

ARTICLE IX.

THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM OF MICHIGAN.¹

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MICHIGAN was admitted to the Union as a State in the year 1835. Since that period, its career has been rapid and brilliant in many respects. The increase of its population, the development of its agricultural and mineral wealth, and the decided steps which it has taken in many of the leading reforms of the day, give it a rank and position seldom attained in the brief period of eighteen years. Should an intelligent man from the heart of New England be suddenly and unconsciously transported to one of the towns of Michigan, though he might not at first be able to define his position, he would not, at all events, be conscious of any change of longitude. Pleasant mansions, cultivated gardens, an active and intelligent looking people, would still surround him. Such a civilization could not have grown up on the spot in so brief a period. It has been transplanted, and retains essentially the same characteristics with the more easterly region from which it came. But as the new land to be occupied was better than the old which had been left, it was natural that men of enterprise and experience should make attempts at improvements in some things. The system which our New England fathers adopted for extending the advantages of education to all classes of the people, has been long and justly praised; but, excellent as that system unquestionably is, the founders of the State of Michigan, in adopting its leading provisions, ventured

¹ Popular Education: for the use of Parents and Teachers, and for young persons of both sexes. Prepared and published in accordance with a resolution of the Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Michigan. By Ira Mayhew, A. M., late Superintendent of Public Instruction. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1850.

System of Public Instruction and Primary School Law of Michigan. Prepared by Francis W. Shearman, Superintendent of Public Instruction. Lansing, Mich. 1852.

A Discourse delivered by Henry P. Tappan, D. D., at Ann Arbor, Mich., on the occasion of his Inauguration as Chancellor of the University of Michigan, December 21, 1852.

to introduce into it some changes which are claimed to be improvements. To examine some of these points, with a view to determine whether any improvements of this kind have already been made, or, more especially, can still be made, is our present object.

Before, however, proceeding to this examination, it may be well to refer, for a moment, to the publications named at the head of our Article. These may be considered the offspring, as well as the representatives, of the educational movement in Michigan; and from them we draw a considerable portion of our information on this subject.

The work of Mr. Superintendent Mayhew contains a series of well-written essays on a variety of topics relating to practical and general education. It is a book for the people, and cannot fail to exert a healthful and elevating influence. That feature of it which appears to us the most striking of all, is the decidedly religious tone which everywhere pervades it. The following paragraph is of so much importance in itself, and presents, also, so clearly the general character and scope of the whole work, that we cannot refrain from giving it entire.

"In the next place, the idea that man is a being destined to an immortal existence, is almost, if not altogether, overlooked. Volumes have been written on the best methods of training men for the profession of a soldier, of a naval officer, of a merchant, of a physician, of a lawyer, of a clergyman, and of a statesman; but I know of no treatise on this subject, which, in connection with other subordinate aims, has for its grand object, to develop that train of instruction which is most appropriate for man, considered as a candidate for immortality. This is the more unaccountable, since, in the works alluded to, the eternal destiny of human beings is not called in question, and is sometimes referred to as a general position which cannot be denied; yet the means of instruction requisite to guide them in safety to their final destination, and to prepare them for the employments of their everlasting abode, are either overlooked, or referred to in general terms, as if they were unworthy of particular consideration. To admit the doctrine of the immortality of the human soul, and yet to leave out the consideration of it, in a system of mental instruction, is both impious and preposterous, and inconsistent with the principle on which we generally act in other cases, which requires that affairs of the greatest moment should occupy our chief attention. If man is only a transitory inhabitant of this lower world; if he is journeying to another and more important scene of action and enjoyment; if his abode in this higher scene is to be permanent and eternal; and if the course of instruction through which he now passes has an important bearing on his happiness in that state, and his preparation for its enjoyments — if all this be true, then surely every system of education must be glaringly defective, which either overlooks or throws into the shade the immortal destination of human beings."

