



THE FOLK HIGH-SCHOOLS OF DENMARK AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF A FARMING COMMUNITY

HOLGER BEGRUP
FREDERIKSBORG FOLK HIGH-SCHOOL

BY

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RODDING FOLK HIGH-SCHOOL

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INTERNATIONAL PEOPLE'S COLLEGE
HLSINGØR (ELSINØRE)

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
SIR MICHAEL SADLER
MASTER OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, OXFORD

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SECOND EDITION

Two years have passed since the first edition was published. The intermediate period has made some alterations necessary and a few more illustrations have been added.

INTRODUCTION

The farmers of Denmark have won the admiration of the world by their alert courage in quickly adapting themselves to changes in economic opportunity and by the intellectual and moral power which they have shown in their successful achievement of many-sided co-operation. All who have visited the country know that among its agricultural population certain qualities of mind and character which have peculiar value under modern conditions are »in widest commonalty spread«. And yet it is not long since the qualities were developed. Almost within the memory of men still living, the Danish farmer had an outlook and a habit of mind very different from those which characterise him to-day. In the early years of the nineteenth century the Danish peasant was still unprogressive; sullen and suspicious; averse from experiment; incapable of associated enterprise. To-day he is forward-looking, cheerful, scientifically minded, resourceful, co-operative. To what causes is due the remarkable change in the tone and temper of a large rural population?

The book which Mr. Begtrup, Mr. Lund and Mr. Man-
niche have written gives the answer to this question. The secret is open. Character, as Goethe said, makes charac-
ter. A group of greathearted patriots moved their fellow countrymen by their teaching and by their example. Their teaching was not occasional but systematic: and their

precepts were distilled in corporate life. Danish experience confirms the truth of the epigram: »Educational bands make the strongest ties.«

The man whose personality imprinted itself first on a small body of disciples and ultimately upon the peasantry of Denmark, was N. S. F. Grundtvig (1783—1872) pastor, poet, historian and educational reformer. What Arnold of Rugby did for England, Grundtvig in another sphere of education did for Denmark. Mr. J. S. Thornton, the veteran schoolmaster, who has done more than anyone to make England realise Denmark's message in social reform, wrote some years ago short but moving descriptions of Grundtvig's life-work.*) Grundtvig, like Thomas Arnold, was a Christian Radical. Both won unpopularity in some circles, enthusiastic devotion in others. Arnold narrowly escaped dismissal from the headmastership of Rugby through his outspokenness. The outspoken Grundtvig had, in a material sense, the more chequered career. His travels as a poor scholar, helped by a travelling stipend from the king of Denmark, brought him to the British Museum. We English may be proud to think that what he saw in England deepened his belief in liberty and in the power of wise, inspiring education to enhance the manliness of the people. »It is my highest wish as a citizen«, he wrote, »that soon there may be opened a Danish High School accessible to young people all over the land where they may become better acquainted with themselves in particular, and where they will receive guidance in all civic duties and relationships, getting to know their

*) in Special Reports on Educational Subjects (Board of Education) 1897 vol. 1 pp. 593 ff; also 1907 vol. 17 pp. 105—129 and in Continuation Schools in England and Elsewhere

*) Manchester University Press) 1907 pp. 487 ff.

country's real needs. Their love of their country shall be nourished by the mother tongue, their nation's history, and by Danish song. Such schools will be a well of healing for our people.«

A little sentimental perhaps to our ears, but sincere and, as events proved, in the highest degree practical. The People's High Schools founded by Grundtvig and his disciples (chief among them Christen Kold 1816—1870) gave the essence of a liberal education to farmers' sons and daughters. The humanities, which was all that the schools taught, did not breed ineffectuals. Between 1860 and 1880 they worked a miracle of culture in the Danish country side. The town folk were, as a whole, impervious. But the peasantry was transformed.

In the seventies and early eighties of the last century, Danish agriculture was hard hit by foreign competition in the grain markets of Europe. Wheat fell in value and at that time the chief product of Danish farms was corn. The Danish peasantry turned for a remedy to technical improvements, not to protection. It changed over from the export of wheat to butter and bacon. It proved itself mobile, intelligent, heartily co-operative. And it is universally admitted that the agricultural population could not, but for the work of the People's High Schools, have shown adaptability so great, open-mindedness so intelligent. Grundtvig's policy had found the issue he predicted. Co-operative life in an atmosphere of liberal education had given practical culture. The new leaders of the peasantry, the organisers of the new and effective co-operation, were for the most part High School men. »The co-operative dairies« wrote Mr. Alfred Poulsen of Ryslinge, who read a memorable lecture at the Oxford Summer Meeting in August 1894, »rose like magic.« Butter and bacon saved

Danish agriculture. Behind the new and swift reorganisation of one of the most conservative and individualistic of industries were brains, leadership and unselfish public spirit. The People's High Schools inspired their pupils with energy and idealised labour. »We clenched our fists as we listened to the lectures and yearned to go out and set to work.« In the schools the young men learnt to trust one another. In co-operative enterprise they translated that trust into terms of associated credit. The schools gave them a wide outlook, opening in the pupils' minds new windows through which they looked out on the world. With this effective culture, and with the faith which went with it, the young men and young women saved Danish farming. »The schools awakened in them a yearning for knowledge and a desire to work.«

University College.
Oxford, June 1926.

M. E. SADLER.

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CHAPTER I.

The Rise of the Danish Peasantry.

In one of the most famous Danish comedies, »Jeppe paa Bjerget«, which was written in 1722, the author, Ludvig Holberg, portrays the transformation of a drunken Sealand peasant into a country squire. One of the characters, a squire named Baron Nilus, finds the peasant drunk on a dung hill, and his servants devise a plan to bring the helpless fellow to the manor and lead him to believe that he is the baron. The plan succeeds, and the peasant uses his power coarsely and foolishly until, again helplessly drunk, he is taken back to the dung hill. The comedy ends with a declamation by the baron of the moral of the piece:

Of this adventure, children, the moral is quite clear:
To elevate the lowly above their proper sphere
Involves no less a peril than rashly tumbling down
The great who rise to power by deeds of just renown.
Permit the base-born yokel untutored sway to urge,
The sceptre of dominion as soon becomes a scourge.

— — —
Nay, never shall we tremble beneath a boor's dictates
Or set a plowman over us, as oft in ancient states —

Shortly after the farmers, in 1901, had formed a liberal ministry in Denmark, and farmers for the first time had secured places in the cabinet, »Jeppe paa Bjerget« was performed at the Royal Theatre. When the moral was declaimed, there was enthusiastic applause from the Copenhagen audience: it was intended that the new peasant ministers should understand that the conservative bourgeoisie had the great author, Ludvig Holberg, on their side in opposition to the rule of the peasants.

In consequence of this event, one of the leading liberal papers wrote an article which attempted to show how inapplicable the moral of the play was to the current situation. It wrote, »Since Baron Nilus played his joke on Jeppe, a remarkable change has taken place both in Jeppe and in the baron. Jeppe has stopped his drinking habits and begun to think over matters; he has applied himself to the development of his powers, and taught himself a number of useful things. One day, when Baron Nilus was in his best years, Jeppe was freed from serfdom, and then the affairs of the peasant rapidly improved. He has united with his fellow peasants, and cultivated his soil until it has far surpassed that of the baron. He has taken the lead in parish affairs, and has learnt to interpret and administer the law. His naturally good brain has constantly improved, and when Jeppe's friends saw what he could do, they put the baron out of parliament and bade the peasant step in. His knowledge of parish matters led on to a comprehension of state affairs, and when he reached the stage when he understood them better than did the majority of men, and just as well as did the rest, he entered the cabinet chamber and said politely, "I beg your pardon, baron, this place is mine and you must go."

The affairs of Baron Nilus, on the other hand, had

gone very badly. What remained of his old refinement, his culture, and his interests? Nothing! In his old age he had grown as stupid as an ass, as ignorant as an ox, and as coarse as his bailiff; and when one day they made him a cabinet minister, there was no end to the foolish things he did. All the country laughed at his folly, and Jeppe laughed the loudest.

If Holberg, therefore, were in a position to rewrite the comedy, he would have to present a greatly different picture. He would have to reveal the stupid caste-proud baron Nilus, whom Jeppe the peasant so wonderfully excelled. There would be no end to the tricks which Jeppe's inventive mind could devise in order to show the audience how vainly and ineffectively Nilus acted when by chance he gained power. — — — It would be a magnificent and edifying comedy, and all the people would cheer when Jeppe appeared and declaimed the moral:

Of this adventure, children, the moral is quite clear:
 The lofty without glory our lots on earth can steer.
 The risk to folk and country one hardly need relate
 If we choose men as rulers because of their estate.

— — —

Then at the plough with safety our leaders great we'll find,
 And leave our friend the baron in folly dazed behind.

These remarks contain a condensed account of much that is peculiar to Danish development during the last eighty years. Denmark, at the beginning of this period, had a peasantry which, in its cowed state, was in no respect different from the peasantry of other countries. Yet, in the last generation, these same peasants have become

have attended the schools: in 1920—21, out of 7006 students, they numbered 348; and the inhabitants of the towns form 43 per cent of the total population. The students from the country come from the homes of farmers, artisans, tradesmen, teachers, and clergymen; in 1920—21, the number of farmers' sons and daughters at the schools was 4989, whilst those from other homes in the country made a total of 1665. The latter class, however, have come to the schools especially during recent years. The Danish high-schools, then, have worked mainly among the farming population, and their history is so interwoven with the history of the farming classes that, if their work is to be understood, it is necessary to know something about the conditions under which this section of the Danish people live.

2.

At the close of the eighteenth century, Danish landed proprietors, influenced by the Physiocrats, had carried through some very radical land reform legislation; and this had led to conditions which had prevailed for centuries previously. During the first half of the nineteenth century these laws were completely established. The old system of communal tillage was discarded; the farmer, who formerly was a tenant of the manor, became a freeholder; villeinage was abolished, and the personal dependence of the peasant on the squire ceased. These reforms were of vital importance to the social development of Denmark. What was perhaps most important was that, with the allotment of the land, the area of the manors was not extended, but all the soil which formerly had been cultivated by the village peasants in common, now came into their personal possession. Through this Den-

mark escaped the danger of getting a numerous and powerful class of landed proprietors on the one side, and a poor country proletariat on the other; and through this the distribution of Danish soil such as obtains to-day was determined.

When the word »democratic« is used in reference to the distribution of property within Danish agriculture, it is intended to emphasize the similarity between the sizes of the allotments. An idea of this similarity can readily be formed from a perusal of the following figures relating to freeholdings in Denmark from 1800 to the present year.

Freeholdings With land	Years				
	1800	1850	1885	1905	1916
above 10 ha*)	1,800	1,878	2,041	2,093	1,963
from 12—100 ha	53,000	67,800	73,000	74,600	76,000
Under 12 ha	20,000	60,000	80,000	90,000	106,000
	Total area of land in 1916				
above 100 ha	357,000 ha				
from 12—100 ha	2,069,000 »				
Under 12 ha	816,000 »				

During the nineteenth century the number of freeholdings in Denmark doubled: in the year 1800 they totalled about 91,000, and in 1916 the figure was something like 184,000. That means that over 90% of the total holdings in Denmark are freeholdings. This notable change has taken place both through an increase of the medium-sized farms, »Gaardene«, the owners of which are called »Gaardmænd« (farm men) and through the advent of a

*) One ha (hectare) = about 2½ acres.

number of smallholders known as »Husmænd« (house men) who, in past centuries, were without any importance in Danish agriculture.

The rapid growth of the number of small holdings in Denmark has been made possible partly by a large reclamation of heath, moor etc*) and partly by the fact that individual holdings have been reduced in size. This development happened whilst liberalism was the dominating economic policy in Denmark, and, generally speaking, it may be said to have taken place with the State as a passive spectator. During recent years, however, the establishment of about 10,000 small holdings has been due to State legislation; and an old law dating back to the time of absolute monarchy has afforded protection to the farms in their competition with the large holdings, and has prevented an indiscriminate division into small holdings.

The daily practice and routine of Danish holdings differ according to the size of the property. On the large estates the owner has no direct contact with the actual manual and technical work; he is so much in the background that even these duties are taken over by a manager. On these estates a relatively insignificant number of agricultural labourers find employment. On the average medium-sized farms, the owner, the »Gaardmand«, joins with his helpers in the work of the field and stables. His fellow workers are either his own sons and daughters or the children of other farmers. These assistants work with the conviction that, in due course, they also will become

*) Since 1864 an area larger than that covered by the island, Sealand, has been put under the plough. From this it may be inferred that Denmark now uses for agriculture soil which is inferior to that ordinarily cultivated in England and other countries.

independent land holders. On these farms the rising generation of farmers get their practical experience. The young people board and lodge on the farms, and this, in most cases, means that the employer's home is also their home, where they eat, work, and spend their leisure with the family.

Referring to this Professor W. J. Ashley writes (Agricultural Tribunal of Investigation. Final Report 1924 S. 267): »Danish statistics interpreted with English prepossessions are apt to be misleading. For instance, it has been said that the proportion of labourers to farmers working on their own account does not differ as much as might be expected from the proportion in this country. Thus in 1901, while, in England and Wales, farmers numbered some 224,00 and »others engaged in agriculture« some 764,000, the proportion being about 23 : 77; in Denmark the respective numbers were 152,000 and 358,000, and the proportions 30 : 70. But, in fact, a very large number of these labourers are »Husmænd's« and »Gaardmænd's« sons, who not long after they have been confirmed, at the age of 14 or thereabouts, go to work for a few years on another farm and live with the farmer's family. They may work for a time on two or three farms in orders to get experience, but it is almost always their hope to succeed to their father's holding or to get a farm of their own, and this hope has largely been realised. . . . It is said on high authority, if a farmer with a place of the very common size of 50 to 60 acres, should happen to have 3 or 4 sons, he needs only 2 of them to help him, and the other one or two will stay away. The wife will do, perhaps, but little continuous or hard farmwork, but she will lend a hand with the harvest. And the assistance of the children begins at an early age.«

The small holdings, owned by »Husmænd«, fall into two groups: the larger contains about 70,000, each being worked by the owner and his family, and being their entire means of support; the smaller contains less than 40,000, each being insufficient to meet the needs of a family and making it necessary for the man either to take other work of a similar kind with strangers, or to procure an extra income as an artisan or in some other way.

In speaking of the history of the Danish peasantry, the people alluded to are, in general, the »Gaardmænd« and the independent »Husmænd«. To them, first and foremost, the distinctive character of Danish rural life is due; and it is especially from their homes that the students of the high-schools have been recruited.

In the development of Danish life these conditions of land ownership have been of very great importance. Where social gulfs are wide, class feeling and class distinction have an easy growth; but where, as in Denmark, the core of the social life is found in the work of many small and medium-sized independent farmers, and where, furthermore, the division between group and group is such that it is often difficult to distinguish between a small »Gaardmand« and a »Husmand«, and between a large »Gaardmand« and a small landed proprietor, there is no place for caste feeling and class struggle; and even if men, who borrow their words from countries with deep class divisions, have attempted to create rifts, the sense of fellowship and the recognition of common interests are still the strongest bonds that unite Danish farmers. »Gaardmænd« and »Husmænd« come from the same stock, and this is a fact of great importance. The children and grand children of the »Gaardmænd« constitute a large proportion of the »Husmænd«.

The freedom from internal social conflicts enjoyed by the Danish country population has meant that intellectual and spiritual pursuits have not been the privilege of particular groups but the common treasure of all. Further, the strong spiritual currents from church and people, that have swept over the country population during the recent generations, have done much to establish the plain, democratic character of the men and women, and to check influences tending to divisions.

The Nestor of Danish political economy, Professor Harald Westergaard, in a recent book on Denmark »Economic Developments in Denmark«. (In English, Oxford 1922) emphasizes that in Denmark, as in other countries, the gulf between nobility and commoners has been succeeded by the distinction between rich and poor. But he adds, »It has been Denmark's good fortune that various circumstances have prevented this distinction from becoming very wide«. If this be true of the people as a whole, it is especially true of the country population; and Denmark's »good fortune« is due to the »democratic« distribution of property, and to the spiritual movements among Danish peasants that have created a fellowship in the quest for the joys and values of human life which, irrespective of class and profession, family and income, unite all.

3.

The political ideas of the liberals did not begin to exercise any influence in Denmark until after 1830. Young university men and citizens were won over by the new ideas, and when the absolute monarchy ended in 1849, it was they who made the new constitution. This was based on a general suffrage — even in respect of the Upper

House, and was, in its time, one of the most democratic constitutions in Europe. The same social class that created this constitution, during the following years took the lead in Danish politics. National politics were marked by important laws which were decidedly liberal in character. Foreign politics, however, were hampered by great difficulties respecting the relationship to Slesvig and Holstein. The government was unable to cope with these difficulties, and Denmark was consequently driven into the war with Prussia and Austria in 1864. In the unequal fight Denmark had to surrender; and by the peace terms formulated at Vienna, Denmark was compelled to cede to the victors not only the German parts of the two duchies, but also Danish North Slesvig. This defeat has been a very great influence in the development of Danish life, even to the present day. The lessons derived from the defeat led to the sweeping away of many old doctrines and beliefs; and the national grief gave birth to much of the new life which since has grown in the Danish people. During these years Danish folk high-schools were established in large numbers.

In political life the defeat caused an important change. The power of the former leading class was broken, and a new class claimed the leadership. The Danish peasants, before 1848, had not played any part in the liberal movement; but under the free constitution their influence began to be felt. Their claims were dominated by merely economic and materialistic considerations, and the first peasant movement was, on the whole, based on class struggle. It made such rapid progress, especially in Sealand, that the old liberals took fright and began to recede from their position in regard to general suffrage.

When, after the defeat of 1864, certain changes in the

constitution were made necessary by the new boundary, the national liberals used the opportunity to overthrow the power wielded by general and equal suffrage in the Upper House and carried through a revision of the constitution which gave the majority of the seats in the Upper House to the wealthy citizens and the landed aristocracy. This caused a great fight which continued until 1901; and the issues were, indeed, not finally settled before 1915, when equal voting rights were again established in the Danish constitution.

In this struggle it was the peasants who became the backbone of the army of democracy; it was not »Bondevennerne« (The Friends of the Peasants) as the adherents of the old class politics were called. As early as the fifties there was formed a group of peasants, clergymen and teachers who were influenced by Grundtvig. They cooperated with Bondevennerne in social affairs, but were more insistent in their adherence to the principle of equal suffrage. From 1864 it was more and more they who took the leadership of the opposition; and when, in 1870, the various sections of the opposition united and formed a large Left party, it was the Grundtvigian section that influenced and guided it. This means that during these years, beside the questions relating to general suffrage, church and school matters occupied a central position in the interests of the opposition.

This struggle for the general suffrage which, in the seventies, became a fight for a parliamentary system after the English model, was, at rock bottom, a struggle between the old classes composed of the landlords and the middle class of the towns, and the new class — the peasants. The desire for the establishment of general suffrage was not the result of abstract theories respecting the people's

rights and so forth; it sprang from a living faith in the forces that were at work in the classes to which general suffrage gave power. There was a strong confidence in the capacity of the Danish peasant.

Shortly after the events of 1864, the leading weekly organ of the left party, the »Venstre«, expressed this view: »The classes of society which have had the power up to this time have not been equal to their tasks. They bear the responsibility of the defeat of 1864; and at the head of the government there is now a new king who is of another house,*) and foreign to the people. In the midst of this darkness there is only one gleam of light, and that is that there is still a large part of the people, the whole peasant class, whose power has not yet been tested and still remains unspent.« The paper adds several items of evidence which show how this class, which for centuries had not counted much in the life of the people, was now awakened to a consciousness and understanding of its duties, and mentions as an example the fact that many high-schools were being formed, and that the bulk of their students were being drawn from this new class.

One of the most beautiful expressions of this faith in the peasants came from one of the leaders of the Venstre, when referring to the centenary of Grundtvig's birth. Alluding to the peasantry he quoted the two lines from Grundtvig's song about the common soldier:

O, what high souls
Here in lowliness dwell!

A poet who was closely associated with Grundtvig and the »Venstre«, in a poem relating to these years, lamented

*) The house of Glücksborg had, in 1863, succeeded the house of Oldenburg on the Danish throne.

that »our mother's house« had fallen into decay, and declared the great duty to be the raising of its sunken walls. He urged the peasant to undertake that work of reconstruction.

Forward to help in the hour of need
 With the treasure you have in store.
 With the peoples' slumbering strength and wits.
 On! peasant, on!

Nowhere was this faith more vital than in the circle of Grundtvig and his friends within and outside the peasant class. Indeed, it was hinted that they had »fallen in love with the peasants«.

The faith in the peasants found a beautiful literary expression in the peasant stories of Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, the Norwegian poet who for many years was deeply influenced by Grundtvig and always in close contact with Denmark. In the history of the high-schools there is an indication of this faith in the account of how fine young university men during these years forsook official careers, and, in difficult circumstances and humble surroundings, engaged in school-work among the peasant youth.

Such a faith is not to be explained on merely »rational« grounds; but it is clear that at this time there were certain features of the life of the peasantry which inspired faith. That it was the peasants who used the new schools, and by their help created a new people's culture, has already been stated; and the peasants' skill in economic matters and in the forming of cooperative organisations will be related in a later chapter. Throughout the peasantry during these years there was a remarkable fullness of life. No class understood so well how to create its leaders and call forth ideal representatives of its character and will.

»As the time from 1830 to 1870 is marked by a line of leaders from the university world, by the cream of the learned sons of the citizens, the time after 1870 is known not least by the line of peasant chiefs, which occupies a prominent place in the portrait gallery of the period.«

All this naturally gave the peasants self-confidence and wholesome self-assertion. They possessed faith in the future and courage to set to work, whilst in the other classes doubt and barren dejection had taken root.

In a remarkable manner the peasants, in the twenty years following 1864, with the outside support of Grundtvig and his friends, were the one and only class to bear the standard of democracy forward. It must not be supposed that peasants over the whole country were with the movement from its beginning, but the political awakening spread from district to district, frequently following the traces of the popular awakening. The towns, on the other hand, rigidly guarded their doors against the movement. A few instances will show how sharply the towns were separated politically from the country. In an East Jutland constituency, Horsens, which consists of the town of Horsens, a number of villages, and the island Endelave, Jessen, the former national liberal minister, at an election in 1866, gained 1394 votes, of which 1284 came from the town, 86 from the island, and 42 from the country; whilst his opponent Jens Jørgensen, a Grundtvigian peasant of the Left, received 1345, of which 1342 were from the country, and 3 from the town of Horsens. At the next election Jens Jørgensen was the victor with 1391 votes, all of which came from the country; the three votes from Horsens in the intervening period had disappeared. In another East Jutland constituency, Aarhus, the national liberal at the election of 1866 captured 1100 votes, of

which 32 were from the country; the Left candidate got 806, of which 20 were from the town. In the capital, Copenhagen, which in the seventies was a town of about 200,000 inhabitants, the candidate put up by the Left opposition at the election of 1872, gained 478 votes, in 1873 he won 340, in 1876: 1195, in 1879: 761, and in 1881: 1295.

The breaking of this united front against the Left first began in the eighties: this was caused in part by the rising socialist labour movement, and partly by a new liberal movement which, influenced by the new views advanced by the critic Georg Brandes, aimed at bringing into force the radical-liberal doctrines which were general in Europe.

When democracy, bearing the seal of the peasantry, won its way forward from election to election and soon had a considerable majority of representatives in the Lower House, the opponents of the parliamentary system, in their unreasoned illwill towards the new ideas, infringed the Constitution when handling finance by adopting Supply which was not voted by Parliament. The opponents of the parliamentary system known in History as the Estrup Ministry, did what Charles I had done in England 200 years ago with regard to ship money — they incurred expenditure year after year to which the Lower House was bitterly opposed. This happened first in 1877, and later in 1885—94. An attempt was made to cover up this violation of constitutional law with some doubtful interpretations of a few paragraphs from the Constitution; but the majority of people felt that a gross violation had occurred, and this feeling in certain circles of the peaceful peasant population created revolutionary possibilities. The outcome of it was that the majority held by the democrats was further secured during these years. The ministry which was responsible for the unconstitutional

management of finance retained power for 19 years, and it was not before 1894 that it was compelled to withdraw. But the Court and the circles it supported were not yet prepared to hand over power until several conservative ministries had failed, and the conservative party in Parliament had been reduced to an inconsiderable group. The formation of the Left ministry in 1901 not only meant a change of political parties, but was also evidence of an important social change: it was not only the trusted representatives of the peasants who now directed state affairs but peasants themselves. Among the members of the first Left ministry were a Sealand peasant and a West Jutland village school teacher.

