

training in independence in thinking on the part of the listening student, as, for example, in philosophy. He may find nothing to which he could object, but he will find many things which he will do well to think over and judge for himself.

No student should feel in coming here that a fixed time will be enough to spend in study in Germany, if he is at liberty to go on until he is reasonably satisfied with the amount of knowledge gained. There are very great possibilities of learning at a German University, so great that even the regulation time of three years' study will not exhaust what is offered in any given subject.

I have been told with some justice in America that German professors have not the faculty of imparting knowledge. This is the case with inferior ones; but the regular professors, in Heidelberg at any rate, lecture with vividness, clearness and with an irresistible hold on the hearer's attention. And, certainly, there is nothing left to be desired as far as their thoughtfulness of the difficulties and peculiar mental constitutions of the individual students is concerned.

I have been asked as to the degree of acquaintance with the language necessary for an advantageous hearing of German lectures, and would reply that, while it is hardly fair to come to Germany and expect favors in the matter of the language, much kindness is shown to foreigners, and the intelligence of a student is not measured according to his knowledge of the speech of the country. It is necessary to have a fair knowledge of German grammar and a small stock of German words to profit at all from what one hears; but a thorough mastery of German, while an immense advantage, is not absolutely indispensable. If one be about to study here, a start in the language in Canada is eminently advisable, and, then, a short preliminary sojourn among German people in their own land will do much to give the required preparation for University work.

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ENGLISH BALLAD POETRY.

This title may appear somewhat vague, but was purposely left indefinite, in order that I might be at liberty to select such portions of the subject as would be likely to be most interesting, without being confined to any particular order or epoch. For in a subject of this nature, where the date and authorship of particular compositions are often equally uncertain, it would be evidently impracticable to fix upon any precise period in its history. I shall endeavour, therefore, in the following papers to give a general sketch of the rise and progress of Ballad Poetry in

England, together with a particular account of some of the more important and interesting ballads which have come down to us, and (where the nature of the composition will admit of it) occasional specimens in illustration of their character. With these few observations by way of introduction, I proceed to the subject before us.

In order properly to appreciate the nature and history of ballad-poetry, we shall require to know something of its origin and of the class of men by whom it was first cultivated. As far as our knowledge goes, the ballad appears, at least in England to have been a lineal descendant of the old romantic poetry of the Middle Ages, in which the minstrels, or poets of those days, were accustomed to celebrate the daring exploits and adventures of the heroes of chivalry and to expatiate upon the charms of their mistresses. For, as Spenser informs us:

"It hath been through all ages ever seen,
That with the praise of arms and chivalry,
The prize of beauty still hath joined been."

These minstrels were an order of men, very common in the Middle Ages, who made music and poetry their profession, and were accustomed to sing verses, composed by themselves or others, to the harp, or to recite them, on public occasions or at festivals, to the crowds of people who resorted to the fairs and other places of public entertainment at such times, and with whom they were extremely popular. Many of them, also, more especially those, we may suppose, who were held in the greatest estimation for their poetical or musical talents, appear to have been attached to the Court and the households of the wealthy barons and nobles, who were often themselves lovers or followers of the Art; and in many cases we find them existing as regular officers of the household, whose special duty it was to provide music and poetry for the entertainment of their employers and their guests.

The existence of such a class of men would evidently be indispensable in a rude state of society, where the masses of the people were wholly illiterate and uncultivated, and where even among the higher ranks of life the possession of the knowledge of letters was often regarded as the result of the arts of the magician or the wizard. It was through the agency of the minstrel, whose memory was stored with the legends and popular traditions of former ages, that the knowledge of past events in the history of the people, as well as of their present achievements, was rendered accessible to the popular mind, or transmitted to posterity. With the increase of knowledge, however, and the advancement of learning, circumstances to which the invention of the art of printing imparted a wonderful impulse, the office and profession of the bard—for the minstrel was noth-