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THE MEDICAL SCHOOL OF BERLIN COMPARED WITH THAT OF VIENNA.

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To the crowds of young Americans who study, or look forward to studying medicine in Germany, the central point of attraction is undoubtedly the "Allgemeines Krankenhaus" of Vienna. Americans do not often deceive themselves when there is a question as to the practical advantages to be gained, and, upon the whole, Vienna must be admitted to deserve the popularity it enjoys. But there is another aspect of the question, of course. It would afford an exceedingly instructive comparison if Vienna were placed upon one side, and upon the other were grouped, by way of contrast, the leading medical schools of Germany—Berlin, Leipzig, Munich, Würzburg, Breslau, Heidelberg and others. What the points of contrast would be, I am unable to do more than hint; since the object of the present letter is mainly a description of the School of Berlin.

It is said, with apparent truth, that the physicians of Vienna differ from those of Berlin in devoting themselves much earlier and much more completely to specialties. Hence the charge sometimes made against them, that their development is less broad and general than it should be. We know that Skoda and Oppolzer did not achieve their greatness at the expense of breadth, for both had charge of general clinics, and both were men of truly sagacious minds, free from the objectionable influence which specialism sometimes exerts upon small men. But let these two men, with Rokitsansky, stand for what the Vienna School has been during the last twenty years, and let Virchow, von Graefe and Griesinger stand for Berlin; are we not struck with the fact that the latter trio is composed of great men, in a sense in which the expres-

sion does not apply to their Viennese colleagues?

At the present time, in Vienna, Stricker is a man of purely special research. Billroth is perhaps the broadest, probably the most "practical" man in the School; he, however, is not an Austrian, but was summoned from a German university. Hebra and his followers, Kuhn, Neumann, Sigmund and Zeissl; Meynert; Arlt and Jaeger; Politzer and Gruber; Widerhofer; Benedikt and Fieber; Wedl, Schrötter, and others that might be named, form a brilliant group of men who are almost entirely devoted to specialties. The anatomists, pathologists, chemists and physiologists of Vienna are of equally deserved fame. But, outside of this remarkable array of talent, we find but one or two names of eminence in general medicine; a fact which strikingly coincides with the extraordinary poverty of opportunity for general clinical study, of which the students make earnest and just complaint. Inferences apart, Vienna is the school for specialties.

As a general rule, the value of teaching depends on the character of the teacher much more than on the amount of material at his disposal. There is enough material in Vienna, if judiciously used, to serve for thrice the actual number of students. It is used, or it is wasted, as the case may be; and if wasted, it harms the quality of the teaching more than mere poverty possibly could. If a Virchow had at his disposal fifteen autopsies a day, instead of five, no doubt he would know what to do with them; but upon young men the effect of such an overplus of matter is apt to be seen in superficial and careless habits. As a case in point, let me quote the remarks of a correspondent who has studied ophthalmic surgery in Vienna, and who now writes me from Breslau to the effect that the instruction in his specialty is most excellent: "the material is not very abundant, but what comes is most thoroughly worked up, which I consider much better than the mass of half-digested (?) material one gets at Vienna."

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There is a good deal of justice in the general impression among us at home, which makes Virchow the representative of the Berlin school. Since the death of Graefe, Virchow stands undoubtedly head and shoulders above his colleagues in that city. Add to this the fact that he possesses an admirable gift of teaching, that he is master of an excellent laboratory, and abundant material, and is served by most efficient assistants, and it will not exceed the truth to say that for the study of pathology Berlin is incomparably superior to Vienna. If it be a prominent object with a student to make himself master of pathology, he should by all means visit Berlin before Vienna.

Virchow's lectures are about two hours and a half long; I have no doubt he could lecture six hours equally well, for he never shows a sign of flagging. On Mondays, he takes scalpel in hand and performs an autopsy before the class, making the body before him the text of his discourse; on Wednesdays and Saturdays he describes the specimens that have accumulated from the previous days. His statements are clear and simple, his voice distinct, his manner easy; he is never in a hurry, and never above the comprehension of his hearers. He enjoys a dry joke amazingly; and as he cracks it, with characteristic deliberation, he is apt to bring down the hammer upon the unlucky fingers of some of his hearers. As a teacher he leaves nothing to be desired; he was born to the office.

On Tuesday, Thursday and Friday a systematic course of microscopic pathology, lasting the whole term, is given by one assistant, under the general oversight of the Professor, and normal histology is taught in the afternoon of four days by the other assistant, the course lasting six weeks. Both of these microscopic courses are admirable, and both are fully appreciated by the British and American students. Good instruments are furnished for those of the class who do not own them.

With three hours' work in the forenoon of every day, and two hours in the afternoon of four days in the week, and collateral reading, a student need not blame himself if he finds his time wholly occupied by Virchow's courses, especially if he attends the systematic theoretical lectures which are given by Virchow on four days in the week.

The *Charité*, at which most of the clinical instruction is given, is a large, massive, not unattractive building of four stories, enclosing several ample courts planted with grass and trees. Internally its ar-

rangements are simple, and hardly up to the modern standard, the fault of which lies in the fact of its being an old building. It is as clean, tidy and cheerful as the "Massachusetts General." The number of beds is in the neighborhood of eighteen hundred. The quadrangle known as the New *Charité* contains about three hundred beds, half of which are devoted to insane patients, and the remainder are occupied by the syphilitic and by prisoners and convicts sent thither by the authorities for treatment.

