

Women in Modern Germany

By MARIAN P. WHITNEY

FOR it is a new Germany. Do not let yourself be misled by the alarmist press of our own or other countries with its constant suggestion of a Germany which is a danger to civilization, which feigns suffering, weakness, and reform only in order to be able suddenly to rise again in new strength and deal her enemies another and more deadly blow. A few hours in the country with seeing eyes will prove to anyone that the old prosperous, materialistic, and militaristic Germany is really a thing of the past.

It is not only the outward appearance of things—the thin figures which used to be so round, the pale faces which used to be so ruddy, the city streets with their few and shabby conveyances, the shops with their meager display of goods at huge prices in marks. It is not even the almost total disappearance of the uniforms which formerly brightened every street scene in Germany. More striking is the inner change, the absorption of everyone in the questions of the day, the constant talk of policies and politics in a nation which used to be content to leave all such matters to the Government.

Nothing shows so vividly the reality of this deep-seated change or revolution as the almost complete disappearance of the officer from public view and the emergence of the German woman into public life. In the country where woman has always been relegated to the sphere of *Küche, Kirche, und Kinder*, the first election after the adoption of the new Constitution in May, 1919, put thirty-nine women into the National Assembly and 155 into the legislatures of the various states making up the Federal Republic, while 1,400 were elected municipal or county councilors, corresponding to our aldermen or selectmen. Compare with this America with her one woman in Congress, and England with her one feminine M. P.! In the new parliamentary elections of last June, after demobilization had thrown so many more men into public life, there were still thirty women elected to the Reichstag and the number in state and municipal office is proportionately large, about 11 per cent of all city councils in October, 1921, being women.

It was interesting to me to be present at the last session of the first Reichstag of the new Republic, in the magnificent hall of the Reichstag Building in Berlin, and to see the plain, business-like assembly, the women scattered everywhere among the men and all going about their work as simply as if things had always been so, while my memory would turn back to the last time I had seen that hall filled with brilliant uniforms and orders as the session was opened in the presence of the Emperor, with all the pomp and glitter he loved so well. The women bear their full share in the work of the Assembly. They have places on many of the most important committees and are so much taken for granted that even the comic papers have almost forgotten to make fun of them. In Berlin during the campaign preceding the new elections in May, 1920, I was interested to see the number of women speakers advertised for the regular political meetings of all parties. I was told that the people like to hear them speak and are disappointed when there is not at least one on every program. The usual plan seemed to be to have two men and one woman speak at every meeting.

It is not only in elected offices that women have found a place in the scheme of government. Although no woman has yet been put at the head of any of the great national departments or ministries, many are filling important positions in them. Some are at the heads of bureaus. Last summer nine women held such positions of importance in the national Government, ten in those of the different federated states. Most of them are connected with the Ministries of Education, Labor, or Public Welfare. The most important of these positions is that held by Dr. Gertrud Baeumer, one of the best-known leaders of German feminism, teacher, writer, editor of *Die Frau*, and long president of the German National Council of Women. She has been put at the head of one of the great educational divisions of the Ministry of the Interior, a position which gives her great influence in shaping the whole educational policy of the nation, not only in regard to schools of all grades, but to the universities and educational institutions of every kind and degree.

A proof that Germany believes women have permanently entered political and administrative life is found in the fact that the Schule für Kommunalverwaltung (School of Municipal Administration) in Cologne is now open to women on the same terms as to men.

A bill which has been before the Reichstag and which I understand has just passed provides that henceforth a woman shall be officially attached to every German embassy, to care for the special interests of the German women traveling for business, study, or pleasure and to keep the government informed as to the activities of women in all countries. What plan could be more sensible, yet what other nation has made any such provision for the comfort and welfare of its women citizens?

As in so many other countries, notably in America, women are going more and more into social work, but in Germany it is chiefly in official positions under national, state, or city government, and several of the most important social schools for women are at least partially supported by state or municipality. The graduates find employment, not in what we know as charitable work, but as regularly salaried officials, since the new states all recognize their responsibility for the life, health, and welfare of their babies, children, and workers as well as for the hopelessly poor, criminals, and the insane.

A recent law provides for some 2,000 children's bureaus in the country which shall watch over the welfare of the child before and after birth, care for his well-being during and after his school days, see to the placing out and guardianship of dependent, orphaned, and delinquent children, thus removing the care of the child and adolescent entirely from any connection with the departments of charities and corrections. This is an object which has long been desired by many of those most concerned with the question of child welfare among us, but which has nowhere been achieved. Every community is also organizing offices for vocational guidance which are to help the young people find their proper niche in the economic world, where they can do the best work for themselves and for the nation. All these bureaus are being largely conducted by women who

are prepared for the work in the schools already referred to. They are also acting as health officers, as inspectors of factories, milk, etc.; some are caring for out-hospital cases and many are also engaged in the administration of the government subsidies to the victims of the war, cripples, widows, and orphans.

