

THE LORD CHANCELLOR OF ENGLAND.

DIARY FOR AUGUST.

1. Tues... *Lammas.*
8. SUN... *8th Sunday after Trinity.*
10. Thurs... *St. Lawrence.*
12. Sat... Articles, &c., to be left with Sec. Law Society.
13. SUN... *9th Sunday after Trinity.*
16. Wed... Last day for services for County Court.
20. SUN... *10th Sunday after Trinity.*
21. Mon... Long Vacation ends.
24. Thurs... *St. Bartholomew.*
26. Sat... Declare for County Court.
27. SUN... *11th Sunday after Trinity.*
28. Mon... Trinity Term begins.

NOTICE.

Owing to the very large demand for the Law Journal and Local Courts' Gazette, subscribers not desiring to take both publications are particularly requested at once to return the back numbers of that one for which they do not wish to subscribe.

THE

Upper Canada Law Journal.

AUGUST, 1865.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR OF ENGLAND.

The events that sullied and at the same time added lustre to the pages of English history some two hundred and forty odd years ago, appear to have been in some measure re-enacted in England during the past few months. The keeper of the King's conscience, holding precedence over all temporal lords, the disposer of vast patronage and above all presiding over the very fountain of equity and good conscience, has been tainted with, to say the least of it, the suspicion of improper conduct, and this very suspicion of one, who, like Cæsar's wife, should be "above suspicion," has led to what cannot be considered to be otherwise than the fall and temporary disgrace at least of a most brilliant man and able lawyer.

For hundreds of years, it might almost be said from the commencement of English history, the judiciary of England has been free from the taint of corruption. The case of Lord Bacon seems to stand alone as an example to the contrary. Men of his day stood aghast not only at the enormity of his fault, both in itself and its consequences, but at the sight of the most subtle intellect that probably was ever made, "the high priest of nature," "the wisest, brightest," but as he proved himself to be "the meanest of mankind," condescending to acts which the lowest

officer of his court would despise. Englishmen of the present day look with shame at the reproach which has lately been cast upon the nation at large and upon the almost spotless integrity of English statesmen in particular.

The first charge against Lord Westbury, the late Chancellor, was in reference to what has been termed the "Edmunds' scandal." A Mr. Edmunds, who had for seventeen years served the House of Lords as reading clerk and clerk of the private committees was also connected pecuniarily with the patent office. There were certain defalcations and irregularities in his connection with that office, owing partly, as he rather coolly complained, to the want of a public audit. These defalcations and irregularities were known to, but perhaps not remediable by the Chancellor. Mr. Edmunds resigned his appointment and presented a petition to the House for a retiring pension, which was recommended to be paid to him by the report of a committee, not aware of the facts known to the Chancellor, except from some rumours which were considered too vague to be noticed. It is alleged that at the time this resignation was on the *tapis* a promise was made by the Chancellor "that if Mr. Edmunds would resign he would throw no obstacle in the way of his pension." Whether these were his exact words is not certain, but they were doubtless to that effect. The gravamen of the charge was that the Chancellor, well knowing of these defalcations and irregularities on the part of Mr. Edmunds, but not disclosing his knowledge, had recommended, or at all events not opposed the retiring pension, with the supposed intention of filling the vacant office with one of his sons. A select committee was appointed to enquire into the matter. This committee acquitted the Chancellor of any unworthy motives, but thought he had committed a grave error in judgment and taken a wrong view of his duty. Of this there can be no doubt, but a solicitor of first rate standing in London has gone further than this, and whilst hinting at unworthy motives, directly charges the Chancellor with an untruth, apparent on the face of his own letters and statements. This is another unpleasant feature in the case which has not yet, that we are aware of, been explained or contradicted.

Following closely upon these transactions comes the question of Lord Westbury's connection with the Leeds Bankruptcy Court. It