certain English judges and commentators upon the law, he would in no wise see occasion to change his preconceived opinion as to its utter inscrutability.

In the reign of Edward I. we find a consciousness of the fundamental importance of this doctrine stealing over the minds of our pioneer law-builders; and a very funny, though ingenious, reason for it is put forward in Y.B. 39 Edw. I., T. Pasch., to the effect that no person should excuse himself for ignorance of the law, because every person is represented in Parliament and so assents to the laws there made! Some two centuries afterwards old Christopher St. Germain, in his "Doctor and Student" (see Muchall's ed., p. 250), declares it to be a first principle of English law that "ignorance of the law ("though," he naively adds, "it be invincible") doth not excuse"; and he thereupon proceeds to expound its reason in much the same terms as are to be found in the Year Book above cited. Hooker, in his "Ecclesiastical Polity," also adopts this theory of the reason of the rule, and so does Locke in his essay "On Government" (see Hallam's Const. H.E., i., p. 222). Now, putting aside the consideration that the fallacy of this reason is demonstrated in the fact (so much truer then than to-day) that but a small portion of our law is of Parliamentary origin, such an hypothesis must be held untenable simply by reason of it being founded upon a most novel and unwarrantable extension of the doctrine of estoppel.

In the case of *Lansdown* v. *Lansdown*, decided in 1730 (Mos. 364), Lord Chancellor King is reported to have said, without exploiting the principle of it, that the maxim only obtained in criminal cases, and did not apply to civil suits. But that, as Holland says (Jurispr., 7th ed., p. 95), is clearly not the law. Lord Ellenborough, in *Bilbie* v. *Lumley* (2 East. 472), substantially declares that every man must be taken to be cognizant of the law in general, on account of the *convenience* subsisting in such a presumption; and in coming to that conclusion he very nearly compassed the whole truth of the matter. Since the decision in *Bilbie* v. *Lumley*, the doctrine has, in the main, been held to be unassailable in all the Common Law Courts—yet few, if any, of