

WEATHERLY'S LIFE STORY.¹

The lighter side of the literature of the Law has recently been enriched by a well printed volume of memoirs, with a fine profile of the author and concluding with a delightful chapter, mainly devoted to the author's pretty wife, whose portrait by Herbert Lambert, of Bath, follows this beautiful tribute written for their wedding day (2nd August, 1923):—

TO MIRIAM.

Give me thy hands,
Thy dear sweet busy hands,
To help and guide me
Through the Twilight lands.

Give me thine eyes,
That they may look and see
Deep in my Heart
How dear thou art to me!

Give me thyself,
My sweetheart, wife and friend,
And that shall bless me
Till the very end!

The unusually cold weather for this mid-April in Ontario being conducive to fireside enjoyment, three sittings far into the night after briefs had been flung aside sufficed to finish the delightfully told story of the Englishman—Fred E. Weatherly, K.C.—eminent devotee of law and lyrics who was born in 1848 in Portishead, then a little fishing village in Somerset, on the shore of the Bristol Channel, who tells us that “from my earliest childhood, ships, books and music were my chief delight.”

The volume, dedicated to the author's wife, is introduced to readers in a short foreword by the Honourable Mr. Justice McCardie, who pays a charming tribute to the writer as—

“A man of happy yesterdays
And confident to-morrows!”

¹ *Piano and Gown.* By Fred E. Weatherly, K.C. Foreword by the Honourable Mr. Justice McCardie. London and New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons Ltd., 1926.

and quotes the words of Oliver Wendell Holmes:—

“For him in vain the envious seasons roll,
Who bears eternal summer in his soul!”

Indeed most readers of these memories of a man of 78 will agree with me that another couplet from this well-known American poet, whose distinguished son at 86 still adorns the Bench of the Supreme Court of the United States, may be appropriately quoted:—

“Call him not old whose visionary brain
Holds o’er the past its undivided reign.”

The author devotes a preface of a half page to the expression of his gratitude for the influences and environment which made him a writer of songs, and the genius of the composers who set the songs to music and the great array of talented artists whose singing of the ballads made them known to the millions who have loved them.

Childhood and early school days at Portishead and Hereford Cathedral School are pleasantly recalled in four chapters, in which, too, we are informed of, the author’s association with Michael Maybrick, who under the nom-de-plume of “Stephen Adams” wrote so many of the musical scores for Weatherly’s most popular songs, such as “The Midshipmite.” Sixteen succeeding chapters are devoted to Oxford days—where after graduation, he spent some years coaching students and followed his bent of song-writing successfully. Many interesting incidents are narrated, and much correspondence quoted, full of wit and humour. At the age of twenty-nine he was called to the Bar and settled in London. The remaining chapters of his book are of interest to the lawyer as giving some conception of the life of a London barrister making his way in the profession (while evidently “piano” and pen were proving more alluring than “gown”), and practice in the later years of his life as one of the West of England Bar. At page 220 he records a tribute to the skill of Sir Edward Clarke, K.C., the Dean of the English Bar, who will long be remembered with affection by those of us who met him at the London International Bar Association Meeting in 1924, and who carries his weight of years so lightly as to assume the burden of publication at an early date of a new life of Disraeli. At a trial of two prisoners indicted together before Lawrence, J. at Bristol Assizes the Jury, at the close of Sir Edward’s opening for the defence, put their heads together and acquitted both the defendants. On the

next page is an amusing story of Reginald Wansbrough, a Bristol advocate, in these words:—

“One of the most successful advocates in Bristol and the neighbourhood and one of my dearest and most faithful friends is Reginald Wansbrough. No one enjoys more than he the story of his beginning.

“His offices were and still are over a very popular wine bar, the entrance to which is in the main street, the entrance to Wansbrough’s office being out of sight in a side street. One day there came to stay with the agent of the Bank of England, the buildings of which are exactly opposite Wansbrough’s offices, a gentleman from London. He was followed by worrying letters on business, which needed speedy legal advice. While reading these letters in the drawing-room upstairs he had from time to time looked across the street and seen in an opposite window the face of a very young but smart-looking man. He saw his name on the wire blinds in the office, ‘Wansbrough.’

“Discussing with his host the names of various solicitors he decided to go to Wansbrough, and to Wansbrough he went. The young man was highly delighted at the arrival of a new client, especially when he introduced himself as a visitor at the Bank agent’s, and more especially because that morning he had not seen a single client. The business finished, Wansbrough said diffidently: “Would you mind telling me why you came to me? Did the agent—”

“No,” said the client, “I decided for myself.”

“Wansbrough ventured to ask: “How? Why?”

“Well,” replied the client, “I have been watching your office all the morning, and the stream of people going in and coming out made it perfectly clear that you were a very busy man.”

Wansbrough realised that to have offices over a wine bar may bring business to the solicitor above.”

Weatherly ventures to challenge some of the views of Lord Birkenhead recently expressed in the *London Sunday Times*, respecting a counsel’s duty to a client of whose guilt counsel has no doubt.

He gives the following excellent samples of Irish wit:—

“Carson (now Lord Carson) had been examining a very truculent witness. The atmosphere was getting heated, and the learned Judge took the opportunity of adjourning rather earlier than usual. After luncheon the witness referred to resumed his place in the witness box, looking even redder than before. Carson took up the cross-examination where he had left off. The witness was more

truculent than before, and at last Carson said in his mildest accents: "Have yeh bin dhrinking?"

"That's my business," answered the witness.

"Have ye any other business?" said Carson.

"Another story, this time of 'Tim' Healy. He was engaged in a case in the Chancery Division, and after the reading of certain affidavits, the learned Judge said he was not satisfied as to certain facts, and suggested to Healy's opponent that he should file further affidavits by a certain date, and that the argument might proceed in the absence of the required affidavits. The argument proceeded for a few moments when suddenly there came from the corridor an excruciating sound as of steel on steel.

"Dear! dear!" said the learned Judge, "What is that noise, usher?"

Healy answered the question. "It's me learned friend, my lord, *filing* his affidavits."

Portraits of some celebrities of Bench and Stage are given, and many of the author's famous verses. Weatherly's songs have been household words for half a century. I feel sure there are few, if any, of my contemporaries who have not made the attempt to sing "Admiral's Broom," "Nancy Lee," "Midshipmite," "Holy City," "Deathless Army," five of the earliest of the fifty best known songs of Mr. Weatherly mentioned in the addendum, and all of us have been, in later days, entertained somewhere or other by "Danny Boy"—one of the latest and perhaps the very best rendition of which was that given in Massey Hall by the lady soloist accompanying Sousa's Band last year. But perhaps more than enough has been said to convince readers of this sort of literature that space must be found on the library table for Mr. Weatherly's interesting book.

Cobourg.

FRANK M. FIELD.