Would that all practical educators, and all works on education, at least recognized the same just and rational views! Certainly it seems too plain to admit of controversy, that all theories of education which do not take into account our future and infinitely more extended life, must be radically defective. It is for this reason that we deem a discussion of the interests of education always in place in a theological Review. It is only because we hold to this theory of education, that we believe its universal diffusion to be the great hope of our country, the main support of a free government; and we are the more rejoiced to see such principles asserted by men occupying high positions in society, now that these very principles are in many places called in question or directly assailed. Far distant be the day when the religious element in our common-school education shall be excluded on the false charge of sectarianism. We do not, indeed, advocate the teaching of dogmatic theology in primary schools; although we should not consider even this so dangerous as difficult. We are not aware that this is anywhere, even now, attempted. But if the constant recognition and acknowledgment of the principles of Christianity is sectarianism, we must plead guilty to the charge of loving and fostering this evil; and we verily believe that, when this kind of sectarianism entirely ceases in our common schools, then will their peculiar value, as a means of perpetuating our free institutions, be at an end; or, as a Jewish historian would be likely to speak of such an event, then will the Lord God withdraw his favor from us.

The second treatise mentioned at the head of this Article, is a history of the origin and progress of public instruction in the State of Michigan, and contains a digest of all the laws and documents relating to this subject. It is lucid, systematic and thorough. Without any attempt at "fine writing," it furnishes what every sensible man values far more highly, distinct and reliable information, in a direct, perspicuous and vigorous style. To those who seek information on the subject of which it treats, it leaves nothing to be desired.

The inaugural address of President Tappan presents substantially the opinions which are contained in his more extended work on *University Education*. The greater condensation, however, which was necessary in a single address, has given to his views a sharper outline, and if possible, greater distinctness, while the consciousness of his new and responsible position

infused a new grace into his style and fresh inspiration into his thoughts.

In reviewing the brief history of education in Michigan, we have been struck with the remarkable unity of plan and of action, which has, on the whole, all things considered, thus far characterized the proceedings of the State. Notwithstanding the discordant elements which have now and then been developed, arising in part, no doubt, from the jarring interests and the rivalry of different religious sects, and in part from the animosities of political parties, we challenge any other State to present the same spectacle of resolute determination to crush every attempt at disunion, and of triumph in placing the interests of education on a sure basis, high above the raging waves of political and religious faction. The annual reports of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and of the Regents of the University, as well as the frequent debates, in the State Legislature, on the subject of education, all tend to strengthen one's confidence in the determination of the people of the State not to commit so sacred a charge to unscrupulous men, and not to allow the symmetry of a beautiful and well-devised plan to be broken or marred. Although too little time has as yet elapsed to see the mature fruits of this unity of plan and action, it requires no peculiar prophetic power to predict the most beneficial results. The State of Michigan contains nearly as many square miles as the whole of New England, with a soil far more productive, and with almost unequalled mineral wealth. It will not be very long before the population of Michigan, at the present rate of increase, will be nearly equal to that of New England. Let us now suppose that the whole of New England were united in one State, and that all of its educational interests were subjected to one judicious system, at the head of which stood one university. Let us suppose that all of the wealth invested in college edifices and grounds, in libraries, in cabinets, and in museums, were united, and that all of the students and professors of New England colleges and universities were brought together, so as to constitute a single well-organized whole, is it not apparent that, for every person who is seeking an education, the advantages of such a university would far surpass those of any college or university now existing in this country? Would it not rival the best universities of the old world? It is perfectly clear that what we most need in this country for the perfection of the

highest institutions of learning, is, not so much the invention of new theories of education, nor the lapse of centuries to secure the growth of our so-called *infant* institutions, as well-concerted and united action. The first university in the world is not half so old as many of our *infant* institutions. While the University of Berlin, which was founded in 1810, attained at once the stature and strength and wisdom of manhood, many of the New England colleges of equal or greater age, are not yet far removed from *infancy*! The causes of these phenomena are too apparent to require comment. While, therefore, the wisest practical educators of New England unceasingly regret the existence among them of so many small colleges, instead of a few larger institutions of learning, and are aiming, in the best way they can, to remedy this evil, the people of Michigan have no such obstacles to overcome, no old system to pull down, upon the ruins of which they are to construct a new and better; they have already — to the praise of their firmness be it said — a system which, whatever other defects it may exhibit, possesses at least the merit of consistent unity.

