

## “EDUCATION FOR BUSINESS.” THE BOSTON HIGH SCHOOL OF COMMERCE

The Boston High School of Commerce was opened in September, 1906, with 142 pupils. Its membership in succeeding years has been 332, 554, 721, 837, 967, and 1078. Owing to lack of accommodation, the school has been obliged to deny admission to at least 500 boys during the last three years: at present two main divisions of the school are one-half mile apart. These few statements show to a certain extent the demand in the city for the kind of work the school is doing. The object of this paper is to tell as directly as possible what that work is—to show how one school is trying to fit high-school boys for business. The paper tries to set forth some educational practice rather than educational theory. It seems to me eminently fitting to put on the market reports of a few educational experiments at the present time when so many new theories are being launched forth by educational promoters.

In its earlier years, the school was popularly called Commercial High School, and even some official publications of the city used that name. The first head master of the school insisted that this was a misnomer. He maintained that a commercial high school centered its work around such distinctly commercial subjects as bookkeeping, stenography, and typewriting, and prepared for secretarial positions; or, as one of the boys of the school said recently in class, for the passive side of business. A high school of commerce on the other hand, he maintained, offers a more liberal course and prepares for the competitive, or active, side of the business. A high school of commerce includes all the work of a commercial high school and more. This point of view has been quite generally accepted in the city so that we now hear but seldom any name other than the High School of Commerce.

The aim of the school can be stated briefly: to give its pupils the best possible preparation for a career of business usefulness in Boston, either municipal or metropolitan. This statement of the aim carries with it the thought that the school takes no concern

about any of its pupils who may wish to go to college. That work is being done well by other high schools in the city and boys who may wish to go to college are expected to go to one of these schools.

It is not the attitude of the school that the boy must necessarily show some very decided business bent in elementary-school days to warrant his attendance at the High School of Commerce. The demand for service in the business world is great and varied: if a boy has a general notion that he wishes to enter upon a business career, the school is pleased to receive him, to train him as well as possible, and to try to place him in that avenue of business activity where he can use his capacities to best advantage.

The school does not promise to get the boys positions: that would be unprofessional, and the promise would be a hard one to fulfil, since the actual hiring of boys is done by agencies outside the school. Our promise is to do our best to secure positions for such boys as make a satisfactory record with us. Thus far our graduating classes have numbered 19, 9, 41, 91, and 113, and no boy can rightly complain of the way that promise has been made to apply to him.

The course of study is largely a required one. This is so for two reasons. First, the teachers of the school, as a result of their experience and investigation, know better than boys or parents what steps are necessary to take them from the level from which they came to the level for which they are ambitious. Second, a man in business often has to do things that he does not like or that he is not fitted for if he wishes to discharge properly the responsibilities of his position in life. For this same reason we offer no apology to boys for asking them to do work that they do not like, or that they are not fitted for, when we think that such work is necessary for preparing properly for the responsibilities of business life.

When they first enter the school, they choose between Spanish, German, and French. Whichever they take they have to study for their entire four years. This choice is the only one that they have during their first two years. Their other studies are, in the first year, penmanship and elementary bookkeeping forms, elementary science, mathematics (largely commercial arithmetic)

and English; in the second year, history and commercial geography, mathematics (largely commercial arithmetic), bookkeeping, and English. The third-year studies are bookkeeping, typewriting, chemistry, and English, in addition to the required modern language and to stenography (to be followed two years), or geometry, or advanced arithmetic. In the fourth year, besides the modern language the studies are economics, commercial law and civil government, English, and typewriting, and, as an additional subject, stenography (continuous elective), or bookkeeping, or chemistry, or solid geometry, algebra, and trigonometry. During the last two years, instruction is given in commercial design, but this is an extra study which does not count toward a diploma.

During the course, lectures are given to the pupils, a report of which will be given separately. Our course of study calls for a fifth-year special course, designed primarily for graduates who wish to come back to school and take a part-time course, and for graduates of other high schools. At present it seems inexpedient to encourage this course.

Practically all studies require five meetings a week. Each pupil is expected to carry five studies.

When the school opened, in 1906, the school session in practically all the city high schools was five hours in length, and it was so in the High School of Commerce during the first year. It was pointed out to the school during the year by certain business men that such hours were hardly consistent with the business hours of the city, and they recommended a longer session. Those intrusted with the management of the school recognized the argument and accordingly recommended the present hours to the School Committee, and the recommendation was adopted. The school now is in session five hours and fifty-one minutes—from 8:55 to 2:46. Of this time, ten minutes are given up to opening exercises, 44 minutes to recess and passing, and 10 minutes to light gymnastic exercises. The remainder of the time is divided into seven periods of 41 minutes each. These hours and the home lessons suggest such a plan of life as this for the boys: rise not later than 7; play after school until 5; study from 5 to 6, and from 7 or 7:30 until lessons are finished; and retire not later than 10.

