

2.—*Technical Education for Commerce.*

By C. H. OLDHAM, Barrister-at-Law, Hon. Secretary,  
Principal of the Rathmines Urban Council's School of Commerce.

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I IMAGINE that to many of my audience to-night there must appear to be something incongruous about the title of this paper. Technical Schools are well understood in these countries to mean institutions that educate students for industrial life. There is no very great definiteness attaching to the term Technical Education. There is in particular some haziness as to where "teaching the practice of any trade or industry or employment" begins and "instruction in the principles of science and art applicable to industries" leaves off. But there is a pretty widespread impression that Technical Education means education for industry, for the workshop; and that it does not include education for commerce, for the counting-house. The latter has come to be called "Commercial Education"; and schools for the promotion of Commercial Education, where they exist, are usually called Schools of Commerce rather than Technical Schools.

I do not object to this distinction in nomenclature. But it carries with it an inference to which I do object—namely, that Commercial Education and Schools of Commerce are not entitled to claim State Assistance under the Technical Instruction Acts, 1889 and 1891, or the Local Taxation (Customs and Excise) Act, 1890. The demand for Commercial Education has certainly arisen in the United Kingdom since the dates of these Acts. But, as the whole subject of Education, both secondary and technical, is at present "in the melting pot" in England, so far as the distribution of State Aid is concerned, the national importance of Commercial Education and its claim to State Assistance must be insisted on, and must not be measured by its comparative novelty in these countries. By "Technical Education for Commerce," then I mean to express the claim which Commercial Education makes to receive the same State Aid as is now conceded to Technical Education.

It must be admitted that the whole subject of Technical Education has been forced upon England by the pressure of foreign competition. It is hardly acclimatized as yet, and, though it has undoubtedly taken root and come to stay, the English people have not quite learned how to use it to advantage. It dates from the eighties at furthest.

Now it was a mistake when Technical Education was being imported that the Commercial Education of foreign countries was not imported also. It was just as important from the point of view of foreign competition. Goods are produced in order to be sold. Our industries will languish and will have to be curtailed if

our commerce is unsuccessful in finding markets for their products. The search for markets has developed in recent times into almost a special science, in which not only individuals and business firms, but expert Government Commissions and Departments play their *role*. Other things being equal, it is the commercial man with the best technical training who succeeds in gaining the market, and thereby determining the volume of the output at home. The reason is simple. In the old days the customers went in search of the goods, but in the present times the goods have to seek the customer. Now, the art of capturing the customer is very often simply *the art of saving him trouble*. Quote him a price for the goods delivered at his own doorstep; state this price in his own language and in his own weights and measures; let the commercial traveller make all the calculations, and possess all the information at his finger tips, as to means of transport, freight charges, tariff charges, etc.—then you will get his order, for he will understand what you commit him to. All this is part of the game as played in modern markets. But what preparation has been made by England to equip her commercial travellers for playing such a game?

I say that it has only now been recognised that the backwardness of Commercial Education in the United Kingdom is accountable for much of the inroad made by foreign competitors upon British commerce. The well-educated German clerk and traveller is more formidable than the German manufacturer whose goods they push. Foreign products have been enabled to displace often superior British products merely because more highly trained commercial agents have been employed in pushing their sale. But the invasion of the skilled foreigner does not stop at selling their foreign goods, he is necessary to ourselves in order to sell our own productions. It is a most serious fact that the conduct of British trade abroad has, for like reasons, had to be largely entrusted to foreigners who have, to a quite startling extent, superseded Englishmen in the management of what should be England's own commercial business. In the words of a recent authority—"The travellers, agents, and even consuls representing the interests of British trade abroad, are generally foreigners who have been thoroughly trained in the practice and theory of business, while at home also the majority of our foreign correspondents and managers of firms with branches abroad are likewise foreigners." (*Hooper and Graham's Commercial Education at Home and Abroad*, 1901, p. 10). That being the case, no one will question the national importance of Commercial Education. And no one can doubt that the too narrow restriction of the English view of "technical instruction," which would confine it to the preparation for manufacturing industry only, ought to be widened (and it is steadily being widened) to include also the special training required for commercial life.

