

FOSS AND HIS "BIOGRAPHIA JURIDICA"—LAWYERS' INCOMES.

"His name is still sacred in Westminster Hall, and his celebrated work, '*The Treatise on Tenures*,' which Coke describes as 'the most perfect and absolute work that ever was written in any human science,' and for which Camden asserts that 'the students of the Common Law are no less beholden than the civilians are to Justinian's Institutes,' will ever prevent its being forgotten. The treatise itself is, however, now seldom read without the valuable commentary of Sir Edward Coke, a production which, as no one would dare to enter the legal arena without fully digesting, has been illustrated successively by the eminent names of Hale, Nottingham, Hargrave, and Butler."

(To be continued.)

LAWYERS' INCOMES.

From time immemorial lawyers have been popularly regarded as an overpaid and greedy set of fellows; and many hard things have been said and written of their avarice and extortion. But as a rule they have never been, and are not now, well paid nor greedy nor avaricious. Much of this evil report has come from the jealousy usually felt by those compelled to do manual labor toward those who labor with their brain. We believe it to be a fact that the majority of those who have won the highest places at the bar have been remarkable for their liberality to their clients, and for carelessness of their own pecuniary interests.

Lord Bolingbroke, in a moment of despondency, said: "There have been lawyers that were orators, philosophers, historians; there have been Bacons and Clarendons, my lord; there shall be none such any more till, in some better age, men learn to prefer fame to pelf, and climb the vantage ground of general science." There is a grain of truth in this, for no lawyer can hope for "fame" or "pelf" either, who neglects to "climb the vantage ground of general science." But is it not asking too much to ask the lawyers to give up the "pelf" when all the rest of the world is racing for it? If they do their work honestly and thoroughly they are worthy of their reward. Fame is of course to be desired. To have our merits appreciated two or three centuries hence, long after what was once our mortal substance is "stopping a beer barrel," is a very pleasant notion to entertain; but

one who labors for that alone is not unlike Verdant Green who, in a drunken freak, buried the college plate in the quadrangle "to provide for posterity."

An income of eight or ten thousand a year, *argent comptant*, carries along with it many solid advantages, and the lawyer who can command this has no reason to consider his a hard lot, because posterity may not assign to him, in the Temple of Fame, so lofty a niche as Milton occupies, who sold his *Paradise Lost* for £15, or as Rembrandt tenants, who was obliged to feign his own death before his pictures would provide him a dinner. There is a deal of truth in that homely proverb, "Solid pudding is better than empty praise." The reputation which wins current value during life is more useful to the possessor than honor which comes after death, and which comes as David says in the "Rivals," "Exactly when we can make shift to do without it."

The fees of the lawyers of antiquity were not, it seems, large, unless we go away back to the lucky Isocrates who was said to have received one fee of twenty talents, about \$18,000 of our money, for a speech that he wrote for Nicocles, King of Cyprus; but kingly clients, and *such* kingly clients, have been *exceedingly* rare in the world's history. In the year 1500, 3s. 4d. was thought to be a sufficient fee to a sergeant for advice to the corporation of Canterbury regarding their civic interests, and only a little later the wealthy Goldsmiths' Company liberally rewarded a sergeant, "learned in the law," by a fee of 10s., and that for services in an important matter. From the "Household and Privy Purse Expenses of the Le Stranges of Hunstanton," it appears that noble house paid to Mr. Knightly 8s. 11d. "for his fee, and that money yt he layde oute for suying of Simon Holden," and the same lawyer also received at another time 14s. 3d. "for his fee and costs of sute for iii. termes."

It is recorded of Sir Thomas More that he "gained, without grief, not so little as £400 by the year," and this income, partly made up from the emoluments of his judicial appointments, was said to be a very considerable one, and equalled by but few of the bar. In Elizabeth's reign a fee of ten shillings was the ordinary reward, and the fact that the ten shilling