

## The Social Life of a Law School

By CHARLES H. SHERRILL, '89

AN essential part of education for the bar consists of the acquisition by the student of a thorough grasp upon the ethics of his profession and also some preparation for the personal contacts which the practice of that profession will naturally entail. This necessitates for him something which the lecture room cannot, of itself, give him,—a certain social atmosphere long recognized in English legal education, but almost never in this country. The English provide it for their students, but we do not. Frequent jocular remarks are made by American lawyers concerning the English requirement that a law student there shall eat a certain number of dinners per month at one of their four great Inns of Court before he can be called to the bar. But it isn't at all a ridiculous requirement; on the contrary, it is based on common sense. This excellent custom of theirs has persisted so long because the English wisely understand that, during the hours of relaxation in the great dining hall of Middle Temple, a law-student comes to realize the human side of the responsibilities of our uniquely responsible profession, not only by frequent personal contact with the leaders of that guild, but also by the memories of hundreds of other distinguished lawyers of whom the walls around, or the converse of his friends or table acquaintance remind him. He absorbs there a legal atmosphere steeped in the best traditions of the past, that cannot but better his manhood and his professional morale. This enriching feature is grievously lacking in an American legal education.

These thoughts lead one logically to the conclusion that our Law School should have a great dining hall exclusively devoted to our law students, their instructors, and such leaders of the profession as would beyond doubt in increasing numbers repair thither to indulge in and contribute to the legal atmosphere sure to develop in such surroundings.

This dining hall should be of such an architectural type, and so adorned with portraits of ancient and modern worthies as would stimulate pride and interest in the profession to which those who use the hall are about to devote their lives.

In order to gain the most benefit from the dining hall and to elaborate the atmosphere it will create among the stu-

dents, it should be supplemented by some sort of club-room or rooms such as the Common Room or Combination Room seen at English universities, wherein could be carried forward the good talk started in the dining hall. Nearby should be dormitories for the students, affording the necessary complement of their social relations.

Especially at the Yale Law School is such a separate legal environment desirable. The standing of a law school is in great measure determined by the type of men it attracts as students, because high-class men succeed later at the bar better than men of a lower average; thus the Harvard Law School has been benefited by the type of Yale men it has attracted. Our School at present draws fewer Yale graduates than it deserves and almost no Harvard or Princeton men. Such a group of buildings as is suggested above would attract more of these desirable folk from outside New Haven, and greatly increase the number of Yale graduates.

Harvard men intending to practice law in New York City would find New Haven sufficiently near thereto and yet enough removed from that bustling metropolis to provide the desirable "academic calm" for study. They do not care to go to our University Dining Hall, to be thrown into the common life of Yale so dear to Yale men—it does not attract them at all—indeed, it may repel them. But if attendance at the Yale Law School could mean a complete social existence of its own, for its own students, an agreeable club life devoted exclusively to the Law School and the traditions of that profession, such a life, plus our proximity to New York, would bring us many Harvard and Princeton students. Of this conclusion I feel sure, as a result of many conversations with graduates of those two universities.

More Yale graduates would select our School if they knew that this complete legal atmosphere and life awaited them in New Haven, and if they knew that they need not fear to find themselves, after their Class had left, back in their old university town, with no satisfactory substitute for the college life they had come to feel so great a factor in a Yale education.

The Corporation has approved a form of certificate to be given all men who left the University in good standing to enter service during the course of the war, taking this means "of recognizing this patriotic action with the consequent sacrifice of a completed undergraduate training."



COMING OUT OF DAILY CHAPEL AT BATTELL