One cannot attempt to think out the subjects Commercial

Education should include without realising that the world of commerce or business is made up of a great variety of persons employed in very diverse functions and with very diverse needs. They have been classified by Professor W. A. S. Hewins into three groups as follows :—

1. There is to begin with the great army of office boys, junior clerks, shorthand clerks, copyists, typists, junior book-keepers, ledger clerks and accountants. These and similar employees are engaged in operations which are mainly mechanical, but which require for their effective discharge certain valuable qualities, such as honesty, accuracy, patience and docility.

This class is by far the most numerous of any, and the special education its members require is essentially primary in its character.

2. Then there are the employees in more responsible positions, such as senior clerks, correspondence clerks, managers of departments, agents, dealers and travellers. The members of each of these classes fall into a large number of groups according to the nature of the work in which they are engaged, *e. g.*, manufacturing, shipping, home trade, foreign trade, finance, banking, insurance, railway service, mercantile service, municipal service, civil service. Again, there are countless sub-divisions under the heads of trade and manufacture, according to the nature of the wares and products which form the staple of the business.

It is on this class of employes that the country has, in a large measure, to rely for the maintenance of its trade in competition with other nations. They require secondary education, either of the First Grade (up to 18), or Second Grade (up to 16), in commercial subjects.

3. Finally, there are the great employers of industry and the heads of large firms and business houses. To this class should be added the experts employed in Government and Municipal service, among whom, it is to be hoped, it will before long be possible to include a considerable number of "commercial attachés" engaged in the Consular service.

This class, though the least numerous, is in many ways the most important, as it is on them that the organisation of the whole framework of our commercial life rests. They require commercial education of the tertiary or University type. *Report of Special Sub-Committee on Commercial Education*, adopted by Technical Education Board of London County Council, 20th February, 1899.

We may allude to these three groups shortly as (1) the Junior Clerks, (2) the Senior Clerks, (3) the Employers or Masters. Without going into the sub-divisions of each, it is obvious that the workers in each group have their own particular functions, which education, whether of the school or the business house, should fit them to discharge.

Now before considering what schools can do for these various grades of business men, some general propositions may be borne in mind, *e. g.* :—

- (a.) *The most effective kind of commercial education is that which must be acquired (and given) inside the business house itself. We may call this the practical training.*

No technical schools for commerce can pretend to do more than supplement this practical training, which is always by far the more important. Business men are disposed to think that "business itself cannot be taught." Hence, they incline to think that beyond (1) a good general education, the only thing necessary is (2) this practical training in a business house. It might be answered

that business has grown so complex in modern times, that every one would be helped by learning in a School of Commerce how to grasp the principles which underlie sound business practice. But it is enough to state that the highly-trained German commercial clerk is the result of something more than a good general education *plus* the routine of a business house. However, let it be granted that the practical training obtained inside a business house is the great, while not the sole, requirement.

(b.) *Technical Education for Commerce must continue beyond the time at which pupils leave school and enter their offices ; it must continue side by side with their office duties.*

The Junior Clerk who enters business as a boy of 13 or 14 has comparatively routine work falling to him to do ; but he will not become really efficient even at that, still less will he fit himself for promotion to higher positions, without he continues his education beyond his school-days. The Senior Clerk may remain at school until 16 or 18 ; but he will find himself seriously handicapped as a manager or traveller unless he adds to the lore learned at school a wider knowledge than he can pick up in his business work (*e.g.*, it may be of foreign languages, or of the economic conditions of this and other countries).

