

that one of the most important things at which every advocate ought to aim is this economy of his material which enables him to present a picture in which everything that is critical and salient stands out, and where there is no danger that anybody will fail to see the wood for the trees.

Speaking now from the point of view of advocacy, I do not greatly admire the famous speech of Portia in the Merchant of Venice. Of course she was a lady barrister—(laughter)—and I believe it was her first brief; so on both grounds we must speak with indulgence and consideration. But I don't greatly admire her performance as a matter of advocacy. No doubt that was a very fine passage all about the quality of mercy, and it would have been a most admirable way of addressing the court, supposing that Antonio was going to be convicted; but when she had got in reserve that point about the pound of flesh, I must say I think she ought to have brought it out immediately. If I had been the Duke of Venice, though I should have decided in Portia's favour, I should have made her pay the costs of the first half hour of the hearing. (Laughter.)

But then, lawyers and barristers and judges are notoriously impervious to the influence of poetry and the drama. I remember to have been told a story of a very shrewd, but peculiar English judge, who, I believe, was one of the best judges of a horse that ever sat upon a bench (laughter), but who sometimes avowed curious literary opinions, meeting one day in the Temple, in London, with Serjeant Taulford, who, besides being one of the King's serjeants, was a great Shakesperian authority, this lamented judge said to Taulford: "Taulford, you know about Shakespeare, I believe. Tell me, what is the best play of Shakespeare to read, for I have never read any of them?" Serjeant Taulford gave the rather surprising advice that he thought the best play to begin with was the tragedy of Romeo and Juliet, and meeting the judge about three weeks afterwards, asked what he thought of it. "What do I think of it? Why, I don't think anything of it. It is a tissue of improbabilities from beginning to end." (Laughter.)

So far as I have been insisting that in the outfit of the advocate, apart altogether from any question of knowledge