School spirit is one of the very valuable assets of any school. Each school has its own distinctive spirit and its own ways of fostering it. A school which fits boys for business must have an individuality peculiar to its problem. Special study is therefore given to the question of having the school spirit help in turning out such young men as are expected from the school.

A boy should leave the school with a spirit of being willing to work and of being willing to take whatever tasks are given him to do, within proper limitations; he should take up his work with pleasure and enthusiasm; he should be intensely loyal to his employers, and he must measure his worth by results rather than by hours. It is the function of the school spirit to help contribute these factors to the boy's preparation.

The school spirit of the High School of Commerce is aided by a number of features which may be touched upon briefly. Decided effort is made to keep the pupils happy at their work, while the same effort is made to keep them working all the time. Musical associations are strongly encouraged, and about one-tenth of the school, during school hours under the direction of one of the teachers engage in some one of the musical activities of the school, which include a band, two orchestras, two glee clubs, and a string quartet. Athletics is strongly encouraged and practically all the boys of the school belong to the athletic association. No boy whose school record will not warrant it is allowed to represent the school in the practical work, about which more information will be given later. The ideals and habits that go to make up a successful business man are those which are insisted on throughout the school. All these forces working together throughout the school hours and through the medium of studies, most of which are in the course of study for their vocational value, have produced a school spirit which is very helpful in preparing boys for their life-work.

In a vocational school, there should be practical work. In a high school of commerce, the opportunities for such practical work are very great. If the co-operation of the stores is necessary, the merchants of the city are most willing to co-operate. In Boston, however, the work is able to stand on its feet on account of its own real worth. In but very few cases are the boys of the school

taken into a store for practical work merely as a courtesy to the school. Usually the boys earn whatever they are paid. The courtesy from the stores—and it is a courtesy we very much appreciate—takes the form of coming for their help to us rather than to the other possible sources in the city. It almost seems to me that the possibilities of this practical work in connection with the school are limited only by the efforts of the teachers and pupils working together in searching out the possibilities. More and more are the boys looking out for themselves in the matter of getting this practical work. The concern of the school seems to be more and more to foster the tradition in the school that a boy who looks after himself in this regard gets more credit in the official records of the school, on account of initiative shown, than a boy who is placed by the school. The school further concerns itself with so systematizing this practical work that it will be of as much value as possible to the boys.

This feature of practical work finds expression in four principal ways: Saturday work, occasional assignments during the year, work at Christmas, and summer apprenticeship work. In addition, many boys do after-school work; but this work is fraught with so much danger to the boy's progress in school that official notice is not taken of it.

By all these means of getting practical experience, the boys of the school earned between \$35,000 and \$40,000 last year; at the time figures on this question were collected, there were about 900 boys in school.

Saturday work is very much encouraged. Work at Christmas time depends on the boy's standing in his class work: only the boys of such a grade of scholarship as warrants it are allowed to take this work. The boys who are sent out for a day or two at a time during the year must also maintain such a grade of scholarship as to warrant it. It is from the summer work, however, that we expect our greatest returns. The importance of this feature can be estimated when I tell you that 65 per cent of the boys worked during the past summer. The 397 boys working under this scheme earned nearly \$17,000. This made an average of over \$5.00 per week for each boy while he worked. This figure compared with

about \$10,000 earned the summer before by 352 boys. Moreover, the boys found more of the positions for themselves this past summer: where four years ago the school placed directly 75 per cent of those who worked during the summer, this year the school placed 20 per cent. The efforts of the teachers are now concerned with directing a boy how to find a summer position and where to find one, rather than to find it for him.

This practical work of the school is one of its important features: boys plan for it as they do for their other school work. A boy who has had no practical experience before he graduates from the school is considered more or less in disgrace, and is the rare exception.

Boys bring back reports for all employment work to which they are assigned; these reports, filled out by the employers, are placed on file and are consulted from time to time as the need arises.