As a matter of fact, the commercial education of a keen man of business does go on all through his active life. But the growing complexity of modern business makes systematic instruction of great assistance to the man who is intent on improving himself. It is to provide that systematised assistance for men already engaged in business that technical schools for commerce are mainly wanted. Who will say that such schools are not wanted ? To him I reply by quoting the impressive words with which Mr. Arthur Chamberlain, J.P., chairman of Kynocks (Limited), recommended his programme for a Diploma in Commerce to the University of Birmingham :—"Such knowledge as the foregoing is what is required in business, and is usually only learnt bit by bit, at a heavy cost, so that the man of business has generally reached the limits of his working life before he has completed his commercial education ; and, owing to the want of a codified system, business men continue, from generation to generation, to renew the mistakes of their predecessors, and to repeat their experiments, and, after much tribulation, to re-arrive at their methods, their rules, and their conclusions."

(c.) *It is a marked feature of the business world that each grade, even the highest, is recruited to a very large extent from those below it.*

What is important, therefore, is to provide, within the reach of the clever office boy or junior clerk, an effective opportunity for him to acquire the knowledge that will fit him, not only for his present humble duties, but also for those to which his ability, his industry, and his ambition will enable him to rise. With the

modern development of Limited Companies the man of ability does not need to own capital himself, provided he can prove his ability to use capital and to operate with success as a "Captain of Industry." And this sort of ability may arise anywhere, it is not confined to what we call the employer's class.

These general propositions have, I hope, cleared the ground sufficiently to allow me to assume for the moment that the promotion of Commercial Education as a branch of Technical Instruction is desirable. I go on next to consider what powers exist here for its promotion. I think in this respect we stand in Ireland in a somewhat better position than they do in England. We can proceed under two distinct authorities, viz.—

- (A). Under the Technical Instruction Acts, 1889 and 1891. These apply to England and Ireland, not to Scotland. They are administered in England by the Board of Education for England and Wales; in Ireland by our Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction. (These bodies stand for the old "Department of Science and Art," now defunct.)
- (B). Under the Agriculture and Technical Instruction (Ireland) Act, 1899, which created our new Department. It applies only to Ireland; and its powers, as regards commercial subjects, are rather more elastic.

I will now quote the definition of technical and manual instruction contained in the former authority (A), italicising the words that bear on my present subject. It reads as follows, viz.—

The expression "technical instruction" shall mean instruction in the principle of science and art applicable to industries, and in the application of special branches of science and art to specific industries or employments. It shall not include the practice of any trade or industry or employment, but, save as aforesaid, *shall include instruction in the branches of science and art with respect to which grants are, for the time being, made by the Department of Science and Art, and any other form of instruction (including modern languages and commercial and agricultural subjects), which may for the time being be sanctioned by that Department by a minute laid before Parliament, and made on the representation of a local authority, that such a form of instruction is required by the circumstances of its district.*

The expression "manual instruction" shall mean instruction in the use of tools, processes of agriculture, and modelling in clay, wood, or other material.

Although the italicised words seem very wide, the commercial subjects "sanctioned" as aforesaid are usually very limited, such as commercial arithmetic, French, shorthand, type-writing, etc. The grant obtainable under this authority (A)—for a school aided by the local authority is *equal in amount to the sum contributed by the said local authority out of the rates for instruction*, provided certain stated conditions are complied with.

Turning now to the second authority (B)—our own Department Act of 1899—we find that our Department is to spend £55,000 on "technical instruction." Of this sum, one portion (a) £25,000 has been allotted to the six County Boroughs in proportion to their respective populations; the other portion (b) £30,000 is for the purpose of technical instruction elsewhere than

in the county boroughs," as well as for the aiding inquiries or the collection of information relative to technical instruction. Each particular application out of this sum of £30,000 must receive the concurrence of the Board of Technical Instruction for Ireland. In the case of the Urban District of Rathmines and Rathgar, the said Board has "concurred" in a grant of about £1,000 per annum, which, with the sum of about £617 raised by the local rate of 1d in £1, leaves a total provision for the Rathmines School of Commerce amounting to about £1,617 per annum as a maximum.

