

LEGAL EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES.—*The American Law Register* has given its views lately on the subject of legal education. As the topic is one of considerable interest to us at the present time, it may not be inopportune to look at the views expressed by contemporaries in regard to the lessons to be learned from the experience of our neighbours. The *Law Register* bewails the decadence of legal education, and asserts that the former days were better than these. The American demon of hurry has infected the legal profession, and every other calling too, and now the result is the admission to the bar of men scantily prepared for the work of their profession, and, in many cases, not even so sufficiently equipped as to be able to acquire that learning which is in many cases postponed until studentship is ended. The long apprenticeship of the Inns in England, the discipline of pleading under the bar before call, the preceptorship of a member of the bar of the old school, the thorough knowledge of the legal classics made necessary by the length of time required for the course, are in marked contrast to the superficiality engendered by a course of but two years in the study of law, with no sufficient training as a guarantee of proper mental power or equipment for the task.

The old American system, before the law school had practically the monopoly of legal education, in which the centre of instruction was the office of the practising attorney, is pictured in glowing colours. With us in Canada a similar system, or rather lack of system, means that the student is left to his own resources for instruction, for guidance in his reading, for help in his difficulties; he gropes in the dark along a labyrinthine path, where the help of a skilful guide would save many a needless step, and deliver him from many a pitfall.

Many of the evils which our contemporary deplors are traceable to the law schools, or, perhaps, more accurately, to defects in the law schools, which have rendered them quite as powerless to stem the flood of evils that haste and unrest have brought upon the standard of legal knowledge, as was the former system of blind groping. To remedy these defects is the duty of the hour. They are chiefly two. In the first place, no means are provided to insure that the student who attends the lectures given in the law schools is capable of comprehending them. He has no knowledge of legal principles, he is without even the foundation of a good academic or collegiate education. Next, the time given to study is so short; no one could possibly acquire a respectable knowledge of even the elements of law within the limits of the sixteen months of instruction, which is the full time of most of the courses of the law schools. The examinations are conducted by the professors, and follow the ruts in which the lecturers have travelled.

The remedy must come, in the opinion of the journal whose views we are examining, from two sources. These are the law schools and the courts. The courts, in whose hands the control of admission to practice rests, are urged to lengthen the time of study, whether in the law school or in the office, to at least three years. Then the character of the examinations, preliminary and final, must be changed in the direction of greater difficulty. So raise the standard of attainment requisite for admission, that none but thoroughly fit men shall be per-