Mr. Bradlaugh is hard at work preparing his case for the Court of Error. I saw him in the Queen’s Bench yesterday, poring diligently over a number of books from the library of the court, and taking copious notes of the cases hearing upon the question which peculiarly affects himself. It was whispered at Westminster last term that he intended to retain Mr. Benjamin. Q.C., to argue his case, but the rumour turns out to be unfounded. Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant mean to be their own lawyers. Whether they are wise in their determination remains to be seen, but, at any rate, their ideas are not those of most professional people. When a physician falls sick he almost invariably seeks the advice of a fellow-practitioner, and no lawyer, however eminent, makes his own will. At least, when he does, it frequently turns out that, in addition to legacies of money and land, he leaves a legacy of litigation to his relations. It is only another illustration of the familiar saying that work that is not paid for is, as a rule, not worth having. The traditional lawyer who, whenever he transacted any business on his own account, made a practice of transferring a guinea from his right-hand to his left-hand breeches pocket must have been fully alive to this truth.

Returning to the Bradlaugh case, however, the resolution of the applicants is not so surprising as it would have been if Mr. Bradlaugh had been a simple layman. In his early days he received a legal training, and he has, besides, the advantage of being a practiced speaker. Eloquence, it is true, does not go for much with a number of hard-handed judges sitting in a row, but, nevertheless, there is a great advantage in being able to state one’s case and to advance one’s arguments with clearness. Furthermore, a practiced public speaker keeps his head, and knows better that to leave unsaid than a novice. This faculty. I may mention, is one of the most valuable a lawyer can possess. Sir John Holker is not a brilliant man. To outsiders he may even appear dull. But in him the habit of not saying things which are better kept in the dark has become so natural that he causes counsel on the opposite side in a case many a fit of fear and trembling. Indeed, I have heard an eminent barrister on the Northern Circuit say, “I can never trouble myself to watch every turn in a case in which I am engaged unless Holker leads on the other side.”