



THE LAWYER.

DEATH AND THE LAWYER.*

A DIALOGUE.

DEATH.

GOOD morrow, Sir! my call, I trust, is
 Agreeable to Law and Justice ;—
 You see, I've got a cause in hand,
 So brought the *brief*—

* The writer of this imperfect sketch feels himself bound to make an apology for the crude state in which it appears—not for the purpose of deprecating fair and liberal criticism (for no one ought to flinch from *that* under any circumstances), but merely as his excuse for treating so fertile a theme as LAW in so barren a manner. The fact is, that “Death’s Doings” had been publicly announced to appear on the 2d of October; and the Printer waited till the last moment (Sept. 27) in expectation of receiving a poetical contribution on LAW, from the pen of a gentleman who had promised one—and who, doubtless, would have written on it far more to the purpose—when the mortifying intelligence arrived, that owing to indisposition he was unable to fulfil his promise. This was an awkward dilemma; for, as not one Plate had been dismissed without some poetical Illustration, LAW, by such a marked omission, would, it was thought, have appeared to have been treated *contumeliously*; at the pressing request of the artist, therefore, this colloquial bagatelle was attempted, and in a few hours sent to the Printer “with all its imperfections on its head.”

LAWYER.

I understand—
 But, truly, when at first you enter'd,
 To raise my eyes I scarcely ventur'd;
 So *very* like a ghost you look'd,
 I almost fancied I was *book'd*.

DEATH.

And so I think you are, my bold one—
Book'd for a passage to the OLD ONE. [Aside.
 Ah, Sir! so wondrous thin I'm grown,
 That urchins cry out *Daddy Bone*;
 While full-grown wags indulge their whim,
 And, jeering, call me *Gaffer Grim*!

LAWYER.

The varlets! *do* they?—that's a *libel*,
 As sure as truth is in the Bible;
Scan. mag. at least, and defamation,
 To any gent. of reputation.
 My dear Sir, let me bring an action
 Against the rogues—and satisfaction,
 In damages, you'll get, depend on't;—
 Nay, *that* alone mayn't be the end on't;
 For, if I can, a bitter pill
 I'll give them in a Chancery bill;

And when I once have got them *there*,
 Such affidavits I'll prepare,
 That though they swear with all their might,
 I'll *prove*, if need be, black is white,
 That right is wrong, and wrong is right ;
 And—what to them the greatest curse is—
 However full, I'll drain their purses.

DEATH.

I dare say your advice is proper—
 But, Sir, these chaps have not a copper
 To spend in law—

LAWYER.

Oh, never mind—
 The money, *somewhere*, I would find !
 Indeed, I feel for you sincerely,
 And fain would punish them severely.—
 But what's your *present* business, pray ?

DEATH.

Why, Sir, I wait on you to-day,
 To bring the brief and a *retainer*—
 [Gives a retaining fee.]

LAWYER.

I hope, dear Sir, you'll be a gainer.

[*Pockets the fee, and bows.*]

DEATH.

You *hope* so, eh?—you'll change your story
 When you've discover'd who's before ye. [*Aside.*]
 The brief, I think, you'd better read,
 And afterwards we may proceed
 To see what course we should pursue ;
 The *facts* I'll fairly state—and you
 Can then judge what you ought to do.

LAWYER.

Why, as to *reading* briefs, the fact is,
 'Tis not exactly *modern practice* ;
 However, I can skim it through,
 And make a *marginal* or two—
That I can do in half a minute—
 But, good or bad your cause, I'll win it!

[*Takes the brief,—reads,—but soon appears
 dreadfully agitated.*]

DEATH.

Why look you, Sir, with such surprise ?
Why shakes your frame—why roll your eyes ?—
Your client ! see—without disguise !

[*Death throws off his clothing.*]

LAWYER.

Dread Spectre ! are you what you seem—
Or am I in a frightful dream ?—
And oh !—the *brief* !—what dreadful pain
Now racks my poor distracted brain !
What horrid vision of the night
Is this which stands before my sight,
And fills me with such dire affright ?
Hence—hence !—I pray ye—hence !

DEATH.

Not I !

