

## LEGAL EDUCATION.

mittee of the American Bar Association, which in 1881 gave the gist of the opinions communicated to them by some of the best men in the profession in the United States in the following words:—

“There is little if any dispute as to the relative merit of education by means of law schools, and that to be got by mere practical training or apprenticeship as an attorney's clerk. Without disparagement of mere practical advantages the verdict of the best informed is in favour of the schools. The benefits which they offer are easily suggested, and are of the most superior kind. They afford a student an acquaintance with general principles, difficult, if not impossible, to be otherwise attained; they serve to remove difficulties which are inherent in scientific and technical phraseology; and they, as a necessary consequence, furnish the student with the means for clear conception, and accurate and precise expression. They familiarize him with leading cases, and the application of them in discussion. They give him the valuable habit of attention, teach him familiar maxims, and offer him the priceless opportunities which result from contact and generous emulation. They lead him readily to survey law as a science, and imbue him with the principles of ethics as its true foundation.”

The report before us then takes up the parable, as follows:—

“In addition to these statements in regard to the positive advantages of the kind of instruction afforded by a good law school attention is called to the fact that many a young man who has plodded his solitary way through Blackstone and Kent, in the office of some busy lawyer, who seldom has time to speak to him except to ask him to do an errand or copy a paper, has no adequate equipment for the modern requirements of the profession. If this be regarded as an extreme case it will have to be admitted that even the best advantages of an education in a law office are greatly reinforced by a systematic course of study in a law school.

“On this same subject there are some striking statements in the Inaugural Lecture of Mr. Girard B. Finch, the new Law Lecturer at Cambridge in England. The subject of Mr. Finch's Inaugural

Lecture was: ‘Legal Education; its Aim and Method.’ One passage in his address may well be quoted:

“During my stay in Boston last spring, men engaged in legal practice spoke to me of the great value of law teaching at Harvard University. Mr. Sidney Bartlett, the father of the Massachusetts Bar, told me that the three years' course at Harvard was equal to seven years' work in an office. Mr. Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., and Dr. Eliot, President of the University, spoke to the same effect. Dr. Eliot related with pardonable pride, that at the recent dinner of old Harvard men, a prominent young advocate had declared that when he was a student, he had often heard it said that the course at Harvard was equal to ten years of actual work; that he was then incredulous; but that after being in practice for ten years he came to know it as a fact.”

“It seems to us that there is no answer that will counterbalance evidence of this kind, although it is doubtless a fact that in studying in an office a student acquires a certain readiness in what may be called the ‘technique’ of the law that cannot be acquired very well in connection with a law school. The force of this objection—surely not very strong in itself—is entirely broken by the fact that any student of aptitude is likely to have ample time to acquire such details in the first years of his practice in the profession. Even if that were not the case, the objection would be fairly met by recommending that a portion of the time of study before admission to the Bar be spent in an attorney's office, as is now required in this State. The objection can in no way disturb the overwhelming advantage of such scientific training as can only be obtained where scientific instruction is given. To suppose that any education can be as well gained at haphazard, as at a school where effort is made to impart instruction in the most approved manner, is to suppose what, on the face of it, is nothing less than an absurdity.”

It is hard to get over this reasoning and testimony. Feeling the force of it one turns naturally to the discussion for ourselves of the same question as is answered by this report for the American Bar: