

# *Alt Heidelberg and its Student Life*

by

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(*Φ. Γ. Δ. — Φ. Β. Κ.*)



*With 10 illustrations*

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*Otto Petters* © Heidelberg 1911

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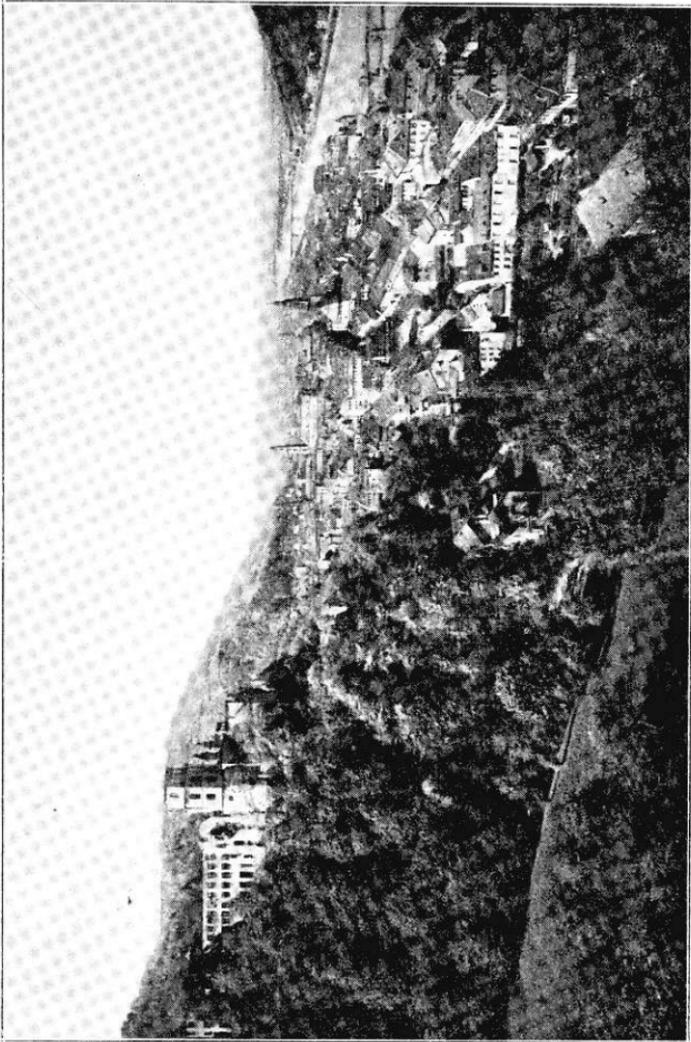
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*Heidelberg from The Scheffel Monument*



## ALT HEIDELBERG.

Old Heidelberg! Thy beauty  
Is crowned with honours rare;  
No town on Rhine or Neckar  
Can unto thee compare.

Thou home of merry comrades,  
Of wisdom deep and wine,  
Within thy stream's clear water  
Blue eyes reflected shine.

And when with southern breezes,  
Spring comes o'er hill and lea,  
She weaves with fairest blossoms  
A bridal robe for thee.

And like a bride, thy image  
I hold within my heart, —  
Emblem to me for ever  
Of Love and Youth thou art!

If worldly cares torment me,  
And life seems dull and stale,  
I'll spur my horse and gallop  
Out to the Neckar vale.

Translated by  
K. v. T.

Victor v. Scheffel  
1826—1886.

## “ALT HEIDELBERG” AND ITS STUDENT LIFE.

Some four years ago it was my privilege to make a pilgrimage to a shrine, to the birthplace of the American college fraternity system, old William and Mary College in Virginia, the college where Jefferson learned how to write the Declaration of Independence. Yet the founding of the Greek letter fraternity of  $\Phi BK$ , with all the principles of the American national college fraternities of today, was only part of a larger movement. The movement so well expressed in the opening sentence of the first minute of old  $\Phi BK$ , dated December 5, 1776,—“a happy spirit and resolution of attaining the important ends of society”—was embodied not alone in the New World with the birth of the new nation and the new Greek letter fraternity, but also found notable contemporary expression among the enlightened progressive spirits of western Europe and especially among the students of the German universities.

Since making that pilgrimage to William and Mary College I have had the chance to see again at least a bit of the outside of Oxford and Cambridge, where, living together within the college pales, young Englishmen have for centuries received that education from their fellows which has so well fitted them for national leadership. The individuality of English university life

has helped to create the individuality of the English nation. Yet English college life offers no close parallel to American student life or to anything found in Germany. It has been my good fortune recently, as an old American college fraternity man, to come into fairly close contact with a college fraternity system that traces its descent back far beyond the hundred and thirty-five years of the American college fraternity, back for nearly a thousand years into the dark ages, back to the dawn of university education in Europe. Since the spring of 1907, I have spent the larger part of two college years in, with the possible exception of Oxford, the best known, the most typical home of student life in Europe, in what the students themselves have called for generations, "Alt Heidelberg."

Heidelberg, its Castle, its University and its student life are known, by fame at least, throughout the world. Every year thousands of English and Americans gratefully break their journey between the Alps and the Rhine with a few hours, or days, in Heidelberg. Americans so unlike as Longfellow and Mark Twain have surrendered themselves equally to its charm. Goethe lingered here because he said the town had something ideal in its position and entire surroundings. It was not a mere boyish outburst of college spirit that caused Victor von Scheffel to write:

"Alt Heidelberg, du feine,  
Du Stadt an Ehren reich,  
Am Neckar und am Rheine  
Kein' andre kommt dir gleich."

One of the latest historians of German student life, Dr. Fick, boldly asserts that Heidelberg is the most beautiful university city in the world.

The visitor who has heard such opinions is certain to be disappointed at first on his arrival at the railway station. Nothing appears but a new postoffice building and the broad, busy streets of a modern, prosperous, rather commonplace little German city. A few steps further, however, and he sees the mountains rising abruptly to the right and to the left and rolling grandly away into the distance; and after a few days' wandering over the old city and its environs, or even after one look from the terrace of the Castle, the stranger is ready to acknowledge that the Laureate of Heidelberg has not said enough in its praise.

Heidelberg has the essentials of beauty in unique combination—mountain and plain, river and forest, the work of nature unspoiled by the hand of man, and the work of man moulded, colored and harmonized by the hand of nature. It lies just where the Neckar bursts through the mountain portals of the Odenwald from the east to wander peacefully westward over the broad plain toward the Rhine. The newer part of the city is working its way out into the Rhine plain, while the old town nestles along the river under the shelter of the mountains to the south.

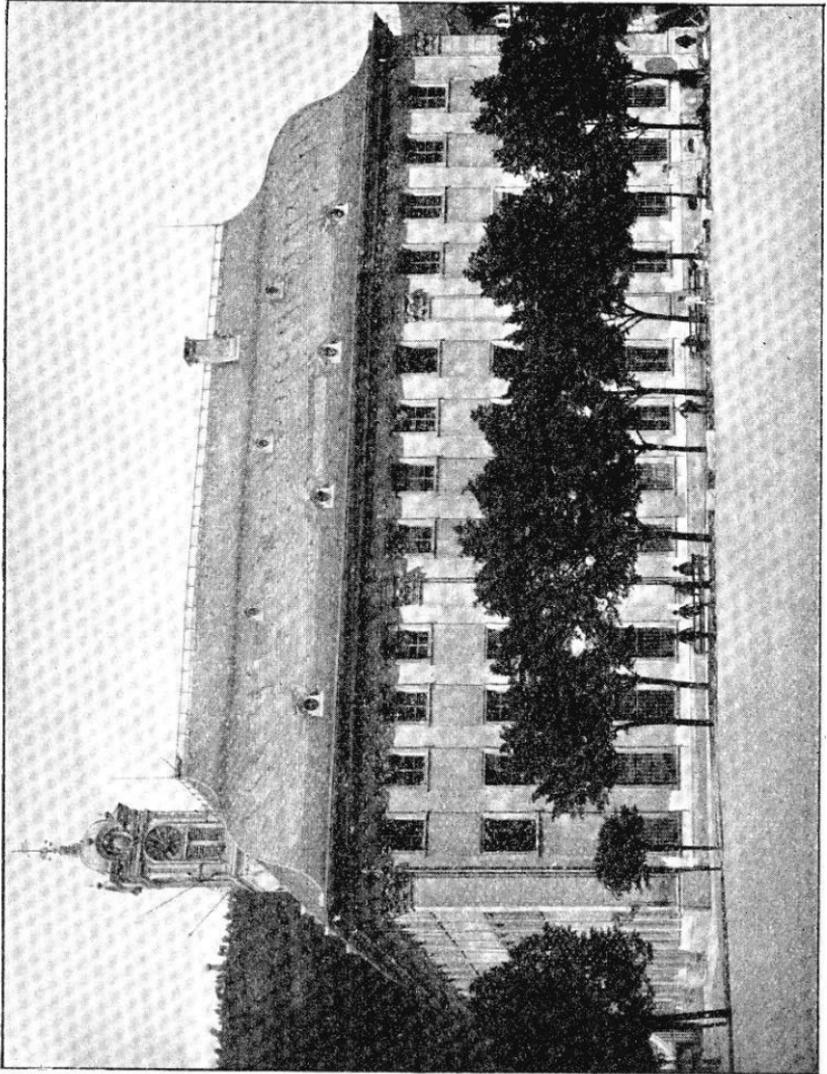
There are scores of lookout points, each one furnishing its individual picture; but perhaps the most inclusive is from the Molkenkur, half way up the Königstuhl, one of the highest mountains in the Odenwald. Far above you the *Berg-bahn* threads its way toward the summit of the Königstuhl. Immediately to the left you look down into the gorge-like valley of the Klingenteich, which separates the Königstuhl from the dome-shaped, forest covered Gaisberg on the west. Across the Neckar to the north rises the Heiligenberg, its huge, pine billows above dwarfing

the vineyards and terraced villas audaciously climbing up its sides from the river below. Toward the north-east the eye loses itself in the variegated checker-board green and gold of meadows and grain fields climbing the mountain side toward the horizon, while just below them the Neckar disappears in a magnificent curve around the Königstuhl.

Then your eye follows the river toward the west, past the *Alte Brücke*, with its gates and statuary, down for nearly a mile to the *Neue Brücke*, connecting Heidelberg with Neuenheim, and on past the site of the old Roman bridge and out along its graceful curves over the Rhine plain, across fields and orchards, past little hamlets, busy towns and chimneyed cities, clear on to the Haardt mountains, rising cloud-like on the western horizon.

Below you, huddled between the Königstuhl, the Gaisberg and the river, lies the old town, with its narrow winding streets and alleys, its dirty-white plaster covered, or dull red sandstone houses with their gray-black tiled roofs, its half dozen old church spires, its little open public squares and its bits of private gardens enclosed by blocks of houses.

Immediately below you to the right, on a broad bench of the Königstuhl, the majestic ruin of the Castle frowns down upon the city below. The Castle, when one views it nearer, is a huge but strangely harmonious jumble of rugged medieval strongholds, with tower walls over twenty feet thick, and beautifully ornamented renaissance palaces of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. With an enthusiasm and emotion unlike the jester we are accustomed to hear speak, Mark Twain pictures the Castle as every beholder of sensitive soul must see it: "Out of a billowy upheaval



*The University*



of vivid green foliage rises the huge ruin of Heidelberg Castle, with empty window arches, ivy-mailed battlements, mouldering towers—a Lear of inanimate nature, deserted, discrowned, beaten by the storms, but royal still, and beautiful.”

Such is Heidelberg, its Castle and its setting. But after all the heart of Heidelberg is the University, the oldest in Germany. It was founded in 1386, a hundred and six years before Columbus discovered America. It has been a center of the great movements in the history of modern civilization and in the history of the Fatherland—humanism, the Reformation, liberalism, romanticism, nationalism and modern science. But its great age and renown and the inimitable romantic charm of its surroundings mean more to a college man, and especially to a college fraternity man, than to others. All these have united to furnish a continuous student tradition for centuries. Moreover, the conditions governing this tradition more nearly approximate those found in American universities, while the conditions of student life in Paris or Oxford or Cambridge are almost wholly dissimilar to ours. Heidelberg, therefore, offers a continuous history of the movement that has led up to the modern American fraternity.

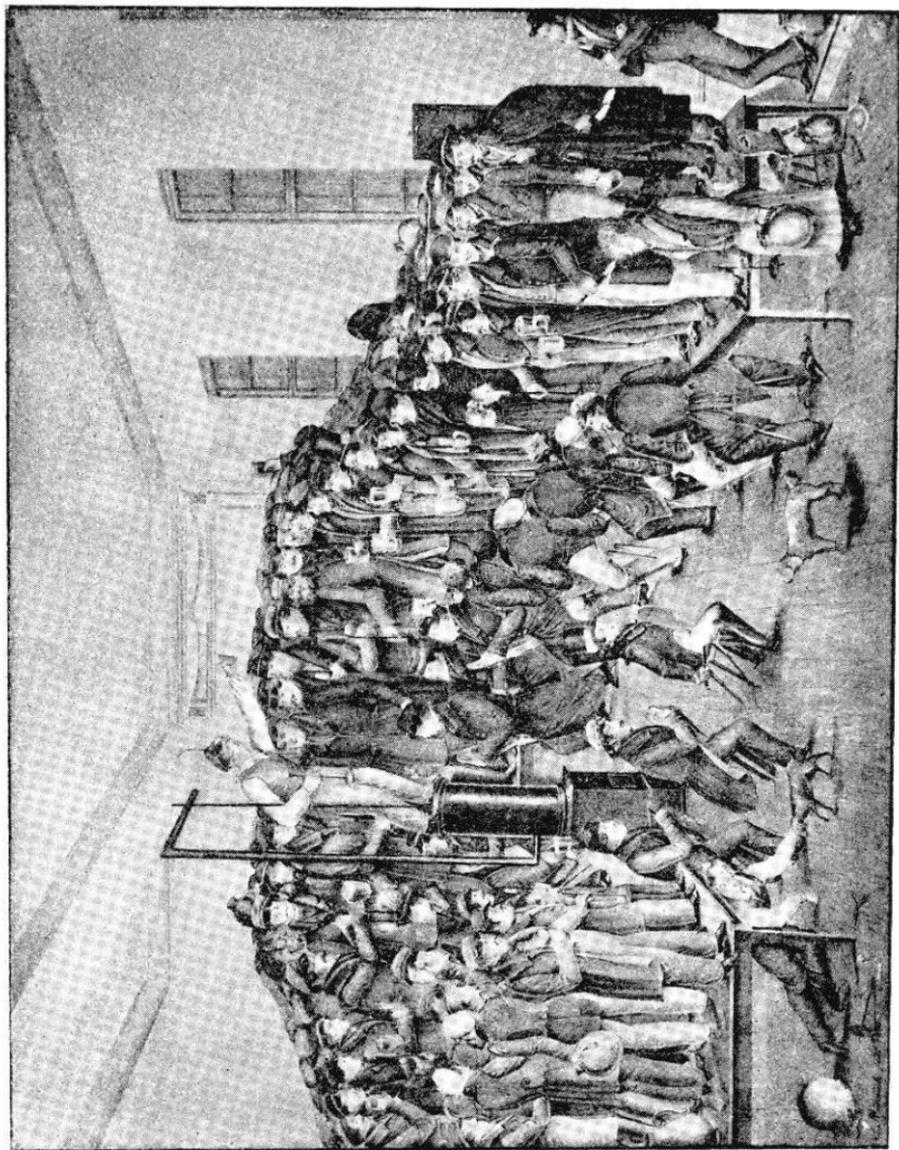
The University itself, like the town, at first sight, is certain to be disappointing to the casual visitor. There are no grounds, no campus, nothing of the charm of “the Backs” at Cambridge, nor of the inimitable grouping of the inimitable colleges of Oxford. The buildings, with a few late exceptions, are severely plain, commonplace and even ugly. They are scattered all over the city, with almost nothing to distinguish them in architecture or inscription from their imme-

