

On Byways

A Compilation of
Personal Experiences

[by Johannes Bartsch]

1. The First Attempt

As a young man and assistant at one of the better grocery and drapery (?) businesses in Danzig, I enjoyed very much going to the theater and opera, and when time allowed, I read plays and drama, with special preference for Schiller and Göthe. And so it happened that my interest was diverted from the business toward books. I fully recognized that my place was not in business but my abilities could be better used in the area of books, and I endeavored to find employment as soon as possible in the theater. For this purpose I spent the greater part of my time to learn several roles in plays, as well as to sing. It occurred that while I was in the warehouse and was occupied with declamation or singing scales, someone from the business would catch me unawares.

At first only one of the young people was aware of my future plans, but that could not remain quiet for long. My singing and declamation practices occurred oftener, all the personnel knew of it, nor did I keep it a secret. It was painful for me when several times the manager of the business himself surprised me as I was singing scales and practicing declamation roles. My work at the business was, of course, a full-time job, to put out the wares and bring them to the store, as well as keeping the store in order.

I need not mention that in the last period of time there was some negligence.

I had become acquainted with an old Mr. Schmechel whose son was a stage manager in Königsberg in the Woltersdorfer Theater. The old gentleman was interested in my enthusiasm and wrote to his son asking if he could possibly do something to secure a position as an actor for me.

The answer was, if I wanted to risk it, I should come to Königsberg. There it could become apparent whether I could be hired to fill a vacancy.

I did not hesitate; in spirit I was already living on the stage. I took leave of my business, but at first I did not want to let my family, mother and relatives, know about it. For this reason I left my belongings behind at the place of business, and, accompanied by several acquaintances and well-wishers, drove with a small traveling case to Königsberg. The belongings could be sent to me later at the appropriate time.

The city of Königsberg was strange to me. My pecuniary provisions were meager, so that I had to take modest lodging in case I had to live without an honorarium for a time. I wanted to live within limits in all areas if only I could first reach my goal, that is, employment at the theater. I wanted to learn with doubled enthusiasm; study (as the performers would say) while having to live off bread and water for a time, but – study!

About many a famous performer I had read how the beginning is usually difficult, also coupled with privation, but how perseverance had led to the goal.

In a suburb of Königsberg, in a small house “Zum Ring (?)” with Mr. Hecht, I had moved into a small room. The very same evening I went into the theater to become acquainted, if

possible, with some of the personnel and to have opportunity to meet the stage manager, Mr. Schmechel.

I met Mr. Schmechel the next forenoon at the rehearsal. He knew I had come and remarked, "To become something, you must have a lot of talent; for the stage you have a small figure."

I knew that; I had already been told that earlier; but – talent I had; that I knew, and that I felt. That, I also had been told earlier. And the will to learn from early till late, I had as well. I had to be successful.

At the theater there was no vacancy; however, if my voice was found to be especially good, I was to be placed into the chorus personnel.

We had cool, rainy weather from which I had contracted a head cold and my voice was husky. The sound of my voice did not want to return even though I used a cold water cure, and also ate raw eggs with sugar candies.

The forenoon of the auditions arrived. The hall in which music pieces and opera were practiced was occupied with soloists and choristers of the opera who were trying out. I was overcome with shyness when I was called in to try out. Now I was called to come to the instrument. The music director checked my physique, my face. "Sing ascending; -- now another time, louder! – g – a – b –, descending!" Several of those present cleared their throats, to give me a sign to free up my throat. My voice still didn't satisfy me. Otherwise I sang bright and clear, but now my timidity in front of so many singers made me insecure.

I was excused, but did not receive any information, whether it was good or inadequate. The next day I was to get information from Manager Schmechel.

The time till the next day seemed long to me, living thus between fear and hope. But the day and hour arrived. I went to Mr. Schmechel and received notice that, since personnel was filled, there was no opening for an immediate position.

Mr. Schmechel advised me to try contacting the top stage manager. Maybe he would make an exception.

My heart sank; but I went.

The top stage manager asked about my family, confession, and occupation. "Stay with your golden profession. I am not engaging you."

When I remained persistent, however, and he sensed my determination, he said, "Go into the theater every day for several months, behind the scenes, and if you still want to be employed, come back; then we will see."

For such a situation, my pocketbook was not prepared; and because the top manager dismissed me, I left there dejectedly.

What now? Once more I went to Schmechel to hear his advice. He told me how, when he himself had started his career as an actor, how he had struggled with such difficulties, and how he had left Königsberg and had walked six hours to Kranz in order to seek a position with a little company. He advised me to do the same. He also gave me a letter of reference to the stage manager there in which he stated that if I would be employed, he would like to come there as a guest star during that season.

That breathed renewed hope into me! It wouldn't, of course, have been very romantic to arrive at my goal with so little effort--something that was so important to me.

The next day I walked out of the gate of Königsberg soon after breakfast and came upon the main road to the seaside resort of Kranz.

The skies were dreary; a misty, foggy rain and a cold wind faced me. I was not prepared for a six-hour walking tour to, and who could know whether also possibly back. My head covering consisted of a cylinder hat which, of course, suffered from the rain. I had a summer overcoat with me. I had determined to walk the distance. It was to later pave the way for the difficulties that also the beginning of my performing career had. So I therefore walked on foot to Kranz. My bag I had left in "Ring"; it would be easily forwarded to me.

Halfway to Kranz I turned in at a guesthouse to determine the demands of the next morning and to be able to make the last three hours with renewed strength and energy.

In the afternoon at 3 o'clock I arrived safely. I went to a small guesthouse to take some refreshment and to ask for the residence of the stage manager.

No one could give me any information; but I learned from some persons that the director often took a swim at the seashore or took a walk in the fresh air at this time. So I made my way to the seashore.

The rain had stopped, the wind had quieted down, and the sun was shining down bright and warm. In the swimming area, a band (*or orchestra*) was providing music. The refreshing green of the area, the music, and the bright sunshine refreshed my joints, and I walked up and down along the shore expectantly.

Then I noticed to the side an older man sitting on a rock. I approached him. He noticed me coming toward him and asked if I wanted him. I said that I had a reference from Mr. Schmechel to the theater in Kranz and wanted very much to get the letter to the addressee.

He looked only at the address and said, "The letter is not addressed to me; the X.Z. lives there behind the theater. Besides, I am my own stage manager."

He was the director and this first encounter with the letter—a mistake?—. Yet how should I find X.Z. since he, as the director said, was hardly a stage manager of the group!

I had the sealed letter in my hand again and walked toward the home of the stage manager as I was directed. There I encountered a desolate chaos. The doors were all open, and although the shutters were locked, one could see in the large rooms, devoid of furniture, a deserted confusion. In the middle of the room were pieces of clothing on the floor, in other places an old suitcase, and then kitchen utensils scattered.

The impression was so unpleasant that I would have turned immediately had some hope for a position not held me in place, and had my entering the room not already been noticed.

A tall, middle-aged man with a full beard stepped into the room; two ladies followed him. I recognized them as actors. He was the addressee, was cordial, read the letter, probably felt honored or flattered to be addressed as the stage manager, and promised to bring the matter to the director; he gave me high hopes of soon being counted among the theater personnel.

Although this encounter awakened little confidence, yet I thought, if only a beginning is made, the first position attained, it could be easier to get into a better engagement.

At the conclusion of this introduction, this Mr. Stage Manager wanted to introduce me to the director. For this purpose he directed me into the theater.

The performance was only mediocre. It identified the strolling players in the mosaic of personnel.

The play was over; the auditorium emptied out. I waited for my new benefactor. But he, though he was occupied on the scene, did not want to come. A half hour passed. Neither one or the other appeared, and I learned the personnel had all left. I was left with nothing to do but to return my walk to the director, since the home of the stage manager was locked.

With uneasy feelings I made my way.

The sky was covered with dark clouds, and only now and then did the moon appear. A sharp wind came up, making also the roar of the waves in the sea become stronger.

The home of the director lay before me. Already in the vestibule I heard a scolding voice. As a result, my hopes sank even more, and I knocked almost only out of necessity.

Finally there was a harsh “Come in,” whereupon I entered the room in which the director was agitatedly pacing up and down. I had originally talked to him at the East sea shore. I now approached him about my search for employment, in which I mentioned the reference and Schmechel’s promise for a performance as a visiting star. The letter, of course, was no longer in my hands. “I cannot put too much stock in that; he promised last summer also! Who are you -- from where are you, -- can you prove your identity? You could have escaped from anywhere, and want to position yourself in a favorable manner by giving yourself another name.”

These and other similar statements robbed me of my courage. My blood wanted to surge into my head. I certainly did not look like an escapee. Upon his last words, "I have no opening; good-bye (?)." I was out the door and on the street.

There I stood. My first impressions were anger and disgust over this kind of treatment. Then – my own insignificance became very clear to me.

The wind howled and chased the leaves from the trees. The sea roared. The treetops bent down off and on. The clouds chased one another, and only seldom did the bright rays of the moon break through. All of this – the howling of the wind, the roar of the sea waves, the driving clouds, and the rustle of the trees, was a wild romantic drama. In me there was also turmoil; it was raging within me; it was almost like the night outside. Yet I felt important compared to the people with whom I had been in contact in the last hours.

I leaned against a tree and thought, or did not think.

Some time may have passed in this way – what should I start now? It had gotten late; the wind was cold and went right through my partly damp clothes. I longed for a place of protection from the wind; also for a place where I could quietly rethink my plight.

Without a plan, I walked the length of a street. I had to find night lodging somewhere. My God, help me; I feel so forsaken! -- Sighs of this kind welled forth from my breast repeatedly.

After a while I was standing in front of a type of yard of an inn. It was almost the last one in town. I had feared to enter into a better place. Here there were still loud voices; I went inside.

One large room was furnished with tables and benches. The tobacco smoke dimmed the light of the lamp and the candles. The guests consisted of fishermen and possibly drivers. I sat down at an empty table and ordered something to eat.

"Nothing there anymore," was the answer.

Then, please, a glass of beer. -- This I received and paid for. "Where so late?" they asked me.

"I would like night lodging here."

"We don't have any rooms, and you cannot sleep here!"

From persons sitting farther away, I heard something said about Heuboden.

Only a few people were still in the room. The proprietors started to darken the room and to lock up. Accordingly, for me there was no room in the inn.

When I was out in the open again, I was no better off than before. The cold wind penetrated my clothing again. Then – Heuboden! came to my mind. It would at least be a refuge against the storm and possible rain.

Diagonally across the street stood a type of barn, and up above large hatches were open which appeared to be a hayloft. Also a ladder was leaning against it. With the uncomfortable feeling that I might soon be sent off from here again, I climbed up. I would gladly have given money for this place; I wanted only rest, and protection from the weather! The day had been too full of tiring events.

Nobody came to disturb me. I did not sleep; it was uncomfortable; I was afraid my clothing would be taken away in my fate, and the recent past, my shattered hopes, and now unemployed, the money nearly gone, and then the future.--

Why did I have to get into this situation; weren't my intentions good? Didn't I want to let my light shine? And I had the intention of eventually giving my earnings to really good causes.

With such complaining and displeasure about my fate, the night pretty well passed.

As tired as I had climbed up, I went down again. Since I was quite chilled, I wanted to run myself warm. I had covered quite a distance when the day dawned. My clothes were full of hayseed and wrinkles. I pulled, stretched, and wiped as good as I could. The cyclinder hat would definitely have to be taken to the first hat maker in Königsberg to be pressed. In the town one would have considered me a tramp. It was good that I could change clothes in Königsberg!--

The walking tour took me in the same direction from which I had come yesterday. Gradually the joints limbered up; I arrived at an inn. The sight of it alone already refreshed me. In this guest house I rested, ate a big breakfast, and took new courage again; but continuing to walk did not work. My joints were so painful with every move! So I stayed sitting. For the time being I was content to sit; but I couldn't sit here forever!

From Königsberg to Kranz there was a daily mail route with passenger transportation. I awaited the arrival of this mail wagon from Kranz and then went along to Königsberg.

After a few hours I got off at Königsberg. It seemed like a long time since I had left Königsberg – and yet only a day had passed.

My first walk was to the hatter. That took only a short while, and the cylinder hat shone like new again. But the ride with the post and pressing the cylinder hat had resulted in a new hole in my money bag. Now I had to take those expenses into consideration.

Finally I stood at the guest house, "Zum Ring," with the honest Mr. Hecht. Yes, there I was again, but what did I want here now – I could not stay here for long. Any chance at the theater was over. I needed to have patience and look for a position at hand.

I had sat in my room at Mr. Hecht's for a while. The difficult situation had driven me to prayer. I didn't believe, and didn't even consider, that the way I was taking might not be right before God. If anyone of my acquaintances had advised me against the Theater, I would have believed, "They don't understand this; they have no appreciation for artistry." If I had been advised against becoming an actor, I would have believed they advised anyone against it who they thought could become a success on the stage, and thereby placing them in the shadow.

I was convinced of my ability, and of the eventual achievement of my undertaking. About God I had only a vague idea, but felt myself at times, as also now in my need, driven to prayer. How deep my prayer life was, whether my prayers reached the throne of God to His Father-heart, I cannot say; an assured, redeemed child of God, I was not.

For the present I wanted to take a position in business again; even with little pay. It would be only for a short while till I finally had a position in the theater.

After I had refreshed myself by cleaning up bodily and putting on fresh clothes, I hired the laundry lady, and till the things were back, I made use of the time by seeking a position through an employment office. Of course, a sales clerk position is not so easy to secure, especially when there are no references as presently in my case. So my efforts were also in vain. There was one more opportunity left.

After I had settled my accounts, I was ready for the trip back to Danzig. There I hoped, even if the good jobs were all taken, maybe with a reference from my previous boss, I could get a position again.

Concerned about the future, I drove back. When I saw others eating, I would try to sleep, in order to stretch the money further. I did not like to think of meeting up with my acquaintances who had wished me well for my first appearance, and from whom I had already bade farewell as an actor in spirit. This humiliation was difficult to ease, yet there was no other way but to go back to Danzig. I could not and did not want to go home. They would not have approved of my activities, nor would they have understood them.

Danzig was coming closer all the time. My uneasiness became ever greater. In Dirschau, a juncture of my home place where the train had a long stop, I went to out-of-the-way places to avoid people.

On the trip from Dirschau to Danzig everything went well. One more station, and the destination was reached again. If only the trip had taken longer, much longer. Was there no possible way of evading the somewhat recent failure awaiting me? Time did not stop; the minutes on the clock went backward, and the train hurried forward. A long whistle, and we drove past the familiar parts of the city.

Too soon I found myself at the train station of Danzig.

My way led me through a part of the city in which I hoped to meet few acquaintances. After walking across the long bridge, I came upon the fish market. Here was a business where we had delivered wares at times. I was therefore acquainted with the proprietor, Mr. Zilz.

Mr. Zilz had no knowledge of my future in acting; probably didn't know yet that I had left the dealership. With him one could easily discuss a matter.

Mr. Zilz was ailing. He was maybe looking for help, probably not permanently, but for the present, a dependable assistant! He asked if there was someone to recommend. I was embarrassed about giving him an answer. I could not get myself to say anything! "Perhaps—perhaps Mr. Tetzlaff could recommend a young man." I mentioned the name; I named my name.

Before the trip to Königsberg, I would hardly have accepted this position, -- Now it was like a glance from above, an answer to my heart's cry in the last days.

Mr. Zilz wanted to talk with Mr. Tetzlaff. In a week I was to report. During this time I wanted to go home and reflect on the experiences of the recent past. Probably also meditate on plans for the future.

I wrote a few lines to Mr. Tetzlaff. I mentioned my lack of results in Königsberg, and expressed my urgent plea, that, when requested, he would not refuse a reference.

That in this writing there were specific unrequested assertions, and that those in my case knowingly included some untruths, I have to sadly admit. With fear I grasped for the position! But only again to more carefully pursue my ideal to attain the goal.

At home they were quite happy about my visit. It was difficult to bring up that I had changed my job from a "first business" to the fish market. That was another known untruth, which had to bridge "from – to"; it did make some difference to me, but – discretion demanded it. White lies – it is said – are allowed, and I did my best to talk my conscience into being quiet this time. When we would once reach our goal, when I would finally breathe air in the performance world, then all lying, even for necessities, would cease. Whether that stilled my conscience or not, I don't know anymore.

A week passes quickly. When this week of vacation came to an end, I stood, as an assistant, behind the counter of the Zilzen shop at the fish market in Danzig in an old familiar business.

2. The Theater

It was fall; the first snow partially covered the level ground. I leaned in one corner of the mail coach and wrapped myself in my warm winter cloak. As the only passenger, I noticed the cold more; and the trip became more boring. Finally towers appeared in the distance, and I recognized my destination was nearing. The destination, Graudenz, always came closer. Only a short while, and the mail coach stopped on the yard of the postal station building of the city of Graudenz.

I got out of the wagon and went into the station building to get a bite to eat, rearrange my belongings, and then place my contract of credentials (*or proof of identity*) into my pocket, and then start on my way to the director's home.

The home of the director was near by; he himself was home. He was friendly upon my introduction, but only in a business-like manner. From our correspondence he knew that I was new to the stage. "You can participate in a group scene this evening; you will not have a speaking part." Those were my instructions.

In the anteroom a young girl was busily occupied; when I walked out, she followed me into the lobby and addressed me. She had heard that I was a Mennonite and came into the theater for the first time. She was also a Mennonite. Her name was _____. She was also engaged as an actor; yet the director was mostly keeping her occupied in the business. She had no acquaintances here, and felt the need at times to air her heart, and begged me not to abuse her trust.

I felt sorry for the girl in her position; she was being used as a broom, although in character she might be the best of the women personnel. As often as possible, we got together. She was seldom used for performances since they deprived her of her talent. To meet the daughter of a Mennonite family among the theater personnel seemed amazing to me. Some, unusual family situations must exist there. I did not know any particulars, but hoped to learn more in time.

Her engagement did not last long; suddenly she was gone.

Earlier she had told me she had been disappointed; she had hoped to do something on the stage. She would rather earn her support from hand work. She wanted to get away at the first opportunity. Parents and relatives were well to do, but she did not want to go home. Later she met up with a non-commissioned officer and married him. I have withheld her name because there are still living relatives.

After the first conversation with the young acquaintance _____ I went back to the post office to change clothes for the performance in the evening.

I was therefore a newly engaged member, an actor. As such, I entered the theater for the first time today, the area behind the scenes.

How did I manage this? The time of my employment with the Zilzen business could really just be called an introduction to theatrical circumstances. Soon I had succeeded in making acquaintances in the city theater and through these I was advised how one could best get an engagement. The matter was finally almost simpler than I had desired, and thereby had almost lost some of its appeal.

In the theater, on the stage after the performance, I was questioned by several curious people--where did I come from, whether I had been in engagement before, etc. Also ladies came to see the new person and question him.

The entire personnel, especially on the smaller stages, almost formed a family. Through performing together daily in the rehearsals one is dependent on another; and because there is not much communication with the outside world, so even during free time one converses with another.

The performance had begun. The inspector has the responsibility of giving orders backstage to all the engaged five minutes before the beginning of the scene so that at the drop of a cue he goes out at the right place.

During the scenes when I was offstage, at the beginning of a new act, we could sit and carry on a quiet conversation. That was a terribly simple matter; that, everyone could do. But how did I feel when the curtain was raised! The audience below and above in the galleries appeared to me like a black mass; the lamps on the front of the stage were like streaks of light, my tongue failed to give me service, and chills went through my body. That was the stagefright of which I had often heard, but from which, in my aptitude for the theater, I had hoped and believed I would be spared. Now it did not have great significance; I had speechless roles, and was laughed at by some, and was characterized as a novice.

It soon changed though. In time I was able to distinguish between human heads and forms, lights and other objects. After this scene I was free for the evening.

The next morning at 9 o'clock choir rehearsal was scheduled. I was to appear for all rehearsals.

After the performance I went to my living quarters. The first performance on the stage had been different than I had hoped. I was happy now to have ended up without a role. I thought more seriously about the beginning. Today my good intentions would not have been good enough. I consoled myself that nearly every beginner has to go through this illness and wanted to arm myself later with courage, etc.

In the transition from business to the theater, I believed I had good intentions, except that I was crazy about performing and music. Pecuniary-wise, our family had suffered some early losses. Through the early death of father, the breadwinner was cut off, and the meager remains of the legacy did not stretch far enough to support mother and children.

Through industriousness in the theater I hoped to be a means of benefiting our family from the earnings, which was hardly possible with the 80-100 Rx wages in the business.

Early in the morning after the first appearance on stage, I went out to look for living quarters. Everyone who passed me, or looked back at me, must have noticed that I was an actor, or possibly a performer.

I wanted to be something! I perceived myself as such! My bearing and gait were changed accordingly. Too bad that I could not increase my height by an ell, even though I tried! A handbreadth may have done it. What would I have given to be a handbreadth taller! I had tried to help along. The heels on the shoes were high enough. I had put little wedges in the heelplate. Barefooted I had to stand on tiptoes to reach this height. But I could not even accomplish a handbreadth despite my worries.

