

## LEGAL EDUCATION.

be much indulged in. Counsel's *honorarium* has degenerated into the fee fixed by tariff; his ancient dignity has undergone a somewhat mercenary change. It is not well that nowadays he should run counter to the views of common-sense laymen who do not understand how a lawyer can be on both sides of a case.

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CONSIDERABLE attention has been given to the subject of legal education in the State of New York, arising out of a conflict between the Court of Appeals and Columbia College. In the year 1860 this college obtained the privilege from the Legislature—a privilege already granted to two other universities—of examining its own students for admission to the Bar. Recently the Courts have framed rules for admission, and desire to reduce the system, or rather want of system, of admission to a definite order. This invasion of their privileges is resented by the universities, and we have been favoured with a copy of a lecture delivered by Mr. Dwight, Warden of the Law School, upon education in law schools in the City of New York compared with that obtained in law offices. Mr. Dwight points out with great force the advantages of a regular and systematic training in a school under qualified professors, undisturbed by the routine and drudgery of an office.

Among these advantages he claims—

“Law schools make the student acquainted with reports of law cases, ancient as well as modern, and their comparative value; teach him how to study the cases reported, and to apply legal rules to them, and thus give him an invaluable key to the great mass and volume of legal knowledge, which from many who do not attend them is wholly hidden. Next to perfect familiarity with a legal rule is the knowledge where to find it speedily when wanted, and this acquisition of a lifetime is most satisfactorily begun in the precincts of a law school;”

Most of all, he claims that law schools tend to prevent students from becoming mere technical lawyers, inspire them with a love for broad principles, and an aversion to all modes of spending time and talents in begetting and abetting knavery.

While admitting the value of what Mr. Dwight advances in favour of this mode of teaching, we feel that he injures his cause by the sweeping denunciation of office training, where, as he himself points out, the two professions of solicitor and counsel are not simply permitted to be practised together as with us, but are united, and one examination is required for both. Mr. Dwight says with much truth, that

“Three years' attendance in a law office, particularly in this city, has little or no effect in giving the student that comprehensive knowledge and severe mental training which fit him to understand and comprehend the law as a science, or to practise it as an art. The student can have little if any personal attention from the lawyer in whose office he may be, and, where clerks are numerous, scarcely even enjoys his personal acquaintance. What the student gets he picks up in a hap-hazard way, while hurrying to chambers and answering to his principal's causes, or driving as a copyist through a mass of manuscript, or keeping a register of daily business. It is a notorious fact that many of the young men in offices do no more than this during the entire three years, and some of them not so much. Where they are not paid clerks, they spend a large portion of their time as they see fit. Some of them perhaps repeat the poet Cowper's experience, who attempted to obtain a legal education in this way, and who informs us that he ‘spent his time in giggling and in making others giggle, instead of studying law.’ A young gentleman once called upon me to commence his regular law-school duties, and mentioned that he had been for two or three years in the office of a prominent lawyer. I remarked that his attendance there must have been of great service to him; to which he replied, that he supposed so, but he had never been introduced to the great man, much less had any instruction from him. Matters in the offices being in this state, the law school is an indispensable requisite to a complete training for the functions of a lawyer.”