

Written for this Paper.

EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM OF EUROPE.

Permit me to furnish the readers of the News with a few elementary principles of the system of education on the Continent of Europe, or rather the organization of public schools.

I shall not here attempt a comparison with the "Educational System" of either Great Britain or the United States, but simply give a few elementary principles underlying the bases of their system. Through the courtesy of the Council of State or Minister of Public Instruction in Geneva I obtained cards permitting me to visit its public schools; and I took advantage of the opportunity. That which is said in this connection will, in general, have reference to the Canton or State of Geneva.

The public instruction here is under the superintendence of the State Council, with the aid of thirty commissioners. The rector of the university and the deans of the several different departments have likewise the voice of consultation. From the fact that education is obligatory upon all children between the ages of six and fifteen years it is necessarily free, the state being encumbered even with the furnishing of all books and other necessary school supplies for the use of its children. This modification, however, ought to be noticed, that it is optional with the parents whether they send their children to the public school, to a private school, or whether the instruction be given at the home of the parent. But in the two latter cases the mode of instruction followed is subject to the inspection of the State commission, and ought to correspond with the program by them arranged or be equivalent to it. The instructors of public schools are appointed by the State Council and their salaries fixed by the same body, not being permitted to exceed nor fall short of a certain sum, except in special cases. With but very few exceptions, the sexes in public schools are invariably separated—the girls in one school, the boys in another. From this general rule, however, we must except the different departments of the university. Sometimes, too, the sexes in the public schools receive their instructions in the same buildings, but in separate departments of the buildings. I was agreeably surprised upon entering a class of the college, in which the English language was being taught, to see so many young men rise simultaneously in recognition to the entrance of my companion and myself. The same act of courtesy was repeated upon our entrance to the superior school for the instruction of young ladies at a recitation upon French literature, with, however, this contrasted exception—it was a body of young ladies who rose to their feet instead of young gentlemen.

The course of public instruction comprehends, firstly, primary instruction; secondly, intermediate or secondary instruction; lastly, superior instruction. The primary instruction is subdivided into (a) *écoles infantines*, or schools for the smallest of children; (b) primary schools; (c) complementary schools. *Les écoles infantines* are again subdivided into an inferior and a superior department. In the inferior department children are received from the age of three to six respectively; hence the instruction is not obligatory, but seems to

be designed for the children of parents who are to be away from home or at work during the day, or perhaps for those who would rather not have the care of their children. It thus serves as a safe and instructive retreat for the little ones. The child is occupied with some little play or manual performance which serves as a development of its physical and intellectual being. In the superior division of this department the child enters at the age of six years, where he remains till the age of seven, and is taught in connection with that which precedes—reading, writing, the elementary principles of calculation and drawing, together with little songs. The instruction given in this department is entirely by lady teachers, and is the true type of kindergarten schools.

At the age of seven years the child enters the primary school, where he remains for a period of six years—until he is thirteen. Here he is taught reading, writing and the French language, as well as the elements of the German language, arithmetic, mental calculation, the elementary principles of geometry, geography, natural history, elementary drawing, music and gymnastics; to which we may add manual labor for the boys and needlework for the girls. The scholastic year embraces from forty-two to forty-six weeks of study with from twenty-five to thirty-five hours per week. The scholastic year being divided into two semesters, the child undergoes an examination at the end of each semester.

On reaching his sixth degree and the age of thirteen years, the pupil on leaving the primary department enters the complementary school, which is designed for the completion of his elementary education and embraces a period of two years. The instructions given and received at this stage will necessarily depend upon the future aspirations of the pupil; also whether he is in the city or the country. But whatsoever may be his aspirations or the locality in which he dwells he will be instructed upon the elements of physical and natural science—if a boy, the institutions of his country; if a girl, domestic economy. The scholastic duration of this department embraces a period of from twenty-five to forty weeks, with from ten to eighteen hours per week; and, as in the primary department, the pupil undergoes an examination at the end of each semester. The results of the examination not only depend upon the examination in question, but also upon the year's work. The instructions given in primary schools as well as in the complementary schools are sometimes by male teachers and sometimes by female.

The department of higher or secondary instruction is divided into 1. The Professional Instruction, 2. The College, 3. The Superior School for the Instruction of Young Ladies. The professional instruction is designed as preparatory for the industrial, commercial and agricultural careers of life, and is divided into a. professional schools, b. evening schools, c. secondary schools for country districts. The pupil having arrived at this stage, the instruction is no longer free nor obligatory, unless it be for those who may have chosen to enter this department, (upon the arrival of their sixth degree and thirteenth year), instead of entering the complementary school. The professional school extends

over a duration of two years of from forty-two to forty-six weeks each, and from thirty to thirty-five hours of lessons per week. The instruction given is the following—the French and German language with a view to special correspondence, commercial calculation and book-keeping, mathematics, physical and natural science—which have a special bearing upon the industry they are following, history, commercial geography, the duties of citizenship, industrial arts, beautiful arts, watch-making, carpentry, etc. The evening schools are designed for those having completed their complementary course and arrived at their fifteenth year. This period extends over a duration of two years, with but ten to twelve hours of lessons per week. The secondary school for the country districts are designed for those pupils having achieved their sixth degree in the primary schools. The instruction in this department must necessarily be of a rural nature in connection with other instructions; the boy is taught lessons of practical agriculture, the girl domestic economy.

The college, which is a division of the secondary or higher course of instruction, is designed for boys who have arrived at their 5th degree in the primary schools. The candidate is permitted to enter his matriculation in the college upon the presentation of his certificate of examination from the primary department of education. If, however, he has not followed the course of instruction in the public schools, he must then undergo an examination. The college is separated by two divisions, inferior and superior. The inferior embraces a period of three years, and in general terms comprises the following branches: The French, Latin and German languages, geography, history, arithmetic, general notions of constitutional government, the primary elements of physical and natural science, penmanship, drawing, music, and gymnastics. Having completed the course prescribed for the inferior division of the college, the student enters the superior division, where he remains for a period of four years. This division has four sections, (a) classic, (b) commercial, (c) pedagogic, (d) technic. In general terms, instruction is given in this department of the college upon the following branches: The French language and literature, the German language and literature, the Greek and English languages, geography, history, cosmography, mathematics, the physical and natural science, book-keeping, the elements of logic, psychology and political economy. The superintendence of the college is entrusted to one director, who does not form—at least only in exceptional cases—part of the Faculty of Instruction.

The superior school for the instruction of young ladies forms part of the secondary branch of public instruction. It is separated into two divisions, inferior and superior, the first extending over a period of four years, the latter comprising only three. In the first, instruction is given in the French and German languages, general history, geography, arithmetic, the elementary principles of physics and natural science, drawing, penmanship, music, gymnastics and needlework. The superior is divided into two sections—literary and pedagogic. In both of these sections a number of studies are obligatory, such as the French and German languages, abridged