diate neighbors, and their location is a partial index both to the growth of the town and to the history of education. The faculties first organized still make their home in the upper part of the city under the protection of the Castle, while the laboratories for natural science and medical research, the clinics and hospitals have had to find places in the newer western part of the city. The three or four buildings usually shown to visitors as the "University", the ones occupied by the "humanities", are on the Ludwig Platz just off the Hauptstrasse. One of these is nearly two hundred years old, built after the French had destroyed the old University in 1693 (see page 9). With the exception of the beautiful *Aula*, or public hall, restored for the celebration of the five hundredth anniversary in 1886, every room in the building looks its age. The benches upon which students sit and write in the lecture rooms are as primitive as those in the schoolhouse of Eggleston's "*Hoosier Schoolmaster*." In this same building is the renowned *Carcer*, or students' prison (see page 21). Contrasting with the old building, known because of its age as "Die Universität", is the more modern lecture hall across the Ludwig Platz, with a central hall imitating the old cloisters and with a secluded shady old garden, at the the back of which stands the mysterious old Witch's Tower. Still newer, a few steps away, is the magnificent Library, housing one of the richest university libraries in the world—but it takes you twenty-four hours to draw a book out!

The methods of work in the University, on the whole, differ but little from those in advanced classes in American universities. Two or three little things, however, strike the American as odd. Women have entered the universities several centuries after the men,

and it should be noted in passing that Heidelberg has been a leader in the comparatively liberal treatment of women. Yet in most cases, outside or inside of the universities, women are likely, in Germany, to be considered after the men, and the result is that the German professor is perfectly polite—according to German standards—when he begins his lecture with a polite bow and a “Meine Herren und Damen”—gentlemen and ladies! As the professor enters the door he is greeted by a thunderous trampling of feet and the same respectful applause is given when he leaves. If the students are annoyed by some late-coming student, they hiss him by shuffling their feet. One great advantage they have over American students—absolutely no record is kept of class attendance. Moreover, a man can escape being called upon in the “exercises” if he will just tack his card on a seat far enough back in the room. Freedom in attendance, a large degree of freedom from recitation and migration from university to university are things that suggest anarchy to the American student, but they do not so result in Germany.

Let it be remembered once for all that it is not necessarily the business of German students to study, and it is certainly not the business of the professors to make them. You see a certain proportion of the students in the lecture rooms, but at any hour, day or night, you are likely to see students anywhere, in the city or out. They are literally everywhere. They pervade the whole town. And you have no trouble in distinguishing them from the three other most prominent elements in the life of Heidelberg—the good burghers, the soldiers and the tourists.



*The Fox Kiding, 1842  
(From Otto Petters, "Heidelberger Studentenleben einst und jetzt")*



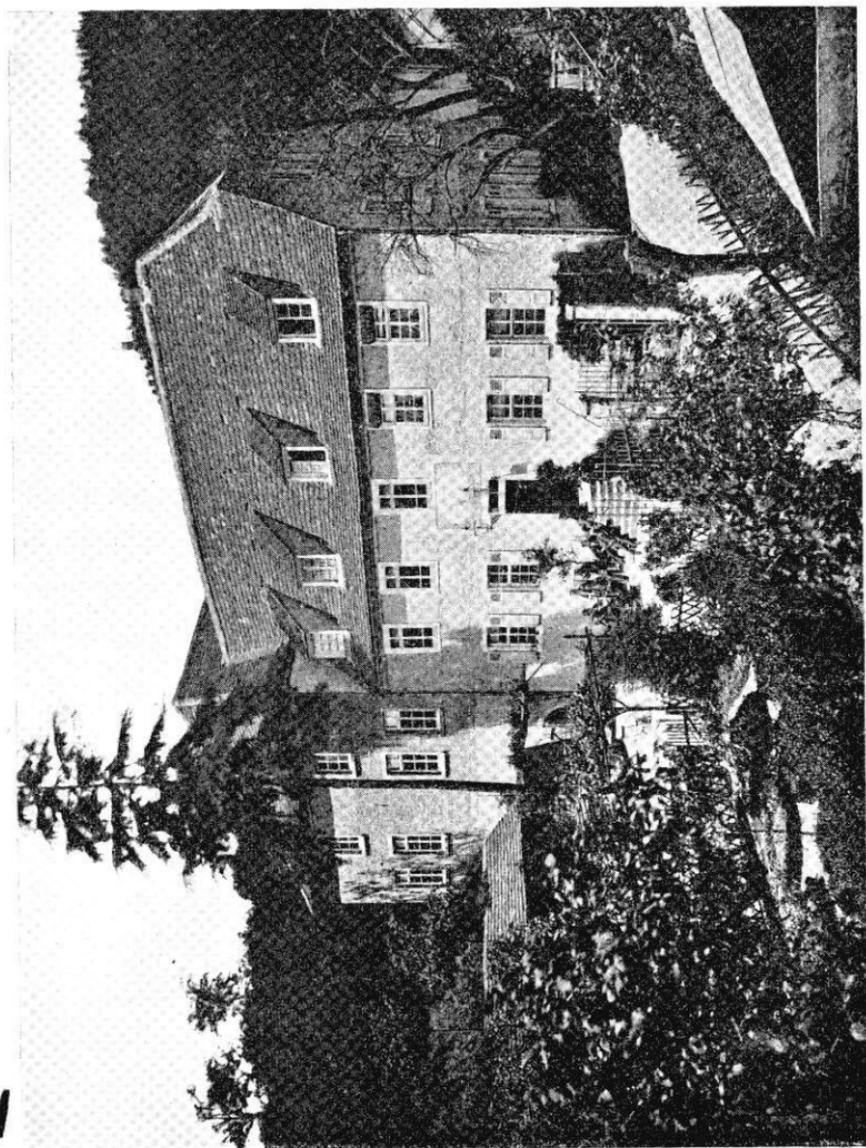
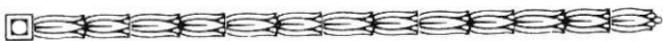
A walk along the crowded Hauptstrasse, about noon, say, will show you how cosmopolitan the old place is. The crowds jostle you off the sidewalk into the street, at the peril of your life from a squad of blue-coated soldiers tramping heavily along in their cowhide boots like a bit of human juggernaut, or from the push carts of the jabbering bareheaded peasant market women, from a clanging lilliputian street car, or a tourist car honking angrily at a manger-like wagon ahead, piled high with huge bundles of weekly wash, and crawling slowly into a side street by the help of two fat cows placidly chewing their cuds. But the explosive crack of a whip behind you causes you to make a frightened jump back to the sidewalk, where you bump into a little group of three or four gentlemen in slouch hats and baggy trousers, standing oblivious to the crowd to hear a joke one of them is telling, or perhaps serenely conscious that all good Germans will pass respectfully around them. They are professors, men of international reputation, as philosophers, philologists, scientists or surgeons. You haven't a moment to attend to them, however, as you turn hastily to stare with the crowd at the carriage-and-four rattling by with tremendous flourishings and staccato crackings of the whip in the hands of the coachman in uniform. The coachman's glory is altogether dimmed by the occupants of his carriage, two or three or four young fellows of twenty, clad in resplendent uniforms and in a dignity elaborate enough for field marshals. They are the chief officers of a student Corps on their way to make a formal call or to attend some Corps or student celebration. Students on the sidewalk are not so conspicuous, but you know them at a glance—slender, pale, young Germans

hurrying past by ones and twos and threes with lecture notes and books under their arms; occasional women students clad, perhaps, in very "progressive", in some striking phase of "dress-reform"; representatives of the nations making a low-toned Babel of the street—fair-haired Finns and Swedes, long-haired Russians, athletic-looking young Englishmen, dandified little Frenchmen, polyglot speaking Greeks, dark-eyed, well-dressed young Italian noblemen, a slender high caste Hindoo talking fluent English to an alert young American, dapper be-spectacled Japanese, and, perhaps, His Royal Highness, Prince Rangsit of Siam, pushing his way through the motley crowd like a hustling young broker on Broadway, but followed by his German tutor and his Siamese lord-in-waiting.

