

ALLGEMEINE DEUTSCHE SCHULZEITUNG

1839 — 1840

Address Before the Society by FRITZ O. EVERS, Pastor of Zion Church

Heinrich Scheib was elected pastor of Zion Church on October 18th, 1835. With him a new era began in German life in Baltimore. His well-trained scientific mind, his balanced judgment, his universal knowledge, his magnetic personality, his uncommon talents as preacher and teacher soon made him a prime mover along all avenues of progress. A new day had dawned. This new day also called into light and life the much neglected field of education of our youth. The precarious, yea disgraceful, condition which Scheib discovered in the parochial school of Zion Church led him to radical measures. The old school was discontinued. An entirely new school was started. It opened on November 21, 1836, with seventy-one children and two teachers. In this great institution modern principles of education prevailed; principles at that time ultra-modern and today, after almost one hundred years, still modern. The school's aim was "education" as against "instruction." The guarded and guided development of the personality of the child was its goal, rather than the cultivation merely of mind and intellect. Pastor Scheib was a born educator. He spent his youthful enthusiasm—he was just on the brink of thirty then—upon this young institution and the ideals which it endeavored to realize. Additional to the numerous annual reports on the progress of the school, we possess a document which, on the broadest basis, presents and promotes the world of thought from which this educational ideal had grown: A school-paper, an educational magazine, of national ambitions.

On Saturday, June 15th, 1839, the first issue of the "Allgemeine Deutsche Schulzeitung" appeared. The paper announced itself as a bi-weekly. As editors H. Scheib and P. M. Wolsieffer are named. It was printed by L. B. Schwarz.

Out-of-town subscribers were served

by the railroad service, i. e. express. Later, when irregularity in delivery brought complaints, the postal service was used. Agents were named in the following states and cities: Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Ohio, Kentucky, District of Columbia, South Carolina, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Massachusetts, Louisiana and Canada. Philadelphia had two agents, one of whom was the well-known book dealer, John George Wesselhoeft; Harrisburg, Allentown—here by the physician, Dr. Wilhelm Wesselhoeft, cousin of the Philadelphian; Wilkes-Barre, Erie—here by the publisher Fr. Stohlmann; Sachsenburg in Butler County; New York and Albany; two agents in Newark; Cincinnati and Lancaster, Ohio; Louisville; Washington; Charleston, S. C.; Indianapolis; New Albany and Evansville, Indiana; Belleville—by the famous Dr. Gustav Körner, and Highland, Ill.; St. Louis and Herman (this was a settlement of German immigrants, having for their purpose the forming of a German state within the Union); Boston, New Orleans and Montreal. This list offers an enlightening cross-section of German intellectual life throughout the then settled regions of the United States.

The single number had eight pages, eleven by nine inches in size, three columns wide. The paper was good and durable in quality. To my knowledge only two bound copies of the 26 issues that have appeared are preserved. The value of this publication is found in its very conception, its high idealistic aims and its radically progressive program, as well as in the sane, common-sense judgment it reflects on all questions pertaining to the welfare and training of the child. It was a school-paper, not only meant for teachers, but even more for the intelligent parent.

In its history it but repeats one of the many sad chapters in the venturesome undertakings of this kind in past

German-American life. It died of anemia at the end of the first year of publication. The doleful announcement of its discontinuance appeared in No. 25. The number of paid subscriptions at \$1.50 a year, or six subscriptions for five dollars, was frankly given as 202. Assuming all arrears as paid up and making deduction for agents' commissions, etc., we arrive at a possible total income of \$252.50. The expenses were for—

The first three numbers..	.\$ 68.92
The remaining 23 at \$18.25	
each	419.75
The paper carrier in Baltimore at \$1.50 an issue..	39.00
Postage, writing and wrapping paper, etc	52.00

A total outlay of \$597.67, and a clear loss of \$345.17.

The valedictory in No. 26 shows good humor on the part of the editor and a far-sighted plan for a real effective dissemination of educational ideals.

"Not unlike the actor who unsuccessfully bids for the applause of his unappreciative audience, yet withdraws from the stage with a low bow of thanks to them, so we, in this, our valedictory, cannot do less than express our thanks and gratitude to the appreciative few who so kindly and liberally encouraged us with their help and patronage.

"To all who have read our paper, our warm thanks are offered; especially are we obligated to such friends who, in one way or another, endeavored to further the interests of our enterprise. To our worthy colleagues in the field of journalism we likewise commend ourselves for a kind remembrance, thanking them for the liberal attitude with which they received us into their midst, without ever using the pricks of their wit on us. To the sincere one whom, by some inadvertent sharp word or controversial statement, we may have offended, we extend the hand of reconciliation and beg his forgiveness; but as to the insincere one—the hypocrite and dissembler (Pharisee), we had a duty to perform by holding the mirror up to him and here no excuses are required.

"As much as we wish it, it seems that

another school-paper within the near future is improbable. In consideration of the great importance of constant suggestions in the educational field, we cannot omit a very grave word directed to all publishers of German newspapers . . . who have the opportunity to show to a nation of free people the way to its true happiness. Who better than the free, independent press? . . . The press has succeeded in spreading a general interest in politics, why should it not be able to carry on a similar activity in the interest of the general education of the nation? Our local papers are very large, they bring much material, but alas, only much politics, and so much politics that it becomes too much politics. How would it be if every publisher of a political paper would resolve, just for himself, to give one column, or only half a column, each week to the cause of education? ... Or is not the effort worth while to secure for the German name the glory, that it was Germans who gave form and foundation to the great national edifice of a general, beneficial educational system?"

The contents of the volume of twenty-six numbers are most instructive. What has come directly from the fertile pen of Pastor Scheib I cannot trace with certainty. Comparing the style and general tenor of most of the fundamental articles on questions of education with his sermons and his annual school reports, I am led to believe that almost all of the unsigned articles came from him. In a series of seven articles, beginning with the first issue, "Education in General" is treated in a most thorough and surprisingly modern way. Psychology surely is not an acquisition of these latter days. It forms the solid basis of his dissertations in 1839. Eight articles in all, spread over numbers three to ten, give a comprehensive view of the entire school system of those days. Private schools predominated; church schools came next in rank; common or public schools, had just begun to take root in the New England States. With utter frankness he portrays the shortcomings of the several systems. Private school enterprises were mostly business enter-

prises, often not even headed by a "school-man." Sons and daughters of the rich were much coveted acquisitions and to their whims the schools catered. Scheib is profoundly suspicious of the beginning influence of the female teacher in the educational field, especially in public schools. He advocated salaries enabling a teacher to live in modest comfort, to remain in his position and locality, and decently to rear a family. As yet there was not a normal school in the country. Scheib advocated the creation of such institutions by the state.

A very extended discourse on "Physical Education" covers twelve numbers. The importance of the subject is apparent from the fact that it is a lead-off article in the first number. It is a complete treatise on hygiene and sanitary matters, starting with the baby and its mother; sex problems are frankly discussed; the gospel of *Mens sana in corpore sano* is ably proclaimed and defended.

Space forbids giving a full review of the vast and rich material which this publication of almost one hundred years ago contained. Ever and again, the reader is surprised by the discovery of the far-sightedness of the editor and the perfect fit of his criticisms and his constructive suggestions to modern conditions. However, there are a few phases which I dare not pass over.

The religious views are frankly of the liberal, rationalistic type. While there are occasional tirades against the "Dunkelmänner," the entire subject is approached and presented in a spirit of deep reverence. Ethics and religion combined was his ideal of education.

References are frequently found to conditions prevailing in Germany or in Europe. A number of articles seem to be reprints from German publications. One interesting chapter in German-American history is woven into the current history of this year. The third convention of Germans in the United States was called to meet at Philippsburg, Pennsylvania, on August 1, 1839—following two conventions at Pittsburgh, the first October 18, 1837—the anniver-

