

**AN ESSAY ON
PROFESSIONAL
ETHICS**

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An essay on professional ethics by George Sharswood

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Id non eo tentum, quod si vis illa dicendi multum instruxerit, nihil sit publicis privatisque rebus perniciosius eloquentia : sed nos quoque ipsi, qui pro virile parte conferre aliquid ad facultatem dicendi conati sumus, pessime memoremur de rebus humanis, si LATRONI COMPAREMUS HEC ARMA, NON MILITI.

Quinci. *De Inst. Or.*

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TO
MY HONORED MASTER,
JOSEPH R. INGERSOLL, LL.D.
INSCRIBED
AS A
TESTIMONY OF
RESPECT AND GRATITUDE.

PREFACE.

THE following Essay was originally published under the title of "A Compend of Lectures on the Aims and Duties of the Profession of the Law, delivered before the Law Class of the University of Pennsylvania." A portion of it had been read by the author as an Introductory Lecture at the opening of the Fifth Session of the Law Department of that Institution, October 2d, 1854. The young gentlemen, alumni, and students of the school, who were present on that occasion, requested a copy for publication, in order that each of them might possess a memento of their connection with the Institution. The author preferred to publish the entire Compend than merely a part of it. He hesitated much in doing so, because the questions discussed are difficult, and opinions upon them variant, and he could scarcely hope that he had in every case succeeded in just discrimination. A review of the matter now, when a third edition

has been called for, has suggested, however, no important change in the principles advanced, though a few additions have been made, some inaccuracies corrected, and the Introduction upon the importance of the profession, in a public point of view, has now been incorporated with the body of the Essay.

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS.

It is proposed to consider this subject under two general heads :

I. Those duties which the lawyer owes to the public or commonwealth.

II. Those which are due from him to the court, his professional brethren, and his client.

I. The dignity and importance of the Profession of the Law, in a public point of view, can hardly be over-estimated. It is in its relation to society at large that it is proposed to consider it. This may be done by showing its influence upon legislation and jurisprudence. These are the right and left hands of government in carrying out the great purposes of society. By legislation is meant the making of law—its primary enactment or subsequent