

because visitors take only a hurried glance for fear of disturbing things or of annoying some one. Let the good work go on. There are many such little things that though small in themselves will tend to give visitors a better impression of our school and of the work being done here and which in the end will be of profit to the school yea, a hundred fold.

The Extent of Law.

HON. J. L. WEBSTER AT THE OPENING OF THE LAW SCHOOL.

The law is a measureless subject. Its extent and magnitude are only limited by the boundary lines of human knowledge. It reaches from the highest to the lowliest, protecting the young, guarding the weak, avenging the humble and grasping and restraining the universe of men in one common embrace.

The social system rests primarily on the affections, but the law regulates and enforces its obligations. The business relations of the people, from the greatest enterprise to the minutest details, are controlled by it and carried on in harmony with it. Governments are but fabrics of law woven, as it were, into beautiful and enduring designs, to control the body politic and promote the mutual safety by the combined strength of the people. The federal constitution is a law unto the states and unto the citizens, fixing, establishing, and maintaining their relative obligations as firmly as the unwritten laws that have been forming through many centuries fix and maintain the relative obligations of individuals.

Congress and the legislature are making new laws every year, intended to meet the demands of our growing country, and the courts are daily handing down opinions, declaring what the law is, and applying principles to the multitudinous affairs of life at the rate of more than 100 volumes a year. So extensive is becoming the field of law, as applied to the transactions of life by the numerous courts that it is being stored away in so many thousands of volumes of reports and so many hundreds of volumes of text books that no man's life is long enough to read them.

The law permeates everywhere, into all the doings and transactions of mankind, in secret and in public places. Even more than that, it inquires into the motive and intent of every action, thus making the inmost thoughts of man subject to its imperial power. As the wind blows through the trees, rustling every leaf, moving every twig, shaking every branch and bending the strong trunk, so the law is felt permeating everywhere throughout the social, business, and political system of the world.

No man can know all law. No man can understand creation, yet there are certain natural laws so mastered by scientific men, that they do understand how material things are kept in place, how and when changes occur in the grass that grows under our feet, and in the worlds that move in the heavens above. So there are principles that pervade the whole field of law that man can master, and when these are well understood the application can be made to the countless conditions of life that are effected by them. These principles have been gathered through ages, from the time of Justinian, Littleton, Coke, and Blackstone, to the days of our Justice Story and Chancellor Kent.

Every man that would become a lawyer, alike a credit to himself and an honor to his profession, must understand these principles. They should be so photographed upon his memory as to be constantly present before him, so that he can see them, as he would look upon and study the pictures

in an art room. He should be able to appreciate and admire them as he would appreciate thought and expression developed in the tone and coloring of a beautiful painting.

It is such and only such an acquaintance with the fundamental principles of law that will create and maintain a genuine love for its study and practice.

A student of the law should be as charmed with all historical writings that explain and illustrate its principles as with the most fascinating novel. He should go back through the ages and study the growth of nations and the character of their governments to find how the elements of law were evolved from the crudities of earlier times, and fashioned and developed by the progress of the people. Centuries have passed while the law has been developing into its present beautiful symmetry, just as it has taken the world a long time to become able to form a government of liberty and law, such as the republic of the United States.

The origin and development of law was beautifully portrayed by the Hon. Joseph Neilson in the following illustration: "At the seashore you pick up a pebble, fashioned after the law of nature in the exact form that best resists pressure, and worn as smooth as glass. It is so perfect that you take it as a keepsake. But could you know its history, from the time it left the fragment of rock and fell from the overhanging cliff into the sea, to be taken possession by the undercurrent, and dragged from one ocean to another, perhaps around the world for a hundred years, until reduced into its present form, it was cast upon the beach as you find it, you would have a fit illustration of what many principles now in familiar use have endured, thus tried, developed, fashioned during ages. We stand by a river and admire the great body of water, flowing so swiftly by, yet could we trace it back to its source we find a mere rivulet meandering on, joined by other streams, fed by secret springs and by the rains and dews of heaven, but gathering strength and deepening its channel as it flows through the provinces, until it attains its present majesty. Thus it is that we can trace the systems of science to small beginnings, through gradual and countless contributions, until they finally take their places in use, as each of you, from helpless childhood and feeble boyhood, have grown to your present strength and majority. No such system can be born in a day. It is not as when nature in the full proportion of her strength suddenly lifted land into mountain ranges, but rather as by small accretions during countless ages, she places her islands in the seas."

A system so developed has about it a perfection that elicits the admiration of every scholar. Now and then we hear of the cruelties, the hardships and the injustice of the law. Now and then we meet with an inharmonious joining of its principles that produces painful results. These are not the faults of the law but evils arising from a misapplication of the law or erroneous judgment pronounced by those who administer it. It is the duty of the lawyer and of the judge to ascend to that elevation of greatness from which he can look upon the law as a science and administer it in all its beautiful symmetry.

Erskine said, "The wisdom of the law is greater than any man's wisdom." Other writers have gone further and proclaimed that the wisdom of the law has become a science. "The law," said Blackstone, "is a science which is universal in its extent, applicable to each individual, yet comprehending all knowledge."

The late Judge Mellvaine of the supreme court of Ohio once said to me, "I want to talk to you about the science of law," and entered upon a discourse fascinating and charming. Edmund Burke, the greatest of English scholars, who gathered all knowledge into his speeches and prose writings,