

honorable mention as a lawyer of sterling common sense and untiring energy, who holds his position by the sheer force of an unbending will. The excellent suggestions of that quaint writer on the crudities and absurdities of the law, good old Jeremy Bentham, were first put into legal practice by Mr. Field when he made the New York Code, which mowed down, as with a McCormick's reaper, the rank and luxuriant harvest of technical fictions and incongruous absurdities that for centuries had overgrown and covered up the simple rules of reason and justice that it is the object of all laws to subserve and enforce. Mr. Field, for this, will be remembered, when the ablest lawyers of his time will be forgotten in the dust of ages; albeit, some of them even now affect to regard his system of common-sense practice as a bold innovation, which lays an iconoclastic hand upon the idol of their false prejudices and traditional legal education. Mr. Field, in his code, never forgets that the law addresses itself to the plain sense of plain men, and he proceeds by no indirection to his point. That is a striking anecdote related of the Russian Emperor, who directed his engineers to lay out a railroad between St. Petersburg and Moscow. When the plans were submitted to the Czar's inspection, he asked the meaning of the crooked angles and zigzag lines that marked the devious route. "To accommodate the intervening towns and villages," was the reply. The Emperor drew his pen across the map, turned it upon its face, and marked upon the back two dots representing the two cities. He then made a straight line between the points, and said, "Build me that road."

The illustration is apt for other matters than the survey of railroads, and especially does it apply to Mr. Field's code. He treats the whole subject of the law in a common-sense manner, utterly ignoring those endless involutions, redundancies of expression, and the profuseness of verbiage, that usually bury the sense in such a fog of words that if a fog-bell were rung in the middle of one of these legal sentences it could not be heard at either end of the paragraph.

Mr. Field is emphatically an earnest man; and, like all such men, who spend no time in trifles, has neither courted nor found popularity. His manner is cold, almost forbidding, very like that of an English barrister; and yet the few who break through this outer crust, which exerts a repelling influence upon the many, find him pleasant and companionable in private life. He has never succeeded in obtaining public station, although eminently fitted for it by great executive ability. Were he personally more popular among his associates, and professional and political *confrères*, he would long ago have held high rank in public affairs.

Mr. Field has a fine presence, a tall, commanding figure, a thoroughly English manner, and a clear voice, with unusual distinctness of enunciation. He has not the fervor of the impassioned orator, but his arguments are always clear, occasionally eloquent, and generally convincing. He pays the closest attention to the interests of his clients, and always prepares his cases with industrious zeal. He does not allow his attention, during the progress of a trial, to flag or waver for an instant, but is always watchful and devoted to the matter before him. Like all successful lawyers, he is

a great worker, and pays the inevitable price of sleepless nights and laborious days, illustrating the poet's lines,—

“He who would climb Fame's dizzy steep
Must watch and toil while others sleep.”

Take him for all in all, he is a man whose place at the bar will not readily be filled when he shall have passed away.

A. OAKEY HALL.

A. Oakey Hall, who has been four times elected district attorney of New York city, is another representative man, who largely fills the public eye as a successful lawyer. He has many qualities peculiar to himself. He was famous as an editor and *littérateur* before he was celebrated as a lawyer; and even now, in addition to his onerous and multifarious official duties, he finds time to edit a city paper (the New York Leader), and occasionally to write a story, a book, a play, and even to woo the muses with success. “Hans Yorkel,” his newspaper *nom de plume* in by-gone years as the New York correspondent of the New Orleans Commercial Bulletin, made a reputation that almost any writer might envy. His sparkling, brilliant, piquant letters, equally light and profound, ranging at will “from grave to gay, from lively to severe,” were, by their own buoyancy, borne far and wide on the current of the newspaper press.

Mr. Hall is the only man at the New York bar who makes politics a business, and succeeds at it. He has been a Whig, a Republican, and a Democrat; and, in spite of this tergiversation in politics, he has always

wielded a large influence with the party to which he was attached, and retained its confidence while he acted with it. He has been the counsel to the Metropolitan Police Department and to the sheriff of New York, through all administrations, even when his political opponents were in power and held the offices. This speaks as highly for his ability as a lawyer as for his adroitness as a politician. He is always retained, and bears the burden of the fight in all important cases growing out of the quarrels of leading actors and authors, with whom he is on terms of the closest intimacy, and by whom he is regarded with the greatest favor and admiration.

