

**SPECIAL REPORTS ON
EDUCATION SUBJECTS. VOL. 20.
THE TEACHING OF CLASSICS IN
SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN
GERMANY**

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MR. J. W. HEADLAM & MR. FRANK FLETCHER & MR. J. L. PATON

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Headlam, J. W.

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PREFATORY NOTE TO VOLUME 20

OF

SPECIAL REPORTS ON EDUCATIONAL SUBJECTS.

The following reports are based on information collected during a tour made in Germany, at the instance of the Board of Education, by the authors, Mr. Frank Fletcher, Mr. J. W. Headlam, one of His Majesty's Inspectors of Secondary Schools, and Mr. J. L. Paton, during the months of August and September 1906. Through the courtesy of the Prussian Ministry and the Hamburg Education Authority, they were enabled to attend the lessons at a large number of schools (a list of which is appended), and the Board desire to express their warmest thanks to the Prussian Kultus Ministerium and the Hamburg *Oberschulbehörde* for permission to visit the schools and to the directors and their colleagues for the ready courtesy with which they welcomed them, and the kindness with which they placed at their disposal information for which they asked. The Board also express their obligations to Dr. Reinhardt, Vortragender Rat in the Prussian Ministry of Education, and to Dr. J. Ziehen and Dr. F. Bölte for help given at Frankfurt. The following schools were visited by one or more of the three gentlemen conducting the inquiry, all of whom were present at Frankfurt:—

Hannover.—Städt. Leibnizschule. Direktor: Geh. Rat E. Ramdohr. Kgl. Kaiser Wilhelms-Gymnasium. Direktor: Professor Dr. Richard Wachsmuth.

Linden-Hannover.—Städt. Humboldtschule. Direktor: Professor Dr. Oehlmann.

Magdeburg.—Städt. Oberrealschule u. Realgymnasium (Guericke-Schule). Direktor: Dr. Hummel.

Hamburg.—Wilhelm-Gymnasium. Direktor: Professor Wilhelm Wegehaupt. Realgymnasium des Johanneums. Direktor: Professor Dr. Tendering.

Altona.—Städt. Realgymnasium und Realschule. Direktor: Professor Dr. Borbein.

Frankfurt.—Lessing-Gymnasium. Direktor: Dr. Friedrich Neubauer. Goethe-Gymnasium. Direktor: Dr. Ewald Bruhn. Wöhler-Realgymnasium. Direktor: Dr. Otto Liermann. Musterschule. Direktor: Dr. Max Walter.

Berlin.—Askanisches Gymnasium. Direktor: Professor Dr. A. Busse. Kgl. Französische Gymnasium. Direktor: Dr. Georg Schulze.

Charlottenburg.—Städt. Kaiser Friedrich-Schule. Direktor: Dr. phil. Johann Alfred Zerneck.

Breslau.—Städt. Gymnasium und Realgymnasium zum heiligen Geist. Direktor: Dr. Wilhelm Richter.

Dresden.—Städt. Drei-König-Schule. Rektor: Professor Dr. Hugo Schladebach.

The immediate object of the tour was to enable the inquirers to acquaint themselves with the "actual working of the system of organisation which has recently been introduced into some of the Frankfurt and other schools, and which is known as the 'Frankfurt reform scheme.'" The characteristic of this is that the age at which the study of the ancient languages is begun is postponed later than has been customary. Latin is not begun till the age of twelve, Greek not till fourteen. It is maintained by those who advocate this system that under it boys can, before they leave school, attain the same standard of proficiency in the classical languages as those who have been brought up on the old system. The importance of this, if true, is clear. It would immensely simplify the problems connected with the choice of classical or modern side, and the transference of boys from one type of school to another. It was therefore necessary to inquire how far the claims made for the system were justified, whether the experience of Germany was such as to encourage those who wish to introduce a similar system into England. Above all, the Board desired to find out whether, in those schools in which both Greek and Latin is taught, the result of the change appeared to be to strengthen and raise the position of the classics, and to maintain a high standard of excellence among those who had been educated under it, or whether, as has been suggested, it is only one step in the other direction, and is merely part of a gradual process, the ultimate result of which must be the abolition of what is known as a classical education.

The system has been in force for over ten years in certain selected schools; it has been tried under some of the ablest masters in Germany; a whole generation of schoolboys has passed through the schools and proceeded to the University. We have, then, an experiment conducted with exceptional thoroughness, and the time seems to have come when it should be possible really to judge of the success which may be expected from it.

In drawing up the Reports each of the three investigators has taken for himself a special department. Mr. Fletcher, for his special subject, takes a comparison between the standard of attainment reached in the German schools with that of the English schools. Mr. Headlam supplies the general historical introduction. Mr. Paton especially deals with methods of teaching. Each of them,

however, has reserved to himself full freedom to put in his Report everything on which it seemed to him desirable to lay stress. There is, in consequence, some inevitable overlapping. It is also probable that there will be found some points on which the opinions of the writers differ from one another. It seemed, however, better to adopt this plan, and so to lay the evidence fully before the public, than to attempt to draw up formal and definite conclusions. In this way alone could a true estimate of the position be made, whether by the Board, who, it need scarcely be said, are in no way responsible for the opinions expressed, or by the general reader, who can balance for himself the arguments put forward by the writers.

Office of Special Inquiries and Reports.

December, 1909.

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THE ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF THE
REFORM IN CLASSICAL TEACHING
IN GERMANY.

The object of our visit was to make ourselves acquainted with the work of the schools arranged on the Frankfurt system, to inquire into the methods of teaching, and to estimate the results. We were chiefly concerned with them from the point of view of classical instruction; we were to inquire what effect the new arrangement of the work had on the progress of the boys in classics, and especially whether, as is claimed, it enabled them to make greater progress in a shorter time, or whether, as has been suggested is the case, it brought with it a serious lowering of the standard and was only one more step in the gradual change which is slowly but surely diminishing the thoroughness and importance of classical studies.

It was, however, from the first clear that if our report was not to be actually misleading it would be impossible to confine ourselves to a consideration of the "reform schools." It is necessary to include some consideration of their relation to the normal German school. Anyone who goes from England to one of these Frankfurt schools will find much that is novel, strange, and interesting. It does not follow that all of this is to be attributed to the characteristics special to them. Much which is strange to us in England is common to them and to all other schools in Germany. The particular points by which they are differentiated from the others are often of small importance compared with those points which, while different from our system, are universal there. It soon became apparent that it was those characteristics which they had in common with all the other schools that deserved our attention as much as those which were peculiar to themselves, and there is a real danger lest we may attribute the success attained to the peculiar method of organisation when it is to a great extent due to quite other causes.

THE REFORM MOVEMENT IN PRUSSIA.

The truth is that though we speak of the Frankfurt schools as reformed, as compared with the traditional English system, it is not only they which deserve the name. Now all German schools are reformed. During the last few years there has taken place a great change in the methods of classical teaching. It is a change similar to that which is now being actively promoted in England by many of the most experienced teachers and distinguished scholars. The movements in England and Germany spring from similar causes and have the same aim in view. The Germans have moved more rapidly than we have;