SUDDEN DEATH OF MR. JUSTICE TALFOURD.

We have this week to announce the sudden death on Monday morning last, at Stafford, of Mr. Justice Talfourd, which might almost be said to have taken place on the judgment seat. Nothing gave token of so serious a calamity. His Lordship appeared in his usual health on entering the assize court, and it was not known that he had experienced any symptoms of illness before taking his seat on the bench, but, on the contrary, at an early hour—six o'clock—he was out enjoying a morning walk. His delivery of the charge to the grand jury, however, was characterised by much hesitation, and he evidently had difficulty in proceeding with his task.

Both courts opened at ten o'clock in the morning, Mr. Justice Talfourd presiding in the Crown court. His Lordship had reviewed the calendar, and was directing attention to the number of charges of highway robbery which it contained :—

"These crimes," said his Lordship, "come—I will not say exclusively, but in the far greater majority of these cases—from those districts which are the most rich in mineral treasures, where wages are high, and where no temptation of want can for a moment be set up as an excuse or palliation for the crime ; on the contrary, I have observed in the experience I have had of the calendars of prisoners tried at these assizes—an experience, many of you are aware, extending far beyond the period of my judicial labours—I have observed that in times of comparative privation crime diminishes, and that when wages are high and are earned by a less degree of work, there is a strong temptation to spend them in vicious indulgences, and that crime has increased almost in proportion to the state of prosperity by which the criminals have been surrounded. This consideration should awaken all our minds, and especially the minds of gentlemen connected with those districts, to see in what direction to search for a remedy for so great an evil. It is untrue to say that the state of education—that is, such education as can be furnished by the Sunday schools, and other schools in these districts—is below the general average ; then we must search among some other causes for the peculiar aspect of crime presented in these cases. I cannot help myself thinking, it may be in no small degree attributable to that separation between class and class which is the great curse of British society, and for which we are all more or less, in our respective spheres, in some degree responsible, and which is more complete in these districts than in agricultural districts, where the resident gentry are enabled to shed around them the blessings resulting from the exercise of benevolence, and the influence and example of active kindness. I am afraid we all of us keep too much aloof from those beneath us, and whom we thus encourage to look upon us with suspicion and dislike. Even to our servants we think, perhaps, we fulfil our duty when we perform our contract with them—when we pay them their wages, and treat them with the civility consistent with our habits and feelings,—when we curb our temper and use no violent expressions towards them. But how painful is the thought that there are men and women growing up around us, ministering to our comforts and necessities, continually inmates of our dwellings, with whose affections and nature we are as much unacquainted as if they were the inhabitants of some other sphere. This feeling, arising from that kind of reserve peculiar to the English character, does, I think, greatly tend to prevent that mingling of class with class, that reciprocation of kind words and gentle affections, gracious admonitions and kind inquiries, which often more than any book education tend to the culture of the affections of the heart, refinement, and elevation of the character of those to whom they are addressed. And if I were to be asked what is the great want of English society—to mingle class with class—I would say, in one word, the want is the want of sympathy."

It was while giving utterance to these noble sentiments that his auditory became greatly alarmed by the changed aspect of the venerable speaker. His head fell on one side, and in an instant it was apparent that he had been seized by apoplexy. As quickly as possible the associate took off his Lordship's wig and untied his handkerchief, and he was carried out of court by Earl Talbot, Dr. Holland, Dr. Knight (the latter two of whom were on the grand jury), and the associate. His Lordship was removed to the judge's lodgings, and was attended by Sir Chas. Mansfield Clarke, Bart., Dr. Holland, and Dr. Knight, but their professional assistance was of no avail, his Lordship, having faintly groaned, breathing his last the moment he was placed on the bed. The consternation produced in court by the sudden seizure of his Lordship, and the announcement of his death immediately afterwards, cannot easily be described. His loss is deplored by the bar, by all the members of which he was beloved, and by the public at large.

The deceased was worthy of the respect of Englishmen, as being a remarkable example of the facilities offered to the middle classes in this country of attaining the highest positions. His father was a brewer ; his mother the daughter of a Dissenting minister. He commenced his education at a Dissenting grammar school, and finished it at one of our public schools. He came to London, and added to his income by his literary exertions. He contributed to magazines, and was a reporter to the press. These facts give us a high idea of the late judge's energy. Those who knew him best say that his powers never slept.

His career is shortly told. His parentage we have given. He came to London at the age of eighteen, and placed himself as a pupil under Chitty in 1813. He was called to the bar in 1821, and was married the next year. It may be said that his prosperity has never had a check. His literary productions—"Ion," "The Athenian Captive," "Glencoe," "Vacation Rambles"—have all been warmly received by the public, while his professional labours have achieved undoubted success. He exerted himself manfully in the cause of liberal opinions. The authors of England are indebted to him for his exertions in the cause of literary copyright. All liberal measures found in him a sincere advocate, while he was a member of the legislature. There are few public men left of his class who would carry to the grave so great an amount of sympathy as Justice Talfourd.