

England to most degrade the highest degree that is left. Oxford and Cambridge still ask for a certain quality of scholarship in candidates for their degrees; but it would really seem that the present Radical Lord Chancellor cares nothing for the legal qualities of those upon whom he would bestow the style and rank of Her Majesty's Counsel. The degree of Q.C. has always until lately been a degree coveted by even eminent barristers. There is no examination for it; but it is supposed to be sparingly granted on the recommendation of a discreet Lord Chancellor. His discretion and the fact that the recipient must be of a certain standing at the Bar are the only safeguards of the worth of men called within the Bar; and that worth should be most jealously guarded by the Lord Chancellor. What, then, are we to say of Lord Herschell's latest batch of Queen's Counsel? The selection is, as I gather, the cause of much scoffing at the Bar. Even the rather staid *St. James's Gazette* has been making fun of it. 'Well, they *are* members of the Bar, I suppose,' it makes a learned counsel say when he reads the list of the lucky seven. And, indeed, of the seven only two are considered to be in any way really qualified for what ought to be the high degree of one of Her Majesty's Counsel. The two are Mr. Besley, who is an Old Bailey practitioner of some credit, and Mr. Vernon Smith, who is a rising counsel. Of the others, Mr. James Jardine is a Bombay advocate, of whom nobody seems to know much in this country; Mr. Robert Wallace was, I believe, a friend of the late Lord Coleridge; and Mr. William Mulholland is brother of a member of Parliament. But as to their reputation at the Bar, these three, with Mr. Reader Harris (whoever he may be), are really practically unknown. They may be, and no doubt are, most deserving members of society, but I say nothing against them when I say that they are not worthy of their promotion. A Queen's Counsel should be an eminent barrister of good practice. He should, indeed, have earned himself distinction at the Bar. These gentlemen have done nothing of the kind. And yet there is worse behind them. Of the whole batch the most curious selection seems to be that of Mr. Reginald Smith. He was called to the Bar some ten or eleven years ago; and perhaps the fact that he was once in chambers with the present Lord Chief Justice may have helped towards his promotion. But he is a barrister of no pretensions, quite unknown to the world as an advocate, and virtually unknown to most of his own brethren. Worst of all