

Exile

MARTHA GELLHORN

HE came from Germany with three trunks. They were the old-fashioned kind, which have humped lids, and they were tied with cord. As he had no intention of returning to his home, he brought everything he could with him. He brought towels and old frying pans, and there was his desk lamp and his books and his fur gloves and two pieces of statuary, a portrait bust of Beethoven and a portrait bust of Goethe. He planned to settle in America, as he had been settled in Tübingen, and go on with life, ignoring the vulgarities of history.

As for money, he had a little, and money had never been a problem, so no doubt it would never become a problem. He had inherited from his father, who had inherited a little in his time also. This money meant that you could live in Tübingen, in three rooms, which were tended by the youngest of the maiden aunts. You could read, sometimes even buy books, take walks in the afternoon, and year after year you could prepare a work on the Origins of the Postal System. This work was never finished, because there was always more to learn or something else to learn.

He was leaving Germany principally because the Nazis were disgusting about Heine. He himself was neither a Jew nor a Communist, nor even a Pacifist. The Nazis would never have noticed him, because he said nothing, had few friends and no following, and spent all his time in the University library. But Heinrich noticed the Nazis. There were no new books in the library, and the newspapers grew unreadable. He didn't care for brutality and he hated noise; there were parades all the time in front of the library, parades with songs and brass bands, and it confused him as he worked. But one day he read that Heine was a Jew and therefore not a poet at all. That was the end. These Nazis were messing up truth and history so that one no longer knew what was right and what wasn't. He was fifty, and had lived in Tübingen all his life. He decided to leave. Aunt Lotte was dead, fortunately, so nothing hindered him except packing. It took him eight months to pack and make arrangements, and all the time he thought about Heine and how they said he was not a poet at all because he was a Jew. The country wasn't fit to be lived in any more.

He remembered his cousin, the daughter of his father's brother, when he read about Heine and knew he would have to leave. He had never seen the cousin, a married woman now, somewhat younger than himself, perhaps forty-five. She was the wife of a shoe salesman, had no children, and lived in Kansas City. Her name was Mrs.

Luther Morton. He wrote and said vaguely that he would have to leave Germany, in order to continue his studies. His cousin, who had heard some lectures on Nazi Germany, had a terrifying vision of Heinrich persecuted, and became kinder than she was. She invited him to come to America.

*

Anna Morton walked along the station platform and stared anxiously at everyone. She had never seen Cousin Heinrich and had no clear idea even of his age. She imagined a tall German, with saber cuts on his face preferably, and maybe even a monocle and a polished manner. She had left Germany when she was five years old, and had gone frequently to the movies since.

But when she saw Heinrich she knew him, and tried not to feel cheated. He was puzzling over his luggage, wicker suitcases, bulging oddly. He was fumbling inside a vast black coat for a tip to the porter. His gray scarf, knitted by Aunt Lotte, hung in lank streamers from his neck. His glasses slipped forward on the bridge of his nose as he leaned over. And he was fat, but not jovial-fat: just fat from sitting in libraries all his life. Anna Morton said, shakily, "Welcome to Kansas City, Heinrich."

"Anna," he said with tears coming to his eyes. "Anna." It had been a long journey; it was good to get home.

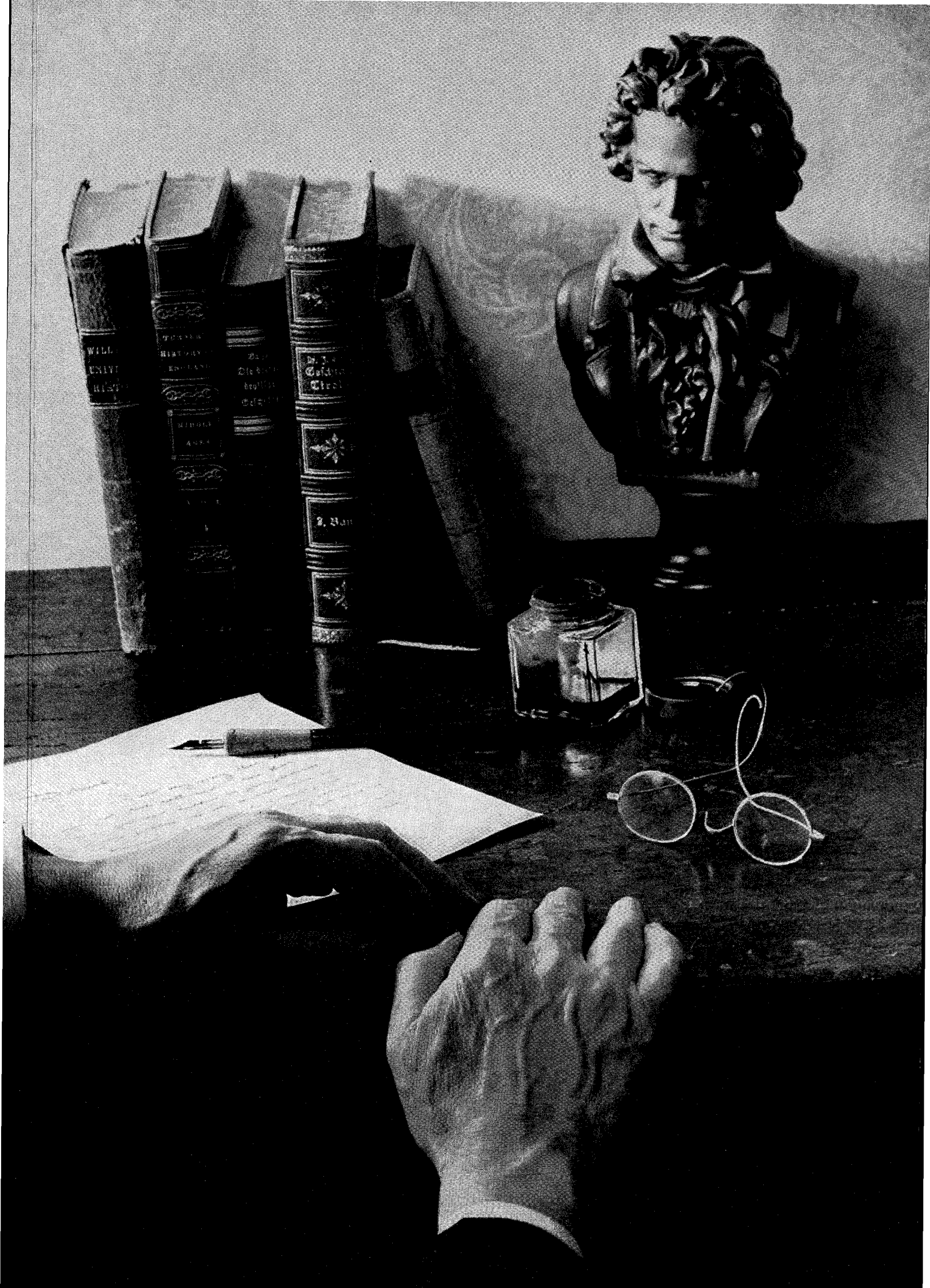
They walked out of the station. The porter was frivolous with the wicker suitcases and winked at the other porters, and Anna was ashamed. In the taxi she said, "You must come and stay with us, Heinrich."

