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LOCATION AND INTERVAL BEFORE LUCRATIVE PRACTICE

By *Enoch G. Hogate*

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As the time approaches for the law student to graduate, the question comes more and more forcefully to him, Where shall I locate? It is a question that but few are able to determine in advance and be well satisfied with the decision made. When looking over the field, the new lawyer may settle on a location and time will reveal it is a misfit, but if so, it is because of the man himself rather than the place. No doubt everyone ought to locate where there is business, and where the outlook is for an increase of business. If, then, the person has a legal education, and the right kind of stuff in him, he will, in due time, get his portion of the legal work.

But the law graduate is prone to say a particular field is already full of good lawyers who have the best of the business, and can command all of it. As Webster said, "There is always room at the top;" and if a novice in the practice has the dogged determination to hold on and fight, he will find, even in that field he now thinks full, there is a place for him. It goes without saying that if a location that superficially looks good is not already filled with lawyers, it is because there is not enough business to justify lawyers settling there. If the student—the one who is just ready to launch into the active practice—will settle where there is business, and shows capabilities on social, economic, political, and legal lines, he will realize sooner or later that that portion of the world has been waiting for him, and he will succeed.

Again, let the new man in the practice remember that there is always a period of waiting before he may hope to see the sun arise on his field of an inviting and lucrative law practice; but, really, that period of waiting is most desirable. He has the opportunity to study conditions, his environment, to adjust himself to the situation, to form friendships, in social, business, and political life. Better than all that, it furnishes the opportunity to live among his books and know where to put his fingers on the tools of his trade when he has occasion to use them. He ought not repine if he does not get big cases to start with, nor be envious of those who do secure the big cases. I can think of nothing more disastrous to the young practitioner than to get a case early in his practice that is too big for him to handle, and make a failure with it in court. He has a failure charged up to him, with no line of successful cases back of him to compensate. He has butted his head against a stone wall and has been disfigured. Better have a number of small cases at first with few points in them. And it is not meant by this that he should seek small cases, nor, on the other hand, that he should seek large cases, bristling with legal propositions and technicalities, but if he succeeds in handling the small cases, with ever-increasing importance, he will get the larger ones when he is able to handle them. Business men with large ventures are seeking lawyers who can handle their business, and will seek the practitioner as soon as he has demonstrated his capability.

So, I say to the graduate in law of this year and the succeeding years, "It is up to you." The legal and business world will receive you kindly if you will let them; business will come to you if you are equipped for it and desire it. There is no reason for discouragement, for there is abundant room for the practitioner who practises law as a science, and is determined to uphold the high ideals of the profession, and not to prostitute the high calling.

Amos G. Hazen