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But for readiness of wit it would be difficult to beat Lord Justice Chitty's remark when, during the hearing of a case, a portion of the ceiling fell with a crash in front of his desk—"Fiat justitia ruat cælum" (Let justice be done though the heavens fall)—or Mr Justice Darling's, when a counsel handed to him the bulky volume, "Burdett's Official Intelligence." "I should have thought," observed his lordship, "that a volume of smaller proportions would have been more appropriate to that subject."

But the Bench has by no means a monopoly of humour. Indeed, many of the cleverest sayings are credited, not to the wearers of ermine, but to the men in gowns of stuff or silk.

**EPIGRAMS IN COURT.**

The law has seldom produced a more brilliant wit than Joseph Jekyll, of whom the following stories are told. Once when he was bored by the long-winded and dreary speech of a Serjeant, Jekyll wrote the following lines on a slip of paper, which was passed along the barristers' benches to an accompaniment of shaking sides:—

The serjeants are a grateful race,  
Their dress and language show it;  
Their purple garments come from Tyre,  
Their arguments go to it.

On another occasion, when a well-known counsel was doing his best, in cross-examination, to get an acknowledgment from an elderly married lady that tender had been made of a certain sum in dispute, Jekyll threw him this couplet:—

Garrow, forbear; that tough old jade  
Will never prove a tender maid.

Curran, who was responsible for at least as many smart sayings as Jekyll, never allowed politeness to restrain him—as when, to the snappy question of a judge: "Do you see anything ridiculous in my wig?" he answered: "Nothing but the head." And when, to a prosy parliamentarian who asked him: "Have you read my last speech?" he retorted: "I hope I have."

**"GO IT, TELESCOPE."**

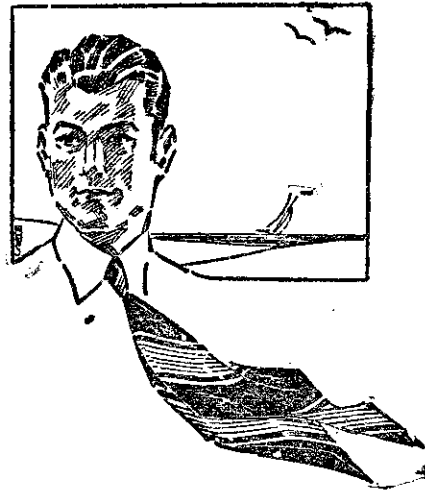
The late Sir Frank Lockwood had few superiors in the art of repartee. The genial lawyer was a tall man, and for some reason, not altogether transparent, an unruly member of his audience once called out to him, in the middle of his speech: "Go it, telescope!"

"My friend is mistaken in applying that term to me," Sir Frank quietly said, "he ought to claim it for himself, for, though he cannot draw me out, I think I can both see through him and shut him up."

On another occasion one of his political opponents rudely called out in the middle of a speech: "All lawyers are rogues." "I am glad," Sir Frank politely rejoined, "to meet this gentleman as a member of my profession; but he need not proclaim our shortcomings to the world."

**THE PIOUS PUGILIST.**

Lord Bryce, in his biography of Dr Fraser, former Bishop of Manchester, tells an excellent story. When one of his clergy provided much copy for the local papers by knocking down a man who had insulted him, the Bishop wrote him a stern letter, pointing out, among other things, that, as the Church of England was exposed to much criticism on all hands, her ministers ought to be very careful in their demeanour. In reply, he received a letter saying, "I must regretfully admit that, being grossly insulted, and forgetting in the heat of the moment the critical position of the Church of England, I did knock a man down." Fraser was hugely delighted with the turning of the tables on himself, and invited the clergyman in question to stay with him not long afterwards.

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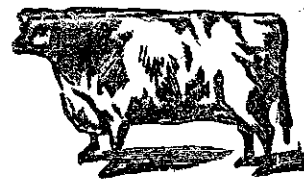
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