

Is a matter of common observation that the technical expert often cares more for the mechanical perfection of the process than for its commercial return. And if he thinks of the latter at all, he has usually little skill in estimating the relative importance of the commercial and administrative factors involved.

And the result is that many a business man will tell you that, in spite of the various plans adopted by his father in order to enable him to "gain experience," the first few years after he left school were practically wasted.

The curriculum which has been drawn up for the three years' course leading to the degree of Bachelor of Commerce in the University of Birmingham comprises studies which fall mostly into four main categories—(1) languages and history, (2) accounting, (3) applied science and business technique, (4) commerce. Those of the fourth group are intended to be the most characteristic feature of the Birmingham plan; but it will be convenient to consider them after something has been said of the other groups.

1. *Languages and History.*—The student, it will be presumed, has laid a fair foundation of general culture at school, and has reached the stage represented by the matriculation examination of the university (or the examinations which are accepted in lieu of it); but whatever history he may have read at school, it is hardly probable that he will know much of the history of his own time. Accordingly there is prescribed one course on the nineteenth-century history of Europe and America. Its purpose is to give the student some impression of the wide sweep of national movements during the last hundred years in his own country and abroad—of such phenomena as the French Revolution and its effects down to the present on French politics and society, of the rise of Prussia and the creation of the German Empire, of the union of Italy, the expansion of Russia, the establishment of the dual system of Austria-Hungary and its working, the American Civil War, and the like. This is intended to widen the student's outlook and mitigate his insularity; it is intended at the same time to show him the political motives which operate by the side of the purely economic motives in determining the policy of our neighbours, and to enable him to enter into more sympathetic personal relations with men of other countries, by a better appreciation of their national point of view.

It is very desirable that every student who proposes to take the whole course should bring with him an acquaintance with the rudiments of two modern languages; though for the present only one will be insisted upon at matriculation. But it is the intention of the University that no student shall receive the degree of Bachelor of Commerce who is not adequately equipped in two modern foreign languages—German, French, Spanish, or Italian—and to that end a whole series of classes has been arranged. A speaking knowledge of the languages will be aimed at from the first; and in the last year there will be courses in commercial correspondence. But that a business man should be able to carry on a foreign correspondence, or even that he should be able to travel abroad and come into personal touch with his foreign correspondents, desirable as these powers are, are relatively small matters. What is more desirable is that he should know where to get the best information in foreign languages on the things which ought to interest him in his business, and should be able to use his knowledge of the language to keep himself abreast of the industrial and financial movements. Accordingly, after the student has read a little of the classic literature of foreign countries—enough to give some insight into the sentiments and modes of thought of other peoples—his attention will be turned to the current industrial, commercial, financial, and statistical literature of the countries in question. He will be made acquainted with the chief economic and technical periodicals of other countries and the chief governmental publications; he will read selected articles and chapters and acquire the necessary vocabulary. The time ought not to be far distant when the library of every manufacturing town—and, indeed, of every really great undertaking—shall possess all the good current literature bearing on its particular interests in each of the chief languages of Europe, and when a man of business will be as much in the habit of casting his eye over the chief foreign periodicals as he is (or should be) over the *Economist* or *Engineering*. Much more in the way of description and analysis of industrial conditions in particular trades and localities, and that of high quality, is being produced by foreign economists than is at all realised in England. It is unknown to the English Board of Trade, and its trustworthiness and significance can only be gauged by those who are acquainted with the circles from which it proceeds.

Yet all this knowledge of foreign languages is in the main merely instrumental. It has been well remarked that "business men have no more use for a man who makes bad bargains in three languages than for one who makes all his bad bargains in English."

2. *Accounting.*—Birmingham will be the first English university to realise the importance and the educational value of proper training in this subject, and to appoint a professor to take it in charge. In giving accounting a place in a commercial curriculum it will only be following the example recently set by several of the greater American universities—by Harvard University and the Universities of Michigan and Wisconsin; and it proposes to use the term "accounting," which has come into common use in America, rather than "accountancy," to indicate that what it aims at is not so much the preparation of professional accountants for their future occupation (though it expects to do something in that direction), as to teach the ordinary business man the proper use and interpretation of accounts. The instruction, which will be put into the hands of an eminent practising accountant, will consist of three courses, one in each of the three years. The first will deal with the simpler systems of book-keeping as actually practised, with many concrete illustrations. The second will be much higher in character. It will begin with an explanation of the various forms of accounts adapted to different classes of undertakings, so as to enable a student to plan a set of books for a particular enterprise. It will then enter into the analysis of accounts with a view to the computation of earnings and values, examining for that purpose a number of published balance sheets. The third will be devoted in large measure to the consideration of departmental accounts, and to the advantages, requirements, and difficulties of cost