The definition of "technical instruction" under this second authority (B) reads as follows, being very similar to the foregoing, viz. :—

The expression "technical instruction" means instruction in the principles of science and art applicable to industries, and in the application of special branches of science and art to specific industries or employments. It shall *not* include instruction given in elementary schools, or teaching the practice of any trade or industry or employment, but save as aforesaid, shall include instruction in the branches of science and art with respect to which grants are for the time being made by the Department, and any other form of instruction (including modern languages and commercial subjects) which may for the time being be sanctioned by the Department, by a minute laid before Parliament and made on the representation of a County or Urban District Council that such form of instruction is required by the circumstances of its district, and shall also include instruction in the use of tools, and modelling in clay, wood, or other material.

It is under this authority that the "Technical School" for Rathmines will take the unusual form of a School of Commerce. The difference is due to the special features of the locality. The inhabitants of the urban district are, for the most part, following commercial pursuits. The few who may be requiring technical training of an industrial type can find their wants already supplied by the proximity of the excellent City of Dublin Technical School in Lower Kevin Street, or of the Pembroke Technical School at Ringsend. The scheme adopted for the Rathmines School, and which has received the sanction of the Board of Technical Instruction for Ireland, has regard to these local circumstances. It provides that the Rathmines School shall supply technical instruction for persons of either sex who are intended for commercial pursuits, or who may desire to be specially instructed in subjects appertaining to commerce. It will be, in short, a School of Commerce; and, since the local circumstances of this Urban District are so peculiar, it is likely to remain the only distinctive School of Commerce in Ireland.

The establishment of this School is an event of more than local interest; for though designed primarily for the Urban District, its classes will be open to all. It will commence with a somewhat modest programme, if judged by Continental and American standards; but this will be amended from time to time as changes may be found desirable. It will really depend

upon the support which the School may receive from the commercial community of Dublin how far this programme may be extended. The commercial community in England is alive to the fact that the "German commercial clerk," with his highly-specialised training, represents a new phase in the battle of competition. Has this fact dawned upon us in Ireland? Have Dublin business men felt no injustice to themselves in the fact that State-aided Technical Instruction has been lavished in helping artisans and manufacturers to fit themselves for modern industrial conditions, while little or nothing was being done to assist our own commercial clerks, travellers, and managers to equip themselves with the knowledge appertaining to modern commercial conditions that they must have if they are "to hold their own anywhere"? Have they wanted instruction of no sort to enable them to grasp their complicated business problems? The time has come for Dublin business men to answer; for this School of Commerce will be planted at their disposal, and charged with the special function of catering to supply their requirements.

It is assumed that most of the persons who will resort to the Rathmines School will be already employed at business in the day time. Accordingly, in the first instance, the work of the School will be done in evening classes, between 7 and 10 p.m. Moreover, in the arrangement of classes, it is recognised that people who have been at work all day cannot be expected to sacrifice more than three evenings of their leisure in attending Classes for their improvement in Commercial Education. The School Session, which will run for the eight months from September to June, will be suspended during the Summer. It is obvious that these conditions impose great restrictions on the work that the School can attempt to do.

Referring above to the three groups, or grades, into which Professor Hewins classifies the world of business men, I may shortly indicate how far the modest curriculum of subjects in this Rathmines School of Commerce will endeavour to cater for their wants in the first instance. I group these subjects under three categories as (a.) *Junior Classes*; (b.) *Senior Classes*; (c.) *Special Courses of Lectures*. But this grouping is solely with a view to reducing as far as possible the overlapping of subjects in point of hours on the time-table; a student can select from the list any subject or class that he, or she, may desire to attend.

The various subjects, so grouped, are as follows—viz. :—

(a) *Junior Classes*—(1) English Correspondence; (2) Typewriting and Manifolding; (3) Shorthand; (4) Book-keeping; (5) Mercantile Arithmetic; (6) Junior Office Work and Methods; (7) Elementary Modern Languages, as French, German, and others. These Junior Classes are only held on Mondays, Wednesdays, or Fridays.