During these years of constitutional struggle the high-schools exercised an important political influence. The schools did not take any part in the political agitation of the day; indeed, most of them refrained from mentioning the prevailing strife; but the teaching of history they gave was characterized by a faith in the strength and powers of the common man, and by the stress that was laid on the importance of freedom in a people. In large numbers the pupils of the high-schools became the Left's leaders in the districts and in the Parliament.*) An attempt was then made by members of the conservative government to reduce or withdraw the financial grants which the schools received from the State, the intention being, of course, to make the work of the schools difficult. The attempt was not very successful, and was soon given up.

Danish political life took a new turn in 1901. During the generation of constitutional struggle practically all

*) In 1903 about 35 percent of the members of Parliament were old high-school pupils

legislation had been stopped. Interest had been divided between the struggle itself and the dominating economic conceptions of liberalism. During the sixties about 50 new laws were made yearly,**) but in the eighties the yearly number was reduced to as few as three. The industrialisation of the Danish people began in the sixties, and this created new social problems; but apart from individual new beginnings in the nineties, the problems received no attention from the legislature. The new circumstances demanded attention, and for this reason there occurred in Danish political life a new orientation on social lines. The social democrats increased their number rapidly, and in 1924 they became the largest party in the country and took the reins of government. The large Left Party, which had been formed to deal with problems of another kind, had experienced serious internal conflicts when facing the new demands; and these conflicts had resulted in a division between a larger group which adopted a moderate liberal attitude, and a smaller group whose direction inclined to radicalism. In both parties the country population now forms the centre of gravity; farm owners and small-holders are found in both; but the farmers are more likely to be found among the moderates, whilst the small-holders are more equally distributed among the two parties.

Whilst during the constitutional struggle it could be said that the high-schools had an especial connection with one particular party, this could not be said of the position to-day. When the high-schools are attacked, on one occasion they are told that they are too closely related to the moderate party, and on another that they exercise an in-

*) The highest number, 66, was reached in 1866.

fluence favouring the radicals. Most of the former high-school pupils are to be found in the two Left parties, but there are also many among the social democrats.*)

The most important social difficulties of the present day have their roots in the towns, and are associated with the so-called »Byerhverv« (town-trades). Because of their remoteness from town conditions the country people often find it difficult to understand the problems confronting the town workers. That there frequently is, however, a living social interest among the rural population, is clear. The strongest evidence of this is the following won among them by the ideas of Henry George. In Germany, England and other countries the single-tax movement is a town movement; but in Denmark it is a movement of the farmers. Denmark's chief exponent of these ideas, S. Berthelsen, in a treatise emphasizes this point. He writes: »The cause of the Danish countryman's comparatively rapid acceptance of the principles of the Henry George reforms must in the first place be sought in the considerable influence and liberal-mindedness of our Grundtvig high-schools. The deep and strong idea of justice on which the doctrine of the land-tax is built, found ... — — — ... ready understanding and acceptance among the most alert section of the Danish high-school world.«

*) Among the leaders of the late social-democratic ministry were three former high-school pupils; and two of the four social-democratic mayors of Copenhagen are from the schools.

The Rise of the Danish Peasantry II.

CHAPTER II.

The Danish peasantry at the beginning of the nineteenth century was an underclass. In sullen resignation it spent its life in dependence on estate owners and government officials. It was without culture and technical skill, and was seldom able to rise above the level of a bare existence. The great agricultural reforms were carried through without the support of the peasants, who did not even understand the meaning of them. The »Great Committee for Agricultural Reform«, in its preparatory work, had no use for a single representative of the peasant class. All the reforms were made *for the sake of the peasant*, but not *by* him. In the course of a century this underclass has been changed into a well-to-do middle class which, politically and socially, now takes the lead among the Danish people.

In tracing the economic history of this development, it is found that during the first decades the peasant was free, he had no qualifications enabling him to utilize the great possibilities opened up by the reforms. The leadership of the practical work did not rest with him, but was in the hands of the large estate owners and interested people outside the farming classes. Among the latter, the clergy, influenced by utilitarianism, played an important part.

It was, however, on the manors that practical progress was made: the draining of land was introduced, the swing-plough and the scarifier were employed, experiments with new forms of cultivation and new field plants were made, and methods to improve the breeds of cattle were adopted. The peasants were very slow in making use of the results of the new experiments.

It was also among the big landowners that an interest in agricultural theory was found. The most important agricultural journal was edited by two manufacturers and a merchant, and the chief contributors were clergymen, estate owners, tradesmen, and factory owners. Officials and people from industry and commerce, together with the larger estate owners, were behind the formation of the first agricultural societies. The most thorough guides in practical agriculture before 1850 were written by clergymen; and the series of publications which appeared in the thirties and forties describing farming in various districts of Denmark came from the pens of men belonging to the same circles.

Much of this work was philanthropic in character, being done by people outside the peasant class for the sake of the peasant. This philanthropy continued until about 1849, when the free constitution was carried through. The first tendencies to independence among the peasants were noticed in the shape of a class movement having for its purpose the enabling of tenants to become freeholders. At the same time there was economic progress among the peasants which set free some of the strength which hitherto had been completely absorbed in the struggle for daily bread. The men who did not belong to the farming class began to retire from the agricultural societies, of which, from the fifties, the peasants not only became

members, but also began to be represented among the leaders. A growing feeling of independence and an increasing confidence in their own powers characterised the peasantry during the first years of the free Constitution. This was most noticeable after the defeat of 1864. Several instances, taken from the records of the societies, illustrate the new spirit of the peasantry, which, however, is discussed further in our chapter on the political development. The number of agricultural societies which were led by estate owners reached twenty in the forties, which means that there was one in each district. From 1850 to 1864 twenty new ones were established; and after 1864, especially during the first years, a great many more were formed. In 1900 there was a total of 101, and more and more these became the peasants' own associations. There was a similar development with a branch of the farmers' associations.

Soon after 1800 a number of philanthropically minded men — outside the peasant class — formed the »Sparekasse«, a savings-bank for the support of agriculture. In 1850 there were 37 Sparekasser, in 1865 there were 76, and in 1886 there were as many as 496. So rapid was the growth of banks that often parishes got their own banks. The direction of these banks almost everywhere came into the hands of the peasants. Danish economists explain this by referring to the economic progress of the peasantry, and also to the peasants' increasing pride in themselves.

But just as this movement towards independence was in full swing, the Danish peasant class was thrown into a very severe economic crisis. The crisis and its causes were common to several European countries. In the early seventies the countries round the Black Sea and the Bal-

tic deposited their increasing corn stocks in the West-European market. The result of this was significant; but yet more so was the fact that, a few years later, the enormous corn production of countries overseas — especially of North America and the Argentine — filled the European market, and forced the price of corn below that of the marginal corn production of the old European countries.

Denmark was injured more than any other country, for its agriculture was concerned essentially with corn production. Corn was the most important article of export; in 1865—70 the average annual export of corn was valued at 36½ million kroner, whereas the export of cattle products amounted only to about 25 million kroner. Of the cattle products a good half consisted of live-stock, the rest being meat and butter. Prices fell from year to year. Some figures will show the position:

Year	Wheat per tønne	Rye per tønne	Barley per tønne
1851—55	19,00 Kr.	14,60 Kr.	9,90 Kr.
1871—75	20,10 »	14,30 »	12,50 »
1876—86	17,90 »	13,20 »	11,90 »
1881—85	14,80 »	11,30 »	10,60 »
1886—90	12,60 »	9,90 »	9,60 »

Year	Oats per tønne	Butter per tønne	Bacon per pound
1851—55	6,50 Kr.	0,50 Kr.	0,34 Kr.
1871—75	8,20 »	0,85 »	0,50 »
1876—86	7,90 »	0,85 »	0,53 »
1881—85	7,50 »	0,90 »	0,55 »
1886—90	6,90 »	0,89 »	0,47 »

Danish »Tønne«, (barrel) is about 4 bushels.

Whilst in several neighbouring countries new tariffs were erected to protect the hard pressed agriculture, such measures were not adopted by Denmark. The peasants understood the meaning of the falling prices and altered their methods. They decided that corn should no longer be used for export; instead, it should be used as fodder at home; it should be converted into butter and bacon. They saw quite clearly that the breeding of cattle and swine should be extended, and dairying started, the field crops adapted accordingly. With unique ability and alacrity the Danish peasantry obeyed the demands of the new circumstances. The exportation of corn ceased, and cheap foreign corn was imported. Butter and bacon became Denmark's chief export articles. The following figures illustrate the change:

Year	Live cattle 1000 head	Beef mill. kilog.	Butter mill. kilog.	Live Swine 1000 head	Bacon mill. kilog.
1866—70	52,2	11,0	4,9	44,6	5,0
1871—75	67,0	15,0	10,6	105,6	7,0
1876—81	98,7	22,0	13,5	212,7	4,7
1881—85	108,8	27,0	15,3	278,1	7,9
1886—90	110,8	27,0	30,7	135,1	23,0
1891—95	105,9	31,0	51,6	135,7	41,3
1896—1900	57,4	23,0	57,4	0,07	64,9

To this day Danish agriculture is based on the foundations laid as a result of the total change of methods in the eighties. The agricultural export in 1922 was:

Horses	16,9	million kroner
Cattle	28,2	» »
Bacon	331,2	» »
Beef	29,0	» »
Butter	388,0	» »
Eggs	115,4	» »

Had the Danish peasantry, with stubborn conservatism, held to the old methods, it would have meant economic ruin for themselves and for the country; that is, of course, if the State had not intervened. The peasant, however, helped himself. He adapted his methods to the new circumstances. In the numerous co-operative organisations*) which then came into being he created a firm support for the new system. He was open to new ideas, and willing to apply them. The mobility, the capacity, and the culture that such a radical change calls for, when it is to be made by voluntary effort, the Danish peasantry then possessed; and this fact is certainly due to the influence of the Danish folk high-schools.

One of the writers who have dealt with this question says »The promptitude and precision of this change is evidently due, in large measure, to the work of the folk high-schools. The schools enabled a sufficient number of young, liberal-minded men to grasp the importance of the new course of events, and, after a short period of training, to take up responsible position as leaders of the new co-operative organisations.«

During the years of the agricultural crisis the question of the influence of high-schools on young farmers was thoroughly discussed. Some people thought that these schools, by teaching the youth myths and legends, history and literature, distracted attention from practical life and its claims and tended to create a generation of ineffectual dreamers. This criticism was mostly heard in conservative circles, where there was much anxiety regarding the move of the peasants towards independence. Among those who effectively refuted this criticism were two men

*) The growth of these organisations is discussed in another chapter.

who, without doubt, belonged to the most distinguished leaders of Danish agriculture. Both of them, not only as managers of their own large farms, but also leaders of the training of young farmers under the auspices of the Royal Danish Agricultural Society, possessed an extensive knowledge of Danish youth. One of them, Inspector Buus, drew a comparison between the standard of adult education in 1883 and that obtained twenty years earlier. He said, »The pupils who now apply for admission to our school of farming stand, in respect of both knowledge and spiritual development, on quite another level than did past pupils. During the last seventeen years I have examined from 110 to 130 diaries written by our pupils; therefore the opinion I have formed as to the development of the pupils is much more than a mere impression. If I compare the diaries of the first five years with those of the last five, I might easily be led to suppose that many of the present pupils came from quite another social class than did the majority of those who were here during the first years.« Then he mentioned certain forms of school work that might have contributed to this result, and continued, »I believe that this development, however, is chiefly due to the activity of the folk high-schools. The positive knowledge they give the students during one or two courses of five months is, perhaps, not extensive or of fundamental value. Yet I know how quickly an energetic and gifted person from eighteen to twenty years of age, with a desire for learning, can make good the difference between elementary and secondary education. What is most important, however, is not the amount of knowledge the students acquire, but the fact that the young people get mentally and emotionally roused. They may forget a deal of the instruction; but they leave the schools different people, having learned to hear, to see,

to think, and to use their powers. I am a friend of the folk high-schools, and I do not believe that one can occupy himself to a considerable extent with the youth of the country without becoming a friend of these schools: one is bound to become aware of the fact that they greatly help in making the youth receptive of instruction, and fit for true advancement in life.«

A prominent estate owner, Mr. Tesdorf, in referring to this statement, declared that he had had pupils since 1852, and that the number of those who had attended the high-schools was steadily increasing. This he regarded as extremely satisfactory, for it clearly proved to him that the stay at the high-schools had an extremely good influence. He always advised those who were leaving his service, if they had not previously attended a folk high-school, to do so for a shorter or longer period according to circumstances.

What was true of the period of the agricultural crisis has been true up to the present day. The old students of the folk high-schools have led the way on the technical side of agriculture;*) they have controlled the numerous organisations which have promoted improved farming. They have controlled not only the agricultural and co-operative societies but also the associations of small holders which sprang up in large numbers at the close of the eighteenth and the beginning of the new century. They have been the men who, in the work of local government in the rural districts, have led and controlled. It is not possible, of course, to give a detailed account of all this; but all who, in the light of personal experience, have formed a judgement on the matter, agree with this view.

*) This leadership has, to a great extent, passed from the large estates to the medium sized farms.

In considering the technical progress of agriculture, it must be noted that, after 1864, agricultural schools were founded for the purpose of providing the young peasants with instruction in agricultural theory. The first of these was started in 1867, another in 1871, and a third in 1879. The total number in 1920 was 13, to which must be added 4 »Husmandsskoler«, or schools for small-holders. All the schools were, practically speaking, established by old pupils of folk high-schools, and were inspired by the same spirit as that of the folk high-schools. To the present day there has been a close connection between the two groups of schools. At first many of the agricultural schools gave actual high-school teaching, including history and mythology; but they gradually came to concentrate on purely technical subjects. An exception, however, is found in the schools for small-holders, in which there is given general high-school teaching. The reason for this exception is that the children of small-holders can usually afford to spend only one winter on adult education, whereas most of the children of the »Gaardmænd«, the larger farmers, are able to attend both the high-school and the agricultural school. When attendance at both schools is possible, the folk high-school is, as a rule, attended first. The common experience is that after a stay at the folk high-school better results are obtained from the technical instruction of the agricultural school. If however, a choice between the two schools is necessary, the average youth prefers the high-school. During 1921—22 the agricultural schools had about 2000 men students as compared with 3500 in the high-schools; and of these 2000, 800 had first attended high-schools, and several hundred intended to become students at the high-schools later. The relationship between the two groups of schools is so close

that they are usually spoken of as a whole under the common name of »The Danish Youth Schools«.

All sides recognize that these schools afforded valuable help to the Danish peasantry during the years of the economic crisis. Professor William Ashley recently endeavoured to show that the passing of the old forms of cultivation was not so abrupt as generally understood, and having expressed the opinion that it was the high-schools which gave the Danish farmers the intelligence which caused them to change their agricultural system, he wrote, »The high-school did, we can hardly doubt, to some extent help the movement along. But it did something larger than that.... It put a new spirit, a new sense of independence, a new hopefulness, into the peasant class. It stimulated activity and promoted perseverance because it awakened them to the possibilities of their position.«

That which was a source of strength and help to the peasants during the years of the crisis continued to be so afterwards. Although detailed proof of this cannot be given, there is to be found a good deal of evidence which is sufficiently convincing to justify the assertion.

There is obtainable in Denmark a biographical encyclopædia which, however, is not yet complete. Its principal feature is the biographies of persons who, in recent times, have distinguished themselves in Danish life and activity. An examination of these biographies reveals the fact that 109 farmers have thus earned distinction, the book including only those who were born after 1848 and therefore lived their youth at the time of high-school activity. A further examination reveals the fact that the great majority of these men were students of the folk high-schools and the agricultural schools. Those who attended only the folk high-schools number 26; the number

who attended both the high-schools and the agricultural schools is 47. Sixteen attended only the agricultural schools, whilst there are only twenty who did not attend either kind of schools.

These 109 farmers represent the leading men of modern Danish agriculture. They are men who have been occupied in the practical work, in co-operation, in the life of the unions, and in the domain of politics. If, on the other hand, the rural youth is considered as a whole it is found that not more than one-fourth or one-fifth have attended these schools. Nevertheless, four-fifths of the leaders have done so.

In »Kraak's Blue Book« the Danish »Who's Who«, which gives biographies of living men and women who are prominent in Danish social life, there are, in the 1923 edition, 126 biographies of men who have lived in agricultural circles. The information about the education of these men is not very full, but it is quite clear that over two-thirds of them are old students of the folk high-schools and agricultural schools. What is true of these men, whose names are known throughout the country, is true also of these who, in parish and country, have filled positions as leaders. Statistics and popular judgment tell the same story.

The fact that the work of the folk high-schools has borne fruit in practical economic life is not surprising. History can give other examples of how a spiritual awakening of the people has led to similar results. It should be mentioned, however, that the high-schools have also worked directly to give their students a conception of the greatness of simple, common, constructive tasks. A high-school leader, Ludvig Schrøder, who was the principal of the famous school at Askov, has exercised a great influ-

ence, in this respect, over a section of the schools. In teaching history he more and more dwelt on »the poetry of active and practical human life«, and sought to awaken the students' admiration for the beauty and value of good, solid, practical daily work. One who heard Schröder's presentation of history, and who himself became a leader, has spoken of how the young people listened to the teacher's graphic glorification of common daily work. He says, »We clenched our fists, and yearned to go out and set to work!« As it was with him and his fellow students, so it has been with very many others.

CHAPTER III.

Co-operation in Denmark.

England is the home of the Co-operative movement. About twenty years after the beginning in Rochdale, co-operative ideas took root in Danish soil. In 1866 Dean Sonne formed a »Workers' Society« in the little town of Thisted, which lies on the west coast of Jutland, and this event is regarded by Danish co-operators as the beginning of the movement in their country. But »Collective Liability«, which characterizes all co-operative activity in Denmark, is to be found in the Credit Societies formed, after the German model, as early as 1850.

A clergyman interested in social questions brought the idea of co-operation to Denmark; the beginning was made in a market town, and the town workers formed the membership. But the present movement retains little of its original form and characteristics. The leaders of the Danish co-operative movement, subsequent to its initiation, came from the ranks of the common people; the home of Co-operation shifted from the market towns to the country; and farmers and small holders became the members of the organisations. It should be noted, however, that during the last twenty years, the field of co-operative activity has been extended.

Attention will first be directed to Denmark's co-operative stores, although the outstanding feature of Co-opera-

tion in Denmark is the exceptionally well developed associations of producers and exporters: but the growth and extension of the co-operative stores indicate typical features of the whole movement.

The following figures relate to the number of co-operative stores in Denmark from 1870 to 1919.

Year	Copenhagen	Provincial Towns	Country	Total
1870	0	3	18	21
1880	0	5	119	124
1890	0	8	395	403
1900	0	15	827	842
1910	0	52	1316	1378
1914	17	75	1470	1562
1919	2	78	1611	1691

Whilst Co-operation in other countries has been urged forward by town people (in England by the workers, in Germany by the middle class and workers, and in Sweden by the workers), in Denmark it is a rural movement. Until the beginning of the twentieth century it was, literally speaking, only the rural population who were members of the associations; but from that time people of the towns also joined. The centre of gravity of the movement, however, remains in the country; against Copenhagen's 24,500 members, and the 40,000 of the provincial towns, the total country membership in 1919 stood at 253,000. Of the rural population, which includes artisans, unskilled workers etc., the farming element constitutes the majority. In 1910 an investigation of the social standing of the members of the co-operative stores was undertaken, both in the towns and in the country. Unfor-

tunately, the work was not consistently carried through; but of the total membership of the societies from which particulars were obtained, 41% were small-holders, 32% farmers, and 27% artisans, unskilled workers etc.

The tardiness of the town workers in joining the co-operative movement is due to the fact that the Danish Labour Movement was greatly influenced by the German socialists, whose lack of confidence in co-operative ideas they shared. At the beginning of the new century, however, there was evidence that a new point of view was being adopted. The change was the result, not so much of agitation from the side of Danish co-operation, as of the influence of the new attitude towards co-operation taken by many German socialists.

Several circumstances must be considered before it can be understood why Danish Co-operation became a farmers' movement, and, in this respect, differed from the movement in other countries. No doubt, conditions of a purely practical nature were partly responsible for this course of development. In 1857, the influence of liberal doctrines led to the abolition of the monopoly of handicraft trades and businesses in the towns, and free and equal opportunities of starting industrial enterprises were secured. But a certain restriction survived until 1919. This was to the effect that outside the market towns, within a radius of five or six miles of them, no private wholesale or retail business was to be conducted. If it were desired to start a business within these protected areas, the co-operative store, which was not subject to the restriction, was the only possible way. This restriction was a factor in the course of development.

Another factor is to be found in the political conditions that have obtained during the last half century. The

country population to a great extent belonged to the Liberal party, and the town population to the Conservative. When after 1880 the differences between the parties deepened, especially as a result of the unparliamentary handling of finance by the Conservative government, the political fight was transferred to the economic domain of the combatants. Until this time the farmers had respected the freedom, in regard to political matters, of the merchants with whom they dealt; but after 1885, it appeared to them that the towns supported a government which flouted the laws of the Constitution, and that such an attitude warranted a discontinuance of business relations. The membership of the co-operative stores then rose considerably, and the number of new societies increased from year to year. It is evident that co-operation must find favourable conditions of growth in a people who steadfastly fought to realize the ideal of equality; the fight for political equality and freedom created in the Danish rural population a feeling of solidarity which, in economic life, found an almost ideal expression in the work of co-operation.

This feeling of solidarity, however, did not arise solely from common political convictions. The »democratic« distribution of property in Denmark is referred to elsewhere in this book, and mention is also made of the absence of wide class distinction. It is impossible to say too emphatically how much this social equality has meant in the growth of the co-operative associations; the equal and uniform conditions gave rise to a natural fellowship, and common tasks were readily undertaken by all. But bearing this in mind, it is nevertheless not too much to claim that general opinion in Denmark favours the view that the most important reason for the triumph of co-

operative ideas among the peasants is to be found, not in the social and political spheres, but in that of the spiritual influences which emanate from the Danish folk high-schools.

The writer of the history of Danish Co-operation, H. Hertel, who has no direct personal connection with the high-schools, writes, »These schools awakened in young men and women a yearning for knowledge and a desire to work; the character of the pupils was strengthened, and they left the schools with a much enlarged outlook on life. To satisfy its yearning for knowledge a current of youth flowed from the folk high-schools to the agriculture schools, and when it afterwards passed out into life it did so with a strong feeling of fellowship, and a desire to work for common progress. Youth thus gained some of the qualifications necessary to the success of a co-operative movement.«

The influence of the high-schools was soon traceable in the homes of the students; and throughout the whole country it became evident that that section of the community which had not attended any high-school or agricultural school had nevertheless benefited as a result of their establishment. A community of social beings whose eyes are open to all the currents of life is, of course, more readily attracted by beneficial reforms than one which is listless or sullen. The high-school students have taken an active part in both local and national life, and have provided the co-operative movement with the material for leadership. From them have come most of the men possessing the will and the capacity to assume the direction of the movement, and to lead it in a manner which the country folk could understand and approve.

The debt which the co-operative movement thus owes

to the schools it has tried to repay by improving the economic conditions of the agricultural population, and by giving greater prosperity and stability to their industry; and these conditions have made it possible for an increasing number of young men and women of the agricultural population to attend the schools. The fact that co-operation has not hitherto made much progress in the towns is probably due, in part, to the town dwellers' indifference towards or lack of understanding of, the high-schools. Their attitude has made it impossible for the high-schools to influence the towns and make them ripe for the reception of co-operative ideas.

