

Wintering in the Old World

By J.W. Henson

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A Word To The Wise is Not Sufficient

Of Idioms, Idiots and Slang I would like to say an opening word. Nothing marks a traveler as an insensitive, rank amateur, more than talking to someone who does not speak his language as if every word was being heard and understood. When approaching one in his homeland it is polite to ask, "Do you speak English?" If the response is negative, do not continue to stand and speak as if they were understanding. It embarrasses them and should do the same for you. I have had foreigners in my country approach me and speak as if I were understanding their every word. It makes for an uncomfortable situation and one to be avoided when possible.

If to your question, as to their knowledge of English, the response is "yes" then it must be determined to what extent they do so before starting a litany of words. Even with those who seem proficient in English it is unwise to inject slang, idioms, and philosophy into your conversation. Speak slowly, use small, easy to understand words, and short sentences that they would have most likely learned in school. This is not always easy to keep in mind, but is well worth the effort to do so.

Germany

I sit staring at my keyboard with an occasional long, slow glance from the window to the woods down beyond. What can I say about such a place as Germany? What can I say about such people? Was it true or just a dream? Have I *ever* been abroad? In my mind I can see that little corner of Germany as clearly as I can see the grand oak tree there in the woods below me just now. Have I only crossed over that land as a shadow from a cloud above, leaving neither step nor tread beneath? Is it still there or did it vanish as soon as I returned to my homeland? Are our friends there more sure of their reality than I am of mine since they have only seen their one side. They have never been here. They know only that they saw us, they ate with us, they laughed with us, they loved us, and now we are gone. Did we ever truly exist for them? Are we only vacant memories to them, and nothing more? I think not, for they still exist in our hearts as living, loving, vibrant people, and I am sure the same is true with them!

Pension Schumacher

Yes! Pension Schumacher still sits on that hill, at the upper edge of town, overlooking the village of Holzbronn, a 'Dorf' of about 800 residents! It has been our home while

visiting in Germany for the past several years. It is operated by a relative of my wife Audrey, a Gackenheimer woman and her husband. Breakfast is served with the apartment each morning, and there is a kitchenette along the hall where we prepared many of our other meals, which were eaten out on the balcony when the weather permitted.

Bob and Mary Roach picked us up at our home below Ringgold, GA, and took us to the Express Shuttle in Chattanooga. The shuttle left Chattanooga at 1:30 pm. and arrived at the Atlanta Airport at 3:30 pm. with Bob, Mary, Audrey and me. Our flight was at 6:10 pm. on Delta Airlines direct from Atlanta to Stuttgart, Germany. We arrived in Stuttgart about 9 am. this morning. After going through Customs we went to the Bank and then on to get our rental car. We four drove to Gültlingen and went to the Co-op, a grocery store, where we bought drinking water in bottles and proceeded to Pension Schumacher in Holzbronn, arriving about noon. It was 18 hours since we left home until we arrived at our home away from home, the Pension.

Tonight I sat staring out of the window of our third floor apartment watching the rain splashing against the curtained window, wondering what our family and friends back home were doing. This has been a very wet year for the Germans. Night comes early this time of year at these latitudes. At other times I have seen the snow flakes piling up on the

driveway below us, covering our car, or heard the gentle whistle of the torrid summer breeze blowing through the scrim into our non-air-conditioned room. I have heard the glockenspiel at the church chiming out the hours, and the sound of the Baker's truck ringing in the street announcing his presence with fresh product. Even the Butcher's truck summoned the citizens from their homes to buy his merchandize. They are all friendly remembrances that remind me of the shortness of life and how we must savor every drop of it in our short passage through.

Being extremely tired I reviewed the activities of the day. The airplane trip of nine hours was fraught with boredom. To help alleviate the tedium they show movies. I have yet to see a movie that I enjoyed on an airplane. However, on the eastern crossing this time it was the worse. It was filled with images and words of Satanism. We would not allow ourselves to look at the images after we saw the blatant direction it had taken. When the stewardess came along serving drinks I said, "I am very disappointed with the movie that just finished showing. It was laced with views and words of Satanism. Will you please tell the Captain? Perhaps he can lodge a formal written protest to Delta." Later in the flight a matronly well dressed woman approached us in our seat. She said that she was in Customer Service and happened to be on this flight. We told her of our objection to the new age type of movie pressed on us as a captive audience. She was from Memphis, Tennessee and in our conversation she mentioned her church. She assured us that she would register our complaint in a formal manner. The couple in the rows in front of us joined in with their aversions to such showings. Just as the lady was about to leave the couple seated behind us said, "We can't understand why you show such a movie." So, six people in one little cluster gave her something to think about. In parting I said,

“There are so many good movies available that no one could find objectionable that I do not understand such a movie as the “Men in Black II”. The plane landed in Stuttgart and as we were leaving there stood the woman with the Captain. She told us again how sorry she was that the movie was distasteful to us, and that she would report it to the Company. At the outset of the movie it said words to the effect, “Satan has come to this earth”. Our Lord Jesus Christ bought back the kingship of this world from Satan by his death. As His loyal followers it is our responsibility to pleasantly register our complaint to Satan’s incursions and doubly so since we were a paying, captive audience. There are many Christians who would not look at such a picture, but are not bold enough to verbally condemn it. I believe it is part of our witness to do so. I am aware that prophecy tell us to expect these things before Christ’s return. However, if there are no dissenting voices the evil may flood across us and all will feel it is acceptable. The flight seemed interminable. It is a soul numbing experience.

We rested some in the afternoon. It rained and then cleared off. Out on the balcony you could see fog collecting in the valleys. It looked like great rows of cotton poured from a picker’s bag. At 5:30 we were invited down for dinner in Wilhelm and Inge Schumacher’s

dinning room. There were 13 people in attendance. This is not something that normally goes with the price of the room. These Germans do set a grand table. The first course was a thin vegetable soup with cheese ravioli. Then came Spätzle, a Swabian dish heavy with noodles and cheese, topped with sautéed onions and a wonderful side dish of green salad. We were given water to wash it down with, but they drank something a little stronger. It was a beautiful sight before the onslaught. At one of these meals we had a Lentil Soup that was wonderful. I am going to insert the recipe here for fear I might forget it later on. Recipes are not easily translated into the American way of cooking. Much of their ingredients are weighed and not volume measured, but I have set around their kitchen watching and asking questions and writing the measures as best I can.

Lentil Soup *For Two People*

1 cup clean Lentils
 1 teaspoon Olive Oil
 Water to cover
 1 tablespoon Ketchup
 1 tablespoon Vinegar
 1 tablespoon Instant Gravy Mix*
 Salt to taste
 Black Pepper to taste
 1 tablespoon dry vegetable soup†

Step One

Cover the lentils with water and cook for 25 minutes. Sieve the water off, rinse, and add fresh water.

Step Two

Add all of the other ingredients and cook until the Lentils are done (soft). Adjust the amount of water to your particular desire. Their soup was rather on the thin side. (You can adjust your ingredients to your own taste after the first making.)

* *Instant gravy comes as a powder in an envelope. Without it I would suggest 1 tablespoon of flour, to slightly thicken, and 1 tablespoon McKay's Chicken Broth as can be had at the Village Market, or other health food store. Dissolve into some water. This will replace some of the salt.*

† *The dry vegetable Soup Mix is like Knorr boxed soup mixture with small flakes of vegetables.*

After dinner we sat around the table, as their custom is, laughing and talking until we were completely overcome by weariness. Maurizio Ostrega is an early riser too, for in retirement he has a newspaper route of 135 papers each morning starting at 4 am.. He goes on foot pulling a small two-wheeled wagon holding the papers. He carries about six different newspapers from various towns. Some subscribers take as many as three different papers. The route takes about two hours so he too must go to bed early.

