

study of languages; others natural mathematicians, can accomplish more in this direction than himself, and he becomes discouraged. Because he cannot store away historic matter with the ease of a Bancroft or delve into science like an Agassiz, he is apt to underrate his own powers, and lose confidence in his own individuality. No success can be expected without labor, and no one knows what he can do until he perseveringly applies himself to the struggle. Honest toil always has its reward, and enjoyment follows closely in its wake.

A. U. H.

### German in American Colleges.

The study of language will always form an important part of the Higher Education. It is natural for man, as his mental vista widens, to desire to add to his vernacular the idioms and beauties of other languages. This is so, not only because language is the great vehicle of thought, the universal medium of intercourse, the common property of mankind, but because inherent in language itself we find the history of the people by whom it was developed. In the construction of the language of a people we have a stereoscopic view of their mental organization. In the inflexible and rigid construction of the Latin we read the history of a mind, bold, obdurate, inexorable; while in the multiplicity of forms and wonderful flexibility of the Greek we have the history of a mind, genial, sympathetic, persuasive.

On these two great monuments of the learning of antiquity are the fountains from which flows the great tide of modern languages; and but few modern languages are more directly affected by the classics than our own. So, however long may be the struggle for precedence between ancient and modern languages, these models of antiquity must ever hold a prominent place in a course of liberal instruction.

But the German, of which we wish to speak particularly, can present no such claims for our study. As a classical language it must give precedence to the ancients. Neither can it claim to be any material aid in the acquisition of our own language. Upon what then must German rest its claim for the place which it now holds in the college curriculum? Manifestly upon its direct, practical utility.

If it is the object of the classics to give depth of erudition by carrying us back through the cycles of antiquity and giving us communication with the great minds of the past, it is the office of modern language to give breadth of view by opening commerce with the master intellects of the present.

The German alone opens to us a vast field for exploration. It introduces us to a corps of philosophers and statesmen of the first rank. But beyond this, the large and constant immigration of people who speak the German and its allied dialects renders its acquisition a necessity to professional men. And it is chiefly upon this ground that it has gained the prominent place which it now holds in American colleges. If, then, German is studied for its direct utility it should be taught with special reference to that end.

While German has always held its place in American colleges by virtue of its practical utility, it is still taught as a classical, or so called, dead language. It is scarcely creditable to a college to graduate a student in a course of three or four years in German, who is not able to converse intel-

ligently on the most ordinary topics of the day. And yet, that this is the lamentable fact, thousands of graduates are only too competent witnesses. That the present method of teaching the classics is the best may well be questioned, but that the present method of teaching German in our colleges is wrong, there is no room for doubt.

A native of Berlin would indeed find it a difficult task to acquire our language if he were introduced immediately to Shakespeare and Milton, yet in American colleges, after a few months' drill in grammar, we are introduced to the masterpieces of Goethe and Schiller. But suppose a German should master Shakespeare and Milton, as classical writers, would he have any adequate, practical knowledge of the English language? Certainly not. And yet we are trying to acquire a practical knowledge of the German language by reading the masterpieces of its literature, under the same methods of instruction that we read Latin and Greek.

If we wish to acquire German only as a classical language, then this is all well enough, but if we are ever to acquire it as a practical language, as a medium of intercourse, our methods of instruction must be changed.

A living language can be taught only by the living voice. We can learn to speak it correctly only by hearing it spoken correctly. Imitation is the only true method of learning a living language.

Then give us more of the elementary and conversational German and a more thorough drill in its enunciation. But in order to do this, we must have instructors who are themselves masters of the language, not masters of it as a classical language alone, but familiar with its idioms and fluent in its use.

In American colleges there is no deficiency more marked, no want more urgent than thorough, practical instruction in this department.

Too frequently the German is thrown in to eke out the quota of some classical tutor or assigned to those who have never made it a specialty, and thus it often becomes a burden to those who teach it and scarcely less to those who study it. Our influential German element, and the utilitarian spirit, especially of the West, demand a revolution in this department; and this demand has already too long been disregarded. It is to be hoped, however, that the change may soon come, and that professors may be chosen with special reference to the object in view—thorough practical instruction in German.

H. H. W.

### The Power of Women.

That women possess power, none but the shallowest observers of human nature will deny. Of the extent of that power only those who look longest and deepest into the throbbings of the social sea are aware. Members of society by their own right, women have risen above being mere ornaments, or appendages, and have become the controlling influence. They are the nucleus around which the social structure is constructed. They are to the social system what the sun is to the solar system; and we, the "lords of creation," though we bob rapidly around on our own orbits, are compelled by irresistible power to also revolve around this centre; and are as materially influenced by our relative positions to this centre of light and life as are

the planets by their positions to their centre of light and energy.

