

LAW IN ROMANCE.

pleaded by advice of Garrow, Q.C. Still Colt, Q.C., "was briefed with Garrow's views, and delivered them in court with more skill, clearness, and effect than Garrow ever could; then sat down, and whispered over rather contemptuously to Mr. Compton (the attorney), 'That is your argument, I think.' 'And, admirably put,' whispered the attorney in reply: 'Well, now hear Saunders knock it to pieces.'" The court, however, maltreat Sergeant Saunders, and sustain the demurrer: so the cause is tried on issue joined in the first two pleas. Every one reads Charles Reade: so we all know, that the plaintiff had it all his own way, and a verdict of £3,500. We only quote one amusing instance of examination. Julia, the plaintiff's lady-love, is undergoing cross-examination:—

"Saunders.—You are warmly interested in the plaintiff's success?

Julia.—Oh, yes, sir.

Saunders.—You are attached to him?

Julia.—Ah, that I do!"

And one o'er-true saying of a Yankee witness, that in Westminster Hall, they sell justice "darnation dear, *but* prime."

Griffith Gaunt is fresh in all our recollections. Whatever may be the merits of the book, the trial is ingeniously told, and the lady's defence courageously and artistically conducted by herself. She is indeed a second Portia at the law, and has hardly, we think, a counterpart in nature. But Mr. Reade thinks a clever woman can do any thing. "She bristled," he says, "with all those fine arts of defence that nature lends to superior women. She entered on that defence before she spoke a word, for she attacked the prejudices of the court by deportment." Of course, we all know that the stupid sot of a husband whom she was accused of murdering had unhappily not even been drowned, and would be made to turn up at the last moment. Yet the cleverness of the dialogue, and the freshness imparted to it by the ancient phrase in which it is couched, carry one along agreeably to the end.

Among other fictitious scenes that rise before the memory is the life-like trial of Effie Deans in the "Heart of Midlothian," where the great Wizard of the North resumed for a time his wig and gown; and then the court-room in Miss Edgeworth's "Patronage," where the forgery is detected by the discovery that a sixpence placed under the seal of a deed bears a later date than the instrument itself,—which in boyhood we used to think a sign of extraordinary acuteness on the part of the counsel who discovered it, but which has since sunk in our opinion, while our impression of the nonsense of the incident has increased.

But what praise is sufficient for the great suit of *Burdell v. Pickwick*,—that most laughable but truthful satire on trial by jury! From the commencement of the chapter, Mr. Perker's formula, that "hungry or discontented jury-men always find for the plaintiff," to the conclusion, in the elder Weller's sad apostrophe, "O Sammy, O Sammy! ry worn't there a

alleybi!" it is replete with shrewd observation. The surprise of Mr. Pickwick, that Segeant Buzfuz, who was counsel for the opposite party, dared to presume to tell Mr. Sergeant Snubbin, who was counsel for him, that it was a fine morning; the refusal of Mr. Starleigh to excuse the apothecary from jury duty on the ground that he had no assistant, whereas he ought to be able to afford to hire one in the place of the boy, on whose mind the prevailing impression was that *epsom salts* meant *oxalic acid*, and *syrrup of senna* *laudanum*; Mr. Skimpin's look at Mr. Winkle, on asking his name, "inclining his head on one side to listen with great sharpness, and glancing at the jury meanwhile, as if to imply that he rather expected Mr. Winkle's natural taste for perjury would induce him to give some name which did not belong to him,"—all these have so much of truth and nature mingled with the fun, that we can hardly believe Mr. Dickens has not passed his days in a court-room. "Chops and Tomato Sauce," and "Put it down a wee, my Lord: put it down a wee," have become household words; and we have been surprised not to find them in our edition of "Familiar Quotations."

Mr. Thackeray has never carried us into court, except very briefly, in the painful episode of Barnes Newcombe's brutal treatment of his wife. Such matters do not suit his genius; but he introduces us to counsel in vacation, and gives the profession a fair hit at their unseasonable persistence at law-talk.

"The British lawyers," says Mr. Titmarsh, travelling at Baden, "are all got tog-ther; and my friend Lunkin, on his arrival, has been carried off by his brother sergeants, and become once more a lawyer. 'Well, brother Lunkin,' says old Sir Thomas Minos, with his venerable kind face, 'you have got your rule, I see.' And they fall into talk about their law matters, at a dinner-table, at the top of Chimborazo."*

It is the Rhenish circuit, and on the stranger's book:—

"Sir Thomas Minos, Lady Minos, nebst Begleitung aus England.

Sir John Eachus, mit Familie und Dienerschaft aus England.

Sir Roger Rhadamanthus.

Sergeant Brown and Mrs. Brown aus England.

Sergeant Tomkins, Anglais. Madame Tomkins. Mesdemoiselles Tomkins."

Both Mr. Dickens and Mr. Thackeray take us into the chambers of the profession, but put the matter rather differently. Mr. Thackeray lets us into Mr. Percy Sibwright's and Mr. Bingham's chambers in their absence. Mr. Sibwright has written things in the nobility's albums. The food of his meditations are "an infantile law library, clad in skins of fresh new-born calf, a tolerably large collection of classical books which he could not read, and English and French works of poetry and fiction which he read a good deal too much.

* Kieckhefer's on the Rhine.