Another point worthy of particular notice, is, the provision which the State has made, or is making, for the gratuitous instruction of its sons in all departments of study, from the most elementary schools to the highest professional education. The tuition is free even in the University. So far as our knowledge extends, no other State in the Union, and no other country, has yet taken this important step. While New England has long boasted of her superiority over every country of the old world, in the provisions which she has made for the education of children, Michigan may, with not less pride, boast that she alone has perfected the plan, in offering gratuitous education, not only to children and youth, but also to persons of maturer years, whether they may wish to prepare for any of the learned professions, or to push their investigations in science and philosophy beyond the usual routine of study. It is as unnecessary to enlarge upon the advantages of this generous provision, as it is impossible to anticipate the full benefit which may ultimately result from it.

But that which has chiefly arrested our attention, in reading the history of education in Michigan, is the striking announcement that the system which has been adopted, was framed in imitation of that which prevails in Prussia. Leaping beyond

the older New England States, and passing by the imperfect school-systems of England and France, the first settlers of this new State looked for a model, not, indeed, as an object of servile imitation, but as affording the best outlines to a system which is now generally acknowledged to be the most symmetrical and perfect in existence. While Michigan was yet a territory, important steps had been taken by Congress to provide for the cause of education by setting apart ample tracts of land, the avails of which should constitute a permanent fund to be devoted exclusively to this object. On the first organization of a State government, although many features of the present system of public instruction had been marked out by the Legislature, the responsible task of arranging the details of this system was committed to the first "Superintendent of Public Instruction," the Rev. J. D. Pierce, a man of liberal education, of enlightened policy and of comprehensive views.¹ Respecting this system, Mr. Superintendent Shearman remarks:

"The system of Public Instruction which was intended to be established by the framers of the Constitution, the conception of the office, of its province, its powers and duties, were derived from Prussia. That system consisted of three degrees. Primary instruction, corresponding to our district schools; secondary instruction, communicated in schools called Gymnasias; and the highest instruction, communicated in the Universities. The superintendence of this entire system, which was formed in 1819, was intrusted to a minister of State, called the Minister of Public Instruction, and embraced everything which belonged to the moral and intellectual advancement of the people."²

Again, in the inaugural address of President Tappan, the idea is presented in a strong light, that Michigan, in its system of education, has adopted for a model the system of Prussia. As this subject is one of much importance, and must be one of general interest, it may not be unprofitable to compare, as well as we can, the model with the copy, more especially to discover whether any improvements may be made in the latter.

In the first place, let us inquire what is the Prussian system of education? The main classification of Primary Schools, Gymnasias and Universities, has above been given. Of the primary schools, we need not speak particularly. Our impression is, that they are every way inferior to the same grade of schools in this country. Not only is there far less attention paid to ren-

¹ Mr. Pierce is a graduate of Brown University of the class of 1822.

² Public Instruction and School Law, p. 18.

der them comfortable and decent, but the range of studies is narrower, and the acquisitions of the pupils are more limited. One important feature in the organization of the primary schools of Prussia distinguishes them from the corresponding schools of this country; though established by law, the State does not provide gratuitous instruction in them. Every parent is compelled to send his children to school, but he is also compelled to pay for the instruction of every child. This system may appear to a Prussian far more equitable than ours, but it would probably be difficult to persuade any American that it would be wise to adopt it in this country. An important feature in the instruction itself, imparted in the common schools of Prussia, deserves also to be noticed. The principal dogmas of the established church are taught to every child, and thus an intimate connection is kept up between the school and the church, arising primarily from the acknowledged connection of the Church and the State. It is scarcely necessary to say, that nothing of this kind yet exists in Michigan.

It will be worth our while to consider the intermediate schools, or Gymnasias, somewhat more particularly; and, in the first place, we may mention the important fact, that they are intended exclusively for boys. The higher education of females is by no means encouraged to the same degree in Germany as in this country. Our own impression is, that anything like a thorough education among ladies, is decidedly unpopular; and the few German women, who so far cast aside the restraints of their sex, as to venture upon higher studies or upon authorships, are commonly dignified with the not very pleasing epithet of *blaue Strümpfe* (*blue stockings*).

Thus far, whatever differences have been pointed out between the Prussian and Michigan systems of education, have been, according to our standard of judgment, in favor of the latter. At this point, our self-adulation must terminate; and we shall often be compelled, if we exercise common candor, to acknowledge that much remains for us to do before we approach very near to the standard which we have set up. It is certainly not unprofitable to view simultaneously our own imperfections and the way in which they are avoided by others.

