

## Our Foreign Letter.

### DAS KINDERHEIM IN SALZUFLEN (LIPPE).

A GLORIOUS summer day—a cloudless sky—a view over ranges of wooded mountains and nestling home-steads—the pure air of the height and a fresh salt breeze (though we were miles and miles away from the sea)—these were the minor privileges which rewarded our visit to the Children's Sanitarium at Salzuflen.

The queer little town of Salzuflen itself is well worth a visit. With its streets of ancient gable-houses and rough cobble-stone pavement, its odd mediæval towers and remnants of massive walls overgrown with weeds, it looks like a living illustration to an old fairy tale, in which everybody goes to sleep for a hundred years, happily unconscious of modern improvements.

My friend and I had spent a hot and happy forenoon in the quaint and quiet town, revelling in un-studied picturesqueness and old-world dreaminess. At length, when we had gazed our fill at the beautiful old water wheel, photographed to our heart's content, and wondered again and again where all the inhabitants could be, we strolled up to the Kinderheim, to receive kind welcome from the Matron, and conclude that this too was worth a visit to Salzuflen.

Das Kinderheim, the children's home at Salzuflen, receives scrofulous children for the space of four weeks (in exceptional cases for eight weeks), for a sum of from 30 to 50 marks a month (a mark being almost equivalent to a shilling). This sum covers all expenses, including doctor's attendance.

The Institution is worked by Sisters and Brothers from Bielefeld (an organization fully described in the NURSING RECORD of July 28th and following numbers for 1894). They are assisted by "Helpers," ladies who volunteer for gratuitous service, and devote themselves whole-heartedly to the interests of the Institution. In the service of her charges it is not unusual to find a lady of rank cheerfully blacking boots and carrying water—the argument being that the word "menial" has no connection with any service rendered to the afflicted.

The Institution of Salzuflen receives 130 boys and girls, who enjoy during their short sojourn all the advantages of a happy well-regulated home-life, perfect sanitary surroundings and very liberal diet. They bathe in the salt water from which Salzuflen takes its name, and play all day beside the "Gradierungen" (graduations). There are many hundreds of feet of these in Salzuflen. They consist of immense walls or hedges of brambles, over which salt water constantly trickles, evaporating as it runs, and forming whitish-grey crystals that glitter in the sun. The entire graduations are gradually transformed into crystal walls over which ceaseless streams of water trickle. They surround the public gardens, scent and cool the air, and are considered the main attraction of Salzuflen.

Such graduations exist in many other parts of Germany, and whenever they are found, there are sure to be public gardens, baths, a spring with a pretty name (in Salzuflen it was the Sophien-Quelle), a brass band, and a coffee-garden,—if not two or three or more—and last, not least, there will certainly be some

sort of refuge, large or small, for sickly children. The Kinderheim, at Salzuflen, is a type of such a refuge at its best and happiest, and for this reason I have chosen it for the subject of to-day's letter.

It is quite impossible to spend a number of hours at the Kinderheim without realizing that the children are well cared for. Each detail of our visit impressed the fact.

On our arrival we passed through the pretty garden and broad shady court adjoining the Kinderheim. In the latter we found the boys drilling with a "Brother." Among the thirty boys we counted, more than one was maimed by suffering, but there was not a single face there that did not glance back sympathy with the ruling spirit.

A more kindly yet perfectly firm method of command I never saw. The object was to form from one long line into lines of four with military precision, and march abreast. The lesson seemed new to some of the boys, and they blundered stupidly.

With a voice that never showed a trace of irritation, the Brother helped them and reminded them of their numbers: "You are *one*—now remember! You *two*,—you, Hans, *three*, and Paul, *four*! Now, what are you?" The boys repeated the numbers, and were told how to step out. The command was given, and again there were blunders, and yet again. And again, with his calm, kindly insistence, the Brother numbered and instructed them. *At last*, even the smallest boy marched forth in perfect order,—a smile of triumph on his face.

The house itself is as well ordered, cheerful, and airy as a children's home should be. Bright prints on the walls, windows open to a broad and lovely country lying all around and beneath the home; cleanliness and kindness. Need I detailize the items that go to make up such a result? It is enough to quote a fact given me by unprejudiced outsiders who, like myself, have no personal reasons for praising the institution. "The children," I was told, "love to be in Salzuflen. When they have once lived here they are glad to come back." And children do gladly come back, year after year. Those who know how very rarely children cling to the kindest institutions; how joyously they generally return to the most sordid surroundings, in preference to official luxury, will give the fact its fair value.

The cheery house with its open windows is almost quite empty to-day. Only two little girls are lying down and resting in the ward after their bath; their blonde hair is strewn over the snowy pillow, and the two little faces in the middle are rather doleful. No wonder! Through the open window come sounds of their fellows at play, and if we want to see the *life* at Salzuflen we must follow those bright voices. There are those happy boys again, singing part-songs now with the indefatigable Brother, and farther on five small girls marching in step, keeping time to patriotic tunes. "Lieb Vaterland," they sang from the beloved Wacht am Rhein, "magst ruhig sein. Wir wollen deine Hütersein!" literally, "Dear Fatherland, you may be quiet! We will be your guardians," and on and on through many verses, brave with clanging of swords and joy of battle; and they were so very small, so very frail, so very much in earnest—these German songsters! By one of the graduations my friend and I sat down on a tall, grassy bank bordering a potato field, and with our feet buried in long, cool grass we sat and watched the children play.

(To be continued.)

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