

of a judge, being both lucrative and honourable, and attracting men of distinction, those who held it were looked upon with the respect which its actual status demanded, and the prestige attaching to it from old association freely accorded. When the advantages of the position, either relative or positive, became less, and no longer attracted the highest class of those qualified to fill it, then both positively and relatively the Bench declined in public estimation.

Another cause acting in the same direction is the general falling off of litigation, and especially in country districts. In former days the assizes were among the great events of the year—the judges were met with a certain degree of state—the great lawyers who came to take part in the trials were looked upon with interest—the cases entered for trial were numerous and important—in some of them the whole country-side would be concerned and opposing factions arrayed to support the parties to the suit. In the trials themselves the greatest interest would be felt—the evidence, the deportment of the witnesses—the arguments of counsel keenly criticised—the faces of the jury closely watched for tokens of sympathy with one side or the other—the judge's charge listened to with the respect due to the words of one so highly exalted—and lastly the finding of the jury waited for with anxiety. All this glory has now departed. In the country the spirit of litigation is dead, or the occasions for it no longer arise. The sittings of the Courts pass unnoticed—judges come and go with no more pomp than commercial travellers—lawyers are few, there being no occasion for their services. Of the cases tried many are withdrawn from the jury, and, therefore, attract no attention. Thus everything conspires to diminish in public estimation the importance of the Court and its officers. Its proceedings no longer excite interest. The counsel at the close of a long-contested case, in which every emotion has been excited, every faculty exerted, from the passionate appeal to the jury to the calm, dispassionate summing up of the judge, is no longer the foremost figure in the sight of a wondering and admiring multitude, and his fame held in renown from one Court to another.