To gain some definite idea of a Prussian Gymnasium, we need to consider at what age a boy is usually admitted to it, how long he remains, and what are the studies pursued therein;

also to know something of the number and qualifications of the teachers usually employed. Of the six Gymnasia in Berlin, we may select the Friedrich Werdersche as a fair example of the Prussian Gymnasia generally. Before us lies a "Programm" of the public examination which was held in the hall (Hörsaal) of this Gymnasium in April, 1851. Such a "Programm" answers in some respects to the catalogue of an American college. From this publication, we abstract the following items of information. The number of pupils in the first Semester of the current year was 445; in the second Semester, 469. These were divided into eight classes or years; for, to pass from one class to the next higher, a year's study, at least, is ordinarily required. In the year 1851, only fifteen went from this Gymnasium to the University. Of this fifteen, thirteen had spent two years, instead of one, in the highest class (Prima), and two had spent *two years and a half* in the same class. This would make nine years or nine and a half for the entire course. The average of the ages of these fifteen, of whom the oldest was twenty and the youngest fifteen, was eighteen years. This may be accepted in general as a fair average of the different ages of students on entering the German universities. If, therefore, we allow eight years for the Gymnasium, the usual age for commencing the studies of the Gymnasium would consequently be ten. But another question, and one equally important with the length of time spent at the Gymnasium, is, what are the studies pursued during these eight years, from the age of ten to eighteen? The principal studies are Latin, Greek, German, French, Mathematics, History, and the Natural Sciences; and the relative amount of time given to these studies respectively is represented as follows: Latin, *nine and a fourth*; Greek, *four and a fourth*; German, *two and a half*; French, *two and five-eighths*; Mathematics, *three and seven-eighths*; History and Geography, *three and five-eighths*; the Natural Sciences, *one and a fourth*. The study of Latin is commenced at the beginning of the course and continued through to the end of it, in at least nine lessons each week, and through two years (the Ober and Unter Secunda), in ten lessons weekly. Greek is commenced on the third year from the beginning (in the class called Quarta), and is continued through the remaining six years, in four weekly lessons the first year of the study, and subsequently in six weekly lessons. Thus it appears that the prominence given to the study of Greek, and especially of Latin,

constitutes the chief peculiarity in this course of study. The number of teachers employed in the Friedrich Werdersche Gymnasium in the year 1851, was twenty-six. This would render the work of the individual teachers comparatively light, and would admit of a sufficiently extended division of labor. These teachers are all thoroughly educated men, the most of them being Doctors of Philosophy, and many of them being well known as authors.

We have thus endeavored to present, in a somewhat statistical form, an idea of a German Gymnasium; and now the question arises, what have we in this country corresponding to it? What is there now existing in the State of Michigan, which, with a change of names, would be above described? We think it would be exceedingly difficult to find anything. Do the Union Schools or the Academies answer to the above description? The Union Schools correspond to the so-called High Schools of New England; and the Academies do not differ materially from the Academies of other States. Now, setting aside the limited number of teachers in these American schools, and saying nothing of their qualifications to teach when compared with the Professors in the German Gymnasia, what degree of correspondence is found in the course of study? After somewhat extended observation, we have come to the conclusion, that two years may be considered the average length of time devoted by American students to a preparation for the college or the university. Many persons have been admitted to the best colleges and universities of our country after a much less period of preparatory study. In general, the amount of knowledge which would be required on entering the *Unter Tertia* of a Prussian Gymnasium (that is, the fourth year from the beginning), would gain admission to any American college or university; in other words, the first three years of the Gymnasium, *omitting the last five*, would be fully equivalent to an ordinary preparation for an American college! We forbear to institute further comparisons between things which have so little in common as a German Gymnasium and an American Academy.

