

Thoroughness depends largely upon proper supervision. This is perfectly secured in Germany. There are no loose ends; there is no referring of important principles of management to the vagaries and idiosyncrasies of individuals. Individuality has its full scope, but within the lines of established supervision. Organization that does not make a slave or an automaton of the individual is always most effective toward a given end; and such organization exists in the German school.

But one of the chief excellencies of the system is, that all the teachers are thoroughly trained and equipped for their work. All are not of equal excellence, but none are poor or inexperienced. No one is entrusted with responsibility who has not shown his capability for it, and promotion follows upon success. As far as possible, especially in the lower grades, the teacher is encouraged to throw aside the book, and to teach according to his own ideas. He is not cramped or confined to any particular method, but seeks to impart his instruction in the freshest and most personal way. In this self-reliance he finds the highest stimulus, since the true teacher is never content to use the second time what has once been employed, till it has been subjected to revision and offered to himself for improvement. His position in school is helped by his position in the community, where he is held in high esteem. His work is both honourable and important, and he is unwilling to see it suffer in his hands.

These very things, however, that tend to make the schools thorough, produce an evil,—that of *over-pressure*. The school years are long, about forty-two weeks,—and the hours are long,—never less than five, and in some of the upper classes, seven hours a day. Two afternoons a week only are given up, and many

hours must be spent in study at home. The discipline is rigorous, and covers, not the school hours only, but follows the boys to their homes. The burden which they bear is too heavy, and makes them listless and dispirited. German boys never play; they have no games, no sports. Life is to them a serious business. During a year's residence in a German town,—where were a university, a gymnasium, a *real-schule*, people's schools, and various private schools, and where, having two boys of my own in school, I had good opportunity to learn of boy's life,—I never saw or heard, with the exception of one game of hide-and-seek, a single game. Once in crossing a large court, I saw a company of boys choosing sides for a game of ball. I watched with interest a spectacle so unusual, wishing to see how a German boy would look when actually engaged in a game; but I was disappointed, as the company soon broke up in a fight. I was not surprised; for fighting, not in anger or hot blood, but easily and naturally, is the amusement of the German boy. Not that he is more pugnacious than other boys, but the military discipline that curbs him in school, and the sight of soldiers whenever he steps into the street, keep constantly before him the idea, and almost the necessity, of fighting. This lack of healthful sport seriously affects the boy, depriving him of much enjoyment, and making him old before he is mature.

The over-pressure of the schools is a serious cause of ill health. The nearsightedness of the Germans is proverbial, and results largely from the strain upon the eyes during school years. Statistics show that when children enter school at six scarcely five per cent have defective vision; but when they leave it as young men, at twenty, nearly fifty per cent are