

THE  
BIBLIOTHECA SACRA.

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ARTICLE I

MEDIAEVAL GERMAN SCHOOLS.<sup>1</sup>

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HERR G. L. KRIEGK, the archivist of Frankfort on the Mayn, has published several volumes gleaned from the city archives. Among these gatherings, not the least curious relate to German popular education before the era of Luther.

According to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* "Luther first brought the schoolmaster into the cottage," and he is generally regarded as, with Melancthon, the originator of the German school system, so that before his time popular education was non-existent. The truth, however, turns out to be, not that Luther was the father of the common school, but that the common school was the father of Luther. His first rudiments were acquired in Mansfield, a village which even now has no more than fifteen hundred inhabitants, and elementary instruction was afforded to him in a school there, either gratuitously, if his father was too poor to pay, as was probably the fact, or for the merest trifle, and that from a teacher probably salaried by the state. Nor is there reason to suppose similar establishments to have been then either uncommon or of recent origin.

But the clearest proof that German schools for the people may be traced in some cases more than three centuries

<sup>1</sup> *Deutsches Bürgerthum im Mittelalter; das Schulwesen.* G. L. Kriegk. Frankfurt, 1870.

backward from Luther's boyhood may be found in the researches of Herr Kriegk. This antiquarian at first noticed in the archives that bills against the city by mechanics, as glaziers and locksmiths, were made out in the handwriting of the mechanics themselves. He also observed that in the chronicles of mediaeval guilds or trades-unions the statutes were subscribed with the names of members, and showed the autograph of every man. The Frankfort book of the locksmith brotherhood, for instance, contained signers by hundreds for a century and more onward from the year 1417. None of them, though they came from all sections of Germany, made their marks. He also met with a gift of thirty-five gold gulden in 1477 by a pewterer to a convent to provide books "useful for the common folk."

Herr Kriegk was at length convinced that the mechanics of the Middle Ages could write, and indeed that they and their wives were better educated than their contemporary nobles and even princes. In 1407 the landgrave of Thuringia confessed that he had never been in a school. In the thirteenth century, also, the pre-eminent knightly minstrel, Wolfram von Eschenbach, could neither write nor read. In fact, reading and writing were despised by the ruling class as unknighly, priestly, womanish, and effeminating arts; just as the fine arts had seemed to Virgil,<sup>1</sup> though well enough for Greeks, yet beneath the dignity of Romans.

Surprised at the evidences of early popular culture, the archivist, as he wandered in the byways of history, gathered up, as it were, such fossil educational remains as were scattered here and there along his pathway. Some of his findings, "picked from the worm-holes of long-vanished days," will have special interest for those who have held that common schools began either in the seventeenth century with the Scotch law of 1696, or with the Massachusetts law of 1647, or, at all events, one century earlier in the principalities of Protestant Germany. Nothing could astonish Herr Kriegk more than to read the assertion of Edward

<sup>1</sup> *Aeneid*, 6, 852.

Everett, that the founding of the school which in 1637 became Harvard College "was the first occasion on which a people ever taxed themselves to form a place of education";<sup>1</sup> or, again, that "more has been done for education in America, and at an earlier period, than by any other government."<sup>2</sup>

In the papers which the Frankfort explorer has raked from the dust of old oblivion several sorts of schools are brought to light, access into which was easy all along from the first years of the thirteenth century, with no indication that they were new-born even then. Among these varieties were endowed schools largely supported by legacies, though in part by church or state appropriations and by fees. Yet in these institutions the poor were taught either gratis or in consideration of slight services. In the outset they were training schools for the church, and even after they had a wider aim their pupils were still styled clerks. They were early resorted to by such as would prepare for the universities, or as aspired to become notaries and secretaries, as well as by children of well-to-do classes. Their curriculum was termed the Holy Hepta; that is, the seven sciences—namely, grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music. This classification of sciences as seven has been traced to Philo, a Jewish teacher contemporary with Christ,—a fact which favors the opinion that Christian schools were derived from Jewish synagogues.

