

luxury. None of the bedrooms were crowded. A caretaker slept in each one, and the children's clothes were hung up in an anti-chamber on numbered pegs. Good engravings hung round the walls, among them well-known woodcuts by Richter and Ritter von der Führich.

"The best is just good enough for children," is a saying often quoted in Germany. It found expression here.

A few well-chosen texts completed the decoration of the bedrooms, which had a home-like air. All the windows were wide open.

"It is a pity you cannot see our Christmas trees and our Christmas festivities," said our kindly guide, as we bade farewell; "children are at their best when they are happiest."

"I have seen none but happy faces to-day."

"Ah, well, we do our best. Goodness in children depends very much on their feeling contented."

As I walked through the crowded streets among which the Krippe of the old and new town of Hanover was situated, I thought how far more law-abiding some of our grown-up children would be if *their* caretakers were to adopt the same theory in practice here more completely.

Wishing to study a subject that gained in interest as one investigated it more thoroughly, I visited a number of Nurseries, and found that all more or less fully strove to give the children they sheltered, home comforts and home restraints, habits of decency and self-respect, and a taste for regularity and order. Many Nurseries train young girls for the "Kindergarten," a system which has been so frequently discussed in women's papers that I need not enlarge upon it here.

My tour was almost over. I was pleased with what I had seen, when I was told of a new and handsome "Krippe," erected and supported almost entirely by the beneficence of a private individual. And here I realised how useless generosity can be if it be unsupported by system.

The kind and free-handed benefactor had provided a house more obviously suited to its purpose than any I had hitherto seen. It was built on approved plans, situated in spacious grounds, and supplied with sufficient furniture and space for three times the number of inmates it harboured.

But, alas! the well-meaning woman set to manage the establishment had evidently no sense of order, no idea of the value of system.

The spacious hall in which she received us, kindly enough, wore that vague look of discomfort that prepares one for an untidy house—the stray umbrella, the forgotten broom, the paper thrown aside.

In the room reserved for the children's cloaks and (often dirty) home frocks and hats, some baby-linen was soaking, while a number of infant's milk-bottles, *unsealed*, were laid out on the window-sill.

Several rooms were standing empty, but the infants' room (where most of the babies were screaming for over-due bottles) was terribly hot and stuffy.

Perhaps the Matron observed me counting the crowded cots mentally as I gazed round, for she remarked naïvely: "We *might* give them another room, but it *makes less work* to have them all together!"

I noticed that the Nursemaids looked sullen and

tired. One, who was attending to an infant a few weeks old, was handling her charge with anything but tenderness. Yet the Matron, who looked worried too, made no remark. I feel sure she never noticed anything was *avoidably* wrong.

None of the elder children looked clean, nor had they any welcome to offer their Matron or the visitors. They occupied large and well-built rooms, or played in a beautiful playground, but there were many fretful and bored faces among them, and they all looked more or less unkempt. I found myself wondering whether many of them would not have been equally well off amidst their natural surroundings.

The Matron spent herself in excuses, enlarging upon the general order and harmony of management, and I felt myself to be an intruder, although I had chosen the ordinary public visiting hour. In my turn I feebly apologised, and was glad to find an excuse for curtailing my visit to the "Krippe," which, curiously enough, was the best built and best situated of any I had seen.

One could not help regretting the evident waste of capital going on here. A quarter of it in competent hands would have benefited twice the number of children more wholesomely and fairly.

After seeing so *many* excellent Nurseries, it may appear ungenerous to notice this *one* failure, but I have done so deliberately because I wish to disprove the theory that "*anyone*" can manage and attend to children. It is not so. Work here as elsewhere requires skilled and trained workers; and the age of skilled labour is making us harsh in judging the unskilled.

Even philanthropists must serve a probation before they venture to organise. They must realise clearly (in the words of a writer of bygone days) that "nobody ever made such mischief in life as those who at once did too much and too little. If you begin an act of benevolence, you are no longer free to lay it down in the middle."

LINA MOLLETT.

## Inventions, Preparations, &c.

### HOME "SPECIALITIES."

SUCH is the suitable title given to the excellent preparations of Messrs Alfred Bird & Sons, of Birmingham, who now make Table Jelly in all flavours, which are suitable for invalids, when it is necessary to prepare the food hurriedly. This firm's Blanc-mange Powder always makes excellent light puddings for the sick, as so many changes can be given with them. The Custard and Egg Powder are doubtless well known in every household, but the little pamphlet we have seen entitled "Pastry and Sweets" now in its 14th edition, would be appreciated by all interested in the preparations of Dainty Dishes for the sick, and also for general use.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)