My walk in the early morning, therefore, concerned finding a permanent home. This was, if possible, to be cheap since the monthly salary was low. I had demanded less than was determined by contract. Instead of Rx 20, I had only requested 16Rx per month; I was expecting a promotion, of course.

On the first evening I made the acquaintance of another new actor, "Lehmann." I met him on my "search." He offered me to move into a room with him which would make the rent cheaper. The room was spacious enough for two. We agreed.

Lehmann did not show any particular enthusiasm for studying. The director even made the comment once, "When I see you, then I am angry!" That remained a caption for Lehmann. Since living together hindered my practicing and my learning, I did not again move in with anyone later.

The chorus rehearsals were from 9-12 o'clock. Chorus pieces out of song sheets, burlesques, and comedies were practiced. My voice was good. I sang second tenor as well as first tenor as the need required.

Already the first day a role was given to me for the next performance. I took it very seriously. I thought about the stage-fright. I believed my theater "to be or not to be" was dependent upon my initial performance, and aside of that, it required all my willpower to advance. Lehmann hindered my studying. He had all kinds of diversions and communication.

The evening for my role arrived. On the evenings in between I had been on the stage for the chorus numbers. The last ensemble practice gave me insight into the play. I was an old bookkeeper of a business. The theater hairdresser had prepared my mask; I was new and did not understand how to go about with cosmetics and powder.

In every dressing room one or several hairdressers are busy. Every actor is assigned a place in one of the dressing rooms that he keeps for the season. Every actor has extra belongings exclusively for the theater: A society and black suit with coattails; then for rococo-style pieces: tricot, collar, plumes, black and colored stockings, shoes as well as the cosmetics, powder, and cocoa butter. The latter to get rid of the cosmetics after use.

It is a rule, that none of the performers are allowed on the stage without cosmetics. To violate may be punishable by withholding a month's wages or dismissal.

The "old bookkeeper" was prepared. A gray wig and gray sideburns completed the old man's attire. The only thing still required was a good performance of the role.

I was upstairs ahead of time, got information from the inspector and waited in place for the final cue. I felt so terrible again! I counted my heartbeats; my body seemed to go weak, as if that head full of information wanted to turn in circles!--that stage fright again!--then I get a nudge, come to my senses, and then hear in clear words my cue.--

The doors open, I stand on the scene, but cannot recall the beginning of my role. There—O great arrangement, help in a thousand needs for the performer! The prompter calls the first sentence from his cage once, twice. I got the words out; whether aloud, or whether

appropriately behind my make-up, I do not know, but the development of the role had little striking influence upon either the audience, or upon the participants in the scene.

The contents of my role were approximately as follows: A warning to the manager of the business, since the die is cast, and larger payments as a result of the expected bankruptcy were not received, the manager was to be warned to stay away from speculating since Renouie (*renovation*) and the existence of the business were at stake. (*This paragraph possibly not translated correctly.*)

I was finished with my role and again free for the evening. How I had performed, I could not ascertain; I was neither reproved, nor praised. Only I know best how I felt, and that, without the prompter, it would have been difficult to hear anything from me. I was not satisfied. How often I had spoken the comedy to myself; how good it had turned out at rehearsal. Now it seemed as if I had bumped my head (?).

The next day a telegram arrived, I feared from relatives, or from the tutor, since I did not presume a recall from the theater as an impossibility. It had to be read, nevertheless.

“Heartfelt congratulations upon your first performance. Signed, The Salesman of the Danzig Business.”

O, sweet dispatch. It almost seemed like irony to me as I read it, and yet it was meant sincerely. My appearance had not exactly deserved congratulations. In my own eyes, I had become smaller. Till I would be an artiste, I still had some steps to climb! Yet I was happy at heart that old acquaintances were thinking of me!

The group stayed in Graudenz about one month; then attendance decreased, and they ordered: “Move on to Möwe.”

In only a few days the positively last performance was given. The people of Graudenz did their best since the comedy was also a good selection. Already the same night some were sent by mail coach, others left on rented wagons. The things followed later.

In Möwe there were enough living quarters available from which to choose and to put up the performers. On the day after our arrival, the first performance was presented. In the first week the tickets were regularly sold out and they had to find additional reserved places.

I had pretty well become accustomed to the smaller roles, but I enjoyed singing in the chorus more. I allowed myself to be used in both tenor voices as needed.

So several weeks had passed again; then several actors became upset with the director and walked off.

After this, attendance seemed to have been cut off. It was said wages would be lowered or not paid at all. A few actors vanished. Lehmann received a dismissal. The director was outwardly disgruntled. For two days the performances were canceled completely. The group was talked about in public. The landlords wanted the rent paid in advance.

I had become uneasy, too. I wrote to the Bromberger Theater about engagement, and at the same time, upon advice of a few actors, wrote to the theater agent Block in Berlin.

A few days passed, then a letter arrived from Bromberg. Although their budget was already filled, the director, upon my writing, wanted to make an exception and engage me. Then a letter also arrived from Berlin from Block, with completed contract to Elbing as opera chorus tenor and suitable roles as an actor.

What was I to do now? *Wer die Wahl hat, hat die Qual!* (*This is a little German rhyme meaning he who has a decision to make has torture with it.*) I had written to both places. I felt I should accept the Bromberg proposal. The actors stated again, one should not make an enemy of an agent. One needed him twice a year. I wrote--with a sense of doing the wrong thing--and canceled Bromberg, and sent the signed contract back to Berlin. Lehmann had to wait, but now also received a contract to Elbing. My release was agreed to after a salary reduction, and so we left, Lehmann and I together, for Elbing.

Lehmann's money hardly took him to Elbing; he asked for a little loan from me; also he told me he had completely forgotten to pay the wash lady the final amount in Möwe. This "forgetting" seemed to me to have two meanings.

It was a bright, sunny December day when we arrived in Elbing. The warm rays of the sun made the snow and also the sledge-run watery. We perspired, and were both tired from being loaded down with luggage and bags on the way from the train station to the city.

First we put down our belongings in a little guest house, rested, drank coffee and went to the post office. Here a letter awaited me from Bromberg from the theater director. I was thoroughly put down and was denied any further help or engagement with the theater.--

I had deserved this lesson. I went and stood like a poor sinner; Lehmann said I was walking like a soaked poodle. The matter was our fault; but I could not find happiness. Lehmann suggested I was an old wife.

We first went to look for living quarters. The first one was to be Lehmann's since he was unfamiliar in Elbing. I had worked here as an apprentice in a business earlier.

Lehmann got a nice room with good people; it seemed to me they would rather have had me than my colleague.

Afterwards I secured lodging for myself, and acquired one very near to the theater with a tinsmith. Here there was good house mouse eating (*lit.*) throughout the whole season. I was told later, I had fattened myself up well there.

For one month I paid rent in advance. This is not usually custom among actors. The landlord told me, usually more is charged to actors for board and room since generally a part of the money is lost in the end. We always remained on friendly terms; not seldom I had to go with the landlord for a glass of beer.

Now, after I had my living quarters and belongings in order, my first walk was to the director. I was immediately considered for a role. I met Lehmann the next day at the rehearsal in the theater. Rehearsal, performances, and learning roles took their usual effort (?). There was more thorough practice, also there was a complete opera caste. I now had the learning of opera choruses before me.

In my first role here, I appeared as a cattle-dealer from upper Austria. More could have been made also of this role. Regarding my talent I always received lower opinions. The way to becoming a star performer seemed more steep and difficult. Reality was far different from the ideal.

The director was apparently partial to opera, or the operas were better attended. He presented only operas. My contract read: 2nd chorus tenor and suitable roles in acting. But since a first tenor was missing, I was used exclusively as first tenor. That was fine with me, but for my voice the high parts were detrimental for the future. During my engagement there I was involved in 15 large opera choruses, besides in a number of music pieces.

I seldom got together with Lehmann since arriving in Elbing, except in the theater. Once he needed money. I wanted the old debt paid first, and suggested he take an advance from the director.

A few days later a young man came to me asking for Lehmann. From those living in Lehmann's house I learned he had left late in the evening, and he failed to appear for breakfast. After his room was opened, we found his bed and furniture, as well as Lehmann's disarray of things left behind.

Instead of paying for the room, Lehmann had asked for a loan from the landlord, taken one-half month's advance pay from the director, owed the laundry lady a dollar of pay for mending a pair of torn stockings, and owed me the rest of the trip from Möwe. Therefore, burned out. Lehmann's absence was not lamented, but undoubtedly these people mourned their missing dollars that had gone along.

One day as we were busy in the theater with rehearsals I was called to come forward. A lady was there who wanted urgently to speak to me. My first thought was, relatives. Why else would any lady be concerned about me?

As I was coming on stage, a young girl ran toward me. After a brief "Good day" she explained I had to immediately help her with a collection. She was on a trip to Königsberg and without money. She had lived in the guesthouse "zum Engel" over a day, and now they would not let her out of her room until she had paid.

It was an actor from the group from Möwe. There she had a relationship with an actor. This had broken up, and she had up and left and now wanted to get to her relatives, who also belonged to the theater, at Königsberg.

This is typical of actors. A broad conscience, narrow pockets without money, and without – concerns.

This experience was painful to me. I had been together with Lehmann; he had burned out. Now this one comes from the same group and wants to collect. But there was nothing else to do. After the end of the rehearsal, we went to the stage manager and from there to the director. The collection was agreed upon.

In such instances, every member pays according to his ability, since no one knows in what situation one might find oneself. There are people who know how to make a business in this manner.

In the evening of the same day this girl came again and requested that I come into the guesthouse to her room for the night. She was afraid to stay alone since she had been repeatedly bothered (*or molested?*) by the landlord.

What was there to do?--

I discussed the matter with an acquaintance. We both went along to her room.

For a while we sat there. She was doing handwork; we read. Then there was a knock at the door, and without waiting for a "come in," the landlord stepped in, obviously surprised to find two persons in the room.

We asked what he wanted. Coldly, the landlord said, he expected to meet the lady here alone, and looking at us slyly, commented that we were certainly close relatives of this lady. "Not relatives, but here to protect her from unwelcome guests or impositions." The landlord: "If you are so intimate, I can probably also take payment from you for lodging and board."

Since the collection was to be paid out tomorrow, and we carried our currency (?) in our pocket, we could well lay out the money till tomorrow.

"How much do you have coming?" The landlord went down and came back with a hand-written bill. We paid the amount. My colleague added that the landlord should read the next issue of the Elbing paper regarding what rest and protection a young, traveling, single girl could expect in his guesthouse. The landlord suggested the lady had given approval for his coming. He would know how to justify himself.

Our little charge complained and cried. The landlord had included breakfast for the next day on the bill and received payment. We comforted our little charge, and since she had nothing further to fear, we went home.

The next day she received the collection, also left happily, but had forgotten to repay the money we paid out in the guesthouse. A note with heartfelt words of thanks for the help and protection was my reward. The note was too valuable to place in my pocket, so I let it slip through my hands.

I had a similar experience with another coworker who borrowed handkerchieves from me, but which she never seemed to get back from the laundry woman, until one day the lady and handkerchieves had taken off.

During the short theatrical time span, I had been behind the scenes long enough to witness many an act. Love scenes alternated with abusive language, and actions were carried out in the dressing rooms or in the shadows backstage. As the result of acting out plays together and the semi-familiarity of being together, some of the ladies loved to address actors with “du.” Of course, not everyone responds to that “du.” (*The German language uses the word “sie” to address someone more formally, and uses “du” to address someone in more familiar terms. Both are forms of our English “you.”*)

My contract extended till Palm Sunday. On this day, the winter season in all theaters comes to a close. For new engagements for the summer theaters, one has to start being concerned in good time.

Through the agent Block I had received a contract to Dresden to the second theater. This left me about two weeks of free time. During this time I was home with Mother and siblings. It was energizing to get out of the loud bustle into the quiet. The time passed almost too quickly. Was I a full-fledged actor? Had I reached my sought-after ideal?

In the belief that the smaller roles were somewhat futile, and to break out of the minor character roles and to improve my way into better, possibly first, roles, in that respect I was a real actor. The ideal likely had a connection with the performers. However, I hoped to remain free of the intrigue and the immorality of many of the actors. I saw the ideal only in the skill. The enthusiasm that had inspired me at the beginning had let up; the goal had moved further away, especially since my short stature was a hindrance in many roles; also a certain happy-go-lucky attitude, which is second nature for many actors, turned me off. My getting ahead was made more difficult because of my stature as well as the character.

Vacation time was over. Becoming acquainted with a new locality, new surroundings, and the feeling of confidence in my voice in the opera choruses and other pieces, drove away many an unpleasantness of the stage. So I left home without concern, with self-confidence, toward my new goal.

In Berlin I had to go to the agent to be accepted on the list of actors who were placed through him. There I had occasion to become acquainted with a small part of the capital city. I stayed there one day; then I was on my way to Dresden.

The 5th of April, 1870, the train which had brought me, stopped at the station in Dresden, Neustadt. The summer theater was in the Altstadt (*New part vs. old part.*), behind the zoological garden; and so, a long distance. The actor in this theater, therefore, had to take lodging in the old town. I left my belongings at the train station, and with umbrella and hat-box, I headed with a light step toward Altstadt, first to find lodging, and then return for the belongings.

Ahead of me walked a little man, loaded with travel bag, suitcase, and other bags. He would sometimes look right, left, or also behind him, and gave the impression he was looking for a servant or a porter. I had soon overtaken him and was just going to pass him--

(The little man addresses him in a dialect that I cannot interpret accurately but it runs something like this:)

“Hey, my Rutsler, Mr. S’, allow me...whew!...I am nearly running out of breath. Would you take this pack from me, my Rutsler? – No offense!”

The good Saxon could have hired someone at the train station to carry for him. I could have done the same. But money was too precious to me! -- I suppose for the old man, too. So I took the pack, and we headed toward Altstadt. The old man told how the Prussians are so hostile to the Saxons. I was probably an exception, because I was “n guter Mensch” (*a good person*).

Upon his asking, I told the old man the purpose for my coming here. As we continued our conversation, we came upon and over the Elbe bridge. The old man showed me the way to the “English section,” thanked me and went on his way again loaded down with his baggage.

The way to the English section was still quite far. Finally it was reached. I looked at every house for a posted notice that there might be a room for rent. Also found more than I needed, but also more expensive ones than I could afford. I was directed to the 4th or 5th level. Tired of searching, also for the sake of time, I took a little room up four flights of stairs for 6 Rx per month, hoping soon to be able to find a cheaper, more fitting home. Now I made my way back to the train station to get my belongings.

It was late afternoon, and I was tired, when I arrived at my new home again.

Stretched out on my bed, I waited till evening. Then I went out to look for food in the surrounding area. In a nearby victual shop were cheap Bohemian beer, bread and butter, cheese, milk, coffee, sausage, eggs, matches, and other things. I was immediately well-acquainted with the good-natured business lady, despite this first encounter. We long remained well-acquainted, at least as long as I was a daily guest. She could become quite angry if I went somewhere else.

After I had satisfied my hunger sufficiently in Dresden for 2 ½ Neugroschen, I went back to my new home again, four flights of stairs, No. 2 to the left. It was so high and couldn’t really make me feel at home. But, I went to bed and slept through my discontent.

The next day my first walk was to the director. There I was informed about the beginning of the rehearsals and performances. There was enough time left to get orientated in Dresden Altstadt. Dresden is a nice city. There would be much to tell—about the shores of the Elbe, the Brühlschen Terrace, the Zwinger, the palace church, galleries, museums, the large Royal Garden, and many other places. But this would only be a digression from the subject matter, and the many descriptions are much better and have much more to say than are at my disposal.

The second theater is laid out nicely, between the large Royal Garden, not far from the Zoological Garden. A large, gorgeous rose garden belongs to it. If I am not mistaken, the theater was Director Neffmiller’s property.

The attendance at the performances was small at first. Only on Sundays there were more people. Then there were also two performances, in the afternoon and one in the evening.

The productions were only operettas and comedies. These would be repeated ten or more times. Performances that were used especially to draw crowds were, "Parisian Life, Beautiful Helena, and Beautiful Galathe." The latter pieces could be called indecent, are not given at renowned theaters, and not attended by the better audiences.

Immediately at the beginning there was a change of personnel so that I did not learn to know all of the members. There were usually rehearsals only once a day since the pieces were mostly short and repeated so often. Accordingly, no real interplay could be achieved. Since only operettas and comedies were presented, only one stage manager was necessary. This one was a Jew and intolerable to most of the group.

Due to the poor attendance, the second half of the month's wages was canceled. The result was that several actors stayed away. The loss of half a month's wages was also hard on me, of course. I always had money on hand since I lived frugally. Also by writing roles and other work, I often had some extra earnings; yet the stay at home, the trip to Dresden, and the rent had pretty well emptied my pockets. Now I was losing half a month's income, 11 rx. Yet there was more change to come.

At this theater things were always jolly. During the rehearsal on the stage there was eating, drinking, and also drunkenness. The result was quarreling and abusive words that ran their course without restraint. No wonder that the better ones withdrew. I was too new, without connections with other theaters; I stayed in the background and kept quiet.

To the first comedian and stage manager, I was not well-liked. He could not get through to me, and even more in the play. At first I accepted his scolding or criticism as a learning experience and practiced performing according to his rules. But when bad jokes on his part followed, it ruined everything for me. I was partly angry, partly discouraged. My roles did not go smoothly on the stage. When wages were paid once again, I received a dismissal along with several others. Upon our request for a reason, we were told, "It was determined by the director."

The dismissal did not give me much concern; I had seen in advance that it would not always be good here; also I had some companions in misfortune. The association with these colleagues had somewhat disgusted me; there were more things going on behind the scenes here, as well as openly, than in other groups with whom I was acquainted.

Order and punctuality were adequately included in the paragraphs of the contract, but in actuality and during the rehearsals, they were overlooked. Respectability during the performances was often lacking, before and after the comedy, and also even more during the rehearsals.

My position here had lasted one-and-one-half months. I had not added to my learning. I had received deeper insight into the moral decay evident among the actors of the smaller theaters. The play continued for a short while, then the comedy at the 2nd theater came to an end. Since getting a position in the middle of summer was uncertain, I did not have to rush to get any letters written.

3. Only Change Remains

So I am an actor in Dresden and --- caromisiere (*play caroms ?*). My means allowed me, not to take lodging in a hotel or in a villa, but to be on my way to seek lodging elsewhere. The thought came to me: I probably will soon reach the peak of my endeavors; that is, being an artiste could no longer be far away. For the time being it was probably artistry to be able to make my way in Dresden all summer long. For the moment, I did not even like to think about the theater.

Recently I heard it said, "Artistry brings goodwill; -- artistry goes after bread; -- artistry goes begging." Everything has already been, it is said. I had not reached artistry yet.

So I went to look for a place to live, but the place had to be cheap. I had to live frugally with lodging and food; for this reason I could no longer go to the Victuals Shop to drink coffee and eat bread and butter and cheese for 2 ½ Rx. Also for this reason I was no longer a good acquaintance of the good-natured sales lady. I had bought a spirit-cooker; and if I was drinking coffee at home and eating bread and butter and goat cheese, the entire meal cost exactly 12 Pfg., that is, barely half as much as at the nice lady.

My plan for the summer was soon made. In Dresden I hoped to make a living with Korkbilderarbeit (*cork picture work ?*) I had already made some samples during my time at the theater. I had already produced two cork landscapes and turned them into cash for about 15 rx each.

I had finally found a home for 3 Rx per month. I went to the community kitchen to eat the noon meal or went to get it for 10 rz. I made coffee in the morning and before evening on my spirit cooker. In this manner, I believed I had scrupulously limited myself since the cheese and also butter were often missing, and appeared only in the evenings. Yet the monthly expenses including rent remained at 10 Rz. -- The walk to the food kitchen was difficult for me at first. Several times I went up and back without eating there. But time and circumstances change many things. So I got used to the food kitchen, although only people of low class ate there; besides, I was unknown in the big city.

My cork picture work had made a start. I had acquired cork, cardboard, and tools. Delight and love for something make effort and work trifling. In a short time I had a picture ready. I was pleased how it turned out. Now, to sell it. That seemed to be complicated. In crafts and other businesses, they wanted to buy on commission because it was difficult to determine a value. But I needed money, and had to sell it for cold cash. I should go peddle door to door! That was a difficult assignment; but I had to bite into that sour apple.

In a hotel it found a place in the guest room, and for a long time it was readily visible from the street.

For a second picture I was given order for a garden refreshment room, a little forest castle, to be completed in rololithography according to specifications. It turned out to be only a small picture, but the work turned out well and brought a good price.

I also sold a pair of other pictures but for cheaper prices.

Now I had money; I bought gifts for home so they would not be allowed to think I was not doing well, and paid rent in advance.

