

## T H E S I S .

Subject, The German School System.

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As we look back over the history of the world and think of the decay of such mighty nations as Greece and Rome, we are inclined to think that the greatest glories of the world have passed away. But this can not be so, for if we study the nations that have risen to power during the Christian era, we can not help but see a rise in government, society, and education. No country can better show us the advancement of education than the vast educational center, Germany.

In the primitive times, the inhabitants of Germany, semi-barbarous, as they were, seemed to have no need of education, only as training in the use of arms. With their contact with the Roman people and the growth of Christianity, came a need and a desire for further education. Schools began to be formed with every missionary settlement and, finally, in 554 A. D., Chlotar II founded a court school for the princes, and nobles. Charlemagne did much for education during

his early reign, requiring that every priest should read, sing, write, and reckon which, on considering the great ignorance of the times, was considered a great advancement. In this way education advanced slowly until, in 1262, the first state school was founded at Lübeck. The meagerness of this, and all other schools at this time can scarcely be conceived of, yet at the end of the fifteenth century the foundation had been laid for the famous German School System of to-day.

With the great religious awakening of the sixteenth century came also an awakening in education. Luther became a great teacher of the times, believing that every boy and girl should be trained in some line of useful work as well as in the Scriptures, reading, writing, history, and Latin. Other leaders of Luther's time added to his views until finally, in 1619, it was declared by the government that every boy and girl must attend school until twelve years of age. This was the first compulsory school law.

that affected all classes but it has been carried out ever since.

There seem to be three great rules governing the German schools of to-day and these grew out of the ideas of the early teachers. They are: - First, All teachers must be well trained and have a professional standing; Second, They must receive permanent appointments; Third, Children of a lawful school age must attend school every day of the session from the age of six to fourteen. The rules are rigidly carried out, no person being allowed to teach unless the government is assured of his ability and he has passed a thorough and strict examination. When a position is once given it is usually for life. In case of vacancies in schools, the government makes appointments as the government has full control of the schools.

The schools of Germany may be classified in general into public and private schools. The public schools include the elementary schools, the high

schools, and the normal schools.

The elementary schools are models of discipline and the instruction, though simple, is thorough. The school session usually consists of six hours each day with two yearly vacations, one at Easter time and one during the winter holidays. The forced attendance aids in giving uniformity in the grades which is one peculiarity of the German schools.

The high schools of Germany are known under various names but are of two great classes, - classical, or Gymnasium, and commercial, or Realschulen. The girls do not receive as great advantages, as the boys, they having to depend upon private schools for their higher education. These schools pave the way to the universities of which there are twenty three in Germany. These embrace theology, law, and medicine and are greatly patronized by foreign students.

Germany has about two hundred normal schools which are quite small. They have a course of three years with free tuition to all

who intend teaching. The boarding also is very cheap. The qualifications for entering these are very high but thorough and severe work is done.

The private schools of Germany include the Kindergarten, schools for girls, and schools for technical handwork. The teachers for these, as well as for public schools, must pass an examination under the government. Usually these schools have better accommodations and improvements than the public schools. In many places, the girls are obliged to attend private school because of the training which it gives in household duties.

The influence of the teacher everywhere does much to aid the schools. The salary of the teacher is very low, the teacher of the upper grades receiving only from sixty to two hundred and twenty dollars a year, and the high school teacher, nine hundred dollars a year. But this is easily balanced by the cheap rate of boarding in Germany and the permanency of the position.

Formerly there were no female teachers in Germany but the number is rapidly increasing, they numbering in 1886 about one-tenth of the entire number of teachers.

Very few text books are used in the elementary schools but many books for reference are supplied for the teacher.

The school houses lack good ventilation and black-board space and, in many cases, lack all attractiveness, the great object being "work." The boy enters school at six and is compelled to remain until twelve or fourteen and he is at all times studious, obedient, and respectful.

The German School System is continually undergoing reforms all of which tend to raise its standard higher than before.

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