Schools of a second variety were called Latin. Into these pupils under eight years old were not admitted. The nature of their studies was also such as to require, and so pre-supposes, some preparatory training, or more elementary schools. Thus, no instruction was given in them regarding either reading or writing or arithmetic, except as an extra and as a special favor. This fact countenances the conjecture that primary schools existed in many a hamlet where the memory of them has faded away; since history, as Dr. Channing has remarked, has had no margin even for mentioning the school-mistress. In the view of Herr Kriegk village schools

<sup>1</sup> Works, Vol. ii. p. 172.

<sup>2</sup> Works, Vol. iii. p. 498.

were kept by sextons in some room of the church, or by mechanics in private houses and shops. Thus, while doing their little utmost for the masses, they were feeders of higher schools.

A third species of schools in cities were called German, because all instruction in them was imparted in the vernacular tongue. These were pre-eminently folk-schools. Their studies were mainly the three R's: reading, writing, and arithmetic. Two of the ground rules, duplation and mediation, are now unknown. How far the three rules — the secret of success in the Tweed ring — addition, subtraction, and silence, were pursued, does not appear. The Latin schools, and likewise the German, were usually regulated and subsidized by the city government. Private schools, however, were not uncommon, and seem to have anticipated our kindergartens. At Brunswick it was ordained in 1478 that no one of them should contain more than ten pupils, or retain them after the close of their seventh year.

Other schools, called claustral, were opened in every convent, whether of monks or nuns, and never lacked secular students. The ground-plan of the Swiss abbey of St. Gall, erected early in the ninth century, is still preserved. It is engraved in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.<sup>1</sup> It shows a large school-room divided across the middle by a screen or partition, and surrounded by fourteen little rooms, termed the dwellings of the scholars. This department was named the *schola exterior*, as intended for outsiders, in distinction from the *schola interior*, where the monastic novices were instructed. At Reichenau the outside, or secular, scholars were four times as many as the novices in 816. Proofs of high culture in these claustral schools a thousand years ago there will soon be occasion to present.

Saint Gall was nothing exceptional. An educational arrangement almost identical prevailed in all Benedictine establishments. A census taken in the year 1005 revealed the number of abbeys to be fifteen thousand threescore and ten.

<sup>1</sup> a. v. Abbey.

The founding of Monte Casino in Central Italy, mother and model of all these institutions, dates from the year 529.

It was my fortune to spend twenty-four hours in this grand fountain-head of mediaeval culture in 1868, when it had become the last survivor of Italian monasteries. Then and often since have I longed to learn from some contemporary witness the details of teaching and learning within the ancient claustral walls. What I so much desiderated has just fallen in my way beyond my hope. The autobiography of a monastic schoolboy early in the eighth century has recently come to light in a rubbish-heap of mss. at Swiss Einsiedeln, and has reached my hands.<sup>1</sup> His school years were ten, between 815 and 825, in the exterior school at Reichenau, an island in Untersee, a lakelet near Constance. His schoolmates were five hundred; their sports, studies, and masters are drawn to the life.

This schoolboy, Walafrid Strabo *der Schielende* [or the cross-eyed],—who seems to have been an orphan picked up by some missionary,—entered the school at nine years of age, and had not then learned the alphabet; but before completing his course he was familiar with Virgil, Lucan, Statius, Cicero, Quinctilian, Sallust, Livy, and a much larger number of so-called sacred or scientific authors. He even mastered several books of Homer's *Iliad*. He corresponded with friends in Aniane, Rheims, Treves, and Aix la Chapelle. His forte was Latin poetry, and he gained the name of the saintly poet, or the poet of the saints.

No notice of this find has come to my knowledge, except in German; but it ought to be translated in its entirety; for its sixteen pages give me more vivid and varied ideas of

<sup>1</sup> Possibly this ancient record of school-boy experience ought like Goethe's autobiography to be entitled *Dichtung und Wahrheit*. Yet it is thus described in the sketches and pictures from the history of education by L. Kellner [Essen. 1862. Vol. i. p. 132]. "Walafrid Strabo hat über seine Studien in Reichenau ein Tagebuch geführt, welches in der neueren Zeit aufgefunden und veröffentlicht worden ist. Es liefert ein so lebendiges und frisches Bild des damaligen Unterrichts und Erziehungswesens in den Klosterschulen, dass wir es unseren Lesern nicht vorenthalten können, und in einem besonderen Abschnitte folgen lassen."