The first rays of morning are slow in coming, and are heralded by the roar and rumble of farm tractors, cars, and trucks leaving the village for work. The farmers seem to pay little attention to the weather. I have seen them out with their tractors in the damp and snow plowing and harrowing their fields. One of my great Uncles used to go out and turn the snow under with a team of mules and a hand plow. My grandfather would laugh at him, but he insisted that the snow put extra Nitrogen into the soil. I am unqualified to pass judgment on this.

With a quick shower and shave behind me I eagerly listened for the sound of footsteps in the hall telling of the arrival of breakfast. Breakfasts were typically Continental in layout. There was orange juice, European type hard rolls, jellies, coffee, cream, numerous and various cheeses, butter, and every other morning a four-minute boiled egg, at our request. Cereal was available with milk for the asking. We ate cereal so often that it was finally placed on the sideboard for our pleasure. The breads had been bought at the curbside, or for diversion made in the Pension kitchen, and the jellies made from fruits grown on their own grounds. Being vegetarians we were not served meats from their kitchen. There was an abundance of breakfast variety available on the table without flesh foods. The Continental Breakfast is very different from the English first meal of the day. The English eat one of their heartiest meals in the morning. I have been presented with long menus of available items at the English breakfast table. But unless you have become acquainted with the Continental Breakfast you do not know the true joy and predictability of early morning feasting.

From the balcony and dropping away into the valley below and over the distant rolling countryside beyond could be seen other small villages dotting forest and lea. The Pension is just outside of the Black Forest where bears and wolves roamed in the distant past.

This country has been occupied for over 2000 years by humans. In the olden days men had to pool their wisdom and resources to protect themselves from the animals in this wilderness, but today man has to protect the animals from the momentum of his incursion with the technological “advances”. Things have done an 180 degree turn.

Inflation slowly raises the prices of all things and the Pension which used to be DM 60 (\$27) per night for Audrey and me is now € 40 (\$40). We were there when the € (Euro) went on sale the first time, about a year ago. The senior population was very concerned about changing their accounts from the Deutsch Mark to the Euro for fear of losing value. They had used the Reich Mark under Hitler, then the Deutsch Mark, and now the Euro. They remembered the trauma of the change imposed on them by the Allied Occupation Forces from World War II. The Euro is approximately on parity with the US Dollar today. In 1871 the German States came together to form the German Empire. That was the year before Audrey’s grandmother was born. The unifier was Otto Bismarck. That year the whole of the new Germany began to use a currency called the *Mark*. It was named so in honor of Bismarck. This Mark lasted until 1923 when it was replaced with the *Reich Mark*. In 1948 the Occupational Military Government made yet another change and their currency became known as the *Deutsche Mark*. Then on January 1, 2002 the entire European Community went on the *Euro*.

Most of our breakfasts were served at 9:00 o’clock unless we were going on a longer journey. We got into the car and drove to the city of Kuppengen. This was the town where Audrey’s grandfather was married the first time. We parked at the church and went to the church office. A lady about forty answered the ring of our bell. The pastor was there and he spoke English. We made photographs of the Martin Luther painting on the wall of the office. It is a very old piece of art going back to about the time of the Reformation. Out in the hall are two framed boards showing the names of the pastors from just before the Reformation to the present day. This old Church was built around 1300 as a Catholic house of worship. The Reformation changed all of that and the priest of the time converted over and continued serving the congregation as a Pastor in the Lutheran Church. Those were difficult and trying times, but when have times not been hard somewhere in the world. From the Church we walked down to the city square. A sign on the old Rathaus (City Hall) by the door says 964 AD..

We returned to the car and drove on to Herrenberg and parked at the City Hall parking lot. There you can park for two hours. You set your Parking Dial to the current time and place it on the dashboard of the car. The police can then check your parking time. We took the elevator up to a catwalk and crossed the street into the old city. An escalator lifts you to the next level, and there you have stepped back into the distant past.

We were invited to eat several meals with the various families in the Gültlingen area. They only say the Blessing on Sunday, and that chore always fell on me as the quest of honor at the head of the table. Once as we sat around the table, having finished the meal, Red Wine and Schnapps were brought up from the cellar for those who drank. They informed us the Schnapps and wine were made in their house and that the Schnapps was

42% alcohol. The discussion came around to the cellar where these things are made. Maurizio suggested that the Schumachers take us into the cellar and show us the process of making the liquors. We went down and there sat two plastic containers that held about 25 gallons each of the fermenting pears. With a wooden hoe like implement they stirred into the disgusting looking liquid to add air and cause the fermentation to go on forward. When the putrid slurry reaches its proper stage of fermentation, it is heated and the vapors condensed through a stainless steel coil. The Schnapps in the final form was crystal clear. They showed us two glass casks of about eight gallons each full of the Schnapps. This process is strictly regulated in Germany and taxed at about 45% when it was known that the tonic was being made. Many make it much as do our Moonshiners do to the loss of revenue to the state. I do not know the status of legality in the Pension. They have a wine cellar aside from the distillery. In there sit hundreds of bottles of water, Durr's Orange juice, wines, Schnapps, and other drinking materials. I believe that the European drinks for a different reason than does the American. They learned to partake in their home at an early age. They believe it is good for their health, even though they can see its ravages on the population when over indulged. A lot of Americans drink because they believe it is the 'in' thing to do. It must start as a rebellion against our old Judeo-Christian mores of the past. When I was a young child it was against Constitutional Law to make, have, sell or drink alcoholic beverages. Many Americans are still opposed to alcohol, some to the point of making it a tenant of their religious faith. To the European it is only a liquid drink. I asked Karl Gackenheimer once if he wanted something to drink. Affirmative! I passed him the water. He said, "I want something to drink. I don't want to take a bath!" Poor Karl died a few months ago. We have visited his grave in the Gültlingen Cemetery two or three times on this trip.

The houses are very comfortable. Most of them are heated with hot water radiators. In the Pension Kerosene is used as the energy source for heating the water. A light odor of Kerosene assails your nostrils upon entering the building. In the basement there are six water pipes running up the wall with valves to control the flow of the warm water. Each segment of the house can be controlled from there. There are valves near the radiators for thermostatic control of each heater. Many of the homes have large uncomely wood burning stoves, too. They are a thing of wonder. They have a molded seat around the device and you can sit there with your back against the warm surface. It really is a delight.

On Thursday we had breakfast at 8:00 am.. I had made a schedule of days, times and places and insisted that we stay on track. Only civilized man can set up a program and follow it to the letter. I FAXed a schedule of our breakfast hours to the Pension Schumacher a couple of months before we arrived, and they were very faithful in following it to the minute.

We got into the car and headed south from Herrenberg along A-81 toward Singen. We went west off the Autobahn through St. Georgian and into Triberg. The rolling hills,

country, and forest resembles our Tennessee-Georgia landscape. We had an appointment at the Hubert Herr Uhren Fabric for 10:30. When we got there the receptionist had no record of our upcoming visit. She sent me out into the rain to get my eMail from them so

she would know who had made the appointment. That really irritated me, and I must admit I was angry, and later told Mr. Herr so. He was nice and said that he had forgotten to make a note of our visit.

I have the uncanny ability to offend people without intending to do so, and recognize it best after having it pointed out by my wife. She is more in tune with the feelings of others than I. She handles them with kid gloves, but I often hammer them on the anvil of ignorance. Still they love me. It is inconceivable the resilience in human relations when there is no evil intended. A hearty smile often covers for the abruptness of our words and actions. I am not arguing that this is good, only that it amazes me. Shandelle speaks better German than I do, yet she is very reticent to do so for fear of offending with an inappropriate word or phrase. I pull out all stops and talk the scale up and down, and it seems they enjoy the concert of words that I give them. My vocabulary is pretty good, but the grammar is atrocious.

