Vol. V. NOVEMBER, 1895. No. 2.

THE COUNSELLOR,

THE NEW YORK LAW SCHOOL LAW JOURNAL.

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Subscription, $2.00 Per Year. Single Copies, 30 Cents.

Entered at New York Post Office as Second-class matter.

THE MEETING OF THE AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION.

The American Bar Association held its eighteenth annual session on the twenty-seventh of August in the City of Detroit. The great influence which this Association wields, makes its meeting one of the important events of the year, and the addresses on this occasion were especially noteworthy for their timeliness, interest and value.

The early meetings of the Association were held in Saratoga, but now they are held in some one of the large cities. One of the results of this change in the place of meeting is shown in the fact that one hundred and fifty Michigan lawyers joined the Association at this session. The membership list contains names from every State and Territory, except Nevada, New Mexico, Arizona and Alaska. The constitution states that the objects of the Association are "to advance the science of jurisprudence, promote the administration of justice and uniformity of legislation throughout the Union, uphold the honor of the profession of the law, and encourage cordial intercourse among the members of the American bar."

Hon. James C. Carter the president delivered the opening address, reviewing the important features of the legislation of the States and of Congress during the year. In commenting upon this legislation, he said in part:

"It is amazing to think that enlightened States, abounding in productive wealth which would easily afford an ample revenue if properly tapped, should insist on retaining an intricate system of taxation even after it has proved to be abortive for its avowed objects. And yet this is what is everywhere exhibited. It seems incomprehensible that a people should deliberately adopt a policy that fosters the increase of crime, contempt for the laws and the debasement of character. In some communities, notably in New York, the impossibility of a general and equal enforcement of the laws and the revolting injustice of a partial effort have had the effect of leading the executive officers to wholly abandon any serious attempt at a rigid enforcement.

The condition of what are called sumptuary laws is equally discreditable to our knowledge both of the science of legislation and the teachings of experience. The task of enforcing them against the passions, the beliefs and the interests of multitudes can be accomplished only by a despot armed with unlimited power. The result is that our statute books are bristling with penal enactments that have little effect in repressing the practices against which they are aimed.

In urging the increased study by our profession of the science of legislation, I mean that science in its broadest extent. It should embrace, as I conceive, two principal branches: First, the just limits of the province of legislation; that is to say, what subjects are really fit for legislative action as distinguished from those which should be left to the disposition of courts, or to the discipline that proceeds from the moral agencies of society.

The other important branch is the study of the proper manner in which subjects fit for legislative action should be treated:

that is to say, the art of framing appropriate and effective laws."

Mr. Carter's address occupied three hours.

Prof. James Bradley Thayer of Harvard delivered an address on the subject of Legal Education. In it he urged the necessity of a learned study of the law, and the maintenance of schools. He made the assertion that American law schools are in advance of England, and that the best English teachers conceded this superiority in America.

Among other things, he said that efforts ought to be made to perfect the early English Year Books on which much of American law depends. As they stand, badly edited and full of errors, they form a wall which only the most persistent can break through. An interesting suggestion of Prof. Thayer's was that studies at law schools should be continued by watching actual trials.

Judge Taft ably defended the federal judiciary from the attacks recently made upon it by such men as Gov. Altgeld of Illinois. He referred in detail to the relation of the federal courts to organized labor, especially to their action in issuing injuctions in the American Railway Union strike. Of this strike he said:

"A public nuisance more complete than that which Debs et al, were engaged in furthering, cannot be imagined."

Prof. Austin Abbott reported that there were in the United States sixty-eight law schools which had last year an enrollment of 8330 students, of whom 1854 had degrees in letters or science. In these schools there were 666 instructors. About three-fourths of the students in law schools were residents of the States in which their schools were situated.

Judge William Wirt Howe of Louisiana, lecturer on Civil Law at the Yale Law School read an interesting paper on "The Historical Relation of the Roman Law to the Law of England."

Judge Howe first noticed the conflict of opinion on this question between the two schools, one of which minimizes the obligation of England to Rome in this respect, and the other of which perhaps magnifies the amount of the contributions of what we call civil law to the law of England. He suggested that the truth lay somewhere between these two extremes. He thought that history, analogy and high authority all united in contradicting those who persisted in ignoring the indebtedness of England to the Roman system. He claimed that the law of a people is developed in much the same manner as their language, and it is impossible to deny the obligation of the English language to the Latin. It is quite impossible to speak or write English for any important purpose without using words of Romanic origin. Bearing this analogy in mind, we must admit the obligations of England to the Roman system. The discussion in times past has been greatly befogged by prepossession and prejudice, by political causes and the antipathy in England to everything connected with popery Judge Howe quoted Blackstone's first lecture in this connection. He conceded that Blackstone was a great lawyer and a lecturer of rare ability, but he asserted that history was not his strong point, and that his conception of the relation of the civil law to the law of England in its formative period was inadequate, and, in some respects, erroneous. History shows that during the four hundred year of Roman occupancy of Britain, a high civiliza-