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# The Honourable Sir Alfred Wills

Vanity Fair

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## JUDGES. No. 46.

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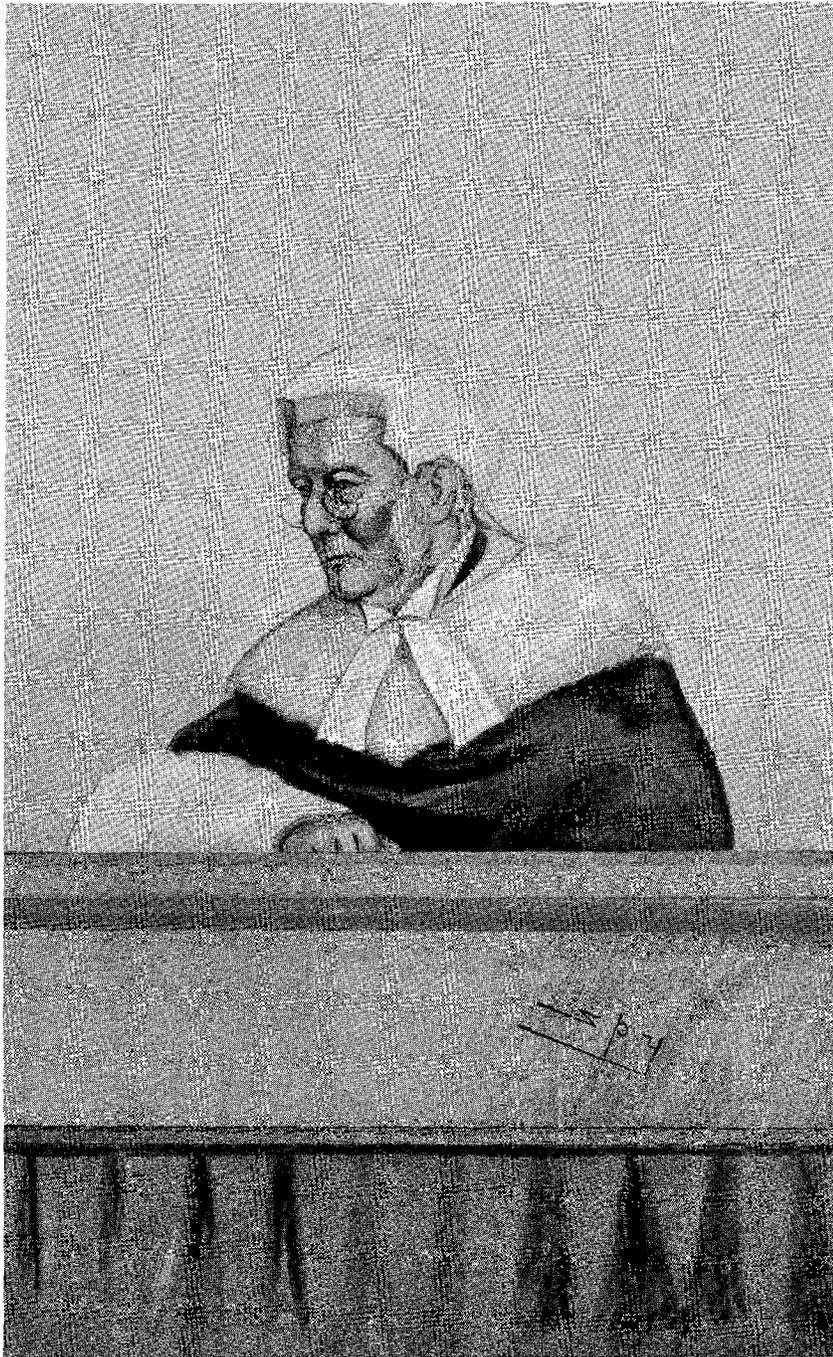
### THE HONOURABLE SIR ALFRED WILLS.

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A SOLICITOR became his father eight-and-sixty years ago; wherefore he naturally went to the Bar. He also inherited brains; wherefore they made him a Fellow of University College (London). He became a barrister and a Bachelor of Laws in the same year; was called within the Bar at the age of forty-six; was made Recorder of Sheffield eight years later; and was improved into a Judge of the Queen's Bench a dozen years ago. Since then he has been President of the Railway and Canal Commission, Editor of "Wills on Circumstantial Evidence," Treasurer of the Honourable Society of the Middle Temple, and author of "Wanderings Among the High Alps" and of "The Eagle's Nest." For he is as industrious a Judge as he is a benevolent man.

He is so industrious indeed that he is said to have tried a treadmill, and so benevolent that he has tried (with some success) to improve our prison arrangements. He is a conscientious man and a conscientious Judge; so that he tempers Law with an amount of morality that has earned for him the degree of "Benevolence on the Bench." At the Bar he was so highly regarded by the more worldly solicitor that he was made Standing Counsel to the Incorporated Law Society; and when he left the Bar for the Bench none but his enemies (who are very few) had a word to say against his elevation. Yet is he no great lawyer, for he suffers from a constitutional inability to distinguish between the merely legal and the merely honourable; the result being that he is apt to apply the principles of Honour to affairs of Commerce which, of course, is ridiculous. Thus, though he may benefit the community at large, he perplexes lawyers and horrifies men of the City. In a word, he administers Morality, whereas baser men say that he ought to administer Law. Nevertheless he makes much amend for his morality by his devotion to work; which passes the devotion of other Judges. With prisoners he is humane rather than merciful, for he is even more anxious that every prisoner should have his chance than he is to give every criminal his due. With the Bar he is very popular; for he is courteous to all, great and small alike. In the Long Vacation he climbs Alps with much credit; and he is so fond of fresh air and exercise that, while he keeps a serene forehead, his cheeks ever wear the apple-bloom of wholesome youth.

He is not a great Judge; but he is a good one. He looks the man that he is.



THE HONOURABLE SIR ALFRED WILLS.

"Benevolence on the Bench"

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