We went to the wood lot a few blocks up the street from the assembly plant. Boards of Linden wood were cut into slabs about two inches thick and 18 inches wide. These were air layered with cross sticks holding them apart for natural curing. They are left in this condition for about two years. They are then cut into smaller pieces, planed and glued together. This make the boards that will not split or warp, leaving them in a very stable condition. They then have a design stenciled on them, and are taken to the band saw and cut out in banks of six per cutting. The wood carver then does his decorating. They are stained and put together into things resembling bird houses.

Back in the other shop machines were stamping out gears from narrow rolls of brass 2"-3" wide and a couple of feet in diameter. These are assembled into frames to make the clock. Hubert Herr makes clock works for other companies in the Triberg area to assemble into their clocks. The clocks are put together and tested ready for shipping. TV's QVC channel features Mr. Herr a couple of times a year. He is on the station telling the features and virtues of his clocks and of the Triberg, Germany area. They will sell thousands of clocks in a very short time over the medium of TV. I told him that we have seen him several times on TV. Mary and Bob Roach bought a very nice and expensive clock and had it shipped to their home.

It was still raining as we left the Clock Factory and drove up the street to the waterfall. It is Germany's highest waterfall. Construction was going on in the rain as we walked to the Falls. There has been a lot of rain and the Falls were very full, dancing, foaming, and

running against the banks. After taking photos of the Falls we went to the "House of 1000 Clocks". The City of Triberg is too much like Gatlinberg, Tennessee in the Smokie Mountains. It is a tourist trap, a sink where your money goes down never to be seen again.

As we left Triberg and headed for the Autobahn large, wet snowflakes were falling thick and fast. The ground was so warm that the snow was not sticking even at the 32 degrees Fahrenheit. Along the Autobahn the highway repairmen continued to work in the falling snow. The hot asphalt being rolled put off condensing steam that blanketed the highway

in a great white cloud.

The Infrastructure

After breakfast on Friday Bob and I went down to Gültlingen to the VolksBank to cash in some Traveler's Checks. Bob had two \$100.00 bills and wished to change them for Euros. The young man who has always helped me at the Bank has been transferred to the Wildberg branch, and the young lady told Bob that she could not accept \$100.00 bills. He later exchanged them in Calw at the bank. Most things do not stay the same for long. While Germany is about half the size of Texas, it has about one third the population of the United States. Therefore the renewing of the infrastructure is more noticeable than in the States. Highways are being worked on so much of the time regardless of the weather. Bridges widened, moved or rebuilt. I never cease to be amazed at men working in cold, wet weather that would keep our people at home for the day. New buildings are going up all around and some old ones coming down. Scaffolds surround Churches, Ruins, and old Castles, and Burgs, and are along the streets and sidewalks. Cobblestone streets and walk ways are lifted to expose the sewers, cables, and water lines only to be replaced the next day to look as if they had been in place for the last 100 years.

We drove up Kapellenberg street to the Gültlingen Michel's Church where Audrey's grandfather had attended as a young man. We parked by the cemetery and there found that change had also taken place. The old parking place for the cemetery has been moved across the street and places for new graves have been laid out where the old parking lot had been. We entered the confines of the cemetery through the iron gates and began looking for Karl Gackenheimer's grave site. We finally found it with the assistance of a young lady who tending the graves of some of her loved one. I remember seeing Karl approach the grave of his wife and his son. He squared himself before the stone, removed his hat, lowered his head and stood silent for a moment of respect. Today he was joined with them in the cold ground, and it was I who stood there bearing respect and homage to the fallen one.

Leaving the cemetery we entered cloistered walls of the ancient church. It was 50 years old when Columbus got funding for his epic journey into the unknown. Audrey went forward and retrieved the organ key and whined out a few plaintive strains from the old instrument that was cheering the faithful before the American Revolution. Though the days have been long and the years short this place has witnessed centuries of woe befall the simple people of this valley. Wars have come and gone. Parents have buried their children and mates their spouses. Audrey's grandfather sang to the voice of this organ in the cold days of winter so long ago. The only connection we have with them is through the records and the service of our memories.

We retreated from these holy grounds and drove down to the community bakhaus. It was built in 1860 to serve the community of Gültlingen for baking their bread. Many of the older families still use it, but the younger ones no longer haunt these premises. It has two wood fired ovens and a room for preparing the dough. The ashes are raked out once the

oven has reached its temperature and the velvety, round loaves of dough are placed in the oven. A man and two women were busy at work as we entered. The man, about 50 years of age, opened the hot oven, added some more wood and raked the fire together. Closing the door, he said to me, "You are with the Gackenheimers. You are from America, and are staying at the Pension Schumacher in Holzbronn. I was with Karl Gackenhaimer in the hospital just a few hours before he died. I was Karl's friend and also a friend of his son Friedrich. They are both dead now." I said that Friedrich has been dead a couple of years. He said, "Four years in a month less four days." I thought that he must have been a true friend indeed to know the number of years, months, and days so off hand since Friedrich had died. In these small towns word of visiting Americans travels fast. It isn't something that happens very frequently. It makes small talk in the meat market, the co-op, the flower shop, and the bake shop.

The young people are not following the ways of their ancestors even as they have not in America. It is sad that the McDonald Corporation is building their eateries all around Germany. Even Calw has a new one since last December when we were there. WalMart is putting up stores across the land, and they are being patronized. Prices are cheaper and the merchandise selection is much better than many of the small stores can offer. Their competition will eliminate many of the old Mom and Pop stores and markets even as they have in the USA. So change, after all the centuries, is revising the complexion of the Germany that I have known and loved for its oldness.

We then went to the old city of Calw. Audrey always likes to stop by the Monument to see the Walkers in the old city. The square slopes upward from the river with the church standing on the upper left corner. Markets surround the plaza and on market day the square is filled with beautiful produce of all varieties. Much of the fresh things are cheaper than here in the States. I have always thought of us as the breadbasket of the world. Bananas are cheaper, and the Italian cucumbers that come shrink wrapped are cheaper. Audrey pays \$1.00 each for these cucumbers at home. They are 25 Cents US there. The Ritter Sport candy, made by Hershey, that we pay \$1.50 for here is 59 cents there. It is German Chocolate and is better tasting than Hershey's. Tomatoes, lettuce and other produce is a little cheaper. Breads, canned goods, cooking oils, meats, cheese, and cereals are about the same price that we pay. Elsbeth Fitzky says that she does not buy the vegetables from Turkey because they use a lot of fertilizer in growing things.

Surrounding the old city square are the half-timbered buildings that the English call 'Tudor'. They are built with timbers about the size of crossties from the railroad and are filled with masonry in between. The construction of the timbers is various forms of triangles which gives the buildings their incredible strength. The timbers are stained a rich, dark brown and the masonry an off white to white. While our frontiersmen were living in one story log structures with mud floors the Europeans were snug in the four to five floor homes. Many of them still stand from the days before America was drawn on the maps of the world.

When the weather is cold much walking is involved for one does not choose to sit in the open. In the warmer seasons I love to sit and watch the citizens going about their daily

activities. We got back in the Nissan Station wagon and headed down the Nagold Valley.

