

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php

other part is diseased. Wholeness is health, soundness, integrity. Etymologically, if not theologically, *wholeness is business*.

Above all, make the most of the *best* there is in you. And that, be it remembered, is not the body nor the intellect, but the conscience and the heart; not genius or imagination or learning or taste, but truth and right and wisdom and goodness. Be true to your whole nature, but especially to your moral nature. Do right by men; by *all* men, but above all, be right in the sight of God. Dethrone every idol in your heart, and let not genius, but moral excellence, not self or the world, but humanity and God, be the ruling idea of your private and your public life. That idea has in it elements of more than earthly, of more than human power. It can refresh the weary body, as with ethereal sustenance, and revive the exhausted mind, or the sinking spirit, as with a new inspiration from the breath of the Almighty. It can give understanding to the simple. It can almost put a soul within the ribs of death. It can electrify learning, which were otherwise dead matter, and impart to genius itself a higher life, which is like the life of God.

ARTICLE IV.

GERMAN EDUCATION.

By Anthony Lamb, Jr., Providence, R. I.

THE question has frequently been asked of late, why the instructors of Germany succeed so much better, generally, than our teachers, in imbuing their pupils with a love for science, and an ardor in the pursuit of knowledge. The inquiry has been suggested by the remarks, upon that subject, of a popular writer of travels, who has lately presented, in a strong light, the contrast observable in this respect between the pupils of the German schools and universities, and those of our own. We allude to the work of Mr. Brace, entitled "Home-Life in Germany," in which is given a faithful picture of life, and particularly of

domestic manners, in that country of happy homes. The question is a very interesting one, fruitful in suggestions, and highly important to the interests of education in our country. We have thought, therefore, that the communication of such observations and reflections in relation to it as have occurred to us, during a brief residence in that country, and a brief experience as a teacher at home, might not be uninteresting to the friends of education.

Among the causes to which we attribute the result just named, we present the following :

1. That delightful state of the domestic relations which, as has been universally remarked by travellers, so generally prevails throughout that country. The Germans are eminently a sociable and domestic people. Their highest earthly pleasures, while they are at the same time among the most hospitable and philanthropic people in the world, are enjoyed at home ; and their highest temporal gratification springs from the promotion of the comfort and improvement of their families, and particularly from successful exertions in forming the characters, disciplining the intellectual faculties, and storing the minds of their children with useful knowledge. In their ordinary intercourse with each other, and especially in the domestic relations, there is much more expression given, than with us, to the best affections of our nature ; much more of an opening of the heart, of that spontaneous and cordial interchange of good feelings by which those who are bound together by the ties of consanguinity or friendship, "are melted into one." The consequence of this state of society is, that the attachments are very effective in the formation of good habits, and of a love of improvement, not only for its own sake, but also as a means of increasing the good-will and interest of friends. In all families, of any degree of intelligence, the children are objects of more interest and consideration than they are in general with us. Much more attention is devoted to assisting them and encouraging them. The parents and friends of the family frequently converse with them concerning their studies, manifest an interest in the pursuits in which the children are interested, and in every appropriate manner endeavor to impress upon their minds the vast importance of disciplining their moral and intellectual powers, of the acquisition of knowledge, and of preparation for usefulness. The rewards and punishments are addressed to the sense of duty,

of honor, and of filial affection. Good conduct and improvement are rewarded by the favor of friends, by permission to take the accustomed walk on a leisure day or holyday with the family, by being taken to some exhibition of works of art, or place of innocent amusement, and similar gratifications; in the *gymnasia*, by being permitted to pass in the regular succession from one grade to another, and finally to the university; and bad conduct and indifference to study are punished, among other methods, by withholding or depriving them of these privileges. We know of nothing more touching to a feeling heart, than to see a number of those respectable and intelligent family groups, on their leisure days or holydays, full of innocent glee and merriment, or engaged in animated or improving conversation, walking in the streets, or public places, or environs of their cities, or sitting around the tables in their gardens, partaking of some simple refreshment, or one reading aloud while the rest are listening, or all quietly chatting together; the ladies, young and old, plying all the while the knitting or sewing needle. In this way, the foundation is laid of that amiability of manner, goodness of heart, and love of knowledge, for which the German is so justly famed.

2. The ample provision made by the government for the compensation of teachers; in the *gymnasia* by salaries, and in the universities by allowing the professors, in addition to their salaries, to receive the fees paid by those who attend upon their lectures; so that the best talent can be, and is, secured.

3. The manifestation of the same affectionate and kind-hearted interest for the improvement of the pupil; the practice of the same gentleness of manner but rigor of requisition by the teacher as by the parent; the mutual attachments formed between them, and their constant interchange of expressions of respect and good will. In the words of Mr. Brace: "I like very much the bearing of the professors and students toward one another in these universities. The manners are gentlemanly, but nothing more. There is no repelling distance on one side, or excessive deference on the other. They walk together and meet each other in society, and make excursions in company in summer; and the feeling between them is that of friends, though of friends differing in years and experience."

