

The Daily Review.

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EDITORS: S. W. ALVORD. NOBLE N. ALVORD.
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The Legal Profession.

The following paper on the legal profession was written by a literary gentleman who sometimes visits this place, for the *Lariat*, a paper conducted by the students of Wabash College, Crawfordsville, Ind. We commend it to the careful perusal especially of the younger members of the bar:

Preparation is everything in the life of a lawyer. He wins or loses his causes according as he has full or careless preparation. His whole professional life is indicated in advance by the preparation he makes at the beginning. The first ten, possibly the first five years after a young man begins to study law will determine his status. If he thoroughly masters the fundamental principles then, he can thereafter be relied on to make the most of his causes. If he begins professional life without a distinct impression of the profound reasoning underlying all legal conclusions he will have a most uncertain career. He will win causes without knowing how he won, or lose without knowing why he lost. Success and failure alike confuse him.

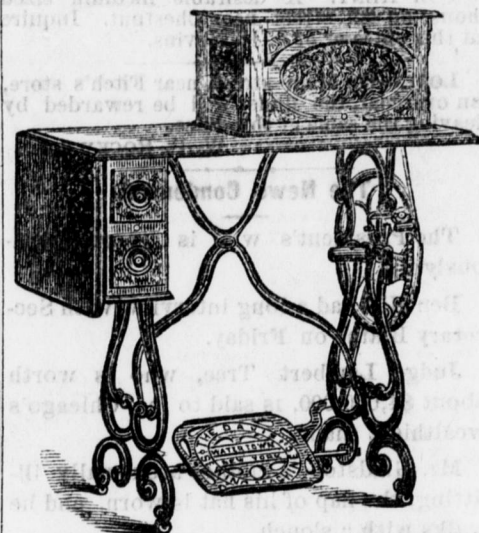
A man can never be a lawyer who has anything of the parrot in him. That silly bird looks wise and severe without knowing anything, and repeats words it has caught from others without knowing what they mean. The lawyer shuns these distinctive traits of the parrot. With full mastery of the elementary writers and thorough familiarity with the maxims of the law a young man has protection against unsafe conclusions. Without this he is like an army without orders, or a ship without a compass. A student without mastery of the Greek verb *may* make a clear and accurate translation of *De Corona*, but the probability is that he will not; and whatever he does he does doubtfully, and with difficulty and without enjoyment.

The elementary law writers are the grammar of the law. These must first be mastered or every step thereafter will be hazardous. A lawyer needs at least one—better take two more years of preparation than was necessary fifty years ago. The necessity demands, and every year emphasizes it, from the enormous number of law books. They increase at the rate of more than three hundred annually. More than two hundred of these are reports of decided cases. These are, as a rule, far less satisfactory than the earlier decisions. It requires a keener mind and a more accurate and enlarged preparation to read and apply the cases of this day than the cases of fifty years ago. Then they were decided on principle by reference to fundamentals. Now decisions, rest on decisions, and every case is a frame work where everything depends on something else. A case is apt to be a piece of patch work, and not a completed design. The discriminating faculty is more and more demanded that this patch work may be taken apart and the conclusions cast aside which are incongruous and unwarranted. The faculty ridiculed by Butler, to "Distinguish, and divide a Hair, twist south and southwest side," is in every day demand. Every decided case carries more or less weight and it must be considered critically before being accepted to determine just what weight to give it. The present way of making briefs is very much on the scissors and pastepot plan. It is a search of digests and reports.

A man with one book is said to be a dangerous man. It will come to be said of the dangerous lawyer that he is a master of the elementary principles—which

is one book in a large sense. A student in college who is thinking of becoming a lawyer could not do himself a better service than to memorize Broom's Legal Maxims. It is a delightful attraction and contains the very essence of the law. The time will never come when they will cease to be authority. And often application of a maxim will overturn a plausible speech of an hour better than an hour's speaking could do. J. A. F.

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