About three miles out of Calw is the little village of Kentheim. There is an old church that was built over 1000 years ago. Audrey and I went to their services one Sunday. It is of the Lutheran persuasion and the priest spoke a very clear high German. Their services do not drag on interminably. They enter, worship the Lord for a short period and then retreat into the world to live as better citizens. At least that is how it is supposed to work. The church sits with its back to the Nagold River, and in periods of too much rainfall the water comes to church also. About 50 years ago the water rose to a height of about two feet in the sanctuary. They have struck a high water line inside and outside on the old mason walls. I am very interested in how people worship and what it has done for their individual civilization. These old churches are such hallowed places. People have been born into their communion, married by the Priests, raised their families, died and been interred in those sacred burying grounds by the church. This cycle has gone on for about 30 generations in this little house of worship. Some people seem to believe that they might become contaminated by entering these hallowed halls. That which has been regarded as sacred by many generations must have some element of sacredness to us even if they have not had access to the Red Books from our framework of belief is so firmly secured.

We stopped at Bad Teinach and went into the Spa area. There were people bathing and lounging around the periphery. It is from here that the famous Teinacher and Hirschquelle waters are bottled and distributed across Germany. It come bubbling from under the ground in a pure, and naturally carbonated state. Next door is a Four Star hotel with reasonable rates for such a luxury setting. On beyond from the hotel is a well about a quarter of a mile deep brings warm, and believed by the Germans, healing water to the Spa. With each descent of the well the temperature continues to rise.

A man made waterfall cascades down the hillside into a pool replete with fish and statues of bucks drinking from the water. The large fish swim lazily about in today's warm sunshine just as do the bathers. It is a lovely setting around the Spa. All nature seems to be enjoying this temporary reprieve from the onslaughts of winter that will soon blow down upon them. In the warmer seasons stringed groups or bands playing lazy tunes around the falls as the residents sit soaking up the sun and the sound.

Old men and women exercise in the pool or sit alongside stretching their twisted and ill proportioned limbs in an effort to restore the lost vigor that they enjoyed at eighteen years of age. Some of the views are repulsive! Many people have no sense of privacy. A little more covering would do much to retain the image that God once gave to them. Those who are not too fat are lean to the extreme. The few who are properly fleshed are held to ridicule in the minds of the others, I am sure. It is my belief that the lack of being circumspect and private cause many people to have disrespect for humanity, valuing it for less than it's true worth.

With people aside it is a scene of tranquility, yet I find such places more than a little depressing. People with more wealth than is good for them, spending it for every notion

that enters their head. Places like this are *money sinks* where our little accumulated wealth vanishes with a swish and a whirl and leaves us little or nothing for the interchange. The Bible says that 'a fool and his money are soon parted'. I paraphrase this verse, hoping to do no harm to the original, in that 'a wise man retains his wealth'.

At Christmas, in one corner of the Spa stands a merchant with a variety of beautiful glassware, and woodcarvings for sale at exalted prices. These things are magnets for Audrey's eyes. They draw her with a power that is irresistible, but she is frugal in this respect (most of the time).

We drove from Bad Teinach to a place that is small but respected by the locals for its beauty. The road that winds out from the Spa into the mountains beyond is narrow, and at one turn there is a paved lane turning to the left. It goes through the Black Forest to a place called Lautenbachhof. There is an old guesthouse there. We have never eaten there for it seems to be a remote and desolate place, with no guests about when we were there. I do not like to eat at a place not frequented by the locals. Over the years Audrey and I have been to this place many times. You drive past the guesthouse on the left hand side and around a serpentine lane to a rear meadow. There are sheep and two separate herds of two varieties of deer. As the picture would suggest the animals are not unfriendly. Audrey is a great lover of the dumb beasts. Dumb can mean not overly intelligent, or else the lack of speaking ability. The not overly bright may explain her attachment to me. The first time we were out to the farm there was a box where you could purchase a Marks worth of grain, drop it into a PVC pipe down to the manger to feed the deer. We had asked no permission to go back to the animals, and at last a man who was mucking out the barn came our way rolling a wheelbarrow loaded with a generous sample of his work. He didn't say anything, only returned our greeting, and remained in the vicinity until we were finished and had departed.

From the Lautenbachhof we returned by the little lane that ran through the forest to the county road and continued up the mountain to a small village of about 500 people called Schmieh. Just as you depart this community on the back side, there is another little lane crossing a field and entering the forest beyond. It is a one car lane and we are puzzled how to pass when we do meet a tractor or another car. We have only met a couple of cars and one tractor in the many times that we have traversed the sanctuary of this wood. There are places where you can park your car and walk through the forest on an unpaved service lane. The forest is a damp, dank, dark place with the floor covered with mosses, lichens, and mushrooms. It seems that Hansel and Gretel should appear exiting the witch's house in search of their father and home. These forests were fearsome places in the distant past. They were filled with bears, wolves, and wild boars. This is confirmed in the Autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini in the 1500s when he and his group passed through the forest on their way to France and were assaulted by various creatures, especially wolves. We returned to Holzbronn by the way of another small village called Emberg.

Sabbath morning we were up early, dressed and on the way to church in Calw just above the old city on Bahnstrasse 295. There were about 60 people present in the congregation.

The is a good representation of all ages there. The man who preached was their former pastor. He has been moved to the Adventist church in Stuttgart, but still resides in the Calw area. His sermon was about the three servants who were given their master's money to invest. Two did well but the third buried his charge, and was condemned. The preacher made a personal appeal to us as stewards. They were very kind to us and set up a room and furnished us with an interpreter. We were given a warm welcome as guests. We arrived back at the Pension about 12 noon. I rested for awhile and then at 2 pm we left and drove down to Heinz and Anneliese Schlotz's residence for an afternoon tea. I don't know what their word is for the affair, but our English friends call it tea. They serve Kucken with coffee, Cola, or water to wash it down. They live on the side of a mountain perched high above the Nagold River by Wildberg. Anneliese is a sister to Karl Gackenheimer. That makes her a cousin to Audrey. They both are retired from Mercedes. That Heinz is a very funny man. He kept us laughing all afternoon and into the evening.

As darkness descended across the area they started the routine of supper. We had not moved from the table since mid-afternoon. When it at last came time to go home, Heinz got into his *Smart* car and we followed him back to the Pension. We really enjoyed our hours in their home. Until last December (2001) we had never met Anneliese, and only knew of her existence from the old family records.

The Autobahn is the highest level of highway in Germany. Next down comes the Bahnstrasse, or the equivalent of our Federal highway system like US 11, US 45, or old US 66. Then comes the Kreisstrasse, or a county road, and last the Landstrasse which correlates with our country lanes. The Autobahn grid was laid out in the 1930s and has been a pattern for Freeways all across the world ever since. The entire Autobahn is under posted speed limits, but many of the citizens do not observe them, and the police seem not to care so long as they are driving safely. I remember when I was young that Tennessee did not have speed limits on open highway. Communities were 30 MPH whether posted or not. Tennessee said 'any speed so long as you are driving safely'. You could be given a ticket at 30 MPH if it appeared you were operating your car unsafely. That left too much to interpretation.

On the 11th of November we drove down in the evening to the Schlotz Residence in Wildberg and picked up Anneliese. She was taking us out to eat pizza in Nagold. After eating we went to the Kubus Hall for an evening of music. In German it was called a Kammerkonzert, or Chamber Concert. There was a pianist, a violinist, and a cellist. The violin was played by a lady from California. It was a good classical music program. The pianist had a young girl turning pages for him as he played. Eventually she got several pages caught in her hand instead of just one and the music went all over the floor. That brought the concert to a temporary halt. A little further on, the cello's bow broke a string. It was long and flying to and fro so that brought the program to a stop again. The violinist had to have the pianist's handkerchief for her nose during one of the pieces. Through it all it turned out very nicely.

