

SIR FREDERICK POLLOCK,

Oxford Lectures, 110.

This we claim for the true and accomplished lawyer, that is, for you if you will truly follow the quest. As a painter rests on the deep and luminous air of Turner, or the perfect detail of a drawing of Lionardo; as ears attuned to music are rapt with the full pulse and motion of the orchestra that a Richter or a Lamoureux commands, or charmed with the modulation of the solitary instrument in the hands of a Joachim; as a swordsman watches the flashing sweep of the sabre, or the nimbler and subtler play of opposing foils; such joy may you find in the lucid exposition of broad legal principles, or in the conduct of a finely reasoned argument on their application to a disputed point. And so shall you enter into the fellowship of the masters and sages of our craft, and be free of that ideal world which our greatest living painter has conceived and realized in his master-work. I speak not of things invisible or in the fashion of a dream; for Mr. Watts, in his fresco that looks down on the Hall of Lincoln's Inn, has both seen them and made them visible to others. In that world Moses and Manu sit enthroned side by side, guiding the dawning sense of judgment and righteousness in the two master races of the earth; Solon and Scaevola and Ulpian walk as familiar friends with Blackstone and Kent, with Holt and Marshall; and the bigotry of a Justinian and the crimes of a Bonaparte are forgotten, because at their bidding the rough places of the ways of justice were made plain. There you shall see in very truth how the spark fostered in our own land by Glanvill and Bracton waxed into a clear flame under the care of Brian and Choke, Littleton and Fortescue, was tended by Coke and Hale, and was made a light to shine round the world by Holt, and Mansfield, and the Scotts, and others whom living men remember.

You

shall understand how great a heritage is the law of England, whereof we and our brethren across the ocean are partakers, and you shall deem treaties and covenants a feeble bond in comparison of it; and you shall know with certain assurance that, (however arduous has been your pilgrimage, the achievement is a full answer.) So venerable, so majestic, is this living temple of justice, this immemorial and yet freshly growing fabric of the Common Law, that the least of us is happy who hereafter may point to so much as one stone thereof and say, The work of my hands is there.—

This quote was
copied from:
"Blackstone's
Commentaries",
Introduction.