The regular classroom work is supplemented by special lectures, which make a decided contribution to the school. Some of the lecturers are paid and some contribute their services. The general purpose of the lectures can be best explained by giving the general nature of several of the courses. One series given to the Seniors is made up of ten lectures on transportation in New England, six on advertising, six on salesmanship, and about twenty on commercial possibilities in South America. Another series of lectures given to the Seniors is made up of ten lectures on "Economic Resources of the United States" and about twenty-five lectures under the general head of "Office Routine"; in this course are explained various details and incidentals of office work and convention, with demonstrations of advertising and salesmanship. Another set of lectures is given to the Junior class under the general head of "Local Industries"; it comprises six lectures on the leather business, three on textile industries, three on banks of Boston, three on historical, commercial Boston (illustrated), and about twelve on various industries of New England. Another set of lectures is given to the school as a whole upon general business, economic and civic subjects.

Too much importance cannot be attached to the need of an efficient teaching staff. Of much more importance than a suitable building, a favorable location, a proper course of study, abundance

of books, supplies, and equipment, is proper instruction. For the special need of a high school of commerce, teachers are not yet trained. It will be many years before we have a set of teachers trained for this particular line of work as well as those are trained who are engaged in the classical education. We who are now at work must do our best to meet the oncoming competition in this line of work and also to gather such experience and information as will enable the next generation of teachers to work more effectively.

To get the necessary kind of teachers, adequate salaries will have to be paid. At least six of our teachers have had offers from business houses at advanced salaries. A city will get in the way of instruction just what it pays for. If it wants only \$1,000 work done, then \$1,000 is enough for salary; but if it wants the benefit of service which is worth \$2,000 or \$3,000 in the open market, then it must not expect to get it by offering a salary of \$1,500 or \$1,800. If it wants as teachers men who can prepare boys to take up the more responsible positions in business organizations, then it will have to offer suitable salaries. The past year has seen perhaps a greater advance in teachers' salaries throughout the country than any year ever before. While we are in the midst of this movement for better salaries for teachers, I wish to enter a special word in advocacy for a salary that will attract suitable teachers into the work of a high school of commerce.

A teacher in a high school of commerce must be equipped with a liberal education and good habits of study, and he must further be an authority in the line in which he teaches. He should belong to the distinctly commercial or semi-commercial bodies in his city; he should form a business acquaintance with the best firms of the city, and should frequently be seen in the gatherings of business men; and above all he should have a great love for his own city and full confidence as to its future prospects.

One of the questions that is immediately asked about our school is: "What are the alumni doing?" When this question is put to me, I am not sure what kind of answer is expected. The people before me know it takes time to train a person for a particular career. The school has been in existence six years. Its aim has

not been to instil into the minds of its pupils get-rich-quick ideas; its object has not been to be able to gather as quickly as possible a set of statistics showing what wage the boys have received year by year after graduation, and showing how the wages compared with those of the boys of other high schools. Such reports as these appeal to me as being more or less sensational rather than professional. The aim of the school has been above all to develop a man, to give him such a fund of knowledge about his own city as was possible, and to give him such vocational instruction as he could assimilate in the four years he was intrusted to our care. We do not mean to say that we are not watchful over our alumni. On the contrary, we are very watchful. When we think that they are not progressing so rapidly as we think they should, we try to find the cause and remedy it. When we think that they are trying to progress too rapidly, we do our best to set them right.

In general, I should report of our graduates that most of them go into the distributive side of business. Very few go to college.

Our principal way, at present, of getting information about our alumni is through a general letter in which we ask the following questions:

1. Mention places employed since graduation, giving dates. Give pay received.
  2. Have you worked for any of these concerns during your summer vacation?
  3. If you have changed houses mention the reason.
  4. What parts of the school training have been most useful to you in your work?
  5. How could the school have helped you more than it did?
  6. Are there any opportunities for summer employment or permanent positions with your firm. To whom should communications be sent?
  7. In what lines of work do you find good opportunities for alumni of this school?
  8. Can you give any information regarding other alumni?
- (Additional suggestions and information will be gladly received.)

Information like this will be asked for from our alumni during the first, third, sixth, and tenth years after graduation.

One of the lessons we try to teach is that of thrift. This is done in one way by not making continual appeals to attract away a part of the weekly allowance of the boys; in a second way it is done

by encouraging the boys to make weekly deposits in the school savings bank. The object and work of this bank can be best shown by making a few extracts from a circular letter sent to the parents of all the pupils in school:

The bank has now been in existence in school for nearly a year. The extent to which it has been used by the teachers, pupils, and organizations of the school has more than fulfilled expectations. During the year there were 25 bank days; the total deposits were \$2,862.11; 342 accounts were opened; \$210.70 was drawn out during the year; the balance in the bank at the end of the school year was \$2,651.41; the total number of deposits during the year was 1,968; the average daily individual deposit was \$1.44; the average daily total deposit was \$106.49; the average total deposit of each depositor was \$8.37; average total withdrawal of each depositor was \$0.64; average net deposit of each depositor was \$7.73.