Heinz did not go with us. It may not have been his kind of music. There was a heavy fog

on the highway as we returned to Wildberg and the Pension.

A Drive Through The Neckar Valley

Driving north on A-81 toward Stuttgart we went around Sindelfingen and Böblingen. It is a large manufacturing center. You pass the Mercedes plant with its lots filled with finished automobiles. IBM has a plant there and so does Hewlett Packard where they produce computers. There is a west shift in the Autobahn where it runs in conjunction with A-8, a dog leg of five to eight miles before heading north again. The Autobahn runs through a tunnel and across a beautiful countryside strewn with the lazy three blade windmills and buildings at sparse intervals. The windmills are for the generation of electricity, and I make believe that I can see Don Quixote riding full tilt in preparation to do battle with the wicked windmill. About 50 KM north of Stuttgart Autobahn A-6 crosses in an east-west direction and we turn west toward Heilbronn. The first exit is about six miles along A-6. It is onto Bahnstrasse 27 and we took it to the north up through the Neckar Valley. We passed the Audi Factory with many cars sitting in their lots, a salt factory and other heavy industry in this area.

We advanced up stream to Neckarzimmern. There on the west side of the Bahnstrasse is the 'Bleikristall Fabric'. Parking is available in the east side of the street. There is the Frank Kasper showroom. If you go around back of this showroom you come to the real glassblowing factory of Peter Kasper. Their product is about 24% lead oxide (PbO) and is beautiful beyond compare. We stood behind a glass shield and watched as the artisan took a glob of white hot, molten glass from the furnace on the end of his blow pipe. He would turn it and blow as another would pull and draw at the right place at the right time. Peter

Kasper was doubtless the master in his own shop. In 1953, while visiting Venice, Italy, I went early one morning to the Island of Morano. There were many large furnaces and dozens of artisan at work. This was at one time a forbidden area to tourists, because of the secret nature of their work.

The castle Hornberg is also in Neckarzimmern.

In Gundelsheim there is an Esso Gas Station where we always stop to be refreshed. This particular stretch of highway is called the Burgenstrasse because of its many fortresses and castles, though it is still highway B-27. On the east side of the highway is the castle Horneck, and on the other side about 2 KM off the highway is the castle Guttenberg. While you sit on benches provided, watching the valley of gardens below, great condors swoop down just over your head. This is the main feature of this castle.

The river appears to be about 150 yards wide at this point and is flowing generally in a northerly direction in the narrow valley between lofty mountains. The level of the water laps to the top of the River's bank and is maintained at this level by a series of dams with locks. There are a lot of barges on the river carrying a variety of goods up and down

stream. At times they are backed up and tied against pilings waiting their turn through the locks. Ducks, geese and swans mingle with the river traffic. Some of these birds are still plucked for their down to stuff pillows, cold wear, and comforters. The Neckar flows across from Eberbach to Heidelberg and on to the Rhine River at Mannheim giving the area access to the northern ports and to the ocean. We have driven this stretch of the valley some 14 times and find the beauty just as exciting and enticing as it was the first time we traversed the area. I can with confidence say that this would be a lovely travel for anyone.

One of the most beautiful and least advertised of the castles along this highway is at Zwingenberg about three miles south of Eberbach. The castle has been recently renovated. It clings to the mountain about half way up to the summit with a view of the entire valley spread out beneath. I was told, but have no verification of the rumor, that concerts and programs are held there in the summer, and that it is possibly used also as a hotel. I have never seen such advertised.

It is obvious to the casual traveler that these people conserve their resources better than we do in America. On either side of the highway and well back into the hinterland are small villages of 500 to 1000 inhabitants. Their houses are all red tile roofs with white or off-white sides. The grounds are well manicured and in warmer seasons are profuse with flowers and gardens. Many of the homes have compost bins, participate in recycling programs, and collect rain water from their roofs for the summer gardens. It would take a lifetime to become acquainted with all of these hamlets, however, each has its own water and sewer system. The roads are always well marked. There are no places such as Apison, Tennessee where one would have to stop and ask the way back to Chattanooga. Junk cars and mobile homes are not to be seen. I am a proponent of 'ugly laws' in our country where cars that were not licensed, insured, enclosed from view, or in running condition would be assessed an Ugly Tax. There is much that our city and county planners could learn from our German friends about making our habitations more comfortable and pleasant.

At Eberbach we took highway B-45 north toward Erbach. The highway skirts around Beerfelden of World War II fame. South of Beerfelden, in the community of Gammelsbach, is an old castle.

In Erbach we turned on to Erlenbach Strasse and drove through the village of Erlenbach and another 7 KM to the community of Bullau. It was 7 KM of winding roads and forest with no habitations. We turned onto a small, narrow, paved woods trail to the Bullau Gasthaus.

About a mile down this way the trail dead ends at the gasthaus. We went in and had a meal of omelet's with salad and water. Mary Roach really enjoyed the atmosphere of the 'woody' little restaurant. Back up the lane about 100 yards is the famous Bullau Bild - Bild Stock. It is standing there just as it was 600

years ago, against a giant beach tree. Over the years the tree has grown in circumference

and is surrounding and encroaching upon the porcelain image of Jesus and His mother at the Bild Stock. Bild Stocks were in ancient times placed along pilgrimage routes to holy sites. The pilgrim would stop and say a prayer there before continuing on their route. Even today the faithful come to this shrine and light a candle leaving it burning and a prayer from the heart to grace the site (note the red candle in the photograph at the base of the Bild Stock). I have taken many people to this place over the years. You can tell those who are of a religious bent for it is one of the most meaningful things they will see that day. Others regard it as if it were paganism from the past, and really wanted nothing to do with it. The old people of the past seemed to like, or to need a visual representation around which to build their faith. Ours today seems to be built more around the spoken word, or the gift of hearing. This place is rich in history, and who is to say that for people who were unfamiliar with reading and writing that the sense of sight was not the stronger of the ways to reach their hearts. I am very interested in how Adventists reacts to these artifacts from the distant past. Sometimes I feel that we are bigots breed without a feeling for the past and the devoutness with which many of these people approached their God. I think that too often we presume more from scripture than is written there for our edification and enlightenment.

For three days we were guests in the home of Johann and Elsbeth Fitzky in Erbach. She is one of Audrey's favorite German cousins. Johann worked in the bank at Michelstadt before the war, and again after the cessation of hostilities. At retirement he was the number two man in the bank. In his youth he was a member of the Hitler Youth. The day before he entered the army as a paratrooper he joined the Nazi Party. He was sent to Sicily and then on to North Africa. Without ever seeing battle he was captured by the French, turned over to the British, forwarded to Casablanca, and given to the Americans. From there he was shipped to America as one of some 500,000 POWs who eventually ended up there. He was shipped to a camp in MacClean, Texas and then to Fort Lewis, Washington where he spent the war. There he worked on farms and in food canning factories. He was paid by the day and had a bank account in Spokane. He says that they always had enough to eat, was treated well, and that it was some of the best days of his life. At the close of the war he was sent to England to work. The good times ended there. In 1946 he was sent back to Germany. When he saw all of the destruction that had fallen on the once proud Third Reich he cried. Since he had been a Party member it was another year before he was released as a prisoner by an American Col. Harrison. It was springtime when he got home. He helped his father put in the crop and then went back to his job at the bank. Johann is 79 years old at this time. He is a dear, sweet person. He loved mountain climbing and distance hiking. On his vacations he would hike from Erbach down to Italy. He had as an ambition to climb Mount Everest, but time has taken its toll and left that dream unfulfilled.

