

OUR SCHOOLS AND GERMANY'S

INTERESTING COMPARISONS DRAWN BY AN EXPERT.

Many Points in Favor of the American School System—Most Important Is in the Education of the Teachers—Other Differences.

From the Boston Transcript.

Perhaps the most important characteristic difference between schools in Germany and in the United States is the vast difference in the preparation of teachers. Over here school boards in the smaller towns of the country habitually commit the pedagogical crime of intrusting the boys and girls just "graduated" from the high school with the education of somewhat younger children; and teachers are appointed when they have taken a "normal" course after leaving the high school and have thus done about enough work to gain admission to the sophomore or possible the junior class of a good college. In Germany, on the other hand, the teacher is prepared for independent work as a teacher until he has taken the equivalent of a full college course, followed by two years' graduate study and then two years' probationary teaching, without salary, under expert direction. The necessary result is that while there certainly are many good teachers in America and many bad ones in Germany, the average instruction is distinctly higher in grade than here. It is doubtless largely for this that the German pupil wastes considerable time over the American in the course of his primary and secondary education; the German youth is apt to be as far along at 17 or 18 as his American cousin is at 20. Another important difference is that in Germany teaching is never a makeshift to the German, as it still is far too often in the United States; for while the primitive days are past when every middle-aged person with ordinary intelligence had been a school teacher in his youth, our schools still depend far more than they should upon the transients who keep body and soul together by teaching while they are preparing for another profession. In Germany such a long apprenticeship is requisite for getting into the profession that jumping from one to another is well nigh impossible, and besides teaching has a far more distinct and honorable professional standing in the community than is the case here.

DRAWBACKS.

Now every good thing has its bad side, and so it is with the fine preparation of the German teacher and his permanency in the profession. In the first place, the man who discovers after some experience that he has no real vocation for teaching is less apt to seek some other occupation, because of the extreme difficulty of making a change. Again, the man with a university training is pretty apt to be inoculated with the yearning of the specialist to devote his life to investigation and almost as surely to be thereby spoiled for school teaching, especially in the higher grades. If the man must be a choice between evils, the half-taught teacher who has the pedagogical affluents, even the traditional one who keeps just a lesson ahead of his class, is to be preferred to the trained specialist whose real interests are far removed from the school-room.

There is another striking difference between the teaching personnel in Germany and in this country. Over here the school man has things pretty much his own way from kindergarten to high school, and the proportion of men to teachers is lamely small; almost any other occupation offers a man with brains far better pecuniary rewards, while women are willing to put up with smaller salaries, and have fewer other respectable means of making a living open to them. In Germany, teaching is traditionally one of the learned professions, naturally reserved to men as the educated sex, and so the schoolmaster is abroad in the land almost to the exclusion of the schoolmistress. One extreme seems about as bad as the other; while our schools often suffer for want of a strong masculine and the more practical masculine mind, the German schools suffer no less for the lack of the gracious influence of woman and her gentler spirit. Similarly it seems to me that German children lose very much by the strict separation of the sexes. There is practically no co-education, even in the primary schools. And so, while Germany does not go to the dangerous extreme of giving her girls the warped educational education prevalent in the more southern countries of Europe, she does erect a mischievous and useless barrier between the sexes; and her boys and girls miss that same attitude toward each other and that mutual invigorating and refining influence that comes only with free and wholesome intercourse. It might be added here that women in Germany are making a hard and gradually more successful fight for the same education offered to men. Traditionally, only a primary education has been freely available for them; they have to fight even now, not only for admission to university courses, but for an even chance at secondary education as well.

COMPARISON OF SYSTEMS.