(b) *Senior Classes*—(1) Business Methods and Counting House Knowledge; (2) Commercial Geography, including Transit Facilities; (3) Economic Principles of Commerce; (4) Accountancy and Advanced Book-keeping; (5) Mercantile Law for Business Men; (6) Advanced Modern Languages, as French, German, etc., with Commercial Correspondence in the languages.

(c.) *Special Courses of Lectures*, to be given on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 8.30 and 10 p.m. throughout the School Session, on such subjects as (1) Banking and Credit, (2) Risks and Insurance, (3) Finance and Taxation as affecting Trade, (4) Modern Economic Questions, e.g., Trusts, Trade Unions, Tariffs, etc., (5) Organisation of Factories and Offices.

As the detailed Syllabus of the School will be shortly in the hands of the public, I need not go into further details, and indeed until that Syllabus is officially promulgated everything that I am stating as regards its contents must be given with the reserve that it is subject to alteration. The scale of Fees is based on the time given to the subject each week. The School Session extends to about thirty-two weeks. Where a subject is treated in a class that meets once a week the Fee will probably be 5s. per Session—Mercantile Law, for example. Where the class, as in Shorthand, meets twice a week, the Fee may be put at 10s. per Session. Where, as in the elementary class for each modern language, they meet three times per week, the Fee may be 15s. per Session. Of course, no public School of Commerce of the kind is supposed to be run on a self-supporting basis.

Just one point more regarding what I have termed the Junior Classes. No doubt the students who need these somewhat mechanical acquirements form much the most numerous class. But it is not the present intention to give undue encouragement to this class of students at the Rathmines School. They are the only commercial class that is already well catered for by the various "Business Classes" which private enterprise has provided in this city; and why should public money be used to drive private individuals out of a branch of tuition which is at present being done, and done well, without putting any burden on the rates? It is the higher and more educational branches of commercial instruction which (notwithstanding their greater importance) are wanted by so few that it would never be remunerative for private enterprise to provide competent instruction in them, that such a School of Commerce must rather aim at supplying. Of course Junior Classes there must be; but I hope we can be something more than a Typewriting School! There will probably be some restriction on that side of the School's work in the direction of compelling the student, for example, who wants typewriting to take up the study of additional subjects at the same time. But everything depends upon the support which the Rathmines School will receive from the commercial community, whose needs it is to serve. If the School develops as its promoters hope and expect, it may come

ultimately to include a complete provision for higher commercial education for the population both of the Urban District itself and of the city of Dublin. But if none of the business community of Dublin wants the instruction offered in the higher branches of commercial knowledge, then the offer of that instruction cannot be permanently maintained. Thus, for example, the "Special Course of Lectures" which have been mentioned above must all be tentative in character, and they will be developed or dropped according as they may be found to meet the wants of the commercial students who attend them.

An Evening Commercial School, such as this Rathmines School will be in the first instance, is but a low grade for a School of Commerce. Such schools can undoubtedly meet the wants of a very numerous class, and can exercise a very beneficial influence in improving the efficiency of business people in a country. But it is not in such schools that the more formidable type of highly-trained "German clerk" is reared and brought to perfection. What England has got to create for its commercial population is the High grade School of Commerce which gives instruction during the day-time, and extending over as many as five or more years. We would call these Professional Schools of Commerce, for they are precisely as highly developed as our best type of the Medical or Engineering Schools, but are designed for the Profession of Commerce—if I may use a word which sounds so novel only because we have as yet nothing of the kind in these countries.

That Irishmen have achieved distinguished careers in all the learned professions is a fact of common knowledge. But, taking him with his characteristic qualities as we know them, is there any career for which an Irishman seems so specially endowed by nature as for that of the first-class commercial traveller? Give him but the first-class training and the scientific knowledge that the foreigners are getting to-day in those splendidly equipped Schools of Commerce on the Continent which have literally lifted the business of the commercial traveller into a learned profession, and I say that the Irishman would be competent to save the situation for the commerce of the United Kingdom against the world! Let the Englishman make the goods, and let the Irishman sell them: I say that we must stake our future on that combination! And if there is an element of truth in such an opinion, then the Irishman ought to have a special interest in the development of the higher commercial education in these countries.

