

STUDENT-LIFE AT HEIDELBERG.

BY A GRADUATE OF HEIDELBERG AND CAMBRIDGE.



Of all the thousands of British tourists who, on their way to and from Switzerland, annually pass through Heidelberg, so charmingly situated half-way between the river scenery of the Rhine and the mountain grandeur of the Alps, few think of, and still fewer visit, a hideous mass of yellow-stuccoed masonry, round which, however, all Heidelberg life centres.

This architectural abomination, resembling nothing so much as two gigantic Noah's arks set down at right angles to one another, lies just off the Hauptstrasse, flanking the Ludwigsplatz, and is the famous Rupert-Charles University of more than European celebrity.

Founded in 1386 by the Elector Palatine, Ruprecht I., it will this year celebrate its 500th anniversary by a series of magnificent fêtes early this month. As general interest seems to have been aroused by this jubilee, a few notes on the University and the life of its alumni, by one of them, may at this time prove not unacceptable.

The University year is divided into two terms, called respectively the winter and the summer semester. The former runs from the middle of October to the middle of April, with a few weeks' break for Christmas; the latter lasting from the middle of April to the beginning of August, leaving two months and a half for the summer vacation.

In Germany, as in England, student-life begins with matriculation. Mine at Heidelberg was comical

rather than formal and formidable, as is the case with us. On the day and at the time appointed, all we "Freshmen," having previously disbursed sundry marks and pfennigs, and deposited sundry papers at the secretariat, gathered at the University building. There we flocked round the closed door of the hall, where we had learnt that the ceremony was to take place. Soon the door was opened, and we began to be admitted one by one into the sanctum. After an hour's waiting, due to the fact that we were enrolled in alphabetical order, I marched into the room, preceded by a sonorous "Herr Schpentzerr" from the uniformed janitor. I found myself in the presence of four spectacled professors (the Pro-rector and three others), who were sitting side by side at a long table covered with papers. After an awkward pause of a few moments, which we filled in by mutually taking stock of each other, the secretary, who acted as master of the ceremonies, mutely pointed to a chair, before which lay a large book on the table. I sat down, signed my name, filled in certain other columns with information respecting the date and place of my birth, the abode and status of my parents, &c., and then, after a low bow to the Board, walked out, without having uttered or heard a syllable during the interview. Next day I received my certificate of matriculation, and a card which entitled me to the "civic rights appertaining to the Rupert-Charles University," and I was now a full-fledged student.

There are at all German Universities four Faculties, or branches of study: Theology, Law, Medicine, and Philosophy, which last is a comprehensive term, including all subjects not contained in either of the

three others. In 1880 there were six Professors of Theology, twelve of Law, nineteen of Medicine, and no less than thirty-three of Philosophy, besides many private tutors.

The professors lecture in rooms specially fitted up for the purpose, but not necessarily in the University building, where, in fact, comparatively few lectures are held, most of them being delivered in new buildings lately erected by the University. As these latter are in some cases a considerable distance apart, all lessons timed to begin theoretically at the hour do not in reality commence till a quarter past, so as to give time for the students to run from one room to another.

As a rule the morning is devoted to the hearing of lectures, some of which are free to all adults, whether matriculated students or not, the afternoon being given up to relaxation, and the evening to private study. There are, however, lectures of some sort going on at all hours of the day, from 7 a.m. to 7 and even 8 p.m.

The students lodge where they please, but the house must be licensed by the academic authorities. The rent of the room or rooms, which are let for the whole semester, ranges from 3s. to 15s. per room per week, according to storey and situation. Frequently two students rent one small attic between them, so that lodging cannot be accounted a necessarily heavy item in a student's expenditure. Nor is board more expensive. Three good meals a day—two of them, viz., dinner at 12—2, and supper at 7 p.m., being meat meals—can be obtained *en abonnement* for 1s. 6d. to 2s. per diem. I occupied two well-furnished rooms on the ground-floor of a "gasthaus" close to the University, and found that my board and lodging together cost me rather less than a pound a week.

