

## OUR ENGLISH LETTER.

the result, and the drunken condition an incident of an all night sitting at the card table with three militiamen. The first jury disagreed. Field, J., tried the prisoner a second time, and having obtained a verdict, rated him soundly as a liar. Now the lad named the very men with whom he had been playing, but they were forty miles off, and there was no opportunity of investigating his story, and it seemed doubtful to your correspondent as an impartial spectator, whether, after all said and done, he might not have been absolutely innocent; and at any rate his story had not been investigated. Yet his offence, although technically described as burglary, was of the most trivial nature, apart from the breaking and entering, and presented no feature which could not have been easily dealt with by a stipendiary magistrate. This brings me to the second count against gaol deliveries, which is their expense. I have just been through a whole circuit at which not more than three serious cases have been tried, the remainder being purely sessions cases. In fact, a gaol delivery is neither fish, flesh, fowl nor good red herring; it does not serve the needs of provincial towns, and it is, by dint of causing a judicial famine, an endless nuisance to metropolitan suitors.

The current sittings did not open in an exciting manner. It was hardly possible that they should, seeing that not more than three common law judges can sit simultaneously, and that Mrs. Weldon is undergoing luxurious discipline in Holloway gaol as a first-class misdemeanant. In passing it may be observed that this good lady has met with severe treatment, and that the general opinion is that her sentence would have been a good deal shorter if her character as a litigant had not been as well known as it was. However, now that she is away there is some chance of progress, the more so as there

is but one sensational case in the legal programme at present. That is *Adams v. Coleridge*, for the second time of asking, and I am happy to be able to state that Mr. Adams, having employed counsel, is likely to conduct his case in a more creditable manner than heretofore. It is rumoured, however, that Lord Coleridge is filled with melancholy forebodings, and that he has been heard to describe himself as a poor broken-down old man.

The retrospect is a painful one for lawyers. In Lord O'Hagan the profession lost a man universally popular and of brilliant ability. In Lord Cairns Lincoln's Inn mourns the most logical of her sons, and the Conservative party deplores a competent and convincing leader. Both were brilliant examples of the best types of the Irish legal mind, the former a brilliant and impassioned orator, the latter a past-master of rhetoric and logic. Nor, passing away from personal regrets, are the prospects of the profession good. Work, indeed, is slightly more abundant than it has been for the last year or two, but professional morality shows signs of deterioration. Men have always been known to be prepared to work for nothing, but the secret is rather more open than it used to be. Further, a good many barristers find themselves unexpectedly and quite involuntarily in the position of having done their work for nothing. The course of things is simple. A client comes once, twice, or even three times; at last the advocate asks for his fees; the result is that he loses a client and does not recover his money. It may be said that barristers in this position ought to report the matter to the Incorporated Law Society, and this is sometimes done by men of established position, but very little advantage ever accrues, and one cannot help thinking that when fraudulent solicitors are brought before the Court they are treated with exceptional lenity.