

was waged with intensest vigor. A constitution had been granted and revoked in Wurtemberg; the Duke of Weimar had granted a constitution to his subjects, the celebration of which event, at Jena, had led to patriotic demonstrations and to a revival of the influences of Luther's great struggle for liberty of thought. The movement thus engendered had become so formidable as to invoke the oppressive antagonism of the tyrannous Metternich, and the promulgation of the infamous Carlsbad Decrees, which provided for the rigorous censorship of the universities and newspapers by Government commission. Their provisions involved the suppression of any newspaper and the exile of any man who might express opinions inimical to the policy of the Government. The same interference with free thought existed in Austria and in Lombardy. The students of the University of Turin had been massacred because they appeared at the theatre in red caps. France and Spain were in a state of unrest, and the countries of Europe—the people—from the Mediterranean to the Baltic. The effort was being made to conform human life to those inherent laws of the social fabric that most make for happiness. The effort to reduce these laws, natural, inherent laws, to definite terms; the effort to adjust habits and customs to new ethical rules and to new constitutional provisions, produced a state of mental activity and of moral daring in every part of Continental Europe. This, then, was the social, political and intellectual atmosphere that prevailed in every German home, and even in the homes of Karl and Johanna Virchow, as they rocked the cradle of him, the formal appreciation of whose long and illustrious life is the object of our solemn reunion at this hour.

The clamor against absolutism was heard in childish murmurs at the public school at Schievelbein, to which young Virchow went at a tender age. There, in the little town in which the Reformation had long been the dominant force; there, in the little school beneath the shadow of the church, its synagogue, and the Castle of Malta,—a combination that in its catholicity was almost prophetic—the youth encountered forces that were potent in fashioning his subsequent illustrious character. It is in this fact that we, in free America, where the schoolhouse stands as the temple of rational belief, where it stands as the safeguard of the Republic, may take peculiar satisfaction.

The political agitations of the times, the little rivalries, the little hatreds, the fierce combats of the public schools, were not, however, sufficient to divert the youthful pupil from the successful prosecution of his studies; for, we learn, that he went, under age and with a particularly advanced knowledge