a Benedictine school than I have been able to gather from all other sources whatever. Reichenau celebrated its centennial in 824, while Walafried was still a scholar there.<sup>1</sup>

A few of Herr Kriegk's dates, attesting popular education in the thirteenth century, and arguing its existence long before, are noteworthy. Teachers in an endowed school at Frankfort are mentioned in the year 1215 — an institution dating from Charlemagne or his immediate successors. In such schools a majority of the teachers were laymen as early as the year 1200. In 1316 the Jews are recorded to have sold their schoolhouse in Frankfort, and must have built or bought it long before. The seal of a Freiburg school bears the date 1334. In Worms education had become too free before 1260; for in that year restrictions were imposed, lest scholars should be sent to school for the sake of food or other material gains. On the other hand, ten years later, in 1270, the chief prelate of Cologne was inaugurating, or probably only enforcing, compulsory education. He imposed fines on the dwellers in outlying hamlets if they neglected to send their children to school. The schools at Basel were crowded at so early an era, that in 1289 an order was issued there limiting the number of pupils in each to thirty. In 1302 one of the magistrates of Marburg is described as having been formerly a schoolmaster. In 1300 a school for girls is mentioned as already flourishing in Mainz. In 1296 a school superintendent was appointed in Vienna by the city council. In 1326 the town council of Esslingen built a schoolhouse for an elementary school. But for the loss of records, it would no doubt be clear that many other places had so done long before. One writer observes that fourteen cities in Hesse alone had been ascertained by him to have set up schools in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

In Schmidt's *Paedagogical Encyclopaedia*<sup>2</sup> I observe an account of schools still earlier than any described in Kriegk.

<sup>1</sup> L. Kellner, "Sketches and Pictures of Educational History," Vol. I. 132-149. Essen. 1862; from the Annual Report of the Benedictine foundation of *Maria Einsiedeln*, 1856-57.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. x. p. 359.

In the year 1192 the ruling authorities in Ghent ordained that whoever pleased to open a school might do so without molestation. This action seems to have resulted from hostility on the part of church schools to those of a secular character; and, besides, neither class of them seems to have been a novelty, even in that twelfth century.

The notices now presented from Herr Kriegk, all of dates previous to the year 1400, suggest that, if the truth were known, the institutions to which they refer would be seen to have originated many generations before. Even earlier than the year 1300 popular instruction had been diffused in more countries than one, and among many of the poor — thanks to the Franciscans and Dominicans, who from their foundation labored chiefly with and for those masses whom the more ancient and aristocratic order of Benedictines had overlooked. They also improved school-books and instructional methods as well. They set up their schools where they were most easily reached by the common people.<sup>1</sup>

A generation before Francis and Dominic founded their orders the Waldenses had promoted elementary education among the masses. Their cardinal tenet was that every one has an equal right to read the Bible and to preach. Hence from the start, in 1170, they had something of biblical translations, and directly drew up vernacular catechisms, as well as books of devotion. Their success in publishing these books was such that their first persecutors say: "Nothing has astonished us so much as that little girls, even of the poor, have learned the Gospels and Epistles."<sup>2</sup> Nor were the Waldenses confined to a corner, as we often suppose. Their principles were thought by their adversaries in the year 1300 to be more widespread than those of any other heretics. The words of one inquisitor of that era were: "Fere nulla est terra in qua haec secta non sit."

Other details in years somewhat later, though all within the pre-reformation era, bring to light schools in many other

<sup>1</sup> Schmidt, Educational History, p. 159.

<sup>2</sup> Schmidt, Paedagogical Encyclopaedia, s.v., Vol. x. p. 206.

places, and those very probably of no less antiquity than such as have been mentioned. Among these school-seats are Brunswick, Spires, Halle, Baden, Goch, Gerolshofen, Revel, Constance, Nuremberg, Ratisbon, Breslau, Wurzburg, Ulm, Worms, Hoxter, Heidelberg, Kaufbeuren, Oppenheim, Zittau, Ueberlingen, Bruchsal, Andernach, Grünberg, and so on. This list indicates not only that mediæval Germany was sown broadcast with schools, but that some of them were maintained in insignificant places, unless towns large of yore have now strangely dwindled.

