

(editor's note: This paper was transcribed from a handwritten cursive copy with various difficulties. For a perfect rendition, the reader might wish to consult the original, itself a copy, in the volume entitled *Literary Club Papers I*, 1885 – 1886 Oct 3, '85 to May 29, '86) The original is very badly faded.

Budget. Hooper Editor. March 27, 1886

The Young Lawyer

The young lawyer, we all know him, we all have met him. He is generally in hurry, has a quick, nervous walk, and a highly important air. Wears nose-glasses; but they are to make him look intellectual, am sorry to say the desired result is not often effected. The young lawyer begins his professional career with a confiding father, a large sign, and very little knowledge of the law. Having milked his father, placed his sign in position, and forgotten his law, he opens a wee office on the 19th floor of "Memery's" building, and there with the Ohio reports and a small office boy, he waits and watches for his prey. The office boy is at first a great source of trouble to him; the problems being 1st How to keep him employed, next to teach them to behave with proper respect to his employer. I once knew a young lawyer who, having no other means of employing his boy's time, set him to work copying the revised statutes of Ohio, two ponderous, closely printed volumes of over 1200 pages each. The boy did not live to complete the task. What office boy with a spirit would; – and died just as soon as he possibly could after completing volume 1. It is needless to remark that his master never smiled again “—at his own expense —It is very hard to inoculate a small office-boy with respect for a young lawyer; he may pity, but he can not respect him. Yet no martinet is more severe and strict than the youthful employer. He frowns down the slightest attempt at familiarity, and rules over that boy with as despotic a sway as the czar of Russia.

Our youthful friend's first experience is before a magistrate. His father has been sued by a discharged employee; the defense is perfect; the plaintiff hasn't a leg to stand on. The youthful advocate makes the greatest effort of his life; he begins with the feudal law, and traces its history down to the middle ages, thence to the present time, and concludes by reading a decision of the Supreme Court. This mighty effort has occupied three hours, and has effectually cleared the court-room, and closed the eyes of the justice; – but Justice, we know, is blind –When he ceases, and closes his books with a terrific force, the justice awakes with a start, rubs his eyes, and proceeds to render judgment for the plaintiff. “But, your Honor,” cries the indignant advocate, “you have over-ruled the Supreme Court.” “I know it,” answers

the magistrate, “but as that court has never failed to overrule me, I claim the same privilege in my turn, you can take an appeal.”

After this experience, he waits in solitude for three or four months only broken by the visit of his creditors. He is at last assigned, at the expense of the state, to defend a criminal. The prisoner has been indicted for arson; the young man has forgotten what arson is, but he proves equal to the occasion, has recourse to his text-books, and studies of the subject. He then visits his victim, I mean client, in the County jail. How his heart beats as he approaches him; and they have their first interview of course the prisoner is innocent; who ever heard of a prisoner that wasn't? He can prove an alibi; – it was a case of spontaneous combustion; he is the victim of police persecution, he is sure to be acquitted; – but he is not entirely satisfied as to his counsel; thinks he is a little too young; besides, he never had a lawyer yet, who didn't furnish all the testimony required for the defense. However he remarks, “that beggars can't be choosers,” and submits with as bad a grace is possible.

From that time forward, and until the trial, our Advocate is a changed man. He has hardly time to eat, drink, or sleep, so constant is his application and study. As the trial day draws near, he feels his courage growing less and less, and when the fatal day does arrive, he wishes for wings to fly away. Yet here he is in the crowded court room, before Judge and jury. The prisoner is brought in. The judge looks over his spectacles; – all is ready. At this time, the faculty of memory deserts our poor friend; he can remember nothing; he is no longer capable of articulate speech. The judge calls his name, “Mr. — are you ready?” What shall he do? Yet all at once he is saved. The prisoner rises, and addresses the court, “Judge, I have seen the attorney whom your honor has appointed to defend me, and have consulted with him. I am satisfied that if I were ever innocent, he would surely prove me guilty. I can lose nothing, therefore by pleading guilty in advance, and throwing myself on the mercy of the court.” Let us draw a veil over the scene. What Pen could portray that young man's feelings? – Yet the picture is not overdrawn. Whoever heard of a young lawyer failing to convict his prisoner? Nay, I am informed that it was only last week that “Rac Butler” rushed into the law library his face aglow with triumph, and told the librarian that he had just succeeded in doing something phenomenal, something never before heard of in this county. “What was it,” cried the librarian. “What was it,” repeated Rac, “why, my client was indicted on seven counts, and I have just convicted him on all seven.”

But why waste words; strange as it may appear, all the old lawyers were young lawyers, and apropos of that, a young legal friend of mine once said that he would die happy if he could only grow a beard and have a bald head. Said he (confidentially) I despise a beard, but you must know a beard gives one such an aged look, and at the same time inspires respect; and as for a bald head, it impresses a client from the very start, and makes him think you are intellectual.” The next time I saw that young man he had a beard. He was not a handsome man, nor was it a handsome beard; but he had nobly sacrificed himself for duty's sake. I have always respected him since, and if I am ever accused of a crime, will try to get him appointed assistant prosecutor.

I was unwillingly present as a juror last month in Superior Court room. It was a damage suit; a youthful lawyer against a grey-beard. The contest was unequal. How unmercifully the old man twitted his adversary, accused himself of being young, referred to him sarcastically as “his youthful friend, whom it is to be hoped will know a little more law when he gets a little older.” It was with difficulty I expressed my indignant feelings returning home. I put my pen to paper, and on behalf of all young lawyers, addressed the old one as follows:

Since juvenility is a crime
That only can be cured by time
We'll patiently await our hour
To crush the tyrants now in power.
Old time will prove our firm ally
Their foe, insidious, ever nigh
To ease our pain he'll give them age
And leave to us the world's wide stage.

Here our contributor must have fallen asleep, for the pen seems to have dropped from his hand, making a huge blot; - - and the contribution ends. —

Simeon M Johnson