Sketches
from the Berlin Student Life of Today.

By Dr. HELENE WEGENER, Berlin.

Much is said of the distress of German students. Student-years and years of distress are becoming more and more the same thing. The worst-off, however, is the student in a large town and, among the large towns of Germany, in Berlin. How many of those from other countries have known the Berlin University in its most brilliant time! Now the prevailing distress has seized upon two thirds of the normal number of its students, professors and lecturers and on almost all its institutions, which are short of teaching material, apparatus, instruments, books and journals, as their academic frequenters are of food, lodging, clothes, light and fuel. I have made a personal study of the distress of Berlin students and have been an eye-witness of many cases, besides going through the records of the university authorities and hearing their trustworthy reports. I will endeavour to cast a few chance rays of light on some of these cases, created as they are out of cruel reality.

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I go from Berlin to Charlottenburg and there in a very small attic flat in a house at the back of the street five persons are lodging with a good-natured woman who is both old and deaf. Four of them are unemployed workmen and one is a student. They all crouch together in the semi-darkness over a bare deal table. They do this peacefully every day between four and five o'clock for their afternoon coffee, as well as twice daily besides. In the morning there is hot "coffee" so-called, but it is really made from some powdery substitute. At noon and in the afternoon the same brew is warmed up again for them. Should there be money enough, for the evening meal there will be some delicacy, such as dried cod or the like. There