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REMINISCENCES OF THE FRENCH BAR.

In 1839, there was published an extremely amusing and interesting book, entitled "Souvenirs de M. Berryer, Doyen des Avocats de Paris de 1774 à 1838." The author, M. Berryer, the father of the celebrated orator of that name, entered the profession of the law in 1774, and continued in active practice upwards of sixty years.

He was the first advocate who condescended to plead before the revolutionary tribunals, and he was concerned more or less in almost all the causes of consequence which came before them. His reminiscences consequently comprise the ancient *régime*, the transition period, and the established order of things; and they are narrated fully and frankly, in clear, easy, familiar language, with some of the caution taught by experience, but with none of the garrulity of age. They have, moreover, a merit which few French contemporary memoirs possess,—that of authenticity.

M. Berryer begins his work by describing the courts of law as they existed when he first entered on his novitiate. At the head stood the Parliament of Paris,—an august and erudite body, justly venerated for the fearlessness with which, on many trying occasions, they had refused to register the arbitrary edicts of the Crown. This body was divided into chambers, which held their sittings in the Palais de Justice,—a building which rivalled Westminster Hall in the richness and variety of its associations, though far inferior in architectural magnificence. Around the Parliament of Paris were clustered a number of inferior jurisdictions, closely resembling those of which the ancient judicial system of England, and indeed of every country with feudal institutions, was made up. There existed provincial parliaments and other local tribunals, it is true,—for the administration of justice in France

was never centralized; but what with appellate and exceptional jurisdiction, the concourse of suitors to the capital was immense. A countryman inquired of a lawyer whom he saw about to ascend the grand staircase of the Palais de Justice with his bag of papers, what that great building was for. He was told it was a mill. "So I see now," was the reply; "and I might have guessed as much from the asses loaded with bags."

It is a remarkable circumstance, that a great majority of the public buildings of London are of comparatively recent date, those which they replaced having been destroyed by fire. The same fate has befallen the public buildings of Paris; and M. Berryer states that the immense vaulted galleries which, from the shops established in them, had procured the Temple of Justice the name of the Palais Marchand, were swept away by a conflagration in 1774.

He also duly commemorates the Grand Châtelet, the seat of sundry metropolitan jurisdictions, and relates some curious circumstances regarding the ancient debtors prisons,—the Fort-l'Évêque and the Conciergerie.

In the former was confined no less a person than Maximilian, the reigning Duke of Deux Ponts, afterwards King of Bavaria. In the latter, M. Berryer tells us, a rich Englishman, Lord Mazareen, was detained during many years for a large sum due on bills of exchange, which, though possessed of ample means, he obstinately refused to pay, on the ground of his having been cheated out of them at play. He lived at the rate of more than a hundred thousand francs a year, kept open table, and had his servants and carriages.

A second edition of Lord Mazareen appeared more recently in the person of an American, Mr. Swan, who was confined twenty-two years in St. Pelagie. This gentleman was in the habit of publishing memoirs against his detaining creditors, which he invariably commenced by stating that he possessed more than five millions (francs) in the United States; that it would be easy for him to pay twenty times the amount of the claim, but that it was unjust, and his