

It is not pretended for a moment that text-books exist on "commerce" so understood; or that any teacher, whether his experience has been academic or "practical," is now in a position to deal satisfactorily with all these topics. But a good deal more material, in the shape of recorded experience, exists than is commonly supposed, though it is scattered about in all sorts of repositories. It is the belief of the University of Birmingham that the subject can be taught to the great advantage of future business men. But the material must first be got together and codified; and supplemented by constant references to the current experience of the leaders of commerce in the neighbourhood; and the conclusions must be continually checked and corrected by reference to observed facts. It will be the main business of the Professor of Commerce so to arrange his work that a fair beginning may be made with this arduous but hopeful undertaking in 1904.

A training such as has been outlined above can only be profitable to students who have reached a certain maturity of mind and character. It is suitable, not for boys, but for young men who are beginning to take life seriously, and can make a wise selection of studies. Moreover, it implies a good preliminary general education. Accordingly—although all persons who are at all likely, in the opinion of the professors, to benefit by the instruction will be admitted to the several courses on the payment of the necessary fees, and will receive class certificates if they so desire—no students will be admitted to the University examinations and regarded as candidates for the degree of Bachelor of Commerce who have not been matriculated. They can matriculate on passing the Matriculation Examination of the University or on producing evidence of having passed one of the examinations accepted in lieu thereof (*e.g.*, the Higher Certificate of the Oxford or Cambridge Examination Board or the Oxford or Cambridge Senior Local Examination, or the Oxford and Cambridge Junior Local with honours in two subjects, provided that they have passed therein in the requisite subjects).

But students may be able to pass such examinations and yet be too immature to profitably enter upon the studies of the Faculty of Commerce. This is not altogether a matter of age; and therefore it is not proposed to set any age limit. But the University will reserve the right to postpone the admission of students who are evidently unable to benefit by the instruction offered. In such cases it may be well that the lad, after passing the Matriculation Examination, should be given a year's experience in a workshop or counting-house before he enters the University. He will then come to his commercial studies with a certain freshness of mind, with more knowledge of practical life and human character, and a more definite purpose. The same plan may be recommended in some cases to even older and comparatively mature students who look forward to entering a business in which some early practical experience is deemed desirable. But the need of such early experience is often exaggerated; and it is believed that difficulties of this kind, where they exist, may be overcome in large measure by a sensible use of the vacations, and, indeed, of the opportunities always present even in term-time in a great industrial centre like Birmingham. The vacations can also be used for foreign travel—which is likely to be considerably more beneficial after the student has learnt in the University courses what to look out for.

In creating a Faculty of Commerce the University of Birmingham makes its appeal in the first instance to the substantial business men of the country. What it offers is designed in the first place for their sons and relatives, most of whom are "going into business" in any case. They can perfectly well afford to send their sons for three years to college; they only need to be persuaded that the education they will receive there will make them better business men. But the curriculum ought to attract the sons of "professional men" also. And it ought to be the means of securing for commercial life some of that business ability which is latent in the artisan and other classes of the community and at present finds no outlet for lack of opportunity. It is hoped that, by and by, means will be found, by way of scholarships, to enable lads of ability, but limited means, to take the university course. It is probable that scholarships will be founded by Midland Chambers of Commerce: County Council scholarships are tenable in this as in other departments of the University: and where the scholarships attached to endowed secondary schools are not tenable at the newer universities, the restriction will doubtless soon be removed. Moreover, it would be better for a student to leave the University after part of the course in order to earn the means of continuing his studies, than to lose the training altogether. This is a common plan with American students.

The experiment is being watched with sympathetic interest by many of the commercial leaders of the Midlands. They cannot guarantee to find a position for every man who has scraped through the curriculum. But they are ready to regard with favour and to give fair opportunities to such graduates of the University as have shown intelligence and force of character. For men of this kind the University will furnish an avenue to the higher grades of business service such as has never existed before.

The University of Birmingham, 23rd April, 1902.

W. J. ASHLEY.

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM.—CURRICULUM AND REGULATIONS FOR THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF COMMERCE.

FACULTY OF COMMERCE.

THE instruction provided by the Faculty of Commerce furnishes a systematic training, extending over a period of three years. It consists of courses of study of two kinds. Some deal with subjects which are primarily of concern to the future man of business, but which are nevertheless capable of being made the instruments of a true education. Others deal with subjects which have long been recognised as elements of liberal culture, and yet are peculiarly valuable for those who