Students as well as tourists give the cosmopolitan air to Heidelberg, but the characteristic student groups are altogether German. They come lounging along in little crowds of half a dozen or so, each group wearing their own peculiar tri-colored bands of ribbon diagonally across their breasts and their own peculiarly shaped brilliantly colored caps. They carry canes, but few books. Other similar groups, but with differently shaped caps and differently colored ribbons, can be seen through the open windows and doors of restaurants clustered around their reserved table, eating, drinking beer, smoking and playing cards. They are the Corps or other "corporation" students, the brothers or formal enemies of the young fellows in the coach-and-four. These are the men that represent the latest development in the German college fraternity system.

Student organizations have always flourished luxuriantly in Heidelberg. At the present time, out of an enrollment of about two thousand five hundred, there are

nearly two dozens regular color-bearing fighting *Verbindungen*, about as many more duel clubs and some twenty-odd other regular organizations, with some of the latter organized *against* duels (see page 37). The color-wearing *Verbindungen* are not all "Corps", in the precise use of that word by the German students. In Heidelberg there are five of the old Corps, founded in the order named, between 1810 and 1849—Suevia, Guestphalia, Saxo-Borussia, Vandalia and Rhenania. Then come the Burschenschaften, with three "chapters"—as I may call the local *Verbindung* by analogy with our own fraternity system—Allemannia and Franconia, both founded in 1856, and Vineta, founded in 1879. Then come the two chapters of Turnerschaften, founded in 1885—6, Rhenopalatia and Ghibellinia. Finally come three chapters of Landsmannschaften, founded in the early eighties, Zaringia, Teutonia and Cheruskia. Each of these groups is affiliated with similar groups in the other German universities, Corps with Corps, Burschenschaften with Burschenschaften, Turnerschaften with Turnerschaften and Landsmannschaften with Landsmannschaften, thus forming what are practically national fraternities. These different groups meet in annual national conventions, where the interests of the orders are discussed and laws are formulated to govern the conduct of the individual chapters. A man belonging to a corps in one university, say the white-cap Corps in Bonn, to which Emperor William and his sons belong, would affiliate on coming to Heidelberg, not with a Burschenschaft or a Turnerschaft, but with a Corps belonging to the same national "convent" as his own, and in this particular case with the white-cap Prussian Corps at Heidelberg most closely affiliated with his own Prussian Corps at Bonn. My friend Dr. S——, to whom I am



*The Hirschgasse  
(From Otto Pelters, "Heidelberger Studentenleben einst und jetzt")*



indebted for the kindly hospitality of some of the *Verbindungen* at *Kneipen* and duels, joined a *Verbindung* originally in Marburg, and therefore he was cordially received as a visiting "alter Herr" by the fraternity men in Heidelberg "in cartel" with his chapter at Marburg.

The color-bearing *Verbindungen* as they exist today are the results of centuries of evolution. In the earliest medieval universities, like Bologna and Paris, students were grouped for the purposes of university government or for mutual assistance into "nations" and these "nations" were still further subdivided into "provinces". In Paris, for example, the students were divided into four "nations", Gallici, Anglici, (later Alemanni), Normanni and Picardi. The Gallici were subdivided into "provinces" of Frenchmen, Italians, Spaniards, etc., and the Alemanni into Englishmen and Germans. When the earliest German universities were founded, the system of "nations" was taken over from the older foreign universities, but modified into general divisions of the old German empire. For a century or so the "nations" were rather loosely organized. But by the middle of the seventeenth century they became much more closely organized under the command of "senioren" and "consenioren", carried particular colors, fought constantly against each other and by 1660 had become such a nuisance to the authorities that they were officially dissolved.

From the beginning, the new student, called at first a "Beanus" and later a "Pennal", was compelled to join his proper "nation" and do anything his superiors in the "nation" demanded, give up his new clothes, his furniture, the provisions brought from home, and endure all sorts of mock initiations and personal

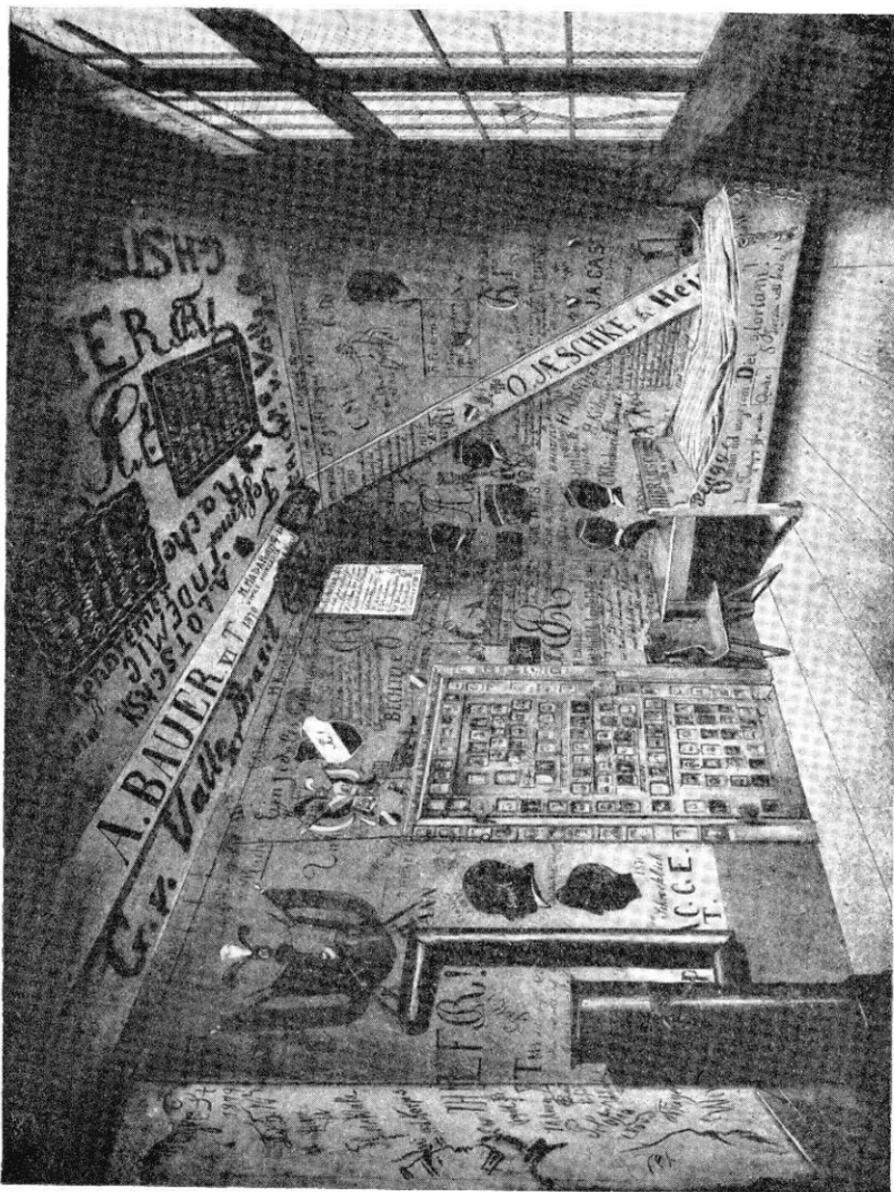
indignities. There was nothing voluntary in membership; a student belonged to a certain "nation" because he came from a certain district.