To this evidence, other evidence may be added from an account of the Danish co-operative movement published in French and written by Director Anders Nielsen, a leading figure in the Danish co-operative movement. In this sketch Director Nielsen says of the high-school: »It has filled in and levelled the clefts in society, and thereby paved the way for working together. It has sent students out into life with an added love for the country and its achievements, riper and more thoughtful, more receptive to life's teachings, and therefore well equipped to understand and make their way where the less developed run aground. — — — This significance of the folk high-schools has now been emphasised and affirmed so often, and from so many sides, that it can well be stated as a fact that not only the co-operative movement, but the cultural position of the Danish farmers on the whole, rests on this foundation; and when we thus consider the social importance of the co-operative movement, and its economic contribution which has led to the present position of development, we must acknowledge with gratitude the great religious and school leaders Grundtvig and Kold, and their many co-

workers and followers who have called forth a higher culture and feeling of solidarity among the people, and who taught the people to think and use their powers so as to develop their lives in such a way that the united efforts of all ensure that not only the individual but the whole community is benefited.«

The close connection between the folk high-schools and the co-operative movement may lead persons outside Denmark to think that the folk high-schools have undertaken direct propaganda for co-operative ideas. This has in no way been the case. In the early days there was no form of instruction concerning co-operation. Later, sociology found a place in the list of subjects taught in the schools, but the teaching in sociology for many years concentrated on the Danish Constitution and municipal administration. Only in recent years has the teaching of this subject embraced social questions and therefore co-operation; and these questions are always treated objectively, without any desire to propagate any particular views.

The aim of the folk high-schools is, through the medium of history and poetry, to bring about that social and human awakening which stimulates the growth of spiritual powers. That such growth has great social and economic consequences is the lesson taught not only by the experience of the folk high-schools but by many other spiritual awakenings as well. The French Huguenots belonged to the cleverest and most industrious citizens of France, and when, after the repeal of the Edict of Nantes, the Huguenots spread all over Europe, economic prosperity followed in their train. In Norway men who were permeated by the Christian revival originating from Hans Nielsen Hauge in the first half of the nineteenth century »were

among the best citizens the country had known — — —. They were pioneers of agriculture, small industries, trade and education in town and village.« England has among other examples that of the Quakers.

Before mentioning other branches of the co-operative movement it must be noted that the co-operation of consumers was not confined to local stores. After various attempts there was formed in 1896 the »Fællesforening for Danmarks Brugsforeninger«, a co-operative wholesale society through which the Danish co-operative stores become more and more their own merchants, importers and manufacturers. The development of independent factories has been a cautious one, but when »big business«, using its monopoly power, has tried to override the interests of consumers, the movement has made a fight. The most arresting chapters in the history of the co-operative wholesale association are concerned with these conflicts with »big business«. Whilst Denmark is the most co-operative country in Europe, this condition is not due solely to the development of the co-operative stores.*) It is also due to the application of co-operative ideas and principles in other spheres.

First came co-operation in the dairying industry. It began in 1882, and the beginning was made by a few ordinary farmers in the little country village of Hjedding in West Jutland. A young dairyman and two farmers formulated the rules which were to become the pattern for

*) It was estimated in 1914 that one out of every eleven persons in Denmark was a member of a co-operative store. In England there was one in 15, and in Germany there was one in 29.

numerous co-operative dairies. These rules embodied: common risks for the members combined with joint responsibility; the division of trading surpluses of profits according to the amount of milk delivered to the dairy (not according to the amount of capital invested); equal voting rights for all, irrespective of the amount of capital held; and free admission to membership. These ideas spread over the country with the rapidity of a heath fire. Danish agriculture was in the midst of the great crisis referred to in another chapter; and the dairying industry referred to Danish agriculture possibilities which the older methods of using the soil did not admit. In the time of crisis it was co-operative ideas which helped the peasants to a state of freedom from dependence upon outside capital, and enabled them, without support from the State, to carry through what was little less than a revolution in Danish agriculture.

The fact that the peasants themselves established the dairies — as well as other Co-operative productive agencies — had an important social significance, for the small farmers in this way obtained the advantages of large scale farming — division of labour, economic use of machinery, large purchases of raw materials, and collective selling of standardised products. Some figures relating to the transitional period will illustrate the point. About 1870 twice as much was paid for the butter from the manor farms as for that from the little farms, and it was considered that only the first mentioned butter was good enough for export. The manor farms always captured the prizes given for butter at exhibitions. In 1888 a national meeting of farmers was held; of 16 silver medals awarded, the manors secured 15, and of 18 bronze medals they secured 14. The co-operative dairies obtained only one silver and

four bronze medals, but even these meagre results attracted attention to the co-operative dairies. At a similar exhibition held in 1894 the co-operative dairies gained 6 silver medals out of the 7 awarded, and 14 bronze medals out of the 16 awarded. At the 1900 exhibition they made a clean sweep of all the silver prizes, and secured 202 out of the possible 206 bronze medals.

The characteristic feature of the Danish co-operative dairies is, however, not only their first-class produce, but also the fact that they hold such an important place in Danish agriculture. Much the greater part of Danish agriculture is linked directly or indirectly with the dairies. In 1923, 89,5 per cent of the farmers were members of a dairy, and the milk of 86,2 per cent of all the cows in the country was handled by the co-operative dairies.

The conditions which have favoured the growth of co-operative dairies are essentially the same as those mentioned with respect to the co-operative stores; and it will be sufficient here to add a reference to a few other features. The Liberal Minister of Finance, Vilhelm Lassen, in a speech delivered in Copenhagen, emphasized the close relationship between the democratic movement and the co-operative organisations. He said, »In business, selfishness as a rule has full play. Each provision dealer believes his bacon to be the best, and he does not like the idea of having its quality confused with that of his neighbours' product; but what was demanded by the members of the co-operative dairies was that he who had good, healthy cows, and tended and fed them well, should with confidence be able to pour his milk into a common receptacle with that of his neighbours, and when the profits came to be divided, share good and bad luck with them. Such a mutual trust is not usual, and when it was made possible

from district to district this was only because at that time among the peasants there had grown up a feeling of strong partizanship in the fight for their rights.« He further pointed out with emphasis that the feeling of fellowship which was created by the political struggle explains the consistent application of democratic principles in all the dairies, so that the man who delivered milk from only one cow had an equal voice in the management of the dairy with the big farmer who delivered milk from 40 cows. »I ask you to consider« he said, »what this means. I believe that conditions are such in Copenhagen that even the greatest democrat, when he takes shares in a limited company, demands control proportionate to the amount of the money he invests. If he invests 10,000 Kr. he demands more votes than the one who invests only 1,000 Kr.«

No doubt this speech lays too much emphasis on the contribution of the political struggle to the development of the feeling of fellowship. The factors already mentioned relative to the co-operative stores have probably been more vital. Those who wish to obtain an impression of what the high-schools have done in this sphere should examine some of the investigations which the famous physicist, Poul la Cour, teacher at Askov, made in the nineties. He endeavoured to find out how many high-school students there were among the chairmen and managers of the co-operative dairies. The figures he was able to furnish were, unfortunately, not complete, but they showed, however, a remarkable uniformity in every district. Therefore, whilst one must bear in mind that the figures do not indicate the precise position, they do nevertheless give a fairly accurate idea of it.

The investigation was concerned not only with the high-

schools, but also with the agricultural and dairy schools, which are so closely related to them in spirit. The enquiry showed that 47 per cent of the managers of the dairies had attended a high-school, 24 per cent had attended an agricultural school, and 62 per cent a dairy school. From these figures it will be seen that some of them had attended more than one of the schools, and only 10 per cent had not attended any of the schools. It is estimated that in the nineties only 16 per cent of the Danish rural population between 20 and 50 years of age had attended a folk high-school, an agricultural school, or a dairy school. This number, 90 per cent,*) is so overwhelming that one cannot resist the assertion that it is the people from these schools who have secured the chief places in the dairies. Even if it be assumed that it is the former pupils who have been particularly willing to supply information for this investigation, it is nevertheless remarkable evidence of the significance of these adult schools during a very critical period in Danish agriculture. The schools have given to the country leaders on the technical side of the new industrial enterprise in agriculture; but these leaders have had to make a path for the new ideas, and cope with the many difficulties of one kind and another which hinder people from accepting without reserve the new methods and processes.

It is still more important to notice how many former high-school students there are among the chairmen of the co-operative dairy associations; i. e. among peasants who have been selected by their fellows to fill positions of responsibility. A rough examination of the available infor-

*) That is, of the managers.

mation for the whole country shows that of all the chairmen, 54 per cent have been at a high-school, 23 per cent at an agricultural school, and 2 per cent at a dairy school. The figures from Sealand and the surrounding islands, where the influence of the high-school has always been least felt, are particularly illustrative because, out of 185 dairies in Sealand in 1897, 146 provided the information asked for. Of these 146 chairmen of Co-operative dairy associations, 47 per cent had been to the ordinary high-schools; and when it is remembered that only 16 per cent of the rural male population had attended a folk high-school, agricultural school, or dairy school the figures seem to be impressively high. The figures show clearly and distinctly that the high-school students have been the pioneers of the co-operative movement in the country districts, and that the high-schools have supplied the movement with its local leaders.

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In one sphere after another of Danish agriculture co-operative ideas have victoriously won their way. A Danish farm is now connected with a network of co-operative organisations. The numerous threads by which a modern agricultural undertaking is linked economically with the world around are almost all spun by a co-operative organisation. Let us follow some of them. A farmer buys his goods at a co-operative store; he borrows money from a co-operative credit association; he obtains his seed from a co-operative seed supply, his fertilisers from the Danish co-operative fodder association, his cement from the co-operative cement works, his electricity from an electrical

company established on a co-operative basis;*) and when he wants to sell his produce, he sends his milk to the co-operative dairy, his pigs to the co-operative slaughter house, his eggs to the Danish Co-operative Egg Export, and his cattle to the Co-operative Agency for Cattle Export. He places his savings in the co-operative savings banks, and from the different co-operative breeding associations he is able to get information about the best breeding stocks; he gains his knowledge regarding the amount of milk each cow should yield from the control unions, and he has at his service the best and most up-to-date theories of agriculture, brought to him through the consultants appointed by the agricultural unions. By joining such a comprehensive system of co-operation he brings to his farm all the advantages of large-scale farming. The growth of agricultural co-operation in Denmark has been conditioned by the large number of comparatively small holdings; on the other hand the co-operative movement has equipped the small holdings for the competitive struggle at a time when large holdings were gaining great advantage through the application of up-to-date machinery. Thanks to co-operation the adherents of large-scale farming in Denmark are easy to count. Co-operation has succeeded in giving produce from many small farms a uniformity and stability of quality which make it well fitted to maintain a place in the open world market, and this has been a decisive factor in Denmark's position in world economy.

It was Gladstone who called the co-operative movement »the greatest social wonder of the present time.«

*) He cannot yet get his agricultural machinery in this way. The dairies have a co-operative machinery supply association, but not the farmers.

The fact that in Denmark it was accomplished by ordinary men of the people makes the wonder yet more pronounced. A man of university education introduced the idea into Denmark, but, apart from that, university men have played no part in the movement. Farmers and smallholders, elementary school teachers and artisans have been the leaders in both the local societies and the large national associations, and it is to them that the credit for this enormous »social wonder« is due.

One of Denmark's greatest historians once said that Denmark, as a little people, frequently had to learn from the great peoples and obtain new and useful ideas from them, but the country had a capacity for clothing foreign ideas in native attire and appropriating them, not as slavish imitators, but as independent men. This is true of co-operative ideas. Denmark imported them from England, and even now the principles of the Rochdale pioneers provide the foundation for Danish co-operative associations; but in the application of these ideas, in the adaptation of them to ever new spheres of activity, Denmark cannot but see its own contribution to the history of co-operation.

CHAPTER IV.

High-School Influences in the Rural Districts.

The influence of the folk high-schools can easily be traced in present day rural life. In this chapter some instances of this will be dealt with.

Until the middle of the nineteenth century it was quite unknown in Denmark for people to attend meetings for the purpose of receiving instruction in subjects of a cultural character. At the university such gatherings were known, but at that time it was unthinkable that the common people could take an interest in such subjects. A popular movement for meetings of this kind was begun in 1838, when Grundtvig, at a college in Copenhagen, delivered a series of lectures on modern history to a public audience. The following year the poet-clergyman, Steen Steensen Blicher, invited the general public to a meeting held at Jutland's highest point, »Himmelbjerget«. He spoke on national problems, but otherwise the meeting was arranged after the manner of the Greek festive gatherings. The example from Copenhagen was followed at a few places in the country, but it was not until after 1864 that such public meetings began to take a definite form. Then there was found in the people, in the mature as well as the young, a desire for enlightenment; and the newly founded high-schools endeavoured to meet the

need of those who could not become high-school pupils by holding public meetings at which teachers of the schools spoke. The subjects were very varied. At the first meeting at Askov High-School the principal spoke about an old Norse myth, a teacher lectured on German influence in Denmark, and another teacher concluded with a speech about spavin in horses. All over the country these meetings gained an exceptionally large response. People came from long distances to the meetings, which soon became a permanent part of high-school work. But the long journeys were often troublesome; and as the demand for education increased, lecture unions were formed in various districts. These unions localized the meetings and undertook to provide lecturers, many of whom were obtained from the high-schools. Most districts now have these associations.

These meetings were held, at first, in the buildings of the State elementary schools, but when it was seen that a democratic movement followed in the wake of such meetings the conservative ministry forbade the use of the buildings for this purpose. To ensure the continuance of this work of enlightenment special meeting-houses were built, which could also be used as practice centres for the increasing number of gymnastic and shooting societies.

The value of the work done in this way varies considerably. In some places the instruction given through lectures may well be compared with that of the English »University Extension Movement«, and it aims, in the best instances, not only at imparting knowledge but also at developing character and opening the mind to the spiritual values of life. With such a meeting-house as a centre of interest and endeavour people very often live a rich and full life, a life representing much of that which is best

in Danish character. On the other hand, there are numerous places where the intellectual and spiritual value of the lectures is rather doubtful, and as the lectures play a minor part, as compared with entertainments and mere social occasions, these meeting-houses cannot be included among the edifying forces of the districts. There are many contrasts afforded by the meeting-houses, the original purpose of which was that of district outposts for the work of the high-schools.

The outward appearance of the meeting-houses is by no means pretentious. They often bear marks of the fact that they were built in a time of poverty; and it is only during recent years that a definite effort has been made to beautify them.

An extension and, in some places, a deepening of the work of the lecture unions began in the twentieth century through the Danish Youth Associations. These associations are composed of young people from fourteen to twenty-five years of age: they are self-governing: the leaders are young men and women, who are elected by their fellow members; and the work of the »young in the midst of the young« consists in the holding of lectures, and of gatherings for song, games, recitations, amateur dramatics and so forth. Sometimes clergymen, teachers, and older peasants support the work, and very often a number of the meetings are held in the homes of the farmers who, as a rule, are in sympathy with the movement. The associations closely adhere to the view of life taken by the folk high-schools, and seek to follow the Christian community spirit that was inspired by Grundtvig. The leaders are, to a large extent, old high-school students; and the younger members, on the other hand, later find their way to the high-schools. The associations, which have a total

membership of about 50,000, have formed a national union, which has as one of its duties the publication of a magazine. Practically speaking, the movement has no following in the towns; and the membership figure therefore indicates that a comparatively large section of the country youth is recruited.

An even larger section of the country youth has been reached by the work of the Gymnastic Societies. These societies and the high-schools have a peculiar relationship. In the earliest high-schools there was instruction in gymnastics, but it frequently concerned itself with the use of arms, the object being the development of military competence. This was particularly the case after the events of 1864, when thoughts of revenge against Germany were very much alive. But as these thoughts lost their hold, the military drill, which was a more or less direct copy of the German system, could no longer retain the interest of the young; and about 1880 there was evidence on all sides of a decrease in the desire for gymnastics on the part of young people. Then some young Danish high-school workers acquainted themselves with the Swedish gymnastic system which was developed by Pehr Henrik Ling, the educationist. This system differed from that formerly used, not only in the character of the exercise, but, which was more important, in the spirit that permeated it. Vallekilde High-School, in Sealand, introduced the Swedish system into Denmark, and Ernest Trier, the principal, in a speech given at the inauguration of the new gymnastics hall, expressed very clearly the new view that should be taken of gymnastics. He said, »These gymnastic exercises are not at all designed as a form of training for a military or any other special purpose; nor are they intended merely to develop strength and agility in the

human body; they aim at the improvement of the whole person. They will become a link in human education and training. The great question is, What serves to promote human life? These exercises are intended to help the development of that in a human being which distinguishes him from the animals. This is not, by any means, a mere physical development; however many feats of strength, tests of endurance, and forms of acrobatics time and perseverance may enable a man to master, he will never be able to equal the bull in strength or the monkey in agility. But he can raise himself high above the animals if he learns to subordinate his body to his will.«

The high-schools were not only the first to employ Swedish gymnastics;*) they led the fight during the next twenty years against the old military drill which, in the end, suffered defeat. The schools also trained teachers of gymnastics for the local Youth Unions. Almost all of these teachers, whilst receiving this special training, were students at the high-schools. It was, therefore, the folk-high-school spirit that set its seal on the gymnastic work of the local unions; and some of the most noble and beautiful examples of modern Danish youth have grown up within the sphere of this spiritually animated gymnastic work.

If it is desired to bring into relief the typical features of Denmark's development following 1864, and to reach an understanding of them, the influence of the folk high-schools will nearly always — as far as the rural population is concerned — stand out very clearly as one of the causes of the most characteristic features of modern Danish life. Of course, other causes have run parallel, and it

*) Physical exercises now play a great part in the daily curriculum of schools.

is impossible to ascertain the extent of the influence each of the causes has separately exercised. Yet it is a fact that all the observers of Denmark's development are in remarkable agreement that the folk high-schools have been one of the most important — some say the most important — factors in the rise of the peasantry after 1864.

The High-School, however, is not content to be judged by its merits as an influence in social organisation, in practical every-day work, and in the political and national development. It will gladly receive acknowledgment of this, but will ask, further, if its old students have not been helped to live a richer and fuller, a nobler and truer life. Only a deep intimacy with individual peasants, as well as with the peasants as a whole, can yield an answer to this question; and even then it is possible to speak only in general terms. Here, however, is a piece of evidence which comes from the eminent Danish expert in folklore, Dr. H. F. Feilberg, who, through many years' work as clergyman among the peasants of Jutland, obtained a unique knowledge of them. In his highly valued literary work, »Danish Peasant Life«, he writes »If I am asked whether the High-School has left its mark on the life of the people, I answer Yes, though, of course, when you have lived in the midst of a great spiritual movement, it is difficult to trace the separate and various threads of influence which have been intertwined with one another. Whether every student benefits from attending the school is, indeed, very doubtful. Some attend who have no purpose at all in doing so, and who leave as wise as when they enter. In this respect, the high-school is the same as the university; it is clear that a number of the students derive practically nothing from the teaching of the university. Others go to the high-school in order to get a few months' freedom;

and when it is remembered that many of these have never known freedom, for they began to work at the age of seven, and continued in one hard job after another, the fact is excusable. Then there are others who become presumptuous and arrogant after their stay at the high-school: the little excursion into a realm of knowledge makes them intolerable. Among these one could find young, happy students who, to use an expression from Jutland, believe that »all the world hangs in a calfskin«, and that they have managed to get hold of the tail. They, however, become exceedingly able people when the youthful presumptuousness has worn off. It has been said of Christen Kold's students that they, as a rule, could not be approached until a few years after leaving his school: but after this period, during which the fermentation of great thoughts went on in their minds, the value of their stay at the school began to reveal itself in an energetic and efficient life. Speaking in broad and general terms of the impression made by the high-school on the people as I have seen them in West Jutland, I must say that it has left its trace very clearly in the education of the people, and has exercised a cultivating and civilising influence. The peasants' desire to read has grown, and many well-used libraries have been founded; lecture societies have been instituted and meeting-houses built. Throughout, the level of intelligence of the people has been raised. Many old people will tell how, in former days, when peasants met at gatherings and parties, the conversation almost invariably first turned on trade, and later drifted to ghosts, omens and such things: whilst now, every possible topical event that can be understood by the peasant enters into the field of discussion. In this direction the high-school has contributed towards making life more becoming and

more beautiful. An elderly, intelligent farmer on the heath once declared to me that the young put the old to shame. There had recently taken place a festive gathering of young people at which there was no drunkenness or quarrelling, nor was there rough play and swearing; everything went well, everyone behaving decently and decorously. ›What happens when we older people come together?‹ he continued. ›We get drunk, and then old grievances revive; we curse like wild heathens, and often end with blows and broken heads!‹ I venture to believe, also, that wedded life has improved, and that the wives, as the equals of the men, have gained greater influence over the welfare of the homes than they had formerly. Finally, it is my opinion that the high-school has done much to ennoble the ›daily round and common task!‹ As a rule, it is easy to discern the homes where the husband or wife, or both, have been at a high-school; and been there, let me add, because they felt the need of what the school had to offer. In their minds is the earnest desire to do their work as honourably and efficiently as possible, and to make full use of, and improve, the results of development and modern achievements.«

These words were written a generation ago, but are perfectly valid and applicable to the present day. Possibly in the matter of details, an addition or deletion here and there could be made, but the work of the high-schools constantly moves in that spirit, and in that direction, to which the old scholar has referred.

CHAPTER V.

The Influence of the High-Schools in Northern Slesvig 1864—1920.

The fight for nationality which was waged in the Danish part of Slesvig-Holstein from 1864 to 1920 was, in many respects, different from the fight of the other nationalities within the German kingdom. The fight in Poland was led by Catholic priests and estate owners, whilst in the case of Alsace-Lorraine an upper class from the towns joined the clergy as leaders of the people; but in Slesvig it was the common peasantry who, without support from the clergy, the upper class of the towns, or from the landlords, fought against the dominance of the powerful German rule. The peasantry drew from its own rank its leaders; those who should take the lead in parish life, and those who should advocate their cause in the Prussian Diet and the German Reichstag. The fight could never have been sustained but for the close relationship which, at an early stage, linked the Danish folk high-schools with the peasants of North Slesvig; but in order to appreciate this fact it is necessary to consider the chief features of historical developments in Slesvig.

The Danish population in Slesvig, which came under foreign rule in 1864, entertained the hope that the dominance to which they were subjected would last but a

short time. Napoleon the third had inserted in paragraph five of the Prague Conference Treaty (1866) a clause which stated that the northern districts of Slesvig should have the right to decide by plebiscite to which nation they should belong; and in virtue of this many young people of Slesvig emigrated in order to avoid Prussian military service and foreign rule. How severely this emigration affected North Slesvig is revealed by an examination of its influence on the population. From 1865 to 1885 the normal increase of population fell from about 40,000 to 7,000: Flensburg, the large town on the national frontier, alone increased its population. It gained 13,000 in consequence of immigration from the south, the remainder of Slesvig thereby suffering a decrease of 6,000.

Even when Prussia, by an agreement with Austria in 1878, repealed paragraph 5 of the Treaty, the emigration did not cease; and as late as the early nineties Northern Slesvig was destitute of young men. When at this time a peasant leader of Slesvig was placed in his grave, his coffin was borne by eight sons who had received permission to cross the frontier, but were obliged to return to Danish territory before sunset in order to avoid Prussian military service. But gradually the people of Slesvig realised that this emigration could not continue without abandoning the country to the mercy of German immigrants, and men decided to remain at home to save their native soil, even at the cost of having to submit to the detested military training and foreign rule. It is estimated that emigration cost North Slesvig no less than 60,000 men.

Not only did the people seek to save the soil from the German invasion, but also the Danish language and culture; and they had to encounter a comprehensive move to Germanize all institutions, churches, schools etc. Danish

clergymen and teachers were dismissed from their positions, and from 1888 the teaching of the Danish language was prohibited, except in so far as it affected the religious instruction, which occupied four hours weekly.

As the help of church and school was withheld, the people were obliged to seek other means of keeping Danish culture alive. Private schools, including, of course, Danish folk high-schools, were forbidden, and parents were not allowed to send their children over the frontier to the Danish schools as long as the youngsters were of the legal school age. Then a number of »Efterskoler«, continuation schools, were founded on the north of the frontier, and were intended for pupils from fourteen to sixteen years of age. A very large number of children, when the German school period was over, attended these schools for six months or more in order to receive instruction particularly in the Danish language and history. The schools were brought into being by old folk high-school students (most of whom were former residents of Slesvig), and were permeated by the high-school spirit.

