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Mr. John Patrick Murphy

Vanity Fair

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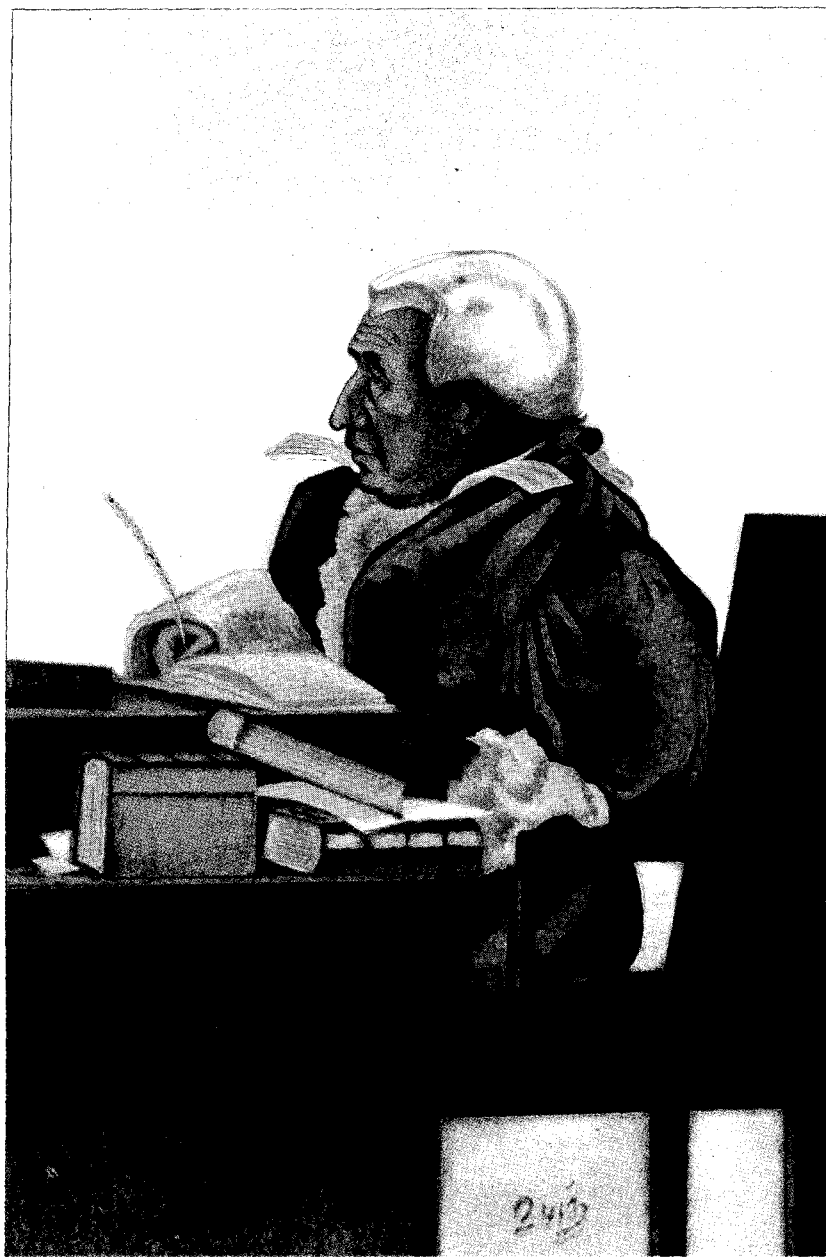
JUDGES. No. 30.

THE HONOURABLE SIR ROLAND VAUGHAN WILLIAMS.

BORN two-and-fifty years ago, his father, who was a Judge of the Court of Common Pleas and the author of a standard work on the Law of Executors, sent him to Oxford; and having done what he could for him in life, he bequeathed to him the right to edit new issues of the book, and the talent to edit them with. He practised on the Common Law side and in Bankruptcy; but he knows a good deal about Equity as the Lincoln's Inn Counsel discovered when he sat as Vacation Judge last summer. As a Counsel, he argued untraditionally, not shaking his forefinger at any Judge—as they do at the Old Bailey—nor even working an imaginary pump-handle—as they do at Nisi Prius; but continually wagging his head after the manner of the china Mandarin which is a common object of the suburban mantel-piece. Nevertheless, being a sound lawyer, a quite upright man, and a friend of Lord Halsbury, he was eminently qualified for a seat on the Bench; and after he had acted more than once as Commissioner for a Judge on circuit, preferment came upon him when Mr. Justice Manisty died, only a few months after he had taken silk.

For twenty years he was one of the familiar objects of the Temple, within whose precincts there was no shabbier man to look at save one; which one was his clerk. His rolling gait caused irreverent juniors to corrupt his name into Rolling Williams; and his blinking eye, his nodding head, and his ponderous utterance were all in full accord with the best traditions of Samuel Johnson, late of the Temple. Since he has risen in the world he has bought a new great coat, and has made an effort to stay his head; nor is he any longer to be seen munching an apple in the street in the morning, or carrying home a number of brown paper parcels in the evening. Yet he has in the enforced dignity of his new office some compensation for these deprivations.

He is a distinct acquisition to the Bench, and is not too old to learn; so that in a few years he will make an admirable Judge. He has no enemies.



Sir Roland Vaughan Williams

"The Mandarin"

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