The curriculum of work is apparently arranged on the theory that each student will remain three years at one University or another. Very few, however, spend all this time at one and the same University, for the students love a roving life, and rarely pass more than one semester in one place. Heidelberg is from its surrounding scenery eminently suited to be an out-of-doors place, and is consequently in high favour during the summer semester, while large towns, such as Berlin or Leipsic, are preferred as winter quarters.

When a student leaves at the end of a semester, he has to "exmatriculate"—that is, go to the secretariat, surrender his certificate of civic rights, disburse sundry marks again, and receive back his papers, which he will similarly deposit at his next Alma Mater.

As the beginning of academic life is matriculation, so the end of it is, if all goes well, the examination for the diploma of Doctor of Theology, Law, Medicine, or Philosophy, as the case may be. This examination is so different from the analogous ordeals among us, that it seems worth describing. The candidate, early in the semester in which he wishes to "pass out," calls on the Dean of his Faculty, and asks for a day to be fixed for his exam. The Dean consults

his note-book, and gives a choice of four or five days near the period when the candidate wishes to be examined. The latter then chooses a date, and begins to harden his heart and stiffen his neck for the inquisition. When the day has arrived, the victim presents himself in evening dress at 5.30 p.m. at the appointed place. Generally he has to wait and cool his ardour in a small ante-room, until a quorum of professors has been gathered together. I was lucky, and found fifteen professors of the Philosophical Faculty ready assembled to try me. I was excused the one hour's preliminary examination in Latin on the ground of my classical honours at Cambridge, though I had great difficulty in persuading them that I was really a graduate of Cambridge, as I had no diploma to prove it. So I had *only* three hours' *viva voce* examination before a bench of fifteen professors.

After having been for two hours questioned as to my views on the Romance languages and literature, we adjourned for ten minutes to recruit our shattered energies with wine and cake (for which I had to pay, though I did not partake of them). Then followed an hour's dialogue about Gothic languages and literature, and I was released and relegated to a side room, while the professors sat in judgment over my fitness, or the contrary, for receiving the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. I was not long kept in suspense, as in less than five minutes I was summoned by the usher into their august presence again. They had all risen, and were standing in a semicircle round the door when I passed in. The Dean made a short speech, saying that the Faculty had decided upon promoting me to the degree of Ph.D.; the professors bowed simultaneously; I gave a semicircular bow in response, backed out of the door, and all was over.

The next morning I had to reappear before the Dean, and repeat after him a long Latin oath, the words of which I hardly caught. One of the clauses was, I believe, to the effect that I would not enter any other University after receiving the diploma of Heidelberg. The fees, £21, for promotion seem rather heavy when contrasted with the prevailing cheapness of education in Germany.

