

JUDGE C. S. REWCASTLE

Mr. Dingle Foot writes:—

I first met C. S. Rewcastle in 1931 when, as a newly fledged barrister. I joined the chambers of which Geoffrey Hutchinson (now Lord Ilford) was the head. Rewcastle was then a busy junior. But, however pressed he might be, he never grudged the time to assist his younger colleagues. We would refer to him any difficult problem of law on pleading and he would go to immense pains to assist us. This was wholly characteristic. Although somewhat assertive in manner, he was essentially generous.

In 1937, shortly after taking silk, he took over the chambers—and in some degree the practice—of Leslie de Gruyther, who had just died. He invited me to go with him and I shared his room for several years. I was away from 1940 until 1945. When I returned Rewcastle had established himself in the field of Indian appeals to the Privy Council. He was one of the quickest workers I have ever seen. He could master the most voluminous record in an amazingly short space of time. He also abounded in confidence and could scarcely ever be persuaded to anticipate anything except victory. Like many barristers he had a somewhat selective memory. His forensic triumphs were not infrequently recalled. His occasional reverses were, I fancy, soon forgotten.

His last years at the Bar were marked by a series of personal tragedies and setbacks. There followed in quick succession the loss of his gifted and attractive second wife, the death of his son in a submarine disaster, and the further death of a daughter-in-law immediately after marriage. All this happened at a time when his practice was greatly diminished by the ending of Indian appeals. "I wonder", he remarked, "how many more blows fate has in store for me."

On the Bench he recovered a great part of his natural resilience. He had never practised in the Divorce Division. But he was soon as familiar with the pages of Rayden as he had once been with Mulla. He also revealed a surprising knowledge of human nature. I had the feeling that he was more at home dealing with the vagaries of conduct which reveal themselves in the matrimonial courts than ever he had been when addressing the Privy Council (however successfully) on recondite points of the Mitakshara law