

GERMAN DEPARTMENT

HISTORICAL NOTE.

The idea of providing a place where young men of German birth could obtain some training for the work of preaching the gospel to the Germans in our country, originated with the Rev. Zenas Freeman, the first corresponding secretary of the New York Baptist Union for Ministerial Education. In his travels among the Baptist Churches, Mr. Freeman learned of the first successful beginnings Baptists from Germany had made in such centers as Newark, N. J., Philadelphia, Pa., New York City and Buffalo and concluded to encourage promising young men in these German churches to carry on this work still further. He invited them to come to Rochester. In the first published catalogue of the Seminary a special course of studies, embracing academical, collegiate and theological subjects, and extending over a period of four years, was announced as designed to meet the wants of such young men. The first German student came in 1851 and remained for two years. In 1852 several others followed, but only one of these succeeded in completing the entire course, graduating from the University of Rochester and the English Department of the Seminary. Inability to make sufficient practical use of the English language cut the course of the others short. For this reason also the increase in the number of German students was very slight, until the trustees of the New York Baptist Union, in 1858, appointed a native German teacher and thereby established what has since been called the German Department. Rev. Augustus Rauschenbusch, D.D., was the first teacher. He remained in this position for thirty-one years. With the success of the German Baptist churches in our country the demand for a larger number of pastors and missionaries increased. This necessitated the corresponding broadening out of the course of instruction and the appointment of additional teachers. In 1872, the Rev. Herman M. Schaeffer, and in 1884, the Rev. Jacob S. Gubelmann, were added to the faculty, and when, in 1889, Professor Augustus Rauschenbusch resigned his position, the Rev. Albert J. Ramaker, and in 1890, the Rev. Lewis Kaiser, were

elected. Professor Schaeffer died in 1897 and the Rev. Walter Rauschenbusch was appointed his successor, who, however, resigned his position in 1902 to take the chair of Church History in the English Department of the Seminary. In 1915 Professor Gubelmann, who at that time had served continuously for thirty one years, retired and Rev. W. F. C. Meyer became his successor. Up to 1875 the course of instruction extended over three years, but was then lengthened to four years; in 1883 another year was added and still another in 1888, making the present course in the German Department of six years duration, of which the last three years are devoted exclusively to theological instruction. For the instruction given in the first three years of the present curriculum there have been secured as teachers the Rev. Hermann von Berge who served from 1907 to 1919, and the Rev. Gustav A. Schneider, who began his work in January, 1908.

At the time when the German Department was established, it was the only Baptist institution of its kind in the world. In the earlier years, it, therefore, attracted young Germans from across the ocean, a goodly number of whom, after having completed the course of instruction here, went back to labor in the "Fatherland," or to lands which had attracted German immigration. The number of such graduates, who have been in the active ministry in Germany, Russia, South Africa, Australia and Brazil, is twenty-one. There have also gone out from the German Department twenty-two young men who have become foreign missionaries—some under the A. B. F. M. Society, others in connection with the German Baptist Mission in the Cameroons, West Africa, and a goodly number under the direction and aid of the various Mennonite missionary organizations of our country. The chief object of the German Department has, however, been to prepare young men for the work of preaching the Gospel to the Germans in our own country.

For a number of years young men of Polish, Bohemian, Slavonian, Hungarian and Lettish speech who, in addition to the knowledge of their own native language, understood German, have been admitted to the German Department with the understanding that they could there prepare themselves for missionary service among their own people either in our country or in Europe. A goodly number availed themselves of this privilege. While this arrangement was wholly unsought and little encouraged it was successful beyond expectation. Among the present leaders in the new Slavic and Hungarian missionary enterprises of the denomination there will be found many men who have had their training at the German Department. The establishment of Ministers' Training Schools for these nationalities at Chicago, Ill., and Cleveland, Ohio, has made their coming to Rochester unnecessary. Yet among the students at present enrolled in the German Department there are two Roumanians.