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The Lawyer's Opportunity in the Small Town

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THE LAWYER'S OPPORTUNITY IN THE SMALL TOWN.

The greatness of Kentucky lies not in her large cities and manufacturing. It lies in her country districts and in her country towns. There are at present in Kentucky some 79 country towns having populations between one and five thousand. The wide-awake lawyer in one of these towns today has better opportunities both for his personal advancement and for the good of his State than the lawyer in the larger city. The young lawyer should bear this in mind when deciding on his future location. Most men will advise the young lawyer to go to a city and the young lawyer, like other young professional men, has a natural tendency to drift cityward. He sees dazzling before his eyes the fat fees that come from managing the business of a corporation. He sees more money in the centers of population and more litigation there, and he reasons that there, then, must be the greatest chance for success. The city IS a place of great opportunity, but for the young lawyer the small town is the place for greater opportunity, unless he happens to be born to the city and its ways, and be possessed of an acquaintance with city men who can and

will help him to climb. Influence and the friendship of people with property is what he needs in the city. Simply to hang out a shingle and wait for business in a metropolis, however, is to hold out a hand to doom.

There are at present in the City of Lexington at least thirty-five young lawyers who have issued from these college halls and it would be a safe assertion to say that less than five are making as much as \$50.00 a month. The same holds true of those in the City of Louisville and the other cities of the State. On the other hand without a single exception the graduates of this department located in country towns are meeting with much greater success. We find them representing corporations, holding offices of public trust and being recognized as leaders in their respective communities. Only a few weeks ago one of our young lawyers located in a country town was nominated for Congress by his party. In a city he would have had to labor for years before being so honored.

Negligence cases will soon be settled to a great extent by the Workman's Compensation Act, and apart from these the only profitable branches of law are those connected with money, property and business. In the small towns the young lawyer of good repute can readily become acquainted with the well-to-do people of the town, and if he can hang on long enough and show his ability and skill in business organization and management, he will gain a reputation for integrity, and the best kind of professional business will drop into his hands.

If he has the superlative ability and forensic skill of a great lawyer, a Root, a Choate, or a Webster, he will in the smaller forum have opportunity to prove it sooner, and can then move forward to success in a large city if he will.

If he lacks this commanding ability, but still can rank with the really capable men who are intellectually equipped and endowed to practice law effectively, he will sooner attain leadership in the small town, and will receive a greater meed of honor, emolument and social position than the same position would give him in the city.

In the country a new lawyer in town is a man who will be glad to take pains with small cases, to draw up simple papers, and do the little things the average man cannot do for himself and for which

he still in not willing to pay a fancy price. The new man will get the little jobs at first, and as he acquits himself with them, so will his reputation begin to grow. His attendance on the regular terms of court will acquaint him with the judges and with his fellow lawyers and get him occasional appointment to defend criminals at the expense of the Commonwealth.

He finds here less competition in proportion to the amount of business than there is in the city and he finds less of the cut-throat spirit. He is recognized as a man, as a human being, not merely as an opposing machine to be tricked and maligned in any way that will defeat him.

Today the best men of the country bar are very different from the rough and ready practitioners of a few decades ago. The bluffing, blustering method of winning has disappeared for the most part, and orthodox methods have become the rule. It has not been long since the village lawyer's favorite position was on the court house steps squirting tobacco juice and dispensing wisdom. He was the village oracle. He was known by his frocked-tailed coat and long black cigar. He is gone. He has served his purpose and served it nobly. In his place is the clear-cut business lawyer of today. His office is as up-to-date and his library as voluminous as his city contemporary. He is not in the limelight as much as his predecessor was. He is found in his office, settling cases out of court and giving his clients sound advice as to the conduct of their business.

The man who works in the small community is known by every one. His traits of character, his capabilities, are on the tips of every tongue. If he lives a square life and treats others right, he will forge ahead. There can be no doubt of it. If he stoops to chicanery in the effort to get an earlier start, or if that is his motive, he will soon be branded as a tricky lawyer and henceforth he will have the confidence of none and the business of only those who will stop at nothing to win.

The young lawyer who wills it so can start in a country town unheralded and unknown and within a month after hanging out his shingle can walk down the street calling every business man in the place by name and getting a pleasant greeting in exchange.

Also it must be said the same young man by taking no thought

of his future, and by reason of thoughtlessness and lack of energy can sit down in his new office in the village and little by little draw around him a class of hangers-on and loafers who will make his office their club room, keeping away any possible clients and producing no business themselves.

In the small town the young lawyer has a splendid chance in the more leisure time of his early career to take hold of public matters in way of improvement societies, commercial organizations and other work which may show his metal and his executive ability, and at the same time, get him acquainted with the citizens to his later advantage.

The lawyer should make himself a mixer. He should take pains to get on the right side of the public. He cannot afford to sit down and wait in silence for business. He cannot advertise in the ordinary ways, but he can advertise by showing himself public spirited and possessed of brain and ideas. He can secure the favorable opinion of others and there is no better or more valuable kind of advertising than the word of mouth sort of publicity.

The young lawyer who start right and behaves himself will be admitted to the best families in the community. He will know the best people and he may form the best of friendships. His ability to speak in public will give him numerous opportunities to make himself known, and no faculty that he can develop will work to his greater advantage. He can stamp his personality upon the community. His opportunities are limited only by his ambition. He, as a young lawyer, will be looked upon as one of the rising young men of the place, unless he is a born ne'er-do-well, and he will make for himself a place in the town that will be a source of permanent satisfaction and the basis of a life of usefulness and profit.

In about a month twenty-six will emerge from this department with their sheep-skins.. It is hoped that all will locate in Kentucky and be a potent factor in its future development. Kentucky's development will come from its rural communities. In choosing a location where we can best advance ourselves and at the same time subserve our Commonwealth, let us not pass by the country town.