

## LORD ST. LEONARDS.

St. Leonards which exhibits him in an equally pleasing light. He was addressing a crowd of electors once from the hustings, when one of his hearers taunted him with his origin. "It is true, I am a barber's son," he retorted, "and I am proud to own it. If you had been a barber's son, you would have been a barber yourself."

The history of young Sugden's early life is not well authenticated, but it is clear that he was set to earn his bread in no very dignified capacity. He was employed as an errand boy in the office of Mr. Groom, a conveyancer in Cavendish Square, London. The story goes that Mr. Groom was in the habit of consulting Mr. Butler, the learned editor of "Ferne's Contingent Remainders" and "Coke upon Littleton." Butler happened one day to be in Mr. Groom's office, when he was bantered by Mr. Groom about a supposed error in one of his books, which the conveyancer said had been discovered by his office boy. Butler insisted on having the office boy into the room and Sugden made his appearance. The error into which the great author had fallen is said to have been so clearly pointed out by the office boy that the author gave way, admitted he was wrong, and became his critic's firm friend. Butler went to Sugden's father and represented that the boy was meant for greater things than running errands and cleaning ink-bottles, and Sugden was eventually entered a student of Lincoln's Inn.

Owing to the curious and antiquated custom of unseating the Lord Chancellor with his defeated government, Lord St. Leonard's fame rests chiefly upon authorship, and not upon judicial decisions. He was hardly twenty-one years old when he made his first adventure in legal literature with a little work entitled "A brief Conversation with a Gentleman of Landed Property about to buy or sell land." This unpretending

work at once gave him a reputation, and met with so much encouragement that three years later, in 1805, he published his celebrated Treatise on the laws of Vendors and Purchasers, which has gone through fourteen editions, and will always be the standard text book on the subject.

In 1807, Mr. Sugden was called to the Bar, having been previously a conveyancer simply. He immediately stepped into an extensive practice, which increased rapidly. At one time his professional income is said to have reached, and perhaps exceeded £20,000 a year. His fame as a Real Property lawyer caused him to be retained in most important cases where questions of that description arose, and in the Common Law as well as in the Equity Courts. About 1822 he received his silk gown from Lord Eldon, who had the highest respect for his learning, and is said to have once consulted him privately on an abstruse question relating to "springing uses," and to have been guided by his view.

"His silk gown," says a writer in *Blackwood's Magazine*, to whom we are indebted for many of the facts in this notice—

"Was a splendid success, silencing all sneers and the whispers of disparagement in every quarter. His consummate knowledge of the principles and details alike of Real Property Law and of Conveyancing, and of Equity, his rapidity of perception, his imperturbable coolness and self-possession, his conscientious devotion to the interests of his clients, the pith and brevity of his arguments, his lucid exposition of the most involved facts—these points all combined to invest his advocacy with such charms in the eyes of anxious solicitors and their clients, that retainers were soon showered down upon Mr. Sugden from every quarter, and it was almost a race between rival solicitors who should first retain him."

But the pressure of counsel business did not detract from Sugden's literary efforts. Before he had passed his 27th year he had given to the public two new and enlarged editions of the "Vendors and