

He was raised to the Bench in 1868, exactly twenty years after his first appearance in wig and gown. He did not go straight to the Court with which his name is chiefly associated. For four years he sat in the Queen's Bench, where he distinguished himself by the versatility of his learning and the independence of his judgment. It was in 1872 that he became judge of the Probate and Divorce Court. Three years later he was appointed President of the Probate, Divorce, and Admiralty Division. During the sixteen years he held this office he proved himself to be almost the ideal judge for such a tribunal. His knowledge of the law relating to the various sections of the division, his firm grasp of facts, his keen sense of the value of evidence, his painstaking industry and absolute impartiality, his courtesy and dignity—these qualities obtained for him the full confidence of the public and the high esteem of the profession. Perhaps no tribunal is more difficult to preside over than the Divorce Court. The character of many of the cases is such that the dignity of the Court is not always easy to maintain; but not once did Sir Jas. Hannen allow it to suffer in his hands. Any attempt at levity on the part of counsel or of witness immediately caused him to assume a severity of countenance which effectually nipped the flippant effort in the bud. It will, however, be his extra-judicial labours which will keep his memory alive longest. The laborious task he began in 1888, as President of the Parnell Commission, and which he performed in a manner in every way worthy of the 'great occasion,' will give his name an enduring place in the records of our time. Throughout the one hundred and twenty-nine days covered by the enquiry the judgment and bearing of Sir James Hannen were never disputed by the keenest partisan, while the industry and care with which he penned the greater part of the report received a universal tribute of praise. Not less valuable was the service he rendered the country on the Behring Sea Fisheries Commission, the satisfactory settlement of the difficult questions being largely due to his skill in tactics and charming manner. It is a somewhat remarkable coincidence that on the day on which Lord Hannen died Sir Charles Russell moved the first reading of the Behring Sea Bill in the House of Commons, and that within a few hours of his decease Major Le Caron, who played so prominent a part as a witness in the Parnell inquiry, died. He was appointed a Lord of Appeal in 1891, and retired in the Long Vacation of last year. His experience