One day each week is known as "Bank Day," and during one period of that day, pupils desiring to make deposits go from their several rooms to the banking-rooms and make their deposits, the amount of each deposit being entered upon a "Deposit Card" which will be kept by the pupil. The money so received is deposited in the Home Savings Bank in my name as trustee. When the total amount deposited by any one pupil amounts to \$3.00, the Home Savings Bank, on the last "Bank Day" preceding the quarterly dates on which money goes on interest, will issue a depositor's pass book, and thereafter when the amount deposited by him equals the sum of \$1.00, it shall be transferred by the bank to his pass book. Deposits made by the pupils may be withdrawn in whole or in part on any "Bank Day" by an order signed by both pupil and parent or guardian. Deposits of five cents and upward are received. On "Bank Day" the Home Savings Bank sends a representative to the school to receive the deposit of that day, but all clerical work connected with the receiving of deposits is done by pupils chosen for their fitness to do that work. In order that the pupils of the school may, in addition to cultivating habits of thrift, gain practical experience in banking, as much of the work connected with the operation of the bank as is expedient is done by the pupils. They have already elected a Board of Trustees, each home room having a representative on the board, and this board has elected its own officers, a president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and assistant treasurer.

To aid in assuring the success of the High School of Commerce Savings Bank, we ask your earnest co-operation by giving the boys all the encouragement you can. There are numerous little ways in which boys can save if they are reminded of them, and it should not be difficult to show them the wisdom of doing so. We earnestly believe that the teaching of thrift goes hand in hand with the training for business which the boys of the High School of Commerce are receiving, and we think you will agree with us that in no way can the school be of greater or more permanent benefit to its pupils than by helping them to form early in life habits of thrift and economy.

Finally, the High School of Commerce Savings Bank does not wish to interfere with any scheme of saving which certain boys of the school may be carrying out. In such cases, it is for the boy and the parent to decide as to whether it would be a wise thing to transfer his savings to the school savings bank.

The heads of departments of the school, with their respective departments, are as follows: Oscar C. Gallagher, English department; Joel Hatheway, Modern Language Department; Winthrop Tirrell, Economic and History Department; Newton D. Clarke, Mathematics Department; Raymond G. Laird, Business Technique Department; Owen D. Evans, Science Department. The work in salesmanship is in charge of Maurice J. Lacey. The men have submitted the following brief reports in answer to the question, "How is the work for which you are responsible meeting the needs of the school"?

*Business Technique Department.*—The function of the department of business technique is to ascertain the requirements, in the way of clerical training, that a typical business man would place on the output of our school, and to meet that demand in so far as practicable.

Good handwriting is always demanded. In addition to the half-year of instruction that the pupil receives, he is required, in connection with his various studies, to do his written work carefully and in accordance with the style of the adopted forms. In the Senior year, that he may be sent out to his first position a credit to himself and to the school, one period each second week is given to a review of penmanship.

Bookkeeping is taught with the double purpose of giving a training in a bread-winning vocation, and of giving to those who may never become practitioners, such an understanding of the methods and purposes of accounts that they may not be at a disadvantage from the operations of dishonest bookkeepers, and that they may comprehend to the fullest extent the conditions reflected by business and financial statements. Pupils are drilled in drawing up a large number of forms and papers incident to several types of businesses. Study is made of the accounts of retail and wholesale trading businesses, of commission concerns,

and of manufacturing enterprises. In all these instances, the transaction comes to the pupil as nearly as possible in the form and manner that it reaches the real business house, and he disposes of the clerical end much as if he were engaged in an actual office. A large amount of very valuable information is secured regarding the administration of these businesses and of the routine of their counting-rooms.

That portion of the student body that selects the secretarial course gets the same clerical training as above outlined to the completion of the third year and in addition phonography is taken during the third and fourth years. The dictation given these pupils includes correspondence from a considerable number of businesses, from editorials of leading daily papers, and from congressional matter. The thorough use of one make of typewriter is required, and some familiarity with one or two others is given. Plans are being made to introduce a phonograph office machine for use in connection with the work of this department.

