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### PRUSSIAN MILITARY EDUCATION.

[From the Report of the English Commission "to consider the best mode of reorganizing the system of training officers for the scientific corps."]

1. While in France the system of military education has been little altered during the last thirteen years, in Prussia it has in the interval undergone constant extension and improvements. The chief alterations that have taken place are as follows:

(a). All the educational establishments have been very much enlarged, owing to the increase in the army which has taken place since 1866.

(b). The educational requirements for a commission remain in principle the same as they were, the double examination for the rank of officer, and the exaction from every candidate for a commission of proof of both general and professional knowledge, being still the peculiar feature of Prussian military education. There has been, however a constant tendency to raise the standard of the preliminary examination in subjects of general knowledge, and to insist more strongly upon a sound liberal education as a condition of obtaining a commission. The number of *Abiturienten*, or men who have passed through the complete course at a public school, entering the army annually, is now four times as great as it was in 1856, and there is the strongest wish still further to increase their number. These young men may be compared to those who come from the highest forms of public schools in England. A large number of them seem to go into the artillery and engineers.

(c). The cadet schools in their general character are unaltered; the introduction of the peculiar class in the Oberprima in the Upper Cadet School at Berlin is the most important modification made in their organization. The proportion of officers supplied by the cadet schools continues much the same as it was in 1856. The feeling in the army, however, against preparatory military schools appears to be increasing; a strong opinion is entertained as to the narrowing effects upon the mind of exclusive class education; and a preference is very generally exhibited for officers who have had the ordinary education of civil schools. At the war schools, the Artillery and Engineer School, and the War Academy, a decided opinion was expressed as to the intellectual superiority of the *Abiturienten* over those who have been educated in the cadet corps.

(d). The arrangements for the professional instruction of officers of the scientific

corps have been very much altered. These officers now have their education up to the time of obtaining their commissions in common with candidates of the line, their special instruction does not commence at the Artillery and Engineer School until they have been in the service three or four years. For the artillery the course at this school has been reduced to one year, and made more strictly practical in character.

(e). The course of instruction at the War Academy or senior department, has been considerably modified; though still comprising many subjects of an entirely unprofessional character, their number has been reduced: the attention of the students is more concentrated upon military studies than formerly, and a larger amount of time is devoted to practical work. In short, the object has been to render the instruction less purely theoretical than it formerly was.

(f). The most important change, however, which has been made is in regard to the war schools—the schools at which officers of all arms receive their *professional* instruction. Since 1856 they have been entirely reorganized, and placed under the direct control of the Central Educational Department; a much higher class of teachers are employed; the character of the instruction has been greatly improved; and attendance at one of these schools is, with rare exceptions, made compulsory upon every one before obtaining a commission. These schools hold a most important position in the Prussian system of military education, and the greatest pains are bestowed on making them answer the purpose for which they are intended—that of giving a thoroughly practical instruction in military subjects to candidates for commissions. The improvements made in the war schools show the greatly increased importance attached of late years in Prussia to the professional instruction of officers.

2. However different the French and Prussian systems may be in some respects, they both agree in this—that no attempts made to give a special military education at an early age, that a general education is made the groundwork of the professional training, and that at least up to the age of 17 or 18 the future officer receives the same kind of education as the civilian, and in the great majority of cases receives it at the ordinary schools of the country. In Austria also the same principle seems now to have been adopted. The cadet schools in Prussia are no exception to the rule, for the instruction at them, except in the two upper classes at Berlin, is the same as at civil schools. The principle of deferring military education to a comparatively late age is indeed in Prussia

carried even to a greater extent than in France, for all professional instruction is postponed until after the service has been entered, and regimental duty been performed for nearly a year. The few who enter the army from the Oberprima and Selecta of the Cadet Corps (not amounting to 70 each year) are the only individuals who receive any military instruction before joining the service, and in their case this special instruction does not commence until the age of 17. So strongly is this principle insisted upon that even for the artillery and engineers there is no preparatory military education, and the special instruction of the officers of these arms is not given until after they have been some years in the service. The idea in Prussia is that a young man can derive no advantage from studying the *theory* of the military profession until he has learned the *practice* of it. "What use can it be," it was said, "to talk to a lad of the principles of tactics, when he does not even know the movements of a battalion, and perhaps has never seen one on parade?"

3. After, however, entering the service, all the officers of the Prussian army receive a careful professional instruction—that given at the war schools. The course is of an essentially practical character, comprising only strictly military subjects, and excluding such studies as mathematics and even languages.

4. The officers of the staff do not necessarily receive any special training previous to their appointment; but in Prussia this is of less importance, as from the professional education which every officer has had, those appointed to the staff, even if they have not passed through the senior department, must at least be acquainted with field sketching and military regulations, and know something of fortification and artillery. Moreover, after appointment means are taken, in the "staff expeditions" which occur annually, to instruct them in their practical duties, and (as is the case also in France with the officers of the staff corps) to insure their keeping up the knowledge of field sketching and reconnoissance which they had previously acquired.

5. The connection which exists in Prussia between the military system and the general education of the country is remarkable. *Portepée-jahrlich* examinations are not only based on the course of instruction at civil schools, but have been used as a means of raising the character of the education given at these schools. On the one hand, the advantages offered to *Abiturienten* and to those who have been at a university indicate a wish to encourage men of liberal education to enter the army as officers, on the other hand, by