After the mentioned sales came a time of “low tide.” Weeks went by, and I could not sell a single picture. This gave reason to think about the future.

I did not yet have courage to write to the theater agent. I doubted my advancement especially since the agents only secured employment for average theaters. I had tried on three stages; my experiences had not improved with time. The performers appeared to me to have sunk from what I believed was a height to below the normal (?). There was still time until fall to look for a permanent position at a larger theater. Now we were still living in July. More serious thoughts went through my mind at times, and though I tried to evade such, these thoughts came up again and again: “Was the change right” – “Why did I have to use force to get into the theater” – “Why had I already been made aware of behind-the-scenes by the top stage manager in Königsberg,” and how had reality confirmed many of the predictions!

My conscience accused me, and though I brought up excuses and justification of many kinds, the voice of conscience did not cease to accuse me. I was not aware of being a child of God. Neither was I ungodly, or careless about Godly things. I was -- as many people simply were and still are.

The monotony of daily sales from behind the counter had not satisfied me; I wanted spiritual (*or mental*) activity.

In the theater in the classical dramas the nobility and the depths of the human spirit were revealed, a knowledge of human nature, depths of thought which I could not have found elsewhere. I felt a propensity for artistry, a longing to live the ideal which was in artistry.

I was aware how Schiller was celebrated, what interest people of high rank had for talented singers. I knew that exceptional talents are required of court actors and chamber singers; and how the Duke of Meiningen sacrificed large sums for the theater and the performers, and Duke Ernst von Coburg himself directed the stage performance and participated in a play. I was familiar from writings with persons who started as insignificant walk-ons but who, after years, were celebrated as stars in the homeland and abroad. Both men and women artistes were held high and were grandly honored and rewarded.

Was it any wonder that I was wild about performing; that I saw it as a mistake that I found myself behind the sales table while my head was full of roles and music?

It was no wonder and only logical.

Man has a right, and should strive higher, as daily work and earning a livelihood bids him to do.

But where was I seeking the highest gratification, and where can the highest pleasure be found?

I knew: God is the Creator and the Sustainer of heaven and earth; we are to fear Him, love and trust Him. We are also, in all situations, to pray to Him and thank Him. This and more I had learned in school in the religion class. Learned, but that was all.---

Another time had come, time for baptism. I had little time on my hands. At the time I was an apprentice in business; yet while learning the Catechism I had serious, religious impulses. During the time of baptism and later, I was not careless about spiritual things, felt myself blessed by God's nearness in many a lonesome moment, my belonging to God; -- but -- these impressions were gradually wiped away in the business activities. The Godhead remained intact; my relationship with God unraveled in time; I thus distanced myself from God, and that is how it had remained until—

Again another time had come. My spirit aspired higher. The business courtesy, "What do you wish,"—"What do you request"—"How can I help you"—"How can I wait on you", etc., etc., was too mechanical for me. Some, maybe many, lies in the business, allowed me to easily recognize the imperfections.

I recognized singing, music and performing as God's gift loaned to man. Since I had no relationship with the Giver, stood at a distance from Him, I grasped the gifts in place of the Giver; the carnal rather than the spiritual. Since the true, ideal God cannot be found in the carnal, and I was bound in my attempt to grasp the carnal, I could not get nearer the true goal which the heavenly calling holds out to man. Neither could I recognize it in the carnal. A ceiling separated me from the same. I could only discern that true artistry lay to some extent in immoral/indecent society. Therefore, I agreed with myself not to accept another position in the seasonal theater. I wanted to take one more run at the court theater in Dresden.

I was simply captured or biased by the carnal; I had grasped the gift instead of the Giver. If, when I left the business, instead of going to the theater, I had gone into the house of God, instead of drama and the classics had read writings that would develop Christianity, then the tendency would have taken a better, a higher, another supernatural, spiritual direction. And God, the Giver of all good gifts, who knew my inclination, would have opened the door to a way upon which even the foolish do not err, that would have led directly to the goal. It would not have been necessary to use force to fight my way through intrigue and opposition whereby body and soul were on the verge of being lost! Praise God, it did not come to the latter. When the need was there, His mercy came to help, so that even in the night His countenance shone upon me.

Now I was on my own way, and was continuing on my own way.

I began worrying about the immediate future; how will this develop; -- is my course a wrong one? -- first business, now theater. Have I had to choose too early to find a suitable direction to take?

From my first teacher in early youth, I had received a New Testament as a keepsake. Up until now this book, together with my hymnbook, had been my constant traveling companions, even though for long periods of time they lay ignored in my suitcase.

To call up past memories, I had sometimes brought them to light, paged through them, observed the inscription in the front: “My dear....in friendly remembrance, from his teacher F. Seidler, A.D. 1855.” That aroused thoughts of my childhood, and my heart was warmed.

I wanted to awaken memories of childhood now; for this, I had to take the Testament out of the suitcase; also the hymnbook appeared with it. Both books, Testament and hymnbook, I now took in hand more often. I did not read the Testament for edification or to strengthen my faith. I believed there to be some secret – to uncover some rock of wisdom. So I paged through what to me, were unfamiliar books such as the Revelation of St. John.

Primarily I busied myself, though, with my cork pictures; I went out, but always came back without results.

My situation brought me upon other endeavors. Would it work to make money by writing -- ? I started to write a little drama; laid the writing aside, took it to hand again, crossed out, and wrote anew.

Regarding rent payment, I had carried a piece of clothing, the frock, to the pawnshop. I did not bring it back again. Two cork pictures went the same way, for which there was no hope of selling them. In the pawnshop only a part of the real value was paid out. For this reason I did not get much more than the original outlay.

Now there was peace again; I wrote. In between, other thoughts would come to mind, so that my peace was without peace. I did not let the cork work lie; I practiced making relief pictures out of cork. One picture was finished, but was left lying. I was obviously not having any luck.

Once when I went out, I noticed how soldiers sold their bread cheaply to private individuals. I also bought a bread for 2 ½ Ngr. This lasted one week for me. Since then I had a cheap source of bread.

Since coffee also became too expensive for my situation, I cooked “bread soup” morning and evening. This is quite a good dish if it is not enjoyed too often. The preparation is simple. The recipe follows: “Take the amount of water desired; bring to a boil; add the desired amount of bread broken into small pieces; soldier bread is cheaper; bring to a boil until the water is of the right consistency; add salt to taste; eat – as you like, hot or cold, with or without a spoon.”

Now I sometimes skipped the meal in the community kitchen as well. My stomach got used to two meals of bread soup. It worked quite well. Since I often did not have peace at home during the day, and was plagued with thoughts at night so that I could not sleep, I would go out early, into the large Royal Garden, to the meadow, and other places to get exercise. I spent the evenings at the Brühlschen Terrace because there in Bellevidere good concerts were presented every evening. In this way I was somewhat distracted. On occasion I spent the entire night sitting on the Brühlschen Terrace to tire early so I would be able to sleep at home.

It does one good, living alone, to be spoken to by someone. This often happened to me daily. But these were almost without exception unemployed, or nondescript existent people.

Unfortunately I had to place myself in the same category although these people were no less than congenial to me.

My self-employment was, as stated above,—bad! For this reason I went to employment offices, to possibly get a position in this way. But this was not successful either, especially for the short term. Finally I was referred to a picture coloring institution. In several quite large rooms young people and girls were busily painting various large and small pictures with templates. I started to work. That was tedious work, also brought in only meager wages. Several days I worked with them. Conduct and conversation of the workers betrayed their low class. Not a week had passed, and I could no longer stand it there; I left what little money I had earned and stayed away.

During my engagement in the 2nd theater I had heard that in Dresden there were forbidden (*illegal* ?) gambling houses (?). I was encouraged by colleagues to go along, but I feared being (*caught up* ?) by these and stayed away.

I had seen many nice things in Dresden, museums, various collections, galleries, green arches or vaults, and other things, since there was sufficient time at my disposal. In the evenings into the night I listened to concerts. Now I wanted more; to also seek out the concealed and disguised places in Dresden. The first in line would be the restaurants with the gaming tables. I did not want to win any money, nor lose any, only to watch the games.

So one evening I went into one of the mentioned restaurants. I purposely went late in order not to consume much, sat with my glass of Böhkish beer until it didn't taste good anymore and shutters and doors were being locked. I was afraid of being asked to leave. Although a part of the guests left when it closed, I remained seated.

Soon, in the middle of an adjacent room, a table was set up. Those persons present made their way there. A design (?) with enlarged cards was laid on the table; out of a cash box a number of new playing cards were laid on the table. The cashier took his place and nearly all of those persons present sat down at the table. The game began.

Now, I had also gone to the table and stayed at the table until nearly morning. How the night could pass so quickly from 11 until 4 o'clock in the morning was inconceivable. About 12 or more persons may have been around the table who also all participated in the game. Some of the cards were constantly in use. The lowest stack was 10 Ngr.(?). Except for the cashier, there was no audible conversation, and even he only spoke when a few playing cards were laid aside and new cards were again brought out for a new game. "Begin, my gentlemen," was probably the only word that could be heard.

Many a little pile went into the cash-box, as well as money from the players was collected. It seemed to be a bad time for the cashier. The little piles remained on the table and were becoming bigger till the players drew in the winnings. The cashier had to bring out more money. He did it with the same calmness that he did as he drew in the money from the cards falling to the left.

In my pocket, except for some small cash, was a 10 Ngr. piece. For a long time already I had been fingering it, the fingers half out of my pocket, yes, even lifted them halfway onto the

table. Again the hand with the 10 Ngr. piece went back into the pocket. Why didn't I place it? I was embarrassed by the meager deposit and, in case of a possible loss, to have to utter an involuntary groan. Or even, as I noted once at another table, a single coin deposit (?) from a left fallen card, generously – or was it contemptuously? – who could know? – pushed back by the cashier, whereupon the other players would have to say, "Take your 8-penny piece away."

So I remained a mute spectator; no one hindered me from that. One gentleman kicked with his foot, brokenly mumbled something, and exited through the back door.

The stack of new playing cards was all played and the game came to an end for this time. A few persons sat down; food and drinks were brought out. A small group walked out the back door; I did the same. Morning was dawning. My distant observation had given me an appetite, but found nothing at home except – my soldier's bread. After I had eaten a piece of bread with salt, and washed it down with a swallow of water, I laid down to rest.

Was that right? – There in the gambling houses was where the

(Pages seem to be missing here.)

The whole thing had a mentally intoxicating effect as I entered. These types of houses are usually attended in not too sober conditions and usually leave the guests to their own impassioned/impulsive moods.

After I believed I had seen enough of the Restaurant, I left without having gotten into any difficulty, or having to give an excuse, or tell a lie.

It would be tiring to put all my nightly walks on paper. It is true, just as I wanted to know Dresden in daylight, I wanted also to learn to know Dresden at night. But these two illustrations may be sufficient as examples.

In this way the days passed. I am not certain whether they may have turned into weeks; but to be brief, I know that my money was on the decline, and although during those days I listened around for employment always with my cork picture in hand, I always came back home without any results.

The date to pay the rent was coming closer; my cash wasn't nearly enough anymore.

Now on one of my walks because of my pictures, I was addressed by a gentleman and invited to go with him. It was a long way, almost to the end of the city where he had a type of publishing business.

I did not keep my present or my past employment a secret. So upon his questioning, the man soon knew my situation. Having arrived at his house, he said he had need for an assistant, and asked whether I wanted to take a position with him. He also believed it would be easy for me to work my way into this field.

I was happy with this apparent turn of events, and was to immediately stay there for the day. My work for the day consisted of looking through the books and the building, and toward

evening I had to write several letters which he dictated. This new job, since it came about through strange circumstances, made me tired and hungry. It took more bread soup at home. In good faith of having income, I had also bought a piece of butter on my way home. So this evening with the bread lathered, it went down more easily than it often had in the past.

Early in the morning at 8 o'clock I was to be at the business again. So I had to get out of bed earlier than usual. I arrived there at the appointed time.

In this lay periodical types of books and writings of various sizes and content. I did not notice any Christian writings. In the course of the day I felt quite familiar with the place. Booksellers and colporteurs took supplies from the business. There was also a mail order service. My responsibility was the receiving, distribution, and recording of the incoming and outgoing copies in the business. There were also two errand boys occupied who carried orders to the post offices and other places, or transported them by cart. The manager, or the head clerk of the business, as far as I knew, was not always present. When he was present, I also sometimes had to take necessary walks, and sometimes stay after closing time, and write letters he had dictated and take them along to the mail.

In this way a week had passed and my money had dwindled, even though I had not allowed myself to spend more than for the most necessary things.

The manager knew that I did not have any money. In my places of employment I had never found it necessary to demand money; therefore I could not bring myself to do it here either.

Now an errand boy had been dismissed; I had to help fill in for him. That was beyond my physical ability. I came back into the business one day with a loaded cart and brought the books inside. I was tired to the point of collapsing, but I was to quickly go out with another pack of books. That was too much for me; I sat down. The manager remarked this was no time to be sitting. The things had to get out. I became upset and said my energy does not hold out to work as a package carrier; for that purpose he would have to employ a stronger man. He remarked, "As you wish." – And with that I was finished. I got my overcoat and umbrella and was ready to leave. Hoping to get some money for my time, I asked whether he had anything further to say.— I don't remember the answer anymore, but he made no arrangements for payment. I could not humiliate myself to mention money.

So, insulted I left for my living quarters. What had I gained from this position? My savings had melted down to a few pence. In order not to lose strength, I had begun eating in the community kitchen again, and in that way increased the running expenses. Now some help soon had to come. From where? I had tried many things by self-employment, and had also looked for employment.

I did think about getting help from God but had no sure confidence; I had no relationship with God, or it was not of the right kind. I wanted to exercise my own will. That one had to submit one's own will to the will of God to experience the will and ways of God and to be assured of God's help was incomprehensible to me.

Several days had passed in this way. My condition had not changed, except that the last pences had been given out, and the day of paying rent was at hand.

I had always planned silently on my cork pictures; also had gone out enough with the last one on which I had worked laboriously. There it stood. "Skill goes after bread!" I called to it. It echoed back, "Skill goes begging." – The last statement repeated itself again and again! Begging! – No, if it was not possible to live with good intentions and by honest means, then there could not be much to life! In the space of one year I had gathered many experiences. I had received insight also in hidden places. All were living, many were living without considering the value of money. I had strived, and had – through frugality weakened my body as well as my mental functions. Now I was--finished.

Tired and agitated I lay on my bed.--Am I done for now? Or was this crisis to take yet another turn? With a heavy heart I groaned, "O my God!" ---

Had I already exhausted this one means of help; had I already ascertained the decrees of God regarding my being or my not being. The words of Göthe, "Who never eats his bread with tears,...he knows not you, you heavenly Powers," had repeatedly come to mind in the last days; so also now.

Had I earnestly inquired of the heavenly Powers? Did I not stand in doubt whether prayers to God could even be answered; had I called in, and out of, deep need to the heavenly Power, God, also my God?

It seemed too great a matter to me, man in relationship with God; to seek help and receive it from the Highest, the Creator of the world. -- How must humans ask of humans, equals of equals, and wait, to finally -- be heard halfway, often not at all!

Dawn broke through – I held fast to one point of light.

If God, the living God, really existed, as it was taught, as the Scriptures said of Him, then I was not out anything; then there could be help for me! If not, then there was little purpose for my "being or not being." Little, or – None! –

Assurance I had to have, even today, immediately! I wanted, I had, to call upon God! Persist, and, with all of my bodily and spiritual strength, turn to God! God must hear me; He had to give if He was the Giver. Tomorrow was the beginning of a new month. Tomorrow it must be settled.

Someone once said, when he wanted to kneel down in prayer for the first time, it seemed to him as if he had no joints; there were rods in his legs, or he had forgotten where the knees were located.

Humiliation before people always seemed to me to be dishonorable. I don't know if I had humbled myself earlier.

Now – I did not know how to lift my voice, my heart, to God in prayer. I found no place to begin. Lay on one's face and call out! – but – if it wasn't real anyhow. – A struggle with

myself ensued! But before the Creator, the created, the earth had to bow! I knelt and I found breath, words, and tears. My heart became freer. I felt that I had not prayed without being heard. Words came out that I had not sought. I prayed to God, who alone could and must help me!

Tomorrow help had to come. To God it was the same, today or tomorrow. For me it was time. Tomorrow the rent had to be paid.

It had gotten late—or early; a long time I sought in vain to sleep. But when I awoke, I felt that I had slept and dreamed.

The day was dreary. A few drops fell sparsely to the ground. Repeatedly I looked out the window; it really appeared to be rain weather.

The evening, the past night, lay clearly before me. Today therefore—help was to come. The sky was so cloudy, I felt depressed. I did not want to eat. Only when I felt hungry did I make myself a bread soup, or ate a piece of bread and drank hot or cold water with it. The last piece of bread lay on the table. It could remain there.

I had put on my undercoat, the picture under my arm. After considering, I left the umbrella at home so someone might invite me to step under shelter somewhere, maybe also so people would catch sight of my picture.

Without calculating I went down streets I had often walked before. I didn't know where I was going. I even ran into people on the sidewalk.---Before me lay the grounds of the Zwinger. Here I could not expect anything in this wet and cold weather. Yet – not far away stood the “Hotel Garnizium Zwinger.” There was a glass front (*lobby ?*) which was arranged with plants and flowers. I had always hesitated entering there; the guests there were usually high society people. Now the veranda seemed to be empty. I wanted go in there and wait out the rain.

I walked quickly as if I was going past, then made a quick turn around, to appear as if seeking only shelter from the rain. I set the picture up on a table near the entrance and busied myself with wiping off the rain from my sleeves, shoulders, and wherever, in order, to kill time as necessary, or also unnecessary, while I was standing at the entrance. The rain increased; the *Gewanke (traffic ?)* on the street ceased, and only covered wagons drove hurriedly back and forth. Now I really had to remain standing if I did not want to damage my picture. How long I stood, I do not know. With concern I listened to the repeated quarter hour chimes of the castle and tower clocks which were shortening the day by another quarter hour each time.

Now I heard steps behind me. A lady stood at the table, looked at my cork picture, and asked if it belonged to me. I said I had made cork pictures for sale. –

Was she interested in my cork picture, or was my humble self attracting her attention – I can't be sure. She only said with certainty, it seemed to me, she had guests and believed they would buy the picture; I was to wait patiently and have a seat. The lady, owner of the hotel, asked about my actual employment, what it was formerly and in the future, and soon knew that I had been engaged at the 2nd theater and had been without employment for several months.

She went away and I stood in the entrance again. “A portion of coffee!” – A waiter served the coffee at the table and left. What was this; -- did the lady – I had no thought of drinking coffee! That was such an optical illusion. – The aroma of the coffee, the appetizing baked goods – how long had I not had any coffee to drink, and such strong coffee, and the smell of that standing before me, betrayed me – but – to allow myself a portion of the coffee – no, in no case! I did not need the strange coffee; nor did I go begging.

I took my original stance with my face to the rain. The lady of the house had come again. She begged me to sit down; some gentlemen wanted to see my picture; I was to wait and drink coffee in the meanwhile; it was a cold rain. She was so friendly, I---had to sit down. I wanted to say I had breakfasted, but I felt ill at ease about the upcoming lie.---I wanted rather to get up and run away!

In the meanwhile, the lady started up a conversation and told me her daughter would finish at the conservatory shortly and was getting a position in the fall as a coloratura soloist at the court theater. Maybe it would be good if I would also go there.

Now I was coming to my senses again! I looked at the lady; she was so nice that I could not resist her reminder to drink the coffee while it was hot. I devoured coffee and baked goods as a long-denied refreshment. I purposely ate and drank slowly so I would not give the lady reason to suspicion that I was starved.---The day before I had eaten a piece of bread with salt. Today I was still on an empty stomach. It was against my resolve. I had first wanted to await the decision of the day, and then – eat or -- not eat. Now I was perplexed with myself.

The expected gentlemen arrived, looked and did not buy the picture! – They had decided as a result of the bad weather to travel on, and their luggage had already been packed for the railway. The proprietress was not embarrassed about this. She suggested I wait a moment. I waited. It did not take long before a gentleman came down prepared to go out. The lady addressed him. He took the picture, looked at it for a long while, and spoke with the proprietress without paying much attention to me. Finally he asked if I could retouch. I answered in the negative. He reckoned if I had made the picture, I would be able to draw, and also be able to retouch.

The proprietress spoke for me. The gentleman, a Frenchman who had come here from Paris, had come with his associate to take photographs in the Zwinger. He spoke only French, so I had a hard time following him, and as much difficulty answering him. This gentleman now offered me, while he was here, to work in his studio. He would instruct me; the work was easy; the hours were from 9 o’clock in the forenoon till 4 o’clock p.m. He would pay 3 francs daily. Sunday I would have the day off.---

The proprietress had secured the position. The gentleman, Mr. Braun, gave me 5 francs of earnest money. Tomorrow at 9 o’clock I was to be here again.---

The 5-franc piece was in my hand; I was to come again at 9 o’clock tomorrow morning to step into a new position, would earn 3 francs daily. That was all true! – but – at the same time

everything was unclear to me. Mr. Braun extended his hand and said, “pour demain, au revoir!” – and with that he went outside. The proprietress said a few more things, extended her hand and with the words “Now you will not forget the time, at 9 o’clock. Auf Wiederseh’n,” she also was gone.

