Miscellaneous.

GERMAN IN OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

The Association of the German Press of Pennsylvania, consisting of the German Editors, Publishers, many German Ministers, Teachers, Professors, and other friends of education in the State, desire to have the following petition with the *reasons* and *facts* therein contained presented to the proper authorities.

To the Honorable Directors and Controllers of the Public Schools of Pennsylvania.

Whilst thanking the worthy Directors and Controllers of the Public Schools of the State, for the introduction of the German language into many of the High Schools of our cities and towns, we would respectfully ask you to consider favorably the propriety of introducing the German also into the lower departments of our Free Schools generally, as far as possible, and for the following reasons:

1. Because comparatively few pupils from the lower departments ever enter the High School, and thus, the privilege of studying German in our Public Schools is denied to most of the children in the State.

2. Because in a State like Pennsylvania, where about one-half of the Church members attend divine service in the German language, and where nearly one hundred newspapers, and a large number of excellent books are published in the same language, all the children, rich and poor, and those too who cannot attend a High School or College, should have an opportunity to learn to read, and understand not only the English but also the German language correctly.

3. Because the German is the *mother* tongue of about one-half of the parents of the State, and it serves, as experience shows, to promote obedience to parents and good training generally, if children study the noble language of their fathers thoroughly, and learn to respect it properly.

4. Because Church, School and Home, Ministers, Teachers, and Parents should constantly work together in the education of youth, but this can only be done with good results, if the church and family language is also correctly taught and understood, as well as duly honored in the school.

5. Because, if our Public Schools teach pupils to read and write the German language as well as the English, and endeavor to infuse a spirit of pleasure and love for reading in both languages, they impart to German-speaking parents through their children much useful knowledge and help to promote education among young and old in German families.

6. Because the German is an original language—and very many of the most important and generally used English words among the people are of German or Anglo-Saxon origin, so that the study of the German language leads scholars to a more thorough understanding of the English.

7. Because the study of different languages—especially translating from one language into another—is one of the best mental exercises and an invaluable means of culture, which should be generally introduced into our Public Schools.

8. Because a theoretical and practical knowledge of the German language, which is spoken and honored by so many millions in all parts of the world, is of great value to all Americans and especially to Pennsylvanians, in business life, in social intercourse, and particularly in travelling in this and other lands.

9. Because the German language in its purity is not only one of the most beautiful languages of the world but also because its literature is acknowledged as unsurpassed in richness and value, and opens and offers to the student the greatest treasures in all branches of knowledge.

10. Because the introduction of the German language during the last few years into the public schools of nearly all the principal cities of the West, and also of many places in the East, as for example New York, Harrisburg, &c., has been followed by the most beneficial results.

11. Because a great many children in our State already understand and speak the Pennsylvania German dialect, and they could be easily taught to read, understand, write and speak the pure German, the language of Luther and Schiller and Gœthe, and of all Germany's great scholars—theologians, philosophers, poets, &c.

12. Because Pennsylvania, the Keystone of our beloved Union, is often called the "Old German State," and it is certainly greatly indebted to its industrious, skillful and economical German-speaking inhabitants for much of its wealth and prosperity, and a proper regard to the language of this large portion of our influential population in our Public Schools seems to us to be just and right.

In addition to these numerous plain and practical reasons, we take the liberty of stating another *fact* in conclusion:

When the School Board of Cleveland, Ohio, lately introduced the German language into the Public Schools of that city, some expressed a fear that the study of German might retard the progress of English studies in the schools, and in order to meet this objection, inquiry was made in Cincinnati, where the German has been taught in the Public Schools for many years, and after a full examination it was ascertained, that, as a general rule, those scholars who were attending the schools where both languages are taught, were making more rapid progress in the acquisition of a *thorough knowledge* of the English, than those learning English only. The same experience has also been made during late years in St. Louis and other Western cities.

Linguistic studies develop the power of the mind and strengthen the mental faculties just as well as mathematical studies, and the greater number of languages the student learns, the more he is able to learn. The knowledge of one language assists him in the understanding of others on account of their fundamental relation and connection with each other, and thus intellectual training is greatly promoted.

