

**SEMINARY LIBRARIES AND
UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION, FIFTH
SERIES XI, PP. 444-469**

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HERBERT B. ADAMS

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JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY STUDIES
IN
HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

HERBERT B. ADAMS, Editor

History is past Politics and Politics present History—*Freeman*

FIFTH SERIES

XI

SEMINARY LIBRARIES
AND
UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

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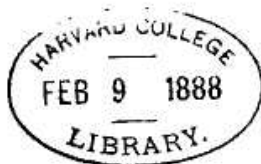
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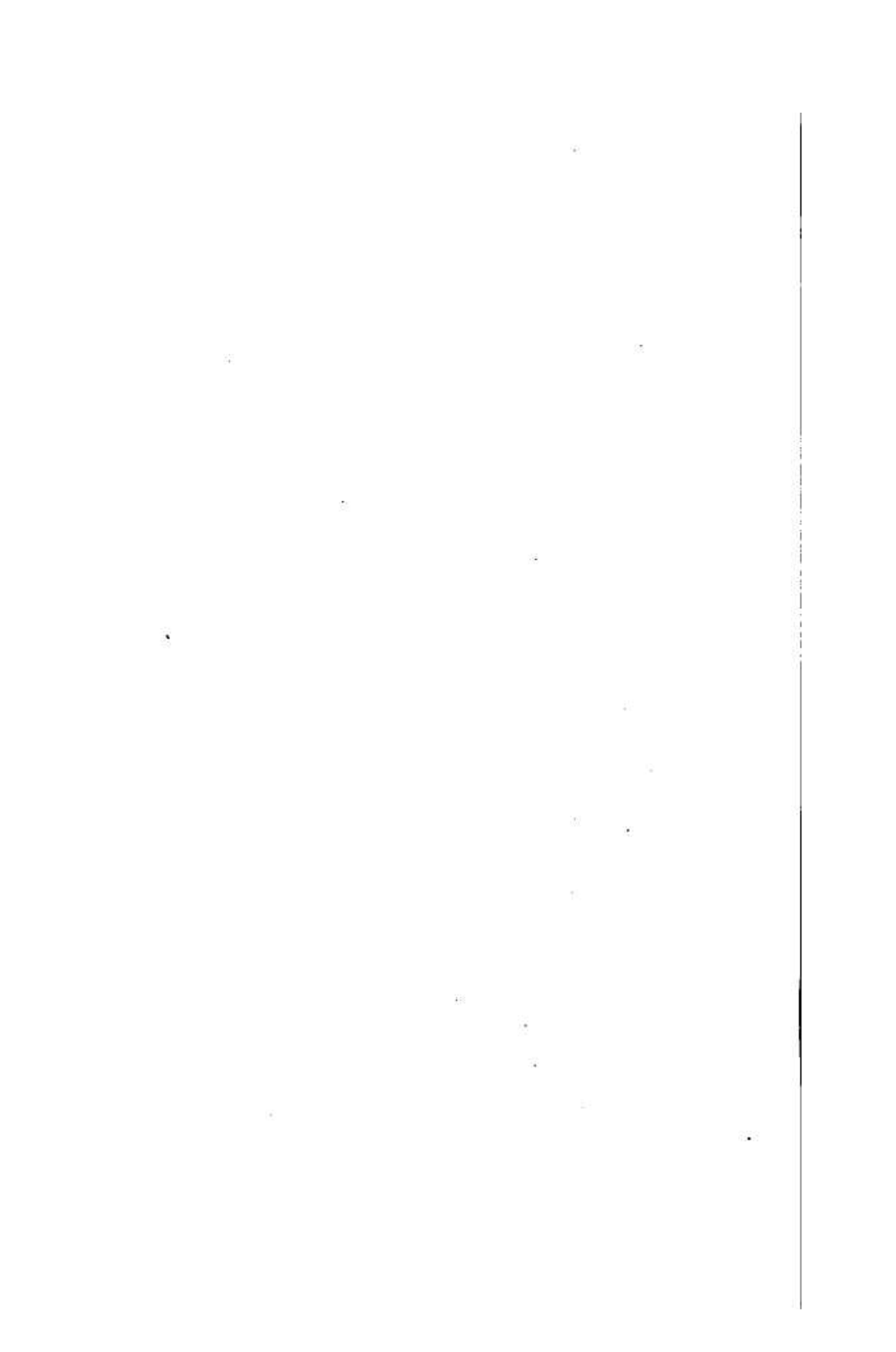
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SEMINARY LIBRARIES
AND
UNIVERSITY EXTENSION.¹

I.