The attempted dissolution of the "nations" about 1660 succeeded only in bringing about the maintenance of the organizations in secret; but by 1700 they had become mere loose social organizations without any definite end. From this date they began to reorganize as "Landsmannschaften", i. e., men from the same province, real fellow countrymen, banded together for the purpose of attaining "mutual friendship and advancement, amicable settlement of (internal) disputes, absolute satisfaction for insults from a stranger, pleasures in common, and complete obedience to the common law and to the seniors". This declaration of principles is still in a large measure the aim of the modern Corps. By the middle of the eighteenth century two degrees began to develop in the Landsmannschaften. The inner circle was chosen from the older and more active members, while the "foxes" (descendants of the Beans and Pennal) constituted the outer circle and the word "Landsmannschaft" soon came to mean only the inner circle.

In the middle of the eighteenth century a new spirit began its work among university students. It was the spirit of the age, the result of long years of philosophizing and discussion in England, France and Germany, the "Aufklärung". It was the work of exact science, of the "Glorious Revolution", of Locke and the Deists in England, of the Encyclopedists and Voltaire and Rousseau in France, of the Rationalists, of Leibniz and Lessing and Kant and Frederick the Great in Germany. Among the educated it was a time of theories and systems and secret orders for the re-

generation of the world. Out of mysticism came the Rosicrucians in 1760. Among the rationalists in protestant Germany the Freemasons spread everywhere, while in Bavaria in 1776 the Catholics founded the order of the Illuminati. From the influence of the Masons, the Rosicrucians and the Illuminati, the student Orders arose. In Jena, the old Landsmannschaft, the Mosellanerbund, already had the Latin motto, "*Vivat unus, vivant omnes*", the vital principle of later Corps and of our own fraternities. Out of this Landsmannschaft in 1771, the first student Order, "Die Amicisten" (L'ordre de l'amitié), was founded. It is noteworthy that the Amicisten were founded only five years before the founding of  $\Phi B K$  at William and Mary, and that the Amicisten and all other similar German student orders, like "Harmonie", "Concordia", and "L'Espérance", were founded in response to the same philosophical and philanthropical spirit that voiced itself in the  $\Phi B K$  "happy spirit and resolution of attaining the important ends of society."

The student Orders, in contrast to the Landsmannschaften, chose their members without reference to the place of their birth. Their outward form, their mystic symbols, badges and colors they got partly from the Masons. The Amicisten, for example, wore a badge in the form of a Maltese cross with Roman letters on the arms and a heart with the date engraved on it on one side of the center, while on the other was the monogram of their motto, "*Vivat amicitia, fructus honoris*". Their principles involved the maintenance of academic freedom, combined with respect for the university authorities and teachers, friendship and mutual helpfulness that should last through life and the endeavor for the ethical perfection of every



*The Carcer*  
(From Otto Peltzer, "Heidelberger Studentenleben einst und jetzt")



member of the Order. But they already held the liberal principles in politics that tended toward the downfall of autocracy. They were at once attacked, therefore, by the princely benefactors and governors of the various universities, ostensibly because they were creating disturbances among students—one Order alone had to fight some four hundred duels in one year—but really because of their liberalism. They flourished under oppression, however, and in the midst of persecution the Amicisten of Jena founded “daughter lodges” at three other universities. When the Orders began to celebrate the victories of the French Revolution the authorities encouraged the Landsmannschaften to try to help put them down.

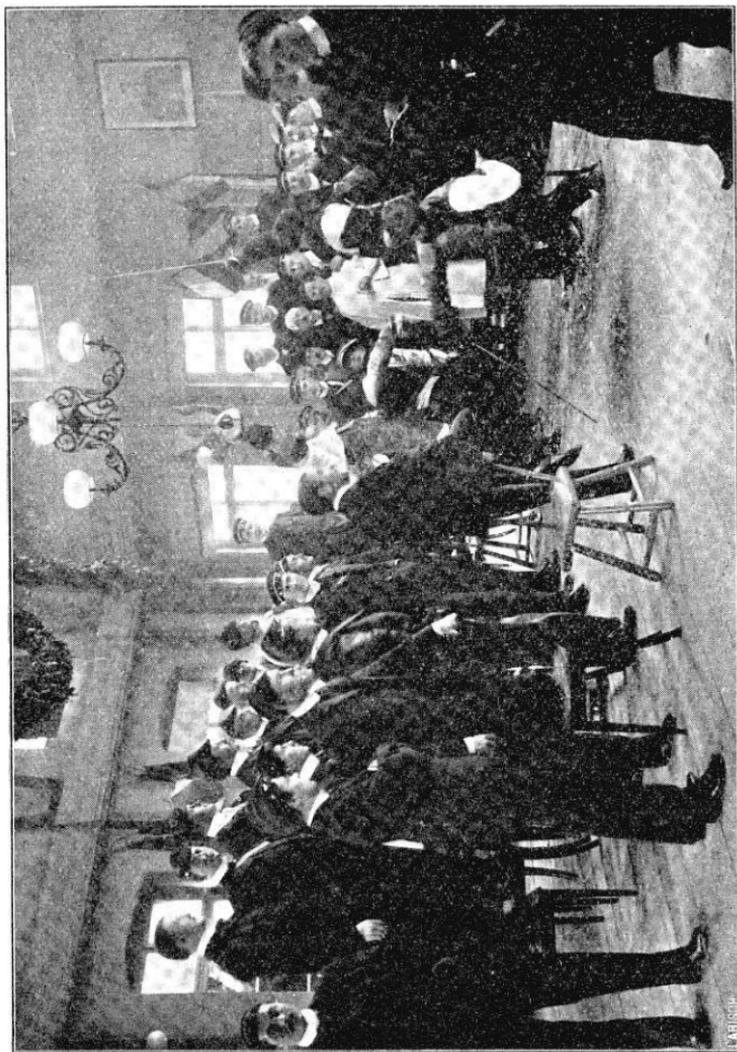
Jahn (“Vater Jahn” of the Turners), who studied in Halle from 1796 on, and other liberal minded men tried to encourage a spirit different from those prevailing in either the Orders or the Landsmannschaften. Jahn said the only questions a Landsmannschaft asked when a new “fox” entered the University were: “Is he tall? Is he strong? Has he money?” Patriotic men saw that the Orders wished the Rights of Man, but they were too cosmopolitan; they tended towards denationalization, while the Landsmannschaften were wholly provincial in their patriotism. If a new national ideal was to grow up among the students a new organization with new principles must be founded. The result was the founding of the old Burschenschaft, with the first general student organization, June 10, 1815, eight days before Waterloo. The principles of the old Burschenschaft were “Burschenfreiheit, Ehre über Leben, Vaterland über Alles” (“Student Freedom, Honor before Life, Fatherland before All”). The two significant principles, then, were equality and democracy

of all students among themselves and an intense national patriotism. These were the patriotic principles that lay back of the war of freedom against Napoleon, back of the risings in 1830 and 1848, that made possible the success of the Six Weeks War against Austria, that forced liberal constitutions from the autocrats of the petty German states, and that finally, through the wars against Austria in 1866 and against France in 1870, brought about a united Germany. It was the German university students, trained in such principles, who become the conscious creators of the great nation of today.