As a sign of flourishing schools, Herr Kriegk mentions that at Cleves, in 1419, the schoolmaster was paid more than both the city clerk and burgomaster, and that in the city records he had nowhere detected any complaint of the teacher's honorarium as inadequate.

In Schmidt's History of Education<sup>1</sup> secular schools are declared to have been founded at dates even earlier than any mentioned by Herr Kriegk, as at Hamburg in 1187, and at Lübeck in 1161.

Some of the minutiae accumulated by Herr Kriegk concerning the characteristics of early German school life are worth consideration. The discipline was severe. Luther relates that he was himself flogged fifteen times in a single morning. Yet we know that the teacher did not whip all the offending Adam out of him. At Heidelberg, in 1567, a master was dismissed because he refused to use the rod on boys of nineteen. He may have feared that they would use it on him — turning against him his own weapons. The seal of the Hoxter school, dating from 1356, bears a pedagogue, with his left hand grasping a pupil's throat, and with his right plying and applying a switch. The rule was, that if any Latin scholar let fall three German words in the course of a day, he should atone for it by more than three stripes. The only check I notice on pedagogical punishments is a papal edict, that if a scholar while being flogged had an arm broken he should be permitted to pass into another school. At St.

<sup>1</sup> Schmidt, *Paedagogical Encyclopaedia*, s.v., Vol. x. p. 166.

Gall so rigorous was the control that when the bishop in the midst of a recitation poured out a basket of apples on the floor no single scholar turned his eyes toward them as they rolled before him. In 937 a student at that school, while awaiting castigation, burned up the school-house.<sup>1</sup> The ideal instructor, whether standing or sitting, never laid down the rod. At Stuttgart, in 1501, every scholar who was heard to utter any German vocable was punished by fasting—a penalty which to boys of keen appetites may have been worse than flogging.<sup>2</sup> Walafrid at Reichenau had been punished in the same ascetic style seven hundred years before. The law for the conversation of schoolboys was laid down in this couplet:

“*Verbis utitor in schola nec ullis  
Nisi sint Romuleæ recepta linguæ.*”

These rigors of chastisement, in the judgment of Dr. Rein, — a celebrated German writer on pedagogics, — resulted from the fact that monasteries, whose rules were imitated in other schools, owed most of their recruits to serfs. But serfs from childhood were wont to be lashed with whips. It is hard for us to regret the harsh school scourging so much as we rejoice in the proof which here comes out regarding the elevating and educative influences of monastic houses, and that on a class which otherwise would have remained shut up in despair. It was much that they recognized in plebeian children a potential nobleness waiting to be evoked, as sculptors see a statue hid in every rock.

One study — one only — was common to all schools, whether in city or country, endowed, Latin, German, private, or claustral; namely, music. Singers were called from all schools to lend their voices in sacred services; and, partly for this reason, schoolhouses were never far from churches, if not beneath their roofs. This custom in regard to location outlived the old faith, so that Shakespeare speaks of “the pedant who keeps a school in the church.” German schoolboys from the earliest times used to sing at the doors of

<sup>1</sup> Gustav Freitag. <sup>2</sup> Schmidt, *Pædagogical Encyclopaedia*, Vol. x. p. 460.

private houses. Performers in these ambulatory singing-schools were paid some trifle for their pains, and carried little pails at their girdles, in hopes of a morsel of meat from those who gave no money. The stripling Luther was a peripatetic choir-boy in Eisenach, and in 1842 I saw his successors in that same city, still singing as he sang. Clad in gray mantles and high black hats, they drew up in horseshoe form before doors and made music thrice a day. They knew well, as they told me, that Luther had been a choir-boy there.

Inasmuch as mediæval schools were so musical, Pope Gregory, author of the Gregorian chant, became their guardian saint. Yet that Gregory should be chosen as the tutelary genius of educational institutions is one of the oddest ironies in history. That pontiff is now best known as having been accused of burning the ancient classics. One of his undoubted utterances was this: "I think it a shame for me, the celestial oracle, to be bound by the rules of a pagan grammarian, and so I scorn to shun metacisms and barbarisms, as well as to regard cases." Notwithstanding, Gregory bought school sainthood for a song; and so on his day, which was the twelfth of March, the school year began. On that day the children, chanting hymns, marched in procession to the church, where they were addressed by the priest, and then were regaled with cakes by the citizens.

