

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE.

plain, if the rule were passed now, to take effect immediately after the expiration of five years. New students could not then complain that they had been unfairly treated. I think, however, that the interests of the public, as well as those of the profession, would be better served by fixing a shorter limitation, and requiring every applicant for admission, after a period of, say, two years, to swear that since that time he has not received fee or reward. As to those who have already commenced their time, another rule might also be adopted affecting them, having a shorter period of limitation, after which it would become operative—one requiring a greater amount of legal knowledge for call or admission. Such a rule might be framed to take effect after six or nine months, thus giving intending applicants ample notice to prepare themselves for the extra books. The fees on all of the examinations might also be increased with profit to the Society—suppose double what they now are. It is probable that would prevent half the present average from going up. I am opposed to monopolies, or any class system of rules or government; freedom of thought and action and competition is absolutely necessary for the development of professional ability; but there are limits to everything human. Go beyond these limits and that which before wrought good will now work evil. A small dose of arsenic will sometimes invigorate life, a large dose destroy it. There is no danger in Canada of a lawyer's talents becoming rusty for want of opposition. Contrast the difficulties attendant upon the acquiring the profession in England with our own Province. The simile is bad, for in truth there are no attendant difficulties here. Witness the illustrious names which in every generation the bar has given to England's glory. The way they have to travel is no smooth, easy one like ours. The more difficult a thing is of attaining, the more it is prized when attained, the more valuable it is. There is another auxiliary, one in the hands of the lawyers themselves, but it has passed into a proverb, that he who is his own lawyer has a fool for a client. It is truly surprising the amount of indifference the profession as a body show by their supineness to this state of facts, when so much is said by them about the rapid increase in

numbers of their body. Every one talks about it, No one tries to remedy it. No aspirant experiences any difficulty in being article'd. There may be some attorneys who exercise a discretion in entering into articles with clerks, and have a choice in whom they will admit into their offices, and permit to *fit themselves* for admission as attorneys. If any such portion there be, the number is few. As a general rule, an attorney will enter into articles with any one who applies, be he gentleman or vulgarian, black or white, educated or ignorant, intelligent or stupid; the rector's son or a stable boy, it makes no difference. The result is that the ranks of the profession are constantly receiving not very desirable recruits. I am no advocate for exclusiveness or caste, according to merit its due wherever found, but the gradations of society are as necessary a result of our existence as a race as is the alternation of day and night of the existence of the earth as part of the solar systems. The position of barrister is an honourable one. This is not, however, the proper place to discuss these questions; but I submit that there should be other requisites for call (and admission also) than mere ability to pass the examinations and pay the fees.

If lawyers were to adopt a uniform rule, and receive no article'd clerks without a fee, and then only such as may be a credit to the profession, paying no salaries to article'd clerks, a great boon would thereby be conferred upon both the public and the profession. What salaries they do pay, let them pay to clerks not under articles. True, higher salaries would have to be paid, salaries equal to what are paid to clerks in stores and counting rooms; but more time and work could be demanded from such clerks—as much as is demanded from clerks in stores and counting rooms. One such clerk would do the work of two under the present system, and the lawyers, individually, would be the gainers by such a change in the system. But I fear this is too much to expect. Lawyers get their work done by three or four clerks who do not feel themselves under any obligation to do more than six or seven hours' work a day, and the general impression is that the present system is more economical. I do not think it is. Viewing it either as a present or future gain or loss, there cannot be a doubt but that it will be a