

* * * Poor Mr. Augustine Birrell, lawyer and litterateur, what a time of it he has to be sure between legal admirers, who are too kind in their praise of his divagations in letters, and literary railleurs who are ever diligent to disparage them. Of the latter sort must be classed the editor of *Literature*. In the issue of that journal of July 21, the head-master of Blackheath school is ridiculed for referring to Mr. Birrell as "a modern Macaulay." And this is how the editor argues the point: "This comparison is surely inept. As well might Charles Lamb be bracketed with Gibbon, or any literary light-weight with any other literary heavy-weight. There might be excuse for pointing out some similarities between Lamb and Mr. Birrell. But between Macaulay, the complete exponent of machine made English, and Mr. Birrell, with his genial whimsies and irresponsible somersaults, are not the differences too wide and deep to need emphasis? The head-master was doubtless led away by the occasion. Mr. Birrell's 'Obiter Dicta,' was one of his prize volumes, and so, no doubt, was Macaulay's 'Lays,' perhaps the 'Essays,' and as Macaulay's books and Mr. Birrell's looked much alike in red and gilt with mottled edges, the head-master was moved to his Gilbertian jest." Why may not Mr. Birrell be persuaded that Law is to-day, as she was in the time of Sir William Blackstone, a jealous jade—a Casaubon and a Mansfield at one and the same time? C'est impossible.

* * * There is no doubt that the failure of the Belgian authorities to adequately punish the infamous Sipido had its effect in stimulating the assassin of King Humbert to perpetrate his foul crime. It is all very well to bespeak some international measures for the suppression of anarchy, as Lord Salisbury is now doing, and we trust that a convention of the powers may be had for this purpose in the near future; but we believe that in every country in Europe there exists at the present day legal machinery of a domestic kind quite sufficient to cope with this pestiferous propaganda, if such machinery were properly operated. We often read in the professional press of the contempt foreign jurists entertain for the English law as compared with the salutariness and exactness of their own. Conceding that the criticism is just, how often do we hear in England of political murders? Clearly anarchy does not thrive in England. We think it was Guizot who said