

A PEEP INTO BRUSSELS

"Anonymous."

BRUSSELS which occupies an almost central position in Belgium, is pleasantly situated on the Senne, a tributary of the Dyle, much as is Paris upon the Seine. Several quarters of the city are at a considerable height about sea level. The origin of the name is uncertain, some authorities inclining to the belief that it was derived from the two words broek, or bruk, a marsh, and sele, or sel, a dwelling or manor—literally a manor in the marsh.

The foundation of the City is generally believed to have taken place in the sixth century, and the founder is by tradition supposed to have been St. Gery Bishop of Cambrai, by the many considered the St. Augustine of Belgium.

Brussels has been aptly described as "une petite Paris." But the whole of Brussels strikes one as cleaner than the whole of Paris, just as the whole of Paris must appear, at least to the casual observer, as more gay and less serious from the commercial point than Brussels. It may be quite true as a Frenchman recently said, "There exists no necessity to do one's business with a serious face but it is with concentration and not with sombreness that the Bruxellois goes about his work, earning those hours of recreation in which he will let himself go with the best.

Brussels is undoubtedly healthy, and there is an engaging air about the city which soon impresses itself upon the foreign visitor. Added to all its many attractions of interesting museums—the homes of wonderful and in some cases unrivalled collections of works of art, it possesses the charm of being modern in the best sense and of being a place where one may find much that is finest in art and music. As a home of fashion it bids fair to rival Paris herself, and the shops of the Montague de la cour, Boulevard Anspach, and contiguous streets are scarcely less luxurious or exclusive than those of the Rue de la Paix or Boulevard des Italiens in the French Capital.

The most fashionable quarters for residences of the wealthy classes are the broad and beautiful Avenue Louise and the street and avenues of the Quartier Leopold. They in a sense correspond to the Avenue du Bois de Boulogne, Avenue des Champs Elysee, and Boulevard St. Germain of Paris.

The climate of Brussels is less subject to extreme changes than that of Paris. It is not unbearably cold in winter and, though hot in summer, is not so airless as either Paris or London.

The social life of Brussels is not unlike that of Paris and other large towns of France and Eastern Germany but it differs in many respects from

both. It is less Gallic and pleasure-loving than the former and more so than the latter. The great stolidity of the German life is in a measure lacking, and there is more of the domestic life than in Paris.

It is not easy for the stranger to gain an insight of the real domestic life or apartment of the Belgian bourgeois. A visitor will be entertained most hospitably (if occasion require or offer) in the show-rooms : he will see the members of the family in their best clothes, and with the manners of ceremony, but he will seldom penetrate into the real home, the "common room" the "undress" life of the family, even though he may be a guest in the house, or a fairly intimate acquaintance.

The daily life of the family in Brussels which is in a large measure typical of all other large and small towns, commences early, rising at seven or even earlier, in summer, the whole family will have finished their first and light breakfast by eight o'clock, and much of the day's marketing will also have been done. At noon all the offices and many of the shops are closed for the mid-day meal and the restaurants of all grades are crowded with hungry customers, whilst the more domestic and leisured principals of businesses and head-clerks—many of them hurry home to snatch a well-earned meal in the family circle. This mid-day dinner, the most important meal of the day, unlike the general custom of Paris where most people of the upper, upper middle, and even middle classes make their repast the principal one souper on the other hand having the general character of the Parisian *dijeuner a la fourchette*, or lunch. The citizens of Brussels are early risers, and they go to bed at an hour well in advance of their fellow citizens of Paris. By half-past nine or ten (in thousands of houses even earlier) lights will be out on five nights out of seven. Entertainments save at a few night cafes close early and Brussels is for the greater part except as regards fashionable folk in the season, slumbering long before eleven. Because doubtless of this habit of early rising and early retiring to well-earned rest, the evening life of Brussels is that which least entitles it to be called a "little Paris." It is distinctly dull when compared with that of the French capital. There are comparatively few good restaurants which are open or rather largely patronised after eight or nine o'clock, and by half-past ten the chief streets and boulevards assume a decidedly deserted appearance very greatly in contrast with those of Paris. Brussels is a city of shady boulevards, open spaces, and pleasant parks as is Paris.

That too tired feeling—Sometimes folk complain of being over-tired "too tired to sleep." If the back of the neck and temples be bathed with hot water, and in which a few drops of eau-de-cologne have been sprinkled, this will relax the muscles and veins that supply the brain. This is also a good cure for a headache.