

BREACH OF PROMISE.

Learning will not serve him without tact; and above all he must cultivate what is called a good manner both with judges and juries. We once heard a judge say of an eminent Queen's Counsel that there was something about his manner which made him *want* to give him the case whatever his own opinion might be as to the justice of his cause. But better far than the most transcendent abilities it is to have an uncle a solicitor. And now a word as to solicitors. There doubtless are many firms of solicitors who look after the interests of their clients in the matter of employment of counsel with scrupulous honour, and who only give their brief to those whom they think most likely to conduct the case to the best advantage; but there are an increasing number of solicitors who adhere too closely to the Scriptural doctrine that it is a man's duty to provide for his own family first, and who intrust the interests of their clients to the care of their barrister relations, regardless of their incapacity to do more than scramble through the work somehow. It is, perhaps, natural that they should do so, but it is the presence of so many barrister-solicitors, or solicitor-barristers, which crowds out an immense number of really capable men who come to the Bar provided with brains but unprovided with interest. Some twenty or thirty years ago a man coming to the Bar with a University reputation, and with the patience to let the profession see that he meant to stick to it, was certain to make a living, sometimes a fortune. Now it is very long odds that he will not make either.

No doubt the prizes at the Bar are such as to make it worth while for a man to go through a good deal to gain them, and the excitement of a "talking" practice, when once obtained, seems to have a fascination which renders it impossible for him who has once experienced it ever to retire into private life again, whatever his personal means may be. Sir Edmund Beckett, the present leader at the Parliamentary Bar, who is supposed to have inherited two fortunes and to have made a third at the Bar, was once asked why he did not give up practice now that he was such a rich man, and he

is said to have replied that "It was the cheapest amusement he could find." Probably there are many parliamentary barristers who wish Sir Edward would invent a more expensive one.

The as yet briefless one has, however, many reasons for thinking his own profession is not such a hard one after all, even if he does not rise through the successive gradations of leading junior and Queen's Counsel, and a seat in Parliament, to being Attorney-General and finally to the Bench; he knows that there are many little pickings in the shape of County Court Judgeships and Police Magistracies, which cannot go outside his own profession.—*London Week.*

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A bill introduced into the British Parliament by Mr. Herschell, Q.C., to abolish the action for breach of promise of marriage, has been received by the newspapers, according to the *Solicitors' Journal*, with "a chorus of approval." The *Law Times*, in a very able article on the subject, warns the framer of the bill that he must not expect to succeed without opposition, for, it says, the institution has many admirers and more readers. But, like other idols of a people or a class, this one stands condemned as an offence to good taste, and an exception to sound principles. As a tolerated custom, the action for breach of promise of marriage has long been extinct on the male side of the question. No well-advised man would venture to call a woman into court for not fulfilling her promise to marry him. Yet no difference can be pretended between the case of the woman and that of the man. There are, indeed, women who say that there is a difference—that a man can easily find a wife, and that his prospects are not blighted by a disappointment of this kind; but the women who say this are not the women to be listened to on such a question. These actions are confined not only to women, but to a peculiar class of women—scheming, enterprising, and anxious to hook a victim. For the woman has suffered no loss, but rather gain, by a man breaking his word, for her interest can be only the same as his; and if it is best he should not marry her, it is equally best that she should not marry him, which is really the question at issue.

The moral obligation to fulfil a promise to marry is so great, that there can be no doubt it often prevails over considerations that should decide the other way. If a