

THE GREVILLE MEMOIRS—THE STABILITY OF THE LAW.

registration of deeds and titles, but that I fear me is too improbable, for, as Cromwell said on a similar occasion, 'the sons of Zeruiah are too strong for us.'" Recent proceedings in the English Parliament indicate that Brougham's despondency about the registration of titles was not well grounded.

In the Greville Memoirs we often meet with Brougham's great rival Lyndhurst. He was Brougham's most formidable adversary in the Lords, as well from his learning and character as from his powers in debate and dauntless courage. Brougham, if inclined to overrate his own services and abilities, was, as a rule, generous in his estimate of other men. We cannot but be struck with this characteristic in reading his biographical sketches. Of Lyndhurst, although his persistent opposition to his favourite schemes sometimes called forth a little bitterness, Brougham speaks with his usual fairness. "Lyndhurst," he says, "was so immeasurably superior to his contemporaries, and indeed to almost all who had gone before him, that he might well be pardoned for looking down rather than praising. Nevertheless, he was tolerably fair in the estimate he formed of character; and being perfectly free from all jealousy or petty spite, he was always ready to admit merit where it existed. Whatever he may have thought or said of his contemporaries, whether in politics or at the bar, I do not think his manners were ever offensive to any body, for he was kind and genial. His good nature was perfect, and he had neither nonsense nor cant, any more than he had bitterness or spite in his composition."

SELECTIONS.

THE STABILITY OF THE LAW.

It is quite a common saying that nothing is certain in law. To those who entertain this idea, we recommend the consideration of an incident that recently took place in England. We refer to the re-entry by the reversioner of a lease of lands for a thousand years upon the expiration of the full term. This is a circumstance that could not have occurred in this country, for the very good reason, among others, that we are not old enough to render it possible, but also for the reason that among us the notion is quite prevalent that when one has used another's property for a good while it becomes his own. This idea is at the bottom of all our anti-rent disturbances. The man who thinks there is nothing certain in law, is quite apt also to think, that if he has for many years occupied a large farm belonging to another, for a rent which in the prolonged tenure of the occupancy has become ridiculously small, the farm ought to belong to him. Our national obligations, too, rest rather lightly upon our conscience. Already there is a large class of our citizens who are seeking ways and means of repudiating our national debt of only ten or fifteen years' standing. It is indeed very difficult for us to realize the expiration of a thousand years' lease. There are leases of a thousand years outstanding in New England, we believe, but as they will continue to stand out until about the year of grace 2700, we need not conjecture nor give ourselves much concern about them. When they fall in, New England will deserve a different name, and some other person than ourselves will doubtless note the incident for this journal. Even now we regard the one hundred year leases of Trinity church, some of which are about expiring, with a sort of awe and a self-congratulation that we allow the tenant of the fee to have his own again.

But to return to this English lease. It was executed in the reign of Alfred, that great and good man and wise law-giver, who did so much to raise his people out of the slough of degradation into which years of subjection had dragged them, and to establish them on a basis of order and