservative Ministry. In February, 1868, Lord Derby relinquished the Premiership in consequence of failing health. Mr. Disraeli now became the head of the administration, and among other changes which took place in the Ministry Lord Cairns became Lord Chancellor in the room of Lord Chelmsford, and was succeeded as Lord Justice by Sir W. Page Wood, afterwards Lord Hatherley. He went out of office with his party in December of the same year, and became leader of the Opposition in the House of Lords. In 1869 he resigned that position, but on the opening of the session of 1870 he consented to resume it. Mr. Gladstone having retired from office in February, 1874, Mr. Disraeli was summoned by the Queen to form a new Administration, and Lord Cairns again became Lord Chancellor. He continued to hold that office until April, 1880, when Lord Beaconsfield went out of office. Although his health has prevented him taking that part either in the judicial or legislative functions of the House to which his position entitled him, Lord Cairns, down to the time of his death, has made occasional appearances in the House of Lords. He was attached to the Evangelical principles of the Church of England, but was ready to co-operate on all occasions with other workers in the religious field. He appeared on many platforms in the metropolis as an advocate of measures, social and religious, for the amelioration of the masses. In Dr. Barnardo's Homes for Destitute Children, at Stepney and Ilford, he took a special interest. When the management of these homes was subjected to a good deal of criticism, and when a board of arbitration had decided that unjust accusations had been brought against the director, Lord Cairns came forward and expressed his readiness to assume the office of president of a committee formed to assist Dr. Barnardo in the further development of his work. The coffee-house movement, also, and many other such movements and organisations, Lord Cairns encouraged not only by his name, but by his personal labours and influence. He was a supporter of several of the local institutions of Bournemouth,

and notably the Young Men's Christian Association.

The place which history will assign to Lord Cairns will probably be that of the greatest lawyer on the English Bench of his generation. The late Mr. Benjamin, whose capacity for passing a judgment and impartiality in the matter will not be questioned, pronounced Lord Cairns the greatest lawyer before whom he had ever argued a case, and Lord Bramwell is known to have a very high estimate of his powers. The attribute in which Lord Cairns excelled was lucidity. The most complex legal problem presented no difficulty to him, and it passed out of his hands placed by his mere statement in so simple and clear a light that the wonder was why there could ever have been any difficulty about it. Readers of his judgments are like those who look for the first time on a simple mechanical contrivance producing great results:—

The invention all admire, and each, how he
To be the inventor missed; so easy it seemed
Once found, which yet unfound most would have
Impossible. [thought]

Lord Cairns made no display of a depth of reading like that of a Willes or a Blackburn, although he was far from deficient in learning. Case-law a man of his powers could afford to despise, and even when at the Bar he was in the habit of citing no cases until he had exhausted the principles of the argument, when he would mention the names of the authorities illustrating his proposition. Much of the logical precision which distinguished him in the statement of legal propositions was due to the fact that, in the chambers of the late Mr. Thomas Chitty, at 1 King's Bench Walk, he was well grounded in the practice of common law pleading, a training of which students at the present day are unfortunately deprived. Lord Cairns on the Bench was not, like the late Sir George Jessel, fond of bringing his own individuality to the front, or of exposing in his judgments the processes by which he arrived at them. In delivering judgment, he was like an embodiment of the voice of the law, cold and impersonal, and suggested an intellectual machine upon which no sophism could make any impression, and which stamped the seal of the law upon what was obviously reason-