4. The impossibility of obtaining any office of honor or emolument, admission into any profession, or an elevated rank or posi-

tion in society, without a university education, and proof of the possession of the requisite qualifications by passing honorably through two, and sometimes three, severe examinations made under the authority of the government. With us, on the contrary, the facility of acquiring wealth, political distinction, and position in society, with comparatively small attainments, has the effect of withdrawing the attention from the severer studies, and turning it to the cultivation of those popular talents, and to the acquisition of that practical skill and tact, so necessary to speedy or immediate success in life.

5. The respect and gratitude everywhere felt and manifested, and the emolument and reward bestowed, for large attainments in knowledge and science, and for intellectual power employed for the benefit of society. On this cause and its effect upon the minds of the children and youth, in the constant and daily exhibition before them of those feelings towards the literary and scientific persons who are associates and friends of the family, and generally towards persons of that character in the community at large, we need not expatiate.

6. The greater degree than with us of heartiness, spirit and abandon with which the German students and scholars, and the people at large, in their intervals of relaxation, engage in their innocent amusements and recreations, particularly in gymnastic exercises, in the cultivation and practice of music, and principally in conversation. In this manner, the vigor and freshness of the mind is preserved, and they return to their serious duties refreshed and strengthened, and prepared to throw the same spirit and zeal into their higher intellectual efforts.

7. The manner of training from the earliest years in the public schools. The principle upon which this training in the gymnasia or preparatory schools is founded is this: that the primary object in those schools is not so much the imparting of knowledge in the several branches of learning or science, as it is to excite in the pupil a vivid consciousness of his own powers of mind, and to train him to their appropriate and effectual exercise. The rule, therefore, is, while all readiness is manifested to give proper aid, not to do anything for him which, by the appropriate exercise of his own faculties, he can do for himself, but rather to show him, when he is at fault in any particular, how the thing is done, and to train him to do it himself, and thus to develop and strengthen his intellectual powers, and make him self-

dependent. We will illustrate by example; and, as our attention while in that country was particularly devoted to languages, our illustrations will be drawn from that department of learning, premising, at the same time, that the same course is pursued so far as it can be done, *mutatis mutandis*, in other branches of learning and science. If a student should accost his teacher, requesting to be told from what root a certain form of a verb, noun, or other part of speech was derived; what is the nominative case of the noun, or the present tense of the verb, for instance; or to be informed what is the aorist tense of a certain verb, or the accusative case of a certain noun, the teacher, instead of giving him immediately what he requested, would first ascertain where the difficulty lay which prevented him from acquiring the information himself, and what was its nature, and would then apply the remedy by pointing out to him the principle upon which the change of the word in the particular instance was founded, and the manner in which it was to be applied. If the pupil wished the teacher to translate a sentence for him which he had been unable to make out, instead of immediately reading off the translation for him, he would, as in the preceding case, ascertain where the difficulty lay, and by giving him, or reminding him of, the rule which was applicable to the case, enable him to translate the sentence for himself. This course, besides the improvement of the mind, causes a great saving of time to both teacher and pupil, for if the contrary course should be pursued, upon every occasion of the occurrence of a similar difficulty, the pupil would run to the teacher, and thus the time of both be unnecessarily consumed; but by reminding the pupil of the principle which applies to the case, and to all similar instances, all future difficulty of that kind is obviated. In those schools with which we became acquainted, where the greatest activity and vigor of mind, and the greatest improvement were manifested, the manner of conducting the ordinary recitations in the classics was as follows: The pupil would be directed first to read a sentence or passage from the book in the original. The teacher would note down such mistakes, if any, as were made in his reading, with reference to accentuation, quantity, emphasis, pointing, pronunciation in general, etc. He would then ask the class if they observed any errors in their fellow student's reading. Those of them who did observe any, would, either by the voice, or by the raising of the hand, or by some other conventional sign,