The people, however, were not content with these continuation schools, and as time went on they found their way in increasing numbers to the folk high-schools in Denmark. Even before 1888 a considerable number had attended the high-schools, but after that year the number greatly increased. In 1892 a union was formed to help young Slesvig people who lacked resources to attend the continuation and high-schools, and in the following years the number of high-school pupils from Slesvig increased between threefold and fourfold. The Germans adopted more rigid measures at the beginning of the new century, and the result was that the number slightly decreased; but after three years the number rose again. In 1908 as

large a percentage of students came from Slesvig as from Denmark; and when it is remembered that there was a German minority in Slesvig's population, it will be observed that the contribution of Danish Slesvig to the high-schools was relatively larger than that of any part of Denmark.

The high-schools became the workshop from which more and more people of Slesvig obtained their weapons for the fight for Danish culture; there they gained their knowledge of Danish history, and were united by strong bonds to Danish spiritual life; there their courage was fired, and their powers and capacity developed. A German citizen of North Slesvig, speaking before the World War, testified to the strong influence of the schools. He said, »Our youth leave the Danish high-schools and return home with the unshakeable conviction that they obey the German authority only because it has the power, and not because they feel a sense of moral obligation towards their foreign rulers.« Deploring this fact, it is nevertheless clear to him that »A general judgment of this educational activity must be in its favour.« He mentions, as a fruit of the high-schools, that »Grundtvigianism lives as a fundamental religious attitude in the hearts of thousands, especially in the hearts of the young.«

The man who was treasurer of the School Union which, during the twenty-two years between 1892 and 1914, supplied help which enabled about six thousand young people to take a course at a high-school or continuation school, is especially qualified to express an opinion on the significance of these periods spent in the atmosphere of such schools. He says, »It would not be easy to exaggerate the importance of the fruitful influence from the mother land that the thousands of young people from

Slesvig thus gained. It was an influence which permeated our public life. Practically all who, during the long and difficult years of foreign rule, took a prominent part in national work, received much of their inspiration from the Danish high-schools.« A characteristic illustration of the position is that the representatives of North Slesvig in Berlin, during the years preceding the war, were all former high-school pupils; and the same applies to an editor who was a member of the Reichstag, and to two farmers who were members of the Prussian Diet. When, in 1919, the Danish population of Slesvig sent a delegation to the Peace Conference at Paris, the four delegates chosen had all attended the ordinary folk high-schools and the extended courses at Askov.

During the World War the character, the attitude towards life, and the national loyalty of the people of North Slesvig, were subjected to a severe test. How they stood the test is evidenced by a large number of letters which passed between the men at the front and their homes. The German censorship prevented them from writing much of what was deepest in their minds; but in spite of that, these letters contain something, a keynote, which gives them an unique place in the literature of the War. A citizen of Slesvig has written the following comments on them: »They were written in *Danish*. They were written by people of whom none younger than thirty-six or thirty-seven had received a single lesson in the Danish language at the State schools; and yet, not only was the language of these letters Danish, but also their spirit and tone.

»How can it be explained that our men were thus able to write home? How had they mastered their mother tongue so as to use it in letters to parents, wives and

children, to friends and relatives? With what joy and expectations these letters, full of accounts of great and varied experiences, were received, can well be imagined. They carried good wishes for »Our dear North Slesvig« and its future; they told of deep yearning for home, but also of the will to sacrifice everything for the sake of those left behind. Suppose that these letters had been written in German; one shrinks from the thought. How could a man of North Slesvig write letters in German to those at home, to his most intimate relatives and friends, to his old parents who, perhaps, could not understand a word of the foreign language? How was it, then, that a soldier from North Slesvig was in a position to write letters in Danish, when he had never had an opportunity of writing a Danish sentence in the course of his school education? Individuals had learned a little Danish writing in their homes, but their number was small. There must have been other sources from which these soldiers learned to write their mother tongue.

»There were, indeed, other sources; they were the Danish folk high-schools and the continuation schools; and it is to these that thanks are due that many middle-aged and young people of North Slesvig can pen their native language, a result that was achieved in spite of the Prussian schools. Who can doubt that the great majority of the letters from our men at the front were written by old pupils of these high-schools which, while imparting a larger and deeper understanding of Danish life, taught the youngsters the writing of the Danish language? I am well acquainted with the shortcomings of the Danish high-schools, but, to me, all these shrink into insignificance when I consider their tremendous contribution towards Danish life. They were first an awakening influence, and

afterwards a constant spring of sustenance and renewal during the long foreign dominance. The young people of Northern Slesvig, who with receptive minds listened to the teaching of the high-schools and continuation schools, found a support in their need. Mainly through the medium of the Grundtvig schools, the keenest and most alert section of the Danish population has appropriated what Danish civilisation affords. Therefore I say that honour is due to the Danish folk high-schools and continuation schools, whether their faults be imaginary or real.«

These words were written immediately before the Versailles Treaty made possible the plebiscite in North Slesvig; of the votes three-fourths went to Denmark. Not the least part of the work of the Danish folk high-schools was its share in rescuing a section of the Danish people from continued subjection to a foreign power.

BOOK II

CHAPTER I.

The History of the Danish Folk High-Schools.

N. F. S. Grundtvig

(1783—1872). Father of the Folk High-Schools.

The folk high-schools of Denmark are not the product of a scientific doctrine of education, and have nothing to do with any carefully devised educational system. Let that first be clearly understood. They came into being as a young tree grows out of the Danish soil. Their aim and methods are in every way determined by the life of the common people, from which they originated and which they are intended to serve. The idea which gave them birth was not conceived in the mind of a college professor; it was conceived in that of a prophet, a spiritual genius who understood the life and mind of his people throughout the ages, and who thereby had the vision of the especial enlightenment that was needed to promote the well-being of his people.

His name was Nikolaj Frederik Severin Grundtvig. In order to understand his fundamental ideas concerning the life and welfare of his people it is necessary to know something about his life, which was inextricably interwoven with the history of the Danish people for 90 years.

Grundtvig was born on the 8th September, 1783, in the parsonage of Udby in South Sealand. His father was

an orthodox clergyman of the old Lutheran type. His mother belonged to the family of Bang, which claimed descent from the most famous of the noble families of the Middle Ages, from the same stock from which came Archbishop Absalon and many other great men in Danish history. Grundtvig's mother told her little boy much about these ancestors, and thereby imbued him with a deep love for the past life of his people. But still deeper did she root the Christian faith in his heart. The hymns which, as a child, he heard sung in his home had a vital influence upon his later life; and the memories of childhood in that good home became his manhood's richest source of inspiration and renewal.

In his boyhood he was sent to the home of a clergyman on the Jutland heath, where he learned to know the vigorous life of the Jutlanders; later he became a pupil at the grammar school in Aarhus, and in 1800 matriculated at the University of Copenhagen. During this period he lived much under the influence of rationalistic teaching, and was dull and lacking in spiritual life. On the 2nd April 1801 he was an eye-witness of the bombardment of Copenhagen, an event which seemed to awaken him; and a year later he was impressed by the university lectures given by his cousin, Henrik Steffans, who had shortly before returned from Germany filled with the brilliant ideas of Romanticism. However, it was not until Grundtvig, as a young divine, held the post of family tutor at a manorial estate on the beautiful island of Langeland that he became spiritually awakened. He fell in love with the young mistress of the manor, and through his struggle to suppress his passion gained a new conception of life. Life to him became a battlefield where the powers of good and evil are for ever in conflict, and where everything depends



LUDVIG SCHRØDER AT ASKOV HIGH-SCHOOL.
THE GROUP 'OF OLDER PERSONS AT THE RIGHT OF THE PICTURE INCLUDES
CHARLOTTE SCHRØDER, H. NUTZHORN, JAKOB APPEL, PAUL LA COUR, H. F. FEILBERG AND POUL BJERGE.



M. S. A. G. G. G. G.

upon the choice of sides made by each human soul. He discovered that the Scandinavian mythology, in which he now became deeply absorbed, expressed in large measure this same view of life. In 1808 he published a »Mythology« which created a sensation even among the German romanticists, and this, together with his historical play, »Conversations«, the theme of which is the decline of the spirit of battle during the period of conflict between heathen times and the Christian Middle Ages, made him famous in Denmark as a poet.

In 1810 he passed through a serious religious crisis which led him back to the Lutheran Christianity of his childhood; and from this time on his Christian faith became the incentive and motive-power of his life-work. His life of romantic imagination ceased: he believed that Christianity alone could renew the folk-life of the Danish people. He no longer sang for his people as an old northern bard, but preached to them with the severity of an ancient prophet of Israel.

The background for the youthful Grundtvig's day-of-judgment sermons was the disaster and misery which the European war during these years had brought upon the little country. The latter part of the 18th century had been a time of material prosperity for the Danish people; important land reforms had freed the peasants and improved their condition. Serfdom was ended, and compulsory labour on the manorial estates was a thing of the past. Workers of the soil became their own masters, and could manage their pieces of land in their own way and to the best of their ability. Simultaneously a flourishing trade developed with countries over the seas, and great fortunes were made. This prosperity continued as long

as Denmark was able to keep out of the war which followed the French Revolution.

This economic prosperity, however, came to a sudden end when Denmark, in consequence of England's assault on Copenhagen, became involved in the Napoleonic Wars. The next seven years of war ruined the country. The Danish people showed very little power of resistance when assailed by misfortune, and it became evident that their material life had been far more vigorous and robust than their spiritual. They lacked that faith and conviction which are often able to convert hardship into a beneficent school for the development of human character. Almost every one sat idle and impotent, cowed by anxious care for the necessities of life, and lacking courage to start upon new enterprises. The more vivacious endeavoured to forget their misery by means of cheap amusements, which reflected their thoughtless levity.

In his first publication, »The Masked Ball in Denmark« (1808) Grundtvig poured out his strong condemnation upon those who thus »danced upon the brink of Denmark's open grave«. And a few years later, when charged with religious zeal, he declared to the masses of the people that their calamity and misery was due to their having turned their backs upon God and forsaken the true Christian faith; and that if they did not return to God, there would soon be an end to Denmark's history.

When, in 1814, peace was signed, and Denmark became separated from Norway, with which country she had been united for a period of 400 years, the little impoverished country sank into a torpor which resembled the tranquillity of death. Strangely enough Grundtvig seemed now to acquire a brighter and less harsh view of his country's future than during the tempestuous years of the

war. The prophetic words, »Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God« resounded in his soul. He pictured Denmark as a low, weather-beaten island in the midst of the stormy world-ocean. To human eyes it seemed inevitable that it would be completely submerged by the waves when the next storm flood arose. His people lacked the energy to build dykes around their land. No leader arose; no great things were achieved; everything lay torpid, poverty-stricken and hopeless.

Grundtvig believed that his own life had been restored solely by the Grace of God, and felt assured that his people should have a similar experience; he was convinced that nothing but ruin could be expected according to natural law, but was comforted by his belief in the omnipotence of God. He seemed, as it were, to sit by Denmark's deathbed, holding the country's destiny within his folded hands, and praying to God for its suffering people; and when his faith and hope seemed vindicated, when the Danish people arose from their slumbers and faced a future full of happy promise, Grundtvig never forgot to thank God. Danish history from that time was to him a history of »a people by the Grace of God«; and with this faith in divine power, together with a great love for his people, he accomplished the great work of his life.

Christian principles made Grundtvig democratic to the very core; for only he who believes that each human soul has eternal life is able, without self-delusion, to recognize kinship in his fellows, however poor and ignorant they may be. In a song he wrote:

"And be we poor and lowly
Yet are we sons of kings
And higher than the eagle
Hope may spread out her wings."

His whole work for the enlightenment of the common

people was based upon this faith in the original nobility of mankind. He did not approach his countrymen as one who would condescend to give them crumbs from the tables of science, art and culture; he wished to share everything with the people, to live in common with them, and to nourish himself from the same sources that were accessible to the lowliest.

To express his aim he coined the word »folkelighed«, which is very difficult to translate into other languages, because the idea the word is intended to convey is so distinctly Grundtvigian that even his own countrymen have been slow to appropriate it. In this word, however, lies the key to the understanding of his life-work.

Grundtvig's view of life placed him in opposition to all other prominent men in Denmark. While every poet, artist, and scientist at that time laboured for the small class which was considered cultured, Grundtvig addressed himself to the whole of his fellow countrymen. He decided not to use his poetical gifts to create works of art only for readers with æsthetic tastes; he would write for the whole of the Danish people, high and low, rich and poor. By his poetry he would sing a higher life into them. He had come to regard poetry not as an art, but as a life-giving power in every human soul, and a mighty influence in promoting the common life of an awakened people. He gladly gave up his ambition of becoming a great poet in the ordinary realms of literature; but he became an unequalled poetical power in the daily life of the common people. In the world of reality he created through his poetry a new Denmark.

Half a century passed, however, before his dreams were realised. In the beginning he stood entirely alone in

the fight to achieve his great aim. The cultured people, who saw nothing in him but a superstitious, confused visionary, contemptuously turned their backs upon him, whilst the common people still slumbered too deeply to be able to hear the loving voice which called them.

Grundtvig suffered greatly in his loneliness, for he felt a great need for fellowship with his countrymen. He tried to find comfort by absorbing himself in history and in his hopes for the future. He translated Saxo's »Denmark's Chronicle« from Ciceronian Latin into popular Danish — into a vigorous peasant language which he hoped would make this fine historical work available to the common people. But he gained nothing from his work except the experience that books cannot rouse a people whose spirit sleeps. Nothing but a living voice speaking the mother tongue can do this.

For a long time he pondered over the problem of how to awaken the people, and it began to dawn upon him that what was necessary was a free school for adults. The reminiscences of the life of Danish forefathers, told in the mother tongue, must, he thought, be the means by which the youth of the present could be awakened and given the impulse to continue that life as a people; and such an awakening must be accomplished entirely through the working of the general spirit of the people,*) and a free use of the Danish language — the only means by which this spirit could express itself.

The ten years following 1814 constituted one of the most poverty-stricken periods in the history of Denmark.

*) Translator's note. Grundtvig conceived of each nation as having a spirit, which expressed itself in the life and ideals of the people. He therefore believed that high-school instruction must be mainly historical, if the students were to understand themselves as a people.

In 1824, which Grundtvig called the »Peoples' New Year«, a turning point was reached, and signs of spiritual and material progress appeared. The price of corn, which at that time was the surest index of the economic condition of Denmark, gradually began to rise; and simultaneously the Danish poets, who had been almost dumb during the preceding spiritless years, began to sing as a lark sings above the wintry fields in early spring. But the surest sign of Spring was a religious movement among the masses. Its drift was a revival of the old Lutheran Christianity which had, together with all other expressions of spiritual life, been well-nigh dead during the age of rationalism.

The leaders in this religious movement were laymen: farmers, artisans and cottagers. The clergy adopted an attitude of opposition, and, on more than one occasion, took legal proceedings against the leaders of these free religious gatherings, which were conducted in an orthodox Lutheran spirit. In spite of opposition the movement rapidly spread and took root in many parts of the country.

As a churchman Grundtvig was not in sympathy with religious gatherings outside the pale of the church; but as a friend of liberty he was shocked by the persecution of poor laymen who, believing they did not hear the true word of God preached at church services, consoled themselves by holding private meetings. Grundtvig therefore sided with those who struggled in defence of the people's right of meeting, and thus raised a conflict within the Church which later was vitally influential in securing religious liberty. He had been ordained as a clergyman in Copenhagen (1822) and there first experienced a genuine spiritual community founded on faith. But during this acute conflict within the church he was impelled to resign

his office, and from that time his ever-active mind gave itself first and foremost to the enlightenment of the people.

Three visits to England during the summers of 1829, 1830, and 1831 helped to mature his views on the question of the people's enlightenment. He travelled to London on a State grant, in order to examine and copy Anglo-Saxon manuscripts including the poem *Beowulf*, to which the English themselves had as yet paid little attention. This literary work served to stimulate the English philologists to more diligent study of the treasures they possessed in their Anglo-Saxon poetry and historical writings; but Grundtvig himself reaped a far greater benefit by studying the daily life of the English people than by his work with ancient parchments.

He was greatly impressed by what he saw during his wanderings among the masses of people in the London streets, at the docks, and in the machine shops that were building some of the earliest locomotives. Such gigantic enterprises in the world of mechanics made a strong appeal to his heroic nature. He asked himself why it was that everything in Denmark was quiet and lifeless, whilst England was pulsating with vigorous life, the air resounding with hammer blows, with the whistling of engines, and with the din of traffic and other noises by which modern civilisation proclaims itself in a city like London.

This difference between the public life of Denmark and that of England — a difference like that between a sleepy night and an active day — could not be explained merely as the result of the difference in temperament of the people. In former times the Danes had been quite as enterprising as the Anglo-Saxons; the same »heroic spirit«

of the North had animated Denmark as well as England throughout the Shifting Ages: but why was this spirit now wide awake in England, whilst in Denmark it slept like Holger the Dane under Kronborg Castle?

He found the answer in the fact that the English had a freedom which in Denmark was absent. Grundtvig did not admire England's parliamentary government; he found much in it deserving of criticism;*) but he felt a deep admiration for the civil, religious and personal liberty which England had gradually won for herself. He perceived more clearly than ever before that »the spirit worketh only in freedom«, and from that time spiritual liberty became one of his chief aims. He also became an ardent spokesman for industrial freedom. Grundtvig's abundant capacity for human development is seen in the fact that he became more liberal-minded with years.

He learned still another lesson from England's community life. He noticed the wholesome habit the British have of looking upon real life as the final test, in contrast to the Danish and German tendency to let theory and preconceived ideas dominate their thought and action. During his later years he emphasized again and again the English proverb that »facts are hard nuts to crack«.

Grundtvig does not, on the other hand, appear to have had much sympathy for industrialism in England. On the contrary he was thankful for the fact that his Fatherland had always been a country of peasants, and spoke with aversion of the development in modern States of a landless class of working men. But during his lifetime the population of Denmark still mainly consisted of farmers together with the property-owning citizens of the towns;

*) Grundtvig visited England before the franchise reforms.

and it was with this in mind that he later advanced his ideas about a common Danish enlightenment for the people.*) Grundtvig returned from England with his lungs full of North Sea air. He gave expression to the ideas he had recently formed in a remarkable publication entitled »Scandinavian Mythology« (1832). It had, as a preface, a poem called »A Rhymed Epistle to my Northern Relatives«, in which he asserted that the condition for the awakening of the »heroic spirit of the North« from its long slumber was freedom. In a lengthy introduction he gave expression to his new ideas about an enlightenment for the people of the North, and drew for the first time a picture of the Danish high-schools for adults which were later realised.

Fortunately the circumstances of the times were favourable to his ideas. Political freedom began to assert itself the very year (1831)**) in which he returned from his last visit to England. The July revolution in Paris (1830) created a stir, and the Danish king was compelled to allow the people a modest voice in the country's government. In various parts of the country there were to be organised Advisory Assemblies, some of the members of which were to be elected from among the peasants and property-owning citizens.

With that sense for the practical which Grundtvig admired in the English people he now seized the opportunity to advocate his high-school ideas. He argued that when peasants and citizens were called upon to sit on the National Advisory Assemblies, it was necessary that their

*) It must be the concern of his 20th century successors to supplement whatever there may be lacking with regard to this in Grundtvig's ideas.

**) Denmark was at that time an absolute monarchy.

enlightenment should be equal to the occasion. They did not need to know foreign languages, but ought to know as much of their country's history and social order as would enable them to help to form the laws of the land. They ought also to know the Danish language well enough to be able to express an idea or maintain an opinion fluently and correctly. He contended that a high-school which would enable the adult sons of the plain people to discuss intelligently the common concerns of the people was therefore a necessity.

Following his argument Grundtvig proposed that the academy of Sorø, which owned a great deal of property inherited from olden times, and which was beautifully situated in the middle of Sealand, should be converted into a royal Danish high-school. It should be open to all adults without preliminary examination, and each pupil should be able to choose from a free curriculum those subjects which he thought would benefit his life as a citizen. The instruction should be permeated by a good Danish spirit, and animated by that quality which poetry especially is able to give to the historical information of a people.

Though Grundtvig took advantage of the new political development to set forth his first plans for a high-school, it must not be supposed that his motive was to establish a school for future politicians. His ideas about the enlightenment of his people had a deeper root and a higher aim; they were bound up with the way he had of regarding the life of the people as a whole. His intention, therefore, was that the school should be a means of developing folk-life in all its fullness.

He certainly believed, however, that a government by the people, or a parliamentary constitution, would be

more harmful than beneficial to Denmark if the legislative assembly were swayed by a crowd of ambitious politicians, and not guided by the enlightened general spirit of the Danish people. Consequently he believed it to be of the utmost importance that the representatives of the people in Parliament should gain that insight into the general Danish spirit which the historical and other instruction of a high-school at Sorø would give them.

He believed, moreover, that all government officials and civil servants would benefit by coming into a freer, closer, and more vital touch with the people whom they served; and therefore suggested that these academic gentlemen, besides being educated at the University of Copenhagen, should spend a year or two at Sorø and share the life there with the youth of all classes.

It is important to note that it was not a high-school for peasants or plebians which he wished to found, but a school for the whole people. Indeed, his aim was so high that he intended that this genuine Danish high-school should, in the course of time, supersede the Latin high-school — that is, the University of Copenhagen: he firmly believed that true science in Denmark must be Danish; in other words, that it must be in close touch with the life it is to illuminate.

He believed also that perfectly free talks in the mother tongue would promote a much more genuine higher culture than the learned lectures which bore the impress of thralldom under the Roman spirit; he hated this spirit, which still dominated the erudite world of the North. He himself gave an excellent example of the free historical talks to be given at the high-school of Sorø when, during the summer of 1838, he had his first opportunity of giving a

course of such talks to a large audience of students in Copenhagen.

His first talk was given on June 20th 1838, the fiftieth anniversary of the emancipation of the Danish peasants from serfdom, which event he well remembered from his childhood. He followed this by a long series of discourses in which were related the history of Denmark and Europe during the last half-century. The only model he followed was that of the lectures given by his cousin Henrik Steffens in Copenhagen (1802—3), whereby the romantic movement was ushered in among the students. But Grundtvig could speak with much more authority and power. He stood before his audiences as the great poet, the tried clergyman, the great student of history, and the powerful prophet of the common people; and after thirty years of waiting he at last gained the ear of the youth of his nation. These talks were the strongest plea he could have made for his ideas of a folk high-school; they showed clearly how his projects would work out in practice.

His brilliant speaking so filled his audiences with enthusiasm that they rendered him homage by singing national folksongs. The movement thus started by Grundtvig spread, and similar lectures were given later by other capable speakers. In Copenhagen a society was formed called the Danish Association, and there people assembled to hear lectures and sing national songs. Similar societies were soon active in other parts of the country, especially in those circles where the people were accustomed, through the religious movement of the laity, to listen to discourses of a spiritual nature.

These people's meetings became an active means of awakening by »the living word« the spiritual life of the rural population; and the new song of the people also

helped in this direction. Formerly only hymns, songs of love and war, and drinking ditties were known; but now Grundtvig and other Danish poets wrote songs about folk-life. The great historical memorials, the shining ideals for the future enlightenment, freedom and progress, the nobility of work, the blessedness of faith in God — in short, the most intimate and spiritual folk-life was poetically pictured and carried by song even to those who were unable to comprehend it intellectually. At all these meetings, before and after the lecture, such songs were sung in unison so that all could participate; and very soon the young people knew hundreds of them by heart, and found in them an expression for their deepest feelings and yearnings.

It was an awakening by means of the »living word« which spread to the farthest corners of the country. Before the end of the century there was in nearly every parish a meeting-house*) where people met to sing and to hear lectures. There are now about 1000 of such »lecture associations« spread throughout the country: each has an average of 100 members, and holds about 10 meetings with lectures annually.

