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EDWARD W. HINTON: A STUDENT'S RECOLLECTIONS

IT IS more than twenty years since I sat in Judge Hinton's classes. I remember vividly the experience. I can still see the attentive smile that played about his lips and eyes and his kindly up-and-down nods of assurance, which had become a habit, as though he agreed in advance with anything we said. I can still hear his soft drawl as he commenced a lecture: "At the early common law . . ."

What a mastery he had of those most abstruse subjects of pleading and practice! And how definitely he applied his colossal knowledge to the present practical problems of our profession. He was a rare teacher. Where else could be found his facility for narrative, his aptness in illustration, his precision in statement? Unless one followed him intently one gained a sense of false assurance—so simple did he make it all seem. And how gladly he "suffered fools." No term less strong than affection could characterize the feelings of every one of us toward him.

But first, there was the amplitude of his learning and his intellect; from him we first gained an insight into the real meaning of the law as a learned profession. For he was as familiar with the Norman-French of the Year Books as with the advance sheets of the Supreme Court. In this respect the perspective of the years has not disproved the impression of those whose vision was likely to be distorted by sitting at his feet. From time to time, in recent years, I have asked him questions on subjects in which the exigencies of practice had forced me to acquire a special knowledge. And I always was dismayed to find that my special knowledge was but the commonplace of his equipment.

Then, there was the breadth of his practical experience. Through years of successful practice and experience on the bench, his feet were planted firmly on the ground. His was no "cloistered virtue . . . that never sallies out and seeks its adversary." And yet his teaching never

included anecdotes of his own practice as is so likely when a lawyer teaches. As far as I can remember, he never mentioned in the lecture room his own experience at the bar or on the bench. He was generous in pat illustrations and pithy statements, but his personal experiences were utterly suppressed.

Then, there were his rare qualities as a pedagogue. He was as unwearying in teaching as he had been industrious in research. To impart information appeared in him to be a supreme joy. No question was too stupid to merit his illuminating reply, and I never heard him give an oracular or evasive answer. He was never impatient or ill-tempered; he was never pedantic or abstruse; he lightened the tedium of a most jejune subject by a delightful flow of humor and witticism.

Finally, there was the humanity of the man. In him modesty was carried to the last degree. He never, in look, tone, or demeanor, implied that he claimed superiority to any of us. He never triumphed in an argument that left a sting. His wit was lambent but never mordant. He saw the humor of his own broken bones, but never ours. High courage, deep courtesy—surely no one deserved the epithet of “gallant” more than he.

A bright but mellow light has faded from our view and left us lingering wistfully in the gloaming.

WILLARD L. KING