

had given evidence in his own behalf, the writer proceeds: "We say deliberately that his remarks in this case betray not only a very faint perception of the relative functions of judge and jury, but a total lack of the spirit of impartiality which a prisoner has a right to demand from his judge. The second incident which we have selected as a text for these observations was even more unsatisfactory. A case was being tried at Worcester Assizes. After ascertaining what the defence was to be, Mr. Justice Ridley volunteers the improper remark, 'If that is your defence, then I say it is nonsensical and preposterous, and I don't think the jury will believe it for a moment.' His lordship's attention is directed to the fact that, so far, neither the prisoner nor his counsel nor his witnesses have been heard, and he is informed that the prisoner is to be put into the box. An intimation of this sort would have steadied the equilibrium of most judges. But it only nerves Mr. Justice Ridley to still higher flights of impropriety. 'Then call him,' he retorts; 'but I give him warning that if, when he has given evidence, I am of opinion that he has committed perjury, I shall order him to be prosecuted. You had better speak with him and let him understand what I say.' The prisoner still wishes to give evidence; but his counsel prevails on him, after what has fallen from the judge, to speak from the dock. When this resolution is announced to Mr. Justice Ridley he receives it with the judicial comment, 'I should think so, indeed!' The prisoner is found guilty, with a strong recommendation to mercy, which the judge promptly disregards. In works of fiction, such as 'Alice in Wonderland' or 'Davy and the Goblin,' an episode of this description would be both relevant and amusing; in an Assize Court it is nothing less than a grave scandal. If it were likely to be repeated, it would raise a very serious issue indeed. But it may be hoped that reflection, stimulated by the emphatic expression of professional disapproval which his recent judicial conduct has elicited, will bring home to Mr. Justice Ridley's mind the fact that questions affecting liberty and life cannot be allowed to be treated by a judge as if they were merely matters of disputed accounts."

Another legal journal calls attention to matters judicial in this fashion: "It is idle to conceal the impression which prevails that, if the Bench continues to be weakened as it has been during the last few years by appointments dictated by considerations having nothing whatever to do with professional qualifications, events will