

German Student Life.

(Continued from last month.)

THIS duelling practice is a very foolish one, but dates back hundreds of years and may be regarded as a survival of old barbarism. The state does not take any measure to repress it, unless sabres or pistols are resorted to; and the university authorities are not very severe, even if they do succeed in surprising a duelling party. Though the fighting is done almost within calling distance of the town, the system of espionage adopted by the students is so perfect, that it is next to impossible for the university police to catch duellists in the act, and unless they can succeed in doing that their chances of proving the combatants guilty of fighting are next to hopeless. The weapon used in these ordinary duels is a long thin sword called a "Schlaeger" which is sharpened to a razor edge for several inches from the point.

But if the authorities wink at the usual "Schlaeger" duel, they act very sternly when the weapons employed are sabres or pistols. One of my friends vanished from our midst for a month or two, and I found out that he had been imprisoned in a fortress for merely attempting to fight a duel with pistols. If he had succeeded in carrying out his intention and the State officers had got wind of it, he would probably have had five years of imprisonment in a fortress to cool off his fighting proclivities. In fact, both the German student and German officer are liable to be placed in a very awkward predicament. If grossly insulted, they are expected by their comrades to challenge the offending party to a duel; if they shirk this "duty," they are immediately "cut" by their friends, and things made so unpleasant for them generally, that they find themselves compelled to change their quarters. If they please their comrades by fighting, the State interferes and away they go into bondage more or less severe and protracted, according to the gravity of the offence against the laws of the land. It is sincerely to be hoped this barbarous practice of duelling in all its forms will be done away with before many years, both in university and army. Perhaps the utter absence of athletic games had something to do with German students amusing themselves by slashing each others faces and heads.

Cricket, baseball, football, rowing, &c. were all unknown to them, and the only exercise taken by them outside of fencing and fighting,

was an occasional swim in the river during the summer, and strolls and drives in the vicinity of Heidelberg—and where can a place be found so rich in beautiful surroundings as Heidelberg? In the course of a very chequered life, I have travelled many thousands of miles: but there is no spot on earth that I am acquainted with, that has left pleasanter memories, than the environs of this old seat of the Counts Palatine.

It has always seemed to me, that if I could choose a place to rest in after the storms and ups and downs of life, that spot would be Heidelberg. But it not be supposed that all or even the majority of Heidelberg students belong to either Corps or Burschenschaft. It costs money to be a member of these organizations, and money is a thing that most German students have very little of. In fact, people in America and Canada would be astonished to see upon how small an amount of cash, a young German will manage to get through his university course. I knew one young student whose means did not exceed six hundred florins a year, or two hundred and forty dollars, and yet he managed to live and pay his college fees; and there must have been many who managed with much less.

The Corps students used to affect a contemptuous manner towards these humble individuals who did not see fit to join any of the color-wearing organizations, and generally spoke of them as "Bummier" or "Kameelon" "loafers" or "camels." But the despised ones did not fret about this assumption of superiority on the part of the colored cap gentry. They had clubs of their own, the largest of which was the Academical Union, in which much brilliant debating was done. The English and American students had a club which generally was known by the nick name of "Pestilentia" a name that was given to it in consequence of some strictures made upon the conduct of some of its former members by a clergyman. However, in my time its members were no worse than their neighbors: and it had on its roll the names of Dana, Doremus and others, men who stood second to none in intellect and ability. I think that if a list were made of eminent Englishmen and Americans, that many of them would be found to be graduates of Heidelberg. I can remember seeing inscribed on the roll of workers in Bunsen's laboratory, the names of Roscoe, Williamson and Russell, all of whom have distinguished themselves in the world of science.

(To be continued.)