The *Verbindungen* now known as "Corps" arose in the beginning of the nineteenth century out of the old Landsmannschaften and Orders. The names of the Corps go back to the Landsmannschaften and their membership is still chosen largely from one state or province, but they may take in anybody by free choice, the membership is limited in numbers, they have a strong, firm organization, a formal initiation, symbolistic insignia, and all this they get from the Orders. They have always been exclusive and aristocratic in tendency, and conservative, if taking any stand at all, in politics. Their aims are practically those of the American fraternities—close personal friendship, the fixing of definite ideals of conduct and character, and social enjoyment and culture, while they claim at the same time to be the special conservators of student traditions, a claim they can probably substantiate. One of the strongest motives of the old Burschenschaften, on the other hand, was to foster democratic equality among all students, and therefore Corps and Burschenschaften have often come into direct conflict. The authorities in the early part of

the last century fostered the Corps at the expense of the Burschenschaften, just as they had fostered the Landsmannschaften against the Orders in the century before. As my readers will notice from the dates above, the first Corps founded in Heidelberg was Suevia (the Latin form of Suabia) in 1810, while the earliest Burschenschaft now in existence in Heidelberg was founded in 1856. The original Burschenschaften were driven out of the universities by the severest persecution. The Corps really took the place in student life of the old Landsmannschaften and of the Orders, except that the Corps have always shunned the liberal principles of the Orders. The new Landsmannschaften and the Turnerschaften, and even the new Burschenschaften have few essential differences in principles or in manner of life from the Corps of today. Since 1886, at the great celebration of the five hundredth anniversary of Heidelberg, the various *Verbindungen* have worked together harmoniously in all matters that concern the general student body.

Naturally, the large mass of the students at Heidelberg and in most of the German universities belong to that class we in America call "barbarians". So far as this class feels itself in need of organization it forms clubs for sport, special study, and so on. In Heidelberg, the "barbarians" have formed themselves into a great organization known as the *Frei Studenten*. The purpose of the *Frei Studentenschaft* is mutual acquaintance, company on various forms of pleasure excursions, exchange of views in conversation or of second hand books for a price, the conduct of an employment agency for members, and of certain forms of social settlement work.



*A Mensur between Burschenschaft Students, 1902  
(From an original photograph by Max Kögel in Heidelberg)*



The *Verbindungen* themselves have changed much in the last half century. They formerly wished to control all student life, and arrogated to themselves the right to think, plan, and make customs for the whole student body. This was especially true of the Corps. It was partly against such exclusiveness and arrogance that the Burschenschaft were first organized. Now the Corps have largely lost their arrogance, while the Burschenschaften are no longer such fiery exponents of democracy and the Landsmannschaften have lost something of their provinciality. All the *Verbindungen*, the *Freistudenten* and the large body of students not incorporated at all now act together through a Central Committee of Students. To this Central Committee each *Verbindung* sends one representative and there are seven representatives from the unincorporated students of the different faculties. This Central Committee is practically a representative body for student self-government. From the general committee an executive committee of three members is chosen: one member from the Senioren-Convent of the Corps, one from the Deputiertien-Convent of the Burschenschaften, and one from the other *Verbindungen* and all other student bodies together. This arrangement shows that the Corps and Burschenschaften still have a preponderance of influence in student affairs in Heidelberg.

The more moderate ambitions of the German fraternities now center within the organizations themselves. The maintenance of student traditions, so far as in the judgment of the different organizations they have proved their worth, the fostering of a manly character and a sense of honor through the severe discipline of obedience to superiors and the test of

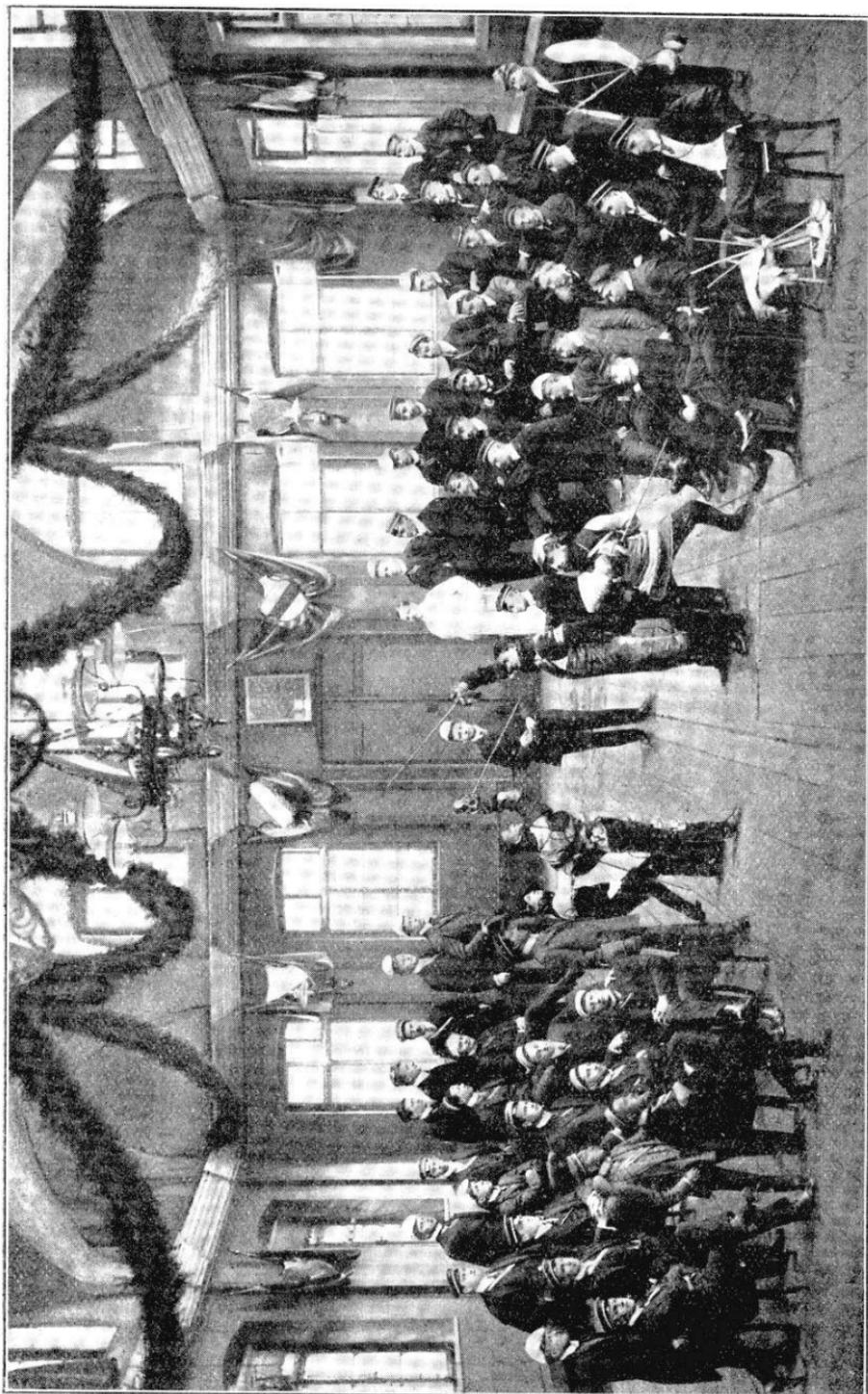
the duel, the cultivation of permanent friendships and the enjoyment of social life together—these are in general the aims of all the *Verbindungen*.