Before I go, the *cause* we'll try :—
My case, at full, I'll fairly state ;
You, as your brethren's advocate,
Must meet the charges I shall bring.—
Thus, then, as counsel for the King,

I am instructed to maintain,
 That all the money you obtain,
 The produce is of woe and pain ;
 That dire contention and confusion
 Are brought about by your collusion ;
 That law and endless litigation
 (Which ruin more than half the nation,
 Entailing mis'ry on mankind)
 Delight your mercenary mind ;
 That civil broils, domestic jars,
 Seduction, rapine, murders, wars,
 Men's own misfortunes and their neighbours',
 Are *all* encouraged by your labours :
 What say you, Sir ?

LAWYER.

With due submission,
 I'd humbly state, no fair decision
 I possibly can *here* obtain
 For, if by *right* I were to gain
 The cause, I'm almost sure ye
 Would constitute both judge and jury :
 I therefore do submit, by law,
 We ought, *this* action to withdraw.

DEATH.

D'ye doubt my *justice*?—Zounds and fury!

LAWYER.

Justice! we *that* leave to the Jury;
The *Law* knows nothing (although odd it is)
Of justice, truth, and such commodities.

DEATH.

Ah! say you so?—what is *Law*, then?

LAWYER.

Law is a *trade*—by which *some* men
Arrive at honours, wealth, and state;
Others there are, less fortunate,
Who drive a harmless goose's quill
From morn to night with no small skill,
And yet can ne'er their bellies fill;
But they are simpletons—and whoso
Knows their fate, will never do so.

DEATH.

How, Sir! explain!—but no digression.—

LAWYER.

This trade—or, rather, “*the profession,*”
 Requires, you see, a man of *parts,*
 One who has learnt the useful arts.

DEATH.

“The useful arts!”—pray, which are they?

LAWYER.

For little work, to get great pay;—
 But if he see no hopes of booty,
 Of course he should perform no duty;—
 Thus, if he can his int'rest serve,
 And get rewarded, he may swerve
 From any needy half-starv'd client;—
 In short, to int'rest be compliant
 Eternally—no earthly reason
 Should put self-int'rest out of season;—
 With Lawyers 'tis a standing dish,—
 Their meat and drink!—

DEATH.

Come, Sir, I wish

You'd cut the matter rather short,
 Or else, perhaps, I may resort
 To means which may be not quite pleasant.

LAWYER.

Pray do not mention them at present !
 You bade me tell—*what* our arts *are*,—
 I've told you truly, I declare ;
 And I should hope, that so much candour,
 Without a syllable of slander,
 Would e'en from you some kind regard
 Beget—indeed 'twere very hard
 That I should thus expose my friends,
 And you not make me some amends.

DEATH.

Sir, you presume !—remember I
 Came here, a ticklish *cause* to try ;
 Though, possibly, put off I may
 The trial to another day ;—
 But, come—I'll hear a little more
 About the “ useful arts” of your
 “ Profession.”

LAWYER.

Proud am I to say,
 That no one can these arts display
 Better than he who stands before ye.—
 Thus, then, I now resume my story :—
 A Lawyer ought to take delight in
 All kinds of broils, abuse, and fighting ;
 For, few things likelier are to fill
 His pocket than a *swingeing* bill,
 Obtain'd through any civil action,
 When parties, seeking *satisfaction*,
 Go to the Bench or Common Pleas—
 For clever Lawyers there, with ease,
 Get fame, as well as lots of fees !
 He should no legal mode neglect,
 The public's *follies* to correct ;
 By this I mean, a good tactician
 Should fearlessly perform his mission,
 Nor suffer any threadbare maxim
 'Bout want of honesty to tax him—

DEATH.

Hold ! hold !—for Honesty's abus'd,
 Whene'er the *word's* by Lawyers us'd.
 I've heard enough !—so, come with me.

LAWYER.

Oh, no! we never should agree;
 Besides, you said, some *other* day
 You'd call, when I was in the way.

DEATH.

I own I did—then, be it so,
 And when you feel dispos'd to go,
 Perhaps you'll kindly let me know:—
 As to the *cause* I had to try
 With you—why, let it e'en stand by—
 Some other time will do—I'll now,
 With your permission, make my bow;
 But don't forget me! if you do,
 I'll certainly remember *you*,
 And you shall recollect this warning:—
 Good morning to you, Sir—good morning!—
 Next time you'll *go!*—I'll not be flamm'd.
 [Exit DEATH.

LAWYER (*solus*).

Go!—if I do go, —————
 S. M.