The articles on legal education have been published with no desire to arouse controversy. The merits or demerits of a particular school is one thing, the best theoretic machinery is quite another. These articles were sought and published to bring before the students themselves some authentic statement of the differing opinions. By comparison they will perhaps be enabled to more thoroughly grasp some conception of the things which no method can furnish. The importance of overhauling methods in law, and all professional schools seem obvious in the light of the marked changes everywhere made in education. A science of pedagogy begins to loom ominously on the horizon; the old-fashioned teacher staggered at the apparition to quietly withdraw. Bombshells are everywhere thrown into the queer structure of tradition. Will this movement pass quietly by the professional schools?

To advance any opinions on the subject of legal education would be quite absurd here. Some observations of student experience may not be out of place. One is that the ownership of ideas springs from their use, and interminable text reading, with no duty but to apprehend the author seems to emasculate the mind. On the other hand the application of law to facts, hypothetically or otherwise stated, does exercise the mind’s assertive and mastering powers. Whether all or any case reading is
EDITORIALS.

necessary for this is another thing. The confusion of a logical system with a dogmatic and traditional one may be too thorough in the law to permit of inductive methods of study solely. But certainly there can be no objection to a system which will make it in some measure part of the task of the student to work out applications of principles to facts and compel him to do a little independent thinking.

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The law is a conservative science and sweeping reforms take root slowly in its often inhospitable soil. Yet that there are sweeping reforms whose accomplishment would abate not one jot or tittle of the integrity or perfection of the science, but would rather aid and broaden its practical operations, no student of contemporary jurisprudence can fail to see and understand. Yet either the delays of legislative action or the lack of an abiding professional interest prevent their being engrafted on our national system. One has only to mention the legislation known as the Evarts' act to prove the former proposition, while the unfortunate lack of uniformity in our State Bar examinations is a lamentable instance of the latter. For ten years the united bar of the nation knocked in vain at the doors of Congress for relief for our overburdened Supreme Court, and only in the last Congress did the passage of the Evarts' Act open the way for that relief.

Of the second proposition, we are unaware of any concerted action by the bar of the nation looking to its accomplishment, or that leaders of legal thought, such as the American Bar Association, have given it any serious consideration. And yet, that the evil is a vital and growing one is a self-evident proposition. The course of our national development has undoubtedly been largely responsible for the magnitude of this evil; the adding of one State after another as almost independent commonwealths, each with their local regulations and ideas, has practically fostered a lack of uniformity in this regard. Forty-four States with forty-four separate and distinct standards, some ridiculously easy and inadequate, others difficult and approaching the dignity of the profession, were an alarming incongruity in themselves, were it not that the fast increasing complexity of our national life often makes imperative a comity between States that will allow a member of the bar of one State to practice in the courts of another by virtue of his office as attorney; but this privilege is sometimes denied, and often restricted within very narrow limits, solely because their standards of admission are not uniform. And simply raising the standard,
as is now the tendency in the East, without the broader national idea of uniformity being engrafted on the reform, seems to fall short of the highest professional ideal. For what is wanted is a uniform and required standard for admission on the common law of the land throughout the Union, a certificate for which would admit the holder to practice in any State court in the country, and withal with a standard sufficiently high and broad to clarify the professional atmosphere of some of its more than worthless elements. Whether this reform could not be best gained by blending examinations for this national certificate and examinations for admission to practice in the Federal courts we do not now attempt to decide, nor do we attempt to decide whether it is a subject for Congressional legislation or only for legal agitation; but we do feel the force of the evil and in thus discussing it at length hope to awaken an interest in its reform which shall lead to that end.