

VICE-CHANCELLOR WICKENS.

TWISDEN (MR. JUSTICE). "A very great lawyer."—Mr. Serjeant Williams in note to *Benson v. Welby*, 2 Saund. 155 a, 6th ed; 2 Wms. Notes to Saund. 454.

WATSON'S CLERGYMAN'S LAW, OR COMPLETE INCUMBENT. "The Complete Incumbent was not written by Watson, but by Mr. Place, of York."—Denison, J., in 1 Burr. 307. "Mr. Place, of Gray's Inn, was the true author."—*Wolferstan v. The Bishop of Lincoln*, 2 Wils. 195. The work is recommended by Blackstone, 1 Comm. ch. 11.

SELECTIONS.

VICE-CHANCELLOR WICKENS.

The late Vice-Chancellor Sir John Wickens, who died on the 23rd Oct., at his residence, Chilgrove, near Chichester, in the fifty-ninth year of his age, was the second son of the late James Stephen Wickens, Esq., solicitor, of Chandos street, Cavendish-square, London, by Anne Goodenough, daughter of John Hayter, Esq., of Winterbourne Stoke, Wilts, and sister of the Right Hon. Sir William Goodenough Hayter, of Southhill Park, Berks. He was born in the year 1815, and was educated under Dr. Keate at Eton, where he obtained the Newcastle Scholarship, and soon afterwards he was elected to an open scholarship at Balliol College, Oxford, then in the height of its first successes under the late Dr. Jenkins, afterwards Dean of Wells. At Oxford he closed his undergraduate career, during which he obtained, among other distinctions, the Newdigate Prize for English Verse, by taking his Bachelor's degree in Michaelmas Term 1836, as a "double first class." He did not, however, obtain the much coveted honour of a Balliol Fellowship, as his facetious propensities had shown themselves in several practical jokes against the master and tutors of his college, which appeared to them to render it extremely doubtful whether he would ever settle down into a staid, sober, and demure "Don," such as they who congregated in the Balliol Common Room. He afterwards settled in London to study for the Bar, and in Easter Term, 1840, he was called by the Honourable Society of Lincoln's-inn, and in a short time obtained a considerable practice. His reputation as an equity

draftsman while at the Bar was very great, and he was believed to possess a most accurate acquaintance with the science of Chancery pleading, which, as most of our readers know, is a branch of knowledge not now much cultivated. In 1868 he was appointed to succeed the present Lord Justice James, who was then made a Vice-Chancellor of England, as Vice-Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, a position which has often proved a stepping stone to the bench of the High Court of Chancery. Mr. Wickens held at the same time another office which is now looked upon as giving its occupant a still greater claim to a judgeship. He acted for some time as what is called the Attorney-General's "Devil" in Equity. In April, 1871, the deceased judge succeeded Sir John Stuart, on his resignation, as one of the Vice-Chancellors of England. The career of Sir John Wickens on the judicial bench, though so short, was sufficient to show that he possessed the very highest qualities which can be looked for in an equity judge. Indeed, he had showed himself to be abundantly endowed with these even when practising at the Bar. There was always something fair and judicial in his arguments as an advocate. In his judicial capacity Sir John Wickens was called upon to deal with a number of difficult cases, including in particular, many which involved the construction of wills, and very few of his decisions were called in question with success. His name is perhaps best known to the public as the judge who decided the case of *Aylesford v. Morris*, which at the time was very much canvassed in all quarters. Vice-Chancellor Wickens, it will be remembered, relieved the Earl of Aylesford from a bargain by which he had agreed to pay within six months of his attaining his majority interest at the rate of sixty per cent. for a loan of money, and the Vice-Chancellor's decision was in March last upheld on appeal by the Lord Chancellor and the Lords Justices. He was a stuff gownsmen down to his elevation to the Bench, an appointment which he held for many years as Equity Junior to the Attorney-General being incompatible with his taking silk, and he never aspired to a seat in Parliament. "Sir John Wickens," says a contemporary, "was one of those men whose elevation did not place a distance between himself