

but, after the memorable fall of the latter, about this time last year, Lord Palmerston, who could ill spare the services of Sir Roundell Palmer in the House of Commons, again offered the chancellorship to Lord Cranworth, who has filled it with credit ever since. No one would venture to claim for the retiring Chancellor such fame as has been won by some of his predecessors, two of whom, and not the least illustrious, are still living at a very advanced age. In depth of learning, he cannot be compared with Lord St. Leonards, nor in versatility of genius with Lord Brougham. Neither learning nor versatility, however, nor both combined, are sufficient to constitute a model Lord Chancellor; and Lord Cranworth has manifested some other qualifications, less remarkable indeed, but hardly less essential. In the first place, he possesses a sound and adequate knowledge of both our legal systems; that is, of common law and equity. This is no small or ordinary attainment for an English lawyer. Lord Brougham, when he was intrusted with the Great Seal by Lord Grey, was chiefly known as an eloquent advocate at *Nisi Prius*, and a powerful debater in the House of Commons; and though his marvellous talents and industry enabled him to master the principles of equity, and even to apply them as no other man could with so little experience, yet his judgments could not and do not command the same authority as those of less gifted Chancellors. On the other hand, Lord St. Leonards, though profoundly versed in the mysteries of real property law, had little, if any, practical acquaintance with common law. Lord Cranworth, before he became Lord Chancellor, had occupied a seat for some years on both the judicial benches, and earned the confidence of both branches of the legal profession. It is to this circumstance too, as well as to his unblemished personal character, that he owes his influence in the House of Lords. Since his accession to office, he seems to have experienced no difficulty in presiding over that assembly, which Lord Westbury sometimes found so unruly. The secret of this, no doubt, is that Lord Cranworth has made no enemies; but his opinion on certain questions, such as those affecting criminal justice, is naturally received

with the greater attention, because he is known to be familiar with the duties of a common law judge. The weak point in Lord Cranworth's public life is his want of sympathy with reforms of the law. It is by no means an uncommon failing with those who are plunged early into the details of business, with the prospect of success and wealth, if they will but make the best of the existing system; with the risk, approaching to a certainty, of failure, if they insist on broaching "crotchets" in the hope of amending it. The reason why so few successful lawyers are reformers is, that, until they have succeeded, no one cares to listen to their suggestions; and, after they have succeeded, their own interests are concerned in keeping things as they are; while, had they managed to gain a hearing sooner, they would probably not have succeeded at all. The only two men of our own times who have conspicuously risen superior to these anti-reforming tendencies, or retained energy enough to use the vantage ground of a great position for the sake of initiating organic changes, are Lord Brougham and Lord Westbury; and this is a merit which, in the eyes of posterity, will cover a multitude of sins. It would be ungrateful not to recognize the leading part which Lord Cranworth took in passing the Charitable Trusts Act, whence an important reform in the management of these vast endowments may hereafter be dated. On most other proposals for improving our legal system he has adopted what is called the "safe side," and has done little to realize the vast designs bequeathed to him by Lord Westbury in his valedictory address to the House of Lords. Those designs, involving the formation of a complete digest as the proper basis for a future code, yet remain to be carried out. It would be too much to expect of the new Lord Chancellor, that he should devote himself to the execution of a project which originated with a political opponent; and the honor of accomplishing it will probably be still reserved, as it should be, for a liberal government."

CHIEF JUSTICE LEFROY.

The retirement of the Hon. Thomas Langlois Lefroy, Chief Justice of the Court of