*Mathematics Department.*—The department of mathematics has defined its problem as an attempt to train boys mathematically for the work which they expect to enter. This, from the purpose of the school, means to nearly all the students some form of commercial employment. About 10 per cent may have a higher school in view, and for such boys the usual fitting courses are provided; but these courses, having nothing distinctive, may be disregarded in any discussion of the work of the department.

The work of the first two years is a continuous course in arithmetic, and in such topics of algebra, geometry, and commercial arithmetic as can be related to the course and serve to extend the mathematical training of the student.

We need here to define what is needed and aimed at in this training. By general agreement among business men, the one mathematical requirement is accuracy. Rapidity is a very minor consideration. Neatness is, of course, an important quality. It is, however, plainly not a special mathematical quality, but extends to all work. But the general demand of business men is for boys who can get things right. Now the problem of obtaining accuracy is one of training. The boy must be given problems which he can

do, and he must be trained to get them invariably right. The average pupil entering the high school has developed no conscience in this particular. He is satisfied to do his work, and take the chances of its accuracy. To develop such a conscience is one of the most difficult problems which we have to meet, and is the aim of all our work. It is not that the boy is unable to do correct work, but that he is indifferent to incorrect work; and he must be trained until the habit of checking, repeating, and revising answers becomes his settled habit.

The method taken is largely that of individual problems. These problems are kept in sets, similar in scope and difficulty, but each different, and each boy is given one to compute and get the correct result. To give more interest, and impart information, the problems are drawn from sources in which the boys are interested. Some of the sources are: the reports of the Chamber of Commerce of Boston, the reports of the Department of Commerce of the United States, and the reports of the Department of Agriculture.

When a boy has completed the two years' course, we expect that he can do these things and do them correctly. He can add, subtract, multiply, and divide integers, decimals, and common fractions with small commercial denominators. He can compute simple and compound interest; he can reckon commercial discounts; he can figure the bank discount on a note; he can solve the usual algebraic equations, and can express ordinary problems in algebraic terms; he can intelligently interpret and compute formulas; and he can use geometric principles in computing such areas, angles, and lines as ordinarily arise in life.

This will seem a very small extension of the grammar-school work. But the whole purpose of the mathematical department is to train a pupil to do the few things that he will need to do in the business world and to be absolutely sure of the results of his work.

*Science Department.*—Since our boys are preparing definitely to enter the business of buying and selling, rather than that of producing, they need chemistry rather than physics. In order to allow for the course in chemistry, program requirements forced us to place the physics in the first year; so it is very elementary.

All first-year pupils are required to take fifteen weeks, with five recitations per week, and without laboratory work, in physical geography. The objects are to teach the boy how to get a home lesson, to give him elemental facts in the subject, and to show the relation of the subject to the production of commercial commodities. Then follow twenty weeks of conventional physics, with four recitations or demonstrations and one laboratory hour per week. The subject-matter is diluted to fit the pupil's time and ability. There is individual laboratory work with suitable notebook record. This subject so treated is so fundamental that little attempt is made to make it commercial. It cannot fail to be vocational in its content.

All third-year pupils are required to take a full year of chemistry, with three recitations and a double laboratory hour per week. We do not believe in giving commercial tests before the pupil is grounded in elementary theory; so the first object of this course is to drill in fundamentals. After six months of such work, the pupil has lectures and reference-book work on important local industries, with commercial tests in the laboratory. The topics are paper, glass, fermentation, sugar, milk, petroleum products, fats and soap, dyeing, etc. Such laboratory exercises are given as the Halphen test for cotton seed, the test for formaldehyde in milk, the Babcock milk-fat test, making soap, dyeing, the Fehling quantitative test for invert sugar, etc. Typical industries are visited. The object of the work is to give the pupil a slight idea of the scope of such work, so that if he wishes to elect fourth-year chemistry he may know what to expect. We devote the last two months to descriptive study of the metals, and the laboratory work is an elemental outline of qualitative analysis designed to give some little skill in methods, some knowledge of the relations of the metals, and to drill the fundamentals of chemistry.