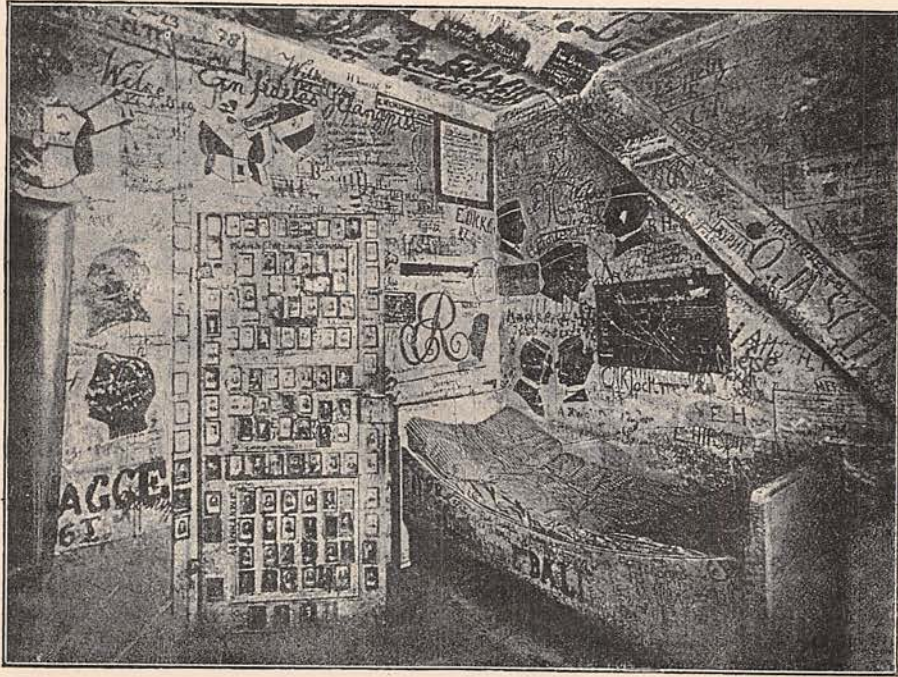
It may well be imagined, considering the unfettered liberty granted to the students, that some of them occasionally allow this liberty to degenerate into licence. For such, however, there are wholesome deterrents in the shape of academical punishments for offences against academical discipline, apart from, and in addition to, the civil pains and penalties inflicted on transgressors of the laws of the realm. First and foremost among the special punishments stands imprisonment, up to four weeks, in the University prison, entitled the Carcer. This prison comprises four cells, to accommodate four culprits; and instead of being, as prisons are popularly supposed to be, an underground dungeon, it is situated some three or four storeys high, occupying the attic floor of the house of one of the University ushers, who acts as gaoler. The windows are strongly barred, and covered with stout wire netting; the bedstead (the prisoner brings his own bedding) is low and primitive, and the furni-

ture consists of a wooden chair and a deal table. But though the fittings are thus anything but luxurious, the ornamentation of the cells is both plentiful and unique. The tables are carved from top to bottom, over and under, legs and all, with wonderful arabesques, scenes, names, beasts, and flowers, while the ceiling and the walls are frescoed and re-frescoed with original designs and inscriptions in colours, or in soot, if the artist could get no other pigment. Many young hearts

spent several years at German Universities, I never fully satisfied myself as to what were, if any, the recreations, athletic or otherwise, of the German students, beyond walking and beer-drinking, with an occasional cab-drive by way of special dissipation.

Of social amusements there seem to exist but few, save what is afforded by scientifically inclined debating clubs, or singing societies.

An exception must, however, be made in favour



A CELL IN THE CARCER.

have left their complaints on these walls, and though doubtless they most richly deserved their fate, yet to read their pathetic lamentations one would think there was a larger share of injured innocence among the Heidelberg students than in any other quarter of the globe. One sees here many well-known names of German statesmen and heroes, men who would doubtless feel rather ashamed of their early vagaries, if they remembered they had stereotyped them on the walls of the Heidelberg Carcer for all eyes to read.

In the event of very serious breaches of discipline, the offender is liable to summary dismissal from the University, subject, however, to appeal to the Protector. This functionary is virtually the head of the University; the Rector, the nominal head, being always the actual Grand Duke of Baden.

A foreign critic in England would, I think, have but little difficulty in recognising cricket, football, rowing, and tennis, as the principal pastimes of the youths at our institutions for higher education. But though I

of the various corps, the members of which form so showy a feature of every University. These corps students seem to spend their lives in such sociableness as is to be found in walking the streets, adorned with coloured caps and sashes to match, in frequenting the corps pastrycooks' in the afternoon, and their corps "kneipe," or drinking saloon, in the evening, and at regular intervals assisting in a body at a students' duel.

These duels, for the carrying on of which the corps system would seem to have been expressly devised, are artificial concerns, prearranged between the presidents of the various corps. These latter are empowered to call upon A to fight a duel, without rhyme or reason, with B, apparently for the sole reason that the remainder of the corps may enjoy the pleasure of looking on, much as big boys at school set on little boys to fight, so that they may assist as excited spectators at a miniature gladiatorial display.

