

one who has enthralled the heart of more than one member of the company. Duels, too, are frequently fought, and a wound on the face is regarded as a mark of honour.

There is not, however, so much drinking and duelling as in former times; but still the amusements of the German student appear to be much less healthy and less rational than those of the English undergraduate.

Most of the German universities can boast of their great men. Just as Cambridge points to Bacon, Milton, and Newton among her sons, so Leipzig claims Goethe, Schiller, and Jean Paul Richter, three of the most richly-gifted geniuses of modern Europe. Among the great men of Berlin are Neander, the church historian, and Schleiermacher, the great expounder of Plato. Jena numbers among her great men the philosophers Hegel and Schelling, who were both professors there. Hegel wrote one of his greatest works at Jena, while the great battle was raging outside the town. The thunder of the cannon and the shrieks of the dying were alike unheeded by the great thinker, absorbed in his engrossing subject. Tübingen gave birth to the school of destructive criticism, of which Dr. Strauss was the foremost exponent.

At present, Berlin and Leipzig take the lead among German seats of learning, Berlin being especially distinguished by its illustrious historical professors. The names of Von Ranke, the Nestor of German historians, of Mommsen, Gneist, Ernst Curtius, Von Sybel, and Waitz, present a brilliant constellation of historical genius unequalled in the world. Berlin also

boasts of Professor Helmholtz, the famous physicist, whose researches and discoveries in connection with the theories of vision, and the conservation of energy, are the pride of Germany and the admiration of the learned world. Leipzig is specially noted for Oriental studies and for jurisprudence. Among her professors are Wundt, the distinguished physicist; George Curtius, the philologist; Delitzsch, one of the greatest of living Hebraists; and Windscheid, the jurist. Jena has fallen from her high position, but can still boast of two distinguished men of science among her professors, Hæckel and Gegenbaur, the zoologists. Göttingen is another university which has declined in public estimation, but among her professors are the eminent physicist and psychologist, Hermann Lotze, and the famous historian, Dr. Reinhold Pauli, whose name is well known in England as the author of the *Life of Simon of Montfort*, and who is probably as well acquainted with early English history as any living Englishman, excepting Professor Stubbs and Mr. Freeman. Halle counts among her teachers the theologian, Julius Müller, and the well-known *savant*, Volkmann. Among the Bonn professors are Dr. Lange, the theologian, and Dr. Nasse, the famous author of the work on mediæval land tenure. The most eminent professor at Heidelberg is Dr. Bluntschli, the jurist, and author of a code of international law. Philosophy does not occupy the supreme position in Germany which once fell to its share, but some very able philosophical teachers are still to be found; among the most distinguished are Professor Erdmann of Halle, the Hegelian, and Dr. Zeller of Berlin, the exponent of Plato and the Greek school generally.

## A BELGIAN DAY-NURSERY.

BY LADY GEORGINA VERNON.



HERE are so many kind-hearted people interested in the subject of day-nurseries for our little ones, that few apologies are needed for bringing the subject again before our readers. A visit that I paid this summer to one or two of the largest nurseries

at Brussels was so full of interest, that I think others might be glad of some of the hints I gained on various little points of management, and some of which might be engrafted on the rules of our own now rapidly in-

creasing day-nurseries. The largest and oldest establishment of the kind at Brussels is situated in the Rue de l'Abondance, a wide airy street, away from the principal thoroughfares of that gay and busy city. This Crèche is often denominated La Mère Crèche, as it is not only the largest but the oldest one in Brussels; it has now been founded thirty-two years, and is one of the first that was established anywhere. I believe the Belgian Government has not in any way taken up the subject of *infant* training or teaching, therefore all this work is necessarily left to charitable people who are willing to devote money and time to this good object. This large institution of which I speak has accommodation for nearly 400 children, and there are combined under the same roof the Crèche for infants and L'Ecole Gardienne for the elder children, as they are received here from fourteen days old up to seven years. It is all under the supreme control of a directress, who appears most thoroughly to carry out her work, keeping a mother's eye on the babies, and intelligently superintending the training of the elder ones. In many ways this combination of infant-school with day-nursery is a great advantage, and especially so to the

poor mothers, who on their way to their daily work can leave both the baby and any other little ones, who are too young for school, to safe guardianship. It is also advantageous for the children, who are passed on gradually from nursery to partial tuition; and so on, step by step, till at seven years old they are launched out into the world of real school life.

But I think a short description of each department of this excellently managed home will explain some of its various advantages.

A large cheerful room up-stairs is the infant-nursery, and the head nurse, who is a stout good-tempered-

touching inscriptions showing they are given in memory of some precious child that God has taken, such as "*Au mémoire de Jules*;" "*Au mémoire de ma bien-aimée Suzanne*;" some given by happy children, rich in all that makes childhood happy, and taught to share their blessings. The sum of thirty-five francs will buy and furnish one of these little cots.

Besides the head nurse there are several younger women, cheerful-looking and good-tempered, amusing or nursing some of the numerous babies. I learnt that the mothers of all the babies in this ward are compelled to come at midday to give them the breast; and at



"THEY WERE A HEALTHY, THRIVING-LOOKING SET OF CHILDREN" (p. 174).

looking Belgian peasant, sits by the great stove which occupies the centre of the room, warming the toes of one tiny specimen of humanity, while her left arm holds another wee baby wrapped tightly in the uncomfortable-looking swaddling-clothes still used among the lower orders in Belgium. The nurse only speaks Wallon, and shakes her head with a smile when I ask her in French about her charges. The directress points out the neat cribs all round the room; they are swinging iron cots, each furnished with the whitest of white curtains and snowy sheets; in some of them one sees little downy heads resting on the soft pillows. Over each bed is a metal ticket with the name of the *donor* or *founder* of the cot: each cot seems to have been given by a friend of the institution; some with

other times of the day, according to their age, they are fed with milk, or some simple farinaceous food, such as semolina and milk.