As almost everything that pertains to public administration is done better in Germany with its powerful central government, than in the United States, so the organization of the school system there is incomparably superior to that of our schools. One of the blind spots of all blind boasts of American pride is the old boast that we have "the best public school system in the world." It is as if we bragged of our roads as the best in Christendom, because they are the widest and longest, whereas they are intolerably dusty or impassable by reason of mud a good part of the year, because we allow every farmer to make his own road in his own way, which is invariably a bad way. And our road supervisors, duly elected by our partisan political machinery, usually know exactly as much about roads as the farmers do. So, too, we have state and county superintendents of public instruction, selected just as the road supervisors are, and, as a rule, equally effective; and in most of our states of real system there is absolutely none. Our schools are in the mercy of locally elected school boards, almost certain to be absolutely untrained for this special work, and therefore incompetent, sometimes even corrupt. We have the freest and most expensive public school system in the world, no doubt, but also one of the least and so worst organized.

In Germany the organization is admirable. The department of public instruction in Prussia or Saxony has actual control of the whole school system under its charge, and the district inspectors are first-class schoolmen, who actually do inspect the schools, who know what ought to be done in them and have authority to see that it is done; furthermore, both the inspectors and, through them, the central office, know their men, and hence the filling of vacancies and promotions can be carried out far more intelligently than is possible under our haphazard lack of system. The "teachers' agency," that queer necessary evil that prevails upon the teachers whom it serves, is a huge confession of the utter lack of proper organization in our schools. The German system is autocratic, to be sure, but so is the management of every great enterprise, even in democratic America, that depends upon organization and centralization for its success. Our present condition is pure anarchy.

ONE, GERMAN, WEAK POINT.

Now it is no contradiction to assert that the most autocratic centrally organized system may be imbued with the most democratic and socialistic spirit; and it is just at this point that the German school seems to me to fail. The rigid military spirit, the ideal of subordination and machine-like discipline, that has wrought itself into the whole civil service of the country, extends even to its educational establishment. My observation at least leads me to the emphatic opinion that there is far more mutual sympathy and good-will between teachers and their pupils in our schools than in Germany. The American teacher may be an ignorant, at worst, and sadly immature; it is hardly possible for him to be a tyrant or a martinet, and the German teacher may easily be both. As a matter of fact, the red, that relic of pedagogical barbarism, which has gone out of use even in our more primitive communities, is by no means obsolete in highly civilized Germany. I have known of its use there upon mere infants. I never knew a German teacher whom I could quite imagine as donning a sweater and coaching his boys in football. The characteristic German picture is rather that of a teacher leading his string of boys on one of those admirable school excursions to points of historic or scientific or scenic interest, leading them under his arm in compact though irregular column, and on every fair occasion bringing forth things for their instruction from his large store of information. He is always Herr Lehrer or else Herr Oberlehrer to them, even in hours of recreation—captain or major rather than comrade. There is good in both ideals; but as for me I would rather sacrifice dignity than sympathy as a pedagogical trait. The American democratic spirit certainly makes men more self-reliant and fit than the fine discipline of Germany.

KINDERGARTENS OPPOSED.

There are two lacunae in the German school system that are very surprising to an American, especially one impressed with its superior organization. The public kindergarten, which has deservedly gained an important place in our educational system, is practically unknown in the land of Proebel, and what is more, it is violently opposed by many of the most prominent educators. The private kindergartens to be found in the cities, do not, of course, fill this void, for they are beyond the reach of the very class that needs this form of infant care and training most. Again, an attempt is made to secure that smooth articulation of grades that is sure to be found in English and American schools, whatever their quality. The primary and secondary schools form separate and independent systems, and there is a sharp break between them, instead of the even continuity we consider essential. The reason for this is that the schools naturally reflect, and are deliberately organized to support the aristocratic constitution of German society. There is an absolutely sharp line of demarcation here between the democratic and the aristocratic theory and practice. We make it as easy as possible for the poorest youth of humblest parentage to get all the education he wants or is capable of getting; and London and Zurich have gone even further in this direction than our cities. In Germany, on the contrary, the government and the ruling classes believe they can serve the country best by limiting the growth of an "educated proletariat" by every means in their power, which does not mean, of course, that they do not insist upon universal primary education as essential to the welfare of the nation. The children of the laboring classes are not expected to go beyond the Volksschule, or primary public school, the only one that is free. In all secondary schools tuition is charged—usually from \$20 to \$30 a year, a large sum for a poor family—and only a small percentage of the places are free. Again, the secondary schools themselves are sharply divided into different categories, according as they are to train young men for the mercantile or industrial caste, or the caste of teachers, preachers, lawyers, physicians and higher civil officials, or for the quite exclusive caste of army officers, recruited from the ranks of the hereditary nobility.

