

though chance may have given me more than the average facilities for practice. I read text-books, doubtless not the same over which Professor Gray stumbled, but such as were put into my hands, and in connection with them I read, as did the other students in offices, collateral cases to the extent necessary to make their teachings practical and distinct. I rendered to the lawyers under whom I was studying whatever assistance I could in their professional business. In return, they gave me such aid as I needed. After five or six weeks, I began to draft papers for them; and, not much later, I took the entire charge of their small Court business, consulting with clients and trying their causes in Court. And in less than half of Professor Gray's three years, I was practising as an admitted counselor before the full bench of the highest Court of the State. Doubtless we, whose course I have thus described, had shortcomings whereof we were ignorant. But, in consulting with our clients, we kept them in paths where no harm befell them; in Court, we won their causes, and the judges approved of all our steps; and our clients bestowed upon us both their gratitude and their money. Looking back through a long vista of years upon these happily remembered days, I can find it neither in my heart nor in my understanding to denounce, as utterly unworthy for purposes of legal education, those text-books which enabled me to make a successful entry into the profession from a period of study which I acknowledge to be too short, and so to practice the law as to draw around me clients whose sad regrets when I relinquished practice for law writing I can scarcely remember without emotions not for public utterance.

Nor can I forbear to put another testimony by the side of Professor Gray's. A young lawyer writes me, earnestly craving advice. He says that he studied law through cases, ignoring text-books, and became an enthusiast of the method. Opening an office for practice, he continued the study of cases alone. Thus he went on until his mind became overwhelmed with a mass which he could not wield. He now finds that he must change his method or give up all attempt at legal practice.

An experience of about forty years, not in writing the jurist works I am calling for, but in contributing thief-food, which, I trust, is performing its humble part in the fattening for a slaughter whereby the advent of jurists will become possible, brings me into sympathy with this young lawyer. The first step in preparing a book is to examine the mass of reported cases on its subject, ordinarily numbering many thousands. Herein I can get on with reading as many, or two or three times as many, as a student would do, without becoming conscious of the tangle in which my lawyer correspondent finds himself. But when the number read has reached up well among the thousands, not one of which contains a particle of general doctrine authoritatively stated, such as I must write, but each one is the conclusion of a Court only on specific and limited facts; or, if the judges announced in it what they deemed to be general doctrine, I am compelled still to interpret their words as qualified by the special facts: when I look at the enunciations in each case as made from a standpoint differing from that in any other; when my thoughts run forward to thousands upon thousands of differing prospective facts, with even more reference to which than to the past, my settings down of doctrine must be made; when I have thoroughly learned that, upon a large part of the questions, the uninterpreted words of the judges are directly adverse to one another, while yet I know that interpretation will melt away a part or all of the seeming discord; when I have discovered that not in all the cases did either the counsel or the Court have any clear or just comprehension of the doctrines wherewith they seemed to be dealing, and that in many of them, both failed to think of something which would have reversed the result had it been before their minds,—I find myself to have taken only the first step toward an understanding of the subject, consisting in the one beam of light, namely, that I know little or nothing of it. In this stage of the book's production, should I relinquish the making of it and return to practice, I could not satisfactorily advise a client on its particular topic. It is only after the book is written that I become conscious of having learned something. The