I do not intend to overburden the present paper by attempting to explain to you the position of Higher Commercial Education on the Continent of Europe and in America. In the work recently published by Mr. Frederick Hooper and Mr. James Graham, two Yorkshire specialists, entitled "Commercial Education at Home and Abroad" (1901: Macmillan & Co. Price 5s. net.), anyone can read a fairly full statement of the facts, which were

embodied in a remarkable series of *Monographs* prepared by the different countries for the Paris Exhibition of 1901 and for the recent International Commercial Education Congresses. At the conclusion of my paper, however, I will bring before you some lantern views (many of which are taken from the work just named), the significance of which cannot but strike you at a glance. Anyone who is acquainted with these facts of the situation abroad must at once admit that the United Kingdom has fallen a long way behind. If you are interested in the matter, the little book published by Mr. Fabian Ware, which is entitled "Educational Foundations of Trade and Industry" (1901: Harpur Brothers. Price 3s. 6d.), will be found extremely informing and suggestive.

I will venture, however, to direct your consideration to some evidences of progress within the United Kingdom. These make me think that the United Kingdom will attempt to solve this problem on its own lines, and it will do so by a development of University institutions of a new type.

There are, so far as I know, only three Schools of Commerce in the United Kingdom which are secondary in type—*i.e.*, which are regular Day Schools, analogous to English Grammar Schools, with a curriculum extending over several years. These are the School of Commerce at *Huddersfield*; the School of Commerce in connection with University College in *Liverpool*; and the School of Commerce which the London County Council has been mainly instrumental in establishing in connection with University College, Gower-street, in *London, W.C.* I hope shortly to have an opportunity of visiting these institutions; but at present I cannot estimate how far they are meeting with support from the commercial community in each of these centres, and may be considered to be real live influences. Besides the Day Course, each of these schools has an Evening Commercial School of the type with which we are to begin work at Rathmines. I am, indeed, of the opinion that it is their Evening Courses that are best appreciated at present. Just as Grammar Schools find shelter and preserve their vigour under the protecting ægis of the Universities, so such secondary Schools of Commerce must look to find their chief support and justification in the development of the Highest Grade of Commercial Education. This development is only just beginning in the United Kingdom.

In the year 1893 Professor Edmund James, of the United States, made to the American Bankers' Association his now famous "Report on Commercial Education in Europe," (largely reprinted in *Report of the Commissioner of Education for the year 1895-96*, Washington, U.S.A., 1897, Vol. I., pp. 721-837.) His chapter on "Higher Commercial Instruction in England" reminds one of another about snakes in Ireland; he had to say—"there is no such instruction given in England at all." But I want to

quote his words, which have made a really lasting impression :—

It is not far from the truth to say that there is no such instruction given in England at all, at least such thorough, systematic, and advanced instruction as would justify our putting it in the same category as that of France, Austria, or Germany. It is in this department as in so many others. The genius of the people—so eminently commercial—the favourable situation of the country, and the many other circumstances which have combined to put England at the very head of commercial nations, have also seemed at first to dispense with the necessity of giving time and labour to systematic school preparation for such occupations. On the other hand, the many unfavourable circumstances which have combined to prevent the growth of commerce and industry in Germany, France, and Austria have brought these nations to a recognition of the fact that thorough education all along these lines was the only hope of their being able to compete with England at all. The result has been what might have been expected. Owing to the superior education and training of her youth, Germany has been steadily diminishing the disadvantages of her position, and English merchants are now awakening to the fact not only that German trade is increasing more rapidly than English, but that even the trade of England itself is passing into the hands of German merchants who have settled in London.

Since the mysterious “Fingers of a man’s hand” wrote the words *Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin* upon King Belshazzar’s palace wall, there has been nothing more impressive than this impartial judgment from America upon the complacency with which English merchants have disregarded the “educational foundations of trade and industry.”