Elsbeth worked until retirement in a bookstore in Erbach. She is 70 years old at this time. In 1963 Johann and another man started building their house in Dorf Erbach, a small village attached to Erbach. They moved in in 1965. I was working at the Preston Company in Cleveland, Tennessee in those years. Theirs is a lovely well maintained three story house with marble floors and stairs. Our room is a comfortable one down stairs under the main floor. I love the German people and this area in particular. If I

were 10 years younger I would move there for the remaining days that I have. Back in 1953 I begged and pleaded with Audrey for us to return and live there. I had cried when I had to leave. I felt we would be a lot of help in rebuilding the nation and could make a comfortable life for ourselves.

We parked in Erbach and walked past the house where Audrey's grandmother was born in 1872, and into the center of town. Erbach is on the Mümling River, a small stream that flows through the Mümling Valley and flows into the Main River at Obernburg. The Main River in turn goes past Frankfurt and on west to Mainz and into the Rhine River. The Mümling is a small river and Johann Fitzky with a smile on his face calls it a creek because as he says it is too small for river traffic. In the photograph you see the steeple of the old church in Erbach. This is the church where Audrey's grandmother went to church and was confirmed there. The castle is still inhabited by Graf Erbach-Erbach. (He must have liked the name so well that he took it twice.) History says that the head of Hannibal was kept here in a sarcophagus in the castle until more recent years. It is said to have been stolen from Rome, Italy and secretly moved to Erbach. We are told that the Italians still say 'Beware of the men of Erbach, they come to steal'.

The hierarchy of German nobility is as follows. There was the Kaiser, or Emperor. The word Kaiser is German for Caesar. Under the Kaiser was the King. Then next was the Fuerst, or Fürst. The Graf is under him and the Baron is next. Then there were lots of serfs under everyone of the notables. I am indebted to Johann Fitzky for this piece of information. The Graf Erbach-Erbach has a palace out in the Odenwald. (Oden was the Scandinavian chief god Oden, and wald means woods . . . the woods of Oden). It is a three story mansion in the woods that have belonged to his family for centuries back. There are more hardwood trees in the Odenwald than in the Schwartzwald, giving it a different character.

Erbach is a town of about 14,000 inhabitants. It sits on the Mümling River. To tourists the main attraction is the old part of the city. The city square is flanked on the one side by the Castle of Graf Erbach-Erbach. It is a large imposing structure with a round tower in its rear courtyard. The surface of the square is paved with cobblestones that have been in place for centuries, and are worn smooth by the passage of generations of feet. To the right quarter are some old buildings and the masonry gate through the ancient city wall leading to the church.

Directly across from the Castle is the Mümling River with its row of five sycamore trees and elevated beds of flowers along the walkway. To the left of the Castle are shops and a nice bakeshop-restaurant combination. Bahnstrasse comes into the square from there, and it was about 100 yards from the Castle along that street that Audrey's grandmother was born. In the city square stood a bronze statute about five feet tall. It was of a short man with a woodsman's axe over his shoulder and a pair of very thick glasses on his nose. His name was Knorr Seppel, and the story told was that he did all of the undesirable jobs in town. If something was stuck in a toilet in the castle, it was his arm that went in after it. Well, he was no longer standing there and I asked my friend, Ulrich Godensweger, the city librarian, what had happened to him. It seems that some rowdys

had pushed him over and broken his arm. He was in the shop for repairs. Godensweger said, "I believe you are the only one in town who misses him!" I love to go into the library and talk with Ulrich. He is a tall, lean, red faced man whose hair is thinning, but has a rather handsome, and character filled physiognomy. As I enter the library I am always greeted with, "Well, hello Mr. Henson. So you are back in Germany again, I see!" Another greeting that I get is from the merchant that runs the Elephant Ivory Pavilion. The description of the man and the greeting that I just described for Ulrich Godensweger would fit him perfectly.

We went into the Tourist Center where two young women were exhibiting their Teddy Bears. They were busy adding arms and legs to the body and pulling on the clothes that they had made for them, finishing with a jaunty little hat. They had exhibited their wares in New York City a short time before. The old Church is always locked but a sign on the door says that the key can be had from the Tourist Center. We took the key and entered the church. We sat there in the dark building thinking of Audrey's grandmother and the countless generations who had found joy, comfort, and solace within these walls.

A twin city, Michelstadt, lies across the Bahnstrasse from Erbach and is about the same size. Michelstadt's most noteworthy building is the old Rathaus. It was there 50 years before Columbus' epic voyage to the New World. They always refer the age of their buildings back to the era of Columbus to make us feel like new comers, I am sure. When you first enter town there is a parking place just across from the Diebsturm. You can see a plaque that tells of the building of the tower in the 800s. It was a place of incarceration for thieves and other criminals. Not a very commodious structure for prolonged living, but I doubt that anyone was concerned with the prisoners comfort or length of life. It has always amazed me that life was held with such little compassion back when there were not many people around, and now that there are so many we treat them as if they were an endangered species. One last place that I find of interest is the Drei Hasen Hotel. When you step off the street into the inn its like stepping back a millennium ago. The streets are very narrow with little or no parking and lots of walking room.

Following the Mümling Valley beyond Bad König is a beautiful example of a Burg. A Burg is a fortress. It is called Burg Breuberg. Johann parked his car below and we walked up to the mighty fortress. It has a place where you can eat and a mighty tower that you can climb for € 0.50. The narrow, steep, wooden steps up the tower hug the wall with an open square in the center. If one has a fear of heights and close places this definitely is not the place for them. Much energy is expended, but on a clear, beautiful day such as this, it is strength well spent. From up and over you get a view of the entire layout of the fortress and of the valley below with small villages across forest and field until the vanishing point is reached.

The Romans built walls hundred of miles long in this area around the time of Christ. They were built to keep out the hoards of German tribes. The Romans always built such walls at the extreme of their conquest or to close off an enemy such as they did in southern Italy in a vain attempt to stop Spartacus about 60 years before Christ. Hadrian built such a wall across the northern section of the British Isles just after 100 ad.. The

Germans call these Roman walls, 'Limes' (Leem-az). In one place there were stone seats of Roman design on the wall where the officials sat in judgment against criminals within the ranks. Most of the walls were taken down by the departing Romans and the stones were later used in other forms of building.

In departing Erbach we turned north and drove past Dieburg, then west to Darmstadt. After asking for directions two or three times we arrived at Marienhöhe (or High Mary referring to the mother of Jesus).

Johann Fitzky tells a little story that he has heard all of his life. He said that at one time there were two cities. One was named Dumstadt, or dumb city. The other city was Armstadt, or poor city. The city fathers of both towns were ashamed of the name of their respective towns, so they took the "D" off Dumstadt leaving it Umstadt, and adding it to Armstadt making it Darmstadt. So today in that area are the towns of Umstadt and Darmstadt. I asked Johann if the story were true and with his soft smile and a twist of the head said, "I have always heard so!"

We were disappointed with our Adventist school at Marienhöhe. Before the Fall of the Wall it was our Seminary in Germany. In 1978 when Audrey and I last saw it, it resembled most of our other schools. After the combination of West and East Germany the Seminary was moved back to its earlier location, before the War, in old East Germany.

Today the school has less than 800 students. There are 36 girls living in the Women's Dormitory, and 40 boys in the Men's home. The rest are day students living in the community, and most of them are not Adventists.