It will not be supposed that we are ignorant of the existence of some honorable exceptions to the general character of American schools preparatory to the university. That the exception in this case should soon take the place of the rule, is our most ardent desire. It should, also, be mentioned in this connection,

that the far-sighted men who first framed the educational system of Michigan, and who looked to Prussia for a model, contemplated the establishment of preparatory schools, which they denominated "Branches of the University," which, in their main features, should come nearer to the German Gymnasium than anything now existing in this country. This plan, the very thought of which animates us with the most pleasing hope, was once partially commenced, but was abandoned in a time of financial embarrassment, and the execution of it has never yet been resumed. It has not, however, been lost sight of; for we find, in the report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the year 1851, the following decided language:

"No misfortune has ever occurred to this Institution (the University) equal in extent to that which has grown out of that system of policy, which has permitted or rendered necessary, perhaps, the abandonment of branches; and it would seem to be of the first importance, if the means of the Institution will permit the outlay of a large amount of capital for any purpose, that it should be directed into this channel. It is the settled judgment of this department, that so soon at least as the debt is extinguished, further effort and renewed exertion should be made, that the University 'may represent itself in the different sections of the State through its branches.' Reasons are multiplied, indicating this policy as the only means of filling up the Institution, and guarding against the multiplication of sectarian colleges."

Whether it would be advisable for the State of Michigan, under present circumstances, to attempt the establishment of branches of the University, or to aim at the elevation of the Union Schools and Academies, so as to fill the vacant space, we do not pretend to decide; but it is perfectly clear that something of this kind must sooner or later be done, before the educational system of the State can attain anything like the completeness which is desirable; nor do we deem this deficiency by any means a peculiarity of Michigan, but a weak point which belongs to her in common with all of the other States of the Union. To Michigan almost alone belongs the credit of discovering the deficiency, and of aiming to remedy it.

It remains for us now to compare the Prussian and the Michigan idea of a University. But to gain a correct conception of the former is by no means easy; for, although we have in this country frequent and apparently full descriptions of the German Universities, nothing is more difficult for an American than to form a just notion of them, without entering a German Univer-

sity, and becoming for a time a part of it; thus seeing it in full and perfect operation. A University in Germany contains four Faculties, one of Medicine, one of Law, one of Theology, and one of Philosophy. The Faculty of an American college corresponds very nearly to the Faculty of Philosophy in a German University. Have we not, then, in such an organization as Yale College or Cambridge University, where these four Faculties exist, a true representation of a German University? At first sight it appears that we have; but, setting aside the superior collateral advantages of a German University over anything which exists in this country — the incomparably superior libraries, the works of art, the cabinets for the illustration of natural science, and the far more numerous corps of professors — there remains still one important feature which distinguishes the two. The Faculty of Philosophy in an American university gives instruction to students who are, for the most part, looking forward to one of the learned professions, and who subsequently come under the instruction of one of the other Faculties. In a German university, this is seldom the case, but the Faculty of Philosophy has students of the same attainments with the other Faculties, who are pursuing the study of philosophy as a profession, and not as a preparation for their profession. The method of imparting instruction, also, by the Faculty of Philosophy, differs in this country from that of the other Faculties. It is either exclusively, or in a great measure, by question and answer, as in the German Gymnasium. Not so in the German universities; in the department of Philosophy, under which head are included Philology, History, Mathematics, and the general principles of the Natural Sciences, the instruction is given chiefly by lectures, as in the professional schools of this country. It is for these reasons, perhaps, that the colleges of this country are said to resemble the German Gymnasia rather than any department in the German Universities. In accordance with this view, President Tappan, in his inaugural address, remarks :

“In the Literary and Scientific Departments of the University of Michigan, we find ourselves at the present moment in just this condition; we are a University Faculty giving instruction in a College or Gymnasium.”

“Now our first object will be to perfect this Gymnasium. To this end, we propose to establish a scientific course parallel to the classical course.” * * *