The first practical step to save the situation for England was the establishment in 1895 of the London School of Economics and Political Science, which one of its founders has described as “the beginning of a higher school of commerce.” English commerce was not ready for such an institution; and it has, perhaps, developed more on the side of political or public than of commercial or private administration. It has been recently included in the newly-incorporated University of London, a fact that gives official recognition to its teaching as being of University rank. This new University of London has a Faculty of Economics and Political Science (including Commerce and Industry), in which students will be prepared for special degrees in this Faculty,—a change which dates from 1901 only.

Between 1895 and 1901 some valuable work has been done in England in the shape of investigations, special reports, and conferences, in which the Education Department conducted by Mr. M. E. Sadler, M.A., the Technical Education Board of the London County Council, the London Chamber of Commerce, and a Joint-Committee of the Edinburgh Merchant Company, and of the Edinburgh and Leith Chambers of Commerce, have all made contributions. This “stirring of dried bones” is still proceeding, and is acquiring impetus. Its last manifestation is the action of Mr. Alfred Mosely, C.M.G., in undertaking to defray all the cost of a carefully-planned Commission, which is to leave England next September, and to visit both Europe and America, for the purpose of collecting the best possible information. There is no reason why Ireland should not

be represented on this Mosely Commission of Inquiry; and I would like to see some movement made by the Chambers of Commerce in Dublin and Belfast, as well as by our Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, to secure a representation, as the matter is already in process of being arranged. (See *Times*, London, for December 16, and January 17). The scale on which the Mosely Commission is being projected makes it highly probable that this Inquiry will be followed by Government action in England on behalf of Higher Commercial Education.

What is most significant, however, is the movement which has originated in English industrial and commercial centres for new Universities which shall be in the hands of practical men of affairs, and shall serve the needs of the work-a-day world more directly than the "ancient seats of learning." The new University of Birmingham is of this type. The Faculty of Commerce to be included in this University may possibly have been suggested by the similar developments which have been proceeding in several American Universities. But the matter is in the hands of practical business men of the greatest ability, such as Mr. Arthur Chamberlain, J.P., Chairman of Kynock's, Limited, who are determined to mould it so as to meet the wants of English commerce and industry.

The following is Mr. Arthur Chamberlain's outline of a course which, being satisfactorily followed, should be recognized by a University Diploma in Commerce, and it forms the basis on which the Birmingham Course is being elaborated at the present moment, viz. :—

For the really-master man the following appear to your Committee to be the necessary acquirements :—

1. A knowledge of the theory and principles of trade, including the following :—

The organisation of Offices and Factories, and the principles underlying the business of making, buying and selling.

The theory and principles of Trade Unions, Associations, Trusts, Combinations and Rings.

A knowledge of the chief causes affecting success or failure in business undertakings, with the application of the principles deducible from these to leading modern cases.

2. A general knowledge of Commercial Law and of the more usual forms of agreement for work and wages, service, agencies, and buying and selling contracts.

The Law of Limited Liability Companies, including the duties of Promoters, Directors, Secretaries, Auditors and Valuers

3. Sufficient knowledge of Accountancy to open a complete set of books for either a Merchant's or a Manufacturing Office, and to prepare trading, profit and loss account, and a balance sheet.

Also to be able to start a system of cost accounts suitable for any business.

4. A knowledge of Shipping and Railway practice, rights and duties, so far as they concern the conveyance of goods.

5. Two Modern Languages, French being compulsory as one of them and Spanish, German, or Italian being the second.

6. Shorthand.

7. The Theory of Banking and Exchange.

8. In addition to the lectures and teaching given by the Professor and his Assistants, arrangements should be made for lectures to be given by specialists to students in their third year on such subjects, for instance, as Statistics of Imports, Exports and Customs, Rate of Wages, Bounties, Taxes, and other artificial influences on trade.

The interest of this sketch is, that it is English-made. Anyone comparing it with Continental standards or the American courses will notice considerable differences and shortcomings. But it is an absolutely novel fact in English commerce that business men are thinking out these problems with a view to reaching a practical solution that will suit their own needs.

