

LORD ABINGER AND THE NORTHERN CIRCUIT.

assizes between Scarlett and Brougham. He said, "I think nowt o' that chap Scarlett, for he has always got the right and easiest case; but Brougham is the man for me, for he has always a wrong case and fights it like a man."

Lord Brougham was for years his principal opponent on circuit, and it was to these two leaders that Mr. Warren was indebted for the characters of Mr. Quicksilver and Mr. Subtle in his famous novel of "Ten Thousand a Year;" Brougham being the former, and Scarlett the latter. We cannot, however, reproduce all the good things in this sketch, and must content ourselves with republishing that portion which "unfolds some of the hidden mysteries of circuit life, and lift the veil that shrouds the jovial doings of the Grand Court;" which is thus referred to by Lord Abinger himself in his autobiography: "On the Northern Circuit at certain periods there used to be a grand supper, at which all the members were assembled, and the expenses of which were paid by fines and congratulations that resulted in contributions to which the principal leaders were subject. These were introduced in general in a ceremonious speech by one of the body, who bore the office of Attorney-General of the Circuit."

The writer of the article in *Blackwood*, who seems to have been on the same Circuit, and personally familiar with most of the incidents referred to in connection with the professional career of Lord Abinger, thus proceeds:

"On one occasion when the late Chief Justice Tindall was Attorney-General, he presented the name of Mr. Scarlett for congratulation (that is a fine) as the inventor of a machine that had the effect of making the judges head move in a direction angular to the horizon, which signified a nod of approbation. But there was another leader of the circuit, whom Lord Abinger does not name, but says that he "was a gentleman of more popular and of much higher reputation than myself"—mean-

ing of course Brougham—who was also present, as the inventor of a rival machine to operate upon the head of the judge; but it had the effect of producing a motion parallel to the horizon—that is, of signifying dissent. This is not a bad counterpart of the story we have already told of the Lancashire rustic. On another occasion, after Scarlett had left the circuit, Pollock, who was the leader, was crowned with an empty punch-bowl. In fact there was hardly any limit to the fun and nonsense that ran riot at the Grand Court. And it was treason to the circuit to absent one's self from it. If any members had not joined it at the assize town, their names were called three times—each time with some ludicrous prefix, which was supposed to hit off the foible or foibles of the man and—stinging truths were often told in the selection of the epithets. We know no occasion when the lines of Burns were more strictly applicable—

"If there's a hole in a' your coats,
I rede ye tent it;
A chieft' amang ye takin' notes,
And, faith, he'll prent it!"

But no excuse but that of positive illness was allowed to prevail. If the absent barrister was in the circuit town, he was sent for by the officers of the court, who were sworn to do their duty on a bottle of port wine, and he was fetched *volens volens* into court. Once a friend of ours had quietly slipped away, to attend, we believe, a marriage on the following day; but he was pursued by Hildyard, late M. P. for Whitehaven, and another—we think it was Cresswell—who were the messengers at the time, and being found at an inn in the neighborhood of York, he was literally handcuffed, and brought in that state to the circuit mess. All this was borne with perfect good-humour. The only thing with which we can compare these saturnalia of the bar—

"Si parva licet componere magnis"—

are the proceedings of the Abbot of Unreason, as described by Sir Walter Scott in one of his novels, when the motly crowd that followed in his train shouted out "A Hall! a hall! for the venerable Father Howleglas, the learned monk of Misrule, and the Right Reverend Abbot of Unreason!" and we must not forget the scene in 'Gay Maunering,' where Counsellor Pleydeil is represented, in the midst of his frolicsome companions, engaged in the pastime of High Juks, "enthroned as a monarch in an elbow chair, placed on the dining-table, his scratch-wig on one side, his head crowned with a bottle-slider, his eye leering with an expression betwixt fun and the effects of wine."