

The Study of Theology in Germany, especially at Leipzig.

THE University in Germany is as yet much less an institute for general education, for giving well-to-do young men a certain literary and scientific polish, than it is in England or even in America. A man who aims only at such well-bred refinement is usually satisfied with the last, or next to the last, class in the gymnasium; and, in fact, in a good school he is then, perhaps, about as far on as the Oxford or Cambridge pass-man. One who enters the University decides then, upon entering, what profession he will embrace. The fact, however, that the student, at this comparatively early period of his course, determines the work he will do in life, leads to frequent changes at a later period, when he has gained more insight; and it is not uncommon to find clergymen who started out to be lawyers or physicians, or to see students of theology pass over to law or medicine. At the same time, theological students sometimes combine with their theology, even in external designation, the departments of philosophy, or of philology, or of Oriental languages, or of pedagogics, and label themselves "stud. theol. et philos.," or "stud. theol. et philol.," or "stud. theol. et lingg. Orientt.," or "stud. pæd.," thus cleaving to some favourite line of study.

The student entering himself for theology is no more bound to any special sets of lectures than is a law or a medical student; nor is he compelled to complete his preparation within a specified time. The time limitation is, in Saxony, a negative one, in that he cannot pass his first examination before the close of his sixth half-year; but he need not pass it until long after that, if he does not wish to. And as for lectures and topics, he has a world from which to choose, for he can add to theological lectures anything he likes in other departments. Nevertheless, a theological student rarely touches medicine, and in law seldom goes beyond canon law. The philosophical faculty has more charms for him, and aside from philosophy, philology, and pedagogics, which connect closely with his own work, he is very apt to take courses in history and in art in order to round out his knowledge; music is often added, partly for practical reasons, partly as a pleasure.

Hebrew the student has learned at the gymnasium. If he has omitted it there, he must make it up, and pass a special examination in it soon

after entering the University. It is taken for granted that he is thoroughly familiar with Greek, and, as for Latin, it must be only less than a vernacular to him. The ordinary Saxon student speaks and writes an intelligible Latin with facility, although the practical use of this old language of science is daily lessening.

In theology a German student makes his choice of lectures according to his tastes, according to his view of what will be useful in his work as pastor, and particularly according to the probable demands of his examinations. Of course, he is limited by the lectures that are given during the terms in which he is at the University. A German professor is bound to no iron scheme of courses; and although most professors do gradually fix upon a given series, called a "turnus," running through four terms or half-years, many either cannot be or are not so regular, and a student may often wait a long while for a course which he wants. As a still further complication of this choice, different professors may read the same course in different terms, and the student is then led, not only by the course given, but also by his liking for one or the other lecturer. If circumstances permit, the earlier terms are devoted to lectures upon Encyclopædia, Introduction, the easier books in Exegesis, perhaps Genesis and Matthew, and the beginning of Church History. The other departments follow as the learner ripens. A diligent student aims, as far as possible, to work the lectures over either day by day or during the following vacations, and in connection with the best text-book he can find; this repetition is often practised by groups of friends, each bringing his own note-book, and perhaps a different text-book. For all of this work each is responsible at the moment only to himself; and it is not strange that young men, freed from the exact supervision and guidance of the gymnasium, should at the outset often fall into one of two extremes, in so far as these "foxes," as the young students are called, either study very little, "cut" lectures ("schwänzen" is the slang term), and give themselves up to general reading, sight-seeing, and amusement, or, in utter disregard of their health, take far too many lectures, and make themselves ill. The counsel of older men is to keep the number of lectures down as far as may be, and to lay stress upon work at home.

As soon as a student begins to understand his duty at the University, finds out the evils of too much freedom, and, with increasing knowledge, sees the worth of guidance, he tries to get into what is called a society or a seminary. It is in these that the heavy work is done. The seminary proper is an institute which has Government aid and recognition; the society is private, and depends upon the special professor or privatdozent; a seminary usually has a room and a library of its own, a society has not. On the other hand, a seminary often has so many members that the single one loses his sense of responsibility for work, or finds practically that his turn never comes; whereas in a private society, if, according to the approved custom, the number be kept down to a dozen or fifteen members, each one has his regular work, and each one may say what he has to say at every meeting; while the professor knows, and tries to adapt the work to, each member. The precise method differs in different seminaries and societies. The general result is that for each weekly meeting, perhaps sixteen or seventeen during the winter term and thirteen during the summer term, some special topic is treated by a student set for that purpose; whether he himself reads his paper off or not, whether or not he be opposed by a formal critic who has had his paper for a day or two, or whether the professor then simply treats of the matter in hand, giving publicly or privately a criticism of the paper, depends upon the habit of the professor. The more the student is pressed to independent thought and work, the higher the standing of the society or seminary; the places in such societies are often filled a term or two in advance, and the friendship between professor and pupil often lasts for life.

The student is supposed, before he presents himself for examination, to have heard, among others, lectures upon Encyclopædia or the Study of Theology in general, upon Old and New Testament Introduction, upon the exegesis of the chief books of the Bible—say, Genesis, Psalms, Isaiah, Matthew, and Synopsis, John, Romans, Corinthians—upon the Biblical Theology of both Testaments, upon Church History entire, upon the History of Doctrine, upon Dogmatics, upon Ethics, upon Symbolics, and upon Practical Theology. In some parts of Germany a definite number of philosophical lectures is also required. It may be added that, in general, a course which is to count

for examination should be a four-hour course, that is, one which is held on at least four days of each week of the term.