The lectures deal with various phases of subjects such as history, science, political economy, poetry and religion; but the lecturer speaks simply, clearly and freely, and keeps in view the spiritual development of everyday life. He voices to the best of his ability all the emotions that have flowed through the life of the people during the last hundred years. Many of these lectures are, of course, rather poor in quality, but the effect of the »living word« is everywhere becoming evident; and those

*) The work of these meeting-houses is referred to also in the chapter on the influences emanating from the high-schools.

lectures which combine intelligence with feeling exercise a great influence on the minds of the people.

These people's meetings have, indeed, exerted a greater influence in promoting the culture of the rural population than the whole of Denmark's written literature, and they compete with the daily press for the leadership of public opinion. And as the lecturers at all these thousands of public meetings are nearly always disciples of Grundtvig it follows that his strong personality in many ways has a greater influence on the character of the Danish people half a century after his death than at any period during his life. His influence, however, would not have penetrated the people's life very deeply, if the enlightenment had been spread only by means of meetings and lectures. A centralisation of the work was necessary, and this took place when permanent folk high-schools were created.

* * *

Grundtvig's plans for a royal high-school in Sorø were not far from realisation when Christian VIII ascended to the throne in 1839. This intelligent king and his amiable queen understood, and sympathised with, Grundtvig's ideas. But neither the absolute monarch nor the State put the idea of a folk high-school into effect. The king continued to occupy himself with plans for a high-school, even upon his deathbed; but after his death they were laid aside. The Liberal Government which came into power in 1848 strongly supported classical education, and was opposed to what they considered to be Grundtvig's »exaggerated Danism«. Consequently the people did not

receive enlightenment simultaneously with their political freedom, as Grundtvig had wished that they should. But on the other hand, because the carrying out of Grundtvig's plans was not undertaken by those above, but was accomplished by the voluntary work and sacrifice of the people themselves, the schools were freer in form and more closely connected with the life of the people than would otherwise have been the case. Whoever felt called to the work fashioned his own school in his own way, with his own means and the help of friends. Nearly all the schools were privately owned, but closely connected with the popular people's movement; and the schools to-day would, under no circumstances, relinquish their freedom in favour of State-control with larger financial grants, but with hard and fast regulations.

Grundtvig rejoiced over the developments that took place and over the enlightened folk-life which flourished as a result of his labours; and as an old man he joyfully harvested what he had sown with tears during the difficult period of his youth. Whilst clergyman at the Vartov institution in Copenhagen, from 1839 until his death in 1872, he gathered about his pulpit a growing congregation. There his beautiful hymns became so familiar that they now re-echo in Danish churches and in every home where there is the least inclination towards Christianity. At the ripe old age of eighty he began to assemble his followers in large »friends' meetings« in Copenhagen, where Christian testimony, popular lectures, church hymns and folk-songs were freely interchanged.

Grundtvig died when he was eighty-nine years of age, and Denmark realised that its spiritual chieftain had fallen. But the bodyguard of men who had attached

themselves to him fought on with the »living word« as their sword, and with his Christian and national principles, which still guide the spiritual life of the Danes, as their goal.

N. F. S. Grundtvig towers above all other men in the spiritual leadership of the Danish people.



C. Hold



A Danish Folk High School (Frederiksborg).

CHAPTER II.

The First Period of the Folk High-Schools 1844—1864.

Christen Kold.

The first Danish folk high-school was erected by patriotic men during the autumn of 1844, and found its site in the village of Rødding, Northern Slesvig, which lies near the border of Northern Jutland.

That the folk high-schools had their beginning on this border was due to peculiar national conditions. The common people were Danish, but the country had been governed for many years by German officials who were educated at the university of Kiel. When the national movement was started in 1840 the townspeople and peasants became alive to their position as Danes, and tried to assert their nationality in church, school, and the law courts. This resulted in a conflict between Danish and German culture, in which most people of the upper classes sided with the Germans; but sympathisers with the Danish population realized that everything depended upon helping the peasants to become capable of defending their own cause. They deemed that a higher education was necessary, that it should be imparted exclusively in the Danish language, and that it should serve to awaken an appreciation of national values; in other words, they

perceived a need for a practical application of Grundtvig's high-school ideas.

Under the supervision of Professor Christian Flor of Kiel, the foremost leader of the Danish cause in Northern Slesvig, a number of townspeople and peasants subscribed the necessary funds, and Rødding High-School was built. In a speech delivered at a great meeting at Skamlingsbanke on July 4th, 1844 to the people of Northern Slesvig, Grundtvig congratulated the people upon the undertaking, which he described as the building of a spiritual »Dannevirke*) on Denmark's frontier.

The high-school at Rødding was destined to play an important part in the struggle to keep alive the Danish language in the Duchy of Slesvig. But this war with spiritual weapons was soon swept aside by the war with powder and bullets which began in 1848.

The Dano-German war for the possession of Slesvig lasted three years, 1848—50, but was not nearly so ruinous for Denmark's material prosperity as the war which began in 1807. The people, who gained constitutional government on June 5th, 1849, now had far more power of resistance; and the war served to awaken a common national spirit such as never before had been experienced. Not only the young men at the front, but also those who trembled at home for the fate of their sons, had greater things than simple daily cares to occupy their minds and hearts. Their eyes were opened to that which lay beyond the horizon of the village, and their ears to hear speech and song about the great events of their national history. Thereby the soil was prepared for the high-schools; and at the end of the war the man who was best fitted to carry out Grundtvig's great idea appeared.

*) The ancient fortification between Denmark and Germany.

His name was Christen Kold (1816—1870). He came from the common people, his father being a poor shoemaker of the country town of Thisted, in Western Jutland, and his mother coming from a neighbouring farm. In his home Kold learned to realize the value of little things. His hardworking father used to say: »Where nothing is, nothing comes. Where there is a little, there is room for God's blessing.«

Kold remembered these sayings when he spoke to young people. He was very sparing with his words; he could lay great emphasis on a single word, and was able to get a great deal from conversation concerning the smallest daily occurrences. Kold's mother told stories to her children, and thereby gave him his first impression of the power of »t h e l i v i n g w o r d« to make people good and happy.

Whilst studying at the teachers' seminary at Snedsted, Kold experienced a Christian awakening by hearing the farmer and laypreacher Peter Larsen Skræppenborg, of Fyn, speak about the love of God. In later years Kold was asked what his principles and methods were, and he answered: »We have none in this school. But when I was eighteen years old I learned to love God and my neighbour; and that made me so happy that I determined to use all my time and strength to help others to do the same. The high-school aims at teaching young people to love God, their neighbour and their country.«

Kold's Christian awakening brought him into contact with the religious laymen's movement which, at that time, had spread to Northern Jutland, and here he began the work which led to his high-school activity. His first and best pupils came from Christian homes, from the homes which had been influenced by the religious revival. Speak-

ing of this work, he said: »I can speak to the hearts of these young people, because the same strings are stretched on the instruments of our souls; but the tones come more clearly from mine than from theirs.«

In his early manhood he found work in Northern Slesvig as teacher to the children of the well-to-do farmers; and here he took part in the national movement which led to the erection of Rødding High-School. Becoming the leader of a »Danish association«, which was similar to that inspired by Grundtvig in Copenhagen, he soon began to give historical talks to the young people of the neighbourhood, and he at once discovered that instruction could be imparted to children much better by telling them stories than by giving them set lessons taken from a text book. This method of instruction, which harmonizes with Grundtvig's view, was later used in many high-schools, the teacher's lively and vivid narration replacing the learning of lessons by rote. But in the beginning Kold could not get permission to apply this free method of teaching to religious subjects, as it was prescribed that the religious instruction in all schools should be the same.

Despairing of this cast-iron system Kold thought of emigrating to America where, he had heard, one was allowed to teach as one pleased; but he went instead to Smyrna in Asia-Minor, where he held the position of servant to a Danish missionary. Later he became a book-binder in this Turko-Grecian city, and as such supported himself for five years. During this period of solitude his educational ideas became ripe for their realization.

When the war broke out in 1848 he entered the army as a volunteer, and discovered that the soldiers and the people everywhere were animated by the same spirit that had brought the high-school into being. Referring to this

later he said, »My aim is to make permanent the enthusiasm which inspired everybody for a brief period in 1848.« It was, however, not the war spirit he had in mind, but that kind of patriotism that makes the individual forgetful of self and ready to give his whole strength to the common cause of his people. By the Constitution of 1849 Denmark gained, together with political self-government, ample liberty in educational matters, and consequently the barrier that had hindered Kold was removed.

That same year Wilhelm Birkedal, one of Grundtvig's ablest disciples, was appointed clergyman for the parish of Ryslinge, on the island of Funen; and his impressive sermons attracted great crowds of people who had heretofore lacked a pastor with whom they could feel affinity. By his ardent talks on Danish literature, history and true patriotism, he did much to widen their horizon. His words brought the peasants under the influence of the spirit of 1848, and transformed them into enlightened men and women, without depriving them of their simple Christian faith. It was in the midst of these people that Kold believed he could best erect his high-school.

Whilst living in Smyrna he had saved about £ 55; but this was insufficient to build a school! He therefore went to Copenhagen, and submitted his plan to Grundtvig, who helped him to collect about £ 70: with this sum Kold was satisfied. »There is room for God's blessing where there is a little« he said. During their conversation, Kold and Grundtvig disagreed on a very important point — the age of admission to high-schools. Grundtvig maintained that the pupils must be at least eighteen years of age, because not until then were they mature enough to grasp the spiritual significance of human life. Kold stubbornly insisted that the pupils must come to him at fifteen,

for at that age they were still juvenile and more likely to receive his words in good faith. However, Kold discovered very soon after he had begun his school that Grundtvig was right. Youngsters of fifteen could not follow his ideas; but the older pupils, who had experienced more of life, listened to him with their whole soul. From then it was settled that the minimum age for high-school pupils must be eighteen.

Grundtvig was unable to understand how Kold could build a school for £ 125: Rødding High-School had cost at least ten times that sum. But Kold intended that life at his school should be similar to that of the cottagers. He bought a few acres of land in Ryslinge, demolished the dilapidated building, and erected in the cheapest possible manner a frame house with thatched roof. He himself assisted in the buildings as hodman. The house consisted of a schoolroom with three windows, a living room and a kitchen. Kold and his assistant, both unmarried, slept in the attic together with their pupils, about twenty-five young men. Payment for board, lodging and tuition was only about twelve shillings a month:*) but the board was, indeed, so plain that the entire household used only one kilogram of sugar during the whole winter. In the fruit-soup there was one raisin for each person. For breakfast there was »Øllebrød«, which consisted of beer, water and black bread boiled together without any kind of sweetening matter. Coffee and tea were unknown. But there were no complaints about this Spartan mode of life. There was a daily feast of good words which made the young men forget all about food; and even in bed they

*) The house-keeping was in the hands of Kold's unmarried sister.

continued to discuss spiritual and intellectual problems under the guidance of their teachers until sleep overcame them.

Kold used to tell stories from the Bible, especially those which illustrated God's guidance of the Israelites. »When I am inspired,« he said, »I can speak so that my hearers will remember what I say, even beyond this world.« He also narrated the story of mankind, using Grundtvig's »Handbook of Universal History«, which was one of the few books Kold constantly read. He would read aloud selections from the poet Ingemann's novels of medieval Denmark, in which are to be found many instances of a sincere devotion to the Fatherland. He used historical subjects as a medium for imparting his own thoughts; he used stories from history as a basis for setting forth his own reflections on human life and its laws. When older he reflected in the same way on his life, in which he saw God's fatherly guidance everywhere. The centre of his view of life was faith in Providence. He believed that »the spirit« was the moving power in all forms of life; but his conception of spirit was by no means narrow, and he spoke about natural law in human life in plain and direct terms.

He always tried to speak to the very souls of his pupils, and the young people felt that his clear blue eyes penetrated into the depths of their inner life. He considered the acquisition of external knowledge as quite secondary, believing that a young man with an awakened and clarified inner life could easily acquire the information he needed in his daily occupation. The aim of the high-school was to approach the soul of the pupils through »the living word«, and thus awaken a life which would never stop growing. Kold said that his especial task was

to enliven the young people rather than to enlighten them.

The following incident, which occurred during the last years of his life, indicates what he considered the main object of his school. An efficient teacher, who later became a prominent politician, came to Kold's school as assistant, and eagerly enquired what subjects he should teach. Kold answered: »I always speak an hour every morning, and towards evening I usually tell the pupils something about my life; between these times you must see that the youngsters are occupied so that they don't make a rumpus. That will be your job, and you can yourself decide what you will teach them.«

Kold considered the companionship he formed with his pupils, apart from the regular lectures, to be of great importance; and he revealed an unusual capacity for educating the young by means of short pithy remarks. He had a remarkable ability to perceive the significance of common daily occurrences, and to detect in little things human values which »great minds« are accustomed to disregard. His words were unforgettable; and old pupils, after a lapse of sixty years, are able to recall hundreds of his sayings.

He dressed so plainly that he might easily be mistaken for the school's gardener; but he was very orderly, with respect both to his person and to surroundings. One day a friend, Peter Larsen, entered the school room without removing his dirty wooden shoes. »Take off your wooden shoes, Peter!« said Kold. »What«, shouted Larsen, »Is your floor too good to walk on with wooden shoes?« »No«, answered Kold, »the floor is not too good to walk upon with soiled wooden shoes, but my sister's work is.« It was his sister who scrubbed the floors.

On his way to church one Sunday he met a neighbour

who, fearing wet weather, was bringing in his corn. When the busy man saw Kold he stammered that it was wrong, indeed, to be working on a Sunday. »Yes« said Kold, »Whose grain are you bringing in?« »It is our own grain«, answered the man. »Well«, returned Kold, »in that case you are at liberty to do as you please with it; but over at our place the harvest belongs to God, and He has given us leave to quit work for to-day.«

A young man once said to Kold: »I am glad to listen to your talks, but sorry that I cannot remember them.« »Don't worry about that«, said Kold, »it would be another matter if it were a question of acquiring ordinary information. But it is like that which happens out there in the fields. If we put drain pipes into the ground, we must mark the place in order to find them again. But when we sow grain there is no need to drive in pegs, for it comes up again! You may be sure that whatever you have listened to with pleasure, whatever has really found good soil in you, will certainly come up again when you have need for it.«

From such remarks it may be realized what a firm confidence Kold had in the power of his own words: but this confidence did not arise from self-esteem. It sprang from his conviction that his speaking served the spirit of the people, which in turn gave his words their force and vitality. He held, moreover, that it was necessary that his listeners should give their unreserved attention to his words; for only thus could the spirit unite the speaker and the audience in living communion. Kold therefore never allowed his pupils to take notes whilst he spoke, believing that the pupil, acting as a reporter, isolated himself from the vitally important spiritual fellowship.

Kold deemed it important that people should live

plainly and simply, »with their feet on the ground,« as the Jutlanders say. He taught the young people that one can be noble-minded, even though one milks the cows or clears away the dung. He scoffed at the »progress« which revealed itself in extravagant clothes and superficial amusements. There is, indeed, an essential difference between the ordinary democracy that aims at the attainment of a culture in mere material things and the democracy of the high-schools, which strives to unite plain customs and a simple, frugal life with a genuine culture of the mind and heart. Kold has helped the Danish people to save millions of crowns, which would otherwise have been spent on luxuries, by teaching them how to live: further, he has helped the peasants to put more heart and soul into daily work which formerly they had regarded as oppressive drudgery. Kold had nothing to do with the teaching of agriculture; but his words have, nevertheless, borne fruit in Danish agriculture. It is not only practical machines but an alert people that have made Danish butter famous in the world market.

After a few years, Kold moved his high-school from Ryslinge to Dalby, where he had many friends among the Christian laity; and here he also ran a so-called free school for the children of his friends. He taught religious subjects without text books, by telling the children Bible stories, and singing with them songs and hymns by Grundtvig. His instruction was in every way free and full of life, differing greatly from that of the public schools. The school became endeared to the children, whose parents eagerly participated in everything that went on there.

Kold started many other similar free schools in Funen and elsewhere. Wherever several families united to set

up such a school, he sent them one of the ablest of his high-school pupils as teacher. Several hundred schools of this kind have sprung up in Denmark, and their humane manner of teaching has also greatly influenced the national schools. It was Kold's hope that the free schools would gradually supersede the national schools, for he held that the instruction of the children should be the parents' and not the State's concern. Unfortunately, this hope has not yet been realised; but the free schools founded by Kold, like the Grundtvig high-schools, play an important part in the life of the Danish people.

As Kold's pupils paid very small fees, it was necessary for him to obtain financial assistance from other sources; and from 1856 he received an annual grant for his high-school from the State. But he accepted this support only on condition that the public authorities did not interfere in any way with the instruction of the pupils. The State now pays almost a million crowns yearly towards the support of the folk high-schools, partly as direct subsidy, and partly in the form of scholarships. What surprises most foreigners is the fact that the State pays this grant without encroaching in the least upon the school's inner freedom. Thanks are due to Christen Kold for this.

In 1862 Kold moved again, and built a fine school in Dalum, in the middle of Funen, a spot within easy access of all parts of Denmark. Here the number of pupils increased to a hundred during the winter term from November to April, and here he began a term for young women during May, June and July.

This high-school was not the only one in the country. At the end of the three years' war, Rødding High-School was re-opened, and the liberal-minded peasants of Sealand erected a high-school at Hindholm, which also attracted

a large number of pupils. But Kold said with his usual bluntness: »My school is the best! At Rødning they work for Danish national life as against German culture, and when the former is triumphant, the task of that school will have passed; at Hindholm they work for the rights of the peasants, and when the peasants have gained the upper hand (and they have already done so) there will be no further use for Hindholm High-School.*) But in my school we work for Life as against Death, and that work must continue as long the world exists.«

When Grundtvig reached the age of seventy, his friends raised funds for a high-school which should bear his name and be under his personal supervision. Grundtvig desired to make Kold the head of this school,**) which was built near Copenhagen; but Kold declined. For the inauguration of this school Grundtvig wrote his famous song, which begins with the words:

What sunshine is to the darkened mould,
is true enlightenment to the sons of the soil;
Far more valuable than the lustrous gold,
it is one's God and one's self to know.

With this as their motto the folk high-schools of Denmark have flourished more and more.

*) The school has, indeed, since been discontinued.

**) Grundtvig's High-School still exists.

CHAPTER III.

The Second Period of the Folk High-Schools. 1864—1900.

In 1864 war between Denmark and Germany again broke out. This time it was the avowed intention of Prussia, under the leadership of Bismarck, to seize the duchies of Holstein and Slesvig. Meanwhile the Western Powers calmly looked on, heedless of the fact that this move was designed to lay the foundation of Germany's future maritime power. The war ended, of course, with the crushing defeat of Denmark, which stood quite alone against Prussia, Austria and the German Confederacy. Denmark lost not only Holstein and Southern Slesvig but also Danish-speaking Northern Slesvig as far as »Kongeaaen«; and so great was the loss that the people were tempted to despair of the mutilated Kingdom's future as an independent State. But this severe blow had cured the people of romantic dreaming; they had acquired more realism in their way of thinking. They pulled themselves together and determined to rise again by work, taking as their motto the words, »We must win inwardly all that we have lost outwardly.« There arose young leaders who strove to raise the people by setting them new tasks. Dalgas began to convert the heath of Jutland into a plantation; Tietgen developed the overseas commerce; Fjord

started the experimental station which, to a large extent, has served to promote agriculture; Georg Brandes endeavoured to bring Denmark into communication with modern French criticism and literature, so as to allow fresh breezes to enter the æsthetic circles of Copenhagen; Hoffding brought a message to the student-world from modern English philosophy; and Wilhelm Beck founded the »Home Mission«, which has done very much towards bringing about a Christian revival.

New men appeared also in the folk high-schools. Everything seemed to depend upon educating a new generation which could, by firm will and industry, rebuild what had been demolished by the war. Like Kold the high-school teachers wished to »awaken« their pupils; but they realised also that they must lay greater stress on specific instruction than Kold had done.

The teachers who led in this new direction belonged to Grundtvig's closest circle of disciples, and they introduced more and more of the master's ideas into the work of the schools. At the same time, there was an increase in desire for enlightenment which resulted in the erection of folk high-schools in many parts of the country. The aged Grundtvig rejoiced over the advancement of the cause, and said with a broad smile, »Now one has to use both hands in order to count the number of high-schools in the country.«

The best known high-school men after 1864 were five divinity students: Schrøder and Nutzhorn, who started Askov High-School; Baago and Nørregaard, who founded Testrup School; and Ernst Trier, who erected the high-school at Vallekilde. A sixth, Frede Bojsen, built a school on the beautiful island of Møen; but being drawn into political life, he was lost as a worker for the cause of pop-

ular enlightenment. All these men opened their schools in 1865—66, and during the following years still more schools were started under able leaders. The teachers who had received no university training often had the advantage, because of their way of thinking and mode of life, of being in closer touch with the people they sought to serve. In spite of their peculiar characteristics, the schools possessed one thing in common — the good spirit in which their work was done. They have contributed incalculably towards the awakening, enlightenment and efficiency of the Danish rural population.

Among the high-school leaders after 1864 Ludvig Schrøder of Askov rises high above all others as *primus inter pares*. He was not a genius like Christian Kold; but he understood Grundtvig's ideas better than any other high-school leader. He was jokingly called »Professor in Grundtvig«. He had a wide view of the object and aims of the high-schools, and was, in his time, the greatest worker in their service. So successful was his work that Askov High-School, which he created, is now the super-high-school of Scandinavia.

Ludvig Schrøder (1836—1908) was the son of a forester, who worked on an estate in Lolland. The proprietor of the estate was the renowned patriot and philanthropist, Count Christian D. F. Reventlow, the author of the great rural reforms by which, at the end of the 18th century, the Danish peasants were released from serfdom and an attempt was made to provide for their educational needs. Schrøder's life-work benefited much from his having passed his childhood within the living memory of Count Reventlow and his noble work of enlightenment; but it was, however, not before he became acquainted with Grundtvig's

vig that he received his higher initiation as a worker for mental and spiritual progress in Denmark.

Whilst a student in Copenhagen (1854—60) Schrøder went to hear Grundtvig, and became his adherent. He was strongly influenced by Grundtvig's »Mythology«, in which are majestically pictured the tasks of Northern countries in the service of the spirit of humanity. In 1862 Schrøder and his friend Professor H. Nutzhorn started work at the Rødning high-school, but in 1864 they were forbidden by the Prussian authorities to proceed. A year later, with small means, they founded Askov High-School just north of the new border. They chose this place for the school in order to help the Danes of Southern Jutland to preserve their own folk-life whilst under foreign rule. The situation of Askov High-School gave it a peculiar stamp. It grew like a vigorous tree with its roots planted in the soil of Southern Jutland, and with branches spreading over Scandinavia, where every one keenly sympathized with those kinsmen who were fighting for their own language against the coercion of foreigners. Of the many undertakings that grew up in Denmark after 1864, there was nothing that stood in closer relationship to the defeat than this school, which was erected as a »spiritual fortification« at the frontier where the battle for the cause of the Scandinavian peoples continued.

Schrøder was so serious that he sometimes tended to depress the spirits of those around him. He often sat silent, with his hands hidden in his huge coal-black beard, like Odin*) brooding over Valhalla's peril. However, when he stood in his rostrum, and his subdued voice spoke

*) A figure of the Old Norse Mythology; it is the same as Woden in Wednesday.

about youth as the creative age of the spirit, when he painted pictures from the old-Norse Mythology as parables of the life of the soul in the present generation, or when he gave, with spiritual insight, powerful surveys of universal history, then his words, simple though they were, exerted an overwhelming influence upon the listening flock. He often quoted from Grundtvig's prose and verse, and he might be called the great prophet's interpreter; but he did more than follow in the footsteps of Grundtvig. He saw the implications of Grundtvig's teaching, and potently brought them to bear upon the life of the present.

