

**ANECDOTAGE; OR, STRAY  
LEAVES FROM  
THE NOTE BOOKS OF A  
PROVINCIAL REPORTER**

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Anecdotal; Or, Stray Leaves from the Note Books of a Provincial Reporter by E. Austin

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**E. AUSTIN**

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# ANEC DOTAGE;

OR,

Stray Leaves from the Note Books of a  
Provincial Reporter.

By E. AUSTIN,

Bristol Correspondent of "THE TIMES,"

AND

SOMETIME OFFICIAL SHORTHAND WRITER TO HER MAJESTY'S COURT OF  
BANKRUPTCY FOR THE BRISTOL DISTRICT.

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## PREFACE.

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THE Author has, perhaps, yielded too ready an assent to the suggestions of partial friends in collecting these "Stray Leaves from the Note Books of a Provincial Reporter," and reproducing them in a more permanent form.

They are, however, respectfully submitted in the hope that they may be found amusing, if not instructive, and that they may be accepted as a slight contribution to the "Anecdote" of the day.

BANKRUPTCY REMINISCENCES :—		PAGE
THE PERJURER'S PEG . . . . .		165
SAVING KNOWLEDGE . . . . .		166
JUSTICE TEMPERED WITH MERCY . . . . .		167
THE INTEMPERATE BANKRUPT . . . . .		169
THE REJECTED BRIBE . . . . .		170
PUNCTILIOUS PUNCTUATION . . . . .		172
IN MEMORIAM . . . . .		175
ODDS AND ENDS :—		
THE BISHOP AND HIS CHARGE . . . . .		176
THE MISSING VOWEL . . . . .		179
COLOURED REPORTERS . . . . .		180
A CURE FOR LOQUACITY . . . . .		182
CONDITIONAL GRATITUDE . . . . .		183
LENIENCY APPRECIATED . . . . .		187
A FINAL NOTE . . . . .		189
NOTE ON THE LEIGH WOODS MURDER . . . . .		189



# ANECDOTAGE.



## A ROYAL SPEECH.

**T**HE Municipal Reform Act transformed the Corporation of Bath from a self-elected body of some thirty individuals into a constituency of about three thousand, divided into seven wards, returning six members each, and presided over by fourteen aldermen.

Such an "extension of the suffrage" of course made a considerable alteration in the constitution of the civic body. From being ultra Tory it became ultra Radical; and the changes which were wrought were neither few nor immaterial. The gentleman who was chosen as the first Mayor under the new régime was an "advanced" politician, and became a candidate for the representation of a neighbouring

borough on extreme Liberal principles. Time, however, has somewhat modified his opinions; and, had he been returned to Parliament at the last general election, he would probably have been classed by Dod in the column appropriated to "Liberal Conservatives."

The majority of the members of the new Council necessarily held the same political views as their chosen chief. "Economy and Retrenchment" were the watchwords of the dominant party; and, under various resolutions having for their object the promotion of these ends, salaries were reduced, offices abolished, and the duties hitherto performed by two or three individuals were devolved on one person. Among other reforms, the civic robes heretofore worn by the Mayor, Aldermen, and Councillors on public occasions were discontinued; and a motion by a Quaker member of the board for following the example of Leicester, and disposing of the maces, was only rejected by a narrow majority.

A few years, however, worked a reaction. The Conservative party again rallied, and secured for some little space a preponderance at the Council-board; but at the time of which I write the Liberals still held sway. The Mayor, who was a very emphatic and verbose gentleman, who had seen

some service in the navy, had all his loyalty called into operation by the announcement that his Royal Highness the late Prince Consort was about to pass through Bath on an approaching day, to take part in the ceremony of christening the famous steamer, the Great Britain, which was about to be performed in the neighbouring city of Bristol.

A special meeting of the Council was immediately convened to consider the possibility of presenting his Royal Highness with an address. It was agreed that the effort should be made; the indefatigable chief magistrate put himself in communication with the authorities at head quarters; and, in the course of a day or two, his Worship had the gratification of receiving an intimation from Colonel Anson, the equerry of the Prince Consort, to the effect that his Royal Highness would have much pleasure in delaying the special train by which he was to journey at the Bath station, for a few minutes, for the purpose of receiving the address of the Town Council.

Hereupon the Council were again assembled, and a committee was appointed to draw up the proposed address. This important business being accomplished, the mode and manner of its presentation were considered; and at last it was arranged that