

Counsellor Brent—"My Lord, we close here."

The Attorney General arose and addressed the Jury, as follows :—

May it please your Lordship—Gentlemen of the Jury, at the close of a trial which has already been protracted, though not more so than its importance demanded, I should not attempt to address you at any length, were it not for certain statements put forth by the learned Counsel for the Defence, in his address to you, which I think justice demands should not go uncontradicted. In order the more fully to do so, I shall advert to the several statements made by that gentleman. In opening his address, the learned Counsel promises to falsify the evidence of the witnesses for the prosecution, and to prove that they ought more properly to be in the dock than his unfortunate client. How far he succeeded in this, you, gentlemen, are able to judge.

He has taken up three characteristics of the Prisoner at the Bar, and on these, bases his address—Mildness, Benevolence, and Usefulness. In order to prove the first characteristic, he refers to the antiquity of the Prisoner,—“He is of no mushroom growth, springing into society by a hop, step and leap—he has long been the companion of kings, queens, statesmen, warriors, poets, musicians, and merchants—the bosom friend and companion of the portly archbishop, and the all but mendicant curate.” It would be absurd in me to deny this statement, but permit me, as briefly as possible, to call your attention to the effects of his companionship on those persons with whom he is said to have associated. He is of “ancient date,” and what, gentlemen, do we find him at the earliest accounts we have ever received of his existence? We find him there prostrating the man who, for his piety, had been saved from a general deluge, subjecting him to indecent exposure, and to the ridicule of his own son.

The Philistines, under the influence of the Prisoner, called Sampson in among them, in order to make sport for them, and the consequence you, gentlemen, know. It was through him that the Amalekites were slaughtered in the reign of David; that Amnon, the son of David, was slain by the domestics of Absalom; and Elah, King of Israel, murdered by his own servant. It was on account of the Prisoner at the Bar that the Prophet pronounced the denunciation against the Ephraimites—“Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower, which are on the heads of the fat vallies of them that are overcome with wine.” He was the cause of the slaughter of 70,000 Jews in the reign of King Ahasuerus. One of the greatest sacrileges ever committed, was committed under the influence of Alcohol, when Belshazzar made a feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand—and never was debauchery more signally punished by the Almighty, for, in the midst of the revelry, the King is slain, and the city taken by the Persians, under Cyrus. Such was the effect of this monster on this temperate and warlike people, that, in a very short time, they became as remarkable for their effeminacy and intemperance as they had been conspicuous for their physical strength and sobriety, and they too soon fell an easy prey to