He took as his motto a line of Grundtvig's »Bjærke-maal«:

»Day and Deed are rhymes for men.«*)

He yearned to speak to the young people so as to fire them with a desire for achievement in their daily life. He believed that only words which beget achievement were worth while. A ceaseless worker himself, he inspired countless people to become active citizens in the service of their country. Schrøder greatly admired work which was done for the common welfare; he despised those who retired from the society of others in order to ponder over their own souls, or waste their time vaguely dreaming. When the young people, with the help of the school, had formed a view of life, it devolved upon them to give it a practical test. He held that if one worked in the right spirit, with that love for humanity which should inspire all endeavour, one need not fear to lose soul-values by a hearty participation in practical life.

Schrøder often spoke about the »poetry of human

*) The English reader would note that in Danish rhyme may denote not only end rhyme, but also alliteration.

activity«. It seemed to him that those who conceived and started new enterprises in commerce, manufacture and agriculture were, after all, greater poets than those who set little lyrical sentiments to rhyme. It would be difficult to name a greater advocate of the dignity of labour than Ludvig Schrøder. No one could come into contact with him without receiving an impulse to live an energetic, enterprising life. He was proud of the fact that many prominent men in the practical life of Denmark had been pupils at Askov Folk High-School.

Most important was his influence upon the advancement of agriculture, which made very rapid development after 1864. Though not an expert farmer himself he had a remarkable faculty of urging others onward in this field of industry. He himself owned a model farm, and among his livestock was very proud to have a cow which was considered the best milking-cow in Jutland. He eagerly discussed agricultural improvements with the numerous farmers who visited him. As a result of the fall in the price of grain, which occurred about 1880, butter production on a large scale, with co-operative dairies, cream separators etc., was developed; and it consequently became necessary to improve the fodder of the cows in order that they should yield more milk. The cultivation of turnips then became a subject of much discussion, in which Schrøder enthusiastically joined.

The writer recalls the following conversation which took place whilst he was a young teacher at Askov High-School. Schrøder was sitting at the end of the supper-table. On his right hand was a farmer from Sealand, who was paying his first visit to Askov; and on his left was a small Jutland farmer — a former pupil of Schrøder's — who lived near the school. »How many acres have you?«

Schröder inquired of the Sealander. »Oh, about 110«, was the answer. »On how many acres do you cultivate turnips?« »Well, I have half an acre with turnips. I would like to have an acre, but it is difficult to get hands to weed.« Schröder then turned to the Jutlander. »And how many acres have you?« »I have forty.« »How many acres of turnips?« »About five or six.« Turning again to the Sealander, Schröder asked, »Can you now work out how many acres with turnips you ought to have?« »Yes, the number would be large; but it is of no use, for I cannot get hands to weed all those turnips. Besides, I can't keep very many cows, for no one will milk them nowadays.« »Is that really so!« exclaimed Schröder. »Can't you get any one to help you with the weeding, and are your daughters unable to get anyone to help them milk the cows? Or do you mean to say that you and your daughters are above weeding the turnips and milking the cows, and that you put the work into the hands of hired strangers? If so, I quite understand why you have difficulty in adapting your farm to modern requirements. You must alter your course. You must not regard any kind of farm work as menial work to be left to hired hands; hired hands are often incompetent. Take part in the work yourself, and demonstrate to your labourers that work ennobles a man. Get everybody who works on the farm to feel that everybody works in fellowship, and that they are all esteemed as human beings. Then you will soon find that all have come to regard it as a matter of honour that the farm is run on modern, efficient lines, and you will be able to sow twenty acres with turnips!«

In this blunt fashion Schröder spoke to his visitors. Some were offended, but others benefited by his counsel, and pushed ahead. It would not be easy to say how many

thousands of acres of turnips have been cultivated as a result of his advocacy. It was, however, not business life that he wished to forward by his eager discussions about turnips and cows, co-operative dairies and associations for the control of milk; it was the human life in the thousands of homes that he had at heart.

As a lover of real life Schrøder was opposed to all theoretical systems. Like his master, Grundtvig, he preferred all instruction to be historical, for he regarded history as real life preserved by the memory of man; history was the experience of the human race, and therefore had a much greater significance than any philosophical system. Historical evidence has an authority to which all must submit; but on the other hand it does not deprive any one of his independent judgment. It places the facts of life before the young man, who must then plan the conduct of his life accordingly. He is not branded with another man's ideas, as are those who are taught after a preconceived system.

In thus presenting history the teacher also avoids converting the instruction into a one-sided agitation. Darwinism, Marxism etc., are proclaimed neither as gospel-truths nor as corrupting lies. The young people learn that such men as Charles Darwin and Karl Marx have lived, and that they arrived at the ideas which are associated with their names through life-experience. Then the youngsters are free to appropriate to their individual lives whatever is likely to be of service. In Grundtvig's opinion, this was the only scientific method of historical teaching; and he believed that the presentation of history as an elucidation of human life was the great educational mission of the Northern peoples. Ludvig Schrøder did much

to guide the work of the high-school along the lines of Grundtvig's conceptions.

But however history is presented, there is always a danger of the teacher's becoming addicted to sterile, theoretical speculations; for they whose thoughts are occupied with the great continuity in existence always tend to become withdrawn from the reality of life, and to build up systems in which the warm life-blood does not circulate. Therefore Grundtvig always emphasized the part that women should play in the work for popular enlightenment, for he believed that they would never forget that the heart is the life-source of human beings.

Schrøder's gifted wife helped much to infuse life into the instruction given at the Askov School. Charlotte Schrøder, with exceptional ability, solved the problem of being house-wife in a great school which provided board and lodging for hundreds of pupils, and of receiving thousands of guests from all parts of Denmark and the neighbouring countries.

Christian Kold was unmarried until a few years before his death, and so lacked one of the great advantages of Schrøder. It was almost exclusively Kold's words, from the lecture-platform or in daily conversation, which created a homely atmosphere for the pupils as well as for the temporary guests. He certainly made good his assertion that the word, spoken with spirit, is the one essential thing in high-school work. But it is, however, an important — if not indispensable — side of the »schools for life« that the daily intercourse between pupils and staff should resemble, as far as possible, the intercourse in a good Danish home. Such intercourse is a means of promoting the spiritual fellowship which is necessary if speech and song are to penetrate the minds and hearts of the young,

and thereby give them an enlightenment that will serve them throughout their lives.

The folk high-school must be home-like, if it is to fulfil its purpose. It must initiate the young into a participation in the life of their people and country, and in the affairs of humanity at large; but it must not deprive them of the cordiality which they bring with them from the homes of their childhood. It must teach the young that earthly life must not degenerate into an egotistic struggle for existence, but must be a community-life for all men, so that the country in which they live and, furthermore, the whole world, becomes the common home in which all people co-operate.

The school for young people, where, so to speak, the transition from their private to their public life takes place, must be like a large home open to all. Mrs. Schröder was exceptionally well qualified to make the school at Askov a place of this kind. She was a pioneer in this field of high-school work, and her endeavours form a beautiful example for every high-school warden's wife. In this way she essentially contributed towards making the high-schools an organic part of the life of the Danish people. Mrs Schröder was of a bright, magnanimous disposition, and both frank and sensitive. Without neglecting her duty towards her husband and large family of children, she opened her heart and her home to all the young people who gathered about her husband's rostrum. When he subsided into a depressing silence she made amends by radiating light and warmth to those around. To apply a mythological figure — as was the custom in those days — it might be said that she resembled Freya, the kindly mother of the gods, by the side of the brooding Odin among the guests of a spiritual Valhalla. She could further

be compared with Freya who, according to the ancient tradition, whispered such words of advice in her husband's ear as benefited him and all the other gods.

Mrs Schrøder took great pleasure in arranging festivals where several hundred people gathered in the hall, which was decorated with wreaths and Danish flags. The tables were adorned with flowers, and the meals were plain but well-prepared. She understood the art of making the daily life at once full of colour and home-like for the numerous students and guests; and the young people, coming from the little homes to which they were much devoted, soon came to feel at home in larger surroundings than they had known before. They were drawn from the small homes of childhood into a Danish royal hall, where they were surrounded by rich historical reminiscences, and where their minds expanded from the love of family into a love of country.

Of even greater benefit to the Danish high-school was the warmth of heart which Mrs. Schrøder communicated to her husband. He had lost his mother as a little boy, and had, as a consequence, difficulty during daily intercourse with people in giving simple expression to his feelings. At times he was impetuous and revealed his passionate soul. More often, however, he was gruff and reserved in his manner; and it then seemed surprising that the same man, when he stood on the lecture-platform, with great warmth bore testimony to the truth that love is »the tranquil source of the river of strength«.

He affected his youthful audience deeply by his descriptions of noble women in Danish history; but those who were acquainted with Schrøder's private life know well that these gentler tones in his talks had their source in his wife's tender and sympathetic disposition. She was to him a mirror in which was revealed the fact that genial-

ity constitutes the strength of the Danish people. She was a valkyrie or battle-nymph who stoutly followed him on his spiritual expeditions through the Ages, and who imparted to his talks of bygone generations the warmth of life. With her aid history became for him a living power, a source of life from which humanity ever arose with renewed strength.

In the course of time, a circle of prominent helpers gathered around this man and his wife, whose home was the heart of the life of Askov High-School. The oldest of these was H. Nutzhorn, who was an excellent authority on Danish history, and had the especial merit of having greatly promoted folk-singing in the folk high-schools.

The instruction at the Askov School was, on the whole, much more complete than at Kold's school. Many of the most capable pupils, after the first winter-course, returned in order to learn more; and Schröder continually felt the need of extending the curriculum. This resulted, at length, in the conversion of Askov High-School into an extended high-school, the purpose of which is to provide especially for the needs of pupils who have previously attended an ordinary high-school, and who wish to proceed further along the lines of free Danish education.

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In April, 1878, a meeting was held at the Tivoli in Copenhagen, where the high-school leader, Jens Nørregaard, of Testrup, emphatically declared that the time had come to erect the State high-school which Grundtvig had proposed.

Nørregaard believed that it was impossible to create

such a school for all classes, which should have a staff of the best teachers, without the aid of the State. He insisted that only under the control of the State could the Sorø School become as liberal and universal as its aim demanded; but, at the same time, he hoped that the government and parliament would choose the head teachers from among the experienced teachers of the folk high-schools, which were then so numerous. Ludvig Schrøder supported Nørregaard's plan, but doubted whether it could be realized; and he suggested that, if the plan should prove impracticable, they should endeavour to maintain, by private means, extended courses of instruction following high-school lines. For him, the main thing was that the existing free school for adults should be extended and improved, and thus gradually approximate Grundtvig's dream of a mountain-top from which one could make scientific observations and investigations, and, from a Danish viewpoint, survey the history of mankind. Many high-school men, including Ernst Trier, who had founded one of the best and largest high-schools at Vallekilde, strongly opposed the idea of a State high-school. Trier maintained very forcibly that it would be an irretrievable loss if the high-schools should relinquish any of the freedom which they owed to the fact that they were independent of the State's interference. Another circumstance that militated against the establishment of a State high-school was the great Constitutional conflict which had now begun.

Under these circumstances, Ludvig Schrøder conceived the idea of extending the instruction given at Askov High-School; the course should occupy two years, and be open to former high-school pupils. Many supported this idea, and Trier, Baagø and Nørregaard promised assistance. Subscriptions towards the realization of the plan were

solicited throughout the country; but the best help Schrøder received was the offer made by a capable young scientist to teach at the proposed school.

Grundtvig was educated during the Romantic Period. In the realm of the mind, history and poetry seemed to him the only things of importance. Though his eyes had been opened to the practical demands of modern life — especially by his visits to England — he was unable to perceive that natural science played an important part in the spiritual life of mankind. He seemed to think that physics, chemistry and mathematics would create materialism if they were given, as in revolutionary France, the most prominent place in school-instruction. Ludvig Schrøder, however, well understood that thinking young people, at the time when the theory of evolution was everywhere winning acceptance, demanded a thorough instruction in the laws of Nature. It was necessary to meet this need; but it should so be met as to avoid a naturalism hostile to the Christian faith. The historical interpretation of life which, heretofore, had to contest with the classical formalism, now had as its most dangerous opponent the modern naturalism with its materialistic view of life. The great thing was to find men who could teach the Danish youth to combine respect for natural law with a veneration for the spirit of history. Such men were difficult to find; for nearly all of Grundtvig's disciples followed in the master's footsteps, and had real insight only into the historical-poetical side of human life. But now the prominent natural-scientist, Paul la Cour, meteorologist and physicist, offered his services.

La Cour was the son of a much esteemed farmer, and was reared in a good Grundtvigian home. He combined a childlike Christian faith with a pronounced scientific bent.

Even when quite young he made discoveries and inventions which gave him a high standing in the world of science; and because of this inherent simplicity he was able to give clear and comprehensible representations of difficult and complex physical phenomena. He was precisely the man Schröder needed for the new course at Askov High-school, which was opened in the autumn of 1878; and in the course of time other able teachers were secured. Soon there was a large attendance of pupils, and everything was working satisfactorily. At first only young men were admitted, but later some provision was made for women.

Influenced by Schröder's ideas as to the place of history in high-schools, Paul la Cour represented mathematics and physics from the standpoint of historical development. As these subjects were usually taught systematically, this was a new departure. He spoke to his pupils of how studious men throughout the ages had gradually penetrated into the laws of number and nature; and he thereby succeeded in awakening an interest in, and a comprehension of, these subjects even among those pupils to whom systematised mathematics had been unintelligible; at the same time, he gave his pupils a good idea of the conquests of the spirit of man in the natural world. He, in fact, succeeded in revealing the close connection which mathematics and physics had with the other subjects which were found in the curriculum of the folk high-schools. But this ingenious and lovable man helped the young people mostly by the testimony he gave to the fact that Christian faith and scientific insight may be united in the same soul. His teaching preserved many of them from the conflicting doubts which, especially at the end of the nineteenth century, tortured many earnest young

people who, whilst wishing to keep abreast of modern knowledge, felt that they could not give up the inherited faith of their fathers.

The flower of the Danish high-school students gradually assembled at Askov; and it became customary for those who desired training as folk high-school or free-school teachers to seek it there. Schrøder, furthermore, managed to link experimental stations and technical schools with Askov High-School; and the village of Askov, which originally consisted of a few farms, developed into a kind of people's university town whose light shone far and wide.

In much the same way as the towns in the Middle Ages grew up around the monasteries, small towns sprang up around the other folk high-schools: and the people living in the neighbourhood became accustomed to attend the public gatherings which were held at the schools.

The lay-preacher, Peter Larsen, who owned a large farm near Askov, and who often visited the school, used to gather the people of his neighbourhood, after the harvests, to meetings at his home. When all the corn was gathered in, it was an old custom among the peasants to celebrate the occasion by a great feast with much eating and drinking, card-playing and dancing. But Peter Larsen converted these events into edifying folk-festivals, without extravagant gorging, and with singing and talking in place of dancing and card-playing. A new kind of harvest-festival came into being, where people gave thanks to God for the growth that was taking place in the life of the Danish people.

After 1873 similar harvest-festivals, or »Autumn-meetings«, were also held at Askov High-School. People came from long distances as guests for several days; they lived

fraternally together, attending lectures, singing and having general intercourse. Later this form of festival was followed elsewhere and several hundred of them are now held all over the country. Christian Kold had made a point of holding teachers' meetings at his school, the object being to discuss the work of the school from the standpoint of public service. Kold's example was followed by the schools at Askov, Testrup and several of the newer ones.

High-school teachers also travelled about the country giving numerous lectures in the meeting-houses,*) and assisting at the large open-air public meetings held during the summer. By these means, popular instruction was spread in ever-widening circles, and the number of young people desirous of attending the high-schools increased more and more.

As might well be supposed, Grundtvig's ideas won recognition in other spheres than in the schools for children and adults. Though forming a minority of the population, the men who had attended the folk high-schools played a prominent part in the political and economic life of the people. As another writer mentions elsewhere in this book, many of them became members of parliament, and were chosen as the leaders in local government and in the co-operative associations. However, though the folk high-schools exerted a great influence on the practical life of the people, especially among the rural population, they did not yield to the temptation to convert the instruction into technical training. They maintained for their aim the dissemination of a general culture which should develop the life of each human soul and promote

*) Referred to elsewhere in this book.

the spiritual fellowship of the whole people. On the other hand, special technical schools sprang up in connection with the high-schools. In these, purely technical instruction was given in agricultural subjects, mechanical drawing, domestic science etc. But they were, however, usually under the direction of people who had previously attended a high-school; and although both sides of the school activity were kept entirely independent of each other, there was a natural kinship between them. They wished, each in its own way, but in the same spirit, to serve the common cause of the people; and they concurred in the opinion that young people needed to attend both kinds of schools, first the folk high-schools, and later the technical schools.

Schrøder's pupil, Niels Pedersen, erected Ladelund Agricultural School near Askov in the latter part of the seventies. A few years later Jørgen Pedersen and Hans Appel (also former pupils of Askov High-School) started another large agricultural school in Dalum, near Odense, where Kold's school had been situated. Paul la Cour's brother, Jørgen la Cour, a capable teacher in agriculture, also ran an agricultural school in Lyngby, near Copenhagen. There, this school and a folk high-school worked concurrently for many years. Simultaneously another large and efficient agricultural school was started, and soon the number of such schools increased to ten.

Ernst Trier at Vallekilde combined a technical school for artisans with the ordinary high-school, and a similar development took place at about ten other schools.

Experimental stations, the State agricultural advisory department, and the dairy control unions became closely connected with the high-schools; but in spite of this success in the rural districts it seemed that the cause of

popular instruction could not win ground in the towns. The interest of the industrial workers centred about their unions and the struggle for higher wages to the exclusion of everything else. The so-called cultured middle class looked with disdain upon the »ultra-Danish peasant high-schools« which, in their opinion, only served to make the rural population puffed-up and arrogant.

The protracted Constitutional conflict contributed much towards the lack of appreciation of the high-schools among the upper classes. Without taking an active part in politics, it followed as a matter of course that the high-schools allied themselves to the ranks of the Left, which had freedom and the people's progress on its programme. At the same time there was a decline in the spiritual life of the schools, which was caused by the fact that the people, during the period of the »provisional laws«, especially from 1884 to 1894, were so exclusively occupied by the political struggle and the numerous meetings associated with it, that their interest in the cause of popular enlightenment was thereby diminished. But when the Constitutional struggle ended, the cause flourished again.

During more recent years a new danger has threatened the spiritual life of the people; namely, the prominent part which business concerns have come to take. This danger is also evident in the growth of the co-operative associations. However, the high-schools have, on the whole, been able to maintain their idealistic view of life throughout the changing times; and Ludvig Schrøder could, after a wonderfully active life, close his eyes with great hope for their future.

CHAPTER IV.

The Folk High-Schools of the Twentieth Century.

While it seems a fairly easy matter to characterize the folk high-schools in their earlier phases, it seems very difficult — if not impossible — for one who is at present engaged in high-school work, to give an account of the schools as they exist in the twentieth century. The next generation will probably be able more clearly to distinguish the present-day characteristics. I must, therefore, be content to mention some of the innovations which have been introduced into the folk high-schools during the last twenty-five years.

The younger high-school leaders have striven as far as possible to be faithful to the good traditions which they have inherited, and have sincerely worked in the same spirit as their predecessors. At the same time, the high-schools have, as occasion demanded, extended their sphere of activity.

The number of schools and the attendance of the pupils has constantly increased; the instruction given has become more varied, and the daily life in the schools is a little more comfortable: but it cannot be denied that there are signs of a lowering of their inner vitality. The influence of the high-schools has perhaps become a little more superficial than in Kold's time, just as a stream becomes less deep when it spreads itself over a wider area.

I venture to say, however, that the spirit that has permeated them in the past has not deserted them; they have still been able to resist the temptation to become institutions of mere learning; they still seek strength from deep sources and strive to serve the vital, inner life of the young people.

The aim is the same as it was in the beginning; but the means have become modified with the changing times. Informal lectures and song are still the main methods of the work; but in addition stress is now laid upon the pupil's personal work with book and pen, and an effort is made to promote discussions about the lectures.

Modern »naturalism« has exerted an influence upon the presentation of historical subjects, as given by high-school men. Former high-school teachers gave history a romantic interpretation, regarding it as a connected story of the life of mankind. Antiquity was its childhood and youth; the Middle Ages, its manhood; and modern times, its old age; and this story was used very freely to show God's guidance and to throw light on the lives of individuals. History became, to these teachers, the interpretation of a grand world story; and as they could deal more freely with antiquity, with its poetical as well as historical tradition, they dwelt chiefly upon ancient and medieval history, and often did not get beyond the time of the discovery of America.

The younger high-school men have tried to throw light upon our own times, and it may be that we sometimes neglect »older times« too much in our attempt to paint as true and vivid a picture as possible of recent times. Whilst not laying stress on the guidance of God in historical evolution, we endeavour to maintain a spiritual view of existence and, as a means thereto, portray some

of the great men who gave their lives in the service of God and their fellow men.

The older high-school men used the Scandinavian myths as parables of the psychology and spiritual stirrings of the people of our times. We younger men find it more natural to look for examples, with which to elucidate the inner life, in the great literary works of the last century. Talk about the Northern gods has ceased; but here and there an interest in aesthetics and modern art-criticism has taken its place.

Another modern feature in high-school instruction is the increasing emphasis which many high-school men lay upon sociology and the historical development of society. The majority of our students take, unfortunately, very little interest in social problems; the Danish rural population live under very good social conditions, while the young people of the industrial classes, who are intensely absorbed with plans for social reconstruction, rarely attend the folk high-schools. Nevertheless, the high-school teachers who are alive to social developments endeavour to rouse an interest in the social and other problems which nowadays agitate humanity. Through the teachings of Henry George, they have succeeded in getting many young farmers — mostly small-holders — exceedingly interested in economic matters which often have a bearing upon their personal interests. Some high-school teachers deliberate against the introduction of direct agitation for a particular kind of social system; they fear that the consideration given to social conditions will make the historical lectures materialistic, and be detrimental to the purely cultural enlightenment which must always be the aim of the folk high-schools.

Perhaps the differences of opinion will be reconciled

when it becomes clear that the schools really have in view a great social object, namely, to uphold the cause of home-life, and to teach people that the whole social fabric must go to pieces in the world struggle for existence if it is not founded upon home-life — if it does not preserve the influence of home and family life so that the life of nations and humanity become permeated by a spirit of fellowship. The only true cure for the death-dealing sway of egotism is to be found there. I dare say that the Great War has, in this respect, taught the world a bitter lesson, which will reveal to all the friends of humanity the significance of Grundtvig's ideas.

With very great pleasure we have seen more and more foreigners come to visit the Danish folk high-schools. It is probable that a number of them have come in order to examine the mysterious relation which seems to exist between these purely cultural institutions of instruction and the excellent Danish butter. But others have had their eyes opened to the moral and intellectual life of the Danish people which the high-schools have largely helped to create, and have come to take a greater interest in the people than in the live-stock of our little country. A lively connection with foreign countries brings, in return, fresh life currents and new points of view within the walls of our schools. This fact is perhaps mostly discernible at Askov Extended High-School, where a staff of capable young men, under Jacob Appel's leadership, do much, in the best sense of the term, to keep abreast of the times. The »Danish Outlook«, a monthly magazine published at Askov, is a very good witness to this.

The folk high-schools have still conquests to make within the boundaries of our own country. If they are not to deteriorate into peasants' high-schools in place of real

folk high-schools, they must soon win a hold over the labouring classes in town and country. There have been some recent indications that they will, in time, succeed in doing so.

Since 1911 both men and women of Copenhagen of all classes and ages have been invited to a week's summer-course at many of the schools. About 1000 people each year, mostly from working-class homes, thus visit the high-schools, and take part in lectures, singing, conversation, folk dancing and excursions to the woods and neighbouring places of interest. In this way they very soon come into friendly relationship with their hosts. During the winter these »eight-day people«, as they are called, attend meetings for lectures by high-school teachers, and social gatherings which are held in Grundtvig's House. Thus about half a century after Grundtvig's death, there is a circle who maintain his ideas and venerate his memory in Copenhagen, where scarcely anyone understood him during his life-time. In this circle it may be expected that the interest for the folk high-schools will become so great that young men and women from the capital will desire to spend a still longer period at a folk high-school in the country. Furthermore, in »Grundtvig's House«, which is situated in the centre of the city, the so-called »High-School Association« works for the spread of enlightenment by means of evening schools, public meetings etc. Johan Borup has founded a high-school especially for the people of Copenhagen, and in this way we hope that the fundamental high-school ideas will gradually win acceptance among that half of Denmark's population which has always held aloof from the Grundtvigian movement.

