

## SERJEANTS' INN AND ITS PORTRAITS.

was known as early as the 17th Richard II., when the inheritance belonged (and has done since) to the Bishop of Ely and his successors. In the 'accompt' of the Bishop's bailiff, 12 Henry IV., it was called 'Faryndon Inne,' and it was stated 'that the serjeants-at-law had lodgings there.' In 1416, 7 Henry V., the whole house was demised to the judges and others learned in the law. The freehold after having passed through various hands, came to be held for three lives by Sir Anthony Ashley, Knight, under whom the judges and serjeants continued to rent it. Eventually the serjeants negotiated with the Bishop of Ely for the purchase of the fee simple of the property and the same was ultimately vested in the society by an Act of Parliament, creating the Society of Serjeants' Inn, Chancery Lane, for the purpose, a corporation, upon the annual payment for ever of a fee farm rent to the Bishop and his successors. The officers belonging to this inn are similar to those in Fleet Street—namely, a steward, a master cook, a chief butler, and their servants, and a porter. In 1837-8 the inn was rebuilt (under the auspices of Serjeant Adams, the then treasurer) by Sir Robert Smirke, R.A., except the old dining hall of the society, which was then fitted up as a court for Exchequer Equity sittings, but is now used as the state dining room of the serjeants, including the common law judges, who are always serjeants-at-law. The handsomest room is, however, the private dining-room, which contains one of the finest collections of legal portraits in the kingdom, including those of Sir Edward Coke, by Cornelius Jansen; of Lord Mansfield, Lord King, Sir Francis Buller, Chief Justice Tindal, Lords Eldon, Denman, and Lyndhurst, all by painters of note. The windows (containing the armorial ensigns of judges and serjeants) are finely executed. The chambers where the judges of the common law sit to hear summonses and other private matters are in this inn. The arms of Serjeants' Inn are, *or*, a stork, *ppr*. This Serjeants' Inn is the exclusive property of the serjeants-at-law, or *servientes ad legem*, who are the highest degree in the common law.

"The other, but obsolete inn, in Fleet Street, already described, still bears the name of Serjeants' Inn, and this is liable to be mistaken for the now only real Serjeants' Inn in Chancery Lane. The Fleet Street Inn was destroyed in the Great Fire, was rebuilt in 1670, and again rebuilt, as we now see it, with a handsome stone fronted edifice, by Adam the architect. This inn is now let in private chambers to any one who likes to rent them."

So far Mr. Timbs; but since he has written, not only the picture-room and its contents have been thoroughly renovated, but the State-hall and other apartments have undergone complete restoration. The State-hall is now rendered suitable to the dignified company who frequent it. It has been refloored, repainted, and the old cumbersome stove has

been removed, to make place for heating by hot-water pipes. Two gas-burners from the ceiling brilliantly illuminate the room, throwing a picturesque light upon the antique carvings, armorially stained windows, and on the grim bust of Charles II., placed above the table of honour. Here the judges and serjeants may in thorough comfort dine, according to custom, on the first and last days of Term.

The first of next Term will indeed be somewhat remarkable, as at the dinner on that occasion four new serjeants will be admitted—namely, two judges, Mr. Justice Brett and Baron Cleasby, and two serjeants-at-law, Mr. Sargood and Mr. Sleigh.

Serjeant Bain has not been content with the re-embellishment of the hall internally (the exterior has been made also very handsome), but has added literary light to the institution, in the publication of a catalogue *raisonné* of all the portraits, whether pictures or prints, in the building. This catalogue, which he has brought out with the assistance of Mr. Serjeant Burke, is very comprehensive.

Beyond a record of the portraits contained in this ancient and unique hall, the resort of the various serjeants-at-law for ages past, it is not our province to offer any artistic judgment on the merits of any particular one, save those of the eminent Sir Edward Coke, Knt., by Cornelius Jansen, and Sir Francis Buller, Bart., by M. Browne, which carry with them the reputation of being the most magnificent among the whole collection. These paintings are in the best style of the artists of the day.

The catalogue does not describe how in every case the portraits of eminent judges found their way to the hall. In all probability, in the majority of instances, they were the presents of the judges themselves; but in some the Inn is indebted to the liberality and forethought of descendants, relatives, and even private individuals, for the honour done them by placing under their safe custody the only remaining resemblances of those who were once the great expounders of the law, and are now the time-honoured monuments of the study of that science, upon whose exponents all lawyers look back with reverence. The portrait of Lord Lyttleton, who was Lord Keeper in the of Charles I., was presented by a Mr. Ray, as was also that of Sir John Powell, Knt., one of the Judges of the Court of King's Bench, who presided at the trial of the seven bishops. But for the munificence of this gentleman, those noble effigies might have been lost to the world, or have decorated the walls of some obscure mansion where their historical associations might have been wholly unknown or unappreciated. At the Board of Green Cloth, November 2nd, 1847, Lord Denman is stated to have moved a resolution, thanking the Marquis Camden for the present of a portrait of his ancestor, Sir John Pratt, Knt., who was Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench from 1717 to 1725, the year of his death. And on the 31st January, 1839, a vote of thanks was