In Germany, as in most other countries, education is less well paid than any of the other great professions, though it is acknowledged to be the most important of all for the general welfare. In this field, too, German women have made decided gains though much less than they think justice demands. The new governments have almost all swept away the laws or customs which enforced celibacy on women teachers and women office-holders. In many regions the principle of equal pay for equal work has been established, at least in theory. The women are as yet by no means on an equal footing with their male colleagues in respect to the attainment of the higher positions in the schools, whether educational or administrative. Associations of women teachers and women's clubs are constantly protesting against such discrimination and claiming that, at least in all girls' schools, the higher teaching positions and the principalship should be in the hands of women.

It was in response to such demands that the Berlin Institut für Erziehung und Unterricht is now giving a special course for training women who hold the title of *Oberlehrerin*, the highest secondary school teachers, to become directors of the so-called *Frauenschulen* or *Lyzeen*. These schools or classes are superimposed upon the special girls' schools and are supposed to give an opportunity for higher education along specially feminine lines to those who do not or cannot enter the university. It is a curious anomaly that their directors have been, up to the present time, almost entirely men. In the women's *gymnasia* which fit for the university men still hold the majority of the higher positions, only about a dozen such schools having women directors, and against this, too, women are protesting vigorously. It will take years to make the legal equality of the sexes a real one, but the women are determined that this shall be done and are standing shoulder to shoulder in working for it. Not only associations of women teachers or of women office-holders, but all the great national associations of women such as the National Council of Women, are throwing their influence into the scale, as are all the women's papers, chief among them the monthlies *Die Frau* and *Die Frau im Staat*, and *Neue Frauenzeit*, issued tri-weekly in Berlin, a real newspaper for women.

University study has long been open to women on the same terms as men, but the professions have not been equally hospitable. A woman might study medicine and pass her examinations, but it was almost impossible for her to get the necessary early practical experience. Now it is proposed to reserve for women a certain percentage of positions as internes in all hospitals and they are being appointed to certain positions under the government though the jealousy of their male competitors has until now practically excluded them from a share in the administration of the state health insurance.

The legal profession has guarded itself even more closely against the entrance of women. A woman might gain the title of doctor of laws, and enter upon some kinds of office work, but any higher posts were closed to her before the revolution, since she was not allowed to take the state examinations which alone give access to bench and bar. At

present the first examination is open to her. She may occupy minor positions in the administration of the laws, but may not take the higher examination or act as prosecuting attorney or as judge. It is expected, however, that these barriers will soon be removed.

Several women are now giving courses at the universities as privatdozent, one or two even bear the title of professor. Quite a number are studying theology and several have been lately installed as pastor's assistants. In spite of the general poverty which strikes more hardly than anywhere else the members of the salaried middle classes and the intellectuals of Germany, and in spite of the over-crowding of all learned professions due largely to the return to Germany of a great part of the administrative, educational, and official classes of the territories taken from her by the Treaty of Versailles, women are entering the universities in ever-increasing numbers. We cannot wonder at this, however, when we remember that there is scarcely a family left in Germany which can venture to bring up its daughters without providing them with the means of self-support. Women students are suffering even more than men under the terrible privations of the present moment. A recent number of the *Die Frau* appeals to women's clubs to help these students by supplying them with rooms or free meals, lest they fail in the unequal struggle and all the fruits of the long efforts of women for educational and professional equality be lost.

The German Housewives' League, which has over 1,000,000 members in the country, and over 20,000 in Berlin alone, is preparing to take a vigorous part in building up the life of the new nation. Three of its members sat with the committee of the Reichstag which drew the new laws for the regulations of domestic service in the country. In the cities, where servants have become almost as scarce and as dear as they are with us, the women are organizing employment agencies especially for women who are willing to go out for a few hours a day for domestic service, sewing, cleaning, etc. Few people realize what a burden the German wife and mother is bearing, trying to do all the work of her family, generally with a complete lack of what we call modern conveniences and without the training which has been forced upon our women by generations of inadequate "help." The difficulty is increased by the fact that a maid is classed as a luxury and taxed as such, a second maid being taxed three times as heavily as the first. When we remember that a mark which used to be worth twenty cents is now worth but a fraction of one, and that in all but the richest families the whole income must go to getting food and even then in inadequate quantities, we begin to realize what these women are "up against." The Housewives' League is trying, by all sorts of means, to help the wife and mother under these new burdens. It is urging and planning new apartment houses, with more modern conveniences and with the so-called "living kitchen," a kitchen which shall be the pleasantest and not the darkest and ugliest room in the house, and which shall serve also as the family living room, so that the mother will not be cut off from the family life. This is only a revival of the old-fashioned farm kitchen with which we are all so familiar, which was always the center of the household. Other houses are being planned with a common kitchen and dining-room and a possibility of some form of cooperative housekeeping for families where the mother is employed in gainful occupation, and the number of such is constantly increasing as the price of food

rises and the family income decreases in purchasing power. The League is also using its influence to support the Government in its efforts to increase the food supply of the country, to prevent the crowding out of wheat and rye by more lucrative crops, such as sugar and tobacco. In short, housewives no less than professional women are taking their share in the huge task of rebuilding the national life on new foundations.

One can but admire these women who, though bowed down by domestic loss and national humiliation, faced by almost desperate economic conditions, and worn by privations of which those who have not seen Germany since the war can have no conception, can still find courage and determination to go on with their work and to plan for their country.