We submit these reasons and facts to your serious consideration and remain

Very Respectfully Yours, &c.

The Officers of the Association of the German Press of Pennsylvania:

S. K. BROBST, Allentown, *President.*

DR. MORWITZ, Philadelphia, } *Vice Pres'ts.*
E. B. HARLACHER, Allentown, }

W. ROSENTHAL, Reading, } *Secretaries.*
J. W. SCHRADER, Pottsville, }

GEORGE RIPPER, Harrisburg, *Treasurer.*

DR. KELLNER, Philadelphia,
PROF. WILKEN, Gettysburg,
A. E. DAMBLY, Skippackville, } *Executive Committee.*
E. D LEISENRING, Allentown,
B. F. TREPLER, "

Scientific.

ALCOHOL, ITS NATURE AND EFFECTS.*

Alcohol is a product of putrefaction. It is to liquids what carrion is to meat. It begins with the death of the grain; it ends in the death of the drinker. All processes of distillation are forms of decay and death. This alcohol, thus obtained by abnormal processes, is the intoxicating element in all intoxicating drinks. The chief difference between beer and whisky is in the percentage of alcohol. We are told that it is the abuse, not the use, of alcoholic drinks against which we should guard the community. Granted. The question still remains, What is the use of alcohol?

It certainly is not food. The experiments of Messrs. Lallemand, Perrin, and Duroy demonstrate that beyond peradventure. It passes out of the stomach in the same condition in which it entered—unassimilated, a foreign substance. The body can make out of it neither bone nor sinew, nor muscle, nor blood, nor flesh. It hastes to rid itself of the intruder. Part is carried to the lungs. The fumes of the toper's breath witness to its exhalation. Part is carried to the kidneys, where it is the prolific cause of Bright's disease. Part is carried to the brain, which soaks it up as a sponge. Part is carried to the skin, which, irritated by its presence, breaks out in boils and blotches. Every part of the body becomes impregnated with it. The toper is rightly called "an old soaker." The first effect of alcohol is thus to spur the system up to strenuous efforts to cast out its foe. It stimulates. It does not, cannot strengthen. It is never truly a tonic. But, if it promotes some activities, it delays others. The excretory organs are so busy getting rid of this intruder that they are prevented from pursuing their legitimate business. The old, effete, worn-out tissues, therefore, remain. Men drink to gain flesh. This flesh of the toper is carrion. Alcohol never makes new flesh nor new muscle. It simply hinders waste, and so forbids repair. This is its second effect. But, as all men know, its chief effect is on the brain. Every poison has its special affinity. That of alcohol is for the nervous system. But it is the base and not the top of the brain it stimulates. It paralyzes the will. It dethrones the reason. It vitiates the affections. It gives predominance to the brute. A drunkard is like a great city under the law of the mob.

Such are the effects of alcohol in its best estate. But alcohol in its best estate is a rarity. Strychnine, stramonium, belladonna, tobacco, cocculus, and opium are all employed to cheapen and to strengthen it. Adulteration is universal. Dr. Hiram Cox, chemical inspector of Ohio in 1855, after an analysis of the products of six hundred different stores, reported over ninety per cent. adulterated. Sulphuric acid, red pepper, pelitory, caustic, potash, brucine, and strychnine were among the articles used for adulteration. Let no man think that his liquor is pure because he got it directly from the custom-house. The merchants of Oporto ship yearly five times as much wine as is produced in the Douro Valley. One druggist house in London last year sold to one liquor firm in that city more strychnine than the whole medical profession of the city would require in the same time. St. Louis and Chicago alone sell nearly as much California wine as the whole Pacific coast produces. Of these liquors—distilled, brewed, and vinous—we are consuming in the United States five hundred and forty million gallons per years; or nearly twenty gallons to every man, woman, and child. We have a drinking saloon to every three hundred inhabitants. And we employ in the making and sale of these drugs three hundred and thirty-five thousand workmen. This, in brief, is the liquor traffic in the United States. Its results in disease, crime, taxation, and mental and moral disorder cannot be summed up in statistics nor given in half-a-column epitome.