The life of German fraternity men in Heidelberg outside of the lecture room is more or less alike in all the organizations. As a rule the members spend their mornings as each individual pleases, but from the mid-day meal on till they go to bed they are expected to be together. They are together at the mid-day and evening meals, on excursions and tramps through the mountains, or up the Neckar, at the informal *Kneipen* or ordinary social or business meetings, at the more formal meetings for some special occasion called the *Kommers*, and at the duels. *Kneipen* and *Kommers* take place in their own house, if the chapter has a house. Two-thirds of the chapters in Heidelberg do have houses, secured largely through the interest and contributions of graduate members, the "*alte Herren*". The houses are generally simple. The first story usually has a big hall for the *Kommers* and smaller rooms for the ordinary *Kneipen* and mid-day dinners. In the story above are a few rooms for the active members, usually the officers of the chapter, and rooms for the steward and his wife, the cook. Every possible chance is taken to celebrate something. The old members like to come back to the *Kneipen*; the good fellowship and brotherly feeling of such occasions is at least equal to that found in one of our "smokers" or banquets.

The customs most characteristic of German fraternity life are connected with the reception, training and initiating of the new student, the ceremonial beer drinking and singing at *Kneipen* and *Kommers*, and the *Mensuren* or student duels. The "fox" is now greet-

ed politely on his arrival, instead of with the contumely of earlier times. If he comes recommended by an *alter Herr*, he is met at the station, his baggage is looked after by the house steward, and he himself is taken to the house and introduced to the members at a *Kneipe*, what we should call a "feed". He must announce himself as a candidate, but must serve a term of probation before being accepted. His initiation is of the burlesque type of our "fake" initiations. The so-called "Fox Major", whose business it is to train the "foxes" and keep them in order, asks the candidate all sorts of impossible questions in a horrible mixture of monkish Latin and German, but at last gives him a diploma, declaring him to be the quintessence of all impoliteness, stupidity and ignorance. After this he used to be baptised in beer, or be tossed in a blanket, but these customs are disappearing. After his return from his first vacation he becomes a "Brandfuchs" by having his hair singed and quenched in beer, and perhaps he is forced to take part in the Fox-Riding, on stools, under the guidance of the Fox-Major (see page 13). All this time he is receiving serious instruction in the history of the chapter, its customs, its insignia and its relations to other fraternities. He must learn to make with absolute exactness the so-called "Zirkel" or monogram of his chapter and to recognize the "Zirkel" of every other fraternity chapter in the nation. Then he is constantly training himself for the duels. Altogether he is so busy that lectures see little of him for the first year or so.

The chief function of the "play" *Kneipe* is to promote good fellowship. The means are beer and singing. The members honor each other, and especially the *alte Herren* and visitors present, by drinking



*A Mensur between Corps Students, 1908  
(From an original photograph by Max Kögel in Heidelberg)*

with the one to be honored. Later in the evening the one so honored must return the compliment. An *alter Herr*, a visitor, or an officer is liable to have to stand a good deal of "honor". The peculiar ceremony called the "Salamander" comes perhaps from "Sauft alle mit einander"—drink altogether. The *Salamander* opens and closes a *Kommers* or official *Kneipe*. It is performed by everybody present, first drinking absolutely in unison, then slamming the glasses upon the table together, then rubbing on the table in unison and finally slamming them down hard together. At a *Kommers* the songs come at regular intervals between the drinking, and they are sung with the carefulness of trained musicians. Every man at table has his *Kommersbuch*. My copy of the *Kommers* song book is the 85th edition, it contains 832 songs and it is bound in brass to enable it to escape the beer on the table and to withstand heavy pounding. We have nothing to equal the German song book or the German singing in American fraternities, for the Germans have kept up through the centuries the singing traditions of the medieval *Vaganten* and Followers of Goliath.

The student duel, or *Mensur* (see pages 25 and 29), is a medieval custom preserved among students after it has entirely disappeared among other civilized human beings. In the sixteenth century the "Fechtmeister", or master-at-arms, ranked above the professor, and with some men of the twentieth century he still seems to do so. Yet the Corps and other fighting fraternities defend the *Mensur* as one of the greatest builders of character. American football to them is brutal, but the *Mensur* "steels the character, awakens manhood, gives the power of deeds, strength of will, self-knowledge and a sense of honor". I took an old American football

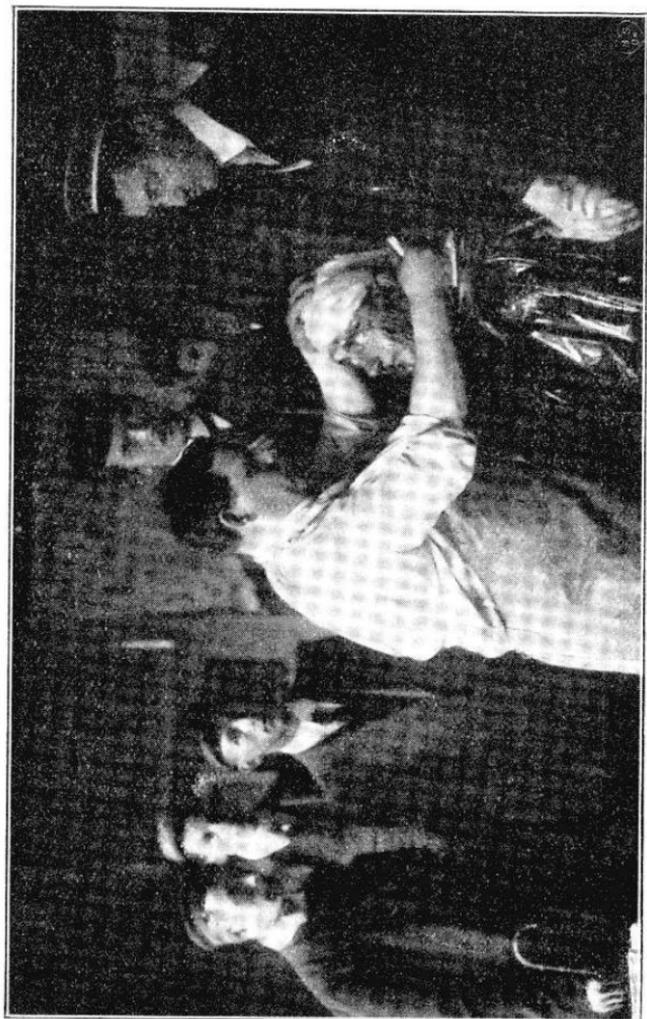


*The last work of Paul Doctor Immisch after a Duel of Corps Students, 1885  
(From Otto Petters, "Heidelberger Studententleben einst und jetzt")*

player to see the duels one morning and he got sick at the blood and went away cursing.

The old idea of the necessity of wearing a chip on your shoulder so it could easily be knocked off has about passed away. Instead of the satisfaction of honor for a real or fancied insult, a means of avenging insult, the *Mensur* has now become an end in itself, a means of education. The new conception of a knightly contest, arranged for beforehand without the least ill-feeling and possibly between men who never saw each other, grew out of the custom of the Corps in Heidelberg and Jena meeting together *to be insulted*. Such a method was seen to be foolish, so it has now become the custom for the officers of one fraternity to arrange with the officers of another for a certain number of duels on a definite date. A "fox" must fight at least three times very well in order to win his ribbon and become a "Bursch" or full-fledged member. "Foxes" used to fight only ten minutes, but now they fight full fifteen minutes, the better to try their metal, while duels between experienced "Burschen" vary in length according to prearrangement.

