

Why should a lawyer, as a lawyer, be familiar with literature, particularly the literature of the novelists?

Well, in the first place, there are episodes of fact and types of character in professional life whose descriptions by famous novelists have become classical in literature,—Serjeant Buzfuz in *Pickwick Papers*; the Chancery suit in *Bleak House*; Effie Dean's trial in *The Heart of Midlothian*; and many more. With these every lawyer must be acquainted,—not merely as a cultivated man, but as one bound to know what features of his professional life have been taken up into general thought. "The first thing we do, let's kill all the lawyers!" said Dick the Butcher to Jack Cade. If you do not know, from your Shakespeare or elsewhere, that this sentiment was once—and more than once—a rabid popular demand, then you cannot gauge the possibilities of popular thought in these very days of ours.

Then, again, there is the history of law,—that is, the scenes and movements in legal annals which history has made famous. To know the spirit of those times—to realize the operation of the old rules now gone—to feel their meaning in human life—to appreciate the bitter conflicts and their lessons for to-day—this deepest sense of reality for the past we shall get only in the novels, not in the statute books or the reports of cases. It is one thing to read the trial of Lord George Gordon in good old Howell's *State Trials*, but it is a different thing to read about the very same events in *Barnaby Rudge*. We must go to *Bleak House* to learn the living meaning of Chancery's delays; to *Oliver Twist* to see the actual system of police justice in London; to *Pickwick Papers* to appreciate the other side of Baron Parke's technical rulings reported in Meeson & Welsby's volumes,—those sixteen volumes of which Erle said, "It is a lucky thing that there was not a seventeenth volume,—for, if there had been, the common law itself would have disappeared altogether amidst the jeers of mankind." Read Lady Lisle's trial by the savage Jeffreys, in Howell's *State Trials*, and then Conan Doyle's account of it in *Micah Clarke*; read some book on the early real property statutes of New York, and then Fenimore Cooper's portrayal of them in *Satanstoe* and *Chainbearer*; read the chill technical reports of bankruptcy pro-