The Clinic for Mental Disease deserves especial mention. Griesinger introduced the "non-restraint" system in the wards under his charge, and it was through his efforts that the government was induced to permit the establishment of one of the first public clinics of the kind in Europe. His successor, Westphal, is a man in the prime of life, of quiet and gentlemanly manners, and a master of that tact which is indispensable in the care of the insane. His speech and intellect are quick and vivacious. As a lecturer, he is very systematic, and economizes, as far as possible, the lecture-time. Without placing him among the great thinkers of the day, I must still rank him among the best of lecturers upon medical subjects. To be sure, the lecture can never be dull; for one or two patients are always brought in and examined in the presence of the class. One must see this done in order to understand how entirely consistent are humor and humanity. Younger students do not attend these demonstrations; in fact, a large number of the hearers are physicians, forming an audience such as one seldom sees equalled for intelligence. They are divided into sections of a dozen or so, which make the morning visit twice a week in company with the professor. I could wish that every physician, and every thinking man, might come in contact with the insane element of our population in the free and natural way in which it is here effected. The wards resemble those of an ordinary hospital, and the degree of restraint exercised is no greater than that required in a children's ward at home. The patients have the liberty of two or three rooms, opening freely into a long, lighted hall or corridor, which is locked at both ends. These locks constitute the only restraint that the patients experience. It would take too long to describe the "non-restraint system." But let it be remarked, in passing, that during the four years of Prof. Westphal's superintendence, the strait-jacket has never been applied to a single one of the hundred and fifty insane, of all classes and

conditions, who fill the wards of the Neue Charité; and that the result of this radical reform has been a wonderful increase in the quietness of the wards. Furious patients can be pacified, in almost all cases; and in an extremity, the cell, or chloroform, or chloral, remain as the most potent known soothers of maniacal frenzy. No patient is kept longer than 24 hours in the cell.

Two lectures a week are given on Mental Disease, and one upon Nervous Disease. The wards for patients of the latter class may contain fifty or sixty beds; the cases are extremely instructive, and are exhibited to the class in the same way as the insane cases.

Worthy to stand in the first rank, and to form an object of leading consideration with the student who is looking towards Germany, is Traube, the acute and indefatigable teacher of clinical medicine, less popular than Frerichs, his superior in rank, but possessing altogether a finer and stronger mind than the latter. It is not necessary to describe him at length, but only to say that his name deserves mention near the name of Virchow, in enumerating the attractions of Berlin.

Anatomy may be studied to advantage. The building devoted to this purpose is large, handsome and commodious. The dissecting rooms contain about forty tables, some for whole subjects, some for portions; they are well-lighted and ventilated, and the supply of material is abundant. From these rooms a trap opens up into the lecture hall, which contains about three hundred seats, and is a model of good arrangement. "The parts are given out every Monday. I was there this morning. There were twenty legs with half of the pelvis, for the crural nerves, fifteen or more arms, with half the thorax for the brachial plexus, a dozen half-heads cut perpendicularly for the brains, &c., six children, as many urinary organs, the bladders blown up, ready for distribution, besides other bodies and parts of bodies." Parts are distributed by lot. "Prof. Reichert passes two hours every morning in the dissecting room, going to half a dozen tables and dissecting and explaining to those around him. He lectures every day between 1 and 2. He has also his private rooms, where one or two anatomists work. Besides his course on general anatomy, he gives one on histology. His assistant, Prof. Hartman, lectures on osteology and syndesmology. The whole arrangement deserves much praise."*

* From a note from Dr. Coolidge, to whom and to Dr. Putnam I desire to express my thanks.

Chemistry is very well taught by Hofmann and others. The laboratory is in the Georgen Strasse.

Materia Medica is also well taught, by Liebreich, the discoverer of the virtues of chloral.

In surgery, we find Langenbeck, Bardeleben and others; but there are several large cities where they speak English, in which surgery is better taught than in Berlin or Vienna.

Skin diseases and syphilis are taught here clinically, but there are other places for their study far better.

The lying-in department of the Charité contains two hundred beds. The subject is not especially well taught.

Tobold has a class in laryngoscopy, which is decidedly poor.

The eye is taught by Schweigger, an able man, and Hirschberg. The ear by Lucae.

In electro-therapeutics, the names of Eulenberg and Hitzig are well known, and their lectures (private) are better worth attending than those in Vienna.

In physiology, the names of Du Bois-Reymond, Rosenthal and Munk, require no comment, except to say that they are clear and excellent lecturers.

In all, one hundred and seventeen courses, great and small, are advertised upon medical subjects, not including zoölogy, botany, mineralogy and chemistry.

Last year there were 2113 matriculated students in Berlin, of whom 454 were studying medicine; 456 were foreigners. Besides these, 519 were in the field with the army. The medical students of Berlin are certainly much more prepossessing, both in appearance and manners, than those of Vienna. Indeed, they are as well-looking and gentlemanly a body of men as is often seen.

It is proper to add, that the cost of living in Berlin, though prices have risen since the war, is still much less than in New York. As an instance, a good furnished room costs from eight to twelve thalers a month.

The winter term commences about November 1st (nominally in the middle of October), and lasts till Easter. The summer term lasts till the middle or end of July. Few persons would willingly remain during the month of August.

LOWENSTEIN (*Centralblatt*, 35, Sept. 2d, 1871) shows that the mucous membrane of the vagina is not destitute of lymph-follicles, as is generally asserted in anatomical text-books.—*British Med. Journal*.