

Some time ago a prominent man of letters in England deplored the decay of sound scholarship in the Imperial Parliament. Comparing the speeches of the members of to-day with those delivered at Westminster a century ago, one is compelled to become an encomiast of times past. In the days of Walpole and Pitt, the speeches of the leading members of both Houses were, on all vital questions, splendid contributions to the literature of their country; to-day who would ever seek for cultured rhetoric, or intellectual stimulus of any kind, in the pages of Hansard—more especially since we have lost Beaconsfield and Gladstone? It would be hard, for instance, to imagine such an incident occurring nowadays as that which subsisted in the classical duel between Walpole and Pulteney in 1741. Pulteney had given notice to the House that he would at a given time bring certain charges against the First Minister. The latter, in repudiating the threatened accusation, theatrically laid his hand on his breast, and said with some emotion:

“Nil conscire sibi, nulli pallescere culpæ.”

Pulteney immediately sprang to his feet and declared that the right honourable gentleman's logic was as bad as his Latin, and that Horace's exact words were: *Nulla pallescere culpæ*. Whereupon Walpole wagered a guinea that his quotation was right, and Pulteney accepted the challenge subject to the arbitrament of Mr. Hardinge, the scholarly clerk of the House. The clerk decided against Walpole, who immediately threw the guinea to his learned adversary, who, deftly catching it, held it up to the House and exclaimed: “It is the only money I have received from the Treasury for many years, and it shall be the last!” What is true of Parliament is equally true of the Bar—indeed the former must needs take its vogue from the latter, seeing that it so largely recruits its ranks from the gentlemen of the long robe. The golden age of polite and philosophical learning, so far as English lawyers in the mass are concerned, began with Sir Thomas More and ended with Lord Brougham—truly a long period. There are a few great scholars in the profession to-day, but they are