

RISE AND PROGRESS OF BUSINESS, EDUCATION IN IOWA.

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In this age of steam and electricity, and in a country where the neigh of the iron steed is heard from ocean to ocean, and where the magnetic wire is quivering from east to west, and the current of commercial activity is moving around with a corresponding velocity, we are most forcibly impressed with the importance of a practical business education.

The young man who enters into the business world at the present day, with nothing more than a classical or scientific education, is but a floating straw in the vast ocean of commerce, to be drifted about by the tide of misfortune, and is thus too often crushed—financially and mentally—simply for the want of practical business training.

Life is too short, and time too valuable, to justify any one to enter the active duties of business life as a *school of experience*, at the expense of spending half a life time in learning the elements of business, and the inconvenience of committing constant blunders.

Indispensable to the attainment of the highest degree of satisfaction and success in business, is a good practical hand writing, a thorough knowledge of commercial calculation, book-keeping and commercial law. Practical business men conceived the idea, many years ago, that to achieve the highest results in these branches, and to meet the demand of the times, it was necessary to establish schools where young men might learn the elements of business, and thereby save themselves years of unprofitable toil and embarrassment in business, and perhaps from financial ruin.

What has been the result? The idea at once suggested itself as practicable, and was acted upon as an experiment, at first by organizing classes in writing and book-keeping in different parts of the country, the success of which soon led to the establishment of commercial colleges, now so numerous in this country.

Thousands of young men who have graduated from these

institutions, are filling with great ability and satisfaction, high and remunerative positions.

Not only do young men attend these institutions, but many who are more advanced in life, who labor under disadvantages in consequence of their deficiency in the most common branches which constitute a business education, avail themselves of their facilities. For the past few years many *ladies* have attended these colleges, and are now filling pleasant and lucrative positions.

Others who have been educated in them and have become proficient in pensmanship, are engaged in teaching this useful, but much neglected art, with profit to themselves and to the community at large.

Iowa, noble Iowa! ever up to the times in literature, art and commerce, has not failed to provide for the business education of her youth. There are now seven business colleges in the state, located respectively in Dubuque, Davenport, Burlington, Keokuk, Iowa City, Des Moines and Oskaloosa, some of which are equal to any institution of the kind in the east.

The first Commercial College established in Iowa, was perhaps the branch of Duff's College, at Burlington, which we believe had an existence in 1854. Not being in possession of the necessary statistics, we are unable to give any positive dates or particulars connected with the institution. Mr. L. H. Dalkoff, was the principal. This college was unsuccessful from some cause, though perhaps not attributable to its management. At least it was continued only for a few years.

In 1855, Mr. W. V. Barr, of Cincinnati, opened a commercial school in Davenport, under the name of "Barr's Commercial College." It was of course a small beginning, but gradually increased in popularity until 1856, when he associated with himself Joseph C. Lopez, of Alabama, a civil engineer by profession.

In January, 1857, Mr. Barr died, leaving the school, then recently located in new rooms, fitted up for that purpose, with some twenty students in attendance, in Mr. Lopez's hands.

In February, 1857, Mr. W. H. Pratt moved to Davenport, intending to open a commercial school, having been engaged for several years in teaching writing and book-keeping. He went in, however, with Mr. Lopez, taking the writing department at first, and in April bought a half interest in the institution. The school was then incorporated as the "Davenport Commercial College." These gentlemen continued the school with some success until the spring of 1859, when Mr. Pratt purchased Mr. Lopez's interest. Mr. Pratt then conducted the institution successfully, as sole proprietor, until 1865. In December, 1859, Mr. Pratt bought out the fixtures of Davis and Tipton's Commercial College, (which had been started in Davenport, a year and a half previous, but was unsuccessful).

In 1864, this school had increased so as to become sufficiently remunerative to tempt the cupidity of other parties, numbering from fifty to seventy-five pupils in average actual attendance.

With his daughter's assistance, Mr. Pratt performed all the labor of teaching and business management, so that expenses were light, and he began to realize some returns for his unrequited labor during the hard times of preceding years.

In January, 1865, he entered into partnership with Worthington and Warner—who had several other colleges—making this one of the "chain." (Chains, though now played out, were fashionable in those days).

The new firm proposed to extend their facilities considerably, and began by taking larger rooms, introducing telegraphing, &c. This college was a complete success to the time of its closing in the fall of 1865, when its fixtures, &c., were sold out to Bryant, Stratton and Merrill.

Mr. Pratt is the pioneer of business educators in this state, and has prepared the way for his successors, who are now reaping the benefits of his labors.