This school "commencement" was in time strangely transformed. The boy who walked foremost was dressed in the robes and mitre of a bishop, and attended by two of his mates in the costume of priests. On arriving at the altar they mimicked the episcopal ceremonial. Ere long the children in the procession all came disguised, and older triflers mingled with the maskers, till all decorum went quite athwart.

Abuses connected with the boy-bishop, or school-bishop (*Schul-bischof*), as the Germans call him, became intolerable so long ago that a council at Salzburg undertook to abate the nuisance in the year 1274. The ghostly fathers at that time, however, contented themselves with forbidding all persons over sixteen years of age to appear in the church as maskers;

though by a Hamburg ordinance of 1330 all those still in an educational course were permitted to wear disguises in church. The early date of the council which essayed this regulation of school mummeries is suggestive. It throws the origin of common schools very far back, and inclines one to think that they had never become extinct since their establishment, or rather extension, by Charlemagne. According to the chronicler of St. Gall, that emperor opened a school in his palace for children of nobles, and of lower classes as well. After a time the scholars, both high and low, were summoned before him and examined. He saw that the inferior set were far more advanced. Thereupon he placed all the poor and learned on his right hand with great promises. Then, frowning on the noble scions, he thundered: "You repose on your birth and fortune. Nothing shall you ever get from King Charles."<sup>1</sup> It is not easy to overrate the influences of such imperial encouragement to plebeian scholars, especially as it was only in the line of learning that youth of their class could hope for advancement. Did my limits allow, I should not fail to pass in review schools open for serfs and freemen alike at a still earlier period. Educational institutes of this class may be shown to have flourished in a full score of towns previous to the close of the Merovingian era, in the year 752.

Other facts point to educational institutions as of great antiquity. One is a list of school-books drawn up at Reichenau in the ninth century, among which are helps for teaching the German language (*carmina ad docendam Theodiscam linguam*), as if elementary vernacular schools were already in operation. Indeed, the autobiography of Walafrid Strabo, who learned to read at Reichenau in 815, shows that German books were then no novelty.<sup>2</sup> An edict of Charlemagne, dated 794, required the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed to be taught to the people in their vernacular. A German catechism was well-nigh as old.<sup>3</sup> The seven sciences,

<sup>1</sup> Edinburgh Review, No. 310, p. 207.

<sup>2</sup> Kellner, 133.

<sup>3</sup> Schmidt, Paedagogical Encyclopædia, Vol. iiii. pp. 869, 872.

or whole educational curriculum of Marcianus Capella (ca. 500), was translated into German in the eleventh century.<sup>1</sup>

The farce of boy-bishops was one germ of the religious plays that were for centuries performed in churches, and in great part by school-boys,—mædiaeval mysteries, of which the decennial Passion-play at Ober Ammergau is in our days a unique survival. But some of these sacred plays have come down to us from the tenth century, and they demonstrate a degree of culture often supposed to have been unknown at that era. There are six sacred dramas, written and acted at Gandersheim, an abbey in north Germany,—perhaps in its chapel,—which prove their authoress, Roswitha,<sup>2</sup> who died in 968 or soon afterwards, intimately acquainted with Virgil, Horace, Terence, and Plautus,—to say nothing of their showing poetical genius. L. Stacke, in his Comparative German History, just issued in Leipsic, gives an exquisite fac-simile of Roswitha's hexameters, commencing :

“Nunc vagat in silvis, latitat nunc denique sulcis.”

Unless many of the nuns of that time, and daughters of the laity who were taught with them, had been good Latinists, how could these creations have found actors or audiences? In fact, the plays themselves describe the reading of heathen books as then constant. Their purpose was not to increase the quantity of reading, but to change its quality.

Analogous to these diversions of Roswitha, as well as indicative alike of classical culture and of gallantry in the twelfth century, were the sports in a nunnery at Toul—a phenomenon described by Gustav Freitag,<sup>3</sup> and also declared

<sup>1</sup> Edinburgh Review, No. 310, p. 200.