Republican Germany and the Arts

By LUDWIG LEWISOHN

IT was in 1871 that Matthew Arnold in the series of brilliantly ironical letters called "Friendship's Garland" pointed out to his countrymen the remarkable and, as it seemed to him, saving preoccupation of the Germans with *Geist*—with the concerns of the mind and the spirit. The hungry and distracted republic of today has little left in common with the empire of 1871 except precisely that preoccupation, that impassioned desire to comprehend and to reshape through thought or art both man and nature. The difficult years that have passed since the armistice and the revolution have not produced such solid and permanent works as undoubtedly adorned the politically bankrupt Wilhelminian period. But the activity in all the arts is intense and enormous. And it is not an activity for gain—there is none to be had—nor even for reputation, but springs from the profound though often feverish desire to grasp the world anew and to find forms in art that are to be expression and salvation at once. Such is the twofold inner spirit of that expressionistic movement—*Ausdruckskunst*—which, despite its myriad varying shapes, serves to clarify and guide one's view of the arts in Germany today.

The superficial view of the tourist may easily miss all the phenomena of this essential life of the nation. In the Berlin of the profiteers he may note the Americanization of the cabarets and the fact that both "Kiki" and "Potash and Perlmutter" are being successfully performed. He may neglect the less advertised productions of Hebbel and Ibsen and Hauptmann and of new plays by Johst or Wildgans or Kokoschka, Hasenclever or Sternheim or Kaiser. He is almost certain not to read the intensely serious and subtle weekly or monthly periodicals wholly dedicated to the art of the drama: *Das blaue Heft*, *Komödie*, *Die Schaubühne*. Nor is he likely to gather the little paper-bound volumes of the two series called *Der dramatische Wille* and *Dramatische Bibliothek unserer Jüngsten*. Thus he may not learn a fact of the first importance, namely, that in Germany today the drama, for the first time in centuries, is seeking and finding new forms to embody its new intentions and that the actual production of these plays is attempted because modern German stage-craft has always sought to serve and never to imprison or limit the dramatist and his work.

In the fields of poetry and prose fiction the significant facts are neither to be grasped nor set forth so simply. A rich and intense lyrical movement with Franz Werfel at its head seeks to unite a fearless contact with all reality with an equally fearless exploration of the inner life. Except by the ecstatic extremists free verse has been not so much abandoned as transcended in favor of the creation of new and more personal rhythms through forms comparatively fixed. This poetry is almost wholly pacifist and humanitarian in spirit. But its pacifism and humanitarianism are rarely facile or polite. They arise from a bitter experience that has been philosophically grasped and interpreted. The novel, the common entertainment of the masses, lags behind poetry and the drama. The horrible and the fantastic have, as in the books of Gustav Meyrink, attained a wide popularity, and both the harmless and the erotic lady novelist continues to flourish. But side by side with these we find the enormous editions attained by the works of such artists as Thomas Mann and Jakob Wassermann and single books, Arnold Ulitz's "Ararat," for instance, that seek to grapple in an astonishingly original manner with the most perplexing problems of our age.

More significant for the broader intellectual life of the nation than the production of new works is the dissemination of great literature. Amid poverty and hunger this dissemination has assumed new proportions in the German republic. During the past three years there have been issued new collected editions of practically all native and foreign authors of first and second rank. For astonishingly little one may buy a complete Dostoevski or Tolstoi, Strindberg or Wedekind, Ranke or Fichte, Hölderlin or Heine, Nietzsche or Hauptmann or Schnitzler. Quite minor modern writers like Peter Altenberg may be had in a little set of admirable volumes. Yet the paper shortage is so constant and acute that no German publisher would dare to set out upon these ventures without the assurance of a sale that fills our American publishers with amazement and envy. In addition, new series of books are constantly springing up. And all of these series, like the latest ventures of the Insel-Verlag or the charming little art books of the Delphin-Verlag in Munich, have a profoundly and often subtly cultural aim. Thus there is a cheap series of foreign masterpieces—English, French, Russian—in the original tongues and exquisitely illustrated volumes on all aspects, ancient and modern, of the plastic and pictorial arts. Alexander Koch still publishes his *Kunst und Dekoration* and the familiar Blaue Bücher and Seemann's Künstlermappen, a little more cheaply executed than before the war, are still announced in first editions of one hundred thousand.

The shrunken and impoverished public that makes these ventures possible does not limit itself to the aesthetic or the literary. Echoes of the public success of solid and brilliant philosophical works, primarily of Keyserling's "Reisetagebuch eines Philosophen," have reached us. What has scarcely reached us is the fact that German scholarship, never as wholly given over to dry research as has been thought, has achieved two triumphs in quite recent years—the new Shakespeare versions of Franz Gundolf and the centenary translation of the Divine Comedy by Hans Geisow. The latter is marvelously fresh and attractive. The specialist may deny its Dantesque character. It promises to do for Dante in the twentieth century what Pope did for Homer in the eighteenth by refashioning the poet in the idiom and spirit of our age.

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