

THE LATE LORD HATHERLEY.

SELECTIONS.

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WILLIAM PAGE WOOD, Baron Hatherley, was the second son of Sir Matthew Wood, the friend of Queen Caroline. He was born on November 29, 1801, and was named after his uncle, William Wood Page, to whom he attributed the early taste he had for literature. In 1812 he went to Winchester College, where he was a pupil of Dr. Gabell and Dr. Williams. In May, 1818, he was a prefect, when the famous barring out took place; and young Wood, although distinguished for his industry and good conduct, found himself expelled, through refusing to give up the names of his schoolfellows engaged in the plot. He was afterwards sent to Geneva; and at the Genevan University he took up Roman law, and attended the lectures of, among others, the Professor Rossi who was afterwards assassinated while Minister to Pius IX. He was next sent on the Queen's behalf to Italy to collect evidence for the trial, and acted as translator and interpreter to the commissioners. The result of the inquiries upon his mind was the firm belief, to which he frequently testified since her death, in the innocence of the accused lady, although he would admit that she had been imprudent in needlessly exposing herself to suspicion. In 1819 William Page Wood joined his brother, the late Rev. Sir J. Wood, at Trinity College, Cambridge. He obtained a scholarship on his first trial, and was always in the first class at the examinations. As a junior soph he gained a prize for a declamation on the question, "Whether the Revolution or the Restoration had conferred the greater benefit on our country?" In October, he stood for a fellowship and was elected, although nearly rejected, by veto of the master and one senior, in consequence of the Radicalism of his prize declamation. The threatened veto was withdrawn; and afterwards Lord Hatherley, as a Cambridge University Commissioner, helped to deprive the master of the despotic veto he possessed. He was admitted a student of Lincoln's Inn on March 1, 1824, immediately after his Cambridge degree, and was called by the same learned society in 1827. He was a pupil of Master Roupell's for equity drafting, and

studied conveyancing under Mr. John Tyrrell, a master of real property law. The Real Property Commission was constituted in 1830, with Lord Campbell at the head; and Lord Hatherley's early initiation into the mysteries of fines and recoveries, leases and re-leases, which preceded Lord Campbell's reforms, prepared him to welcome the simplifications of the law and procedure which followed. Being called to the bar on November 27, he took chambers with Mr. Lowndes (afterwards judge of a local Court at Liverpool) at 3 Old Square, and almost immediately got into practice as an equity draftsman and conveyancer; suffered in Court from the rudeness of Sir John Leach, and was consoled by the courtesy of Lord Lyndhurst. He changed his chambers in Old Square twice, and went to Stone Buildings in 1841, where he remained until his promotion to the bench. With the beginning of railway business, a lucrative period of employment before Parliamentary committees opened for Mr. Wood. In 1830 he was earning 800*l.* a year, and married Charlotte, the only daughter of Major Edward Moor, F.R.S., of Great Bealings, near Woodbury. Leaving the committee rooms, Mr. Wood attached himself to Vice-Chancellor Wigram's Court. In 1847 he was returned as member for the city of Oxford. He continued to represent that constituency till he became a Vice-Chancellor. Meanwhile (in 1845) he had been appointed Queen's Counsel. Having been Vice-Chancellor of the County Palatine since May 1849, he became Solicitor-General in Lord John Russell's Government on March 28, 1851, and was, according to the usual practice, knighted. Lord Chancellor Truro offered him the post of Vice-Chancellor in this year, but the Prime Minister requested his Solicitor-General to continue to act as law officer. He retired with his political chief in 1852, and went back to private practice. In the meanwhile, he had served on the commission for reforming the procedure in Chancery, and had been made an honorary D.C.L. of Oxford. On January 10, 1853, his party was again in office, Lord Aberdeen being Premier; and Sir William Page Wood took his seat as a Vice-Chancellor on Sir George Turner's joining the Lords Justices of Appeal. Few judges of first instance gave more confidence to suitors than Lord Hatherley. His judgments were not finished and elaborate compositions; they