We have had remarkable evidence during the present month of the influence of this Birmingham example elsewhere. The Victoria University has hitherto united under one charter the three towns of Leeds (Yorkshire College of Science), Manchester (Owens College), and Liverpool (University College). But at town meetings, held in Manchester on Friday, January 10th, and in Liverpool on last Monday, January 27th, it has now been decided that this arrangement shall cease. There are to be three distinct Universities, the three towns all desiring to emulate the example of Birmingham. And it is obvious that the force behind this movement is the anxiety of the leading business-men in these centres to obtain a University under their own control which they can mould to meet the needs for Higher Grade Instruction that is now felt in English commerce and industry. In illustration of this, I quote the speech of Sir W. B. Forwood at the Liverpool Town Meeting aforesaid.

He denied that competition with America, Germany, and other nations was altogether in manufactures. That competition affected also commercial methods and ideas, and if they were to regain their position of supremacy in the commerce of the world, it would be by adopting the methods of education which had been so successful in America and Germany. Commerce and learning had been associated since the days of Tyre, and if they were to establish a modern aggressive prosperous University it should be in the midst of a great commercial centre such as Liverpool (*Times* report, January 28th, 1902.)

It is evident, I think, that England is intent upon solving the problem of its Higher Grade Commercial Education, not as on the Continent by Higher Schools of Commerce, but (what is tantamount) by Universities of the type which the City of Birmingham is engaged in constructing.

Finally, there is a symptom of the same thing happening in Ireland. The Chamber of Commerce at Belfast has recently appointed a Committee of its members to consider the evidence that will be given on behalf of the Chamber before the Royal Commission on University Education in Ireland. The object of the Belfast Chamber is neither denominational nor political, but purely economic. It desires that any Irish University now to be formed shall, among other things, meet the needs of modern business and that it shall include a Faculty of Commerce on the American or English lines. I think this is a most timely move on

the part of Belfast. Considering how much this subject is "in the air" in England just now, it is more than likely that the Belfast Chamber will succeed in getting what they want. Therefore let me ask what is the Dublin Chamber of Commerce going to do in this matter? I am told that the Dublin Chamber has considered and come to a decision to give no evidence before the Royal Commission. I hope this statement is not true. What is the use of a Chamber of Commerce which simply abdicates its functions in such a case as this? If the Council of the Dublin Chamber have really decided to do nothing, it will probably result in the Higher Commercial Education for Ireland (when we get it) being located in Belfast. That may be the most desirable solution. But, as a Dublin man who is giving some attention to this subject of Commercial Education, I may be allowed to say that Irishmen cannot afford to sit down and let things drift along.

If the Council of the Dublin Chamber has really decided to take no action in support of the Belfast Chamber's action the decision should be made public. There would then still be time for the merchants of Dublin to take action independently of the Chamber. The Rip Van Winkles can be left to their long sleep. But there is a younger generation of business men who have to look into the future and to read the signs of the times. The signs all show that the Higher Grades of Commercial Education will, for these countries, be provided by means of a development of University institutions, such as we see now in progress in England. The time when University institutions in Ireland are being overhauled and reconstructed is the proper time for Irishmen to make a move to obtain in their own country those opportunities for systematised commercial education that have enabled other nations to loosen the hold of English commerce upon the markets of the world.

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### 3.—*Licensing and Publichouse Reform in Ireland.*

BY WILLIAM LAWSON, ESQ., LL.D., BARRISTER-AT-LAW.

[Read Friday, Feb. 28th, 1902.]

No apology is, I think, needed for introducing this subject to the consideration of the Society, although I could wish that the task had fallen to one more conversant with it than I am. The evils of intemperance are so great that it is no wonder that efforts have been made from time to time to check it by individuals, by societies established for the purpose, by Bishops and clergy of all denominations, and by legislation, actual or attempted. In the present year attention has been particularly