

A German Critic of the Ordnance Survey Maps.—In explaining, in a recent number of *Petermanns Mitteilungen* (1902, No. 10), the method adopted in the preparation of the new map of the British Isles for Stieler's Handatlas, Herr Koffmahn indulges in some criticisms of the English Ordnance maps, which are for the most part quite unfounded. His statements are, indeed, in many cases, so wide of the facts as to be quite inexplicable, except on the supposition that he has consulted some out-of-date sheets of the old edition; but as he shows himself in many respects conversant with the latest developments in the work of the Survey Office, it seems that this explanation cannot hold good. The criticisms are in many cases general ones, no specific instances of the alleged defects being quoted, so that it is impossible to reply to them except by an equally general negative, but there are also some definite statements, the incorrectness of which will be evident to all who are acquainted with the Ordnance maps. Thus, with reference to the 1-inch map, we are told that many sheets of the so-called "revised" maps date back thirty to forty years, the revision having taken place a generation ago. As a matter of fact, as may be seen from the date printed at the foot of each map, the oldest sheet was revised considerably less than ten years ago, while most of the sheets have been revised much more recently. Changes in county boundaries, in regard to which a complaint of inaccuracy is made, are inserted at each revision, while new railways are inserted from time to time as they are opened for traffic. To the statement that considerable towns of recent growth are still shown as villages, and that some populous industrial centres are represented as mere farms, it is obviously impossible to reply in the absence of any citation of instances. Herr Koffmahn appears to derive his ideas in many cases from criticisms which have been made in this country, failing to see that, even if true when first put forward ten to sixteen years ago, the subsequent revision has rendered them quite inapplicable at the present day. It is somewhat singular, also, that among the sources by which, as he says, he was obliged to supplement the maps of the Ordnance Survey, he should give a prominent place to Bartholomew's 2-mile map of Scotland, though this is itself avowedly based on the Ordnance maps. The criticisms on the inferior methods of hill-representation in vogue in this country are probably not intended to apply to the Ordnance maps—if so, it would be a sufficient answer to point to the 1-inch hill maps of the mountainous districts of Scotland, etc.—but rather to maps for use in schools. But, while allowing that these have been far from satisfactory in the past, and may still leave room for improvement, we hardly think that Herr Koffmahn is acquainted with the better class of school maps which have come into use within recent years. He expresses the hope that his own map of the British isles may be largely used in this country as well as in Germany, and it cannot be denied that it gives an admirable general view of the surface features of the country—probably the best in existence, considering the size of the map. It is to be regretted, however, that the scale (1:1,500,000) is far too small to do adequate justice to the more thickly populated districts.