Baylies' Commercial College, at Dubuque, is the oldest now in existence in the state, and perhaps one of the oldest in the north-west. It was founded in 1858, by Mr. Aaron Baylies, a gentleman of large and practical experience as an educator

and business man, and one of the pioneers in the Commercial College enterprise. He was formerly of the firm of Baylies & Lincoln, of Milwaukee, which next to Bell's, of Chicago, was probably the oldest institution of the kind in the north-west. The Dubuque College was conducted upon the most approved plan then known to business educators, and was a favorite with business men from the first. It was incorporated during the year 1859, under the laws of Iowa, and granted a charter. The President, A. Baylies, ably and successfully conducted the college until August 2, 1863, when he died very suddenly in Boston, Mass., during a temporary sojourn in that city. The present proprietor, Mr. C. Baylies, who was at that time superintendent and teacher in the college, succeeded to the presidency of the same, and has conducted it until the present time. A telegraph department was added in 1865, and the popular system of actual business practice was soon after introduced. Many other improvements in course of study method of teaching, &c., have been and are being added as experience proves them desirable.

The Keokuk branch was established in that city during the fall of 1866, in charge of Wm. H. Miller, formerly one of the faculty at Dubuque. The Keokuk College has proven a success, and is now regarded as one of the permanent institutions of the Gate City. Mr. D. D. Morse has ably conducted the writing departments. Over one hundred students were in attendance during the past winter.

The Bryant and Stratton Commercial College, at Davenport, was opened during the year 1865, by Bryant, Stratton & Merrill. The school was under the supervision and management of Mr. Merrill.

In the spring or summer of 1867, the institution was purchased by Messrs. Iles and Montague, under whose proprietorship and management the school continued until late in 1867, or early in 1868, when Mr. Iles died, leaving the management of the institution to Mr. Montague. Mr. Curtis, then of the Bryant and Stratton College of Burlington, subsequently became associated with Mr. Montague, and the col-

lege is still in successful operation under the supervision of these gentlemen. We are not furnished with the number in attendance during the past year, but learn that it has been good.

The Bryant and Stratton Commercial College at Burlington, was established in the fall of 1865, under the proprietorship of Bryant, Stratton and Merrill.

This institution, after various changes, is now under the proprietorship of Mr. J. Bonsall, who constitutes "principal and faculty." We have no knowledge of its facilities and patronage, but trust it has not taken the name of Bryant and Stratton in vain.

The Iowa Business College, of Des Moines, was established by J. W. Muffly, C. B. Worthington and F. W. Warner, and opened for students November 1, 1865. The firm was known as Worthington, Warner & Co., and the college was one of some ten or fifteen schools, composing the American chain.

It was conducted by Messrs. Muffly and Worthington, under the joint proprietorship above stated, until December 1, 1867, when the firm was dissolved, and Mr. Muffly became sole proprietor. January 1, 1869, he associated with himself Mr. W. D. Ellsworth, as penman and principal of the writing department.

There has been no change in the principalship of the college, it having been conducted from its first opening by the present principal, Mr. J. W. Muffly. Number of students in commercial department last winter (1868 and 1869), ninety-seven. Ladies in writing department fifty-four.

The Oskaloosa Commercial College was opened in Sept., 1866, in connection with Oskaloosa College, and has been under the supervision of Mr. M. P. Givens from its commencement. The course adopted is about the same as in the Bryant and Stratton Colleges. This institution has proved a complete success, and has been well attended. The first year the majority of students were from Oskaloosa and vicinity. Since then the number from different parts of the state has been increasing. Many of the students who have completed

the course are filling lucrative positions of various kinds, while many have been called into business before completing the course on account of their proficiency in business penmanship, which has been made a specialty.

The Iowa City Commercial College, was first opened in September, 1866, by Mr. J. L. Craig, of Indiana.

Shrock's Writing Academy, then in successful operation for one year, was made part of this institution. With this additional facility, the spacious College Hall was soon filled with students.

In the summer of 1867, Mr. Wm. McClain, an experienced teacher and practical business man, became the proprietor and principal of the college, under whose supervision it still continues, and who with the assistance of competent teachers in its various departments, has built it up on a permanent basis, having gained for it a fine reputation on account of the thoroughness of its graduates.

The writing department is still under the supervision of Mr. J. Shrock, who for the benefit of those who wish to make penmanship a specialty, in any or all of its branches—plain and ornamental, and pen drawing—continues his writing academy in connection with the college.

The Commercial College, proper, has had an attendance of over one hundred during the past year, in addition to which there has been a class in book-keeping, of thirty-five or forty, from the normal department of the State University, for the past three months. The writing academy has had an attendance of one hundred. Total attendance during the year, two hundred and forty. Many of its graduates are filling remunerative and responsible positions of different kinds.

There are several other schools of minor importance, in the state, where writing and book-keeping are taught, to which we shall not allude.

We have endeavored to give an impartial notice of the different Commercial Colleges throughout the state according to the best information we could obtain. If in any case we have failed to do justice, it has been for want of proper statistics.

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