

jurisdiction. Two of them are still remembered, Monias Leach and Patrick Colquhoun, author of a treatise on the Police of the Metropolis, which passed through seven editions in ten years, and of which the Select Committee of the House of Commons (1838) say: "The merit of being the first to point out the necessity and practicability of a system of preventive police upon a uniform and consistent plan, is due to Mr. Colquhoun."

Leach is described by his biographer in the Dictionary of National Biography (that most catholic work which embraces murderers in its fold) as "an able man," but it is added, "ill health made him irritable." The last feature would scarcely distinguish him from many of his successors on the bench, but he is remembered as the editor of Hawkins's "Pleas of the Crown," and of numerous Reports.

It was while the court was in Hatton Garden that the father of the present Sir George Lewis, whose offices are still in Ely Place, laid the foundation of the business which Sergeant Ballantine describes with loving care, and to which he, Sergeant Parry, Mr. Montagu Williams, and other members of the race of Chaffanbrass, owe their rather doubtful fame.

A singular thing about the Old Bailey, the final cause of the police courts, and which once shared with them the favors of a certain class of counsel more largely than now, is the blight which seems to fall upon its practitioners. Whether a legacy of death hangs round those grey walls, or that the shadows of a hundred years fall like a pall upon the living, the fact is unquestionable. Except parts of Erskine's closely reasoned, but rather turgid speech for Hardy, and Sergeant Shee's defence of Palmer, an admirable piece of reasoning and eloquence (the peroration is one of the most beautiful and pathetic passages in the language), and neither Erskine nor Shee was an Old Bailey man, none of the speeches delivered there survive—can be quoted as literature.

Although the new police courts did much to relieve the mischief which led to their creation, grave evils remained. This was partly the fault of the criminal law, even now, as Sir Edward Fry called it, a thing of "threads and patches," but then still more defective. For instance, it was not an offence to receive cash, or bank notes, or bills, knowing them to be stolen, as for that purpose they were not regarded as chattels. According to Colquhoun, there were upwards of three thousand receivers in the metropolis alone. The thefts, in small sums, from houses, shops, warehouses, etc., were something like seven hundred thousand pounds a year. An immense trade was done in counterfeit coin, two persons together being able to produce from two hundred to three hundred pounds of base silver coin in six days. As usual, the unfortunate attorney was the scape-goat. "No sooner," says Colquhoun, "does a magistrate commit a hackneyed thief or a receiver of stolen goods, a coiner or dealer in base money, or a criminal charged with any other fraud or offence punishable by law, than recourse is immediately had to some disreputable