

The late Mr Justice Talfourd.

HIS DYING TESTIMONY.

The death of this distinguished judge has produced a profound sensation of grief. The loss is irreparable. Few have ever surpassed him in a rare combination of admirable and sound qualities. It was on Monday, the 13th of March, that Mr. Justice TALFOURD, while on the bench, and addressing the Grand Jury, at Stafford Court-house, suddenly expired. The cause of death was apoplexy, brought on, as it appeared, by the excited feelings under which his lordship was addressing the Grand Jury, in reference to the atrocious crimes by which the calendar of that county was stained, even more than on ordinary occasions; owing, as it appeared to his lordship, to the increased prosperity of the district, which furnished the working classes with more ample means for squandering upon indulgences in intoxicating drinks. The calendar contained a list of 100 prisoners, many of them charged with the most atrocious crimes against life, and person, and property. There were 17 cases of manslaughter, and 30 cases where persons were charged with the crime of highway robbery. These crimes, his lordship observed, might be traced in a vast number of cases to the vice of intemperance, which was so prevalent in the mining district. These were his last words:—

"No doubt that the exciting cause in the far larger number of these cases—the exciting cause that every judge has to deplore in every county of this land—is that which was justly called in the admirable discourse to which I listened yesterday from the sheriffs chaplain, 'the greatest English vice,' which makes us a bye word and a reproach amongst nations, who in other respects are inferior to us, and have not the same noble principles of Christianity to guide and direct them—I mean the vice of drunkenness. No doubt that this in most of these cases is the immediate cause, and it is a cause in two ways of the crimes which will come before you, and especially of the crime of highway robbery; for whereas on the one hand it stirs up evil, awakens malice, and kindles the slumbering passions of the human heart, and puts the reason into a state of twilight; so, on the other hand, it points out the victim as the person to be robbed by presenting temptations to those who see him exposing his money in public-house after public-house—or in a state of drunkenness he finds himself a sharer in a sin from which domestic ties should keep him, and is overtaken by his partner in that sin, who adds to it another crime, or he is marked out by some of her wicked associates. One great evil of this circumstance is, I think, you will find, looking at the depositions one after the other, that it is a mere repetition of the same story over again—of some man who has gone from public-house to public-house, spending his money and exhibiting his money, and is marked out by those who observe him as the fitting object for plunder, when his senses are obscured, and who is made the subject of an attack under those circumstances which enable the parties to escape from the consequences; because, although the story may be perfectly true which the prosecutor in this case tells—although it may be vividly felt by him—yet he is obliged to confess—"

Here the learned judge suddenly ceased speaking, and in a few minutes the melancholy fact became painfully manifest that those who had heard him had been listening to his last words, and that he was no more.

The *Times* reports his last address at length, of which the following is another extract:—

"I am afraid we all of us keep to much aloof from those beneath us, and whom we thus encourage to look upon us with suspicion and dislike. Even to our servants we think,

perhaps, we fulfil our duty when we perform our contract with them—when we pay them their wages, and treat them with the civility consistent with our habits and feeling—when we curb our temper and use no violent expressions towards them. But how painful is the thought that there are men and women growing up around us, ministering to our comforts and necessities, continually inmates of our dwellings, with whose affections and nature we are as much unacquainted as if they were the inhabitants of some other sphere. This feeling arising from that kind of reserve peculiar to the English character, does, I think, greatly tend to prevent that mingling of class with class, that reciprocation of kind words and gentle affections, gracious admonitions and kind inquiries, which often, more than any book education, tend to the culture of the affections of the heart, refinement, and elevation of the character of those to whom they are addressed. And if I were to be asked what is the greatest want of English Society—to mingle class with class—I would say, in one word, the want is the want of sympathy."

Punch has a beautiful poetic delineation of the great judge. (See last page.)

From Dickens' *Household Words* we take the annexed characteristic and eloquent sketch of Talfourd's qualities:—

"On Monday, the 13th March, this upright judge and good man died suddenly at Stafford in the discharge of his duties. Mercifully spared protracted pain and mental decay, he passed away in a moment, with words of Christian eloquence, of brotherly tenderness and kindness towards all men, yet unfinished on his lips.

As he died, he had always lived. So amiable a man, so gentle, so sweet-tempered, of such a noble simplicity, so perfectly unspoiled by his labors and their rewards, is very rare indeed upon this earth. These lines are traced by the faltering hand of a friend; but none can so fully know how true they are as those who knew him under all circumstances, and found him ever the same.

In his public aspects, in his poems, in his speeches, on the bench, at the bar, in Parliament, he was widely appreciated, honored, and beloved. Inseparable as his great and varied abilities were from himself in life, it is yet to himself and not them, that affection in its first grief naturally turns. They remain, but, he is lost.

The chief delight of his life was to give delight to others. His nature was so exquisitely kind, that to be kind was its highest happiness. Those who had the privilege of seeing him in his own home when his public successes were greatest—so modest, so contented with little things, so interested in humble persons and humble efforts, so surrounded by children and young people, so adored in remembrance of a domestic generosity and greatness of heart too sacred to be unveiled here—can never forget the pleasure of that sight.

If ever there was a house in England justly celebrated for the reverse of the picture, where every art was honored for its own sake, and where every visitor was received for his own claims and merits, that house was his. It was in this respect a great example, as sorely needed as it will be sorely missed. Rendering all legitimate deference to rank and riches, there never was a man more composedly, unaffectedly, quietly immovable by such considerations than the subject of this sorrowing remembrance. On the other hand, nothing would have astonished him so much as the suggestion that he was anybody's patron or protector. His was ever of that highest and purest sort which has no occasion to proclaim itself, and which is not in the least afraid of losing itself.

In the first joy of his appointment to the judicial bench, he made a Summer-visit to the seashore, "to share his exultation in the gratification of his long-cherished ambition, with the friend"—now among the many friends who mourn his death and lovingly recall his virtues. Lingering in the bright moonlight at the close of a happy day, he spoke of his new functions, of his sense of the great responsibility he