<sup>2</sup> Milman [Latin Christianity, Vol. viii. p. 317], calls the authoress Roswitha an abbess, but according to more recent researches she was a private nun who has been often confounded with a namesake who was abbess of her cloister. Milman, and many others, say that her dramas were “acted in the convent, and possibly in its chapel.” A writer in the Encyclopædia Britannica holds that “the fact of their representation is an unwarrantable assumption.” Yet he admits that they were “designed for recitation by the nuns, for reading aloud,” etc. At all events they imply a contemporary audience to which Latin was well-nigh a living language.

<sup>3</sup> Vol. i. p. 373.

to have been then nothing uncommon. On May-day the doors were locked, the old nuns barred out, only a few priests who understood the art of silence were admitted. In place of the Gospel one nun read aloud Ovid's Art of Love, and two nuns sang love-ditties. Then came forward the May-queen, in robes all studded with spring flowers. She proclaimed herself despatched by Cupid to make inquisition into the lives of the sisterhood.

The tolerance not only of boy-bishops, but of masking and frolics in churches, is in keeping with various other outcrops of humor which appeared unobjectionable to mediævals, however shocking to the modern sense of propriety. One specimen was the seats called *misereres*, meaning "Oh, have mercy." Each was a board, on the ragged edge of which, when upturned, a weary monk was allowed to sit at vigils — a board carved with designs comic or indelicate or horrible. Another such oddity was a church gargoyle or water-spout shaped like a dragon or devil; or in the most solemn pictures, such as the homage of the magi, monkeys were introduced playing antics. Again, similar incongruities appear elaborately carved in the midst of a church, together with lizards and so many other monsters as could never have been thought of unless to represent literal obedience to the precept, "Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord."

There are, however, no better illustrations of humor in the Middle Ages than pervade their school-system. Second only to the school-bishop's ephemeral reign, like the May-queen's in later periods, was the festival of switch-seeking (*Virgatum gehen*), a day when whole schools with their teachers sought the woods, and amid songs and dances cut and trimmed the rods that were to blister the backs of the gatherers for a year afterward. When this day of rustication declined, the striplings must have returned with skipping spirits somewhat allayed, as they half consciously bore their crosses to the scene of future suffering. As an additional mental spur, some blockhead was daily made to bestride a wooden donkey, which stood ready saddled in the midst of the schoolroom. It may have

never occurred to the inventors of this pony that the donkey might make the dull doubly dull by contagion. Another form of dull Jack's tribulation consisted in his being forced to carry the donkey instead of being carried by him. Again, the speech of the old Germans was humorous unawares when they styled the master who taught making verses that were sometimes professedly, and always really, nonsensical, a poet. Furthermore, they allowed certain poor boys whom they termed dormitorials, to lodge in the church; only requiring them, night by night, to wake up and pay for their lodgings by singing at midnight vigils and early masses. It will be easily believed that such songsters were more solemn in their service than hired mourners were at most funerals. It is not impossible that the pillows of the dormitorials rested on ropes, which were loosed in order to bump them wide awake, and that the singer who entered the chapel hindmost found no seat left for him, until, by walking round with a lantern, he caught one of his mates napping, and unseated him.

In the matter of servitudes, the pupils in some towns were bound to supply the teacher with wine; in others, the teacher was bound to bring up from the priest's cellar the liquors for the priest's table; but then he had a right to a seat there himself. No usage, however, may appear so comic as the requiring of each single scholar to bring from home a billet of wood every morning for warming the schoolroom. In places where this custom was in force, as in Gerolshofen, none were exempt. Such a servitude was democratic; for the rich must bear his burden, as well as the poor. Its moral influence also must have been salutary, inuring to self-help, and rousing in every one the feeling that he was earning something of his education and working his passage.

One of the most singular features in the middle age German school was that it knew no vacations, not even on Sundays. Its only interruptions were on great festivals. On these occasions the scholars paid tribute to their master by a sort of donation visit, and the less empty-handed they came the

longer were their holidays. The earliest notice which has turned up of a half-holiday on Wednesday dates from the year 1541. The daily school hours, however, were in many cases only two, and seldom more than four. Yet the hour of commencing was at seven in the morning, often at six, and sometimes at five; so that every pupil must bring a wax taper in his pocket. Every student did so still in the university of Jena when I was there in 1842. Each taper was a yard long, and coiled up like a rattlesnake, with one end erect like his head.