It had all happened so surprisingly fast; I had spoken few words – I couldn’t say much; I stood alone on the veranda with my picture, the piece of money in my hand.

Again I was in my living quarters. I had set the picture on the table; my head seemed almost heavy; my heart and breast were expanded; I had taken in the situation of yesterday evening or night. “O my God, I am not worthy that You have heard me in this way, that you have helped! Help me to believe!” – I had to be alone, by myself alone with my feelings and sentiments! – Only an hour ago I had doubted, had wanted to bring my future to a conclusion. God had intercepted; He had prevented it.

Today, as I am writing this, I am seeking to reawaken the sensations I had at that time. I know what I wanted, I know how I felt after my prayer was answered following that night. But I am too poor at words, to express in words both what I perceived before as well as after! It was the first answer to prayer in which I had asked and knew I had received an answer, but yet – to bully something out of Him, not wanting to believe. I have already mentioned, I was ignorant in the things of God; I knew nothing about redemption, knew not what to do with Christ Jesus, highly praised in eternity. Yet – the merciful God understood the stammering of this dependent child. Also in the future, after times were better, He laid a cover over the past. He did not break the bruised reed, but for years had patience until a spark of faith was lit which remained fast to the wick, and through the grace of God will remain. And --- in the strength of the present hope in eternal life will be fanned into a flame that will never be extinguished nor blown this way or that.

The five-franc piece I brought to my landlord for rent. The balance of the money I wanted to pay in a few days. The landlord was not in such a hurry with the payment since I had paid regularly in the past. He was satisfied and gladly willing to wait.

Today I did not want to go out. Inwardly I felt so different; I was rich; I had truly experienced, when need is at its greatest, God is nearest. I had hoped and sought in vain among human beings. My faith in people had ceased; but in God it had now begun. I took the Testament in hand again, read the inscription of my first teacher, then let it fall open where it would and read a few verses. How was that? – I read the words again and again. Yes, the words were literally there: “In his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.” These verses were the 6th (5th in the English) verse of Psalm 30. How these words harmonized so well with the recent past; I read the whole psalm. How the following words, all the words, made such a deep impression on me! Lord, my God, I will thank thee in eternity! – Yes, Amen.

Never had any words so touched my heart. What kind of power was this that lay in this scripture? – Why had I never read anything like it before, never perceived it? -- Now I wanted to read more often, to read more; this had more effect than Schiller and Göthe!

The day must have moved far ahead; I sat at the window and observed how the clouds were moving along in the same direction. Strange shapes formed occasionally, but were soon distorted of themselves or through other interposed clouds, and new forms took shape. There was a human head; now it stretched; the grimaces were humorous; one piece broke away; the head of a dog appeared with eyes and ear. As true to nature, also this picture disintegrated. The clouds separated and more of the blue sky appeared. Now also a ray of sunshine broke through into my room. The sun came out completely and shone on my cork picture, which I had set on the table. It was made out of flawless cork wood. Yesterday it had appeared to be gloomy, as if to say "Skill goes begging." Today, as it was lighted with sunshine, it called to me, "Skill brings favor." But in my heart the sun was also shining; the clouds had parted. I was filled with rest and peace.

4. Only Change Here Remains

In a room of the Zwinger, near the museum for copperplate engraving and hand drawing (*or sketching?*), a studio had been set up. A courtroom, the former bathing resort or spa of King August the Strong, bordered the studio. In this courtroom stood the apparatus for taking photographs of the copperplate engravings and hand sketches which had been displayed on an easel against the wall.

Here the two gentlemen were daily busy photographing, except Sundays. Here I stood and arranged the plates for photographing or did other things that I was assigned to do.

The jobs were easy and pleasant. The men were satisfied with my contributions. I came to life again, no longer thought about performances and plays, and found equal satisfaction with this new position. Mr. Braun asked whether I would like, after finishing the picture-taking, to change over to photography and go along to France to work in his business. That was a new thought, and unexpected to me. I agreed. As far as I was concerned, it didn't matter to me where I lived.--I could carry on correspondence with my home as well from there as from Dresden, and – *ibi bene ubi patria!*

And the theater? After my dismissal from Nessmüller, I had already postponed a new engagement till fall. I wanted to advance, and for this reason had my eyes set upon the Dresden court theater. But how to get in there, since there were many personnel better than I, who also wanted to secure their livelihood, and did not want to remain static or back track. How many were probably already waiting for a vacancy in Dresden, and probably had acquaintances or agents in theater? I was a stranger; my short stature, despite the reasonably high heels and the inevitable wedges, the missing handbreadth either on top or at the bottom about which I worried in vain, had to definitely work against me here as well.

I knew the court theater by heart, that is, in my walks I had often and many times been at all sides of this building. On such occasions I had also come into contact with individual actors. They were, of course, only small stars, since for "top manpower" and performing stars, common earthly citizens are beneath their line of vision.

Yet, the lesser ones had drawn the greater into conversation, and I had learned a number of things regarding regulations, stage managers, and the conduct of the personnel. It was simply

something different than the small so-called strollers (*actors who moved about*). Employment seemed to be complicated, since the advanced personnel were recommended by the director and the stage manager concerned, and had to be approved by the director “Imperial Count Platen-Hallermund.” I had tried to think of some methods.

Since I had made cork pictures in relief form, I wanted to send a written request for a position with an enclosed picture to the director. For this I had selected the court theater.

With the written request and a picture I went to the Villa of the Count. He himself was not present, so I left both the request and the picture in the office to be given over to him.

Days had passed; the picture had not been sent back; now I had hopes of planning on a position in the fall. During this time my situation had changed. I was pleased with my present employment. The prospect of later getting a good advancement and more income, and after the various experiences and particularly the wonderful leading of God through which I had gotten this position, put the theater in second place.

After I had received Mr. Braun’s proposal and had accepted it, I wrote a second letter to the Count in which I apologized that, since I had received a position for an undetermined amount of time in the future, I was having to declare the written request invalid. The result was that the following day I received the written request and picture with an accompanying letter from the secretary sent to my home.

Now I was certain I could have figured on a position, but by my cancellation, I had cut off any further contact! – The old love had not yet grown rusty. Now that all hope was over with, it seemed to glow more strongly again. I told myself I had been in too great a hurry, much like with the Bromberger director! I had to earnestly work my way through this and tell myself that I had wanted the best; that no other way was possible now that I had not chosen my present employment of my own will, but, as a result of prayer, had accepted it from God. My confidence in God remained, and my future work on the stage was thereby abandoned. I had bade farewell to performing. That to which I had dedicated my energies, my life, I had renounced -- .

Much free time was daily at my disposal. I was acquainted with the supervisory and service personnel in the museum, since I would daily get copper engravings and return them. If the rooms were locked, I would get the key from the steward, take the craft pieces and put them back in place. Also to the employees of the other museums, as well as the picture gallery, I was known as an employee in the Zwinger. I spent a great deal of my free time in the rooms where so inexpressibly many skillful and scholarly treasures have been accumulated. It was only too bad that of everything there – historical, oil paintings, plaster cast impressions, geological, antiquities, and whatever all the collections were called – I had too little knowledge and understanding to possibly gain any benefit from anything. I loved and admired the skill; only it was quite inconvenient to use it to go after bread! (*Not sure how to interpret this last statement.*)

One day after another passed, and the days turned into one and more weeks. The rooms of the Zwinger became like home to me. I had gotten used to the two French men. I felt

respect and an inclination toward both. Both gentlemen saw me gladly. It was not to remain this way. The quick passing of time made way for the coming, and new, events.

Cries of war were heard; they increased, not only from day to day – from hour to hour. “The emperor of France has declared war on Prussia.” How will Saxony react? In Dresden at all street corners, wells, and other empty places, placards were put up which said that the war only affected Prussia; Saxony would be spared, as well as the other states of Germany, with many assurances of friendship, cr. ci. (?) The signature: Napoleon, Emperor.

The placards were also discussed pro and con. Little was apparent in Dresden of the exceptional fraternity toward Prussia.

Very soon there was also movement in the military. Troops moved in and out. Daily there was more stirring in the military. From various parts of the city echoed regiment music. Above all, “The Watch on the Rhine!” – “Beloved Fatherland can be at peace” reechoed in the restaurants. “Beloved Fatherland, may you be peaceful,” rang from the voices of the youth streaming in and out of the schools. “Stand firm and faithful, the watch on the Rhine!” babbled the “heavily loaded” (*tipsy*) patriots late into the night as they staggered home.

It raged and raced, it sang and rang, from early morning till early again, “To the Rhine, to the German Rhine!” – The Watch at the Rhine was all one heard, sung or whistled. Who could help but be caught up in it. –

The activity continued for several days; the regiments were quickly transported by railway. The military seemed to have died out in Dresden; but things came to life again; large wagon transports came through the streets. Also new troops arrived and passed through. – “Another transport of cannon fodder” one would hear being called when a fresh regiment arrived or went to the railway. One was already awaiting word whether there had been a clash with France.

“Where will our Saxons be now?” one would ask himself. Finally, telegrams from the border! “Napoleon has crossed the border at Saarbrücken and has won the first battle.”

That was troubling for the spirit! What will happen? How will our Saxons fare? -- Yet soon things must change. The page would turn.

Our work at the Zwinger took its usual course. Little was spoken about the war. Possibly out of mutual regard. We worked harder and talked less. Following the visit of an agent, our gentlemen became restless! No more wares were coming across the border from France, and a shipment of plates, sent by way of Belgium, also failed to arrive.

Now, 20 or more plates were used every day in the studio. So it was necessary to look for glass plates in the Dresden businesses so we would not run out of work. Because of this searching, one of the gentlemen and I did not make it to work for a whole day. Those that were found were not good enough, or not suitable for the work. Renewed orders also failed to come in. The Dresden businesses, sent samples daily; there was little good among them, and the good

plates were small. The best pictures were on large sheets, and there were no such plates anymore.

Mr. Braun did not have any solution. Letters, telegrams were sent daily. Likewise, new samples arrived daily which were sent back again. There was nothing to do except to let the work rest until wares were transported again. Mr. Braun decided to go home for the time being. The studio remained in the Zwinger. The apparatuses and chemicals were stored away.

Under the present conditions it was not possible that I could go along. The Germans were ordered out of France. Passports to France were not delivered.--Mr. Braun hoped the war would only last a short time; then he would return to Dresden and our photographing would continue! So I accompanied the two gentlemen to the railroad station.

As the train with the two men roared away, my hopes for the future also vanished. Mr. Braun thought the war would soon come to an end; in Dresden people felt that without Paris the Germans could not make it! – Although there had not been much communication between the two photographers and me, my relationship with them could hardly be considered one of servanthood. I found the departure of the two Frenchmen almost more difficult than giving up the theater.

Now I was alone again. Alone with my thoughts in which the future was clouding over anew. I had looked ahead full of hope and with fresh courage. Now I saw my hope carried to the grave (*shattered*). I had cut off the theater. The beginning of employment was, through intervening experiences, ruined by the French war. What was left to me? – I had the calming, uplifting feeling that God was near me with His help. This awareness kept me from worry and banished the darkness of the future.

Again I had become a so-called Baron (*gentleman of leisure*). The entire day stood at my disposal. In Dresden one could pass the time provided the necessary pecuniary means are at one's disposal. I was unassuming, had learned to content myself with what there was; but with the starvation diet had also hurt my body and my memory, and weakened it. In the Zwinger I was a daily welcomed guest; there I spent a part of my present free time. From the war's theater of operations came many telegrams; that also captured my interest. Finally, the proprietress of the Hotel Garmi at the Zwinger had become a friend, but who had the inevitable coffee served every time I came, or brought me some other bite to eat. That was embarrassing to me, so after that I visited the good lady very seldom. Her daughter was now trained in vocal music and received a position in the court theater. I brought my cork picture, through which I had made her acquaintance and received her consideration, to her, and she gladly received it as a keepsake.

It was still unclear to me what I should begin now. In the businesses in which I had become acquainted through Mr. Braun, I asked for advice, but heuer (*this year*) good advice was theuer (*expensive*)! Gladly one or the other would have gone out of their way to be helpful; but the times were poor as a result of the war. Businesses were quiet; factories partly locked up; the servant personnel were rather decreased than increased. As it appeared here in Dresden, it was over all of Germany. What was I to do now?

After much searching, contemplating, and reflecting, I came to the decision, to seek my well-being elsewhere. I received the impression my luck did not bloom in Germany.

For years some relatives by marriage had lived in Australia; these stood there in good repute; I directed my sights there. But how was I to get there since the German seaports were all blocked. – I had heard the way was open through Austria. My plan, therefore, was to go to one of the southern ports, and there to get a position on a ship as a waiter / *bartender*(?) and so to arrive at my destination. Many young people had reached another land by this means. This was my idea, and also the advice of others.

When I had arrived in Dresden I had to show at the police station the place where I last stayed. Also when changing living quarters I changed the ticket. Now I first went to the office to ask for information with regard to securing a travel pass to or through Austria. Here, for the first time, I was questioned about compulsory military service. My assertion, that our confession in Prussia from days of old had been that we were exempt from military service, aroused suspicion. They did not know what Mennonite signified; in Saxony there were no Mennonites. Before I could get my papers, I was to produce evidence from the military district command that I was exempt from service.

Good advice had come at a heavy price again! Especially at this time. Had there not been a war, had no one in Dresden asked about my military service, then I would not have been ready to go to Australia. Then I would be in the comfortable employ of the studio of Mr. Braun.

Now things looked bad. To go on my way without papers, could have bad results. I wanted to sell my things and go, but feared my tickets could have been sent from the police to the military district command, in which case the matter could become even worse. – The straight way is the best, I thought. -- Inserting a certificate from the elder of our congregation about membership in the church, I finally went to the military district command office.

In the military district command there was always plenty of work at this time. Also now there were many people of all walks of life present. One had to wait his turn.

Because of the military forms, as well as busy-ness, special courtesy was pushed aside. It was therefore better to be as brief as possible, in order not to be reprimanded in military fashion. Finally I was next in line. “Name and residence?” – I answered.

“Here are your registration forms from the police station, but we have no notice where you have registered for duty (?).”

I: “Two years ago I reported in Danzig; during the previous year’s registration (?), I was traveling.”

“That is your misfortune. You will be registered as “Uncertain Army Duty.”

“I am a Mennonite, and as such, not drafted as a soldier.”

“You are a Mennonite? – That is strange; here it says you are an actor.”

“I belong to the Mennonite Church of West Prussia which is exempt from military service.” I handed over the certificate from our church elder.

“How can you be exempt from service when you possess no official certification to that effect? We are not playing a comedy here. You are eligible for service and it is only a question of whether you are fit for service.” He turned over my papers to a non-commissioned officer; I was called into an adjacent room, had to take off my shoes and be measured.

Now, I thought, the danger is over with; I had always heard I was not the right size.

I stood at, upon, or under the measurement. What was happening above me I did not see; only before me I noticed the non-commissioned officer who observed my posture and said, “Stand up straight.” “I am standing straight.” “You will probably learn how.” He looked above, below, pressed my legs, my abdomen and head against the board. I kept that stance. Then it slipped and – smack – I felt the movement on my hair. The non-commissioned officer said, “Another time!” It slipped again, apparently upwards. I felt nothing. “Hold your chin higher!” I did. When it slipped again, I felt the object on my head. -- A mark! “You can leave.” I put on my footwear again and walked into the other room. The first officer said: “You must go to the doctor yet.”

I cannot quite describe my feelings. What would happen later, I did not know. Now I was not my own boss. I stood, walked, and did what I was ordered to do. Whether I was endowed with patriotism at this point, I cannot say either. On the way to the doctor, I neither sang nor whistled “The Watch on the Rhine.”

With several other persons, and accompanied by a soldier, we were led to the doctor.

On the way, I did not look at anyone; whether someone looked at me, I do not know. Therefore, I do not know either whether I made an impression, or whether the impression only affected the ground, those of the footprints left behind.

We had reached the home of the doctor. In his room the soldier turned over the papers to the doctor. We had to take off our outer clothes, and strip down our shirts. He started with me. “Are you well?” – “I believe so.” He took a centimeter measurement. “Take a deep breath.” I did so. He measured my chest and made note of it. Then he handed me a book with small print (Perl.) (?) “Can you read the print?” – “Yes.” – He examined my body; then I could put on my clothes. The others had to go through the same experiments. Finally he made his notes, gave them to the soldier, and we could, we had to go.

I could not refrain from asking the soldier what would happen next, whether I would have to go back to the military district command office, or could go back to my living quarters? – He commented, “Why, you don’t even know yet where your quarters are.” –

“H-o-w – what did you say?” – “Well, you cannot know yet where your quarters will be!” – I knew where I stood. – “Do you think that I will be drafted?” – “Whoever first goes to the doctor will also be drafted; here it says, ‘Fully fit for service.’” –

4. In a Blue Coat

“Heda, You, Farmer!” – “This is no farmer; he is a Prussian!” (*? This conversation was in a dialect and not all intelligible to me.*) “Look there, Prussian! Every brave Prussian heart, raises his eyes heavenwards!” (*This was a little rhyme in the German language.*) -- “Ha, ha, ha!” – “Take a look out of yourself; there are more people here!” More laughter! – “Well, he is grieving over his lover!” – “Oh, no, he is thinking about his mother!” – “Leave him alone; he has his face in his pocket!” -- “You shut up; leave him alone!” – “Tell me; you certainly don’t have the measurement; how did you get into the military?” –

The jokes didn’t quit; my tongue had to be loosed. – “I didn’t get in; I was taken!” – “Bravo, good, we didn’t come either!” “But why are you so worried? You certainly aren’t the only one!” -- “But how did you come at such an unusual time? The recruits only get their uniforms in November.” – There were other questions.

The way in which I got into the military I had described in few words. “I had a similar experience,” said a young soldier. “I would rather have stretched my legs under a desk, than to take slow steps here! I am a commander of a knightly order, was in the local noodle factory. Because the business was closed due to the war, I was dismissed. Was going to go home, and at a favorable moment was taken and put into uniform. But this is happening to many, and we’ll make it through the time of service.

Until now I was not wearing military dress. From the doctor, we were transported back to the district command. There it was determined in which unit each of us would fit. Beside my name it said, “Royal Saxon. 3rd Infantry Regiment ‘Crownprince’ No. 102.” Incidentally, the regiments now have other designations beginning in 1870. I was turned over to the replacement battalion of this regiment and from there was led to the indicated company. I no longer know the number of the company of the replacement battalion. Since I was the second shortest in the battalion, I apparently also had to stand in the last company squadron. But again, I do not know how many companies this battalion had, whether 1-4 or otherwise. But in any case, I certainly must have known the number of the company during my time of service! –

By the sergeant of the company referred to, I was assigned to the mass quarters, I who was placed in command of the above-mentioned talkative group. (*Not certain of the exact inter-pretation of this last phrase.*)

To go home, to organize my things, or to do something else, was not possible now. I had to spend the day in the quarters; even had to ask if I wanted to go outside! –

For the rest of this day I had peace; that is, I did not have peace. Everything still seemed to me like a bad dream, a sort of nightmare. I did not know anything to say; my thoughts were a jumble; I thought of – running away. Early the next day at 6 or 7 o'clock I was to be at the uniform place to get my uniform with other men. If I could then take advantage of the opportunity to escape unnoticed! – Besides, it would have crowned my rather adventuresome course, but only in the event of success. Otherwise I would likely have been dealt with as a deserter; but – I had not gotten a uniform yet! –

What went through my head till morning, I cannot say. I felt strange, forsaken, despite the surrounding soldiers. I sought rest, sleep, but neither would come.

At the proper time in the morning I was commanded to go to the yard. A lance corporal accompanied me there. –

A small group of people, bearded and without beards, assembled in the yard. An officer, a non-commissioned officer, and soldiers had also assembled. Here my thinking ceased; I resigned my rights, and submitted myself to the unavoidable.

“Fall in ranks!” sounded out the call of the military person. We were lined up according to height. The tall ones to the right, up to me – the last one. I was, therefore, from the rear, the first one! We had to take off our hats or caps and were inspected. A few, I among them, had to step forward; we were first to have our hair cut. The order was followed. Barber shops were near by. My back-combed hair, under the power of the barber, was forced forward, and fell on the floor to the right and the left, under the fury of the scissors. Soon the heads were finished. Long, curly, shaggy, and other hair, became, in the shortest possible time, military short hair, as the specifications dictated! –

When we were standing in rank and file again, and everything was in order, we did “Right about face” and were commanded to “March.”

Now nothing mattered, whether I was tall or short, made or did not make an impression, was seen or not seen, I marched along just as the others marched ahead of me, while a pair of soldiers tromped along behind us.

