

1953

Lord Justice Lindley

Vanity Fair

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JUDGES. No. 27.

LORD JUSTICE LINDLEY.

AT the beginning of the century there came to London a gardener named John Lindley; who, being a man of industry greater than is expected or often found in gardeners, wrote books about vegetables so well that they made him a Professor of Botany and a Fellow of the Royal Society. Sixty-one years ago this John Lindley had a son born to him at Acton Green, whom he called Nathaniel, unsuitably, as it turned out, inasmuch as he soon showed that he cared not to sit under the green tree, but preferred rather the arid paths of Law. So he got himself called to the Bar, and, being without much legal interest, set himself to write books while waiting for the knock of the solicitor's clerk. And when the Limited Liability Principle was invented, he sent forth his great work on the Law of Partnership and Companies, betimes, which, though now superseded as to its second part, is still a standard work as to its first. Thus his practice grew rapidly until 1875, when, before he had worn out his first silk gown, he was improved into a Judge of the Common Pleas. Six years later he developed into the very wholesome Lord Justice of Appeal that he now is.

Lord Justice Lindley's success in his profession has not been due to interest, nor to electioneering, nor to any Party device. He could never have talked himself on to the Bench, for he had no brilliance as an orator. Capacity for the acquirement of legal knowledge, commonsense in the application of it when acquired, and industry have made him what he is. In Court his influence upon his learned brethren is as great as it is beneficent, so that whenever he is sitting in a Court of Appeal that Court is quite admirably ballasted, for Sir Nathaniel never speaks unless he has something to say, attempts no vain jokes when he is on the Bench, and refuses to waste time; whereas some Judges merely refuse to allow others to waste it. He has never been known to make himself ridiculous; yet, when off the Bench, he is a good fellow and a capital host, not without humour which, when hatching, is presaged by a jovial twinkle in his eye. Everyone respects him, and his broad smile is the most cheerful to be seen in any Court of Justice. He is an archæological survival in that he is the last Judge of the Common Pleas, appointed since the operation of the much-abused Judicature Act.

He is a very much better Judge than he looks.



Lord Justice Lindley

"Partnership"

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