In the matter of examinations the disregard of degrees strikes a foreigner oddly. The working examinations in a German University have nothing to do with degrees, although a student of law or medicine is able to add his degree to the usual examination by presenting a doctor's thesis. A student of theology does not dream of taking a degree in theology. He passes his first examination in the five departments of Old Testament, New Testament, Church History, Systematic Theology, and Practical Theology, writing at the same time a sermon and a catechese or children's sermon. The examination is partly written and partly oral, and is, at Leipzig, held towards the close of each term, the professors examining; the vice-president of the Saxon Consistory, the First Court Preacher, being present. The greater part of this examination is now in German, the rest in Latin. Successful candidates are graded with the marks I., very good; II., good; III., fair; IV., pass; grades between these being sometimes added—II.*a* is, for example, higher than II. Those who pass this examination are called candidates of theology, and write themselves "cand. theol.," since every one in Germany is required to say on his visiting card what he is. The second examination cannot, in Saxony, be passed until two years after the first examination. These two years the candidate must spend in work—by preference in teaching—if he does not succeed in gaining a place in the limited Preachers' College at Leipzig, where he will receive further special instruction from certain members of the theological faculty, and will preach at some subsidiary services in the University Church. Students from Hanover aim at a place in the seminary or stift at Loccum. The second examination is held at Dresden, under the care of the consistory, and is in Latin, covering, in written and in oral divisions, the same departments as the first examination, on a higher plane. On passing this examination the man becomes a candidate of the reverend ministry—"cand. rev. min."—and is ready to take care of a parish. Still, when it is possible, he is at first put to work under an older pastor as an assistant. It should be observed that students sometimes preach for pastors in the neighbourhood, even during their earlier terms, in which case it is necessary

for them to lay the sermon in advance before the superintendent or some one appointed by him.

At the present moment the theological faculty at Leipzig consists of twelve, eight of whom compose the narrower faculty of ordinary professors. The senior, Dr. Luthardt, needs no introduction to the reader. In spite of his sixty-eight years, his voice has lost none of its unusual power, and the whitening of his hair only adds to his prophet-like look. He reads Dogmatics every winter term and Ethics every summer term, combining with them a four-term turnus in Romans, Synopsis of the Gospels, Hebrews, and St. John's Gospel, and leading, besides, a dogmatical society, the dogmatical exercises of the Lausitz Preachers' Society, and the scientific exercises of the Theological Students' Union. Any one who reflects upon the fact that the editorship of the *Allgemeine Evangelisch Lutherische Kirchenzeitung* and of the *Theologisches Literaturblatt*, the writing of new books (just now the second volume of the *History of Ethics*), and the revision of new editions of old books, to say nothing of numerous offices in Church work, are to be added to all this, will concede that there must be here a head and a hand, mental power and diligence, of a high order. The second is Dr. Fricke, a man who for years did three men's work, by acting at the same time as pastor of a large church, as president of the Gustav Adolf Union, a huge society for the support of weak Protestant churches, and as professor. It is this which has prevented on his part an extended literary activity. The pastorate he gave up a year or two ago, but he still retains the presidency of the Gustav Adolf Union. He reads Dogmatics during the summer and Ethics during the winter, adding the turnus Romans, Galatians-Philippians-Philemon, Hebrews, and First Corinthians, and, as extra courses, Christology and Pneumatology, Schleiermacher's *Life and Teaching*, and the scientific basis of the belief in a personal God. He conducts the exegetical seminary for Old and New Testament, and the Biblico-Theological and Homiletical exercises of the Lausitz Preachers' Society. Dr. Rudolf Hugo Hofmann, who has written a *Life of Jesus according to the Apocrypha, Symbolics, The Doctrine of the Conscience*, and various volumes of sermons, and upon questions of Practical Theology, lectures upon Encyclopædia, New Testament Introduction, Symbolics, Practical Theology, Pedagogics, and the Epistles of St. John, leading, besides, the exercises of the pedagogical seminary. Dr. Theodor

Brieger, editor of the *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, and author of numerous works upon Church History, lectures upon Church History in three (or four) divisions, History of Doctrine, and Symbolics, with occasional extra courses, besides leading the exercises of the seminary for Church History, and the corresponding exercises of the Lausitz Society. Dr. Theodor Zahn, the author of the *History of the Canon*, the associate of Gebhardt and Harnack in editing the *Apostolic Fathers*, lectures upon New Testament Introduction, Biblical Theology of the New Testament, History of Jesus, Apostolic Age, Romans, First Corinthians, St. John's Gospel, Hebrews, and Revelation, besides conducting an exegetical society. Dr. Albert Hauck, who completed the second edition of Herzog's great theological *Encyclopedia*, the author of *The Church History of Germany*, and of *Tertullian's Life and Writings*, lectures upon Church History, History of Doctrine, Symbolics, and Archæology of Christian Art, besides conducting an archæological society. Dr. Rietschel, a son of the famous sculptor, lectures upon Encyclopædia, as well as upon the various topics of Practical Theology, besides conducting the homiletical seminary and the catechetical exercises of the Lausitz Society. Dr. Buhl lectures upon Old Testament Introduction, Old Testament Theology, Genesis, Isaiah, Minor Prophets, and Messianic Prophecies. His series is not complete, because he has only been here two terms. He has also an Old Testament Society, and conducts certain Hebrew exercises of the Lausitz Society. These are the ordinary professors. Professor Guthe lectures upon the whole round of Old Testament topics, besides caring for a society and for some Hebrew exercises of the Lausitz Society. Professor Schnedermann lectures upon New Testament subjects, besides conducting the catechetical seminary and dogmatical exercises; and Dr. Thieme, privatdocent, lectures upon History of Doctrine and upon various dogmatical or symbolical topics, besides conducting dogmatical exercises.

Foreign students find in Leipzig a welcome. The city itself, with its concentrated general trade and its enormous book trade, cannot fail to impress any one who spends a few months in it. The University is supported in music by the well-known Conservatory, and in art by the Art Academy and School of Design.