From the infant-nursery we passed through a most important room, namely the bath-room, which is neatly fitted up with small zinc baths, and is supplied with hot water from a boiler like a very large kettle, on a stove in one corner of the room. There are baskets for holding the clothes of each child during the bathing process. The directress informed me that every child had a bath every other day; and those who show any sign of weakness or rickets are given daily, by the doctor's orders, cold or lukewarm baths. To this system may be attributed in great measure the healthy appearance of the children, and particularly their immunity from

skin diseases, which often prevail owing to the want of soap and water!

Next to the bath-room comes a spacious room, with large windows opening out on a broad covered and asphalted balcony, where a great part of the day is passed, when the weather is fine, by the children crawling about in the fresh air. In this room were about sixty children, being all those from one and a half to three years old. Neat cots, the same as in the infants' room, are ranged round the walls; but at the time of my visit they were not occupied, as all the little ones were seated on low comfortable benches, which run back to back down the centre of the room; these benches are provided with backs, and some that are for the use of the smallest children are divided into little arm-chairs; a long low table is placed in front of each. Nurses were busy hurrying up and down the rows, tying on bibs under each little chin; many an impatient hungry child was hammering its spoon on the table, while some were chirping away like little birds in a nest, with half-open mouths waiting to be fed, when the door opened and in trooped a whole set of elder girls, bright rosy maidens from five to seven, constituting the "girls' upper class," who are allowed daily at this hour to come up and assist in feeding the babies. Closely following them came a strapping cook, carrying a huge shining copper casserole of steaming *soupe grasse*; this was speedily ladled out into little basins, and each girl knelt on the floor opposite the one or two babies she had to feed, provided with a basin of soup and a spoon. "*Ayez soin de ne pas brûler les enfants,*" was the watchword from the careful, motherly directress, whose eye seemed to glance over at once and take in each individual little one, as she stooped here to arrange a crooked bib, there to kiss some loving little face held up to her, then to taste the soup, and see it was good and not too hot. It was a *home-like* scene, such as is not often met with in these establishments; but this was like one large family with the mother and elder sisters; they were a healthy, thriving-looking set of children, plump, rosy, and clear-skinned. Leaving this apartment, we wended our way down-stairs to the class-rooms, three in number, all opening out on the little garden. In the largest, about eighty children were ranged in rows on comfortable benches with low desks: some weary heads lay fast asleep on small arms, and they were suffered to remain undisturbed; the same motherly, gentle treatment, combined with all necessary discipline, seeming to pervade the whole. But most of the bright eyes were fixed on the mistress, who, with a wooden rattle in her hand, called their attention and bade them sing; and a merry infant-song, with plenty of action, was gone through with much spirit. From there to the next room was but a step, and here there were only a few boys; the elder girls, who are taught in the same room, being still up-stairs, attending on the infants.

Still one more room, and we have seen all; and this last is full of earnest, attentive little learners; one small flaxen-haired child of about four years old recited a fable with wonderful accuracy, and it was pretty to see how she kept her blue eyes fixed on her teacher's face all the time, as if reading the words in her kind, sympathetic look. During the whole time I spent at the Crèche, I neither saw a symptom of nor heard the name of "punishment;" and the most marked features in each department of this large establishment were the beautiful cleanliness and order, and also the brightness and cheerfulness pervading all. There is another smaller institution of the same sort, under the direction of "*La Société Protectrice des Enfants,*" containing about 120 children; there they are received from three months old up to seven years. Much the same system is carried on as in the larger Crèche. The teaching of the children appears particularly good and thorough, and the singing is quite above the average. One little girl of four was lifted up on a high bench, and told to take the second to a song that another tiny girl was singing, and it was marvellous to hear the sweet, accurate bird-like voice chiming in with a perfect second. It made a pretty picture that I have carried away in my memory, that dark-eyed Thérèse, and little Marie with her curly head (which had somehow escaped the ruthless scissors that generally leave the little heads so bare), standing side by side, wee pink hands moving to give emphasis and expression, and heads bowing in time as the clear voices rang out, "*Bon jour, mes voisins, bon jour!*" while all the other rows of little brown closely-shaven heads behind were nodding grave approval.

These children had their little refectory up-stairs, and one arrangement pleased me greatly: a set of pigeon-holes all round the room contained each one a small tin basin and sponge, belonging to each child.

The usual amount I found paid by the children at the various Crèches in the town was about sevenpence a week in our money, if they had their dinner; those who went home for dinner paying fourpence a week; but at some it is as low, including dinner, as a halfpenny a day; this, of course, cannot nearly cover the expenses of the establishment; and it appears to me a much sounder principle that the sum paid should be sufficient to make the Crèche self-supporting, which can generally be done, as I have endeavoured to show in a previous paper. Those who send their children to the Crèche are not generally of the pauper class, but poor respectable working women, who, without the help of this nursery, would have to pay *much more* for having the child looked after at home, or else lose their daily employment. Besides this, there are few poor homes, and especially in a town, where little children could have the benefit of such cleanliness, good air and food, and care as in these well-managed establishments.