We arrived at 5:03 pm and found the Administration Office closed up for the night. We knew that it closed at 5:00 pm, but thought someone would be around at least for three minutes. At length three young men came along in the darkness, and I asked them for their help. They were very willing and took me to their dorm room from where they began making telephone calls to various Administrators. At last they walked me to the Girls Dorm, and there we were met by the Dean and taken to our respective rooms. The rooms were neat and clean with two beds covered with a down coverlet. Bob and Mary's room was a duplicate of ours. The toilets were across the hall. In the hall was a water cooler. It was the first that I have seen in Germany. They have their own spring and the water is brought from there. The fountain was furnished with paper cups, and we took long, thirsty gulps of the refreshing water. We carried our cases in and then went to the dining room for a meal.

When the dining facility opened at 6:00 pm I expected a rush of students, but there were no more than ten who showed up. The meal was served buffet style, and the selections were adequate but not abundant. There were canned tins of fish (Mackerel), the making for a salad, bread, and a custard with cinnamon sugar to better it with. All this could be washed down with a variety of fruit drinks. Our schools in America would not serve flesh foods at this time. Who knows what the future holds? The Dean of Women has

been at the school for nine years in that capacity. She was a plain looking woman with a set of two inch long pendulous earrings hanging from her ears. Some of the girls in the dorm also had earrings. The school was founded about 70 years ago and was closed during World War II. There were only about five people present for breakfast the next morning.

I remember when Adventists had a string of Standards a mile long. I have always appreciated them. They set us apart from the World. Now in America we have sanctioned the wearing of wedding bands. Even at Andrews University some of our girls are wearing earrings. What has happened to those standards? Were they really Biblical or just the creation of biased man? If they can be moved around as if they were pawns on a religious game board then they must never have been Biblical or if they are Biblical then our reason for existing as a Church is slipping. How many other things will follow in the erosion of our 'standards'. Once upon a time the Worldwide Church of God regarded the Seventh-day Sabbath as strongly as we do. Today it is no longer important to them. I do speak out against these changes in our standards, but am not overly concerned about them, for I know that God is working in the background and all things will be properly sifted out by Him. I just want to be sure that it is not I who is sifted out from the Remnant.

The buildings seem in good repair. The classes start early in the day. To me college students are getting younger looking every day. I am sure you understand the meaning of that. I see the silly enterprises that the young students engage upon today and seem to forget that I was once as silly, if not more so, than they. Yes, Mr. Burns, we can see ourselves as others see us, but only by looking back across the years. Our prayers are with the Administrators of all of our schools and of the students who attend there. These are sore and trying times and we must not heap additional burdens upon anyone.

We went to the office and paid for our night's lodging and the two meals and drove into Darmstadt. We parked up town near the Ludwig's Tower. Today it is closed to climbing. In fact the entrance into the tower has been sealed with brick and masonry. In 1953 I climbed the tower and looked down on the devastation and spoil caused by our bombers in the Second World War. The buildings as far as the eye could see were rubble. You could see where the block buster hit and true to its name cleaned out the entire block. The tower was so slender that the bombs did not knock it down. The street below the tower was only wide enough for one automobile to go through. Bricks from the fallen buildings had completely shut it off and the people only removed enough for a single car to go through. About half way down the narrow, circular stairs I met a *very* large German girl puffing her way up. I reached around the center where the steps met, drew myself as thin as possible, and she was thus able to squeeze around me. Today Darmstadt is a beautiful, modern city with much of the old gone.

It was raining so we soon returned to the car, after Bob had gone into a bakeshop and bought some of their goodies. In the parking garage we proceeded toward the exit with the car in hopes of finding a place to prepay, but this never happened. I got out with the ticket in hand and followed a sign through a door. I saw no place to pay so I continued

along a hall, and through several more doors. Finally I discovered myself out on the street with the door to retreat firmly locked behind me. There was no sidewalk around the building so I hugged the margin of the street and a block later came to an opening into the garage. I had no idea where the car was at this point so I asked for help. A man walked me through the various garages and levels and at last we came upon the car. He helped me find a place to pay for our parking and we went merrily on our way to Heidelberg.

In Heidelberg we parked at the upper level of the old castle. There is a cable car tram that runs from the old city below up the side of the mountain to the castle, but we were already at the top. In 1953 the tram was a cog-wheel railroad that creaked and groaned its way to the summit, and I had ridden that back then. The Roaches joined a tour group and Audrey and I walked down the 324 steps to the old town. I had seen the castle in 1953 and Audrey went through it in 2001. As we walked along the streets in the city below all of a sudden we saw an oriental couple of middle age coming toward us with their Southern Adventist University sweatshirts on. We stopped and had a long, pleasant chat with them, then we went into a McDonalds and had a milk shake. Audrey took the tram back to the top, but I returned by the way of the 325 stairs. Someone had numbered the steps with white paint all the way down. The Neckar River flows before the castle and on to Mannheim where its waters join in with the Rhine River.

To return to Holzbronn we followed the Neckar River back down through that beautiful valley.

After breakfast the next morning we went down to the village of Gärtringen and parked the car beside the railroad tracks. We bought our rail tickets from an automated vending machine. The train is the 'S1' and it is above ground for about half of the trip to Stuttgart. It then joins into the subway system. After about 25 minutes on the train we got off at the Hauptbahnhof (main train station), and came to the surface on König Strasse. The street is limited to pedestrians and is wide and full of people spending money.

I found me a bench out on the street and sat watching the shoppers come and go while the others of our group went shopping. At last my eye caught a view of the front of the Main Train Station and it brought back a flood of old memories. The year was 1953, a cold, gray, November evening that I was remembering. König Strasse was not the attractive place back then that it is today. There were windows still broken out of the Station from the war and a half dozen men lay wrapped from head to toe in blankets on its freezing front steps. All at once I became aware of a loud, angry voice emanating from the interior of the station. That in itself would not have halted my passage, but the voice was speaking English punctuated at the sentences end, center and other convenient place with vile cursing. I went inside to see what was transpiring. In the center of the station stood a large American Negro soldier in Uniform holding a short German man by the front of the shirt. The curses were accented with a vigorous shake of the poor little fellow from time to time. About 30 poorly clad Germans stood silently around watching and listening. I walked up to the GI and asked, "What seems to be the matter here soldier?"

He said that the blankety blank German had asked him for some money. “So?”, I asked, “Soldier you are a disgrace to that uniform, and you are drunk. Now go there into the restroom, wash your face and return to the Base at once!” He had no idea that I was not an officer out of uniform, so he did as I said. I then turned to the Germans and said, “Its all over. Go home at once.” Being a race who had been taught to obey authority, they immediately dispersed and that was that. Now today I thought for a moment that I could see those old days being relived before my very eyes. The poor White and poor Black citizens who had followed a mule across 40 acres of drudgery day after day in the south, smoked hand rolled cigarettes, wore run-over shoes, tattered overalls, and were on the bottom of the economic scale, and abused by many, were now soldiers of occupation. In those days many Americans were devastatingly poor. But overseas they smoked cigars, rode in Taxi Cabs, and were well fed. Is it any wonder that they felt their comeuppance in this release from crushing poverty. And being so far from home and its mores who was to keep check on them?

Today as I sat there on König Strasse I saw a Black woman come strutting down the street with a strange hairdo, well dressed, head back and shoes that made a distinctive clippity clop. A past middle aged German couple came crossing her track at about a 45 degree angle toward me. They were looking at each other shaking their heads and speaking in a low voice. I was smiling as I watched them, and then they saw me. The man said to me, “Its the new Germany!” I said, “Yes, and with all the red, blue, and green hair.” The woman stopped and came back to me. “Are you a Hollander?”, she asked. “No, American”, I said! She repeated it, “Oh! American.” and they went their way.

