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Sir Henry Manisty

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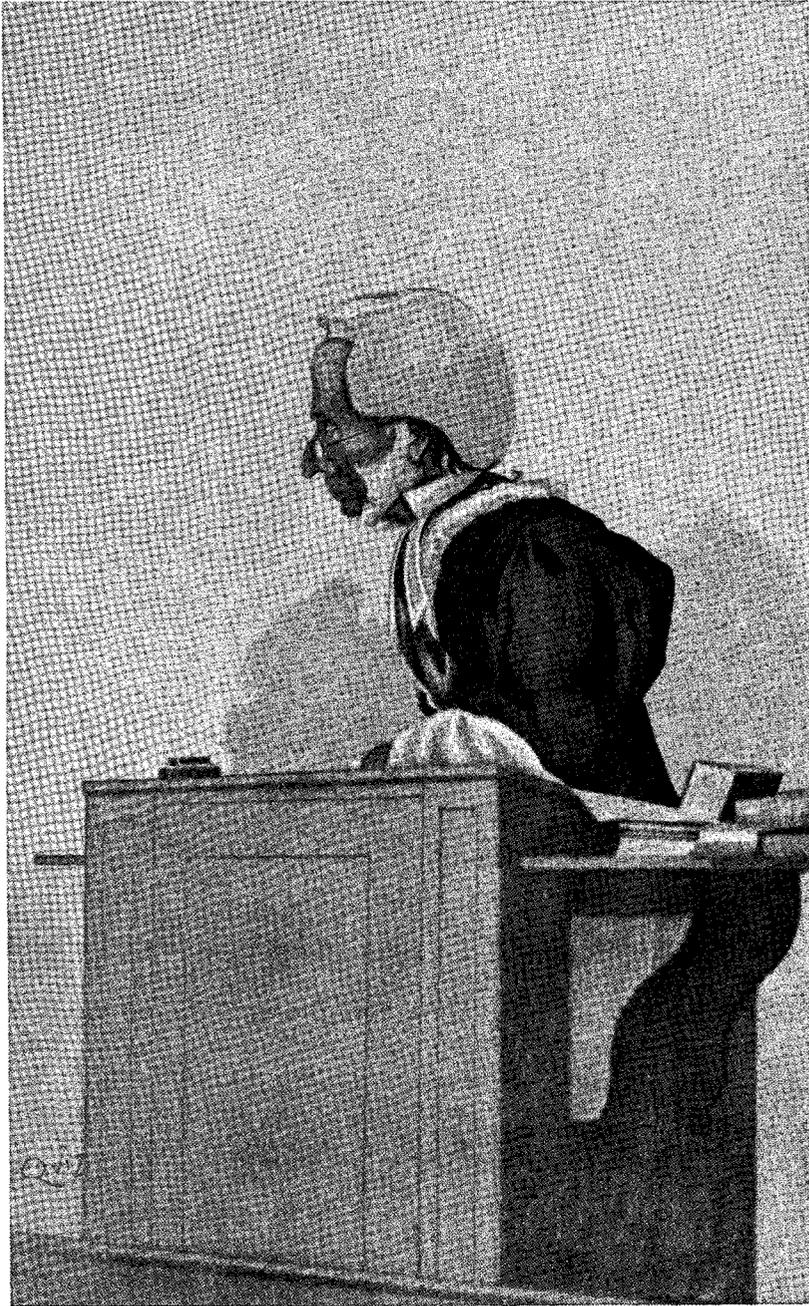
MEN OF THE DAY. No. 450.

SIR HENRY MANISTY.

THE recent retirement of Vice-Chancellor Bacon left Mr. Justice Manisty the oldest ornament of that Bench upon which he has now sat for thirteen years with so much more credit to himself and to Justice than might have been expected from the elevation of an elderly gentleman of sixty-eight years. He was born one-and-eighty years ago in the North of England, where his father, a Doctor of Divinity, used to preach to the Northumbrians. After learning what he might at Durham Grammar School, he became an attorney, and remained one for a dozen years. This brought him to his twenty-eighth year before he got rightly started on his way to the Bench; after which twelve years of steady Common Law Practice advanced him within the Bar, and nineteen more made him a Knight and a Judge. He has lived his life slowly, but steadily, and there is a great deal in him yet.

He is a rather peevish, old-fashioned, careful Judge, who takes laborious notes of his cases; consequently he is slow; but he seldom speaks, and when he does so he generally speaks to the point. He has so high an opinion of his office that he once had a wordy war with an Attorney-General who had ventured to criticise in the House of Commons a certain charge made by Sir Henry to a Grand Jury on Assize; in the course of which he told another Grand Jury that he was not amenable to Attorney-Generals or to Lord Chancellors or even to the Sovereign except from address from both Houses of Parliament; in which things he was aggressively right. He has had much experience in getting out of unpleasant places, as he showed when, having taken a jury's verdict for a plaintiff in the action brought against another Judge, he characteristically and quite legally delivered judgment for the defendant. He is a great upholder of the constitution, and he says that contempt of Court is a "shocken, shocken" thing, even if practised—as was alleged in a recent case—by a Naval Captain in conjunction with the Home Office. He is a great stickler for the legal proprieties, and though he is sometimes wrong, he is an excellent old gentleman who deserves to be respected.

He ought to have been made a Judge ten years earlier.



Sir Henry Manisty

"shocken, shocken"

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