

OVERPRESSURE IN HIGH SCHOOLS IN DENMARK

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Overpressure in high schools in Denmark by Dr. Hertel & C. Godfrey Sörenson

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DR. HERTEL & C. GODFREY SÖRENSEN

**OVERPRESSURE IN
HIGH SCHOOLS IN
DENMARK**

OVERPRESSURE
IN
HIGH SCHOOLS IN DENMARK

BY
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TRANSLATED FROM THE DANISH

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WITH INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION.

DURING recent discussions on educational over-pressure in this country it has been repeatedly argued, and sometimes by those who ought to be well informed, that the complaints made must be exaggerated, because in other European countries, in which children of all classes are subjected to school work far more rigorous and protracted than any that is yet known with us, no murmur of dissatisfaction has been heard. Struck by this observation, and anxious to ascertain why it was that English children broke down at a point on the hill of knowledge which their Continental compeers surmounted with ease, I have been at some pains to inquire into the matter and have discovered that the observation is groundless, and the argument founded on it consequently

worthless. The fact is, that in every country in North-Western Europe there have been, of late years, some popular agitation on the subject of educational overpressure and scientific protests against it and its attendant evils of a more or less emphatic character. In France, Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway parents and physicians have given audible expression to their discontent with existing educational arrangements, and to their fear that the excessive and growing demands, made by schools upon the time and attention of children, will deteriorate the public health, while in several of these countries official inquiries have been held which have resulted in a demonstration of the existence of overpressure in certain directions.

One curious fact which has been brought to light in my survey of European countries with reference to overpressure is, that in every one of them in which the question has been raised, the international argument, if I may so call it, which set me forth on my survey, has been freely em-

ployed to silence those who have presumed to say that overpressure is no myth. Whenever in France, Germany, or elsewhere it has been suggested that the educational coach was being driven a little too fast, the prompt rejoinder has been that its rate of progress must be accelerated rather than slackened if the country is not to be left behind in the race of races, and that no complaints have been made about foreign coaches which go farther and faster. When Germans grumble that their children are over-worked, they are told that they must work harder still if industrial and commercial rivalry with England is to be maintained, and when Norwegians hint that the studies prescribed for their arts examination might be reasonably reduced, they are assured that the requirements of the Danish code are much higher than those of their own, and that in Denmark no objections have been made. A man of any patriotism or "self-respect of race," as Lord Rosebery has called it, is loath to admit that his own offspring are of feebler brain-fibre than those