

LAWYERS' INCOMES.

piece was called an "angel," led to that witty saying, then common, that "a barrister is like Balaam's ass, only speaking when he sees the angel." Elizabeth's solicitor-general received but £50, and the king's counsel to James I. only £40 a year, with an allowance for stationery. But these were only a kind of retaining fee, and similar fees were paid for business done. When Francis Bacon was James' attorney-general, at an annual salary of only £81 6s. 8d., he managed to make £6,000 per year, a princely income, indeed, in those days.

Maynard, the great parliamentary lawyer of Charles I.'s time, received on one round of the western circuit £700, which Whitelock, a contemporary, believed "was more than any one of our profession got before."

In Charles II.'s time a thousand pounds a year was considered a good income for a successful practitioner, but the great advocates and leaders made anywhere from two to four times that amount, and Sir Francis North, attorney-general, received from private and official business nearly seven thousand pounds. He was avaricious and grasping, and made every penny count. In the "Life of Lord Keeper Guilford," Sir Francis' method of gathering his fees is thus described: "His business increased, even while he was solicitor, to be so much as to have overwhelmed one less dexterous; but when he was made attorney-general, though his gains by his office were great, they were much greater by his practice; for that flowed in upon him like an orage, enough to overset one that had not an extraordinary readiness in business. His skull caps which he wore when he had leisure to observe his constitution, as I touched before, were now destined to lie in a drawer to receive the money that came in by fees. One had the gold, another the crowns and half crowns, another the smaller money. When these vessels were full they were committed to his friend (the Hon. Roger North) who was constantly near him, to tell out the cash and put it into the bags according to the contents."

Sir John Cheshire, King's Sergeant, made about the year 1720, an average annual income of 3,246*l*, and Mr. Jeaffreson, in his charming "Book about Lawyers," gives the following statement of the

growing fortunes of Charles Yorke: "1st years' practice at the bar, 121*l*; 2nd, 201*l*; 3rd and 4th, between 300*l* and 400*l* per annum; 5th, 700*l*; 6th, 800*l*; 7th, 1,000*l*; 9th, 1,600*l*; 10th, 2,500*l*." While solicitor-general his income for one year reached 5,000*l*, and his receipts during the last year of his attorney-generalship amounted to 7,322*l*, a goodly income surely even for an attorney-general. But Lord Eldon, who used to tell the story that during the first year after his call to the bar, he only received a little over half a guinea, did even better than Yorke, for it appears from his fee-book that during his tenure of the attorney-general's office his receipts some time exceed 12,000*l* a year. Lord Kenyon's income before his elevation to the bench was estimated at about 8,000*l*, and yet he was so penurious that it was said to be impossible to tell whether his trowsers were cloth or leather, so greasy were they.

Erskine's rapid rise and brilliant career are well-known. Within eight months from his call to the bar he received the splendid fee of £1,000 from Admiral Keppel; and in latter years, when he had become the first advocate of England, his receipts were estimated as high as £12,000 a year, but this is probably a little too high. Edward Law's retainer for the defence of Warren Hastings brought with it £500, a sum not unworthy the princely fortune of the great Indian.

Of the receipts of the great lawyers of this country, there is hardly data enough to speak with exactness. Choate's income, or rather the value of his professional business, has been put at \$18,000, but he was so indifferent about pecuniary matters that he probably did not receive, in hard cash, much above half that sum. Webster's income while at the bar is said to have been about the same; not large incomes surely for two such eminent lawyers in a great commercial city like Boston. But matters have mended even in Boston, and there are lawyers there to-day whose incomes from their profession are double those of Webster and Choate.

In New York there are two or three of the "leaders" of the bar who pocket annually, or at least have during the eight or ten palmy years just past, anywhere from fifty to one hundred thousand