

THE LAW STUDENT'S HELPER.

New Law as to Admission to the Bar In Alabama.

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The Alabama Legislature at its recent session passed a new law in regard to admission to the bar.

The bill provides that any person being a citizen of the United States and a resident of Alabama, above the age of twenty-one years, and of good moral character who shall desire to be admitted as an attorney and counselor at law, may make application in writing to the chancery, circuit or city court in the county of his residence, and such court shall thereupon inquire into his moral character and qualifications other than legal learning, and to that end may examine witnesses, and if the applicant be found to possess the necessary qualifications other than legal learning, the court shall so adjudge, but if the applicant be found not to be so qualified, his application shall be dismissed at his cost.

Section 2 provides that where an applicant is found to qualify as above, the judge or chancellor, in open court, shall propound in writing a sufficient number of questions to thoroughly test his knowledge upon the following subjects, viz.: the law of real property, personal property, pleading and evidence, constitutional law, criminal law, chancery and chancery pleading, the statute law of the State, the Constitution of the United States and of the State of Alabama, which questions shall be answered in writing in the presence of the judge or chancellor without aid from any person or books. The judge or chancellor must then certify that the examination was so taken in conformity with Section 2, and shall then forward both questions and answers to a judge of the Supreme Court, who shall examine them and cause at least two other judges of the Supreme Court to do the same, and return them with their conclusions certified thereon to the chancellor from whom the papers were received. If two of the said Supreme Court judges favor admission, the applicant shall thereupon be admitted to practice law in all the courts, both law and equity, of the State of Alabama, upon the taking of the oath prescribed by law, while if two judges are against admission the application is dismissed, and in either case the applicant shall pay the costs. The application may be renewed after six months.

A diploma from the University of Alabama, conferring the degree of Bachelor of Laws, admits without examination.

A bill has also been introduced to permit women to practice law, but it was defeated. However, the law seems broad enough to cover the fair sex, as it applies to "any persons," the old law applying only to "any man of the age of," etc.

As a result of this bill the University of Alabama has raised its course to two years, instead of one, and in the opinion of the writer it should have been raised to three years.

Heretofore the examination for admission was not reviewed by the Supreme Court, and the man who could not stand the examination, in some courts, was very illiterate indeed. He was examined orally by a committee appointed by the court, as a rule, was asked what was a contract, what was meant by real property, no questions were, as a rule, asked on pleading and evidence or commercial law, a few simple questions on criminal law, chancery and chancery pleading were avoided, and the statute law was entirely forgotten, and a knowledge of the constitution was not required. After such an examination his town paper would say that he passed a splendid examination, and the same issue would contain a card stating that Mr. —, Attorney-at-law and Solicitor in Chancery, will practice in all the courts of the State. Titles examined. Abstracts furnished."

The bill that was passed is one that has been badly needed for a long time,