

THE LATE SIR GEORGE ESSEX HONYMAN.

to private individuals, occasioned by our present method of administering this branch of our Criminal Law. They see, that a large proportion of the prisoners called upon to plead at Assizes and Sessions plead guilty to the principal charges against them; and that almost all of them plead guilty to the counts charging previous convictions.

And since we have shown how the attendance of witnesses against prisoners who take this course can be easily rendered unnecessary, we think we have made out a case for the amendment of our criminal law procedure which we have proposed. If it were so amended, both the State and individuals concerned as witnesses in criminal cases would be largely benefited, without occasioning any public inconvenience, or any injury to persons accused of crimes; who would merely be required to make up their minds as to their pleas a day or two earlier than they are called upon to do under our present procedure.—*Law Magazine*.

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Great lawyers offer in their lives little to interest the general public, unless, like an Eldon or a Romilly, they make a prominent figure in politics, or leave their mark in Parliamentary history. It was not surprising, therefore, to find, last September, that when the newspapers had to record the death of Sir George Honyman, they had nothing more to say of him than that he was the son of one baronet, the nephew of a second, the brother of a third, with such other details as peerages and baronetages supply. But in the eyes of the profession which he long adorned, his memory calls for something more than this. The high position which he long occupied in its ranks gives his life an interest to the legal profession; and it should not be consigned to oblivion, even if he were held in less affectionate remembrance on account of his personal qualities.

The grandson of two Scotch judges (the Lord Justice Clerk, Lord Braxfield, and Sir William Honyman, Lord Armadale,) Sir George, from early boyhood,

dreamed of following that thorny road which leads to the woolsack. Indeed, there is a family tradition that at the early age of ten or twelve he was already giving expression to these aspirations in verse. Nature had endowed him with some of the most solid, if not the most brilliant, gifts for a legal career. He was not a great orator, but he had a clear head, a keen, quick intellect, a memory of rare power and tenacity, and, above all, those habits of patient industry, of conscientious thoroughness and accuracy in all that he did, which are more precious than genius itself. On coming to London in 1838, at the age of nineteen, to enter upon the study of the law, he was introduced to the head of the well-known firm of Martineau, Malton and Trollope, and was received in that house as a pupil. Mr. Martineau was not long in discovering that he had in his office a man of no ordinary capacity, and offered to take him as an articled clerk without premium; but his pupil was ambitious, and the kind offer was not accepted. On leaving those eminent solicitors, at the end of two years, Mr. Honyman passed successively into the chambers of Sir Fitzroy Kelly, then a star of the first magnitude, and of Mr. Gibbons, the special pleader; and in 1832 he started in practice as a pleader.

It has been often and justly remarked, to the honour of the profession of the Bar, that its highest prizes are as accessible to men of the humblest origin as they are to those of the highest birth; but in this boast the fact is often overlooked, that the former have, in the *res angusta domi*, one very decided advantage over aristocratic competitors. The son of a ploughman or miner, of the artisan or tradesman, who attracts notice by remarkable talents, makes friends, in his upward progress through the social strata, among men who are in a position to push him forward, and who have a certain pride in their patronage. But the son of a peer or squire, of a bishop or general, is less likely to find among his comrades or his father's friends those important allies whose help is indispensable to his steps at the Bar. So it was with Mr. Honyman. His father, Sir Ord, was a soldier and a guardsman; his mother, the daughter of an admiral and country gentleman. He had no connection in the law or in