Through the entire school the work becomes increasingly vocational as the pupil advances. Accordingly, fourth-year chemistry is elective for pupils who have shown interest or power in that line. The purpose is not to turn out expert or half-trained chemists, but to give the kind of training a prospective buyer and seller of merchandise will find valuable. Consideration is given

to the buying of supplies on the basis of a scientific test; in other words, scientific efficiency in buying is our theme. Our object is to be able to read understandingly a set of specifications involving contract for the purchase of supplies, to understand the purpose of the several tests there indicated, to know what tests are available for the buyer himself, and to know when the buyer ought to pay an expert chemist for an analysis. We take up from this point of view those commodities which Boston merchants handle: fuel, lime, cement, petroleum products, animal and vegetable oils, essential oils, packing-house products, soap, fermentation, starch, sugar, paper, leather, textiles, dyeing, paints, varnishes, rubber, general food products, dairy products, canned goods, preserves, coffee, cocoa, tea, spices, flavoring extracts, etc. We have three hours of lecture, discussion, and reference-book work, lantern slides, and pictures per week, and a double laboratory period. Where we can find sensible tests within the scope of the pupils' time and ability, we make them. Where the tests are too difficult, we may discuss their purpose and theory, or we may ignore them. We have on hand twice as much material as we can handle in any one year. The interest of the pupils is all that could be desired. We try to be sane and sensible in what we undertake, and we feel that we are getting results which are well worth while. In the end, if we can turn out boys who are good raw material for a business house to break in, we feel that we have accomplished all that is possible.

We do not prepare boys for college and we pay no attention to college-entrance requirements; if we discover boys in the early years who intend to go to college, we advise them to go to another high school. But our course is broad enough and cultural enough so that if one of our boys discovers himself in his Senior year and wishes to go to college, he is able to pass his entrance examinations.

*English Department.*—The course in English is determined by the life the boys have to live. It aims, not to fit them for this life, but to live it with them from the start. Thus practical dealing with business subjects runs through the whole four-year course. It is as possible to secure correct, clear, and forcible English in dealing with the tangible conditions that everyday buying and

selling present, as in dealing with the hazier situations that the college-imposed classical literature too often suggests.

During the first two years special stress is laid upon oral work. Current events, reports of Boston's industries, explanations of salesmanship as the boys themselves have practiced it, and criticisms of advertisements in papers, window displays, and bill boards are constantly called for. Business letters—genuine letters—are read to the boys for criticism, and then rewritten and answered. A special commercial vocabulary is definitely developed. The natural talkativeness of the boys is directed toward debates, and throughout the second and third year inter-room debates are held weekly. During the third and fourth years, commercial correspondence is studied intensively, and with the aid of textbooks the boys are drilled in all the types of communication that they are likely to meet. In the fourth year, too, there is a course in advertising. The theory of advertising—with illustrations at every point—is treated in a course of lectures. Practical application of the points made is secured from collections of good and bad advertisements which the boys make and which form the basis of class discussion. After this the boys themselves write advertisements which shall illustrate the points considered in the class. In all this work, of course, the principles of effective composition are taught, but the field from which the boys draw their subjects is the business world.

It is poor business to have the work done by one department broken down in another; so the English department and the others co-operate in maintaining a definite standard. The written papers in history, modern language, commercial geography, and economics are taken by the English teachers and corrected, and the grade of English work thus done on papers in another course is entered as part of the English record. Co-operation is carried on also by the English teachers assigning topics suggested by some other department and drilling the boys in making their answers not only correct, but effective.

Literature meanwhile is not neglected, but here the emphasis is different from that of the college-preparatory course. To enjoy a good book, and to be able to tell why he enjoys it, is what we

expect of a boy. Certain books are required for careful class reading, among them several on the college list. Besides these, however, every boy must read one book outside of school each month and report upon it in class. The school library contains many volumes of perhaps second grade, as literary standards go, but of vital interest to the boy because of the appeal they make to the creative side of his nature through their connection with the scientific, industrial, and commercial world about him. As far as can be judged, this emphasis upon interest and enjoyment in teaching literature has not dulled the moral or imaginative sensibilities.

*Modern Language Department.*—Each pupil in the High School of Commerce is required to take one modern language throughout the entire course. There are five recitations per week during the four years. A pupil is allowed to take only the one language. This is chosen at the beginning of the course. Experience has shown that with so heavy a curriculum as that of the High School of Commerce, two languages are not thoroughly learned. Our belief is that a more thorough and intensive study of one language is better in every respect for the pupil, and will be of greater value to him in after-life than superficial training in two or even more.

The training in the modern language has two sides, the general and the special. The course is laid out as follows:

The first year is given to elementary grammar. This means in any language the inflection of nouns, adjectives, and pronouns, the conjugation of the regular verbs and the more common irregular ones, and the application of the simpler rules of syntax. In every language a certain amount of grammar must be learned and that thoroughly at the outset, for if it is not learned then it will never be acquired at all. The grammar is, however, taught somewhat informally in connection with the reading. A large amount of easy narrative is read. This serves as a basis for exercises in dictation, conversation, and composition. The main purpose of the work of the first year is to acquire the barest essentials of the grammar, to get a correct pronunciation, to acquire a good vocabulary of simple, common words and to attain ease and facility in their use.

