land—the King's Counsels' robes are of silk instead of the ordinary alpaca 'stuff' of which the junior's gown is made; and 'taking silk' is thus the common phrase signifying that an 'outer' or ordinary barrister has become a K.C. From a purely financial point of view—a point that is generally supposed to have some weight with the fraternity—'taking silk' is often a very doubtful advantage to a professional career. By a usage of the profession a K.C. is prohibited from taking a good deal of minor, though often extremely lucrative, business which fell to his share as a junior, and thus 'silk,' though it may be a stepping stone to the top-notchers, occasionally proves a dead loss to the second rate men. So far as the introduction of the system into this Colony is concerned all that need be said is that the proposal has been received without enthusiasm, that it is not in very marked conformity to colonial democratic ideals, and that the coming of the K.C. means dearer law for the people—a consummation devoutly to be deplored.

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A much more commendable method of improving the status of the profession was that adopted by the N.Z. University Senate at its annual meeting held recently in Christchurch. In the course of the proceedings Mr. Cohen moved—'That the Senate respectfully requests the Minister of Justice to bring in a Bill next session of Parliament to repeal "The Law Practitioners Act Amendment Act, 1898,"' and the motion was carried. As is generally known, only barristers are allowed to plead in the Supreme Courts of the Colony, and prior to the Act of 1898 a solicitor could only become a barrister on passing the Bachelor of Laws or an equivalent examination. The Amendment Act of 1898 abolished this requirement and provided that any solicitor, after having been in practice for five years as a solicitor, might, upon application and without further examination, be registered as a barrister. The result was that a number of men who had managed by dint of hard plodding to scrape through their solicitor's exam. but who had not had the courage to so much as face the more searching barrister's examination, at once made application for admission and were duly enrolled as barristers of the Supreme Court. The obvious tendency of this legislation was to put a premium upon laziness and to lower, not only the dignity and status, but the actual efficiency of the profession. Candidates in law are not now required to serve any term of apprenticeship whatever, and in view of this fact and of the very weighty interests with which members of the profession are charged it is only fair to the public that the test for admission should be reasonably exacting and effective. The repeal of the Amendment Act of 1898, as suggested in the motion adopted by the University Senate, would bring about a return to the old state of things, and future candidates for admission as barristers would be required to pass an examination that would adequately test their legal knowledge and attainments. The proposal has been publicly supported by some of the examiners in law and by representative members of the profession, and as it has been officially endorsed by the Attorney-General (Dr. Findlay) it may be safely taken for granted that the Act in question will be repealed within the year.

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A third circumstance which has helped to centre public attention on the legal profession of late is the two painful cases of misappropriation of trust funds which have recently come before the courts. It is customary with us to banter members of the profession on the length of their bills and to rally them on their genius for promoting litigation. 'A lawyer,' says Mr. Dooley,' 'gets ye into throuble by makin' the laws and gets ye out iv throuble be bustin' thim. Some lawyers only know the holes in the law that makes it as aisey f'r a millionaire to keep out iv the pinitinchry as f'r a needle to enther the camel's eye. Lawyers are iv'rywhere, even on the Binch, be hivens. They are in the Ligislachure seein' that the laws are badly punctuated and in the coorts seein' that they're thurly punctured. They are in congress makin' the laws and the flaws in the laws.' This fairly represents, as we have said, the sort of badinage that is commonly indulged in regarding the 'devil's own', but below all this the public have a deep-seated confidence in the honor and honesty of the profession—a confidence, we are bound to say, that is for the most part entirely deserved. It is just because the vast majority of the profession are scrupulously honorable that the unscrupulous members have so little difficulty in finding victims. The revelations in the two cases above referred to have set the papers clamoring for legislation to protect the public. In both cases the offences had extended over a number of years, and in the Christchurch case the accused deliberately declared that the defalcations could never have been carried out had it not been for the facility offered by the present inadequate provisions of the law as to solicitors trust accounts.' He did not, however, indicate in what way the law should be amended. It has been suggested that frequent audit of solicitors' books by a public auditor would meet the case, but in our judgment this would be cumbrous, expensive, and ineffective. The Law Society does what it can—by striking the offender off the rolls—to mitigate the evil, but it can only act after the offence has been discovered and the mischief has been done. So far as we can see the trouble is one which cannot be fully met by legislation and the only effective remedy is that which the public have in their own hands. Let them be scrupulously careful in all their dealings with their solicitor; let them not, as is often done, hand over funds for investment without getting so much as a scrap of paper in acknowledgment; let them insist on frequent statements of the position of their accounts; in a word, let them put aside sentiment and proceed on the strictest business lines in all their transactions, and they will both safeguard their own interests and protect an ancient and honorable profession from a stigma which it cannot itself avert, but which it assuredly does not deserve.

The Bible-in-schools—and after

The other day a deputation—the strongest and weightiest which the Protestant bodies could gather together—waited on the Premier of Victoria with the object of inducing him to grant an executive referendum on the question of introducing Scripture lessons into the State schools, the proposed referendum to be held presumably at the same time as the coming general election. Mr. Bent very properly refused to assume the responsibility of granting such a request; but as the general elections take place in two or three months' time the matter will be brought before the new Parliament, when there is every possibility of another legislative referendum being agreed to. If Catholic claims were fully satisfied, the action taken by the Protestant bodies on the subject of religious instruction would of course be of no particular interest or concern to Catholics, but to tax Catholics for the support of the public schools and then to introduce religious instruction without making financial provision for Catholic schools would be a horse of quite another color. That such action would greatly aggravate and intensify the injustice inflicted on Catholics is freely recognised not only by ourselves, but by the great body of unprejudiced non-Catholics. This point is stated with such clearness, and the inevitable ultimate effect of such lop-sided legislation is brought out with such fulness and candor in a recent leading article in the Melbourne 'Argus' that the excerpt well deserves to be placed on permanent record.

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'If the denominations which are asking for the lessons (says our contemporary) obtain in the State