In ages before the invention of either printing or paper, schools, like other departments of life, were managed in ways widely divergent from those which we now travel. Writing was then taught simultaneously with reading, or rather before it. Teachers were accordingly called writing and reading masters, and schools were said to be for teaching to write and read. A letter or word which the teacher had marked on a block was copied on the same block by the scholar, who was then taught to call it by its name. Sometimes the blocks were coated with wax, which when scratched all over could be easily smoothed and used again as a palimpsest. In such blocks we see the origin of the word "book," which etymologically is beechwood or something made of it. Visiting Egyptian common schools in 1868 I saw the boys writing on sheets of tin. Our blackboard exercises may be considered a return to the block system, with the addition of chalk, and hanging up the board which used to lie in the scholar's lap. Herr Kriegk has found chalk mentioned only once, and slates not at all. No doubt some of those antique wooden tablets, both waxed and unwaxed, may be inspected to-day in the vast Bavarian national museum at Munich. If they are wanting, it is the only omission there concerning the minutiae of antique life, the very image and body of the time. Parchment was far too dear to be in the hands of mediæval schoolboys. The first mention of paper in schools occurred in 1500. Not till 1494 did Arabic numerals first show themselves in Frankfort records, and for half a century afterward they were not commo

On a general view, however, the resemblances between mediaeval and modern educational appliances are remarkable. Blocks have been alluded to as being really blackboards on a small scale. So have compulsory school attendance, the prominence given to singing, co-education, separate schools for each sex, and instruction vouchsafed either gratuitously or for a nominal price. Besides all these, the monitorial system, re-enforcing the teacher with the heads and hands of advanced scholars, was also practised from time immemorial. Walafrid was so taught in the year 815.

In considering the results of early German education, one can scarcely fail to observe that Beckmann and other historians of inventions ascribe a legion of them to German mediaeval mechanics. Very possibly one secret of Teutonic superiority in this line may be discovered in the school culture which had scattered abroad in all the empire a more numerous class of intelligent operatives—tools trained to think—than existed anywhere else. These inventions made a history of themselves, which—as like causes produce like effects—is now repeating itself in the records of our Patent Office, illustrating the multitudinous ingenuities of Yankees who have been reared in educational nurseries analogous to those of the old Germans.

The schools of the Reformation era could not have been extemporized. They were a birth not *ex tempore*, but *ex omni tempore*. When at Caesarea Philippi we wonder at the source of the Jordan half as large as its mouth in the Dead Sea, we know that it must have flowed a long way subterraneously, and gathered tribute in its hidden progress from many a spring. It seems, on the whole, very possible that elementary schools may be traced in a sort of apostolical succession to the primitive Christians, and through them to the Jews. Jesus, son of Jamla, kept a school for boys in Jerusalem in the lifetime of Paul.<sup>1</sup> The rabbins at that era said that the world is preserved by the breath of children in school, and accordingly declared every village accursed in

<sup>1</sup> Schmidt, p. 104.

which there was no school, and if it heeded not the anathema devoted it to destruction. They prescribed for every twenty-five scholars one master, for forty scholars a master with an assistant, and so on. Evidently there was a rabbinical school in the Jewish temple-court, where the child Jesus was seated among the teachers, both hearing them and asking them questions (Luke ii. 46).

From the retrospect we have taken, it seems clear that the Reformation by no means gave birth to the German school system, which had already been three or more centuries in gradual growth, "as the morning steals upon the night." It is, however, one glory of the Reformation that it stimulated in various directions the development of that system. Of the monastic endowments which it confiscated, a part were turned into educational channels. Money proved the sinews of schools, as well as of strategy. The primary schools in Basel were founded on monkish revenues. One Frankfort school was styled "barefoot," because at its origin, in 1532, it was quartered in a building of mendicant friars. Thus the Reformation put new wine into old bottles, so that the bottles swelled, yet remained as strong as ever. Protestantism owed something to the coffers of old legacies. It owed much more to a leaven of school culture, which, leavening the Teutonic nations, had rendered them more receptive than others of its selectest influences. Hence it had free course and was glorified in Germany, while proving a failure in France and Italy. Well-schooled Geneva sang hosannas to Calvin, whom his illiterate native Picardy would have crucified.