If a man expose himself to the full light of woman's influence, the effect is the same as when the earth exposes the greatest extent of its surface to the sun. His whole system is warmed and invigorated—good thoughts spring into action, and his whole life is beautified, as is the earth when the sun causes it to put on its summer vestments. While on the other hand, if he expose only a small portion to this benign influence, that portion, or that talent, is benefited, while the rest of his being is soon wrapped in snow and ice of egotism, narrow-mindedness, irritability, distrust of mankind, etc., and he becomes selfish, sordid and illiberal. Such is the social power that women possess. That it is often used for evil is a lamentable truth. Thousands of women are using it to elevate humanity, and thousands are using it to degrade humanity, and wither and destroy the frail exotic of morality, which springs up in every man's heart.

In ancient times, there lived a woman who furnishes a good illustration of this class. In youth she was a flower girl, but by the traffic of her charms she corrupted the morals of nearly all Athens, and became dictator to its greatest citizens. She laid a wager that she could destroy the virtue of its greatest philosopher, and failing to do so, declared he was a god, not a man. She amassed such wealth that, on the walls of the city being destroyed, she offered to rebuild them, if allowed to inscribe thereon her name and occupation, which, thanks to the manhood that yet remained in Athens, was refused. Such a woman also was Livia, who instigated the death of Drusus, her husband, and influenced Augustus to elevate Tiberias to the throne. Such was Herodias, who, to sate her revenge, demanded in a charger the head of the first prophet of the new dispensation. Such was Jezebel, who persuaded Ahab to take the life of Naboth to gain possession of his vineyard and substitute the rites of idolatry for the worship of the true and living God, and who, as a judgement upon her infamous career, was eaten by dogs in the streets of Jerusalem. Such was the Spartan Helen whose faithless intrigues involved the whole Grecian states in a foreign war, and caused the overthrow of Troy. Such was Sullia who murdered her husband, procured the assassination of her father and ordered her charioteer to drive over the mangled corpse, thrown into the streets of Rome. Such is Mrs. Woodhull, who, endowed with unmistakable talent, uses it, in imitation of Lucretia Borgia, for the preparation of a diabolical poison, which she is insidiously and perseveringly inserting into the veins of the social system, that she may gain infamous notoriety by destroying our homes, the foundation of government.

To the other better class, belong the majority of women. Noted illustrations were Clotilda, through whom King Clovis was led, in the fifth century, to embrace Christianity, and himself and sister, with three thousand of his troopers were baptized at Rheims in one day, an event prelude of the triumph of Christianity over Paganism among the Franks and throughout northern Europe. In the sixth century Ethelbert, an Anglo-Saxon king, through the pious persuasion of his queen, Bertha, became a votary and defender of the new faith. In the succeeding century six other Anglo-Saxon kings were led in the same way to embrace the Christian doctrine. In the ninth century, the sister of Bogaris,

King of the Bulgarians, taken captive to Constantinople, embraced the gospel. Having been ransomed by her brother, she bore back to his kingdom and court the knowledge of a purer, better faith and persuaded him to renounce Paganism and embrace the religion of the cross. Hence the early diffusion of Christianity among the Bulgarians, Swedes, Danes and Norwegians. But these are remote extreme examples. Let us see what any woman of the present may do. As a wife and mother, she can secure the fortunes and happiness of her children; and even if this were the extent of her power, surely this would be a sufficient destiny; but by her thrift, prudence and tact she can secure for herself and husband a competence in old age, no matter how small their beginning or how adverse a fate occasionally be theirs. By her cheerfulness, she can restore her husband's spirits, shaken by the anxieties of business. By her tender care she can often restore him to health, if disease has seized upon his overtasked powers. By her counsels and love she can win him from bad company, if temptation in an evil hour has led him astray. By her example and precept and her own sex's insight into character, she can mould her children, however diverse their dispositions, into good men and women. And by leading in all things a true and beautiful life, she can reform, elevate and spiritualize all who come within her influence, so that others of her sex, emulating and assisting her, she can do more to regenerate the world than all the statesmen and reformers that ever legislated.

She can do as much, alas! perhaps even more, to degrade man. Who can estimate the amount of evil that one woman has the power to do? As a wife, she can ruin her husband by her folly, extravagance, or want of affection. She can make a devil of a man who might otherwise have become a good member of society. She can bring bickerings, strife and perpetual discord into what ought and might have been a happy home. She can change the innocent babes which God has intrusted to her care into vile men and even viler women. She can lower the moral tone of society and thus pollute legislation at the spring-head. She can, in fine, become an instrument for evil instead of good. Instead of making flowers of truth, purity, beauty and spirituality spring up in her footsteps until her pathway smiles with a radiance that is almost celestial, she can transform it into a black and blasted desert, covered by the scorn of all evil passions and swept by the bitter blasts of everlasting death.

This is what *one* woman can do; and if *one* can accomplish so much, who can comprehend the amount of good or evil that could be done should all the women combine to accomplish it. Look about you and mark the powers that are most potent for good and evil, and you will agree with me that they are the women. Think you not the women could eradicate any social evil? If the women of this land were to demand the same virtuous character of men, as men demand of women, what a reformation there would be. Suppose the women were to visit upon intemperate men the same scorn, contempt and righteous condemnation that men give intemperate women; if they would banish the male indulger from society, and ostracise him from respectability as effectually as the female drunkard is. King Alcohol would meet an adversary who would battle with his host more effectually than did Zenobia, the ancient war-