

FROM AN ENGLISH OFFICE WINDOW

Reconstruction of the Temple

It is easy to criticise people who talk of post-war reconstruction that they should apply their energies to concluding the conflict, but the creative faculty is a human instinct. In many people it has been stimulated since damaged buildings have been removed and sites left empty. While the remains of the Inner Temple Hall and Library occupied the site they were a perpetual memorial of an insensate agent of ruthless destruction. Like other buildings they were unsafe and had to be removed. One of the empty spaces has been occupied by a great water tank, but anyone who has to go in and out through the Temple cannot resist the idea of wondering what is to fill those empty spaces. At the moment there is a general agreement that it is almost impossible to make any plans, since no one knows whether this is the end of the damage. But there is one practical consideration which is much on the minds of some of us at home and so led to a discussion by a legal reform society, on the reconstruction of the Temple. From its members there are about one hundred and fifty men on active service. When those men come back there will be no chambers in which they can have accommodation, and there will be very great difficulty in providing them with books. It is conceivable that they might overcome the former difficulty by seeking offices somewhere in the neighborhood of the Law Courts, although not actually in the Inns of Court. It was agreed that this would be unfortunate especially if circumstances led to any kind of permanency in the arrangement. There was general agreement that it is most desirable for the Temple to be restored as a centre for the practising members of the Bar. There was a unanimous hope that somehow might be preserved that reposeful calm which appeals to everyone who knows the Temple. This would probably be secured by its continued seclusion from the main stream of traffic of industry. It is perhaps not too soon for this point to be put forward and if possible generally accepted as, although the Inner and Middle Temples are independent for some purposes, for others they form part of the City of London. The damage done on one side of the Inner Temple was part of a larger holocaust involving an extensive area within the City boundary. Moreover, any planning of Fleet Street must take into account Prince Henry's Gateway of the early seventeenth century leading into the Inner Temple and the Middle Temple Gateway. So the Corpor-

ation of the City of London may consider themselves entitled to some voice in the matter, especially as they have agreed to act in collaboration with the London County Council so as to cover the whole area. Behind, or perhaps above, all these considerations lies the fact that the expenditure will largely be derived from the compensation awarded by the War Damage Commission, who have some powers, not yet clearly defined, to approve the manner of its expenditure. Public opinion, however, is likely to support the desire to preserve the Temple as the sanctum of the Bar.

Prize for Jurisprudence

George Swiney was a somewhat eccentric medical man who died on January 21st, 1844, but he made an interesting bequest of £5,000 to the Royal Society of Arts. It provides quinquennially a prize of £100 for jurisprudence and a cup of the same value. It is awarded jointly by the Royal College of Arts and the Royal College of Physicians and is given alternately for the best work on medical or general jurisprudence. Last time it was given to Glaister's *Medico-Legal Aspects of the Ruxton Case*, so in the centenary of the author's death it should be awarded for a work on general jurisprudence, though there is a provision that if the Committee is unable to find a work of sufficient merit in the class whose turn it is to receive the award, it is at liberty to recommend a book belonging to the other class. I am asked to make it known that any person desiring to submit a work in competition or to recommend any work for the consideration of the judges should do so by letter addressed to the Acting Secretary of the Royal Society of Arts not later than 30th November, 1943. So far as I am able to trace, the prize has only been awarded once outside Great Britain, and that was when it was given to the late Sir John W. Salmond of New Zealand for his standard work on *Jurisprudence*. Among the other works in that class to which the prize has been awarded may be mentioned in chronological order, Maine's *Ancient Law*, Phillimore's *International Law*, Sheldon Amos's *Systematic View of the Science of Jurisprudence*, Erskine Holland's *Jurisprudence*, Pollock and Maitland's *History of English Law*, Vinogradoff's *Outlines of Historical Jurisprudence*, and Holdsworth's *History of English Law*. The medical jurisprudence prizes include works by A. S. Taylor, W. A. Guy, C. M. Tidy, J. Dixon Mann and Sydney Smith. Only one man has gained the prize on two occasions and that was the late Dr. Charles Mercier with his works on

Criminal Responsibility and *Crime and Criminals*. It is surprising that having twice obtained a prize awarded to so many distinguished men his name is not to be found in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, especially as he had a rather unusual career. The son of a parson, after a few months' schooling at Merchant Taylors he started life as a cabin boy and then went into business, first as a warehouseman and afterwards as a clerk. That he left for medicine in which he was trained at the London Hospital, took his M.D. and F.R.C.S., and became a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians and Examiner in Mental Diseases at London University.

Of course it would be particularly welcome at the present time if the prize could be awarded to a Canadian lawyer. Apparently it would also be within the terms of the trust to bestow it upon an American.

Sir Norman Birkett

An announcement in the *Radio Times* about Sir Norman Birkett making a broadcast appeal attracted my attention because it contained an inaccuracy. The wording was "Sir Norman Birkett, K.C." Can a Judge of the High Court properly be described as King's Counsel? It is true that his patent is not cancelled by his appointment as Judge. It is equally clear that he cannot plead as King's Counsel. It would appear that it is submerged for the time being as there is an inconsistency which cannot be reconciled otherwise.

When the time came Sir Norman was unfortunately ill and the appeal had to be read for him. It was on behalf of a home for crippled boys recently established near Wellingborough by the Shaftesbury Society under the auspices of the Central Council for the Care of Cripples. £6,000 has been provided and Sir Norman was asking for another £6,500. The absence of his persuasive tones was a real loss to an admirable object.

MIDDLE TEMPLAR.