

# **JOTTINGS OF AN OLD SOLICITOR**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649364855

Jottings of an old solicitor by Sir John Hollams

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**SIR JOHN HOLLAMS**

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BY SIR JOHN HOLLAMS

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LONDON

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.

1906

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# JOTTINGS OF AN OLD SOLICITOR

## CHAPTER I

### EARLY RECOLLECTIONS

I HAVE often been asked to commit to paper some of my professional and other experiences and recollections ; but I have hitherto hesitated to do so, for I have no inclination to write a book, nor am I in any respect qualified to do so, and so far as I am personally concerned, I have nothing of the slightest interest to record. Possibly, however, some few reminiscences extending back to an unusually long period of persons and events, chiefly professional, may serve to call attention to interesting changes which have taken place during the period I can recall, and which, perhaps, few will deny, are in the main changes for the better ; and the consideration of what has been done may

possibly call attention to improvements yet needed. Possibly, too, my own professional career may serve as an encouragement to some young men entering the profession, as I did, without any of the advantages which generally conduce to success.

My earliest recollection as a child is of the Vicarage at Loose in Kent. My father held the position of resident curate there for about ten years, and during that period the vicar of the parish (who, of course, received the tithes) never once visited the parish, or in any way interfered. It is true he suffered from bodily infirmity, and he was, I believe, an estimable man; but I suppose such a state of things would not now be tolerated. At that time no one seemed to consider that there was anything wrong in it, and beyond doubt, my father, who for all practical purposes was the vicar, was popular, and the parishioners were content. Thus, as is often the case, an unjustifiable state of things worked well.

At the period to which I refer there was great excitement with respect to Catholic emancipation,

and my father, with most of the clergy of that day, looked upon the proposed change as a great calamity. I was not of an age to understand what was the matter, but I well remember the general expression of grief as if some personal affliction had happened. I can recall a small dinner party to which I was admitted at dessert. My mother was eating a piece of orange peel, and a neighbouring clergyman asked her if she liked Peel, on which she indignantly threw the piece of orange peel down. The incident, of course, referred to Sir Robert Peel, and his advocacy of Catholic emancipation. It is difficult to realise how high feeling ran on the subject. I recollect my father, when about to go on horseback to a Protestant meeting on Penenden Heath, purchasing for the occasion a life preserver, and I was impressed by the anxiety with which his safe return was looked for. There was an old woman resident in the village who was a Roman Catholic, and very violent; she publicly said she would like to wash her hands every morning in Protestants' blood. It now seems incredible that