The march went through the Altstadt (*old town*), over the Elbe bridge, into the Neustadt (*new town*); quite a distance, then between barracks into a barracks yard. Here we were told to “Halt.” Large open doors let us know we were at the arsenal building. “Grab something!” we were commanded. Everyone ran to be first at the things; I remained the last one. “First to the boots!” – These flew in all directions; one would tear them out of another’s hands, from their feet. Everyone wanted the nicest, the best fitting pair. I stood at the pile and watched. “Forward, forward, try them on!” was called to me. Mechanically I felt for any pair of boots, but was repulsed at really trying them on; they were all worn—not new. – How much soldier, driver, or other foot perspiration might already have dampened these boots! – One soldier came to help me, selected a pair, which I also kept, although they did not fit. The soldier said, “They will wear into shape.” Now further: shirts, underwear, collars, pants, coat, cap, and overcoat. All of them old, worn things! – These were given out by number according to the size of the

person. I dutifully loaded up with the things that were thrown at me. Now came the accoutrements: Rifle, sidearm with sword-belt and ammunition pouch; knapsack, bread bag, water bottle, and spiked helmet or helmet. This was tried on. Several on whom this latter item would not fit, did not fare well. With rough pressure it was pushed down on his nose, then slowly and with some effort again removed from his head. I was not willing to surrender my head to such an ordeal and was satisfied with the one dealt to me.

Richly laden, that is, rather heavily loaded, the return march was resumed. Panting under the load of the gifts, I also arrived at the quarters. It had become time for the noon meal. Out of weariness, I could not eat. Right after the noon meal I had to put on the uniform to be at the drill yard with knapsack, helmet, and rifle. There was no time to give oneself over to sentimentality.

I took off my clothes and laundry and started putting on the state's or the royal garments. – They will make a good scarecrow out of me!—I thought. A recruit could hardly have looked more foolish than I did in the state's peculiar uniform. Pants, coat, and collar – everything was put on in its proper place. Now the side arms. By chance, I had gotten it on the right side, over which among those present a general laugh ensued. I knew what to do with the knapsack, that is, the place where it belonged. To get the straps fastened, others had to come and help. Such a weight had never rested on my shoulders. The helmet was still missing; this crowned the whole thing. In short order I was instructed how to salute when superiors should pass me on the street; then – but it was too much at one time; my head was not paying attention; I could not grasp everything. I even forgot the name of the unit I belonged to.

With the sabre at my side, the helmet on my head, and the rifle at my foot, I stood ready to march.--

A recruit, recently receiving his uniform, for the first time wearing the blue coat on his body, not having yet heard a word of command, no idea how to handle a weapon, and – with knapsack, helmet and rifle to march through the populous streets of Dresden! --

With lively interest I thought of David in the armor of Saul; only one difference existed between us; -- David lay the arms aside and reached for his shepherd staff.--I could not throw off this uniform and in a flash carry my umbrella. There it stood, leaning in the corner; how often had it protected me from rain showers. – Now I had three long years ahead of me during which time it could rest, or be of service to others.

“Ready; march!” I had to announce, and then about-face. It turned out so dumb that everyone laughed.

I laughed also, at myself; about everything. It was all so comical, foolishness! This, however, was a highly tragic comedy, by which the lives of thousands had already bled to death – and how many more lives could it yet cost. –

My thoughts struck me every few moments. I was angry at myself that I had followed the police officer and gone into the Military District Office. How could I have imagined that it would take this turn of events!

I was safely on the street on the way to the drill yard. At first I carelessly went my way till a passing soldier called, "Hey! Farmer, get off the sidewalk. That could cost you three days!" – Startled I got off the sidewalk onto the street. Frightened I looked forward, to the right, to the left, also behind me to see whether an officer might be coming where I would then have to give the military greeting. I did not have long to wait until a lieutenant came around the corner toward me on the same side of the street as I.

With every step my uneasiness increased. With my best intentions, I did not know what to do with my rifle. Now he was before me. I made some desperate movements with the "shooting iron"; it almost fell out of my hands. There was a humming in my ears! What will happen now! – The Lieutenant had been looking at me for a while already, now he raised his hand – laughed, and motioned with his hand to ward me off, and continued walking on past me. – I took a deep breath. – That had been almost -- like stagefright! How would things go until I got to the drill yard, then back again, and thus every day! – I agreed with myself on one point. I would do nothing! Why were they sending me, loaded down, and with a rifle, through the city; why is one grabbed up by force and drafted! – I would do nothing, except to say that I just had to take the baggage upon myself; that I had not yet heard a command! – With that I was in agreement with myself and at peace.

Safely I arrived at the drill yard. Which way should I turn? Some were practicing here, others there; at all corners and ends were small detachments. I had been ordered to be here at 2 o'clock; a short while ago the clocks had struck the $\frac{3}{4}$ hour. I stopped and looked to the right and to the left; to continue on into the drill yard seemed foolish to me; decided therefore to head in the direction of the buildings again. In my excitement and uncertainty, I had forgotten the name of our unit. For the moment this seemed the worst thing. I felt myself more helpless loaded down under the military burden than in many problems I had experienced in the past.

Then I noticed a few steps from me, standing on a street corner, were several soldiers, also with knapsack, helmet, and rifle. I walked up to them and saw on their shoulder strap the same monogram as on mine. Now I took a breath, stood still and stayed nearby. Soon more soldiers arrived, one, two non-commissioned officers, a corporal, soldiers again, and finally a sergeant. To my shock, the Lieutenant also came, the one who had passed me on the street, and talked to the corporal. I did not know for certain whether I was really at the right place, until the corporal came to me and laughingly said, "Well, how is it going?" I recognized the corporal as the one through whom I was sent into the quarters. "Bad," was my answer. "Well, well," he said, "in a short time things will go better."

"Fall in ranks!" was commanded. The soldiers fell in line; I also had to get in line, naturally as the first from the end. The sergeant gave orders to a corporal. The corporal came to me, called me out of the line, and said I should remove rifle, sidearm, and knapsack. The drill was to begin.

The other soldiers were all of other ranks, some reservists, some replacement reservists, all drafted for service. I alone was a freshman, that is, a recruit. So I was drilled alone. I considered this as special good fortune among all the misfortune, as it would prove later.

The corporal said, “Now the exercises are beginning; they are also called ‘drills’ in Prussia.” Then he added with important demeanor, “What is right and left you probably know?” – I believed I used to know in the past.

Next “Stand at attention,” was commanded. “Heels together; the feet more outward!” – “There!” – He walked around me a few times. “Your chest out more; your chin back. – There!” – Then, apparently exhausted from giving orders, he walked back and forth a while, and left me standing with my feet more outward and my chin pulled back.

Finally he turned to me again, observed me from top to bottom, laid my hands more on my pants leg, stepped back a ways and called, “Stand at ease!” – I believe he must have thought he was commanding a whole company of soldiers. – I stood at ease. He said upon the command to stand at ease the soldier can take a favorite stance. – The first scene was over with; it had not taken especially much effort.

Again he commanded: “Stand at attention!” I tried to return to the previous position. It was good. Physical exercises of the head, hands, and upper torso followed; the hands laid on the hips. These exercises were repeated two or three times for more lengthy periods than at first. Then again, Stand at attention, hips tight, and physical exercises with legs and feet. Body bent forward, backward, and to both sides.

This performance had taken about two hours of time, of which you could figure a fourth of it was “Stand at ease.” I had the honor of having won the full satisfaction of the corporal. The exercises of the body had been good for me; had hardly tired me. After a certain period of time the command was “Assemble.” I had to buckle on my sidearm, the knapsack on my back, and put the rifle on my shoulder, and walked in rank as the left flankman. Through the sergeant I was informed that tomorrow I was to leave behind my helmet, rifle, knapsack and sidearm, and appear here early at 8 o’clock with only coat and cap. That gave me some relief both physically and in spirit. The corporal walked back with me to my quarters.

The first day of service was completed.

The quarters were -- plainly mass quarters. In a large room lay two long rows of straw mattresses next to one another; in the middle was a roomy aisle. At the head end of the bed there was room for knapsack, helmet, rifle, and uniform. In an adjoining room stood a long table built of boards and benches. Here we ate and polished.

After rendering my first service, I received a leave to take care of some civil matters. Tied into one bundle I carried my things to my former lodging. What kind of eyes would my landlord make to see me as a soldier. Will he recognize me? –

I had the keys to the room with me. I was upstairs, unlocked, and opened the door. Everything as I had left it yesterday. For a while I stood and looked in the room, then I laid my pack down, sat down on a chair at the table, and let my head drop between both hands. My chest heaved and sank – I could not hold back the tears. How had everything happened this way. -- Was it all real as it was now? – What had resulted from all the striving, worrying, hoping, wrestling since the past year? Disappointments – everything an illusion? – Had the past time been a dream, or was I dreaming now in my room? – Ha, if only it were the latter! Up until now

I had been in charge; now – the shiny buttons identified me. In strange clothes, I belonged to a strange authority. – I looked around the room. – My writings! – Cork work I had started. – Yes, truly, skill brings favor; but everything is vapour! – Except the present! – The room, with all it contained, belonged already to the past. – I had come to love this cell. The room had been witness to many a thought, words and deeds. Had the deeds all had a value? – Probably not less than what I had allowed to have done with me recently. – But my last deed – I wanted to separate myself from here, for always. That had come to pass, only in another way.

It was time; I had to speak with the landlord. He was at home. As I entered upon his “Always come in,” he seemed surly; what did a soldier want with him. – He looked at me – stood motionless, as if he was seeing a ghost! – “O, you unlucky cheese hole (?),” was his first greeting. “What have they done to you!” – I forced myself to laugh, and related the course of events that had happened since yesterday! –

The landlord promised me I would not find it hard with the soldiers; such people need some for other service as well as for exercising.” (*Not clear about this statement.*) He encouraged me with many a good word. He wanted to keep my belongings there until I had opportunity to send them away by rail. We took leave of each other. “God protect you. Come again.”

The greeting of the landlord, although common courtesy, did me well! I thought about the protection of God I had already experienced. I took a straight route to the quarters; I did not want to meet higher military or non-commissioned officers.

On the second day, I did not have to report until 8:00 in the morning. I had slept well during the night and got up refreshed. Knowing that I could go without helmet, knapsack, or rifle, made me feel light and happier. The coat buttons had to be polished yet, the boots had to be shiny. – The soldiers who were present were glad to advise me about the polishing.

Unencumbered I arrived at the drill yard. It was not necessary to form rank with the older ranks. The corporal walked with me at his side and did his comedy that he, as one says in Prussia, called drills. Yesterday’s practices were repeated and practiced around right and left. – Also “Battalion about face!” One wrong turn and I would violate a battalion. (?) Well, everything went fairly well. I could move around a lot. The service with the older ranks lasted only till 11 o’clock; then I could go to the quarters. After the noon meal we went again from 2-4 o’clock. The corporal gave me to understand that I had a great advantage because I was drilled alone, while the recruit service was much different. Morning from 6 to 6:45 was instructions hour. A quarter hour for breakfast. From 7 to 11, exercises. From 1 o’clock in the afternoon till 4 o’clock, again, exercises; then an hour of rest, and from 5 to 7 o’clock in the evening, instructions and other classes.

I did my best at the drill yard; the kindness of the corporal to me, as well as also afterwards he had to relieve his strained throat with a cup of beer. Everything went well beyond expectations. Only when it came to the real drills, my feet did not want to tolerate the hard leather of the army boots. The toes were already sore the second day. The moisture and the pain indicated the blood I felt on my socks. After finishing my service, I showed the corporal

my red-colored socks and my raw toe. – Because of the pain, I had to stay in my quarters for a day, and then received permission to wear my shoes during the exercises until I got new boots.

Now it was easier and better; everything went smoothly. Soon I had the rifle in hand. But that was getting worse again. When the corporal took the rifle to show me how to grasp it, I thought, “Why don’t you rather take my spear; this is too heavy for my arm!” – but I always got the burden back. The grasp that I used was not exact enough, and often the corporal called, “Can’t you hold the shooting iron tighter? – Once my fingers were so tired, the rifle slipped out of my hand to the ground. The corporal apparently noticed my weariness and let me rest a while.

The grip also soon got better; exercises and the grip went smoothly. After this, target practice and loading the arms were next in line. Then as I was lifting the rifle to aim, the tip of the bayonet sank, and – gradually the rifle sank to the ground! -- “Throw...and sewed shut! (?) What are you doing! – The guy throws the rifle on the ground!” –

The sinking of the rifle repeated itself a few more times at the longer target practices. Already I was hoping, because of the weakness, to be discharged from the military. – But the weakness was only the result of the poor diet during the summer; through the daily use of the weapon and regular food, the muscles were steeled.

Probably two weeks had passed when I was ordered for target shooting. The first distance was 100 paces. The first shot went off before I had my aim and my target correctly in sight. – It was only good, the target man was behind an entrenchment. -- Where the shot went, I do not know! The second shot was better and at least was in the target. The third shot landed in the black! So the shooting went better than expected. Actually, they were quite satisfied with my performance.

Not even four weeks had passed when I was considered trained and was fit into the company.

During the recruitment period I had not over-exerted myself. Like the old soldiers I rendered only five hours of daily service. I had expected the early part to be more difficult.

Now came the time to change quarters. I received quarters with an official’s family; alone! – At that time this was a rarity, and could again be called fortunate for me. Those providing the quarters were dear people; they had not provided lodging before, and were afraid of having military personnel in their home. At first they did more than was necessary in order not to have any unpleasantness, – but soon, already at the beginning, we came into closer contact. Mr. Brix often went with me into the Garden Restaurant for beer and supper; he was very happy to have such a harmless military man in their quarters.

Mr. Brix had two sons, ages 12-14 years, who attended the Kreuz school in Dresden. These boys were like close relatives to me. If I did not have guard duty, or they did not go out in the evening, I would also sit around the table with the family and always had to start at the

beginning to tell about the theater and other experiences. Mr. Brix smoked away on his pipe while he made his cigar supply available to me.

I was not treated like a soldier or an unwelcome guest. Mr. Brix remarked I was a pleasant guest to them; I belonged to the family, and felt more comfortable there than ever before.

Every situation has its bright and shady side, pleasant and unpleasant; therefore, since the military also belongs to the situations, it cannot be left out. Pleasant and bright were my quarters. Unpleasant and dark the many things to do during guard duty; especially dark, when there was no moonlight and the sky was cloudy. But – the situation brings such with it. One gets used to guard duty, also night duty.

As I explained before, my superiors were very satisfied with me; that is true. But it was not conditioned on the fact that I had other soldiers whom I could model, although I was considered unspoiled, which I really was.

The following little episode was an unforeseen event that almost curtailed my good credit considerably.

Our battalion had guard duty again. This repeated itself twice weekly. Almost every time, food was sent to me on sentry duty from Mrs. Brix. I was almost the only one who had this privilege; I declined it repeatedly, but Mrs. Brix was not one to allow anyone to counter her in her housework. One of her sons would bring leftover food in a little basket from the quarters to the guard.

This time we were outside the city limits at the powder (*gunpowder, I presume*) shed. No human being came there. There were warning signs posted that no one was to come near the powder shed. During the day one guard would stand there, at night two guards in front of each shed. This time I had gotten the first relief shift.

As I came to relieve the old guards of the third shift, the tower and church clocks of Dresden struck noon.

The powder shed lay some distance from the sentry on an open meadow, surrounded by trenches and embankments. Only the lightning rods and the roof were visible from a distance. In addition, a strong fence had been put up in the embankments. Only those officers who came to inspect the guards at night – not always – came up to the shed. In bad weather, two hours in the open are not comfortable, especially at night. Now we had warm sunshine. One could not have wished for nicer fall weather.

I had made myself comfortable. With the rifle at my feet, I observed the area and surroundings. No living being moved far and wide. So I made myself more comfortable. I sat or lay on the grass on the embankment. I lay alone on the wide-open ground, and heard only the noon chimes. My rifle lay at my side.

So I had really become a finished soldier, and in such a short time. A month's time had elapsed since I was called up for military service. Mr. Brix recently said replacements would shortly be sent to France – whether I would be among them. – The war was always carried further. There was hardly any sign of an end! – Where was now my planned trip to Australia! – Prior to this, I was in a constant state of flurry. -- Now as a soldier everything happened of itself; regular meals; living quarters; little strenuous service. – A little concern, though, is quite interesting under some circumstances. For a long time I lay stretched out on the grass; at times I lifted my head to look around.

Then I noticed a figure in the distance that was seemingly moving aimlessly back and forth in the field. For a while I observed the person. Then I got a thought. I would jump up, take my rifle, the helm on the bayonet, and swing it in the air. It did not take long, and the person came nearer, turned his cap around in the air, and came toward my place on the double.

It was Heinrich, the second son of Mr. Brix. He brought a basket and a bottle with food and drink.

The visit here was not without danger for me. But we had a good view for some distance. I contented myself with a look into the basket and bottle in order to send the empty containers back again.

During that time Heinrich was patrolling the embankment with my rifle. He would gladly have strapped on the sabre as well, but the clasp was too wide. – “I wonder if the sabre would penetrate deep into the fence,” he wondered. “You can try it; there it is!”

Heinrich thrust the sabre at the fence a few times. Each time the sabre bounced off. “Well, wait, I'll try it,” I said, drew back and thrust it on the fence! -- Kling – s-s-s – it whizzed through the air. – The sabre blade fell to the earth. The handle with about 1 inch of the broken end I held in my hand! –

What was that – Heinrich looked at me; I looked at the sabre handle in my hand, then at the blade lying on the ground. – What was that—? Yes, that was something. Before it was a sabre; now it is two ends! –

Heinrich wanted to start to cry. “What are we going to do?” – “Be quiet, Heinrich; I will first put the blade in the sheath. – There! Now the handle with little end of blade on top of it. That isn't tight any more. If only the end on the handle had remained a little longer.” – “But what are you going to do now; now you will be punished!” “Heinrich, you keep very quiet about this. Do not tell anyone at home anything either until I tell you; I don't believe I will be punished!” –

I had to really encourage this good boy. It was time that he left, for soon new replacements would be coming.

He went, turned around more than ten times to look at me. He wasn't yet out of my range of vision when the replacement came.

I stand holding on to my weapon.—“Second number (*shift*) replacement has arrived! Anything to report?” – “Nothing happened. Everything is in order. The gate key is hanging in the sentry house to the left.” – “First number, left about face; march!” –

Behind the posting corporal I march in the same stride and step. My eyes are focused down to the left, to the sabre handle, which shakes with every step, and threatens to fall, and which I have to hold with my elbow and arm.

On guard duty one can report without the rifle. The same stands ready in its place, and I go into the guardroom.

Today I was rather monosyllabic. It was almost impossible to get a decent word out of me; much less to participate in the games and jokes of the other guards. Everyone has his bad hours at times. I also, today.

To be sure, I knew better than the non-commissioned officer of the guards and the men put together where my shoe was pinching.

For the night some wood for heating was brought into the guard room. Near the stove lay several large pieces. A bench was set up to the stove. This place was dark; for this reason and for the warmth, I gladly selected this one for the night.

It had to be this way! – I did not know any other way.

I had laid myself on the bench near the stove; I had a headache – somewhere – so they left me alone. Unnoticed I had pushed a few big logs closer to the bench. The 3rd shift had gone to their post; I still had two hours of time. Already it was starting to dawn. I had fallen asleep and contrary to my habit, I snored more than usual today. The others were playing, talking with each other, or smoking. There – a movement, and – crash! – a fall! Everyone looked toward the stove. Some came alongside. Others laughed. I groan and slowly raise myself up. “Is something wrong with you?” – “O – my side; my head.”-- I held my left side from which the side weapon had fallen onto the sharp edges of the wood.

The non-commissioned officer also comes to look. “You have dropped your sidearm; somebody pick it up!” –

Several grab for the sidearm, but only held the handle, without the blade in their hand. –

I sit up on the bench again, still having to breathe heavily, and held my left side.

“Sir – Pet-ty-Off-i-cer, the blade--!”

“What is this! – B., where do you have your sidearm!” –

I: “Here.” I point to the sheath. – “Well! – where – “ Then the broken blade falls out! – The non-commissioned officer looks at the soldiers, the soldiers look at me, I look at the empty sheath hanging on my side.

“But how could that happen – Did it crack now?” – Since I had been relieved, I had not left the room; I only knew what I was seeing now. “The blade cracked when it fell on the wood? – Did it have a crack before?”

Who was to answer now? -- I certainly could not. About the break of the blade in the air, was the last thing I could speak about. – Nobody knew what to say. Nobody knew whether my sidearm had been used for anything before.

A record had to be made in which the recent proceedings were noted. But they would wait until the soldiers on guard would be back to see whether they would know anything.

That was a highly uncomfortable situation. – But the way out seemed to have been made more smooth, and I could go to my post more easily again. The time for replacement had come.