NOTHING INTERCHANGEABLE.

There is nothing interchangeable about the parts of these specialized educational machines, no correspondence in their processes. The father must make up his mind once for all, when his son is about 9 years old, what shall be the lad's future occupation; when a boy has once been fed into the hopper of the teaboard, it is practically impossible to pull him out later and put him into the gymnasium and so all the learned professions will be closed to him forever. As for the man who works with his hands, his posterity shall work with their hands to all eternity; and the son of a man who works with his brain or works not at all shall not work with his hands on pain of utter disgrace and social excommunication.

The extreme inconveniences of a system that compels a final choice of occupation for a boy at the tender age of 9 has not passed without challenge, and the "reform school" movement aims to offer a curriculum less rigid than that of the ordinary secondary schools, one that postpones the study of Latin to a later year, and with it the necessity of selecting the pupil's future career. But the number of these reform schools is as yet very limited.

NO COLLEGE IN GERMANY.

For one of the most characteristic and valuable of American educational institutions, the college, there is no counterpart in Germany. There is the highest public school, the gymnasium, prepares for the university, or, in our terminology, for graduate study, and it is arranged with that specific end in view. The gymnasium, with its annual year, does without a preparatory school and college do together, but, while it may be even more effective within its range, it cannot take the place occupied by the college in our life. The college, while no less completely organized, gives its students a far wider and freer outlook, a certain mental and spiritual liberation and breadth of culture that are worth more than any amount of drill. Under the best conditions on both sides the gymnasium will turn out a man who is trained to take on a very admirably narrow range of activity, but who is not a citizen of the world and with a relatively restricted intellectual horizon; the college will turn out a man with liberal culture, enough to make him a citizen of the world and with such a capacity for intelligent self-direction as to make him an ideal citizen of a republic.

It is only when he graduates into the university that the German student finds that liberality of study toward things that are equally characteristic of our college and our graduate school. There is the sharpest contrast in this respect between the German gymnasium and university; while the latter is most feeble proclamation of all truth, the former indoctrinates. For instance, the secondary school teacher is expected and openly charged by the government, with all the authority of direct imperial command, to make his desk a platform of conservatism of all truth, the former indoctrinates. For instance, the secondary school teacher is expected and openly charged by the government, with all the authority of direct imperial command, to make his desk a platform of conservatism of all truth, the former indoctrinates. For instance, the secondary school teacher is expected and openly charged by the government, with all the authority of direct imperial command, to make his desk a platform of conservatism of all truth, the former indoctrinates.

WHAT GERMAN LACK?

But the college has other important advantages over the gymnasium. The greatest of them is the invaluable esprit de corps, the strong sense of communal solidarity, that makes our college life so delightful and so edifying. The college spirit, the enthusiastic and affectionate loyalty to an institution with an individual organic life, with fine old traditions and great ideals, which holds our old grads together as with hands of steel to the end of their days, this is quite unknown in Germany. The nearest approach to it is the pride felt in their alma mater by the alto Herren who have attended one of the famous old private schools like that at Schulpforta; but even that offers but a distant parallel. Closely related to this spirit, perhaps, is the democratic free masonry between our college students, with which the rigid caste distinctions among the German youth are in striking contrast. In general the social relations of our college students and their forms of recreation are far more varied and wholesome than those in vogue at the German gymnasium.

The whole comparison of German and American schools simply goes to prove what is perhaps self-evident, that the institutions that have grown and developed out of German and American conditions are each best adapted to the conditions out of which they have grown.

HUMOR OF THE TEA TABLE.