About 20% of the people walking along the street wore Denim jeans. Just before we left home for Germany I saw a note on Television where 80% of Denim worn in the world is manufactured by the Mount Vernon Mills, the old Riegal Textile Mills, in Trion, Georgia. Stuttgart is truly and International city. You see people of all nationalities. A man of Greece stopped and spoke with me. I think my face is a magnet that attracts comment. He said that he had lived for ten years here in Stuttgart, and liked it very much. He was of the regular friendly Greek nature.

Erwin Rommel, the Desert Fox, of World War II fame was a highly respected German General. He had a son Manfred. Manfred lives in Stuttgart and was its Mayor for many years. Well when everyone grew weary of shopping we went to the next Subway Station and caught the S-bahn back to Gärtringen and retrieved the car. From there we drove down to Herrenberg and continued the shopping spree.

A Trip To Strasbourg

One morning we left Holzbronn and drove through Wildberg, Nagold, Altensteig, and on to Freudenstadt to the west. We parked in the underground parking area near the post office, and walked over to the city square. We crossed the street by a bronze statute on a tall stone pedestal of a woman in a crouching position with her hand to her brow scanning

the horizon looking for Allied Bombers. The square was once filled with houses and buildings. In the spring of 1945, just a few days before the cessation of hostilities, Allied Bombers came and rained fire and destruction from the skies. A corner of the church was destroyed and an area leveled, an area that today is a playground for children, and rest and relaxation for the adult. Today fountains throw water skyward where once fire rained down from above. The square testifies to the futility of war.

We then drove to Strasbourg, France. Strasbourg was once the German city of Strassberg. The Germans had taken it from France so it was later returned to the true owners. The Rhine River is the border between France and Germany today. Its a new Europe. You cross borders as easily as State borders are crossed in the USA. We crossed the River and drove the lanes unhampered where once the papers of all crossing were checked. We had a large map of the city and found our way to the Cathedral. It is one of the oldest, largest and most beautiful in Europe. Portions of it were destroyed about four times across the last 800 years. Wars have come and gone. Parts have fallen and been replaced so that what one sees today is not all 1000 years old. I am reminded of a story that my good friend, the late George McMillan, once told me. He said that he was once in Illinois in a Barbershop waiting his turn for a hair cut. Finally his eye fell on an axe mounted with a plaque beside it. He went over to read the inscription. It said, "This is Abe Lincoln's axe. It has had three new handles and two new heads!" Many times what we see is only a shadow of the real thing.

Buildings and parking lots chock any hope of getting a full view of the edifice. Its too bad that a few centuries ago the Church did not acquire nine square blocks with the building in the center, and beautiful gardens surrounding it. Then one could get an adequate view of the structure. The tower of the Church is almost as tall as the Washington Monument. Other beautiful churches in Europe are crowded to the exclusion of a proper view. The Cathedral of Cologne is another good example of a city encroaching upon a lovely monument.

Most of the people in the vicinity of the church sitting on the steps, and walking the sidewalks were swarthy complexioned youth under the age of 25 years. The streets were crowded with cars and very narrow. The interior of the Church was dark with candles burning in various areas. Soft organ music scented the air. Light of varying colors streamed through the stained glass windows falling on the masonry walls and furnishings. The floor was lined with chairs for the parishioners. There is a depressing pall over the darken confines of the edifice. It is overwhelming in size and scope, and beauty. Millions of people over the centuries have given of their meager means to build and maintain such a building. We saw the fabulous clock with its planets and weather instruments for which it is famous. On the way home we drove to Baden-Baden and it was there that night caught us.

Out of Calw is the community of Hirsau. It has the ruins of an old Benedictine Closter from about 1000 ad.. The ruins of arches, towers, and walls are spread across acres of land. Audrey collected a couple samples of the red sandstone which the old buildings and walls were built.

A Couple Places Where We Ate

The Krabba Nescht or Crow's Nest is a small eatery located at the edge of the forest in Holzbronn. Audrey and I have walked past it many times, and in jest suggested that we go in and have a bit to eat. We thought that it was probably a rowdy local Public House and that we would be out of place there. Perhaps a place more suited to Audrey's cousin Karl on his nightly rounds of the Pubs. However, on this trip we determined that we would eat there. It is a rustic wooden building with the front entrance shaped like the end of a beer barrel. It is not open on Mondays or Tuesdays so we choose a Thursday night to attend. Inside it hold more people than the exterior would suggest. Actually it can hold up to 250 people. There is an upstairs with open banisters around the sides. The building has a large tree standing in the center and reaching to the ceiling. Hanging from the walls and ceiling are every conceivable kind of antique. That was right down Bob Roaches alley. In one place hanging from the ceiling is an old threshing machine that once belonged to Wilhelm Schumacher's father. Wilhelm was born and raised only a few streets from the Crow's Nest. A Hay wagon tilts from the ceiling in another place. There is an array of smaller farm implements everywhere. Some of them I have never seen before and did not know their use.

I had a plate of fried potato patties with trimmings. A salad and bread and a half liter of Raspberry juice. It was really tame inside, just as you would expect from a restaurant. On Sunday night the Roaches took Wilhelm and Inge back to the Crow's Nest to dinner. Audrey and I went along. The place was packed that night. We found a table for four upstairs and all six of us crowded around it. It is relatively easy to get vegetarian cuisine at any restaurant.

Some of Audrey's cousins run a couple butcher shops in the area. They are disgusting places. When you go into the shop an effluvium attacks your nostrils that is sickening. It even comes out onto the sidewalk to greet you *before* you enter. It attaches itself to your clothing and can be smelled for half an hour after leaving the business. It is not for religious reasons that I no longer eat flesh foods, nor is it a fear of disease, or for animal rights. It is simply that I do not wish to build the tissue of my body from some lower form of life, another species. Neither would I be a cannibal.

I remember when an airplane filled with students fell in the Andes Mountains, killing some of them. After days without rescue the starving, living ate some of the frozen flesh of their compatriots. In the press they were greatly censored for this act. What they were doing was using the flesh of another to extend and support life. That same thing is done every day around the civilized world. We share organs from the dead to extend and support life. I call this "High-Tech Cannibalism". We open our chests and insert another's heart for the very same reason that those poor, destitute students ate their friends. To extend life. I am no organ donor or recipient. I find the swallowing of human protein as natural a way of extending life and is no less desirable to me than the barbaric sawing of one asunder and putting the flesh within. Both are highly repulsive to

me. Does naming it a 'marvel of science' make it more desirable?

Up in the mountains above the Nagold Valley is the little town of Zavelstein. It is about the same size as Holzbronn. It is there that one of Berlin's Krone Lamm's Hotels and Restaurants is located. We have eaten there dozens of time. In fact, it was there that we had our 50th Wedding Anniversary Dinner. It is said that from this lofty perch all of the Gackenheimers once descended. I have asked the family where the Gackenheimers originally came from. I said that one from Wildberg is a Wildberger, and etc. so the Gackenheimers must have come from a community called Gackenheim. Anneliese says that she has searched for such a town without finding it. It is possible that in the mists of time such a village did exist and the name was changed, or the town was obliterated. Germans are excellent cooks. Walter Kennamer, of Tunnel Hill, Georgia is a retired chef. He says that the French excel in breads and the Germans in all other dishes. He has worked with French and German chefs in the past.

In Conclusion

At this writing I was sitting in the Herrenberg Cathedral listening to the strains of the organ as Audrey played "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring" and other familiar tunes. Visitors entered the sanctuary with a whisper and sat listening to the voice of the international language, music.

I did not try to make written note of the German's politics or thoughts on current events. Those things are subject to change, so I shall leave history to sort out the meaning of events that I observe and cannot adequately understand. There is so much to see across Germany that I can only write about a few short days spent in searching these wonders and then only in the southwest quadrant of that country.

The End