So far as the method of imparting instruction is concerned,

the resemblance here affirmed holds good; the Literary and Scientific department of the University is a Gymnasium. But there are some very important points of difference between anything which has ever yet been called a Gymnasium and the collegiate department of the Michigan University. In the first place, the age at which students enter the latter, is not far from eighteen on an average, being the age at which students commonly enter the University in Germany; while we have above shown, that pupils who enter the first class (*Sexta*) of the Gymnasia, are not commonly over ten years of age. In the second place, the course of study in an American college, occupies only *four years* instead of *eight*, the period of study in a Gymnasium. But a third point of difference between the two, if not less important than those already specified, is the different character of the studies pursued. The course of study in the Literary and Scientific department of the Michigan University is substantially the same as in American colleges generally. The study of Latin is continued through the whole of the first year, through two terms of the second year, and through one term of the third year in five lessons each week. Thus we have an equivalent of two whole years with five weekly lessons. The same amount of time is given to the study of Greek and of the Modern Languages respectively. This is considerably less time than is devoted to the study of the Ancient Languages in Yale College and in Cambridge University, but does not fall greatly short of the time devoted to this study in most other American colleges. We have, then, two years with five weekly lessons, set over against eight years with nine weekly lessons for six years, and ten, for two years. This presents the ratio of *one to seven and two fifths*. In the Michigan University, the time devoted to the study of Latin, compared with the time devoted to the study of the Mathematics and Natural Sciences is as two and a third to three and two-fifths. In the Gymnasium to which we have referred, the Latin stands to the Mathematics and Natural Sciences in the ratio of nine and a fourth to five and an eighth! We do not think, therefore, all things considered, that the resemblance between the collegiate department of the Michigan University and a Prussian Gymnasium is particularly striking; and, although it is not our object to question the expediency of establishing a parallel course in which greater prominence shall be given to the Mathematics and Natural Sciences, and in which

the time devoted to the Ancient Languages shall be reduced to nothing, we are quite unable to discover how such a change will increase the resemblance to a *Gymnasium*.¹

Two lines may, indeed, be parallel, which are very wide apart; but if we recollect rightly the definitions of geometry, two lines cannot be parallel when the distances between them are continually varying. We do not, therefore, think there is much parallelism between a German *Gymnasium* and an American college or an American academy. Whatever points of resemblance there may be, the points of disagreement are so numerous that we are not disposed to carry on the comparison any further.

Only one professional school, that of Medicine, has yet been established in the Michigan University. In order to complete the mere outline of a University, a Law School must be added to the departments now existing; nor should we deem it altogether incompatible with the idea of a State Institution, that a Theological School should also be established as a part of the same organization. When this has been done, and when the philosophical department has been raised to the same level with the other departments, by greatly increasing the present requirements for admission to it, something will be presented before the public, having at least the external form of a Prussian University.

It would be easy to dwell upon other and important features in the organization of the German Universities, essentially differing from anything which exists on this side of the Atlantic; as, for example, the dependence of the professors' income on their success as instructors, and the additional incentive to exertion thus afforded; also, the careful and thorough investigation which marks every step in the progress of the German student, contrasted with the absurd practice of crowding almost every study into the short period of four years, thus rendering the attainment of thorough and finished scholarship in any one thing, from the very nature of the case, utterly impossible. We need

¹ Should the word *Gymnasia* be understood to include the *Realschulen*, our criticism would be unfounded; but the Germans, for the most part, make a wide distinction between the two. See *Conversations-Lexicon*, under the word *Realschulen*. An instructive article, reviewing all of the most recent German works on the *Gymnasia*, may also be found in the *Neue Jahrbücher für Philologie und Pädagogik* for May 13 and June 13, 1853. It is entitled: *Kleinere auf Gymnasialpädagogik bezügliche Schriften*.

not, however, again repeat what has been so often and so justly said on these subjects.

The views which have been above presented, suggest one topic, which, sooner or later, will require more attention than it has hitherto received in this country. We have the astonishing fact, that in Prussia more than twice as much time is devoted to the study of the ancient languages as we commonly devote to the same study in this country. This statement is very moderate; for, if we consider simply the Gymnasium, disregarding entirely the considerable time devoted by students in philosophy and theology to the study of Latin and Greek *while in the University*, we have eight years for Latin and six years for Greek, with an average of thirteen and a half lessons each week for six years, and nine and one fourth, for the remaining two years. Now allowing two years for Latin and one for Greek, with five weekly lessons in each before entering college in this country, and two years with five weekly lessons for each language after admission to college, we have in all, four years for Latin and three for Greek. Four added to three would be seven; this multiplied by five, the number of weekly lessons, makes thirty-five. But eight, the number of years devoted to Latin in the Gymnasium, added to six, the number devoted to Greek, makes fourteen; this multiplied by seven and five-sevenths, the average number of weekly lessons in the Ancient Languages during these fourteen years, makes one hundred and eight. The ratio thus presented is thirty-five to one hundred and eight! Certainly we are guilty of no exaggeration when we say, that in this country, we devote less than half as much time to Latin and Greek as they devote to the same study in Prussia.¹ Add to this fact, the superior qualifications of the Prussian Professors to the teachers in our academies, not to say our colleges, and the disparity becomes still greater.