answer in the affirmative. The teacher would then ask each of the pupils, in rotation, to indicate what he supposed to be the error. If the answer given were correct, it would be confirmed by the teacher; if not, he would ask for the correction of the answer from the class, and one or more, or if none were able to do it, the teacher, would give it. If any errors had been made which were not noticed by any member of the class, the teacher would then mention them, and call upon the class to correct them. The pupil reciting would then be directed to translate the sentence, and the same course would be taken with respect to the translation. The pupil would then be examined with respect to the grammatical analysis of the words in the sentence or passage, the rules of syntax applicable, idiomatic expressions, particles, the connection of the sentence or passage with what preceded or followed, its relation to the course of the argument advanced, or subject treated, its rhetorical character, its references or allusions to ancient manners and customs, or to historical events. If it were poetry, he would be examined, in addition, with respect to its prosody and versification; and, generally, with regard to any particulars of importance in the sentence or passage, whether poetry or prose, so far as the time would permit, and the teacher deemed expedient, in all cases the class being called on as before to correct such errors as might be made. In all these exercises, the utmost freedom of discussion, within the limits of propriety and decorum, was allowed. Every particular, which was of sufficient importance, and where the circumstances of the case rendered it appropriate, was with a delightful freedom, simplicity, familiarity, earnestness, zeal, good nature, and humor, discussed, debated, sifted, and elucidated, until, as far as possible, it was understood and settled, in all its bearings and relations. If any point arose which could not at the time be satisfactorily settled, either by some member of the class, or by the teacher (and such points sometimes arose), they were noted, and on a subsequent occasion called up, and, so far as could be done, definitely settled. It may, perhaps, be supposed by some, that much time would in this way be consumed by frivolous questions, remarks, and objections, on the part of the class. But it was not so. Each pupil who felt sufficiently interested (and there were very few who were not thus interested) to ask questions, make remarks or objections, felt that he had a reputation to maintain for scholarship, and was too cau-

tious rashly to expose himself to general ridicule by presenting anything of a frivolous or trivial nature. The class united with the teacher in repelling and discouraging anything of that kind, and order and decorum was at all times maintained by the teacher with the greatest ease. The lessons given are of moderate length, so that they can be thoroughly learned by an industrious student within the time prescribed, the rule being, a little well, rather than much superficially. Besides the ordinary lessons, tasks are given, from time to time, of written translations, exercises in writing Latin and Greek, criticisms, essays, etc., which in some schools that we visited, were subjected to the same course of open and general criticism as the ordinary recitations. Every recitation and exercise, therefore, instead of being a dull recital on the part of the student, and correction on the part of the teacher, is a strenuous and vigorous mental exercise on the part of all concerned.

In this connection we will add, that the pupils are not permitted to advance from one grade to another in the gymnasium, and finally to the university, without the most satisfactory proof that they have thoroughly mastered the studies of the previous part of the course.

We will now suppose that the pupil has passed with honor through the gymnasium, and has advanced to the university. The foundation has now been laid of a store of useful knowledge, but, more than that, the pupil has now become conscious of his mental power, and of his particular mental bias. His intellectual faculties have been trained to their appropriate vigorous exercise. His mental habits are formed. He has learned how to study, how to accumulate knowledge, and to make use of that knowledge when acquired. The course of proceeding is then changed, and is adapted to this new condition of his mind; and in daily lectures from men of the highest intellectual capacity, attainments and eloquence, a full stream of knowledge is poured into the receptacle thus prepared. Copious notes are taken of these lectures in the manner often described in books of travel and by letter-writers. These notes, after the lecture is concluded, are either copied off in a fair hand, or are compared with the notes of fellow-students, and corrected and completed. They are carefully studied, the books cited and recommended by the professor are examined, and read, and the subject of the lecture is carefully investigated, and discussed in the weekly reunions of the

little knots and clubs so frequent among the students of the German universities, and in their casual and daily meetings at their meals, or in each other's rooms, and in conversation with literary or scientific friends, and, in some instances, with the professors at their houses.

Besides the lectures, there is, on Saturday mornings, what is called the Seminar, that is, meetings of those students of approved qualifications, who choose to attend, for the purpose of improvement in some particular branch of learning or science, in each of which one of the professors presides. At these meetings, some student, previously appointed, brings forward an essay upon some subject connected with some topic of the lectures which are in the course of delivery by the professor who presides, or an exegesis of some passage in a classic author. One or two others, also previously appointed, present criticisms on the same, and the morning is then spent in discussing, by the whole number present, with the usual freedom, zeal and good humor, the points in dispute. The exercises of this nature which we attended were presided over by Professors Böckh and Lachmann, and were conducted in the Latin language.

8. A longer time is allowed for completing a course of liberal education than with us. The whole course, from the time of entering the gymnasium until that of passing the final examination and taking the first degree at the university, is extended, for medical students, to at least twelve years, and, for all others, to at least eleven years, consequently there is not that temptation, which too much prevails with us, where too many branches of learning are crowded into a comparatively narrow space of time, of passing over too much ground within the period allotted for the course, and that superficially.

We think that the question proposed is now in a good measure answered, and that it will be found by those who personally examine into this matter, that the causes of the success to which reference has been made, may be reduced to the above-stated general principles.

