

an ample dining-hall and elegant drawing-room, adorned with the busts and portraits of its eminent members. Each member is thus within the eye, and in a degree under the fraternal guardianship, of all the others; and heretofore, however it may be under recent regulations, Benchers, Barristers and Students have participated in the educational, as well as the social, life of the Inn.

Westminster Hall had been built by William Rufus, (A. D. 1087-1100) more than a century before the above-mentioned clause in *Magna Charta* required the court of common pleas to be held "in some certain place." It was originally built as an annex to the King's palace of Westminster, and its earlier uses seem to have been for royal ceremonies and festivities. Probably before *Magna Charta* the "*Aula Regia*" had its principal seat in Westminster Hall; but after *Magna Charta*, and probably in consequence of it, it is certain that Westminster Hall became the seat of the great judicial courts, including, for a long period, the Court of Chancery, after its establishment as a distinct jurisdiction. It has never wholly ceased to be used as the place where the coronation banquets of the English monarchs have been solemnized with the accustomed splendor, and as the place for the trial of peers, and of official personages charged with great crimes and misdemeanors. But its distinctive character has been acquired in consequence of having been for centuries the seat of the great courts of justice of the realm.

Among the most finished pieces of word-painting in the language, is Lord Macaulay's well known reference to the main hall as the place for the trial of the impeachment of Warren Hastings. You recall his words: "The place," he says, "was worthy of such a trial. It was the great hall of William Rufus, the hall which had resounded with acclamations at the inauguration of thirty Kings; the hall which had witnessed the just sentence of Bacon, and the just absolution of Somers; the hall where the eloquence of Stafford had for a moment awed and melted a victorious party inflamed with just resentment; the hall where Charles had confronted the high court of justice with the placid courage which has half redeemed his fame." The great Essayist by his love of dramatic effect, and by his immediate subject which was the trial of the extraordinary man to whose

valor and genius Britain's monarch owes to-day, her title of "Empress of India," and her rule over the 275,000,000 of her Indian subjects, overlooked the less striking, but after all the chief glory of the place, as the source whence English justice for more than six centuries has gone forth in its silent but exhaustless flow, to the "business and bosoms" of men, throughout the entire realm, and whose principles are the rich inheritance of all English speaking people in every part of the globe.

When Westminster Hall is mentioned, the world thinks of it as the seat of the Judicial Courts and the fountain of English Justice. Its permanent glory is derived, not from coronation banquets or the imposing spectacle of an occasional State trial, but because it is indissolubly associated with the history and development of the English law, with the renown of great judges, with the fame of learned lawyers and eloquent advocates.

Peter the Great, visiting Westminster Hall in term time; was struck with the throng of men in wigs and gowns crowding the hall, and upon being informed that they were lawyers, exclaimed, "Lawyers! Why, I have only two in all my dominions, and believe I shall hang one of them the moment I get back." Lawyers and judges belong to a free people, and there was not then, and there is not now, in all the wide and barren expanse of despotism between the Crimea and Siberia, any such monument to the glory of the Russias as Westminster Hall.

GENERAL NOTES.

The oldest judge upon the English bench, Sir Fitzroy Kelly, completed his eighty-second year on Wednesday, October 9.

The mortality returns for England and Wales in the year 1876 record the death of 183 men and 409 women registered as 95 years old and upwards when they died. Fourteen of the men had reached 100 or upwards, and one who died at Mountain Ash, was 106. Forty-three of the women had completed a century of life or more, and one who died at Sedgfield, in Durham, was 108 years old. Their respective ages were:—Four men and twenty-one women, 100 years; two men and seven women, 101; five men and four women, 102; two men and three women, 103; two women, 104; three women, 105; one man and two women, 106; and one woman, 108. Six of the persons, one male and five females, who had reached 100 or upwards, died in the London districts.