Practically all student duels now take place in the Hirsch-Gasse (see pages 17 and 36) at the old inn, "Zum Hirsch", directly across the river from the Castle. Here the duels have been fought since 1820. Each week of term time is divided up among the different classes of fighting orders, certain days for the Corps, others for the Burschenschaften, etc., for in general Corps students fight only with Corps students, and Burschenschaften with Burschenschaften. The duel itself is not so shocking as the sewing up afterwards. If you are fortunate enough to be invited as a guest you go directly out



*Paul Doctor Huber, the Duel Surgeon of to day, at work, 1909  
(From an original photograph by Max Kögel in Heidelberg)*



upon the duelling floor instead of having to peep through a window or bribe a waiter to take you up into a gallery. The fighters are so protected by armour, except on the head, the forehead, the cheeks and the chin, that there is no real danger. The doctor always stands by, in his suggestive white surgeon's coat, to examine each contestant after each round. The *Mensur* is the only contest I know where, in a sense, the more defeated a man is the prouder he is—because the scars will always show. In the actual fighting the swords are raised directly above the heads of the contestants and the stroke is a quick cut directly downwards. A round is from five to ten strokes each, and the duel lasts for, say, fifteen rounds, or until one man is too badly wounded to continue. The victory is awarded by the umpire to the man who has made the largest number of cuts drawing blood. After the battle the fighters sit down over a sort of lead bath, so the blood will drain away, and the surgeon sews up the cuts. Dr. Immisch, who died 1892, is said to have assisted from 1849 to 1885 at some 13,000 duels and therefore used his needle and thread say about 100,000 times (see page 31). During the whole operation of sewing up the duelist must maintain as stoical a countenance as a Sioux Indian (see page 33). And that is the *Mensur*!

Fraternity men take their full share, however, in all phases of general university life. The older men usually cease fighting in the last few semesters of their university life and devote themselves to a careful preparation for their examination for the university degree. The active members, however, continue to be the leaders in the great torchlight processions in honor of the Pro-Rektor, or some national feast day.

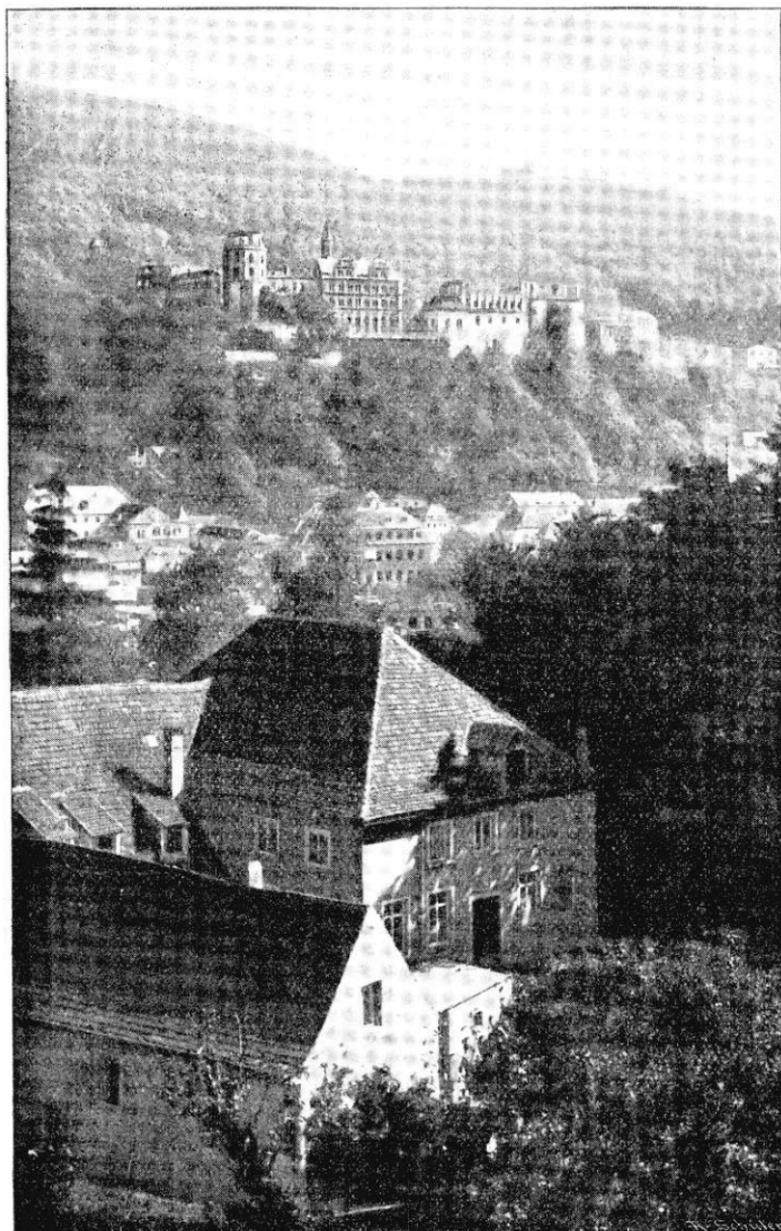
These active members generally manage to do enough mischief of some kind to get put, once anyway, into the old Students' Prison, the *Carcer* (see page 21). It is a disgrace to leave Heidelberg without that honor! Then on a night of the most wonderful spectacle in Europe, the illumination of the Castle, they come floating down the Neckar under the Old Bridge in great barges, and as the dark Castle suddenly blooms out into a gigantic rose-coloured castle-in-the-air, they take up the strains, hundreds strong, of

“Alt Heidelberg, du feine”.

On such a night a stranger on the Philosophenweg, halfway up on the Heiligenberg, looking across at the castle and down on the Neckar, will never forget what he sees and what he hears. One who has been a part of it, even in the least, can only regret that

“Those days of yore  
Will come no more”.

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*The Hirschgasse with the castle in the distance  
(From a photograph by Dr. C. Jäger in Aarau)*

## TABLE OF VERBINDUNG COLORS.

English speaking visitors to Heidelberg often express a desire to distinguish between the different *Verbindungen* as they meet the color-wearing students on the street. The easiest way to tell one *Verbindung* from another is to notice the shape and color of the cap; the complex color scheme of the ribbons worn diagonally across the breast is not so easily distinguished. There are two kinds of caps—the ordinary cap, called a “Mütze” and shaped a bit like a yachting cap, and the so-called “Stürmer”. The latter has a small mortar-board top, which is inclined forward toward the bill; the cap as a whole is shaped like the caps worn by Union soldiers in the American Civil War. Besides they wear sometimes a small cap without a bill, like an English soldier’s service cap, called a “Cerevis-Käppchen”. The colors of the more important *Verbindungen* are as follows:

### CORPS:

*Suevia*: white, yellow, black; yellow cap.

*Guestphalia*: green, white, black; green cap.

*Saxo-Borussia*: white, green, black, white; white stürmer.

*Vandalia*: gold, red, gold; crimson cap.

*Rhenania*: blue, white, red; dark-blue cap.

### BURSCHENSCHAFTEN:

*Allemannia*: black, white, red; red cap.

*Franconia*: gold, black, red, gold; crimson stürmer.

*Vineta*: light-blue, white, black; light-blue cap.

TURNERSCHAFTEN:

*Rhenopalatia*: light-blue, white, dark-blue; light-blue stürmer.

*Ghibellinia*: moss-green, white, rose; moss-green cap.

LANDSMANNSCHAFTEN:

*Zaringia*: red, white, light-blue; white cap.

*Teutonia*: red, white, violet; violet cap.

*Cheruskia*: black, gold, green; black cap.

\* \* \*

Besides the colors of the regular fighting *Verbindungen* given above, still other colored caps can be seen, like the silver-gray cap of the newly-founded Freie Burschenschaft, *Normannia*, the carmine cap of the Sängerschaft, *Thuringia*, and finally of three of the corporations organized *against* duels—the black cap of the Catholic *Arminia*, the blue cap of the Protestant *Wingolf* and the violet cap of *Hercynia*, recently founded on old burschenschaft principles. When caps of different *Verbindungen* are shaped alike and have the same basic color, the only resource of the stranger who desires to tell one from another is to look at the ribbon colors, or to notice what other colors may be combined in the cap with the basic color.

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OTTO PETTERS HEIDELBERG  
on Heidelberg, The University and its  
student life**

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