of outsiders, would become more and more popular; and the more the benefits it conferred were understood and appreciated, the more it would rise in the estimation of the country, and the greater would be its chance of continued existence Bacon somewhere advises people to pause now and then in their avocations and carefully institute a mental examination of the work they have done. The same advice holds good with nations as with individuals. Self-examination, though rather scarce, is, when fairly conducted, an unmixed benefit, and the examination of national institutions, in a spirit of honest inquiry, cannot but be productive of unmixed good.

It is in this spirit of honest enquiry that we wish to draw the attention of our readers to the working of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. We are not about to say anything disrespectful of, or to reflect in an uncharitable way on, this august tribunal. Our object is only to see how this high court of appeal first originated, the purpose for which it originated, the way it has fulfilled its duties, and whether it cannot be improved so as to make it more efficient than it at present is. If the opinion we arrive at be adverse to the efficiency of the Committee, we must not be understood to question the propriety of its establishment, or to find fault with the foresight of the reformers who first brought it to life. Indeed, when we mention that the great and revered and venerable name of Brougham—the father of law reforms—is mixed up with the formation of the Committee, that the first suggestion for its establishment came from him, that he carried through Parliament the measure to which it owes its being, and that for a long time he presided at its sittings, it will be seen that every prospective care that could have been taken to make it work well was taken, and that the failure, if it has failed, must be owing to causes, which although they existed at this time of the formation, were not clearly discernible.

Previous to the passing of the Statute 2 and 3 Wm. IV. c. 92, there existed what used to be called the "Court of Delegates," established by 25 Henry VIII. c. 19, and continued by 8 Eliz. c. 5. The Act of Henry provided that for lack of justice at or in any of the Courts of the Archbishops of this realm, or in any of the king's dominions, it should be lawful to the parties aggrieved to appeal to the king's majesty in the king's Court of Chancery; and that upon every such appeal a commission should be granted under the Great Seal to such persons as should be named by the king's highness, his heirs or successors, to hear and definitely determine such appeals and the causes concerning the same; and that the judgment and sentence of the commissioners in and upon any such appeal should be good and effectual and definitive, and that no further appeals should be made from the said commissioners for the same. The Court of Delegates was also charged with the duty of hearing appeals from the decision of the "Admirals' Court," but its judgments not having been made final, and great inconvenience having resulted from the prosecution of further appeals, an act (8 Eliz. c. 5) was passed whereby it was provided that every such judgment and sentence as should be given and pronounced in any civil and marine cause upon appeal lawfully to be made therein to the Queen's Majesty in Her Highness's Court of Chancery by such commissioners or delegates as should be nominated and appointed by Her Majesty, her heirs and successors, by commission under her hand and seal, should be final, and that no further appeal should be made from the said judgment or sentence definitive, or from the said commissioners or delegates for or in the same, any law, usage or custom to the contrary notwithstanding.

The Court of Delegates, thus made supreme, continued to discharge the duties entrusted to it vigilantly and well, but a reaction soon came, and its proceedings gave rise to discontent. Nor could it have been well otherwise. In those dark days of monarchical tyranny, cases the most remotely connected with politics used to give rise to dissensions, compared to which the angry feelings created by the Eyre Prosecution would appear perfectly tame. The king—we are talking of our kings after Elizabeth—was in a continual dread of losing his prerogatives, and rather than lose one of these, he used to take all the means in his power to get a decision favourable to the side he espoused. Thus, the commissioners were chosen, not with regard so much to their learning in civil and ecclesiastical law, not with regard so much to their standing at the Bar, but their known and avowed opinions in politics. The consequence was,—and it was quite natural under the circumstances—that most incompetent men were often selected to perform duties difficult and delicate, and that their judgments, however much they may have commended themselves to the king, created anything but satisfaction in the minds of the people. So intense was this feeling that, in spite of the two Acts we have referred to, the king was obliged "out of his royal favour, &c., &c., upon petition to him in council made for that purpose," to grant "a commission under the present seal, authorising the commissioners therein named to review the judgments and decrees of the High Court of Delegates, so appointed as aforesaid." But even this second court was found in the course of time to be objectionable. As the ideas of the Revolution of 1688 took root, people began to speculate how it was that, although in his majesty's Court of Common Law and Equity judges were made independent of the Crown, the Court of Delegates was left in its dependent position. The more the times advanced, the more the latter court appeared to be an anomaly, but as with most of the abuses under our "free and glorious constitution" it escaped the eyes of the governing classes of that time, and nothing was done to