How, in the midst of all these labors, Mr. Hall finds time to discharge the duties of district attorney is a marvel even to his best friends, who know his ability and industry. True, he has able and hardworking partners (Mr. Vanderpoel is, without exception, the hardest working lawyer in New York); but even with their aid, the amount of labor performed by him is prodigious. One secret of his successful accomplishment of so much work is, that he drives his work, and does not permit his work to drive him. Mr. Hall is a facile and forcible writer, a pleasing and impressive speaker, and a thorough lawyer. He is a very popular public orator, and keeps the audience in a roar by his clever punning and repartee, while he holds them by the force and logic of his argument. In criminal practice he has few if any rivals; certainly no superior. His impassioned eloquence is very effective with a jury; and his clear, felicitous, oftentimes poetic and always scholarly arguments, ever command the interest

of auditors, and the respect and attention of the court. His "points" are brief, and his "briefs" are pointed. He is one of the leading managers in municipal, state, and national politics, and makes and carries more "points" than any other man. In private life Mr. Hall is a perfect gentleman, always courteous, refined, entertaining, and instructive, and considerate for the feelings of others, although when closely pressed by an opponent he can strike back as hard as any one. Mr. Hall is a great humorist, and says more clever things and makes better jokes than any member of the bar. He never spoils a joke for the sake of a friend, and does not even spare himself when he can say a good thing to "point a moral or adorn a tale." A notable example of his making a joke at his own expense was when some one congratulated him on the very heavy majority by which he was reelected district attorney, and he replied that he "had more *tried* friends than any man in New York." Mr. Hall is only forty-one years of age, and claims that he has only begun life, and laughs at the kindly-intentioned idea that as yet he has accomplished anything worthy of private note or public mention.

WILLIAM J. A. FULLER.

William J. A. Fuller, best known among the profession as the Rubber Patent Lawyer, is another representative man, of whom there are but few at the New York bar. His success, which has been great, is owing measurably to his business ability, practical common sense, close attention to business, and wonderful knowledge of human nature. He has an iron will, indomi-

table energy, extraordinary positiveness of character, intense application, and none of the *vis inertiae* so common to lawyers. He is very self-reliant. *Ita lex scripta est* is not the "be all and end all" of his investigations; and his original habits of thought have grafted many new points of practice, and made many new precedents, by applying old principles to new cases. He believes that law, like everything else, is progressive, and is not disturbed by the mere dicta of judges. He is unusually fertile in expedients, and his rare judgment and knowledge of men enable him to settle most cases that are brought to him without protracted litigation; and yet he is as tenacious as a bull-dog. He is one of the most amiable or most inflexible of lawyers, as the circumstances of the case require, treating his opponents just as they treat him. While he is always courteous to his brethren of the profession, he never grants them any favors that will, in the least degree, prejudice the interests of his clients—in which practice he stands almost alone.

Like Mr. Hall, he achieved literary distinction as an editor and magazine writer before he turned his attention to the law. His life has been checkered and eventful—more so than falls to the lot of ordinary men. He has travelled in every quarter of the world, and is familiar with most civilized and savage peoples. He was, in early life, a sailor for many years, in which capacity he circumnavigated the globe, acquiring thereby an experience that makes him the superior of every lawyer at the bar in the trial of nautical cases. Mr. Fuller first brought himself into prominence as counsel for Horace H. Day, in the great Goodyear

rubber controversy; and has, for many years, devoted his talents and energies, and most of his time, to sustaining the Goodyear rubber patents and prosecuting infringers. He brings to bear upon this business not only his legal ability, but his rare talent for managing men, and has been uniformly and completely successful in crushing out piracies upon these patents, in whatever direction he has moved against them.

Perhaps in nothing has Mr. Fuller shown his knowledge of men better than in his selection for a partner of Hon. Leon Abbett, one of the very best general lawyers in the city, who was for some years the Democratic leader of the New Jersey legislature, and is now the Thurlow Weed of that Camden-and-Amboy-ed state.

Mr. Fuller is a fluent, forcible writer, and a most earnest and effective public speaker. He made a great mark in the Fremont campaign, on the stump and with his pen; but his absorbing professional labors have driven him wholly from the field of politics, although at the breaking out of the rebellion he did gallant work for the Union cause.

His leading qualities are indomitable energy, an impassioned earnestness that carries conviction with it, great industry, an iron will which bends everything and everybody to it, integrity, and perfectly square dealing. So prominent is this last trait, that the infringers trust him implicitly, and often come to see him, under a pledge that they shall not be troubled (when he seeks information against other infringers), and leave his office unmolested, when they know that he holds war-

rants for their arrest for violation of their injunctions. His success is due largely to his keen and thorough knowledge of men (for which his checkered and eventful life eminently fits him), great readiness, the power of thinking rapidly on his feet, never losing his self-control; and, unlike most New York lawyers, he attends to his business — never neglects it.

Governor Curtin says of him, "What are his peculiar excellences as a lawyer? — *He wins his cases.*"