During the second year this work is continued; grammar is studied intensively. This is the grammar year. The reading consists of easy narrative. There is considerable reading at sight; the foreign language is used to a considerable extent in the classroom. There is work in composition throughout the year.

The third year is primarily a reading-year. The greater part of the reading material consists of fiction and modern drama. Through the texts read and through the composition work, an attempt is made to give the pupils some definite, reliable information about the country where the language studied is spoken; the course further aims to give them a practical working vocabulary of travel, of ordinary business transactions, and of everyday life. There is constant practice in hearing and in speaking the foreign language; and a large amount of composition work is done, including some general practice in letter-writing.

At the end of the third year, a boy should know his grammar thoroughly, be able to read average fiction, understand a good deal of spoken language, and be able to express his own wants, if not fluently, at least intelligently. The language training is such, that if he needs to leave school at this time he can go on and acquire and assimilate a large amount of special work unaided.

The fourth year sums up and applies in concrete form what the pupil has learned in previous years. The work consists of a study of the language as used in commercial correspondence, advertisements, trade circulars, market reports, and newspapers. If time allows, a good play is read also. There is constant drill in conversation. The course in Spanish includes special drill in the vocabulary and forms of Spanish bookkeeping. At the end of the fourth year, the pupil should be able to read a foreign newspaper or average book with considerable ease, to understand well the spoken language, to speak with considerable fluency, and to write an ordinary business letter with reasonable accuracy and speed. He should know thoroughly the vocabulary of ordinary life, the ordinary business vocabulary, and have a broad and sound foundation upon which to build.

The nature of our course prevents us from paying much attention to the history of the foreign literatures. Some attention is

paid, however, to the life and works of the principal writers and allusions to political or industrial history are carefully explained. In this way the work in modern languages is able, to some extent, to supplement the work of the other departments.

The results attained in teaching American pupils to speak foreign languages are not satisfactory. The chief reasons alleged are: first, the large size of our classes; second, the greater age of our pupils when beginning a foreign language. Neither of these reasons is valid. The main trouble is that for us the ability to speak a foreign language has no immediate or direct commercial or industrial value. Incentive is lacking. A boy puts his time upon those subjects which he knows will be of use to him. The prospect of making a living out of Spanish or German is too remote to appeal to a boy, despite the active and vigorous propaganda exerted in behalf of the former. Therefore, in our work we must be satisfied to make the modern-language work a means of careful discipline, a means of imparting valuable information, both special and cultural, about our neighbors, to awaken and stimulate in our pupils a healthy interest in, and respect for, our neighbors and competitors, and to give the learner the basis upon which to build an accurate speaking knowledge of the foreign languages, if at any time the need arise.

*Department of Economics and History.*—The purpose of this department is to give the young men who are going out from the school such a knowledge of present economic conditions that they will be enabled to handle better the big problems of modern business. In addition to this we try to stimulate an interest in history which will lead the pupil to do outside reading for himself and take an intelligent interest in all questions which should appeal to good citizens.

These purposes we are accomplishing in the following ways:

1. Our course in general history (mainly mediaeval and modern), given during the first two-fifths of the second year, serves as the groundwork for our later study of industrial, economic, and commercial history.

2. The course in commercial geography, which covers the last three-fifths of the second year, gives an understanding of the

products, resources, and commercial possibilities of various countries, laying special emphasis on the United States.

3. During the entire third year every pupil studies the history of commerce. In this course the development of commerce is followed from earliest times, and special efforts are made to show how our commercial institutions have developed from those of mediaeval times. Special emphasis is laid on the development of means of communication and transportation, dealing through exchanges, and the use of credit in modern business.

4. The first half of the Senior year is devoted to a study of economic theory. Our aim is to present this subject in the most simple and direct way with constant references to concrete illustrations within the range of the pupils' experience. During the second half of the year, the economic and industrial history of the United States is studied as furnishing the best illustration of the various stages of economic development. At the same time, it gives the pupils much useful information about their own country.