A certain worthy old Scot and his wife once invited their daughter to attend to tea. The festive board was graced with both baker's bread and home-made scones. The young man was observed to be devoting himself chiefly to the baker's dainties. The old man could bear it no longer.

"What's wrong with the scones, Tam?"

"Oh, nothing, John," said Tam.

"Well, the man that canna eat our Nancy's bakin' will never get our wee Maggie!"

This is somewhat akin to an incident of a very amusing nature which occurred at a farmhouse in the North. The ploughmen and other servants about the place were entertained to tea one Eastern Eve (Shrove Tuesday). When tea was ready the mistress said in quite homely terms—

"Draw in your chairs now, and help yourself, and dinna be bashful."

Andrew the orraman helped himself to a cake of shortbread, and another, and another, till the good lady, probably fearing that he would devour the lot, handed him a plate of loaf bread and one of home-made scones, saying, "Here, some of this, will ye, Andrew? You'll find it vera nice indeed."

"No thank you, mistress," replied Andrew. "I dinna care for any o' your fancy bread; I'll jist tak' a bit mair o' the bap!"

It is not often that country people require to be pressed to partake heartily of whatever is going. But a farmer whilst entertaining some visitors to tea once did so in a rather unique manner by explaining to one of the guests—

"Stick in your stick in Mr. Brown's hale tea scones, shall I ye?"

Sandy Shaw, an honest country "laddie," going up to London for the first time, was invited by a friend to tea at his lodgings. Sandy went, and after some small talk while the landlady had tea set the two friends "sat to." As they did so the friend noted a peculiar expression on Sandy's face, and asked what was wrong.

"Great goodness!" exclaimed Sandy, his eyes fixed upon a large dish of tarts, "the principal feature on the table, 'Great goodness! dis yer landlady tak' me for a rabbit!"

Where children form part of the company at the tea table there is invariably some little breath of etiquette made which serves to set all serious thoughts aside.

A stern looking old army officer at tea one afternoon at a friend's house set a piece of cake fall. The hostess's little "five-year-old" noticing it, said:

"Pick it up, human, heathenly complied with the request when the child said:

"Now eat it!"

Embarrassing as the incident certainly was the stern old soldier couldn't help smiling at the commanding attitude of the pert little fellow.

THE BEAUTIFYING OF CITIES

The Appearance of Paris Is Worth Millions Yearly to Her People.

Charles H. Combs, in World's Work.

A large number of people, the majority in fact have no consciousness of the desirability of beauty in a city. With them the highest consideration is the convenience or comfort of the city life; and in these respects such enormous improvements have been made within recent years that the city seems to represent everything that could be desired. "What is this beauty, anyway?" they exclaim. Perhaps they were in Paris during the exposition, when the omnibus system proved itself entirely inadequate to accommodate the crowds who wished to be carried. They came home and rail against the miseries of it and extol the superiority of their own system of rapid transit, though the latter is not without its drawbacks. Then they did not have a

decent steak all the time they were in Paris and the oysters—but the foreigners don't know what oysters are! Every time it is the convenience and comforts of the lack of them upon which they harp. The dignity or beauty of Paris, while it cannot have escaped their notice at the time, has not been brought home in their hearts as a thing that it would be desirable to emulate in New York. Yet, if they had learned from the foreigners any wrinkle that would improve their own business they would be quick to adopt it.

Yet may not this same beauty be just such a wrinkle? I think it is worth to the Parisians about \$200,000,000 a year. Paris caters for the world, and its main store in trade is its beauty, which it keeps on increasing, and the treasures of its works of art. Poor, impoverished Italy, where would she be today if it were not for the beauty of her cities, much of it created four and five hundred years ago, on which now she is gathering a dividend of \$60,000,000 annually?

His Delicate Proposal.

Glady (on Christmas morning)—What a nice little check! Who gave you that?

Marjorie (George, of course).

Glady—Is it going?

Marjorie—Oh, no. George wishes me to be desired that I may get my own time—hours.

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