“Number One, fall in rank!” shouted the commander. We went out and to our weapons. Soldiers and weapons were hurriedly checked. The “handle with the little end” I turned over to the non-commissioned officer in charge since it could get lost in the dark.

“Forward, march! Right about face. March!” – The replacement of the third shift occurred with the usual questions and answers. These two hours seemed long to me, yet the city lights provided me with an entertaining view. Now I had time to think about my downfall. – In no way was I indifferent about it. Although I did not believe I would be punished, I regretted the playfulness even more in which I myself had participated. But now it had happened. Every error/oversight at the post is punished with greatest severity. How would this mischievous error be punished? – Besides that, in wartime articles of war (?) are read to us constantly.

Was the situation or the playfulness worth, at the minimum, to be arrested for a period of time, but likely, to be punished more severely? – What effect did a broken sabre have on the German army, on the German empire? How many thousands remained lying in France; -- how many tens of thousands, yes, hundreds of thousands were drafted! – No! I did not want to have this black mark as a soldier. The three years were too long a time to be spoiled right from the beginning. That I had to lie my way through was difficult for me. But there was no other way out. The way taken had to be carried out. – The next time sentinel duty for me was from 12 – 2 o’clock at night. My sabre story kept me occupied again. I was nearly to the place of revealing the matter. But there was more – What instigated the situation? If I did not want to compromise the Brix family, there would always be a lie remaining; I had injured myself in any case. – No, I could not do otherwise than as I had started. The sabre did not have any material value. It was of less value to the State, as well as the salesman, as a peppercorn. I placed this situation in the category of a “white lie.” –

After the guard was relieved the next day at noon, I went to the tinsmith. There was nothing he could do with the sabre. Next I went to the sergeant and reported the accident as it

was stated in the guard report. The sergeant shook his head. There had never been a situation like this before. He wanted to consider the matter further. I was to wait till I arrived for duty the next morning.

Nothing ensued. The next day I had to turn over the sidearm for another one and the incident was closed. I got away without a bruise; but received for a long time—or every time I thought of it—a warning in my conscience.

We had a lot of guard duty, and so, few drills. In the afternoon there was usually an instruction class. There are many sides to the instructions; so the instruction periods were also conducted in different ways. One that was often held was about good manners and conduct. Apparently there was existing reason; there was a lack of good behavior and courtesy. But beside this, they seek to attain a uniformity of courtesy as well as conduct in the military. The repeated classes were for the purpose of military uniformity. But there are heads that some statements do not penetrate. There is a Nürnberger funnel, but not in the military; however, when something does not get through, a choice of heads, from sheep, calf, or even oxen may be used. Also a choice of other, less useable objects, were appropriated in some recollected cases.

We had an especially simple-minded soldier, whose name may have been Schulze. He had the good fortune, by giving wrong answers, to place, not only the men, but the instructing non-commissioned officer, or as now, the sergeant, into a different mood, to the point where he would twist the ends of his moustache and have to laugh, “Ha, ha, ha!” In this case, naturally in approval or as reinforcement, the whole group of men in complete compliance, laughed along, “Ha, ha, ha!” “For what does a guy have his head, ha!?” the Sergeant screamed at him after the laughter. “At your command, Sergeant.” – “Sheep head! What he has his head for?” – “So that his helmet sits properly.” – “Oh? – I thought it was so his collar would not slide of! Ha, ha!” “Corporal, you can keep Schulze an hour for more instructions.” “At your command, sir.”

One day we were called together at an unusual hour. After we fell in rank, several names were called; I was one of the first. We did not know what this was all about. But since the men were called up in alphabetical order, it had to be something important. The greatest part of the company stood aside, only a few stayed back. We had to get in rank again, while the others, out of rank, could go to their living quarters.

The reason for this segregation was soon to be clear to us. We marched toward the large drill yard. On the way one could hear conjectures that we were being taken to the “Regiment in France.” On the yard more troops were present, new units were added, so that several battalions were combined. Finally it was commanded to “Halt!” A staff officer read an order, in which a transport of replacements was to be sent to the theater of operations, and these were the men specified to be shipped to the regiments in France. The war article would be read at 8 o’clock in the morning after which the men would receive new pieces of clothing.

Although one had heard days before already that there would be replacements sent to France, yet it was still a mild shock for many. One thought it would be only a small group that would have to go, and that he himself would be spared. Yet only very few remained behind.

In the Brix family it was already known before I got back what was going on. For the time being, Dresden was to be almost emptied of the military. Upon my entrance into the room, the conversation was about the move. Both of the boys wanted to go along. Mrs. Brix had put her hands together and wanted to cry. Mr. Brix said, "Here is beer; first we want to drink a little cup, and discuss the matter quietly."

The latter was probably the most acceptable.

We sat, as many a time, around the family table. Mr. Brix and I had a little cup of beer before us, Mrs. Brix took her sewing, and Gustav and Heinrich in between. One hardly knew how to start the conversation, till Heinrich said, "We can't go along; if only you will come again!" – "We would gladly have had you with us longer; we will not forget you. You must not forget us either. You have to write often where you are, how you are getting along. You have become a dear friend to us; here is my hand—that you will not forget us." Heinrich said something in my ear. I was surprised. Mr. Brix wanted to know what it was. I said, "Heinrich, tell them!" – Up till now no one knew about the sidearm. The dear boy had said nothing. Now he told about it. I filled in the details. – "Well, you really played a joke on the others; it's good that the affair went so smoothly. – Heinrich, in the future, do not play with rifles or sidearms!" –

The next day in the forenoon at 8 o'clock we stood with helmet and sidearm in front, to listen to the war articles. That was really nothing new. Most of the articles concluded with the words, "punishable by death by shooting." This reading is always done by the adjutant. After the reading we went to the arsenal. New laundry and clothes were given out. There we took off the old clothes, and put on the new. The rest of the laundry and things were ready for delivery by noon. The new recruits could be happy for the old things again.

In the afternoon at 3 o'clock we stood decked out in the new clothes in the exercise yard. Helmet, brass, and leather goods – everything sparkled! After we had fallen in rank, the men were looked over, that is, to see if everything was clean, polished, and fit well. After looking them over, the following orders were given:

"Tomorrow morning at 11 o'clock the battalions will stand at the barracks yard of Neustadt fully packed, ready for the march to France."

6. To France

Again we sat around the family table. It was the last evening in Dresden. Mr. Brix had invited a good friend for today. Mrs. Brix had done some special things in preparation for supper. This evening we would be celebrating the farewell.

The evening passed in a merry mood. I was to write often and much. I would always be able to expect a reply. We were going to continue our association, and then I was to be promoted and decorated and come back well, and, if possible, come for a longer visit. The two old people had become quite patriotic. Several glasses of Moselwine had heightened the mood. I was less talkative, and forced myself to appear to be on the same level with the old people. One drank to the well-being of the Saxons staying in France, then to the entire military of the empire, and finally to the mutual well-being and farewell.

Mrs. Brix and the sons had already gone to bed when the guest finally took his leave from Mr. Brix, and so Mr. Brix and I also could seek out some rest. The farewell party had left a little intoxication behind. The two elders had been not a little talkative.

The day for the march from Dresden had arrived. At 11 o'clock in the forenoon we were to be ready for the march, that is, for the departure. Till 10 o'clock I had time to pack my things according to instructions, to roll up my overcoat, to polish the brass and leather goods, to load up, and load up, take my leave, and get to the place, which lay almost an hour away. That was all taken care of, up to taking my farewell and – one says, Bidding farewell is not nice, yet has to happen anyhow. (*A little German rhyme.*) I had to promise to write soon; I was almost like a family member. The two boys had stayed out of school and walked with me to the position place. Everyone wanted to carry something. It was only possible to give away my rifle which both of them alternately put on their shoulders.

The military was already in rank when I arrived at the position place. For being tardy, I had to announce my arrival to the conductor (?). In other circumstances, tardiness would have been punished. Today it was passed over. The troops formed a large Quaran (Quadrat) (*square*). In the middle were the officers and music choirs. The regiment's music choirs provided music alternately, until "Halt" was commanded. The short speech of the general, and his expectation of the troops' good behavior and bravery, followed for the close. Now go with God. Now a big "Hoch!" (*cheers!*) was raised for the King of Saxony and the Emperor of Germany as the highest Commander-in-Chief.

"Battalion to the right march off – March!" – Now commands were sounded from all sides. "Middle sections pivot right – March!" The regiment music came to a peak. "The Watch at the Rhine" rang out and was accompanied by a thousand or more voices. The crowd of people, who had assembled for the departure of this transport, moved toward the train.

The train had reached the railroad station of Leipzig. (*I think this should be Dresden.*) Our transport carried about 3000 men who were to be dispersed to the various regiments in France. Our battalion came to a standstill at the railway platform where a long line of railroad cars was standing prepared. We were taken to the cars in sections by rows. The rifles had been placed together, and were loaded in separate cars by other soldiers who were standing by for this purpose.

We were sitting ready for departure. We laid our knapsacks above or under the benches; the sidearms and helmets were hung up, and the field service caps were put on. We were sitting comfortably and free as were other civilian travelers.

The train moved back and forth. Then resounded the signal, "Assemble!" It was followed by a long whistle. A mass of people had assembled who were now filling the station platform. "God protect you. God protect you. Adieu. Farewell," sounded out incessantly from the crowd. "Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!" it re-echoed from the train cars! Scarves, caps, and hats were waved. Eyes were wiped. The same was done from the train by those who could reach out to wave caps and helmets. The train was slowly set into motion. Cries of farewell from the platform and further from the railyard continued even after their faces were no longer recognizable. Adieu, my Dresden! – I had not been able to distinguish the two brothers; the crowd was too big. –

The railway station buildings had vanished. The long train, pulled by two locomotives, slowly passed the suburbs of Dresden. As long as I could, I looked outside; no one kept me from it. The last street, -- the last house. Now my eyes began to glisten. The tear in my eyes gave evidence of a hurt! – Adieu, my Dresden, adieu!

Faster and faster the train rolled on. Several soldiers became lively; others became unruly. Taking leave of Dresden was difficult for me. It affected some in the train the same way, or some even more difficult than me. In our train there were few young people; more reservists and older, bearded militiamen. Was there not many a wife, many a fiancé, who wept for the departing ones?

(The following was crossed out in the manuscript but was legible and reads as follows:)

The thoughts about those soldiers who had to leave so much love behind also put me in a depressed mood.

I had also come to love Dresden. In that short time I had experienced many things, had also found loving hearts. But what was my leaving compared to that of those men who left wife and children behind, whom they could no longer protect and nurture. What love left behind over which separation loved ones now wept and – maybe soon they would read his name on the list of those who had fallen in the war. – I sat in my corner, closed my eyes, and gave my thoughts free course. How the lives of people were so diverse. Some lived in happiness without any cares, another group only acquired their livelihood with effort; here the breadwinner of the children and wives was snatched away, the bridegroom from the bride, and – maybe the joys of life on both sides forever destroyed! – Was all of this right and good?

(So far the material that was crossed out.)

God's help in Dresden came to my mind, and a beam of light from above brightened the chaos on earth. Once again I felt myself drawn closer to God. I heard the singing and gaiety of my comrades in the railway coach, but it didn't have an effect on me.

For a good while it had been quite noisy in our train. Song gladdens the heart. Song is more noble, more lofty than the language of people. But if the singing comes from the coarse liquor voices, it has an offensiveness, here also the deafening effect of a drum roll. A few

brought out all their chests and voices could produce. Finally those who were yelling got tired and quieted down. We were on our way without a Commander, without restraint; we could do or not do, sleep or not sleep, as we liked.

Mrs. Brix had put a packet in my bread bag; I believe cheese and sausage. Mr. Brix had also sent a little package along. This contained cigars. Besides, my water bottle had been filled. I did not yet know what it was. (*The next section is somewhat faded, but appears to be something like this:*) Only after I opened the bottle, I found it was a fine cognac. The swallow went through my whole body. Now a bite of food with it, and lit the cigar. Now, my spirits were restored. The dear people were always so good to me. I had loved them as well. Would I also see them again? What would my next of kin, my mother, brothers and relatives say and think when they would receive my last letters?

My cigar spread a pleasant aroma, and suppressed the smell of the soldiers' smoked reeds from the edge of the ditches.

We had already traveled a good distance. The landscape changed constantly. Smaller and larger villages, fruit and vegetable gardens, woods and fields, all came and went. We had stopped at several stations. Our stops were two or three minutes long, then resounded the signal, "Assemble," which was followed by a long whistle from the engine, and we were off again.

It was getting dark when suburbs of Leipzig came into view, and we soon arrived at the railway station. On the open place in front of the train station, long, open shelters had been built in which were long tables and benches on which stood coffee and bread and butter portioned out for everyone. We sat down, drank and ate. After that each man received a glass of beer and a cigar. For one hour we had free range, then the signal sounded, "Assemble!" We hurried into the train cars. The train continued to stand for a while; then it went on into the night. Despite the gaslights, we got to see little of Leipzig. The train hurried on quickly.

Although traveling at night was not unpleasant for us, it did make for some discomfort one for another in that everyone wanted to sleep in the most comfortable position. This was not possible. Some had to pull the shorter ones. But sleep finally overtook even these, and the rolling of the train was accompanied by the steady snoring of the warriors.

One hour after another passed, and as the day dawned we stopped at the railway station in Erfurt. We looked out. Long tables with steaming kettles and coffee machines were visible. Large baskets full of white and black bread were also put on. Women and girls were busily occupied with the kettles, dishes, and baked goods.

Since we guessed correctly that this act signified breakfast, our stomachs became restless. It was difficult to await the time when the horn players gave the signal to get off. Even those who were asleep must have dreamed or smelled that fresh baked goods and coffee were being served nearby; they also rubbed the sleep out of their eyes and now wanted to be the first outside and at the table. Yet – "Always careful!" – was called out to those in a hurry. Everyone had to get back in the railroad cars. We had to line up, always certain coaches at a time; when these

were fed, the next ones were in line. There were probably five sections. To calm my stomach, I took a mouthful of sausage and a swallow of cognac. That spread warmth through my body, and I could quietly await our turn. We were the third group; then came those behind us. Everyone came in line. Everyone received a cup of coffee, white bread and a piece of fresh, tasty rye bread. At a separate table, cigars were distributed. Their quality could probably be judged by the quantity. They were love cigars. They were also black with smoke. Soon we were sitting in our place again, and the train roared away to the Hurrahs of our men.

We had nice weather and fruitful areas to see, Gotha, Eisenach; yet although the spirit was willing, the eyes got tired, and the weariness pressed the eyelids shut. At noon we stopped again. We had to show up with camp containers and received soup with rice and meat.

So things continued pretty well without interruption from one station to another, by way of Bamberg, through Baiern, to Frankfurt, to Mainz. Here we stopped for a night. Probably because of the masses of troops and the captives being transported. An unending transport of captured Frenchmen was also stopping in Mainz. There were people from various countries from Europe and Africa represented, skin color from white to gradually gleaming black. Northern and Southern Europeans, Suaven (?), and Turks. Among the many only a few cheerful faces, some suffering, others sullen.

In recent times, I had come to understand Mr. Braun quite well. Now I thought to bring my wisdom to bear. I asked several from where they were, where they had been captured, whether they had family, etc. But nothing much came of this. The people had such different dialects, that I could not make much sense out of their answers. And what good did it do --province and towns where they lived neither I nor anyone else among us knew about. That these troops were captured, we all knew. Where they were taken captive was insignificant. -- Recognizing the futility of my questions, I gave up the conversation.

How different it had been, if these, some ailing, some depressed, people had been given a godly word of comfort. Surely there were families involved here too, whose hearts bled at the thought of their loved ones at home, from whom they could not expect any news in this tumult of war. Those who had fled had probably been separated from each other, were in need or who may have even been overcome by hunger. Whether missions, Bible, or tract societies may have been active among the soldiers, I do not know. The field was large, the workers have always been few at any time. Those captured did not have to suffer need; they received the same portions as our military. Were even given cigars, also other little things from private individuals.

In Mainz and up to France our food support became more irregular. We often intersected with trains, obviously either prisoners or (*inactivated* ?) weapons. Getting ahead was slower. The stops at the little stations were longer. At the same time, we went through beautiful countrysides, of which the most beautiful, romantic areas were along the Nahe River, through the "Hunsrück Mountains" which is worth seeing. Tunnels alternated with wonderful valleys through which the Nahe wound its way with many twists. Jagged boulders, wooded mountains, surrounded the changing countryside. Picturesque little villages lay on or between the mountains and in the valleys. The train rolled right past a church built into a rock. Only the

pointed spire had been built outside of the rock, and, decorated with larches and the surrounding pine trees, provided a magnificent painting. Again we drove through a tunnel, again a romantic landscape, vineyards and fields, forests and meadows. Well-fed cows, horses and sheep romped about peacefully and did not concern themselves with war cries, troop transports, or news reports of victory. This continued on for a long distance. One could not tire of the sights.

A school teacher was in our coach who could not keep up taking notes, and, in lieu of that, had no time to spend in casual conversation. I had neither paper nor pencil with me, and so tried in my own way to be helpful to the school teacher by keeping quiet, or making him aware of especially lovely scenery. The day beyond Mainz provided so much of interest that a pen-pusher could have filled a book about this trip.

Late in the evening we arrived at Saarbrücken. Here the first and only battle was fought, which had turned out in favor of the French Emperor. We received coffee in bowls to be eaten with a spoon; the first and last time that I directed coffee to my mouth with a tablespoon. We spent the major part of the night here and horsed around near the train station as long as it was allowed. In Saarbrücken also a similar picture unfolded as in Mainz. A transport of prisoners, but strongly guarded by the Prussian military, was halting at the train station. The prisoners assumed, since they were now in Germany, they would soon see bears and aurochs (*extinct European bison*). Here I made the comment that among the French military were few skilled in reading or writing. A so-called sergeant major stated, "We soldiers do not need that. We learn to exercise and fight." He claimed Napoleon had sold the whole French army to the Prussians.

Saarbrücken was now behind us, and so we were now traveling around in French territory. It seemed to me the countryside had now taken on a different character. That was probably my imagination because we were now in the former old German Imperial Provinces of Lothringen (?), where even today up to a certain point behind Matz the German language of their mother tongue has been preserved. All the land had to be characterized as fruitful and beautiful. No bare spot was visible. Gentle ridges of hills covered with beech trees and other wooded foliage, vineyards, and fields of grapes. Idyllic situated saw mills, villages, water mills, streams, and fields covered with trees, with fall foliage of all colors, from dark green, scarlet red, to lemon yellow represented. We drove through forests of foliage in which the trees were so entwined with ivy, that you could see nothing of the tree trunks. We also became aware of other vining plants which we could not distinguish because of the speed with which we passed them. Here I would like to live if enough money would be available to me so I could live off the interest.

The next day the landscape was less varied. We halted for a period of time at a small railway station, but were not permitted to disembark. Departure was delayed, and time got long. One hour after another passed. It was getting dark, and the train was still standing at the same place. Of necessity the soldiers had gone out; the doors were in constant motion. We had not had anything to eat since morning. The so-called "iron portions" consisting of ship zwieback (*ship's biscuits*) and pea sausage (*not familiar with this*) were not to be taken. The order had already been violated by many. I had also eaten the larger portion of a zwieback; I handled the cheese and sausage sparingly, as well as the cognac.

Evening had fully come upon us. Nobody could find out when or whether we were going on, or whether we would get something to eat! Non-commissioned officers and the men walked around outside. It was really enough to get bored. One cigar after another was smoked to kill time. With the coming of night, a cold wind came up that drove us into the train cars. We tried to drive away our annoyance with sleep and made ourselves as comfortable as possible in the cars. Men lay on the floor and on the benches, and soon there was no noise except for the snoring.

Our train had stopped at an intersection. A number of tracks lay side by side, and long rows of freight cars stood near us awaiting further transport.

It may have been past midnight. In the compartment near us, noise, conversation, and laughter were heard. We became curious. The conversation had become louder and developed into a squabble. It had to do with food; we repeatedly overheard, very clearly the word, "Bacon."

There was something about that. One of our men had to go see what was going on. He came back with a piece of bacon in his hand. "They gave it to me, but I was to keep quiet, and also, nobody told me from where it came." – Two, three and more soldiers were immediately prepared to go on the discovery expedition. We were not restrained, only warned to be cautious, and the risks and hazards were up to each individual. A few went to patrol and make sure the air was clear.

Soon someone came and announced one of the freight cars had been discovered to contain bacon. On his heels came a second one dragging a smoked shoulder and bacon! – He was greeted with a subdued "Hurrah! Bravo," but ordered to keep quiet in the compartment. A few minutes later another one of the discoverers came with two soldier breads. Another "Bravo!" It was hardly possible to be quiet. A third discovery expeditioner came staggering in and asked if anything else was needed. – "Certainly! Something to drink!" – "Yes, then you have to come yourselves; at the cask it is crawling like an ant hill; everyone wants to suck." Obviously this man had a sting! (*was tipsy*) – Everyone wanted to get out. But caution is the mother of wisdom.