There is a pleasure connected by the Author of our being with the consciousness of the possession of power, of whatever nature, whether moral, intellectual or physical, and with its appropriate exercise. If students, therefore, be made to feel a vivid consciousness of their mental power, and are judiciously and kindly

trained to its appropriate exercise, they cannot but enjoy, in a high degree, that pleasure which for wise purposes is connected with that consciousness and that exercise. It is impossible, according to the laws of our nature, that minds thus excited, ever in activity, constantly rubbing one against another, knocking off each other's rough corners, and smoothing, sharpening, and polishing each other, should not learn to delight in such exercise, and rapidly improve by it. And this is found to be true in practice. For the German students, much more generally than with us, go to their schools and recitations and lectures with all that alacrity with which youth in general go to their sports, and never appear to enjoy themselves better, than they do in the animating and strenuously contested discussions and disputes of the lecture and recitation-room.¹

We will not at present speak of the defects of society and of education in Germany, now so well understood in our country, because that topic does not lie within the limits of our present subject. We will only observe, in this connection, that in some respects we have the advantage of the Germans. We refer particularly to our possessing, in a higher degree than they, the healthier elements of practicality, to our generally more correct and deeper sense of religious obligations, and to the broader and sounder basis upon which our relative social and domestic duties are in general made to rest; and yet, strange to say, while we are generally more correct in theory, the Germans with regard to the latter are, in general, happier and more uniform in practice.

If now it be asked, whether anything can be done to promote and increase among our youth that commendable love for science, and ardor in the pursuit of knowledge, which are so much more generally, than with us, a delightful feature in the character of the German student, we answer, that we must endeavor to remedy the defects in our social character as a nation, and, where they exist, in our systems of education.

Now we would not recommend a hasty or slavish imitation of anything foreign, much less of foreign systems of education, which, after all, may not be adapted to the state of our society, to the established customs of our people, or to the genius of our government, or which might have a tendency to check our own

¹ See Brace's *Home-Life in Germany*, Chap. XIX. p. 176, Scribner's edition.

legitimate progress, or which might introduce greater evils than those which they were intended to remedy. We have to the best of our knowledge and ability stated what appears to us the causes of the acknowledged success of the instructors of Germany in imbuing their pupils with a love for science, and an ardor in the pursuit of knowledge, more generally than is done with us. We leave to older and wiser heads than ours, to determine what particular measures should be taken to remedy the evil under which our worthy Presidents and Faculties of Colleges and Universities, in all parts of our land, so generally groan, and which, from actual observation, we know to exist, having been connected as pupil and teacher with five of the higher institutions of learning in our country. We refer to the half-heartedness with which a very large portion of their pupils attend upon their instruction. We have no reason personally to complain in this respect, for our pupils were all candidates for the ministry, and zealous students, and, so far as practicable, we pursued the German method of teaching. We will venture, however, in all diffidence, as a friend of our country and of its youth, to recommend that this subject, which is at present occupying the minds of a large portion of the friends of education, and of the public in general, be candidly, carefully, and prayerfully examined, and that, after such profound and thorough investigation, and free and earnest discussion, as we have been commending in the Germans, such changes as may be deemed requisite may be *gradually* made in our systems of education, and such arrangements as may be found salutary in themselves, and have been proved by trial in other lands to have the desired effect, and as may be adapted to the different, varied, and peculiar circumstances of our country, may be *gradually* introduced.

When the manners of our people in general become more simple, and more natural; when we relax from our stiffness and rigidity; when we take a more affectionate interest in the moral and mental cultivation and improvement of our children and youth, engaging with them in their amusements, and exercising a personal supervision over their education, particularly, when it can be done more easily by all classes, in their earlier years; when the innocent and delightful pleasures of home are more generally preferred to the pomp, and parade, and glare of life; when an excessive eagerness for the accumulation of wealth, and

for its exhibition in dress and show, extravagant furniture and crowded entertainments, and the madness of party spirit, and ambition for political advancement, shall no longer interfere with the calm, and sober, and quiet performance of our social and domestic duties, and with the cultivation and manifestation of those gentle and endearing affections which are the distinguishing ornament of our nature, and which are absolutely necessary to our comfort, and happiness, and usefulness; when the qualifications for admission into the learned professions, in which we include that of teaching, are in general subjected to severer tests, and the capacity, as well as honesty, of candidates for high political offices, is more closely scrutinized; when respect for moral and intellectual power and attainments, employed for the benefit of society, is more generally manifested, than for the mere possession and exhibition of wealth, and they are more liberally rewarded; when in our young people the consciousness of mental power is earlier, more vividly, and more generally awakened, and they are more generally, and for a longer period than is customary in a course of liberal education in any one of our States, kindly and judiciously trained to habits of appropriate, vigorous mental exercise and self-dependence; then, and not till then, shall we see our youth glowing with the same ardor, and striving with the same zeal, as the German youth, to mount the hill of science, and in their riper years erecting on its summit trophies to the honor of their country and for the welfare of their race, as numerous and as lofty as those of other lands.