

There is, therefore, no need to describe it in much detail here. I wish, as in the case of France, to consider certain tendencies which are marked in its secondary branch; not only because this is the branch of education which at present interests us more than any other in England, but because it is generally felt all the world over that we have now reached a stage in civilization when the future of mankind depends to a very great extent on the direction and impetus which is given to each nation by its secondary education. It is known to everybody present that by far the greater number of the secondary schools of Germany are State Schools. Now, we find here that up to the present the religious and the social forces—with the ideals which they create—have been allowed to have very little influence in the organization of these schools. The religious question has never been permitted to assume those vast proportions to which it has attained in France in all branches, and in our own country in the primary branch of education. A wise admission of the need of religious instruction—it figures first in the curricula of all secondary schools—and a still wiser concession to the susceptibilities of the by no means numerous German religious sects, prevented the religious forces from ever assuming anything but its proper role in connection with education—and I think it will be generally admitted that its proper role is that of bringing all that is best and noblest in the spiritual ideals of man to bear on the work of education, the chief aim of which is the introduction of the child into his great spiritual inheritance.

Neither can it be said that social ideals have had any great influence on German secondary education. They have not encountered that opposition from which they always derive their strength. The Germans have seen that for national success it is essential that the best talent should be brought to the top, and, therefore, secondary education has been freed from those restrictions which place it beyond the reach of exceptionally talented children of the poorer classes. We find in Germany no need for that system of higher primary education of a technical nature which we see in France. This may be partly due to the difference between the national characters of the French and Germans. But we may be sure that where the national ideal is supreme, even if vain social ideals did arise, their suppression would not be consummated at the cost of national education.

It is in the economic sphere that we come most closely into touch with Germany. And, having been taught by the danger of economic adversity alone to pay proper attention to our own secondary education, we are inclined to imagine that because Germany's economic prosperity is to be directly traced to the strength of her secondary schools, therefore the special needs of industry and commerce must have been considered in designing the curricula of these schools. This is true, but not in the sense assigned to it by many of those—and particularly the politicians—who advise us to imitate, as we were advised to imitate last night by several members of Parliament, the educational systems of Germany. The function of secondary education in Germany is to