Strangely enough, I could go first with two others. – We went, saw, and -- drank! – also walked past the bacon car, that was also swarming with people. Since the lean meat was being pushed aside, I cut off, as good as I could, a piece of shoulder for myself. The bones were very obstructive. Another soldier borrowed his sidearm for carving. We got along well and divided the plunder. We went back to the cask wagon to "have one." – Three casks had been drilled into! – Now we hurried into the coach. I had been gone too long. The others could no longer be controlled. They came and went loaded with loot and were the worse for drink as they came back to the coach. From my piece of shoulder, I had given my neighbor, the schoolmaster, half of it. "Quiet, quiet," was ordered in vain. But finally, when everyone was satisfied, quiet was finally restored again. Yet the night was a restless one. Some had allowed themselves too much.

How did all of this come about? -- Yes, our transport was not small. In it various ranks were represented. Obviously, also such who knew how to open a freight car. As there was noisy discontent among us, -- we had not had anything to eat for a whole day, -- it had passed throughout the entire train. Near us stood several rows of freight cars; so it was understandable that a few hit on the bright idea there could be something inside of them. Some had known how to open one or several of them. Whether it was the odor or something else, word spread so quickly about the matter. In short, in just a few minutes the greater part of the train had been alerted. Out of most of the wagons they went out and carried it in. They had found two cars of bacon, two or three cars of bread, and one car with casks. In and around these cars there was life like beehives that were ready to swarm. A small drill, given by an engineer (?) was used to bore a hole in the middle of the casks. From the straw lying around, good blades were selected to be used as "mund heber" (*to lift something into the mouth*) or as drinking straws. These blades were passed from one to the other. Little plugs were also cut to close up the holes, but it did not matter. The casks were constantly in use.

This whole story seemed more or less dangerous to all of us. For this reason the thievery, although en masse, was kept fairly quiet. But the casks had done many of them in! -- Two were lying next to the train car, drunk as a leech. Others staggered back and forth, started singing repeatedly and had to be forcibly quieted down by the other soldiers or by the non-commissioned officers.

It was still night, or at least morning had not yet broken. The two drunk men were carried like corpses to their coaches, where they could sleep off their drunken stupor.

Where we were, rest and sleep had long taken place; not so with all. The work of securing food had diminished little. The goings-on had brought officers to their feet. They stood in front of the cars and, although they noticed the carrying of provisions, they looked the other way. They cried, "There is to be no romping around in the open. Anyone who has to get out may not delay, but must get back in the coaches."

Among us everyone had pretty well gotten a half of a loaf of bread and two, three, or more pounds of bacon. Now a man comes staggering in with a half side of bacon. He belonged in our compartment. Nobody wanted to load himself down with more, nor let him in. Also, where should it be concealed? -- With force the man pushed the bacon into the compartment and stepped inside. Where should it go? -- To carry it back would be risky. There had to be a way. There -- I was the youngest. It was to lie under the bench behind my knapsack. I was absolutely opposed to this. Let the person who got it conceal it. I found a way out; he could give his shirt to wrap it in since I did not want to grease up the knapsack. Everyone agreed to that. He didn't want to grease up his shirt either. The school master said if he had a greasy shirt on, he would stay free of lice. That helped. The soldier got out his clean shirt -- he was heavily intoxicated -- wrapped the half side of bacon in it and pushed this pack behind my knapsack under the bench. He himself lay down flat on the floor and thereupon immediately started snoring.

With this interruption, all of us had been disturbed from our sleep. We attempted to continue our sleep, but the place was definitely crowded. Despite this, rest did return. We sat so peacefully and snored, each in his own way.

Through the stirring of others, I woke up. The day had dawned. I was stiff and tired from the uncomfortable sitting position. In addition I had an ugly taste resulting from the cognac and bacon. I did not feel well. I was advised to go to the casks, then everything would be in order again. I would gladly have had coffee or water. But none of that was visible here. I had to keep the cognac in my water bottle concealed; so I decided to go back to the casks once more, but found -- a lieutenant and a non-commissioned officer standing there. I wanted to tear out of there, but they called to me, and I had to come closer.

“What do you want here -- ?” “I feel sick. Since there is nothing to drink here, I was advised to go to this car.” The truth of my words could have been read in my face. I must have looked bad. The lieutenant said, “Cognac won’t help anything; you can have a drink of coffee.”

One of the non-commissioned officers went with me into the little station building. There were two large kettles of coffee prepared. I got a lid of one of the kettles full of coffee, drank it, and went my way relieved or warmed.

The officer and non-commissioned officer were field telegraphists. Otherwise, I had not been so fortunate. These telegraphists stationed here had apparently had breakfast prepared for the officers of our train.

I kept quiet about the good fortune I had experienced; otherwise everyone would have streamed to the station building again. My ill feeling was over, and I sat down in my corner.

Outside it was suddenly calm. The commander had come outside and had asked what this running back and forth was all about. Now they set up guards. No one was allowed to go back or forth. If no officer was in front of a car, the guards would let empty-handed soldiers slip through. Now everyone had to sit in his place. Then there were loud voices outside. – Everyone wanted to see. A soldier, “a Jew,” is being led with a whole side of bacon to the commander. The commander had seen him coming out from under a train car and let the next guard know there was no evading anymore. He had to go with his load to the commander. The walk of the Jew to the commander, while carrying his side of bacon, was such an oddity that as he was going by everyone was laughing. – The poor Jew had to make amends. What happened to him I have not learned. He was arrested and sent back. Somewhere in Germany he had to bear the results of getting the bacon.

With this act, the love for bacon came to an end.

How long we stayed at this place, I have forgotten. We received fresh iron portions and a fourth of a quart of cognac. Then a number of people were commanded to carry water and cook the coffee, and we received an adequate amount of coffee per person. During the course of the day we traveled on safely. Nothing was asked about the vanishing of the bacon, bread, and cognac. The two cars loaded with bacon were pretty well half empty, as well as the bread car.

They didn't know about the cognac. We figured ¼ quart per person or more. I got rid of the half side of bacon again. The party involved took his shirt and the bacon into his safekeeping.

Our train went on to Reims, the old coronation city of France. There we stopped for several hours. Here we received the first pea sausage. The preparation is probably common knowledge. One cuts the sausage in fine little pieces and puts them in boiling water. The condensed peas, which are prepared with sufficient bacon, meat, and spices, soon disintegrate like meat extract with the water, so that it makes a thick soup. This provides a tasty, nourishing pea soup. Later we tired of the daily-served soup. Beside this we also received coffee, later cognac and wine. Otherwise, as will be noted later, there were other foods and beverages so that we had enough variety and had no reason for complaint.

In Reims many vendors came with fruits and champagne. A few bottles were purchased. The price, 3 francs, was not expensive. The school master and I bought a bottle together. We could boast of the fact that we had drunk champagne in Reims. For few centners (?) we got nice pears and apples.

Already before as well as after Reims we had monotonous, flat, or slightly rolling plains to drive through. The whole "champaign" (*referring to the level, open fields*) is interspersed with much chalky soil. Beyond Reims, at every little town vendors came with champagne and cognac, with wine, fruits and baked goods. As long as the conditions warranted, you bought. The drive became slower, with more stopping places. We had already been on the train 5-6 days! We expected at every stop to hear the command, "Disembark, fall in line!"

The next day, after we had gone some distance and traveled slowly, shortly before noon the transport train came to a halt. Things came to life in front of the train. The weather was cold and dreary. Troops with baggage left the car. We had not yet received orders to disembark. But when we noticed that weapons were being carried, it also roused us and we began to get ready. Sidearms put on, bread bag and waterbottle hung on, and knapsack and coat we took out to be more free and comfortable for getting ready. With the knapsacks on our backs along with our weapons, we expected the command to fall in ranks.

We stood, sat down, several unfastened their knapsacks, then put them on again. At least two hours had passed until we had to fall in ranks. Again a little eternity passed. The knapsack began to feel uncomfortable. Beside the full baggage, everyone had more or less bacon and bread with him. In addition, 80 cartridges had been distributed to each soldier. Of these, 20 were put in each ammunition pouch, and in the side pockets of the knapsack also 20. After sitting for days, I was not used to the additional weight. The long standing and waiting also tired us no less than a march.

Finally – "Halt! – Sections counted off! – Swing left by sections – March!" – "Break step." Now we were marching on French soil near Paris. We started to sing, but it did not go so well as when marching empty. The singing ceased in time. The music did not come from fresh voices and full chests. After an hour we had arrived at a little town. There was a lot of military here. Upon entering the town we were told to "Fall in step." We believed we had

reached our assigned destination. We had passed the market place, also the last street was behind us. Now we continued out of step.

“Always slowly forward, and always slowly forward, so the last one marching can keep up.” (*This was spoken in a rhythmic chant.*) Another time they struck up a song to raise the morale. Everyone looked for something in his store of supplies. Our thoughts were distracted from the weariness, and we again had houses in sight. Now it was getting dark. The place, a village, was empty, barren, and the locked homes let us assume that even here there was no likelihood of finding lodging.

This area was also behind us. We strained our eyes to see if we could spy a village. It was growing dark, and, because of the dreary weather, we were deprived of any good view. We had already marched for three hours. One asked, how much further did we have to go; -- we received no information. The groups in the rear had to be urged to keep marching forward. Larger gaps developed which simply indicated weariness.

Weariness had also gripped me. I felt pain in my upper legs and had to force myself not to stay behind. We came upon another village riddled with gunshots. We had not yet seen any Frenchmen today. Always we continued on into the darkness. The non-commissioned officers had to urge the soldiers to continue marching forward. The rear battalions and sections were told to “March, march.” “Form up,” which meant they had to run. I was fortunate that we were marching on the left. In our battalion, I was, therefore, way up in front. The non-commissioned officers, by having to walk back and forth and urging them on, had a more difficult time than the soldiers since they had the same load, as well as the 80 cartridges to carry. The weight of the full packs was figured at 50 pounds for each soldier, e. g., underwear, clothes, and accoutrements.

In the open field, halt was suddenly called. The troops staying behind had to assemble. It took quite a while till everything was in order. A number of them had lost their way among the sections in the darkness. Because of weariness, I had already occasionally marched with my eyes closed.

The sections were mobilized to the right for war and the front was prepared. Were we to retire here and settle down in the open? “To be represented in battalions! – Loaded!” – I did everything mechanically. In the end we would be sent into combat after being chased till we were tired! – There was murmuring of all kinds; also the jolly ones and the strong were unwilling. One section commander cried down the rows: “Whoever has the audacity to speak during a command will be placed under the Emperor’s court of justice!” That helped. Our irritableness did not make the load any lighter, nor the way any shorter. For quite a while already we had heard muffled rumbles. Now as we were standing quietly we could distinguish occasional detonations, and the noise of big guns in the far distant. The distance was estimated to be 20 kilometers as the crow flies. My courage sank. I would like to have thrown myself down and remain lying there.

The loading and checking of some weapons had taken longer than usual. “Leave the locks outside,” (?) was the warning given for protection’s sake. “Shoulder arms! Left wheel

by sections, march!" -- "Out of step!" -- So we continued on with our loaded weapons. -- "Draw arms!" True, it has to be this way -- but it does nothing for weariness. Again and again officers, non-commissioned officers, and soldiers would call, "Draw arms!" It is dangerous to have a loaded weapon hanging over behind, especially now when we were marching left. That is, the shorter ones were marching in front. I received many a bump from the back under the weapon or on my back. A warning: to carry the gun more upright.

Discontent and weariness among the men had risen. The urgings to sing remained unheeded. Again we had passed a village where a few military personnel were quartered. A few soldiers had sat down in the streets or remained lying there and through *Tropfen (dripping or sprinkling)*, or through threats they were brought to continue on.

Our march tempo was far from correct. An adjutant came riding back repeatedly and swore about the slow progress. But this did not improve it! -- We had already marched a long while in the dark. The time must have been nearly 10:00.

Finally we could see the glow of light. In time we could recognize lighted windows. We came into what appeared to be a larger town. Now we were at our destination. The last of our energy was exerted. To be in step was not required, only "Close ranks! Close ranks!" was called out. Here the military must have just moved in. There was light in all the windows; soldiers in helmets staggered on the streets. The cannon shots no longer seemed so far away. But we had gotten used to it while we marched. We had gone through one street and made a turn into another one. Everywhere light and life. With every step we expected the command, "Halt." With every step I had to work with my upper body to move forward. The battalion ahead of us swung off to the left. We marched straight ahead. Behind me men were falling to the right and left side of the street. Also in front of us there were gaps. Dripping (?) and other invigorating means did not do enough for those who had fallen. Earlier, because of weariness, I had kept cognac in my mouth, and repeated this often. As we entered this town, I had emptied the almost one-half bottle in one draught. For the moment it helped, but I was already more stiff than before. We had marched past the market place. We could figure on having to go further. I was less strong than most of the others and wanted to hold out as long as possible, but my mouth was dry and hot. Seeing the increased number of exhausted, I also stepped to the side in order to remain behind. I was grabbed by an arm and led back. I marched with a strange section. Now I believed my body would keel over. On the left of the road, a door stood open to a blacksmith shop. The soldiers still had light in there. I wanted to bring myself to that place. I sat or lay on the door sill, saw how the troops marched past, and thought I would march with them; but I could not get my legs or any members to move. I got a violent fever, chills; and, along with that, had severe pain in my whole body.

A short or a long while I lay there, then I felt myself being carried up the steps. Every movement was painful. Upstairs I lay near a warm chimney (*or fireplace ?*) and had been covered with a coat. I did not feel the accoutrements anymore; they had been taken off. My head cleared up again. Not far away several soldiers were sitting at the table in shirtsleeves and leather aprons having coffee. When I began moving, one of them asked me if I wanted to drink some coffee. He brought me a bowl of hot coffee into which the other soldiers had poured some

cognac and had sweetened it. “There; drink all of that; then you will soon feel better!” I drank the portion, but I had trouble holding the bowl, since I was shivering so badly.

The chills were soon gone, and I began to perspire heavily. They brought me another coat to cover up. After that I soon fell asleep. During the night a headache woke me up. My legs were stiff so that I could not move them. I wrapped myself as well as I could into the coats and fell asleep again.

When I woke up again, it was broad daylight. I heard them forging below, but since I was feeling sick, I remained lying. The hammering below continued lustily. In between there was whistling and conversation. Now a soldier came upstairs. “Now get up. You have to go on!” He told me that several squadrons of our people had marched past. They must have all stayed in the area. On the table was still hot coffee, also a bottle of cognac and sugar. I was to prepare some of that and then try to get going. I did not save on cognac and sugar. I had enough bread with me. Some also came off the shoulder. Because I had a good appetite, I believed I would soon be in shape again; and after I had strengthened myself with drink and food, I started to pack up. For this the smithy had to help me. I did not make a move without pain. We had marched through here at 11 o’clock yesterday evening. Our march had begun at 3 o’clock in the afternoon. The town in which our regiment lay was Montvermeille, still about 3 kilometers to walk.

I had shouldered my rifle, but my walking at first was quite poor; I walked like a harnessed rooster. Every step brought pain, and walking in step was impossible. I began very slowly to put one foot in front of the other till it gradually got better. Anyone who would have seen me when I walked out of the smithy must have been uncertain whether I was going backwards, remaining in place, or wanted to walk forward. This type of weariness was not unknown to the smithys. They were Prussian Reservists and had been active in Austria in 1866. So, I walked and actually made some progress. Certainly always slowly forward. One or more of the soldiers who had stayed back walked past me. They leered at me, as if they believed I wanted to start drills for a funeral march. Again, another one had overtaken me. It was going better, but I had to stay behind. The area was nice. To the right and left of the road lay little castles or large homes in the middle of parks. In the distance, large forests were in view. I was not sorry that I could take this stretch in the daytime. Only my legs were not as they should be.

After a few minutes, I saw a soldier with a cap on coming toward me. When we were even with each other, he asked for my company and name. He was a corporal and had been sent to look me up in the last town. Since I was still not fast on my legs, he took my rifle so we could make faster progress. Finally we reached our destination. We were in Montvermeille. Here were only nice, large buildings and magnificent parks and gardens. The corporal told me about the discoveries they had made in these homes. Now we stood at the lodging of the sergeant. In one large room he had arranged his office. Two secretaries were busy there.

I stepped into the office with my rifle and announced myself as having arrived. The corporal gave the report that I had difficulty getting ahead. The sergeant said, “You are the last of the men staying behind in the company; you probably longed to be driven here!?” – What should I say to that? – I would have been quite comfortable with that, but with the sergeant’s

authority, that did not stand up very well, and the best I could do was to say nothing. The sergeant read my nominal role (?). Everything was correct. “You are an actor?” – “At your service!” “What show are you playing?” the sergeant asked me humorously. “I was only in the theater one year; I am a trained business man.” “You are a business man?” – The two secretaries turned around. “Then you can also push a pen?” “At your service.” “Well, we will be able to find work for you. You can go to your quarters. Corporal Flink, take this man to Non-commissioned Officer Stramm in the corporal section.”

7. Before Paris

In the new quarters, I found only one from the old corporal section again, but under a different non-commissioned officer.

We found ourselves in a large building. Four rooms in a front with two corridors. In these four large rooms three corporal sections of the 8 companies “Crownprince No. 102” were quartered.”

After I had been shown to my place, had hurriedly gotten my baggage and gun in order and in the right place, I sat down exhausted. The over-exhaustion is still not out of my members. The pains of yesterday had increased again.

I was just in the process of lying down when the room Dujour (?) called to say I should come along to get vegetables out of the garden for the noon meal. – As interested as I would be to walk through the garden, I begged for a replacement for today. I was feverish and my limbs ached. They granted me rest for this first day. The noon meal was prepared without my assistance.

After I had lain a while, the room filled with the odor of a nourishing meat broth. The men in the room personnel gathered around a large table. I also joined them, believed my fever had to be acknowledged (?), and helped along as much as possible, so that in some areas consideration was given to me. Also the first bowl of hot soup was shoved toward me. But what more did I see on the table? – Two huge glass bowls of fruit cooked in sugar. My bowl of soup did not fail to do its job. I felt warm again. The glass bowls were also passed down the row and pushed toward me. I took a sumptuous-looking peach, like I had never seen before; after that a piece of pineapple. While we were eating, those around me made me aware of the food supplies and beverages found in large quantities here in Montfermeil as well as in other towns. I asked about the fruit in the gardens. The non-commissioned officer stated we did not need those; we had enough here. He went from the table to the wall, opened a double door in the wallpaper, and I looked into a high, wide cabinet full of jars of fruit, bottles, pans, plates, spoons, forks, knives, and below 2 whole loaves of sugar. It was not possible to see all the grandeur in one moment.

I opened my mouth and eyes wide in amazement. That was like being in a fairyland. – Yes, said the soldiers, this means making the most of your time, to enjoy life. Today we are here; tomorrow probably at a place where we have nothing; -- or – who is safe from the grenades or the bullets of the French? –

Since canned fruits were a rarity for me, I really pitched in. One of the soldiers cried, “You’ll get a fever from gorging yourself!” – The non-commissioned officer said, “Leave him alone! He already has it; maybe he will lose it by eating.” I quit and went to the cabinet to see all that was in there.

The wall cabinet was about 7-8 feet high, 2 feet deep, and 6 feet wide. On the top shelf stood and lay bottles, full, of course. On the second tin cans with biscuits, various spices, little jars with French mustard, mixed pickles, etc. The third shelf was nearly full of jars of fruit besides pans, plates, spoons, and other table service. On the bottom lay many assorted things, mostly empty jars, and two Hüte (?) of sugar.

While I was standing at the open cabinet, coffee was brought to the table. One soldier cut a piece of sugar off with his sidearm, took 2 bottles from the top, and brought these to the table. One bottle contained cognac, the other Burgundy. What the value of the latter was, no one knew. No one liked to drink the red wine. “That doesn’t taste like anything; it doesn’t grab you,” said one after the other. It seemed like a find to me.

While the non-commissioned officer and soldiers were drinking coffee with cognac, I started on the Burgundy. This inflames, with sugar, into an exquisitely, mulled wine. In place of the coffee, it was not only a delicacy for me, but also became an invaluable medication. That I was enjoying the good too much (*was of little concern or an understatement ?*). In the afternoon there was no service. Although there was the possibility of an alarm, yet I could lie down and sleep without any worries.

I slept four full hours. “The man is sleeping for the entire corporal section,” the non-commissioned officer called when he came back from a walk and found me still lying there. Upon this, I awoke and jumped up. I did not know if it was morning or evening. I was also thoroughly laughed at as I started getting things together for exercising.

