CO-OPERATION ON THE CONTINENT OF EUROPE.
II. GERMANY.

The reply from Germany to Lord Rosebery's circular letter (see Science, No. 220, p. 395) is more systematic than that from France. At the very outset the writer says that among the working-classes of Germany co-operation has met with little favor; the middle and upper classes, on the other hand, have applied its principles with considerable success in matters of mutual interest. The writer points out the reluctance on the part of the working-people to co-operate is a large measure to the fact that as a class they are incapable of appreciating the value of making provision for the future. They are not yet educated up to the point of making industrial co-operation a real factor in the improvement of their condition. The tendency toward State socialism in Germany is also an obstacle to co-operative development. Statistically co-operation has not been so extensively and successfully carried on in Germany as in some other countries. This is not due to a lack of enthusiasm among the laboring-classes, but it is more to be found among the higher classes. The criticism of co-operation is based on a fear that the power of the working-classes will be increased by the co-operative movement. The writer is of opinion that the co-operative movement in Germany has been hampered by the State and the private and public societies are very reticent when asked for information on commercial or industrial questions. The most observable notice of co-operative movements, so far as they concern the artisan and laboring-classes, is probably taken by the Central Association for the Welfare of the Laboring-Classes, and its organ, the Arbeiterfreund; while very valuable statistics are to be found in the yearly report of the Central Union of German Co-operative Societies, on all which the report from Germany is based.

Associations belonging to this Central Union of German Co-operative Societies are entitled 'Registered Associations,' and are established under the Prussian law of March 27, 1867, and the German law of July 9, 1868. These laws grant special privileges to co-operative societies; that is to say, associations not restricting themselves to any fixed number of members, and excluding them, have got up with a view of facilitating the obtaining of the credit, the earning of a livelihood, or prosecution of husbandry by their members by means of joint management of their business. A great number of associations have united themselves under the leadership of a counsellor in the Central Union.

Such enterprises are in Germany indissolubly connected with the name of their great founder, Schulze-Delitzsch. The movement, which was started and organized with extraordinary genius, is entirely based on the principle of 'self-help.' "If a man cannot save a few pence by denying himself a couple of glasses of beer a week," said Schulze, "I can do nothing for him." The history of Schulze's attempts is briefly as follows: In 1849 he founded at Delitzsch, in Saxony, a 'sickness and death' fund, which, for a small monthly subscription, afforded help and medicine to the poor, artisans and laborers in case of illness, continuous pecuniary support in cases of incapacitation for work, and contribution towards funeral expenses in cases of death. In 1874 Schulze started a loan society, and, in re-organizing the same in 1881, he introduced the principle of unlimited liability, and completed his system, as far as essentials were concerned, by forming capital for individual members by the introduction of inalienable shares. The example thus set was quickly followed, and many mutual help societies sprang up in various parts of Germany.

The principle of unlimited liability, on which Schulze most strongly insisted as the keystone of his system, was also adopted by Raiffeisen, who founded similar societies, chiefly in agricultural districts. The double effect seems to have been to raise the credit of co-operative societies, and to confine them to persons of small means, persons of larger fortune being shy of risking their whole property.

As mentioned above, the societies on the Schulze-Delitzsch plan have been regularly organized into an association, the principal objects of which were briefly described by him in the report of 1874 as being the following: "The General Union of the German Industrial and Economical Co-operative Societies, founded on the principle of self-help, the affairs of which are at present managed..."