All this, and much more, Dr. Story tells, with abundant citations of scientific authorities in support of his positions. We know no other book which contains so much on this subject in so brief a compass. And the book would constitute an admirable tract for general circulation, were it not disfigured by a wretched attempt to write *down* to the apprehension of the common people. Dr. Story seems to have fallen into the grevious error of supposing that to be plain it is necessary to be vulgar. And his pages abound with slang phrases, which, however much they may have secured the applause of the unthinking in the original delivery of the lectures, will despoil the book of its power over that large class of intelligent moderate-drinkers who otherwise could hardly fail to feel the force of his terrible array of facts and figures.

*ALCOHOL: ITS NATURE AND EFFECTS. Ten Lectures, by Dr. Charles A. Story, of Chicago. New York: National Temperance Society and Publication House.

A HUMAN TIMEPIECE.

A wonderful story is told of a man named J. D. Chevalley, a native of Switzerland, who had, in 1845, at the age of sixty-six, arrived at an astonishing degree of perfection in reckoning time by an internal movement. He was, in fact, a human timepiece, or living clock. In his youth he was accustomed to pay great attention to the ringing of bells and vibrations of pendulums, and by degrees he acquired the power of counting a succession of intervals exactly equal to those which the vibrations of the sound produced. Being on board a steamboat on Lake Geneva, on July 14th, 1832, he engaged to indicate to the crowd around the lapse of a quarter of an hour, or as many minutes and seconds as any one chose to name, and this during a most diversified conversation with those standing by; and, further, to indicate by his voice the moment when the hand passed over the quarter, minutes, or any other subdivision previously stipulated, during the whole course of the experiment. This he did without mistake, notwithstanding the exertions of those about him to distract his attention, and clapped his hands at the conclusion of the fixed time. His own account of his gift was as follows:

"I have acquired, by imitation, labor, and patience, a movement which neither thought, nor labor, nor anything can stop. It is similar to that of a pendulum, which, at each moment of going and returning, gives me the space of three seconds, so that twenty of them make a minute, and these I add to others continually."

COMPRESSED AIR FOR PROPELLING STREET CARS.

Mr. Waylies, of New Orleans, has recently invented a car which has proved a complete success. In the car-station there is an ordinary steam-engine of about sixty-six horse power for compressing air into reservoirs. The reservoirs are made of a paper composition, and two of them are placed on top of the cars. On each car there is a small engine operated by air supplied from the reservoir in the same manner as steam, giving the exact amount of power that was required to compress the air. The engine is not difficult to run, and the cars can be stopped much more readily than where horses are used. Each car will have 300 pounds of compressed air to start with, which will be sufficient to run it nine or ten miles. The exhausted air, as it escapes from the engine, may be used for ventilation. The New Orleans *Picayune* says: "When this system is adopted in our city, it will cause at least 5,000 mules to be sent into the country, thereby being of much benefit to the farmers." In New York there are some 40,000 animals employed on the various railway lines. The release of this immense number of horses would do much toward reducing their value. The cost of running cars by this method would be much less than at present, and the speed more uniform. It is claimed that cars can be stopped quicker with the compressed air than by horses.

SIZE OF THE STARS.

How large are the stars, and are they alike, or do they differ in size? It used to be conjectured that they are of somewhat similar magnitude, presumably about as great as our sun, and that the differences of apparent size are due to differences of distance; but when astronomers came to discover that some of the smaller stars are the nearest to our system, this idea fell to the ground. A German computer has now, however, calculated the actual dimensions of one particular star, and finds that its mass is rather more than three times that of the sun. The star in question is less than the fourth magnitude—a comparatively small one. What, then, must be the size of the Sirius and Aldebaran class? The reason of its selection for this determination was that it is one of the components of what is called a binary system—two stars revolving about each other like the sun and planet—and the motions of the members of such a system afford data for the computation. The star's distance from us is a million and a quarter times that of the earth from the sun, so that light takes twenty years to travel hither from it.—*Once a Week.*