Now allowing the Prussian system of education to be the best

¹ The *Neue Jahrbücher für Philologie und Paedagogik*, May 31, 1853, contains a sensible article throwing much light on the practical workings of the German Gymnasia. It is entitled: *Die sogenannten Silentien an den Gymnasien*. The writer of this article speaks of *nine years*, instead of *eight*, as being the prescribed period of study preparatory to the university; and adds, that a considerable number devote even more than this amount of time before their preparation is deemed complete; a fact which we have above noticed, in speaking of the Friedrich Werdersche Gymnasium.

at present existing (and we have never fallen in with an intelligent man who disputed this fact), what practical inference may we draw? If the capacities of American and Prussian youth are assumed to be in general equal, which we take to be a safe assumption, and if the Prussian system of education does not allow too large a space to the Ancient Languages, it follows that our system of education allows less than half enough time to this study.

Is not this fact alone sufficient to account for the low estimation in which the Ancient Languages are generally held in this country? How can any study be appreciated when it is not understood? and how can it be liked when nothing more is known of it than that it is difficult? But, says an objector, do I need to eat a whole orange in order to determine its flavor? We remember once to have tasted of an orange half grown. We did not relish it particularly well; and had we never tasted the ripe fruit, we could not have imagined that such a concentration of sourness and bitterness would ever acquire the most delicious sweetness. It has been said, by one of our most popular educators: "If, by placing Latin and Greek upon their own merits, they are unable to retain their present place in the education of civilized and Christianized man, then let them give place to something better." Whatever may have been intended by this remark, we are ready to endorse its true meaning. It is quite plain that we must soon come to this point, either to abandon the study of Latin and Greek altogether in a general education, and to substitute something better (if we can find it), or else to give them a fair chance and thus place them upon their own merits. This latter has been done in Prussia, and they seem able to retain their present place among civilized and Christianized Prussians; it has never yet, properly speaking, been done in this country, but we should be glad to see the experiment fairly made, and we have some faint hope that they would be able to retain their place among "civilized and Christianized" Americans.

The question then arises, if it be desirable or necessary to increase the length of time devoted to the study of the Ancient Classics, how can it be done? Can sufficient time be spared from the present collegiate course, to accomplish the desired object? We should say, most emphatically, it is for many reasons impossible. There is but one way in which the end can

be attained. These studies must be prosecuted much further than is now done, before students are admitted to college. There is certainly ample time for this. The average age of students in this country on entering college is about the same as of students who enter the university in Germany, and who have, consequently, completed the course of study in the Gymnasium. Youth is manifestly the period when languages are most easily acquired. There is no good reason, that we know of, why the youth of our country should not be as good linguists at eighteen as the youth of Germany. But, to bring about so desirable a reform, two things are necessary; first, that the requirements for admission to college be raised by all of those colleges which can afford to lose a few students without endangering their existence; and, secondly, that a strenuous effort be made to elevate the character of the intermediate schools. The want of these in sufficient number, and of sufficiently elevated character, is the chief deficiency in the educational system not only of Michigan, but of the entire country. Without them, it is vain to think of building up great universities. We may have great college edifices, and collect a great number of students in them, but neither the one, nor the other, nor both together, would make a great university, in any just sense. The culture, the education, would still be wanting.

We dismiss this subject by simply alluding to one thing: the prevailing fear that the cause of science would suffer, if more time should be given to the study of the languages. The slightest knowledge of the condition of science in Prussia, is sufficient to dissipate this fear entirely. We need not, had we space for it, enumerate here the names of those Prussians who have distinguished themselves in science, and who have first passed through the classical training of the Gymnasia. The main facts and principles of the physical sciences are, indeed, communicated in the Gymnasia; and this, as experience has shown, can successfully be done without interfering with the study of language; but no time is gained by setting a very young person at work in the higher mathematics, or the more abstruse principles of science. We consider this fact abundantly proved by the workings of that system of education, which, we rejoice to say, the State of Michigan has adopted for a model.