

apiece for them! It is true, as regards the bar, that a large number of gentlemen go there without any idea of practising, and it is very difficult to ascertain the precise proportion of men ready to take cases if offered. With regard to the business of a solicitor, everyone familiar with the work of the profession knows that at least three-fourths of it has nothing to do with litigation. I mean that if the business of the solicitors of England and Wales were taken from end to end such would be about the average of non-litigious work. The bulk of the business is that of advisers and diplomatists. Now I ask how many men are there who come into our branch of the legal profession and study during the statutory period, and perhaps come out well at the end, who thoroughly appreciate that the chief duty they will have to perform lies in attending to such matters as do not necessarily require an acute knowledge of the technicalities of the law. I do not think that point is sufficiently considered by those who enter the profession. The subject was to some extent recognized by a gentleman who died a short time ago and left a legacy to provide a prize for the candidate best versed in the direction to which I have referred, but he did not, I think, go far enough. I do not underestimate the need of the legal and other examinations; on the contrary, I hope that the high standard will be continued. As to honours, I think that it is a very excellent thing to try for them, and I speak gently upon this because I was fortunate enough to get a place myself in my day, though I certainly never derived a single client thereby. So far as it goes, it is a pleasure to dwell upon, and I counsel every man going up for his examination to endeavour to get a prize, for the extra knowledge thereby acquired, even if he be unsuccessful, is very valuable. I have, however, known men who have come straight from the test brimming over with honours, literally packed with law, but as to whom it has been found almost impossible to unpack a single bit to meet some commonplace emergency. It is a great fallacy to suppose that because you can pass your examination well, or even get honours, that you are likely to get work or be able to per-

form it when you do get it. Now there are several positions in which men find themselves on coming into our profession. There are those who have what I may call a legal family pedigree, others have influential commercial and business relations, and some have plenty of money. The man with the family business already made is not a person one need particularly legislate for, though he has to keep his eyes open, but mere possession of good business connections do not make it all certain that a solicitor will succeed if he is simply learned in law. I look upon tact as the most important qualification, and this can only be acquired by diligent observation and the study of your fellow-man. I remember an occurrence some twenty years ago which will illustrate in a small way what I want to impress upon you when I say how little mere legal skill or abstract knowledge of the law will assist, compared to some knowledge of mankind—a position that might occur to any of you at any time. As all the parties are dead, I am not disclosing secrets, but about the period I name I was engaged in a case of some importance, involving a considerable sum of money, which was set down for trial and in the list to be heard on a certain day. The afternoon before, at the very last moment, my client was in great distress of mind because he discovered that the names of third persons would have to be published to their detriment, and he resolved under any circumstances he must drop from the fight before incurring heavy further expense, and, in the emergency, the animosity being intense, there was apparently only one course—viz. to withdraw the record, which he instructed me to do, and pay the adversary's costs. Much disheartened, of course, I drove off to achieve the purpose. The official closing hour was at hand, and just as I arrived at the door I ran against my opponent, who struck me as looking remarkably gloomy, and it passed through my mind, though I was close run for time, that I had better just see if he would say anything to me before I showed my hand. I am not going to speak too much about myself, but I studied that man's face—he, too, has long since passed away—and assumed as gay an air as possible, and this