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JOEL P. BISHOP.

Joel Prentiss Bishop, the well-known author, furnishes a short sketch of his life to the *Central Law Journal*. The accompanying portrait represents a vigorous old gentleman with pleasant features. Mr. Bishop says:— I was born March 10, 1814, in Volney, Oswego county, New York, in a small log house in the woods, remote from all other habitations but one. While yet a babe, my mother being sick and soon to die, I was taken to my father's former place of residence, Paris, Oneida county, in the same State, and I have no remembrance of Volney. My father was a farmer of small means, yet owning his fertile sixty acres, and I worked with him, attending a remote district school three or four months in the year, and finally graduating into "the academy." The schoolmaster of the district school was changed every term; and, regularly at its close, the retiring one visited my father and urged him to send me to "college." My own aspirations grew, and at about the age of sixteen an arrangement was made with my father to permit me to leave the farm and get an education by my own exertions. I found poverty to be no obstruction. While yet sixteen I taught a public school. And by such and other means I readily obtained the money for clothing, tuition and books. I could always earn my board without hindrance to my studies. But health soon failed, and then began the struggle. I did everything to baffle disease; relinquished study, returned to it under circumstances thought to be more favorable, broke down again, varied the experiment, and so on, for how many times I do not remember. When twenty-one, I became fully satisfied that the struggle was useless, and gave it up. I did not, like Blackstone, write a "Farewell to the Muse," but a "Farewell to Science." It was dated July 19, 1835, and published in "The Literary Emporium," of New Haven, Conn., near which

place I then was, in the number for October 3, 1835. I made, in the "Farewell," one reservation, expressed in the following words:

"Though thus I bid adieu to Learning, where She sits in public places, or bows and waves Her plumes from off her star-clad height to meet The gaze of millions, still I may invite Sometimes her presence in a humble garb, To cheer me in my lone, obscure retreat."

Acting on this reservation, and otherwise letting "Learning" alone, and having drifted to Boston, I entered a law office in the fall of 1842, hoping to obtain a little useful information, but with no idea of having health to practice the law. Here came another, yet agreeable, disappointment. At the end of a year and four months, I had fully supported myself by literary work outside the law, undergone an examination by the judge as to my competency in the law, taken the proper oath for admission to the bar, opened an office, and entered upon legal practice. Indeed, legal practice with me began six weeks after I was enrolled as a student, when required by circumstances to draw, without other help than a little preliminary explanation, a special declaration in an important case which went through the courts, and "stood." And afterward I had managed all the small-court business of the office, consulting with clients, and trying their causes. During this period also, I tried and won my first jury case in the higher court. So practice had become familiar to me; and, considering how slowly my short preparation compelled me to work, there was no lack of clients.

My business was divided between large and small, but most of it was the latter. This, preferring the former, I determined to get rid of; and, as a side exercise during the change, to write a law book. Hence my "Marriage and Divorce," which was published in one volume just ten years after I entered a law office as a student. It brought me a constant succession of requests and advice to write other books. I saw that I could not both write books and practice; so, with the approbation of the only person entitled to object, I made the great sacrifice of my life by relinquishing practice, and entering upon legal authorship—whether for the benefit or injury of mankind time only can disclose.