

FLOTSAM AND JETSAM.

found, however, and he always begins, in the lowest professional grade. Indeed, he is the troglodyte of the law. He has great cunning. He mistakes it for intelligence. He is a fellow of infinite pretence. He pushes himself everywhere, and is self-important wherever he goes; you will often find him in legislative bodies, in political conventions, in boards of supervisors, in common councils. He is sometimes there for specific villainy; sometimes on general principles of corruption, waiting on Providence for any fraudulent job. He is always there for evil. The temper of his mind, the habits of his life, make him essentially mischievous. In all places he is always dishonest. When he cannot cheat for gain, he cheats for love. He haunts low places, and herds with the ignorant. It is his kindly office to get them by the ears, and to feed his vanity and his pocket from the quarrels he incites and foment. He is in everybody's way, and pries into everybody's business. He meddles in all things, and is indefatigable in mischief. He is just lawyer enough to be mischievous. He is a living example of Pope's truth, 'that a little learning is a dangerous thing.' Among his ignorant companions he is infallible in all things. Sometimes he is reserved and sly, with knowing look, which gains credit for wisdom and character, for thinking all he does not utter. Generally he is loquacious, demonstrative of his small eloquence. Then his tongue is too big for his mouth, and his mouth too loose for truth. By his own account, he is full of law and overflowing. Among his credulous dupes he cannot keep it down. He knows all things; nothing is new to him; nothing surprises him; nothing puzzles him. But it is in the law that his omniscience shows best. His talk is of law incessantly. He has a chronic flux of law among his followers. He prates law mercilessly to every one except lawyers. He discourses of his practice and his success to the janitor of his office and the shorewoman who washes his windows. He revels in demonstrative absurdity, and boasts of all he never did. He is the guide, philosopher and friend of vicious ignorance. He is the oracle of dulness.

"And still the wonder grows,
That one small head can carry all he knows."

"He hangs much around justices' courts. There he is the leaver of the bar. But he finds his way into courts of record. In them he is a plague to

the bar and an offence to the bench. He is flip-pant, plausible, captious, insolent. He is full of sharp practice, chicane, surprise, and trick. He is the privateer of the court; plundering on all hands on private account. He is ready to sell his client or himself. He is equal to all things, above nothing and below nothing. He is ready to be the coroner of the county or the Chief-Justice of the United States. He would be a bore if he were not too dangerous for that harmless function. He is a nuisance to the bar, and an evil to society. He is a fraud upon the profession and the public—a lawyer among clowns and a clown among lawyers.

"There is a variety of these animals, known by the classic name of Shyster. He has forced the word into at least one dictionary, and I may use it without offence. This is still a lower specimen: the pettifogger pettifogged upon; a troglodyte who penetrates depths of still deeper darkness. He has all the common vices of the family, and some special vices of his own. This creature frequents common courts and there delights in criminal practice. He is the familiar of bailiffs and jailors, and has a sort of undefined partnership with them in thieves and ruffians and prostitutes. These he defends or betrays, according to the exigencies of his relations with their captors or prosecutors. He has confidential relations with those who dwell in the debatable land between industry and crime. He is the friend of pimps and fences. He has intimacies among the vicious men and women. He is the standing counsel of dens and houses of ill-fame. He knows all about the criminals in custody, and has extensive acquaintance among them at large. He is conversant with their habits of life, and calls them familiarly by their Christian names. He prowls around the purlieus of jails and penitentiaries, seeking clients, inventing defences, organizing perjury, tampering with turnkeys, and tolling prisoners. He levies blackmail on all hands. His effrontery is beyond all shame. He thinks all lawyers are as he, but not so smart. He believes in the integrity of no man; in the virtue of no woman. He loves vice better than virtue. He enjoys darkness better than light. His habits of life lead him by the dark lanes and dark ways of the world. He is the confidant of guilt. He is the Attorney-General of crime."