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London Society for Women's Service,
58, VICTORIA STREET.

WOMEN AND THE LEGAL PROFESSION.

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PRESENT POSITION.

Since the passing of the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act, 1919, a woman can become either a Barrister or a Solicitor.

Dr. Ivy Williams was the first woman to be called to the English Bar (in May 1922), though in November 1921 two women were called to the Irish Bar.

It is expected that in November 1922 the first women solicitors will be qualified for admittance on the Rolls.

Before the passing of the Act unsuccessful attempts were made by women to enter the Legal Profession; thus in 1903 the Judge dismissed Miss Bertha Cave's Appeal from the decision of the Benchers of Gray's Inn to refuse to admit her as a Student, and in 1913 the Court of Appeal (*Bebb v. The Law Society*) upheld the Law Society in its refusal to admit four women to its examinations.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR ADMISSION AND CALL TO THE BAR.

The conditions essential for call to the Bar can be summarised under three heads:—

1. **Time.** Three years must elapse between admission as a Student at an Inn of Court and call to the Bar.
2. **Fees.** These amount roughly to £150.
3. **Examinations.** These are detailed below. All that need be said here is that, except for the Final, they can be taken in any order, and failure does not preclude subsequent attempts to pass them.

It is proposed to trace the normal course of a student for the Bar, and then to point out the advantages conferred by the possession of a University Degree.

It is first necessary to be admitted to one of the four Inns of Court, *viz.* the Inner Temple, the Middle Temple, Lincoln's Inn and Gray's Inn. The fees for admission vary slightly at these Inns but do not exceed £40.

After payment of such fees and admission as a Student, six dinners a term must be eaten, or at least attended, in the Hall

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of the Inn of Court. There are four legal terms in the year, and "eating dinners" is necessary for twelve terms. The terms need not be consecutive, but it will be seen that this makes three years the minimum period which must elapse before call to the Bar, *i.e.*, qualification to practise.

When the necessary time has elapsed, and all examinations have been passed, the Student can be called to the Bar by the Benchers of his Inn of Court on payment of a fee of £90, and if he desire to practise he should (though this is purely formal) attend the Court of the Lord Chief Justice as soon as possible.

The cost of dinners and fees during the three years may be put roughly at £15, which, together with £40 for admission and the £90 fee on call, approximately put the total expenses at £150.

The Examinations which must be passed are:—

1. Roman Law.
2. Constitutional Law and Legal History.
3. Criminal Law and Civil and Criminal Procedure.
4. Real Property and Conveyancing.
5. The Final Examination:—
 - (a) Common Law.
 - (b) Equity.
 - (c) A General Paper.

Indian Candidates may substitute a paper on Hindu or Mahomedan Law for the paper on Real Property and Conveyancing.

Lectures on the subject matter of these Examinations are delivered each term by Readers or Lecturers appointed by the Council of Legal Education in the Halls or Lecture Rooms of the Inns. No fees are payable and attendance is not compulsory.

No Student need reside in London, and no academic dress (except at dinner, when a gown is provided by the Inn) is necessary.

Students who hold a University Degree have the following advantage:—

1. Three, instead of six, dinners a term need only be attended, though in any case the fees for six dinners must be paid.
2. If the degree be based upon an examination in which Roman Law was one of the subjects, and if the Council of Legal Education be satisfied that the student passed satisfactorily in this subject, exemption from the Bar Roman Law Examination may be obtained.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR ADMISSION AS A SOLICITOR.

Before being admitted to practise as a Solicitor, it is necessary to pass certain examinations held by the Incorporated Law Society, and to be articled to a Solicitor for a period varying from three to five years. A candidate who is not eligible for any exemption must first pass the Law Society's Preliminary Examination and then is articled to a Solicitor for five years.

At the expiration of twelve months' service, an articled clerk may sit for the Intermediate Examination, and after passing it, and before the expiration of his term, he must pass the Final examination before being admitted by the Master of the Rolls as a Solicitor.

The Preliminary Examination, which is a test of general knowledge, consists of papers on English Composition, etc., simple Mathematics, elementary Geography and History, Latin and a choice of two other languages. There are no set books, and the fee payable on giving notice for examination is £4, and for a renewed notice, £2.

Intermediate Examination. The subjects of examination are such elementary set books on English Law (*e.g.*, in 1919 Stephen's Commentaries, 16th Edition) and on Book-keeping and Trust Accounts as the Law Society, through its Examination Committee, may appoint. The fee payable on giving notice for examination is £6, and for a renewed notice £3.

Final Examination. The subjects of examination are as follows:—

1. Real and Personal Property and Conveyancing.
2. Law and Procedure in the Chancery Division of the High Court.
3. Law and Procedure in the King's Bench Division and the Law and Practice of Bankruptcy.
4. Law and Procedure in the Probate, Divorce and Admiralty Court; Ecclesiastical and Criminal Law; and Practice and Proceedings before Justices of the Peace.

The fee for this examination is Ten Guineas, and the Certificate received on passing enables an articled clerk to obtain admission as a Solicitor. An Honours Examination is held in connection with the Final Examination, and Certificates and a certain number of Prizes and Scholarships are awarded to successful Candidates in the Honours Examination.

Exemptions. The whole question of exemptions is somewhat complicated, and a candidate would do well if in any doubt to write to the Law Society, giving full particulars of his case. Broadly speaking, candidates with University Degrees need, as

a rule, only serve three years as Articled Clerks, and are exempted from the Preliminary Examination, and where they have passed the examination required for certain Law Degrees, from the Intermediate Examination with the exception of the portion dealing with Book-keeping and Trust Accounts. In all cases, however, fees (not exceeding £8) in lieu of examination fees have to be paid.

There is no exemption allowed in the case of the Final Examination.

Candidates who have passed certain other examinations (*e.g.*, preliminary University Examinations; Oxford and Cambridge Local Examinations) may be excused from the Law Society's Preliminary Examination, and need only serve four years as Articled Clerks.

Barristers of not less than five years' standing are not required to enter into articles if they wish to become Solicitors, but may be admitted and enrolled on passing the Final Examination.

Fees. Examination Fees, as has been shown, cost about Twenty Guineas, but in addition, there is the Government Stamp on Articles costing £80, and the Law Society's Fee of 5/- for registration. On admission, there are further sums of £25 to the Government and £5 to the Law Society.

Lectures on the subject matter of the Examinations are delivered by Lecturers appointed by the Legal Education Committee of the Law Society. The Fee for each course varies from One to Three Guineas.

The chief expense incurred in becoming a Solicitor is the fee which an Articled Clerk pays to his Principal for his Articles. No fixed sum can be stated, but anything from Three to Five hundred Guineas may be required.

For further information apply to:—

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58, Victoria Street,

London, S.W. 1.

Interviews 10—4, except on Saturdays.

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