The duellists fight with long swords, sharpened only for a few inches at the end, and have their bodies and

limbs completely covered with leather armour, with the exception of a part of the face; their aim being not to kill or maim each other, but only to chop out little slices from one another's cheeks, noses, and foreheads, leaving scars which are looked upon with great pride by their fortunate possessors.

These duels have, however, been so often described, that it seems hardly worth while to go over them again.

Duelling is restricted to the comparatively small coterie of corps students. But there is another pastime which unfortunately is open to all to indulge in, at all times and in all places, and that is beer-drinking, which is carried on to an almost incredible extent.

Such is a short sketch of the salient points of German University life as they presented themselves to a graduate fresh from Cambridge.

A comparison between the English and German systems very naturally suggests itself; and this comparison, when made, leads to the following conclusions:—

In these days, when the Teutonising tendency is so strong among us that we import, not only German customs, but even German bayonets and German post-cards, it will be well to pause and reflect maturely before we import also the system of education in vogue at the German Universities. A practical experience of both has convinced me of the superiority of our own system over that of Germany, in almost every respect.

Notably, liberty in the abstract may be a very good thing; but, like other virtues, it can in practice be carried to excess. And not all youths of eighteen to twenty-two can distinguish between its use and its abuse.

With regard to the acquisition of knowledge, it is difficult to compare our system with the German. No system can turn a drone into a bee, and none can prevent a bee from gathering honey where it exists. An undergraduate in either country has ample facilities offered him for the acquisition of learning. If he fails to do so, the fault is not that of the system under which he studies, but his own.

In England it is, I think, generally recognised that perhaps the greatest advantages to be derived from a University career are not so much classical or mathematical as social and moral. And in a German University this social and moral training must, under the present system, necessarily be entirely absent, as the above remarks on the student's mode of life will have shown. No humanising influences are there brought to bear on the still supple mind; no high tone is instilled into it, no unselfishness or *esprit de corps* implanted in it, no rough corners are rubbed down in the mill of free social intercourse, as I think we may justly boast is the case at our Universities.

In conclusion, before our ubiquitous Germanisers lay their axe to the root of our University system, I hope the suspicion at least will arise in their minds that perhaps after all "the old is better."

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STIRRING SCENES IN STIRRING LIVES.

I.—CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS.



IF Columbus had been an Englishman, Englishmen would have known him better, and admired him more. He was really one of the most interesting and attractive of men. The man himself had something fascinating about him; ecclesiastics, princes, mutinous seamen, and ignorant savages instinctively owned his remarkable power. Not everybody, indeed; otherwise

he would not have had to go through the long, weary years of struggle that passed before he could get any one of means and influence to believe in him and in his enterprise. Of a commanding presence, above the middle height, with a long face, aquiline nose, light grey eyes, and hair that had turned white at thirty, he looked what he was—a leader of men. Like many other great men, he was simple-minded, humane, generous, with strong belief in the greatness of others, and with much of that reverence which belongs to minds that soar in the infinite.

The son of the wool-carder of Genoa had early chosen the sea as his home, and had known many a voyage before the great work of his life began to loom in his horizon. Living among the Portuguese (he had married a Portuguese lady), the knowledge of the Portuguese discoveries must have had a very powerful influence on him. Pondering maps, charts, the structure of the earth, accounts of voyages, and opinions founded on them, he had arrived at an immovable conviction that there was a way to India by the West. He was, of course, utterly ignorant of the existence of the continent of America, and he was in serious error in his estimate of the size of the globe, his idea being that the east coast of Asia, commonly spoken of as India, was only a few hundred furlongs distant from the west coast of Europe and Africa. He had heard, however, that to the east of the Asiatic continent there lay a magnificent island (perhaps Japan), and he believed that this island was the first land that would be reached by any one sailing west from the shores of Europe. To reach the shores of Asia by crossing the ocean, to discover and annex whatever splendid islands or golden continents might be there, was the enterprise on which he had set his