

example of the culmination of aristocratic misrule. Though the institution of chivalry, now an object of universal derision, had struck the first blow in her interest, woman, by the common law, remained a slave from her cradle to her grave. In short, there was some reason for saying that the law, as it then existed, was "the result of the blundering and chicanery of several generations that in legal language is called the wisdom of the age."

The common law possessed, however, one virtue that redeemed many sins. It was instinct with that political liberty that was born and nurtured among the tribes that lived in the shadows of the great oaks of Germany for ages before Tacitus placed their simple customs in contrast with the meretricious manners of Imperial Rome.

But whatever its virtues or faults may have been, it was not endowed with the permanence which the rigidity of its structure gave to it in the eyes of Coke. The chancellor was already engaged in smuggling into the country the equitable principles of the civil law, which were at a later day to filter into the common law courts until the whole lump should be leavened; and the new civilization, starting into life at the voice of Bacon, was to render the affairs of life so varied and complex as to make the common law system wholly inadequate to the wants of men.

What Bacon desired was that Parliament should enter upon a career of cautious, prudent and enlightened law reform. The work of Coke was conceived in a different spirit; but his name as a jurist was so great, his accuracy so surprising, that his summing up of existing law acquired an authority almost as absolute as that of a legislative enactment. They were both great men, and great lawyers; but their methods were essentially different. Coke had all the qualities of a great judge, and Bacon had all the qualities of a great judge except the indispensable virtues; one was the greatest of reformers, the other belonged to the ranks of the most extreme conservatism.

CIRCUMVENTING THE MICROBES.—How a witness may kiss the Testament without incurring the dangers that lurk in the ceremony is a problem that has been ingeniously solved in the Northampton County Court, where a witness, at the instance of his Honour Judge Snagge, was sworn on a Testament wrapped in clean paper. If the intervention of paper between the book and the lips does not detract from the sanctity of the oath, the practice that prevails among certain witnesses of kissing their thumbs will not possess the effect which they now fondly believe it to have.—*Law Journal*.