

senting Mr. Eyre. However flattering to Mr. Coleridge to have both parties competing for his services, it can hardly be palatable to him to be dictated to, as he appears to have been, by the Attorney General. The first letter was addressed by Messrs. Shaen and Roscoe to Mr. Coleridge:—

“8, Bedford-row, Nov. 2.

“Dear Sir,—In reference to the objection which has been taken by Mr. Rose to the retainer which we have left with you on behalf of the Jamaica Committee, we, of course, have no wish to take any opinion or decision except your own; and in reference to it we venture to submit that the Jamaica Committee, as is well known from its advertisements and other printed papers, consists of Messrs. J. S. Mill, M. P., P. A. Taylor, M. P., treasurer, F. W. Chesson, hon. secretary, and others; and that if they are incapable of retaining counsel, it must, of course, be upon grounds equally applicable to all other voluntary societies.

“As a matter of fact such societies have been constantly in the habit of tendering retainers, which have been as constantly accepted and acted upon by counsel for many years. Some months ago Mr. E. James, Q. C., M.P., and Mr. Fitzjames Stephen accepted retainers on behalf of the Jamaica Committee. It is, perhaps, not altogether immaterial that in this particular case, after we had left the retainer at your chambers, a correspondence ensued in reference to it which resulted in a note from yourself, intimating that you accepted the retainer.

“As a matter of reason it is frequently quite as important to a voluntary association to retain the services of counsel as to a corporate body or an individual. It is unnecessary to do more than refer to the litigation which has of late years been becoming more and more frequent and important, connected with provisional committees for the formation of joint-stock companies. In Chancery, indeed, voluntary associations are every day parties to litigation, as they are also as individual members in the courts of common law. We happen at the present moment to be engaged in a case of considerable importance in Chancery, in which the Bishop of Natal is plaintiff, while the defendants are the

Council of the Colonial Bishopric Fund, a voluntary body without any incorporation or legal status to distinguish it from the Jamaica Committee.

“If the objection is good, it is good against all voluntary associations, and this would, in fact, outlaw all societies for the promotion of literature, science, and the fine arts, and all clubs, and all the numerous societies which are formed for the express purpose of enforcing certain branches of the law, such as the society for the Suppression of Vice, for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the Society for the Protection of Women, &c.

“Should you deem it advisable that the question shall be submitted to the Attorney General, we shall be glad if you will kindly lay before him this letter as what we have to say on the subject.

We are, dear Sir, yours faithfully,
“SHAEN & ROSCOE.”

To this letter Mr. Coleridge replied as follows:—

“Westminster Hall, Nov. 3.

“Dear Sirs,—I consider your retainer binding, and, for my own part, think there is nothing at all in Mr. Rose's objection. I shall take no steps in the matter, but if I am told by the Attorney-General that I am bound as a matter of professional rule to act for Mr. Eyre, of course I must do so. I can hardly conceive he will tell me so, and I shall not myself ask him any questions. Why, under the circumstances, it is thought the least worth while to contest the matter I cannot understand; but that is no concern of mine.

Believe me to be, your faithful servant,
“J. D. COLERIDGE.”

On learning the decision of the Attorney-General Mr. Shaen wrote the following letter to Mr. Coleridge:—

“November 10.

“Dear Sir,—The Attorney-General has stated it to be his opinion that the retainer of Mr. Rose does, and that the retainer of my firm does not, prevail. I took the liberty of requesting the Attorney-General to let me know the grounds of his opinion, but he declined to do so, saying that such a course was not usual.