5. Courses in civil government and commercial law also come under the Department of Economics. The aim in the first is to give each pupil a knowledge of local, state, and national government which will enable him to fulfil his duties as a citizen intelligently. In commercial law we do not attempt to teach enough to enable a graduate to act as his own attorney. We rather try to show the boy that the subject is so intricate and complex that the intelligent business man will consult a lawyer when any legal question of importance arises. We also aim to give enough knowledge of the law to enable our graduates to have an intelligent appreciation of legal opinions given by their attorneys.

This brief outline shows in a meager way what the department is doing. In addition to this, by co-operation with other departments, much is taught which adds to the pupils' fund of economic and general information. Trips to business houses and manufacturing plants furnish the best sort of illustrative material for economic theory. Practically all of the boys in the two upper classes have worked in business houses and can apply the theory learned in the school to their individual experiences.

We do not feel that our course is perfect in its present form, and

we are constantly looking for ways of improving it. We do feel that as time goes on we shall be able to learn to what extent the work of the department is helping to turn out the kind of business men needed in the community, and that thus we may model our work more directly on the needs of the business world as shown in the experience of our graduates.

*Salesmanship.*—That salesmanship is not solely an art, but is based upon scientific principles, is a fact that is now almost universally recognized in the business world. It is the knowledge of this fact that impels such stores as Wanamaker's in Philadelphia and the Jordan Marsh Co. of Boston to maintain schools for the instruction of their employees in the principles of salesmanship. Accepting the contention that, to a great extent, salesmanship may be taught, and alive to the fact that its graduates, for the greater part, are engaged in active selling, and that the same will be true of its future graduates, the school offers a course in salesmanship with a view to pointing out to the boys its basic principles that must be applied when their business life begins.

When the school was first instituted, and until the present year, the course consisted of lectures by a local business man who addressed the boys upon various matters of business life. This year, however, a new plan is in vogue. One of the faculty who has made a special study in the science of salesmanship, and of psychology and its application to salesmanship, and who, apart from the ideas gained from the literature on the subject, has obtained much information from conferences with business men, has taken charge of the course and is conducting it in both the Senior and Junior classes. Probably the chief advantage derived from the new plan is that the course is more systematized than formerly.

Near the close of the last school year, the third-year class were given four preliminary lectures on salesmanship, preparatory to their summer work. Three of these talks were given by the teacher in charge, while one that dovetailed into the teacher's plan was given by a business man. The elements of salesmanship was the leading topic of these lectures. Ideals in business were impressed upon the minds of the boys with the hope that they

might follow the road to success during their summer and later work and avoid the pitfalls that so often make failures of the novice in business. Other topics discussed in these lectures were: salesmanship, a science or an art; need of instruction in the principles of business; the classes of livelihood-earners; divisions of business; the inside salesman; the traveling salesman; steps in a sale; mail-order business; summer employment. The final word was an exhortation to the boys to gauge their summer work by the standards set before them in these preliminary lectures.

In the meantime, these same boys, who are now in the Senior class, have had practical experience in the business world and will have more in connection with the Christmas employment scheme. Then they will be ripe for the six final lectures in salesmanship to be given during January and February under the direction of the teacher in charge.

Present plans call for a division of these final lessons into four parts: one will assume the form of an "experience meeting," at which about a dozen boys will give brief talks on their experiences during their summer and Christmas work; another will be devoted to talks by a half-dozen graduates of two years ago, who will speak upon the actual conditions in business that await the boys upon graduation; another will consist of a supplementary lecture, a comparison of inside and traveling salesmanship, to be given by an experienced salesman; the fourth part will comprise three talks on the theory of salesmanship by the teacher in charge. These final lessons will complete the ten in the theory of salesmanship that the school offers its students.

Someone may conclude that the course in salesmanship is inadequate for a school with business aims. Let me add that, in conjunction with these lectures, the practical work afforded under the Christmas and summer experience plans is, in reality, a part of the course in salesmanship, since it enables the pupils to apply in practice the theories presented in the lectures. Viewing the course in this light, one can hardly call it inadequate. Again, demonstrations of salesmanship that are in such favor at present are not provided for under the new plan. However, the numerous

opportunities that the boys have for studying actual sales while working in business houses more than offset the lack of artificial demonstrations in the school.

As a final word, let me say that, at present, the new course is in an experimental stage. Later thought on the subject may warrant a change. Moreover, while we realize that we cannot produce expert salesmen, and to do so is farthest from our aim, we feel that, by revealing to the boys some of the ideals of business life that lead to success and some of the obstacles that spell failure, we are not sending forth our graduates into a strange and utterly unknown world to perform tasks for which they are totally unprepared.

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