SEMINARY LIBRARIES IN GERMANY.

The Historical *Seminarium* is a German Institution. It first came into prominence about fifty years ago, under the direction of Leopold von Ranke² at the University of Berlin. Ranke's own training at Leipzig had been chiefly philological, and he transferred the seminary method from philology to history. It had long been customary to train philological students by practical exercises in the critical interpretation of classical authors. The discussions were always carried on in Latin. The practice was simply an adaptation of old scholastic methods of disputation to new uses. In seminary priests and in the schools of the Jesuits we have "survivals" of the

¹This paper on "Seminary Libraries" was written at the request of a committee of the American Library Association, and was presented at their annual meeting held September 6-9, 1887, upon one of the Thousand Islands. By consent of the editor of the Proceedings of the Association, the paper is published in this number of the University Studies, in connection with kindred articles on "The Work of Libraries" and "University Extension."

²See article by the writer on "Leopold von Ranke," published by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. 1887, Vol. XXII, part II.

ancient system of practical training out of which our modern seminary methods have evolved.

Ranke called his seminary work historical exercises (*exercitationes historice*). They were simply private conferences between the professor and a little group of advanced students for the critical study of the sources of mediæval history in the professor's own library. There, with the apparatus of historical learning close at hand, Ranke trained the future historians of Germany to exact methods of analyzing sources and determining facts. It was at this period that George Pertz was editing and publishing the original texts of German mediæval history—the *Monumenta Germaniæ Historica*—and it was the proper use of these texts which Ranke taught his students. He showed them how to compare one authority with another, to weigh evidence, and to balance it by critical judgment. It was in Ranke's seminary that men like George Waitz and William Giesebrecht learned how to collect from many scattered sources all the facts and authorities belonging to the history of the Saxon dynasty of the old German Empire and to arrange them chronologically in Year Books. Thus, in Ranke's private library, German history began to be reconstructed. Thus to modern fields of inquiry was transferred that critical method of textual study which Ranke had learned from the writings of Niebuhr and from the classical philologists of Leipzig. This method was extended by Ranke's pupils throughout all Germany. The writer is assured by Dr. Jastrow, one of Ranke's students, that there is to-day not a single professor of history at a German university who is not, directly or indirectly, a product of the Ranke school. His ideas have penetrated other lands—Switzerland, Italy, France, Belgium, England, and are now represented in American colleges and universities.

Seminary libraries in Germany are usually the professor's own collection, reinforced by such drafts upon the University library as seminary students are allowed to make. It is the custom in some German universities—notably in Berlin, as

the writer well remembers—for professors whose courses a student follows to become surety for him in the drawing of books. Under professorial direction students find their own way in the university library to the proper sources of information upon the subject under discussion in the seminary or in lecture courses. Sometimes special problems are given by the professor for student solution by private study and for report at a future seminary meeting. There the student appears, fortified by books and documents borrowed from the university library, and prepared with his brief of points and citations, like a lawyer about to plead a case in the court-room. Usually the members of a seminary take their weekly turn in the presentation and solution of some historical problem or in the elucidation of some historical text, of which all have a copy. Authorities are discussed; parallel sources of information are cited; old opinions are exploded; standard histories are riddled by criticism, and new views are established. This process of destruction and reconstruction requires considerable literary apparatus, and the professor's study-table is usually covered with many evidences of the battle of books. The dead and wounded are, however, quickly cleared away when refreshments appear upon the scene.

One of the pleasantest features of our seminary meetings in Heidelberg was the weekly display of new books, monographs, pamphlets, and other publications which were sent to our professor from his book-seller for examination by the students before and after the regular seminary exercises. In this way young men were made familiar with current historical literature. The professor's comments upon this or that author, his past or present work, were usually very instructive. Such conversation was an agreeable dessert after a somewhat jejune meal of mediæval Latin. Ideas were exchanged by the students upon books which they had already read or examined. Useful suggestions were thrown out by the professor in a kindly, helpful way, and the symposium usually broke up in a very cheerful state of mind,