

LORD ABINGER AND THE NORTHERN CIRCUIT.

We don't know whether the same practice prevailed on all the other circuits, but it certainly did and still does in some; and records of the proceedings are carefully kept and jealously guarded by the "Attorney-General" of the year. We remember once looking at the records of the Midland Circuit, and the first entry that caught our eye was the following: "Mr. Wallace bets Sergeant So-and-so a dozen bottles of port that the words, *Audaces fortuna juvat*, are not in Virgil;" and then comes an entry, which tells that the Sergeant lost the bet, and the wine was confiscated to the use of circuit mess.

We have been permitted to have access to the records of the Northern Circuit kept during the time that Scarlett was a member of it, and a few extracts from them may amuse our readers.

Scarlett joined the circuit at the summer assizes at York in August 1791, and filled the office of junior. This office, although held by the youngest member of the bar on circuit, confers some dignity and considerable power. The object is to initiate the last comer in all the mysteries of circuit life; and the voice of the new-fledged barrister is as potent in determining questions of professional etiquette as that of the most smoke-dried and venerable leader. Heywood was then "Attorney-General;" and we find that at the Grand Court held at York, Mr. Law (afterwards Lord Ellenborough) and Mr. John Cockell were indicted "for that they had wilfully and maliciously hired a mob to attend a trial of a certain cause, and applaud the speech of Mr. Law with loud noises and shoutings." Law pleaded guilty as to the hiring; and Mr. Chambre being called as a witness, proved that Mr. Law had been offered twenty-five guineas for a copy of his speech at the said trial; and this being thought "relevant evidence," Mr. Law was fined two gallons for the said offence. At the Lancaster summer assizes in 1797, Mr. Topping was congratulated in two gallons for his lucky "miscarriage" in throwing himself out of his gig; and on the same occasion, Mr. Scarlett was congratulated in two bottles "for having argued a demurrer extremely well in court this morning."

At the Grand Court held at York in March 1812, the "Attorney-General" of the year produced the manuscript copy of a London Gazette which had been accidentally dropped by Lord Grey, and which "ought to have been published" if Lord Grey had not lost it. It purported to contain several appointments of members of the circuit to important offices; "but," said the Attorney-General, "Mr. Scarlett you

perceive, was not included in the Gazette, and he showed the most sensible disappointment, that being his only hope of getting into business at all. So at Guildhall he proclaimed himself a junior at the bar, hoping that by his modesty some good-natured soul would give him something to do. . . . He has been canvassing with great zeal, and says that owing to his likeness to Bonaparte he doesn't now care a farthing about the bar or business, but will ship himself privately in a smuggler and go over to the Continent. He knows a secure way of taking Bonaparte off; and as he is so like him, the French won't know the difference, and he'll have have himself proclaimed Emperor instead. I move that he be proclaimed Emperor, and congratulated accordingly." Mr. William Wypeng, however, proposed that he should be proclaimed "the Scarlet whore of Babylon," which was negatived; and it was declared that his title should be "simply and supremely Emperor." He was then congratulated in two guineas "amid peals of applause."

At the summer assizes at Lancaster, in August 1815, Scarlet held the office of "Attorney-General," and presented for congratulation the name of James Allan Park, on account of a gallant exploit he had just performed. He had gone to Rochefort and challenged Bonaparte in single combat; but "after much shuffling," Bonaparte declined to meet him, but consented to become his prisoner; and Mr. Park "has returned amongst us after delivering up his prisoner to Captain Maitland, to be safely and securely kept without bail or mainprise." He moved that Mr. Park should be congratulated in two gallons. At the same Grand Court Mr. Paine was fined one gallon "for a most fulsome compliment he had paid in open court at the late assizes to an attorney;" and Mr. James Parke (afterwards Lord Wensleydale) was also fined one bottle for the paltry offence of "puffing himself" in an article published in the 'Pilot' newspaper. A similar fine was imposed on Alderson (the well-known Baron of the Exchequer) for the like offence. Scarlett then made a short address, and craved leave to retire from public life and lay down his office of Attorney-General.

At Lancaster summer assizes in 1816, the Attorney-General of the circuit produced a copy of the 'Sunday News,' and called attention to a column headed *Multum in parvo*, which contained amongst other items the following, "Another letter on the subject of Junius. At Scackleton, near York, a goose lately produced two goslings from one egg. A steamboat has