

PROFESSIONAL COURTESIES.

for all purposes. Moreover, we shall be compelled for our own security to place them under a very strict surveillance when they choose to pay a visit to Ireland, and the practice of the mixed jury must be abolished. Even America cannot dispute our right to prescribe our own terms for the admission of foreigners into our territories, and perhaps it will be found that those terms may make speedy naturalisation in the States by British subjects, not quite so desirable as it may have appeared. Mr. Reverdy Johnson should take for the first essay in his new office of minister in London an honourable settlement of this difficult question, before quarrels have grown out of the hasty Act of Congress.—*Law Times*.

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We of the present generation are apt to be rather impatient with our seniors when they tell us of the great worthies of their day, and how incomparably superior they were to the ablest men we can produce. By their report there were giants in those days, and we live amongst pigmies. While there can be little doubt that in memory, as in nature, "distance lends enchantment to the view," and softens many hard and unpleasant lines in character, yet making every allowance for this influence we cannot help feeling that in some respects there may be good cause for this contrast which is so much to the disadvantage of the age in which we live. Not to speak of weightier matters or qualities of more moment, we think it must be admitted by even the most ardent and enthusiastic admirer of this age of progress, that in one virtue of our ancestors, namely, courtesy, there is a most observable decline amongst us.

We are far from thinking or desiring to assert that there are few gentlemen in the present day, but we are forced to the conclusion that courtesy is a quality held at an exceedingly low estimate just now. If we desire to see true gallantry and politeness we turn not to the youth, but to the elders of our day. It is amongst them we find that thoughtful courtesy, and regard for the feelings of others, which is so characteristic of the true gentleman. In the present day men do not seem to have either the time or inclination to cultivate the *suaviter in modo*. It is not, in the estimation of the majority, a sufficiently productive or profitable quality to be worth cultivation. Perhaps the importation of Transatlantic "notions" into this country may, in some measure, account for the degeneracy of manners in the present day, and for the freedom, amounting to positive vulgarity, which is sometimes to be met with where we should least expect it. Whatever may be the cause, we regret to say, the fact is too patent to be denied that in the present day the courtesy which used to govern many relations of society is manifestly declining. We are old enough to remember when journalists treated each

other with respect and politeness, even when they were most opposed in politics. Now no such courtesy seems to be used or expected, and editors abuse each other in the strongest terms of vituperation, and exhaust the vocabulary of invective in their efforts to prejudice a contemporary in the eyes of the public.

But this want of courtesy has latterly become apparent in a sphere in which we are more particularly interested. Without the extent of memory possessed by an octogenarian, we can remember when politeness and dignity were the usual attributes of an advocate, and when counsel at the bar uniformly observed towards each other that respect to which their honorable profession so justly entitled them. The weapons of argument were not then less keen, nor the shafts of wit less brilliant than now, but they were never directed personally against professional brethren. There was a time when an early meeting in the Fifteen Acres would have been the result of such encounters between counsel as take place now without remark or surprise from the judge, the jury, or the public. Happily such modes of settling disputes have become obsolete, but surely it is possible to conduct trials at law without having recourse to weapons so unworthy of a learned and noble profession as personal scurrilities. How can we expect the public to respect a profession, the eminent members of which give such an exceedingly bad account of one another. One learned counsel deliberately charges the highest member of the Bar, and whose honour is as clear as crystal, with conducting his case like a "thimble rigger," while another charges his opponent, in open court, with the offence known in professional circles as "hugging attorneys," and in being afraid in the discharge of his duty, to cross-examine a solicitor too severely, lest it might cause him to lose a brief on some future occasion.

We regret exceedingly having to comment upon this subject, but we feel that the interests and dignity of the Bar demand that it should be noticed. If behaviour of this kind is to be the rule in our highest courts of procedure, what are we to expect from advocates before inferior tribunals? Yet we believe that in some courts of petty jurisdiction such personalities between the practitioners of the court would not be tolerated. We do not desire that members of the Irish Bar should emulate the cold and uninterested manner which often characterises eminent *Nisi Prius* lawyers in England; but we think that in the matter of propriety and decorum the former might sometimes, with advantage, imitate the latter. With us such an advocate is oftentimes, in fact, a great performer entertaining an amused audience, rather than a learned advocate enforcing his case before a jury. It is to this *ad captandum* kind of advocacy we trace those personalities between gentlemen of the Bar, which are our present cause of complaint. The argument does not need them, the jury