

## My Autobiography

My father, a Bavarian by birth, came to Hamburg as a young man and established himself as a merchant. After a while he made several trips to Santo Domingo, where he met my mother. After their wedding they returned to Hamburg to make their new home. My elder sister, my younger brother and I were all born there. I was born January 12, 1860, on Lohmühlen Street in the suburb of St. Georg. My best recollection of my earliest childhood is that I was sickly and gave my parents many worries with serious, even dangerous illnesses.

Soon after my third birthday my father left to spend considerable time in Santo Domingo on business. I enjoyed playing outdoors; this was a natural result of the location of our dwelling in the suburbs. Although we lived on only one floor of the house, we had a garden in which there was plenty of room to play. In the same house lived a family named Schönfeld with a son, Eduard, only three weeks younger than I. He was my first friend and playmate. Sometimes we spent the whole day together playing in his garden, doing little gardening jobs. Eduard had a cousin named Gustaf, with whom I soon made friends.

When I was five, my siblings and I were sent to a kindergarten in Uhlenhorst, where I had visual instruction for the first time. I learned to play a lot of games there, especially how to do all sorts of work with my hands, for example modeling little animals, etc., out of clay. Since I enjoyed this, I acquired the skill very quickly. In the fall of the same year, I went to an elementary school run by two maiden ladies named Voigt. Here I learned first to read and write, later on also arithmetic, drawing, German and French, geography and world history. It was here that I first had to do homework. But since all of this was easy for me I was very happy in this first school, although I was often careless and hasty.

My friendship with the two Schönfelds was also strengthened, since they were both in school with me. I left this school after a year and a half, at Eastertime 1867, to go to a larger one. My friend Gustaf Schönfeld went to Dr. Schleiden's school at the same time. This was the same school that my older [half-] brother Emilio Nölting, a son of my mother's, had attended. Eduard had been there for three months. Since I already had the rudiments of the instruction, I was placed in the class just below the top. We had the same subjects I had already studied, but now they were studied in greater detail. In addition we had local history and geography, which I also liked very much. We had to . . .

(Translation of Oscar Hüttlinger's original manuscript)