

EXTRACTS FROM THE OPENING LECTURE OF THE COM- MERCIAL LAW COURSE, SESSION OF 1881-2.

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DELIVERED BY D. E. THOMSON, ESQ.

THIS College does not aim at making lawyers as well as business men of you. One calling is now-a-days quite sufficient for any man—much more than sufficient for some. The day has long passed, if indeed it ever existed, when any one mind might hope to compass the sum of the world's knowledge. Commerce, with its far reaching arms and diversified interests, presents a field broad enough for the mightiest intellect—great enough for the most vigorous faculties. The domain of law is not less broad, and demands from those who would master it the whole of life's energy. No mind is so massive and no vitality so intense but that its best powers will find full scope within the limits of a profession which has to deal with the most intricate phases of all men's affairs. Believe me, you will find one occupation all you can manage. But you should qualify yourselves to manage that one well. The knowledge of law that we seek to impart, understand then, is such only as shall make you better business men. It ought to be, and you should understand it to be, subservient to the main objects you have before you. It is merely a part of the training necessary to fit you for your chosen vocation. We shall have occasion to deal with only one of the many departments of law—that relating to commerce. But even this you must not expect to fully master. True it is but a small section of the ground a lawyer's education should cover, but it is a large subject nevertheless—so large that many lawyers find it wise to make a specialty of it—as others do in other departments. This you know is an age of specialties. We find it so in law, you will find it so in business. It is so everywhere. The man who would achieve success in this day of keen competition—hot rivalry—must find some one thing which he can do better than any of his competitors.

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Lest your hopes of what these lectures are designed to accomplish be still too high, permit me to go one step further in defining our object and the limits we lay down for ourselves. It is this: We not only do not profess to impart the knowledge of commercial law which a lawyer should have, but we do not promise even to impart a knowledge which will, under all circumstances, in your own particular line of business, save you from the necessity of seeking legal advice. "Every man his own lawyer" is a favorite title for a certain class of books, just as "every man his own doctor" is the hackneyed motto of another. Now it is no part of my present purpose to decry indiscriminately books of even this sort. Everything, be it book or