On the whole, we high-school men work with ever renewed courage, because we feel that we have a good

message to carry to our fellow countrymen, — a message that the world, more than over before, requires for the furtherance of its welfare.

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To this survey of the history of the folk high-schools, I will finally add a few particulars about their administration and daily routine. — At present there are about sixty of these schools and ten agricultural schools in Denmark. The total number of pupils, throughout the whole of this educational activity, is shown by the following figures:

1844—45	46
1852—53	197
1862—63	505
1872—73	3091
1882—83	3801
1892—93	5036
1902—03	7361
1912—13	8043
1922—23	8365

3147 of the pupils of 1922—23 were women, and the remainder men. The pupils from the country during this year constituted 30% of the rural youth, while only 1% of the youth of the town areas were in attendance. The average age of the pupils is from 20 to 21 years: almost all of them are more than 18 years of age. About 55% are sons and daughters of farmers who possess from four to thirty cows; about 17% are from the homes of smallholders who possess from one to four cows; only 3½% come

from the towns, and the rest from the homes of artisans, tradesmen and civil servants in the country.

In Norway there are thirty-two folk high-schools with about 2000 pupils yearly; in Sweden 52 with about 4000 pupils; in America there are six Danish folk high-schools with a yearly attendance of about 300.

The Danish folk high-schools are all private, owned as a rule by the principal, who is also the warden. All the students, with the exception of those whose homes are in the neighbourhood, live at the schools. At most of the larger schools the pupils are from all parts of the country: the majority, in fact, are from the most distant parts, for they wish to see other districts whilst attending the schools. The winter-term for young men continues for five months — from November 1st to April 1st; the summer term for young women, three months — from May 1st to August 1st.

The schools are entirely free in their curriculum, which the teachers, living as they do in a circle of friendly intimacy, have little difficulty in agreeing upon.

The State supports the high-schools in two ways: it gives a direct subsidy to each school (from 5000 to 14000 Kroner), graded in proportion to the salaries of the teachers, building expenses etc., and it also gives a number of scholarships to help pupils who would otherwise be unable to pay for board and tuition. These scholarships are apportioned by the local government without regard to the particular high-school the pupil may elect to attend. The scholarships cover half the cost of tuition and board, which at present is usually seventy Danish crowns a month for women, and eighty (£ 4:10:0) for men. At the extended high-school at Askov and the agricultural schools the payment is a little more.

Two to four pupils usually share a room, bringing their own bedclothes. They eat at a common table, and the fare is plain but plentiful. As they are adults and come to the schools of their own free will, there is no difficulty in maintaining order, industry and a good tone in their daily life. It is taken for granted that all the students participate in the whole of the instruction given, which with intervening periods for rest and recreation, occupies the whole day. It must not be supposed that most of the pupils at the ordinary high-schools are able to do much independent work. Writing, arithmetic, drawing etc, are done under the supervision of a teacher. Gymnastic training is given daily; this is very necessary, as the pupils are accustomed to strenuous physical labour. The women get a great deal of needlework; but it is difficult to have handicraft work such as carpentry for the young men at the larger schools. There are open-air games, folk-dancing and ball games every day if the weather permits.

As a rule three lectures daily, covering history, literature, geography, sociology, natural science etc., are given to the whole school. This study in common, which sometimes includes discussions of the lecture-subjects, constitutes the principal work of the school-day. Before and after each lecture the pupils sing together songs which have, as far as possible, a bearing upon the lecture.

At the larger schools the pupils are separated into different groups, each with its respective teacher, for the study of Danish grammar, reading, composition etc.; in the same way they study arithmetic, drawing or manual work. Many pupils make very rapid progress in these classes, especially rapid in view of the short time they have at their disposal. A number of them have previously attended continuation or evening schools; but the majority

come without any other schooling than that which they received in the ordinary national or private elementary schools, and which they finished at the age of fourteen. Experience proves, however, that the same amount of information which it takes the half-grown youth — dozing on the school forms — three to five years to learn, can be acquired by adults who are keen on learning and who have done practical work, in the space of three to five months.

The high-school people maintain that it is not their aim to make all young people in Denmark either school teachers or bookworms, but to help them find happiness in their daily work, and give them a spiritual understanding of active human life. We wish our pupils to return to the farm, craft or trade from which they come, and that they shall do their work with an undaunted spirit and a brighter intelligence as a result of their attendance at our schools.

We are glad to have the students become desirous of reading good books; but we prefer to have them grow in ability to learn of life itself. In short, we wish the folk high-schools to be »schools for life« in the very best sense.

TWENTY SHORT ITEMS ABOUT THE DANISH FOLK HIGH-SCHOOLS.

(1).

The folk high-schools are the genuine fruit of the Danish people's spirit, which found its reflection in the mind of Grundtvig.

(2).

The realization of Grundtvig's ideas has been closely connected with the religious and emotional development of the Danish people during the nineteenth century.

(3).

The first folk high-school was erected in Rødning, North Slesvig, in 1844 as a spiritual fortification against the Germans.

(4).

After the war 1848—50, which awakened the national spirit of the common people, Christen Kold erected his high-school in Ryslinge on the island of Funen.

(5).

Kold, who was reared in a poor home, had a deep feeling with, and understanding of, the common people. He was also associated with the religious movement among the peasants.

(6).

Kold gave the Grundtvigian high-schools their inner spiritual character and their plain and simple outward form.

(7).

Kold's chief aim was to awaken the inner life of his pupils, and to give them a sense of spiritual fellowship.

(8).

Kold's chief means was the free »living word«.

(9).

Although Kold never spoke about practical or technical matters, he influenced the practical life more than any of his contemporaries.

(10).

Kold perceived that the development of personality in people was the most direct and surest way to further human life in every respect.

(11).

After Denmark's defeat in 1864, the high-schools developed as the best remedy for the regeneration of the Danish people.

(12).

There are now about sixty high-schools in Denmark.

(13).

The schools have a yearly attendance of about nine thousand young men and women between the age of seventeen and thirty years.

(14).

The high-schools are private institutions, and the attendance of the pupils is voluntary.

(15).

The pupils and staff reside together in the school houses. This living together as a large family does much to further feelings of fellowship.

(16).

The State supports the folk high-schools without meddling with their internal affairs.

(17).

Throughout Denmark there are meeting-houses in which high-school men hold lectures. In this way they keep in touch with the most alert section of the rural population.

(18).

Generally speaking, high-school pupils come to take the leading positions in local government, co-operative associations, etc.

(19).

The high-schools do not prepare pupils for a life of study. Their object is to enable pupils to return to their daily work with a deeper understanding of human life and its problems.

(20).

Grundtvig's bust ought to be placed at the door of every Danish co-operative establishment. It would be even better if his thoughts could be impressed upon the hearts of all his countrymen.

CHAPTER V.

A Day at a High-School.

The authors of this book are indebted to the writings of Thomas Bredsdorff, late principal of Roskilde High-School, for the essence of the following description, which is added in order to give the reader an insight into the daily life of a folk high-school.

After the morning-song begin the lessons, which every pupil must attend; but the compulsory attendance is not irksome, for each pupil, on enrolling, tacitly agrees to fall into line with the school's system of work. The pupils come to the schools voluntarily, a circumstance which is largely responsible for the zeal and thoroughness of their work. Just as the young men of the Middle Ages freely assembled whenever their beloved teachers set up their rostrums, so in the high-schools, when a little staff of teachers have won confidence. A free and easy association between teacher and pupils naturally develops: one often sees, for instance, teachers and pupils engaged in a terrific snow-ball fight, and a few minutes later the same pupils are following a lesson, their discipline by no means spoiled by the excitement of the preceding battle.

The first lesson begins. Over the teacher's rostrum there hangs a large painting, the work, perhaps, of one of the leading Danish artists, one of the many associated with the Danish high-schools. One sits enjoying this beautiful work of art during the singing of the opening

song. The teacher from his raised platform leads the singing, which is full and hearty. Stress is not laid upon the method of the singing, the real value of which lies in its power to awaken a feeling of comradeship. Through such united singing many a pupil opens a soul that before was retiring and suspicious.

The teacher, in giving his lecture, speaks calmly and without restraint, as to people who are his friends. His subject is historical, and his method follows that conceived by Grundtvig. Seldom, elsewhere, do young people see history as it is presented in the high-schools: the high-school teacher reveals it as living, warm and moving, something of which one is a part, something that forms an unbroken chain to the very present. The pupil gets the impression of gliding with the current of a mighty river, having its source in the distant past, and moving rapidly forward through the present into the unknown future. The countless generations no longer appear as isolated things, accidentally floating, for a brief space, on the river of time, and then disappearing: instead, it is perceived that generation follows generation and unites all in a great human fellowship, in which those who have gone before are absorbed in a mighty spirit, which recreates its forms through time. The young listeners get a glimpse of what Grundtvig meant by »the national spirit«, the spirit that unites all generations in one living whole.

The high-school teacher must not be a mere specialist. A great historian has said: »Only he who has been moved by the dread of extermination that exists in the soul of the people, and has been spiritually lifted by observing the overpowering desire of the soul for life and development, is able to win the confidence of the people and interpret their life with authority.« A teacher must know

something of this dread if he is to enter into the soul of history; without this knowledge history-teaching cannot be made to live and, consciously and unconsciously, be transformed into the nourishment necessary for the spiritual growth of his hearers. But behind this view of history lies the belief in the living God, who reveals Himself in the course of history. Something else lies behind it: the belief that human beings are links in this history, beings whose goal can be briefly and clearly expressed in these words: the fulfilling of God's will.

The lecture ends with a song, which has a bearing on what has been said.

Next comes gymnastics. In the gymnasium it is delightful to see how quickly a new squad of pupils learn to work together; but this is not difficult to understand. The majority of them are old pupils of the gymnastic unions in the country districts. Most, therefore, have a knowledge of gymnastics; and after the hour one frequently sees them standing in groups, discussing the different exercises and their physiological significance and values.

Gymnastics frequently form a subject of debate in the high-school, the line of approach being, for example, whether gymnastics should be utilized as preparatory training for the army, or simply be a part of ordinary free education, quite apart from state institutions. In a high-school gymnastics are, in fact, not mere acrobatics, but a vital and essential part of the curriculum; and it is observed that the pupil who is keen in the gymnasium is nearly always a good listener in the lecture hall.

Next comes the hour for questions and conversation. The teacher may speak about something he has read in the newspaper, and the subject is thrown open for discussion. This is allowed to develop naturally, the teacher

merely preventing the pupils from drifting into unimportant side issues. In such discussions the pupil often finds the satisfaction of just that desire which prompted his coming to the school. He did not come in order to learn some special subject; he came because he had experienced a desire to understand human life and his place in it.

Conversation hours are often a means of answering many questions raised or suggested by the lectures. If the replies do not satisfy the pupil, or if the matters involved are too personal for detailed discussion in the hall, the pupil finds an opportunity of talking to his teacher in private. These hours set aside for discussion and talks with individuals are an invaluable help for many teachers, helping them to modify their lectures so that they answer better to the pupils' needs and development. The high-school desires, above all, to form a real connection with its pupils: it desires to conduct itself in such a way that, in reality, it is the pupils themselves who call forth the enlightenment desired.

Every high-school is, in a sense, a home: the pupils are the children and the principal and his wife the parents. All sit together at meals, and the conversation is full of life and laughter. Meal times are occasions which are used by the principal to offer friendly advice to all, or impart to his »family« items of news from the great world outside. In this simple manner many high-school pupils obtain brief reviews of home and foreign politics. And meal times are also opportunities for cosy and friendly chatting, which reminds the pupil that he is in a home, and not in a State institution where all goes by the book.

After the meal the pupils take up the newspaper, and many, for the first time in their lives, read that section of the press which, by reason of its political views, is

excluded from their own homes. In this way their outlook is widened, and they often come to see their country's affairs from a less individualistic standpoint.

The mid-day break is of about two hours, and then studies are resumed. Time is given to arithmetic, drawing and Danish composition. Much stress is laid upon the last, for all should be able to write their mother tongue smoothly and naturally. The pupil may, as far as possible, choose a subject in which he is particularly interested. It is recognized that all cannot reveal their capacity in the use of the mother-tongue by writing, say, an essay on Shakespeare, and that one should be judged by what one can do, not by what one cannot. When the pupil has acquired mastery in writing about the things familiar to him, he has reached a stage when he can begin to express the less familiar. After arithmetic, drawing and composition the pupil has the rest of the day well occupied with sociology, natural history, physiology etc.

Between the lessons and the lectures some pupils are seen exchanging notes, and in some cases, trying to reproduce lectures. They learn much from this kind of mutual help. Others endeavour to put into practice the instruction received at the drawing lesson, others practise arithmetic, and others fill in the time by reading. In some rooms groups are to be seen discussing with enthusiasm such topics as types of horses, the price of pork, temperance, social problems of womanhood, and the political questions of the day. The pupils, coming from all parts of the country, find it very illuminating to hear matters of common interest discussed by their countrymen from afar, and the broadening effect on their minds of this free interchange of ideas can easily be imagined. For many this kind of experience at the high-school marks their decisive entrance into Danish social life.

At ten-thirty the electric lights are extinguished, the conversation ceases, and soon the whole school is at rest.

The old pupil, looking back over his stay at the high-school, may ask himself what it was that, despite all differences of temperament and outlook, created the life of fellowship: and he discovers that it was the spirit that lived in the song, the spirit that gleamed forth every time the spoken word was really the living word. The word was living when the speaker became impersonal, when he seemed to disappear as a teacher, and, in all humility, remained only the instrument and messenger of the eternal spirit, the spirit carrying all development, revealing itself in changing circumstances and in the lives of individuals, the spirit which is the deepest reality, which is the revealer of God.

CHAPTER VI.

Borup's High-School, Copenhagen.

The first attempt to introduce the Grundtvigian form of education into Copenhagen was made by Christian Flor, the champion of the Danish cause in Slesvig. He hired a small hall, and some friends of his gave evening lectures on Scandinavian history. The experiment lasted only two winters. Later, the attempt was renewed by the keen theological graduates F. F. Falkenstjerne and Morten Pontoppidan, but again the idea of a high-school in Copenhagen was dropped after a short period.

In the year, 1916, J. P. Sundbo, a socialist leader and an old student of Askov, founded Esbjerg High-School for working-men and women. The school has continued, doing good work in trying to educate young people for leadership in the Labour Movement. But although this school is similar in several respects to the Grundtvig schools it does not adhere to Grundtvig's ideas, its chief purpose being political. The »Inner Mission«*) also runs a number of high-schools which, however successful they have been, differ from the Grundtvig schools in the matter of purpose.

The first successful attempt to found a Grundtvig high-school in Copenhagen was made by Johan Borup.

*) A section of the Danish church.

Borup belongs to the circle of young men who, in the early seventies, received an impression from Grundtvig and his disciples which had an enduring influence on their lives. In 1877 he took his theological degree; but it was not his wish to enter the church. His absorbing interest was the Danish language and literature, a keen and understanding interpreter of which he still remains.

In 1878 he became a teacher at Skovgaard Folk High-School, and to his young mind work in the high-schools presented itself as an ideal vocation. After a stay in Paris, where he studied the French language and literature, he became a teacher at Falkenstjerne's High-School in Copenhagen and, at the same time, a University Extension lecturer.

Borup pondered much over the honest but unsatisfactory attempt to run a high-school in Copenhagen; and gradually he realised that the modern wage earners could be approached and enlightened only by those people who were in close touch with them and who understood their views. He thought that high-school work in Copenhagen had been led in a rather haphazard way, and that if it were to find a permanent basis it must devise one in accordance with its peculiar needs.

One summer Borup spent a holiday at the high-school at Vallekilde; here he was strongly impressed by the influence for good which the speech of his uncle, Ernst Trier, the principal, exercised over the young pupils, and here, also, he learned to distinguish between »the living word« and mere eloquence. Unlike eloquence, »the living word« could not be called to the speaker's aid at any moment by an effort of will. Ernst Trier, Jens Nørregaard, Ludvig Schrøder and the other champions of the folk high-schools possessed the power of »the

which they could not reconcile with the national and religious tradition they had known from childhood. They became changeable, and seemed to lose contact with the past; they could not take root in their new environment; they became critical towards the things that were firmly inherent in the soil of their country; they became, in many ways, a striking contrast to the Danish peasantry from which they had sprung. Under these circumstances courage was needed to begin a high-school in Copenhagen; but Borup thought out a line of procedure. He would start a school which should be free from rigid methods of teachers, and where he could speak to the youth from his personal experience of life. He would speak to his pupils on the subject of good and evil, and ask them if they could explain the difference; for he knew this question alone was enough to set many young people thinking. Intellectual life had developed very rapidly during recent years, and, in consequence, moral standards which had stood firm for generations were swept into the melting-pot. He would seek to throw light upon what was ethical and what was unethical, what was religious and what was irreligious; and he would endeavour to indicate the presence of absolute good, believing that if his pupils perceived it, they would be led and influenced in a positive direction.

Life should be his subject: he would speak about the sense for poetry and beauty which come during the impressionable period when youth is passing into manhood, and when the individual soul-life is discovered. He would speak about the time when manhood and womanhood reach maturity, when the individual is striving to understand himself and his work in life and to discover a unity between himself and the infinite powers that exalt and

subdue. He would inspire his students with a belief in truth, freedom, goodness and love, and help them to realize that all the forms of power they experience in life have their final issue in the Infinite Power, and that through them they reach from the human to the Divine.

In the winter 1890—91 Borup, who was then 38 years old, started his school, and the initial response was evidently beyond his expectations. Referring to the event in a recent book he writes, »I remember, as if it were yesterday, the evening when the school was opened. There was neither singing nor any other form of demonstration, and the work began in a medley the like of which has never since been witnessed at Borup's High-School. Dr. Starcke took history in one room, Dr. Rønning, English in another, and I, literature, in a third. I was the last to set to work, for I had been very busy getting people seated, and in attending to blackboards and chalk, inkpots and pens. When at last I felt that all was in order I threw myself joyfully into modern literature. I had just got going when there was a hammering upon the door, and outside stood a crowd of people headed by the German teacher, ready for the next lesson, and with resolute self-control asking where to go. I was dismayed. I asked my own audience to excuse me, and rushed away to tell Starcke and Rønning to bring their lectures to a close. Then I got them both to help me shift the tables from one room to another; we all three toiled and sweated, orders and counter-orders were given from all sides, and everywhere I fled I was stopped by the questions Where shall we go? Where shall I sit? Are there no inkpots, no chalks, no dusters, no black board, no blotting paper? They hurled question after question at me without mercy. I learned a great deal that evening; but what happened?

A few days later my landlady requested me to take the whole concern elsewhere as soon as possible. She had expected to see about ten pupils; not that crowd. In great haste and excitement I rented a larger apartment, and my expenses rose so high that I applied to the Board of Education for a financial grant, which eventually came — after waiting three years — when the circumstances of the school were becoming critical.

Thus the high-school in Copenhagen began its career. Those early days are very far back; and yet, as I survey the years that have passed, the whole period appears in my mind as the course of a single day. Each day even now has its surprises and changes, disappointments and progress; and each day, as through the past years, we meet adversity which compels us to drive our spades deeper, and success which seems to reward our work with full harvests. And now, as in the beginning, my heart is full of joy and gratitude for adversity as well a success.«

In spite of the many difficulties the early life at Borup's school was very happy. Men and women, whose intellectual life had been roused, gathered around him in their quest for knowledge and a wider outlook. Freedom of thought and the right to depart from the beaten tracks of learning were, from the first day, tacitly recognized by both student and teacher, and the teachers worked without the restrictions which preparation for examinations imposes.

When the problems of truth and falsehood, right and wrong, good and evil presented themselves to the pupils, and when questions were raised about the religious life, Borup endeavoured to let the discussion take a natural course. He would indicate that which, in his judgment, was the essential nature of the subject, and then refrain

from adding anything that might tend to detract from the freedom, or bias the trend, of the discussion. His method of teaching largely took the form of conversations, a method which enabled him to get the best from subjects that really mattered, and to condense or enlarge his teaching in accordance with the obvious requirements of his pupils.

»The young people of Copenhagen«, writes Borup, »are born sceptics, and little can be done with them unless they feel confident that they will not be drilled along the lines of certain doctrines. The great problem with these young people is not to finish off their education, but to get them started on the way to the higher forms of enlightenment. If the desire for truth be once stimulated, there are infinite possibilities of real progress in their lives.«

The following extract from the programme issued in 1891 — the first year of the school — is of interest, because it clearly indicates the lines on which the school was started, and also the general scheme devised by Borup in order to introduce the work of the folk high-schools into Copenhagen.

Our intention is not to go over the ground which is ordinarily covered by the elementary schools; we wish — without aiming at passing examinations — to provide teaching in those subjects which, whilst raising the level of general culture, are of great value to men and women who feel the need of information that will enable them to adjust themselves to the conditions of modern life. Our aim is two-fold: we provide the pupils with training in specific subjects of practical value; and we seek, through the medium of such subjects as history and sociology, to set pupils right as to the social problems of the day. We are arranging lessons in the history of literature, the history of the Danish language and

grammar, Danish Composition, German, English, French, Mathematics, Physics and History. The subjects of our lectures will be the discoveries in the realm of natural science during the 19th Century, the solar systems, historical developments from the time of the Revolution to the present day, the principles of sociology, social history, modern world literature, ancient and modern art. The lectures will be followed by discussion. The fees for the complete course are 18 Kroner pr. month; for single subjects occupying two hours weekly, 3 Kroner per month; and for single subjects occupying one hour weekly, two Kroner per month.

* * *

Although the number of students at Borup's High-School has never exceeded 700 a year, the influence of the school has, without doubt, been very extensive. As Borup rightly asserts, the people who attend his lectures and conversations represent the best elements of the town dwellers. They are people who have an enthusiasm for higher education, and they extend to their fellows, consciously and unconsciously, the knowledge and experiences the school affords. In the realm of mind it is always the few who influence the many, and not contrariwise.

Borup's high-school work in Copenhagen has, indeed, made its mark, and has called forth expressions of appreciation from many and various intellectual circles. Martin Andersen Nexø, the famous author of the book »Pelle the Conqueror«, writes: »Johan Borup was my teacher in 1896—7. His wonderfully sensitive personality, and his singular power of giving expression to all living things, attracted me very strongly. His character was as remote as possible from that of a pedantic schoolmaster. As a teacher his spirit was ever moving, and nothing came from him that was ossified or stereotyped. Later I had the pleasure of knowing Johan Borup personally, of learn-

ing something of the peculiar qualities which have made him the powerful teacher he is. In meeting him personally one realizes how very receptive his mind is. The activity of his soul resembles that of the bee which leaves a kiss on each flower it touches. May many, especially workers, find their way to his high-school!«

Johan Skjoldborg, another leading social author, writes: »The Grundtvigian high-schools of Denmark are remarkable. It is indeed remarkable that the common people, of their own desire and at their own cost, should go to the schools simply to be enlightened and inspired, to be awakened to a sense of the poetry in human life, and afterwards return to their ordinary callings to work out in the daily life the ideals they thus form. Such schools could not even have been conceived without a strong faith. But Grundtvig's ideas found an echo in the population; and when we desire to direct the attention of the world to that which is peculiar to Danish culture, we always give prominence to the folk high-schools. Borup's High-School occupies a particular position among our high-schools. It is the only school of its kind that has been able to thrive in our capital where, every day, hundreds of voices from all sides are calling the people to other channels of interest.«

Borup's school has had to adopt special methods; but it is, nevertheless, animated very largely by the same ideals that underlie folk high-schools in general: that is to say, it aims at giving an insight into the problems of life, rather than at educating for vocational purposes. It endeavours to enlighten, and stimulate the soul-life of, its pupils, so that the knowledge they receive can be for them as sunshine and pure air are for the plant.

CHAPTER VII.

The International People's College.

A Folk High-School for Students from Different Countries.

