

COMMERCIAL EDUCATION.

By ETTIE A. ROUT.

THIS is an age of specialization. We may deplore the fact, we cannot doubt it. Special education for special work, that is the demand, and that is the supply—a supply which is now being more or less adequately furnished, either by the State or by private enterprise, in every department of life.

That mercantile life should be so ill-furnished with trained and competent graduates, was, within recent years, a matter both of surprise and regret. But the old order has changed. The ranks of the successful soldiers of commerce are not now recruited from the thousands of young people annually turned adrift from the primary and secondary schools, but from those few scores who have been fortunate enough to have received a good sound commercial education: an education, that is to say, which has not only made them alive to the demands of modern mercantile life, but has made them able to cope successfully with those demands.

The great business of the mercantile world is: Providing for the people. And this providing is nowadays no simple matter—it is one of the Fine Arts, and it demands of its votaries that they shall be bright, quick, alert, and above all, well-informed and well-trained—that they shall have received a good commercial education.

For this, personally I consider a thorough knowledge of shorthand, typewriting and book-keeping to be absolutely indispensable. But these three subjects are not the be-all and end-all of such an education. Much must be added not only in the way

of general all-round information, but also in the way of that special technical knowledge which is termed "business training." I would advocate teaching every boy and girl destined for business life both shorthand and typewriting. I should teach them typewriting; first, because this knowledge cannot be other than useful, and is frequently indispensable; and second, because it is impossible for anybody to be a good typist, and yet not have a sound knowledge of spelling, punctuation, paragraphing, etc. And I would advocate every commercial student being instilled with a good workable knowledge of shorthand, because I know of no better means of training eye and ear and hand to work in unison than is furnished by the acquirement of a knowledge of any system of shorthand; and I know of no better training for the logical faculties than is provided by the acquirement of a knowledge of such a scientific and methodical system of shorthand as that of Sir Isaac Pitman. Shorthand, i.e., phonography, or sound-writing, to my mind gives to its votaries that means of developing the intelligence which, in the ordinary secondary-school curriculum, is furnished by mathematics; and it has this additional advantage: it can be and is actually used in after life, whereas much of the knowledge of mathematics acquired in school life is often useless in after life, at any rate, is wholly unapplied.

These three subjects, then, shorthand, typewriting and book-keeping, constitute the "mathematics" in commercial education;