

JUSTICE SILENCE.

duties with moderate decency. Nupkins, having heard the highly-coloured statement of his satellite Grummer, is convinced that the prisoners are dangerous criminals, and with a noble appreciation of the rights of the accused Briton, proceeds to sentence them unheard. Then Mr. Pickwick, with indignant fervour, asserts the inalienable privilege of a British subject.

"First," said Mr. Pickwick, sending a look through his spectacles, under which even Nupkins quailed, "first I want to know what I and my friend have been brought here for?"

"Must I tell him?" whispered the magistrate to Jinks.

"I think you had better, Sir," whispered Jinks to the magistrate.

"An information has been sworn before me," said the magistrate, "that it is apprehended you are going to fight a duel, and that the other man, Tupman, is your aider and abettor in it. Therefore ————ch, Mr. Jinks!"

"Certainly, Sir."

"Therefore, I call upon you both to ———— I think that's the course, Mr. Jinks!"

"Certainly, Sir."

"To ————to what, Mr. Jinks? said the magistrate, pettishly.

"To find bail, Sir."

"Yes. Therefore, I call upon you both—as I was about to say when I was interrupted by my clerk—to find bail."

"Good bail," whispered Mr. Jinks.

"I shall require good bail," said the magistrate.

"Fifty pounds each," whispered Jinks, "and householders, of course."

"I shall require two sureties of fifty pounds each," said the magistrate aloud, with great dignity, "and they must be householders, of course."

We hope that magistrates of the Nupkins stamp are not common. When they do exist, by their rashness, tyranny and complacent ignorance, they bring the sacred name of justice into contempt, and justify such sarcasms as Mr. Samuel Weller's: "This is a wery impartial country for justice. There ain't a magistrate going as don't commit himself twice as often as he commits other people."

It is with feelings of satisfaction that we turn from the rash and foolish Shal-

low to the discreet Silence. Justice Silence may have no more legal acumen and knowledge than his neighbour Shallow, but he has a fund of sense and discretion, which has earned for him the reputation of being an eminently respectable magistrate. Justice Silence reasons that a judge should keep two objects steadily in view. First, to decide rightly: second, to make the public think he decides rightly. It is not to be expected that a Justice of the Peace will always attain the first object. It is a pure matter of chance whether he will determine rightly or not, and after all the chances are equal. But the second object it is most important and more easy to effect. If the majesty of the law is to be duly recognized and revered, magistrates must take care to impress the public with a belief in the impartiality and correctness of their decrees. In this respect Justice Silence succeeds admirably, and may therefore be taken as the type of an excellent justice. His very appearance is calculated to inspire confidence in his administration of the law. His visage is solemn, his form portly, and his manner deliberate. In a word, he is gifted in a very considerable degree with what is known as judicial dignity. The cynic may say that what we call dignity, is simply the stolidness which belongs to mental vacuity; but after all, dignity, as some one has defined it, is nothing but a mysterious carriage of the body designed to conceal defects of the mind. We therefore claim that Justice Silence has that first attribute of the judicial office—dignity. As his name implies, Justice Silence is not given to over-much talking. A man of few words always passes for a wise man, and the acute public are wont to argue that if the magistrate does not waste many words, he "does a powerful sight of thinking." Justice Silence listens with never-failing patience to everything that everybody