sary of the victory at Leipzig over Napoleon in the War of German Liberation. Here the creation of a Teachers' Seminary for the training of German-English teachers had been resolved. The project had not been carried out after eighteen months. In Baltimore a meeting of German residents was held which elected Dr. Freytag as its delegate to this convention. Pastor Scheib presided at this meeting, Mr. Wolseffer was the secretary. A committee was authorized to prepare a set of instructions for the delegate. At a public meeting held in Zion Church on August 28, Dr. Freytag gave his report on the proceedings of the convention. No. 7 of the "Schulzeitung" publishes this document. Enthusiasm of the rosiest optimism fills the report. We all have often succumbed to the same temptation speaking and hearing of German-American possibilities. God grant that this enthusiasm—though it far overshoots its mark—may never be taken from us. It still remains our greatest asset. Dr. Freytag in 1839 speaks of three million Germans—in the United States—which number at the rate of the immigration of his days he expected to double in a few years! The seminary—for which, in the meantime by the getting together of \$3,000, a suitable property at Philippsburg had been acquired—was now to be opened on a grand scale. Seven directors were elected; a charter from the State of Pennsylvania was to be applied for. He foresaw possibilities in this institution, if only the one hundredth part of the Germans could be enlisted, to make it a university along German lines, which would never want for the most excellent of scientists, even such of wide European fame. "Why, the noted seven professors at Göttingen University would gladly have come, if we had been able to provide a suitable field here for them!" Freytag then announced the formation of "Bildungsvereine" all over the land, with annual dues of \$3.00, in support of the seminary. He suggested that this matter be brought to the attention of the German Society of Maryland, "which now perhaps has not a hundred members, but which may grow

to one thousand members, and this is a small number compared with the total number of Germans in Baltimore and Maryland." Dr. Freytag, Dr. Wegner and Pastor Scheib were constituted a committee to confer with the German Society. On December 13th, German citizens of Baltimore met to organize a "Verein für Schul- und Erziehungswesen" and a constituting meeting was called for December 30th in the German schoolhouse on North Gay Street. The constitution was published in No. 16. The name was now "Bildungsverein von Baltimore." Purpose is support of the Philippsburg Seminary, provided that this institution will actually be conducted according to the principles laid down in the report of the Committee on Seminary at the Philippsburg Convention.

On March 7, 1840, Scheib reports on the growth of the Baltimore Verein, which gains new members at every meeting and shows a splendid spirit and understanding. The national fund does not seem to grow. A depression is on all over the country. Scheib says: "Of course, the times are hard for very many, but the worst is a mental state of depression." He is enough of an idealist to believe in the practicability of raising the funds and maintaining the institution through the formation of these "Bildungsvereine," even though they do not heed the clamor—even then loud—for popular entertainment of its members at meetings. From the Pittsburgher "Stadt- und Landbote" an article is reprinted in the first April issue of 1840, in which the treasurer of the Seminary Board of Directors reveals that to his knowledge, nothing so far has been done to even secure the charter for the institution. On May 2nd, 1840, the full act of incorporation by the Legislature of Pennsylvania is printed.

So far the story from the "Schulblatt."

To complete this interesting chapter of German-American history, I quote from Faust—The German Element in the United States, vol. II, p. 240.—"The fourth convention which met at Phil-

ippsburg, August 9th, 1841, decided to open the school on December 1st, of the same year. This event was contemporary with the attempts of Horace Mann and Henry Barnard to establish normal schools in Massachusetts and Connecticut. But the seminary was destined to be short-lived. The lower school was prosperous for a time, but the normal school was not. The parochial schools were uncertain as to what position to take in regard to the new venture. Catholics and Protestants distrusted one another, and both wished to retain their own students. The founders of the institution were known to be free-thinkers, and that circumstance restrained all denominations from sending pupils. While the Philippsburg plan thus failed, its effect upon local schools was nevertheless stimulating. The wide interest that had been aroused in matters of education was a permanent benefit to the German population."

I cannot part from my subject without stating that this publication was anything but a dry, scientific and uninteresting paper. It vibrates with life throughout. Therein are any number of good stories. Scheib is at his best, though, when he throws the dart of a biting, caustic satire upon the self-satisfied, lazy, untrained, puffed-up school-teacher of his days as a sorry type of public educator. His "Lobrede auf Thomas Faulbein, Schullehrer zu Distelhausen" for his "excellent loyal adherence to the mechanical method of teaching" is a perfect classic.

It has given me the greatest delight to commune with the spirits of a time removed from today by almost a century, and to have found instruction and inspiration at their feet which is eternally useful and is destined to outlive schemes, programs, projects of lesser minds in our days. Truly, for a sector of German and public life, for the cause of education itself as of national concern, Heinrich Scheib has attached to himself "the glory that a German workman has given form and firmness to the edifice of a general beneficial education of the nation."