

---

1956

## Sir William Baliol Brett

Vanity Fair

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarlycommons.law.case.edu/caselrev>



Part of the [Law Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Vanity Fair, *Sir William Baliol Brett*, 8 W. Rsrv. L. Rev. 2 (1956)

Available at: <https://scholarlycommons.law.case.edu/caselrev/vol8/iss1/3>

This Front Matter is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Journals at Case Western Reserve University School of Law Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Case Western Reserve Law Review by an authorized administrator of Case Western Reserve University School of Law Scholarly Commons.

The reproduction in this issue from the Vanity Fair Albums of the caricature of Sir William Baliol Brett was made possible through the courtesy of Mr. William Edward Baldwin, President of the Banks-Baldwin Law Publishing Company, Cleveland.

## JUDGES. No. 10.

SIR WILLIAM BALIOL BRETT.

EIGHT AND FIFTY years ago the Reverend Joseph Brett, of Chelsea, was blessed with a son, whom in due time he sent through Westminster and Oxford to Lincoln's Inn. The young Barrister plodded with considerable success along the dusty ways of the Law. He did not make the reputation of a great light, neither did he display great powers of advocacy, but his opinion on matters relating to Maritime and Insurance Law was held to be worth having. If not marked as a rising man, he was accounted intelligent; moreover, he married and professed himself a Conservative; yet when, well over his fortieth year, he "took silk," there seemed but little chance of great promotion for him. He addressed himself, however, to the political avenues, and twice failed to represent Rochdale, and that, of course, gave him a claim to the gratitude of his Party. In 1866, however, Helston returned him to Parliament, and although he achieved no great distinction there as a statesman, he attracted Mr. Disraeli's attention, so that when eighteen months later much legal patronage fell in, and it became necessary to cast about for Conservative lawyers, he was made Solicitor-General. Six months after this he renounced the Parliamentary career by accepting a puisne judgeship, and he had barely settled himself in the seat of justice when from that serene haven he beheld the crushing defeat of his former Party at a general election.

As a Judge Sir William has shown himself strong, ready, and always able to take a firm grasp of any case before him in all its aspects. He relies entirely upon himself, forms and adheres very strongly to his own opinion, and seeks always to be final, complete, and sufficient in the decision of the Court over which he presides. Yet he is not insensible to the spirit of the times, and his and the popular judgment of a case are often found to coincide. It will be remembered of him that he tried the gas stokers and sentenced Colonel Baker; but he is able, frank, urbane, good-natured, well with Society, and an intimate friend of the Chancellor; and under circumstances he may become Chief-Justice.



Sir William Balfour Brett

"Popular judgment"