The International People's College was founded at Elsinore, Denmark in 1921, and was intended to serve in the building of a bridge between nations by enabling students of foreign countries to meet and study together. A precedent might be found in the Paris University of the Middle Ages, to which young men of the nobility and clergy came from many countries in quest of higher education and a wider outlook, which would qualify them for positions as leaders in their respective countries. But the college at Elsinore was the first attempt to provide an international college for men and women outside the privileged classes; and the attempt was made at a time when no universal language — such as Latin was in the Middle Ages — existed as a common medium of expression for the students.

The idea would have been considered utopian a hundred, or perhaps even fifty, years ago; but the growing demand of the democracies of the world for wider education, and modern facilities for intercourse between nations, made the idea feasible. The idea was conceived

during the World War. The author of this chapter had been a teacher of Copenhagen workers at the University Settlement, and also at the High-School and Study Circle Union of Copenhagen: he had also served as a soldier in the Danish army for two years. More and more strongly he became taken up with the question of how, after his university training, he could best continue as a teacher of workers, and, at the same time, work against war and militarism. Then the idea of an international college came to him as a religious inspiration and, in the light of this, he determined to pursue it in spite of apparent difficulties.

In the Spring of 1916, after having discussed the matter with two members of the Danish parliament and the supervisor of the folk high-schools, from whom he obtained certain credentials, the writer travelled to England. First he addressed himself to the Quakers, who were then eagerly engaged in the work of relieving the sufferings and stemming the hatred caused by the war. A plan for an international college naturally gained their approbation, and some of them offered their active support. Through the Quakers he came into contact with Sir Oliver Lodge, who had recently lost his son in the war, but who entertained no bitterness towards the Germans. This gentleman became interested in the plan, and introduced the writer to other persons likely to be interested. As a result of such introductions the writer was able to return to Denmark with the promise of support from a number of men including the late Sidney Ball of St. John's College, Oxford, Canon Scott Holland, Oxford, Arthur Henderson, George Lansbury, Arnold Rowntree, and Sir Michael Sadler. These supporters agreed that Denmark, a small country, neutral during the war and situated between England, Russia and Germany, was particularly suitable to be

the home of an international college. Shortly afterwards, the plan was brought before leading men in Germany and America and was supported by such men and women as Eduard Bernstein, M. P., Heinrich Schultz, Under Secretary of State, Dr. Siegmund-Schultze, Miss Jane Addams, Mrs. Leonard Elmhirst, Dr. Henry Goddard Leach and some of the leading Quakers.

In Denmark, Cai Hegermann-Lindencrone, a secretary of the Board of Education, and George Jochimsen, a civil engineer, united with the writer in forming a committee, with the former as chairman, to work out the details of the plan. George Jochimsen died shortly afterwards, but Hegermann-Lindencrone continued his invaluable services. Prominent Danes including professors Valdemar Ammundsen, Harald Høffding, Otto Jespersen, Kristoffer Nyrup and some members of Parliament supported an appeal for financial assistance and, without the plan being mentioned publicly, gifts to the amount of sixty thousand kroner were collected. This sum, however, was not enough to erect the building which the committee had under consideration. The college should be situated not far from Copenhagen, so as to secure an easy access to the cultural life of that city, and it was also thought desirable that the students should work and live in the open country amidst the influences of nature. Eventually a property known as Sophienlyst was found at the beautiful town of Elsinore. It had been without occupants for two years, and was consequently somewhat dilapidated; but it seemed to provide what was wanted, and could be purchased with the sum that was available.

With the aid of some of the workers from the Copenhagen settlement, the writer began, early in 1921, the difficult task of putting the building, garden and farm

into working order. The work took a good time, during which the life at the college took a very primitive form: one room in the gables was used as sleeping, dining, and common room; there was little furniture, and a door placed over two chairs served as a dining table. A metal worker was the cook; and as he did not possess a cookery book, there was not much variation in the dishes, and coffee occupied too large a place on the menu.

The first foreigners to arrive at the school were from famine-stricken Austria; and they were very enthusiastic about the good food they got! But there was one other thing to which they could not immediately accustom themselves. Having been under military discipline for many years, they found the democratic conditions at the school very strange, and seemed to feel the lack of some authoritative individual or individuals to whom especial honour was due. When on the first morning, the oldest member of the company, a mason by trade, with long beard and drowsy eyes and in shirt sleeves and wooden clogs, came down from the room in the gables, the Austrians sprang to their feet and saluted, saying, »Guten Morgen, Herr Professor!« They were in earnest, for they had imagined that they were coming to a kind of international university; and even if the heaps of sand outside, and the miscellaneous collection of furniture had helped to disillusion them, they could not immediately rid themselves of the effects of the discipline they had undergone under the old Austrian military system. Nevertheless, they soon settled down and became one of the liveliest and most popular elements in the little community. Soon afterwards the Danes and Austrians were joined by English, German and Dutch students.

A common aim bound the students together: Germans and English, students and workers were comrades. Sometimes the Germans quarrelled and used the strongest expressions; but very soon they were the best of friends again, and sang and enjoyed themselves together. The Germans and the Danes were the most industrious workers; but the English were more constant: and when, during the first year, the breath of anarchy was wafted through the college life, the English kept the flag flying, and carried on where others began to stumble.

There were then twenty-four students: two Americans, three English, five Germans, three Austrians, one Irishman, a Scotsman, and the rest Danes. Five of the students were university undergraduates, three or four clerks, a few farmers; but the majority were town workers. With such a mixed company, representing many conflicting points of view, it was no small problem to devise a method of tuition that would serve all equally well, and consolidate interests. The problem was solved mainly by three means: song and music, manual work and language study.

The language of music is international; and long before the students could converse, they could understand each other through the medium of song. In the atmosphere created by German love songs, Danish folk ballads, and English students songs, they received their first impressions of one another. The Germans especially were tireless in their singing. Their mandolines and guitars were just as indispensable to them as was the bath to the English.

Through manual work, however, the students got to know one another even better. Manual work necessitates few words, and yet serves to reveal much of a man's per-

sonality — his perseverance and accuracy, his strength or weakness. When a man expresses himself by actions and not words, it is difficult for him to convey a false impression of himself to his fellows. His work is good or bad; and if he be inefficient or lacking in any respect, he cannot cover his failings with ambiguous terms. Manual work at the college had another advantage: it gave the farmers and artisans an opportunity of revealing their worth in a branch of activity in which they were superior to the academically trained students, thus helping to level down conscious differences of attainment. Further, it had a soothing effect upon the nerves of students who came from war and revolution-stricken areas, which enabled them better to concentrate on mental work.

Though language difficulties were not a serious obstacle to the establishment of community life, the more students got to know one another, the more they felt the need of closer intellectual intercourse and of breaking down the language barrier. The teaching of languages therefore became a matter of great importance, and it was found that this could be given under exceptionally favourable circumstances. Teaching and practice went hand in hand, daily intercourse providing many opportunities for the latter. During this first year the teaching was rather fragmentary; but in spite of this, all the students learned so much English that they could follow lectures in this language, participate in the discussions that followed, and write essays on the lectures.

From this very modest beginning, the college has steadily developed. Through the work of the students four class rooms and twenty-two bedrooms have been added to the accommodation; several bath rooms and a central heating apparatus have been installed, and the general equipment

has been improved. The number of students has increased from year to year; in the Summer term of 1925 it reached sixty-five, half of which were foreigners. The staff and the curriculum have been enlarged correspondingly. Danish Trades Unions, the Municipality of Elsinore and the Danish State have increasingly supported the College, and committees have been set up in the United States, Germany and Britain, having for their purpose the selection of students, and the raising of funds for their maintenance.*)

The International People's College, although international in its aims and structure, comes under certain environmental influences; and questions as to how far the College is influenced by the country in which it is situated, and to what extent it resembles the Grundtvig folk high schools, naturally arise.

The foreign students are usually impressed by the democratic spirit that permeates the life of the College, — a spirit which is characteristically Danish, and is especially pronounced in the Grundtvig schools. These students observe that on the farm and in the garden attached to the College, the farm steward and workers, the gardener and the maids share the same conditions. There is no evidence of class distinction: all have equal interest in the work, and feel that they partake of a common responsi-

*) George Lansbury, M. P., Eduard Bernstein, M. P., and Jane Addams are presidents of the committees in England, Germany and America respectively. Bishop Valdemar Ammundsen, C. N. Hauge, former Home Secretary in the Danish Cabinet, and Julius Nielsen, Headmaster, are Danish members of the international council of the College. The committee consists of Cai Hegermann-Lindencrone, chairman, Mrs. Svelmøc, Rudolph Benzon and W. O. Uttenthal.

bility. When for a short period of the day students join with the teachers in manual work,*) they experience equality such as is unusual in their own country. Grundtvig gave a striking expression to the ideal of equality in one of his well known songs:

Far more of those metals so white and so red
Find others by digging and selling
We Danes though can point to everyday's bread
In even the lowliest dwelling —
Can boast that in riches our progress is such
That few have too little, still fewer too much.**)

Even if foreign students found only this equality at the College, they would share something of the spirit which prevails in the Grundtvig high-schools.

But foreign students, in the course of time, discover other influences which come from the Grundtvig schools, and get an insight into the different phases of Denmark's most characteristic form of education. Like the Grundtvig schools, the International People's College is personal in method, individualistic in principle, and ethical in purpose. It was Grundtvig's conviction that the spoken word — or, as he called it, »the living word« — was the greatest medium for expressing personality, and therefore the most potent force in education: and it is regarded as of great importance in the Grundtvig schools that »the living word« should have full play in lectures and discussions, and in the daily intercourse between teachers and students. At the International People's College, personal intercourse between teachers and students is perhaps even greater than at the Grundtvig schools; on the other hand, because of the widely varying personal attain-

*) This work, although it now occupies only about one hour a day, still holds an important place in the life of the College.

***) Translation by Mr. J. S. Thornton.

ments of the students — in respect of general knowledge and languages, more instruction is received through study-circles, private study and the writing of essays.

In saying that the International People's College, like the Grundtvig schools, is individualistic in principle, what is meant is that the College adapts itself to the needs of the students. Ludvig Schrøder, of Askov High-School, once said: »A genuine folk high-school exists only when the teacher is capable of meeting the needs of his students.« And another, Alfred Poulsen, of Ryslinge High-School, gave the position clear expression when he said: »It is the school's task to answer questions.« The high-schools are, therefore, not schools for children, for they should rest and grow in their rest, nor are they for adolescents for whom the best school is the farms or workshops of able citizens; but they are schools for adults whose minds are maturing and seeking information about the wider issues of life.

But whereas the students of the Grundtvig schools, young farmers and farm workers, whose interests and field of enquiry have definite reference to their native country and soil, find answers to their questions in Danish history and literature, the students of the International People's College, who come from widely different social circles, seek information from a variety of sources and subjects. German and English workers come to the College from countries in which, unlike Denmark, industrial problems are paramount. For these students the solution of industrial and social problems appears as the vital object of their studies; and a »school for life«, they feel, can only justify the appellation by concerning itself with such subjects as social psychology, sociology and political economy. The College adapts its curriculum accordingly

and, especially during the summer terms,*) gives a prominent place to these subjects.

The teaching of modern languages is largely given in the form of lectures, which are translated sentence by sentence. In this way it is possible to combine the learning of a foreign language with the acquisition of general knowledge. Further, the lessons are bound to be much more interesting when they thus follow a definite line of enquiry. Even after a period of two or three months beginners are, as a rule, able to follow with comparative ease the lectures of native teachers. A few of the foreigners learn Danish so as to be able to study Danish conditions first hand, and come into direct contact with the folk high-schools.

In the presentation of history and literature the College again adapts itself to the varying needs of the students. In many of the high-schools a favourite way of approaching history is to examine the lives of its great figures; for this, it is maintained, throws light on the times in which they lived. To the Grundtvigian teacher, history is not a meaningless mass of details, but a living continuity. He perceives in history the career of Mankind, the strife and struggles, failures and conquests of which are reflected in the lives of great individual figures; and he asserts that the Age can be understood by reference to the lives of its great men. He believes that great men or women are an un failing source of inspiration for the young mind; for in their spiritual development, which enables them to understand and interpret their Age, and

*) The winter terms run from November 3rd to December 23rd and from January 7th to March 30th. The summer terms from April 20th to July 10th and from July 18th to August 30th.

even project lines of future development, there is instruction which can enlarge the outlook and enrich the life: and just as moral values are tested much better in a home than in a barracks, so the young understand much better the responsibilities of life when they see its development in individual figures than when they see it in the mass. Then their sympathy is attracted to something concrete, something with which they can feel, and whose fate and experiences speak to them in a language they can understand.

At the International People's College this method of teaching history can be used with a number of the students, who are intent on understanding themselves and finding their place in life. This history-teaching, however, is preparatory, enabling them later to receive instruction together with the students whose general standard of education is higher. Some of the latter are teachers, and others are leaders of political, industrial and religious youth movements, who come to the College in order to gain a wider outlook on life which will be of service to them in their school and social activities. The social aspects of history interest these advanced students, who find in the historical development of social, industrial, political and religious movements a basis and a supplement to the study of social psychology, sociology and political economy.

During the first years of the College the composition of the students was more international during the summer term than during the winter, and the winter curriculum, therefore, took a less international form than was consistent with an international college. The foreigners who attended the winter courses were chiefly those who wanted to become acquainted with Scandinavian culture and with the Scandinavian and German languages.

From 1928, however, the sharp distinction between the winter and summer terms will cease; the courses in Scandinavian culture and modern languages will continue throughout the college-year, but international relations will be given prominence, and the history of world literature and culture will be treated comparatively. Studies of social problems will not be confined to individual countries, but will concern the whole civilised world.*) The staff will also be international, the aim being, in the course of time, to have lectures from representatives of each of the large countries including Japan and India. W. H. Marwick M. A., Glasgow, Hughes Griffith M. A., Aberystwyth, Frederik Hedebo M. A., United States, Professor Hall, Manchester, Stanley Bailey of the London School of Economics, Professor Paul Passy, France, Principal Zernick, Berlin, and Professor Pflaiderer, Stuttgart, have served the College during recent years.

The International People's College, like the Grundtvig schools, is ethical in its aim, and seeks to help the students to attain a richer and better life. Life, to Grundtvig, was a great blessing, in spite of the sorrow that falls to the lot of all; and he saw that sorrow had its balm when one perceives that life has a purpose to be worked out on earth. Referring to the high-schools, the late Thomas Bredsdorff of Roskilde High-School said: »They have their value in the help given the young students to understand human life and to experience its joy. They try to

*) The permanent staff (1928) consists of three Danish, one English and one German teacher. In 1928 about 200 foreigners had attended the regular winter and summer terms, and about 450 the international vacation courses which the College has arranged from July 15th to August 20th, each year, in order to give foreigners an insight into Danish life and culture.

create a desire for richer and fuller human life, a desire which can ultimately only be satisfied by the beams from Eternity.« The schools do not endeavour to impress dogmatic creeds on the minds of the young, but their work is sustained by a strong faith in Christianity. It is this faith which leads a man to choose the work of high-school teacher: as such he has no guarantee of livelihood, no degree or other qualifications can ensure his success: he feels himself on a deep sea where only faith can support him.

The International People's College came into being as the result of religious inspiration and faith; and its work is continued in the hope that — small as the effort is — it may serve as a channel through which people may form a new philosophical basis for our present civilisation. Before the war materialism was rampant, and the laws of Nature were interpreted by individuals and nations as justifying the suppression of the weaker by the stronger. But the arrogance of nations also found support in an Old Testament conception according to which each nation seems to be God's chosen people. This view has helped the growth of imperialistic ideas, and militates against international co-operation. The latter is inspired by a conception of universal brotherhood, in which each nation has its particular, and consequently limited, tasks. It is the desire of the College that this conception shall receive every opportunity of development.

In comparing the International People's College with the Grundtvig schools, it must be stated that although the spirit in the former always has been good, and the students have been able both to appreciate and overcome the differences of nationality, the curriculum has not yet acquired that unity which characterizes the best in the

latter. There is an explanation for this in the mixed character of the students. In adult education a difficulty always is met in the different standpoints of the students, and, as may be readily supposed, the difficulty is greater when the students come from different countries. Differences of language make it necessary in the beginning for the students to be divided into small groups according to nationality; but greater difficulties are caused by differences in national temperament.

The English students like to take a share in the tuition, and prefer the teacher who regards himself as a co-student, and who confesses that the whole truth is far greater than his conception of it. The German students, on the other hand, want to get at the whole truth, and being more receptive than the English, prefer to be led by a teacher whom they esteem, who can give them a picture of system and order, and who can inspire them with an ideal for which they can work heart and soul. The English are sticklers after facts. They are not interested in theories or speculations, but want knowledge for practical purposes, and their favourite subjects are sociology and psychology. The Germans are also interested in sociology and psychology; but they love knowledge for its own sake, and are sceptical about the utilitarian value of learning. They declare that science has not made their generation happier, but on the contrary has provided them with weapons and tools which are abused because human personality has not been correspondingly developed. They believe that in poetry and art, and, above all, in music and Nature, is found the best sphere for personal development; that in music the soul finds the best outlet for its longing after things infinite; and that in close contact with Nature, people learn to be natural and free.

Although the mixed character of the students makes the formation of a good curriculum a difficult matter, the advantages have gradually proved to balance the drawbacks. In the teaching of geography, world history and literature, the student gets an added interest by the fact that he naturally desires to learn more of the countries, some of the inhabitants of which he has met in the flesh; and in the learning of languages, daily intercourse with comrades from foreign countries is an invaluable aid. The fact that the students are so different in character makes them valuable channels of instruction to one another: the spontaneity of the English and their sense of humour, the industry and rich emotional life of the Germans, the intensiveness and readiness to help of the Danes, the tactfulness of the Swedes — all mark the life of the College and influence its individual members.

The students of the International People's College form a miniature league of nations; and it is hoped that the personal development which is necessary to create harmonious social life out of so many types and nationalities will make the students better fitted to help the world towards a better future. The students must, in a small way, experience that which the whole world must experience if there is to be a harmony in the international orchestra; and they must go through somewhat the same ethical development which is a preliminary condition before the people can enter the League of Nations, or any other form of international association, in the right spirit. They must develop a capacity better able to understand the problems to be solved, and gather from their experiences values for which a new and better world has use.

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AN invaluable contribution to the study of education which few who are interested in the subject can afford to miss.

DAILY NEWS, 19th. October 1926.

This is the story of how the country folk of Denmark, about a century ago, began by the establishment of popular high schools, providing a general culture to be gradually transformed from inefficient to highly efficient agriculturists.

BRITISH WEEKLY, 11.—11. 1926.

No single factor has been of greater importance in developing the modern prosperity of Denmark than the folk high schools.

THE OBSERVER, 9.—1. 1927.

This book, by three Danish educationists representing the folk high schools of Denmark, will be studied with great interest by those who see a noble future for rural adult education in this country. The Danish movement was due, as is pointed out by Sir Michael Sadler in his valuable introduction, to N. S. F. Grundtvig (1783—1872), «pastor, poet, historian, and educational reformer». England is ripe for such a movement, and it may be that in due time we shall have our Grundtvig.

TIMES EDUCATIONAL SUPPLEMENT.

30th. October 1926.

The book is one which none can afford to neglect who believe that in adult education, the development of rural life and the restoration of a reasonable religious idealism lie three of the best clues to the reconstruction of industry and establishment of peace in social and international life, after the years of open warfare and subsequent condition of disorder and discontent.

FRIEND, 12th. November 1926.

The exciting part of the story is that these schools never aimed directly at material progress. Their inspiration was and is idealistic, and their purpose was to promote culture and the growth of character. Though they were never linked to any party or church, their atmosphere was always one of free religion and liberalism in the wider and better sense of the word. They are residential colleges, in which young men and women, who have had only an elementary education, spend five months in winter or three in summer. Its history is admirably told in this attractive little book, in which perhaps, the British reader will find that the chapter which concerns him most directly is the lively sketch by Peter Manniche, of the International High School, Elsinore, in which, British, German and other foreign students are working with Danes, on the Danish model, and broadening its purpose in the interests of international idealism and peace.

NEW LEADER, 12th. November 1926.

EVERYONE who wishes to understand modern Denmark is advised to buy and read this little book, together with the report of Sir William Ashley on Denmark presented to the British Board of Agriculture in 1924.

GEOGRAPHICAL TEACHER,

A first-hand account of an extraordinary development in rural education, humanistic and vocational. A rural revival in England seems highly probable; indeed one can already discern its early stages. The example of Denmark is, therefore, of special interest at the present time, and this short but sufficient treatise, printed in Denmark we observe, thus appears at the right moment.

JOURNAL OF EDUCATION, December 1926.

Americans will still have difficulty in understanding the Danish movement, but this volume provides an admirable approach; at least, no one need now be satisfied with second-hand interpretations.

THE NEW REPUBLIC, 8th. December 1926.

In this singularly interesting book, the work of three Danish writers, all of whom are actively engaged in the field of education, we are given a valuable survey of the origin and development of the Folk High-School and its extraordinary influence in moulding the destiny of modern Denmark.

IRISH INDEPENDENT, 18th December 1926.

As a description of the high school movement, the book will be welcomed by a large circle of cooperators and educationists. A book like this, written from the inside by writers who are in the true line of descent from the prophets and inspirers of the high school movement, has an appeal that other books do not possess, for we catch the spirit of the high school, as well as gain an understanding of the objects and methods of the schools.

Mr. Begtrup contributes the chapter on the history of the high school movement. No better interpreter of Grundtvig and his successor would have been found.

CO-OPERATIVE NEWS, 15th. January 1927.

In spite of the old and close connection of Denmark with England, it is only very recently that England has paid much attention to a movement which has transformed the people of Denmark. Even now far too little is known in this country of the Danish Folk High Schools and what they have accomplished. Three of the present-day leaders of this movement, Holger Begtrup, Hans Lund and Peter Manniche, have now presented an English public with this book in admirable English, and there is no longer any excuse for ignorance on the subject.

GOODWILL, 15th. January 1927.

THE FOLK HIGH-SCHOOLS OF DENMARK

THE role of the Folk High-Schools in this intellectual levelling up can be understood only in its historical setting. Of this a lucid summary is provided in the first section of the book by Hans Lund. Mr. Lund's narrative affords an apt illustration for the familiar controversy, of interest to all educators, as to how far «ideal» factors, social philosophies and the like are real influences in historic development. The author asserts the view, prevalent among his colleagues, that the Danish economic and political renaissance is to be attributed primarily to the Schools. The community life of the school is a microcosm of Society. The phenomenon is of special concern to the social psychologist: it implies the rapid growth of a new «social heritage»; what had made the national mentality fit soil for the new seed? The gradual and peaceful growth of a co-operative spirit is specially worthy of note — without a frontal attack and without coercion; individualism and competition have been in large measure eliminated. Does this purely voluntary collectivism offer an alternative to our rival political creeds, and does it in any way harmonize with the ideals of our modern «Functionalists»? And what is true of agricultural production holds good for higher education; the Folk High Schools are not units of a centralized system under State control, but arise spontaneously under the guidance of some pioneer who, if he makes good, can acquire assistance from public funds. Readers of the volume will find therefore a historic survey of the movement, an interpretation of its aims, and a detailed but summary account of its present position.

JOURNAL OF ADULT EDUCATION, March 1927.

This little English book, printed in Copenhagen, furnishes also a clear picture of these schools as going concerns. They are all privately owned, the proprietor usually being the principal, or warden. They are residence schools, with a small staff of three or four teachers. Being with the young people, who come to them voluntarily. Public aid is received both by the schools and by needy students, but the state exercises no control over either.

NEW YORK HERALD-TRIBUNE, 22.—5.—1927.

The book will be found of the greatest interest and should prove an inspiration to everyone who is convinced of the necessity of making our education in India, real and practical.

PIONEER ALI AHABAD, 10.—7.—1927.

The account of Denmark's Adult Schools and their effect on national life are admirably described.

PROGRESS, Oct 1927.

It is wisdom to glance occasionally into our neighbour's garden. It tends to a just estimate of the virtue of our own activities. Those to whom we have entrusted the great task of shaping our systems of education should find inspiration in the work of Grundtvig and his disciples as revealed to us in this stimulating volume.

IRISH SCHOOL WEEKLY