

German University Life

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attention to the food, I may as well mention the drinks. Coffee of wonderful quality, the beans being ground just before it is made, is obtainable everywhere and at all times. Tea was served in glasses standing in a metal-holder, very weak, indeed, to an Englishman. I was informed that it was not an uncommon practice to dry the leaves after they had been used once and use them over again. Wine was cheap; even a quart bottle of high-grade champagne could be bought for 4/6. But the standard drink except for breakfast is beer. The Bavarian workman, indeed, scorns coffee for breakfast, but has a glass of beer along with his roll of bread and his large breakfast radish. Like the sausage, the kinds of beer are endless. Most are mild, often containing not more than 2½ per cent. of alcohol, which is little stronger than the hop beer sold in our shops as light refreshment.

I have seen children of two or three years old drinking it from their mothers' glasses as they sat in the cafes on a Sunday afternoon listening to the orchestra. Such beer does not transport well and the beers brewed in Germany for export are usually double strength.

Very little spirits is drunk in Germany! Spirits drinking is regarded there as the first sign of almost certain degradation. On the other hand, large quantities of beer are drunk, but to very little effect, and one seldom saw a person drunk. Under the old days of license in New Zealand I saw more drunk men in a week here than I did there in two years.

So I will pass on to a few remarks about the University and University work. The number of students in the two universities of Berlin, namely, the University and the Technical University, exceeded 30,000, so that the buildings were necessarily scattered, and there is little corporate life such as exists in the residential universities of the British Empire.

The university student in Germany is a privileged person: he receives a special discount on his purchases in the shops, has preference in buying tickets for the theatre and other places of entertainment, and in many other ways. In some university towns the student who misbehaves is not placed in the ordinary lock-up by the police, but is incarcerated in special quarters. Some of the universities even had their lock-up attached to their own buildings, and the name of the great Bismarck is to be found on the walls of one of them.

The professorial staff of such a dis-

Mr. R. McKenzie

a well-known Dunedin Rugby enthusiast, who carries out a running description each Saturday afternoon from Carisbrook of the Rugby games. Mr. McKenzie also reviewed, from 4YA last Friday evening, the following day's match, New Zealand versus New South Wales, at Sydney. He will speak again on Friday evening, July 18, his subject being "Tomorrow's Match—New Zealand versus Australia," and he will also speak on the eve of the Third Test, on Friday, July 22.

These talks will be broadcast by 4YA, at 10 o'clock.



tinguished university as that in Berlin naturally includes many brilliant men, especially in view of the fact that the controlling body is prepared to appoint leading men from other countries to the staff. The students, too, especially those doing research work, came from many countries.

For some time I worked with an English university man who had played tennis at many Continental tournaments with our celebrated player Anthony Wilding. All foreign students entering a German university are required to hand in their passports and receive in their place special cards showing that they are entered for the time being as students. They are then entitled to all the privileges of German students.

Student Life.

STUDENT life is made all the more interesting by intercourse with men from many countries. In the last research laboratory in which I worked there were more Poles and also more English-speaking (i.e., English, American, Australian, and New Zealand) students than there were Germans. Other countries represented among the students were Russia, Hungary, Norway, Switzerland, Italy, Austria, Brazil, and Japan. German was the common language, and we never spoke English except in a company that was exclusively English.

The Russian students were interesting fellows, most of them poor and lightly clad even in the depth of those severe winters and living on very little. Yet they were strong and hardy. They were all very apprehensive as to the future of Russia, for they could see trouble, revolution, and bloodshed as inevitable in their unhappy country.

A general favourite was a Japanese student, who, prior to coming to Germany, had been a lecturer in the University of Tokio. The prime favourite, however, was an Irishman who had lived for some years in Leeds. He had all the Irishman's ready wit, and his German, spoken with an Irish-Yorkshire accent, was a joy to all his hearers!

Germans, and indeed all continental people, are excellent linguists, and in shop or restaurant one could always rely on being addressed in English,

and good English at that. The teaching of English in the schools is evidently well done. Further, many Germans in pre-war days worked in offices and other business places in England for a time and gained a good knowledge of the language. I remember being impressed by a German barber who while he shaved me talked fluently in English, with a Scottish accent. He had learned his English in Edinburgh.

Long Hours.

THE students all mixed well, due perhaps in large part to the influence of the principal professor in that department, who was a most genial and kindly man. Every year he entertained his research students and his assistants to the number of 30 or 40 at a dinner in his own home, or at one of the famous old inns of the town or the surrounding neighbourhood.

During the day's work we used our spare moments to wander round the laboratory and discuss with the other students the research work that they were engaged in. This intercourse had probably as much effect on our education as our own particular piece of work. Our working hours were long, usually 8 a.m. to 7 p.m., with a short break for Mittagessen (the midday meal), but if the occasion demanded it was not uncommon to work till 8 or 9 p.m.

Low Salaries.

I WAS not long in discovering that university professors were in receipt of low salaries: the head professor in a department with three or four other professors and lecturers to assist him received only £250 per annum. However, he was allowed to act as expert adviser to any firm or industry, and in this capacity drew a good salary. He brought the problems of industry into the university, and his research students helped to solve them while working for their degrees.

Good students had no difficulty in securing positions for research work with firms throughout the country. This linking of the universities with industry had a wonderful effect on building up the industries of the country, and in making the universities an important factor in national life. Like most of the other students I was offered a position in one of the skilled industries at the conclusion of my

course, but was unable to accept it. Most of the English students, however, did so for experience; a few of them later got similar work in England, but most of them were attracted to the United States, where research men are much in demand.

Social Life.

I FOUND little organised social life in the universities as a whole, since they were non-residential, and one met few students except those in one's own department. In the neighbourhood of each university one finds often whole blocks of rooms let to students. These students usually have their morning coffee in their rooms, dine at a restaurant, and buy food at a delicatessen shop and make the evening meal in their own rooms. Such a life is free and Bohemian, and has a number of advantages.

There were usually a few sport clubs run by university students, but they covered only a comparatively small number of students, for at that time many Germans took part in no athletics. I understand that there has been of late years a radical alteration in this respect. Even at that time tennis promised to become a popular game in Germany, and in every town one saw acres of tennis courts. In winter they were flooded with water over-night and used as outdoor skating rinks the following day and evening.

The Corps.

THE most interesting student bodies were the corps. Members were bound in a bond of brotherhood, for their mutual benefit, this being the avowed purpose of each corps. Members of the corps spent most evenings together either in their own club house if the corps was very wealthy, or in a special room in a cafe set aside for the use of that corps only. Their time was usually spent in talking, singing and drinking beer.

Members of a student corps wore the distinctive cap of their corps and a ribbon of the corps colours as a sash over one shoulder. It was a great sight when the members of all corps met in a gathering or a procession as they did on special occasions. Duels were arranged between individuals from different corps and were fought with heavy sabres in special places known to corps members. The combatants wore heavy goggles, and their necks and chests were well protected, and as thrusting was not allowed, it was hard-possible to injure any part but the cheeks, but these were often cut deeply. The scars on a student's cheek were marks of high distinction, and they were not allowed usually to heal too smoothly.

Most of the university professors bore marks of duels from their student days: one I remember particularly had three beautiful parallel slashes on one cheek each extending from nose to ear. I never saw a duel, but privileged spectators described them to me as gory affairs with a doctor in close attendance.

Nominally duels were forbidden by law, but they were common both in army and in university circles. It was quite unusual for anyone to be killed while duelling: killing was not the object of the duel.

My mention earlier that university students were regarded as a privileged class raises the interesting point of class distinction and social status. All students attending a university were required to have passed satisfactorily

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