

four Inns of Court. Roughly speaking, it is divided into two parts—Roman law, in which one paper is set, and English law, which is sub-divided into three branches, with an examination paper for each branch. This examination entails, of course, the reading of a certain number of legal text-books; but its nature is not such as to tax severely the powers of any man of ordinary intelligence, and success in the passing of it by no means implies any profound legal learning.

“The necessary expenses of a call to the bar with a view to practice are by no means confined to the Government stamp duties and the fees payable to an inn. The inns provide nothing in the nature of legal training except a few lectures; and no lectures, however good, can qualify a student for practice. For practice, experience is necessary, and experience can only be gained in the chambers of a practicing barrister. There, and there only, can a knowledge be acquired of what may be called the unseen work of the bar—the advising of clients, the drafting of the ‘pleadings’ in an action, and the drafting of deeds and other documents. It is very commonly supposed that a barrister’s business consists mainly, if not entirely, in arguing cases in court. This is by no means the case with ‘juniors,’ this is to say, barristers who have not attained the status of a Queen’s Counsel. Every junior barrister (except those who devote themselves to criminal work) has a great deal more work to do in his chambers than in court. Many conveyancers rarely or never go into court at all. It may be safely said that a junior barrister’s first acquaintance with an action is seldom gathered from his brief. In all probability he has advised on the subject matter of action, has drawn the pleadings, and has been responsible for all the preliminary stages before the actual hearing.

“Thus it is necessary for every student to learn his business in a barrister’s chambers, and for the privilege of a seat in a pupil room during a year, and the right to read any papers which may come in, the customary fee is a hundred guineas. Some barristers try to give their pupils some definite tuition, but the busiest men are

those who have most pupils, and the result generally is that the pupils are left to shift for themselves as best they can, and to pick up what knowledge they may. Two years’ reading in chambers is usually considered the minimum equipment for practice at the bar, and this implies the disbursement of 200 guineas.

“It is not unusual to read in a solicitor’s office as well as in a barrister’s chambers, and there can be but little doubt that this is a wise course to pursue. By so doing the ordinary machinery of legal business is learned from the bottom upward, and a solid foundation is laid for the knowledge of law which is to follow. Many who are best qualified to judge have expressed their opinion that the wisest course for the would-be barrister to pursue is to begin his legal career as a solicitor, and only to join the higher branches of the legal profession when of maturer years. However this may be, a course of training in a solicitor’s office must always prove of great practical value to a barrister; for there he has an opportunity of learning much that is useful, and much that renders the course of business intelligible, which could only be learned indirectly and with some difficulty in a barrister’s chambers. There is no customary fee for a course of reading, as suggested, in a solicitor’s office, but the fee to be paid is a matter of arrangement in each particular case. Many young barristers continue reading in a barrister’s chambers after they have been called to the bar; but it must be remembered that professional etiquette strictly forbids a barrister from reading in a solicitor’s office. Consequently such reading must take place, if at all, before call, and not after.

“The regulation two years’ reading in chambers is usually divided between the Temple and Lincoln’s Inn—that is to say, half the time is spent in the chambers of a Common Law barrister, and half in the chambers of one who practices on the Chancery side. In the majority of cases that is probably wise; for the young barrister ought to know something about each of the great branches of the law, and ought never to be obliged to refuse any work which may be sent to him. The nature of most men’s career