I had awakened refreshed with a little hang-over. For the most part I was feeling well. A fire was burning in the fireplace. Over it hung a kettle of prepared coffee. I had only to ladle it out and drink. This time I did not reject cognac in my coffee. Of course, with the necessary addition of sugar. Out of a tin can in the cabinet I got an “English biscuit.” That was for me, as a convalescent, much more advisable (?) than army bread. Several biscuits I annexed (*literal translation*) into my bread bag. Oh, if only it would always remain this way! –

There was no alarm. For these eventualities, in the forenoon there would be duty, hand drills and exercises, with which the older men were not completely in agreement. The weapons had to be polished every day if there was time, or scrubbed off, as well as buttons and leather goods polished, and above all, all the things had to be kept in order.

In between I had looked around in the garden. Only wealthy people could have such a layout. I also believe only around Paris could one have such a magnificent layout, and find so much luxury as here in Montfermeil and other towns, through which we partly marched, and partly where we would set up our quarters for a short time.

In the garden, besides the beautiful plants, there were also useful things. Various kinds of vegetables and herbs for the kitchen, so that we could prepare a tasty soup at all times. Exceptionally tasty carrots, Charlotten (little onions) and other things. One could always pick fresh bay leaves from the bushes. The fresh fruit was, for the large part, over with. Only isolated fruit could be found on the trees and in the grass. – What stories or romances could the comfortable resting places and the benches under the luxurious evergreen trees, the oleanders, and the shrubs, as well as the dark firs, tell about! – How many happy moments, or also how many unhappy hours, may have been enjoyed or mourned there! The old, tall fir trees likely had many a generation behind them. Everything had been prepared and arranged for many, many years of greatest possible ease and every comfort, as also the old buildings indicated. And where now were the owners of all this beauty? – For an indeterminate period of time, we strange soldiers were enjoying the fruits. How much had likely been ruined by irresponsible hands, and by our shots; how much more would yet be destroyed through their own unceasingly sounding shots from the fortress! –

We enjoyed the drinks and delicacies to the full, although we did not know how long our stay here would be. Except for the fruit, non-commissioned officers and soldiers stayed with the cognac. I did my best with the Burgundy that I used as a mull wine. To improve the latter, I had found well-kept lemons in a tin.

I had been there about three days. I snooped around the house to find the entrance into the cellar, when I finally seemed to encounter a noise beneath me. I listened, -- laid my ear against the wall, on the ground, against the foundation of the house. – The noise repeated itself and seemed to come from the handling of bottles that could only have come from below the house. There was no cellar window to be seen around the house, yet there had to be work being done with bottles in the cellar. I went into the building to share my supposition with the non-commissioned officer. He immediately came along on the search. We walked around the house. The non-commissioned officer also heard the noise clearly, but we did not find anything suspicious. In the building there was no indication of a cellar door. Now more soldiers were pulled in for advice. A general search of our corporal sector began. A few inspected the floors, others the walls. I regretted having begun to spy since we had enough for weeks. The others would not give up. Sure enough, next to the wall cabinet in the wallpaper, a door frame was discovered which, in order not to ruin the wallpaper, was exposed with a knife. A double door revealed itself to all eyes. This was easily opened, and a wide staircase led into a dark, underground room. Everything was quiet there. Now lights were lit and matches were taken along. The non-commissioned officer and the soldiers went down. My heart pounded. I felt guilty about my instigated discovery. Yet neither did I want to stay upstairs alone, partly out of curiosity, partly to deafen the warning voice of my conscience.

Having arrived down in the cellar, one knocked against chests and bottles lying around. On one side lay casks in storage, in the background shelves partly filled with bottles. Empty and broken bottles lay on the floor. In niches stood sealed jars of various sizes.

Still there was no evidence of the noise we heard. The non-commissioned officer and a few soldiers were talking in the second room, which was separated from the first room with an arch. In this one stood, besides empty casks, kitchen ware, plates and pans stacked high in each other, wood supplies, and other things. In a third room were shelves again and casks. There was still a fourth room. As I walked by I noticed on the shelves and on a table a number of tin cans, cheese, bottles, etc., all in confusion. The non-commissioned officer went up the steps again.

As several of us were noisily walking up the steps, there was suddenly light ahead of us! – Above, a door was open and before us stood the soldiers of the last room with perplexed faces! – “How did you get here into our quarters?” called the non-commissioned officer of the other corporal section. “Through the cellar,” came the answer from several voices. – “Oh, you -- ...” as one always says. “You should not have clattered so loudly with the bottles,” called the non-commissioned officer.

Now the matter was revealed. Some wanted to break out the masonry in the cellar windows to make it more convenient to search. This was given consideration. But since we had enough to live on, nothing further was done. Our three corporal sectors provided themselves with sufficient supplies of all kinds. Cognac, wine, cheese, fruit, pickles, biscuits, candles, plates, etc., etc. The entire find was now reported to the sergeant as required. He first convinced himself of the supply on hand and reported it further.

We had a good day, that is, we could drink as much as everyone could tolerate. And each man could also take a portion of the other things. They now drank vigorously. I prepared a red wine drink in which the non-commissioned officers and a few other soldiers participated. After that, some more Burgundy, and when there was no more to be found of this, we experimented with other red wine in the cabinet.

The casks, bottles, cases, and whatever else of food supplies was found, as well as plates and some dishes were taken by the construction engineer and the army service corps, picked up by wagons, and apparently later delivered over to the military. There before each expectant fighter were casks of cognac or other spirits, and made available to everyone to drink according “to your ability.”

We had enough supplies for several weeks. Such finds were made in many houses. Many, however, were kept secret, so that troops who moved in later would again have fresh things or could be offered things they could enjoy.

We were not able to enjoy all of our reserved delights. Because of an unexpected move, many things were left behind in the cabinets which we later missed and could no longer find.

The next day we were given field guard duty. We took as much with us as we thought we could use in 24 hours. In the open and in cold weather your stomach demands more than

within four walls. A small group of men stayed behind in the quarters. In the forenoon at 10 o'clock the noon meal was ready. At 11 o'clock we put on the weapons, and after a short inspection we marched off with loaded weapons and full baggage.

Our way led us, after we got out of Montfermeil, through a wooded area, over fields, through gardens, and again toward a town, which was smaller than Montfermeil, but – the name seemed more elegant. If I am not mistaken, it was “Raincy.” We marched past many newer villas with large plate glass windows. Unfortunately, the windows seemed to have been broken with rocks! – This had obviously not been done by the fighting military; we were forbidden under threat of punishment to mischievously damage buildings or gardens.

In utmost silence we relieved the Prussian guard. The guards found themselves in a large house where they could make themselves as comfortable as possible. I had the third shift, so until it was time to relieve the sentry, there were four hours of time. I and other soldiers made use of this time to look at the neighboring buildings. The houses gave evidence of affluence or wealthy owners. On several homes, in front of which were portals and a drive, coat of arms were mounted. The inside rooms were largely empty, but must have been elaborately furnished and decorated. It was unfortunate that the large mirrors (*or plate glass windows ?*) were shattered, wall paper and walls badly painted and written on, marble slabs and gilt cornices broken, and the chandelier and other ornamentation were mischievously dirtied. The garden layouts had suffered greatly from the troops marching through them, but more from the shots from the French fortress, which were fired without ceasing and likely without purpose or goal. In many places the ground was torn up with attempted grenades (*or mortar shells*), trees were uprooted or broken up. One could have cried over the fruit trees that were found, but now ruined. That was a picture of how transitory everything on earth is. We also often had the transitoriness before our eyes, especially when we came nearer to the enemy. The grenades in this town screamed away over our heads, and also hit the ground to the right and left of us.

The time for relieving had come. With quiet steps, and the loaded rifle under their arm, the sentries were led to relieve. Two guards stood to our right. We waited till the non-commissioned officer who led us to the post came back with the soldier who was being replaced. Our section commander had accompanied us. He had to make the rounds, that is, to inspect the sentry line before ours. As we were getting to the place of the sentry we, that is I, was relieving, several rifle shells whistled past us, so that I instinctively bent my head to the side. The officer assumed they had been shooting without aim, at the least from 3-4 meters away. I became very quiet and small. We first noticed our sentries near by. One was sitting, the other standing in a trench. They maintained that position while the officer was talking to them. We also were to stay under cover if possible and relieve each other by taking turns as a lookout.

The French outposts across from us were easily visible; also their movements were observable. We were not to reveal ourselves, and also not shoot. The two sentries who had been relieved walked with the previously relieved ones back to the guardhouse. The officer with the non-commissioned officer and the other guards went on.

Now we sat or stood in the trench. We had put on the field service caps and looked over the terrain in front of us. Although I was quite fearful, I would like to have been able to see further. The enemy posts stood in a garden about 500-600 paces from us.

The area was really nice! Every spot where one looked! On the horizon one could see a blue mountain ridge. That is likely the Fort Noisylegrand from where the grenades were fired that were sent to us. The weather was not uncomfortable, but the air was dreary and foggy. Behind the mountains must be where Paris lies. – Pfee! – Again a shotgun bullet went over near to us. – I would have enjoyed this area more in peacetime; but in peacetime I likely would never have happened to come here. – I ducked into the trench as well as I could. The man next to me had to remind me of my responsibility to look around the terrain.

We could see all the movements of the enemy outposts. Also the guard could be very near. The noise and singing of the soldiers was easy to hear. The horn player blew as if on the exercise place. In between, guns were fired. Where to? – That, as well as the entire demeanor of the outposts, was a riddle to us. It sounded quite lively over there, as if they were practicing field service drills. Several more times we heard bullets whistle, but not in closest proximity. The crack of the guns did not quit.

The two hours had passed without anything worthy of note. The activities over there were known. At 6:00 we were relieved and returned to the guard-house. The next time for us was from 10:00 to 12:00 at night. Then I was somewhat safer. The way and the terrain were already familiar to me. From time to time a red glow would streak through the air, which originated from the shooting of the Frenchmen. We sat in the trench and, because of the darkness, had little to see, and depended more on our hearing. When we had sat or stood about half of the time, a wide, whitish glow came on our terrain from the French side. With an electric light from the next fort, or the next one above, they were searching for our sentry line. The shine went back and forth. We observed how the lamp or apparatus was turned. With lightning speed the shine would fly from one place to another. Then it would go slower again. We found it advisable to lay down in the trench in order not to be exposed to the light. The light came from the left up and over and continued for about a fourth of an hour. Except for the lighting, again we did not have anything to report upon being relieved. Since it was night, we took another way back to the guard-house, and came upon a fruit garden in which there were still quite a few apples and plums lying around. During the day this way could not be taken because of the French.

We filled the bread bags and cheerfully continued on our way toward the guard-house. We were also gladly welcomed because of the fruit.

The third shift was from 4:00-6:00 o'clock in the morning. During this time, everything was quiet on the French side. We did not even hear the shots from the fortress. We also wrapped ourselves in our coats because of the cool air, and leaned against the sides of the trench. From time to time one would alert the other to be on watch.

Even before being relieved, there was life on the French side again. The dawn was introduced with a lusty round of gunfire. The call of the horns accompanied the cracks of the firearms. We were also wide-awake, or pretended to be, when we were relieved at 6 o'clock.

A strong coffee would have been quite good, but making a fire was not permitted; we were not even to smoke. But that was done in the outpost anyhow. The cognac had to warm the body again as many times before. One sip did not do it any more. The stomach had gotten used to it. I did have red wine with me, but that was cold and did not warm enough. I had time until 10:00 in the forenoon, looked for a warm corner and laid down for some sleep.

From 10:00-12:00 was our last shift. At apparently the right time, we were relieved by another battalion and came back to our old quarters in Montfermeil. We found a warm, prepared noon meal there that had been left behind. That was very kind, because not always did we receive a warm soup after outpost duty.

Several more times we were taken from Montfermeil for guard duty. Recently, the French were keeping themselves very quiet except for the inevitable shooting from the forts. For that reason often a patrol was sent out.

When we were on outpost duty again, and it had gotten dark, a so-called sneaking patrol was ordered – one non-commissioned officer, one corporal, and three soldiers. I was also among the latter. For a while a lieutenant went with us in order to inspect the outposts. We were to reconnoitre the south side and so we turned to the left along an end of our line of outposts. Ahead of us lay an open field. Nothing could be seen nor heard of the French outposts. For this reason, we risked going a distance toward the French. We may have progressed about one-fourth hour, but still could not notice any sentinels. We found ourselves in a vineyard now. Over-ripe, slightly frost-bitten, but heavy clusters hung in large quantities. We picked a few, but could not take a supply with us, since the berries were over-ripe and were beginning to rot. Near this vineyard, a green valley lay before us, in which we noticed apple trees almost in the middle that were hanging with the nicest fruit. In the moonlight we even saw the grass around these trees was lying almost thick with apples. Without question, we had to be within the French line of outposts, but despite intense search had neither heard nor seen anyone. The apple trees were too tempting. We went down the slope and were at the best job of picking up apples. One was always nicer than another. I can still recall the tart, sweet flavor of those very juicy apples. Since then no fruit has ever tasted as good again. As we were busy with this good work, -- we may have had the bread bags full, -- there was suddenly a bang, twice, and again more shots. The bullets whistled past our ears. Now we had to be on our guard. But which direction should we take? – The little valley had vineyards or gardens on three sides. In our search for apples, we had lost our directions.

Although we were wearing coats and had field service caps on, the French had caught sight of us anyhow. The shots repeated themselves from various directions. We really did not know which way to turn; from three sides the same view; the moon at its zenith. Because of the grass, we could not detect our footsteps. We ventured in the direction that seemed right and in a few minutes happened upon a French sentinel who, strangely enough, kept completely quiet although he was barely 50 paces from us. Had we been better acquainted with the terrain, he

would have come along as a prisoner, but now we did not know how much longer we might be wandering around in the enemy line. In any case, we went a different way than before. The shooting had stopped. We walked a long while, always listening and waiting whether we might be called by our outposts. But we neither arrived at our outpost, nor at the French outpost. To change our direction did not seem advisable. Finally this course would have to take us somewhere. Then we heard a rushing noise. We thought it was an approaching wind, but were soon convinced of the real thing. A few more steps and we were standing at the brink of a stream. That could only be the Marne that separated us from the Würtembergers. Now we knew where we were. We had maintained the same direction that we had taken from our outpost and were probably 5-6 kilometers away from there. According to the time, we should be back from our patrol now. We kept to the left and soon heard, "Halt! Who is there?" After presenting our password, we asked about our way along the outpost line. After more than a one-hour march over fences, through hedges, gardens, and ditches, we arrived safely at the guardhouse at 1 o'clock at night. We had been absent several hours and had worn ourselves not a little tired.

Our report was, that the left side of our outpost line was opposite a stretch of about one kilometer quite irregularly occupied by the French outpost, and the same was not perceptible toward the stream. Consequently, an orderly (*runner*) was sent out, and after one hour a section of new troops arrived who, accompanied by several of us, engaged in a reconnaissance in the indicated direction.

It was not yet morning when a section of approximately one-half company of captured Frenchmen marched up. A captured guard had shown the way to the outpost. They had taken the weapons standing together, and so picked up the guards, some of whom had been sleeping. Those guards attempting to flee ran into the bayonets which were thrown. So the capture was made in peace without any injured.

Next to us lay the Fort Noisylegrand, somewhat to the left of Mont Avron. From these two points we were shot at continually, even though without purpose. The grenades, of the few attempted, did not nearly reach our quarters, and also did no injury to the outposts. We believed the French were firing so consistently so that it might be heard in Paris; or because of capitulation and the accompanying loss of munitions and guns they saw ahead of time. (?) Many vacant buildings and even more plantings were ruined.

Except for the outpost service, little was undertaken. Seldom was a warning signal sounded because of minor casualties. Yet we had to be prepared at all times to leave, and were not permitted to remove either boots or uniforms. The knapsack was packed. Because of the oft repeated outpost duty, we became so confused that we hardly knew what day or date it was. Sunday, of course, was no exception from guard duty.

In general, we did not live poorly. The gendarmarie had to make sure the streets and buildings were kept clean. Besides our pay, we received regular portions of bread, pea sausage, coffee, rice or barley, sometimes fresh meat, usually bacon, the latter sometimes was hardly palatable. Then every man got five cigars per day, and on specific days a half bottle of cognac or red wine. Sugar, cheese and other things, we could get at the canteen, although at somewhat

exorbitant prices or we could get cigars. The canteen was hardly necessary, however. They only sold me some writing paper and more recently some cheese. His stock of sugar, fruit, cognac, and other things probably also cost him little. He was always the first in place. (?)

So November had passed. We were on outpost duty again. The last few days we suspected there had been considerable casualties. Despite the cold weather that had set in, we were not permitted to cook over a campfire during outpost duty. We yearned for relief to come. The time came, but no relief arrived. From the fortress, there was more shooting than usual. Our guards had to man the outposts again. This was something unusual.

It may have been between three and four o'clock in the afternoon, when in haste an orderly (*runner*) came to the officer in charge of the guards. Immediately came the command, "Pull in the outposts." The non-commissioned officers of the posts hurried. The other men had to fall in ranks. The soon returning guards could only get certain things out of the guardhouse. "To the right, march!" -- We marched to Montvermeil, but did not know the connection with this unusual situation. What was not unusual was that one had forgotten his tobacco, another tinder, the third his pipe, etc. The break up happened despite the delay without relief and unexpectedly.

Having arrived in Montfermeil, we hoped for rest and something warm to eat. It turned out differently. Thirty minutes of time was granted to cook coffee or to add some things to our pack. Some risked cooking coffee; I put biscuits in, filled my bottle as the others did, drank as much red wine as possible, ate biscuits, and was ready. As much as everyone could pack, he took along. In 30 minutes we marched off. -- I had been tired when we returned from the watch; yet the red wine goes into your blood and in the blood lies the soul or the life of a human. So I was refreshed and could march briskly. We were allowed to smoke, which is a relief while marching. But, how much had remained in our quarters? -- All the housekeeping equipment and more! Where would we go now, and would there be anything to find there? --The direction of our march was toward the south headed toward the Marne. We had probably been on the way for two hours when orderlies arrived. What could that mean again? The adjutant rode ahead with the orderlies. We soon learned what it was all about. The Würtembergers and one of our regiments were in combat. We were marching there as reinforcements. -- It was also said that the Sixth Regiment No. 108 had been driven back. The enemy had taken over Champagne and wanted to break through. The adjutants already came galloping back. The bridge over the Marne had been broken down. We would have to make a considerable detour. It was obvious that our matter demanded haste. We paced far around, and this provided opportunity to assemble for deployment.

It was already dark, probably between 8 and 9 o'clock, when the noise of shots started. Red lines streaked through the air. Soon we became aware of crashes in the distance that repeated themselves in short intervals. But in between, the crackling did not cease. In the same area we noticed bright glows like lightning every moment.

A terrible feeling came over me. Several soldiers spoke of the slaughter at Beaumont, Sedan, Mars la tour, etc., etc. Generally it became very quiet in the train of soldiers. I became afraid and asked God to protect me from serious injury. As we marched to the left at the next

road, the weapons fire became more distant, although it did not decrease. Our march continued in haste. The left wing had to be reminded to “march, march” repeatedly. We passed several towns that seemed to have died out. The troops were likely in the battle. In the area of the fighting, a fire glow became visible. The sky became red. Our detour was extremely long. Half of the night must have passed, and always it was “Forward, take long strides!” I had to make every effort not to stay behind. Because of the strain of the march we had long ago disregarded the shooting. Then suddenly we saw the glow of the grenades ahead of us, and soon the screeching in the air was also heard. Soon we could see that from a line shots were alternately fired at regular intervals. Finally we made a “halt.” We marched through a gate into a large yard in which massive ranks had assembled. To form an opinion on the immensity, it must have been a combustible dust. The whole regiment got under a cover. Actually, whole sections in one large area.

The rifles were put together. We could leave rank. When I had taken the knapsack off, I threw myself on the ground and remained lying there. Our whole rank had lain down. They moved close together to warm each other. We were all sweaty and tired, and then the chill is more noticeable.

Suddenly – a wailing, a bang, and constant crashes! Everyone jumped up; a few hurried outside. Outside they were saying the office of the 2nd Battalion had been shot. The first rank of the 5th Company was immediately commanded to clean up. Records, paperwork, everything was scattered like dust, and had to be sorted out of the ruins. The adjutant of the 2nd Battalion and the clerk found themselves in a state of utmost confusion. Part of the papers had been burned and shredded. They had just wanted to send off the orderly (*runner*) when the damage occurred. Of those present, no one had been hit, but necessary papers as well as ink and pens seemed to have vanished. Despite the weariness and the serious situation, there was no lack of foul jokes. They finally had to be called to order.

We were to have arrived here quite a bit earlier to relieve the 108th Regiment which had been beaten back. Because of the broken bridges and the approximately 5 or 6 hour detour, the situation changed entirely. As a result of the arrival of the Prussians, the French were driven back again from the position they had won. Now we lay here awaiting further orders.

For the last part of the night, it was approximately 2 o’clock in the morning, we had apparent rest, but the grenades whizzed past our lodging so that our rest was quite restless. There was no thought of sleeping. One was in a constant state of agitation and often prepared to jump up.