"Why, of course, Anna," he said. Where else would he stay?

Anna had expected him to say: I don't want to give you any trouble, that's very kind, are you sure . . . and then accept. But this taking her sacrifice for granted. It meant that she would have to sleep on the sofa in the parlor, so that Heinrich could sleep in the other twin bed in the bedroom, with Luther. And Heinrich wasn't even thanking her. She answered him crisply when he asked her questions about buildings they passed, or a park.

Luther wasn't home; he wouldn't be back until evening. "You'll sleep in here with Luther," Anna said. "And you can have this closet, and here are two drawers emptied for you. Shall I help you unpack?"

Heinrich muttered something. He had begun to feel like a visitor from a very far place. There were two of them and they had less room than he'd had all alone in



Tübingen. A bedroom, with some silky stiff stuff on the beds, and a doll sitting on the pillow. Why a doll? There were no children in the house . . . and then a parlor, with lots of things in it, and a little room more like a closet, with a small wooden table and four chairs. They ate there. It was a dinette, Anna said. And a bathroom you couldn't turn around in. You couldn't get clean in it, surely; it was too little. It was like the train.

"I have my trunks, Anna," he said, dimly.

"Trunks? But you've already got three suitcases."

"Yes, but you see, I brought everything. Since I'm not going back. I have my books . . ."

"Oh well, we can leave them all down in the cellar. The janitor won't mind. You don't even need to open them."

"But Anna, you see, I need the books. I have to have the books for my work."

"What work?"

He had never said this sentence before in his life, though he'd often thought it: "I am writing a book."

"Oh." It wasn't anything much, that "Oh," unless it was suspicion . . .

Heinrich stood uneasily in the room. He saw no place where a man might sit, securely. He thought to himself of his books, the busts of Goethe and Beethoven, his fur gloves, and all the other things he had had for some time, and needed and wanted with him. There was scarcely room for him here, and there was Anna, waiting for something. How nervous women made you: they were full of questions, just standing and looking.

"Well," Anna said, and there was desperation in her voice. "Well, what shall we do now?"

Heinrich stared back at her, nearsightedly. "I don't know, Anna," he said.

"Maybe we ought to unpack, and then you can tell me about those awful Nazis and all the things they did to you."

She got a suitcase, pulling and dragging it into the bedroom.

"You take the things out, and I'll put them away," she said. He unwound his scarf and drew himself out of his massive coat. He put his coat on one of the beds, and it mussed the taffeta spread, and Anna saw herself having to iron it tomorrow. So he was messy, too, was he: a dirty, messy old German. He undid his suitcases so slowly that Anna wanted to scream, push him aside, and do it herself. He fumbled because he had taken eight months to pack them, and now everything was happening so fast. He would rather have talked a while, and then had some coffee, and then presently done a little unpacking. No need to attend to all three suitcases right away.

"I must get my trunks," he said.

"Have you got the baggage checks? We should have done that at the station, while we were there. If you'd only told me, Heinrich . . ."

He began heavily to paw into his pockets looking for a wallet, and Anna said to him:

"Oh not *now*, Heinrich, there's no sense in doing that now. Since we didn't do it anyhow when we were there at the station . . ."

When the three suitcases were unpacked, Anna said she had to go out and do the marketing. This was a lie; she always did the marketing first thing in the morning, when you had a better choice. Heinrich watched her from a window—a narrow window, entirely submerged in ruffled net curtains. He saw a stout, middle-aged woman, walking away from him, down the street; she wobbled on her high heels, and her dark-red coat blew about her legs. She was thinking about Luther and how it would be when he came home. And suddenly she was trying not to cry.

*

"Heinrich," Luther said, being very genial about it, "what are your plans?"

Heinrich hadn't enjoyed dinner much; it seemed so frail. A salad with a slice of pineapple was the main plate, as far as he could make out, and spaghetti, which was an Italian dish and not very healthy. Besides, it was hard to understand Luther; not that he spoke fast, but he swallowed his words, so Heinrich had to say: "Excuse?" and lean forward and listen all over again. Now Heinrich was startled. He had just come. Why should he make plans?

"But I will do my work, Luther."

"Oh," Luther said. Anna had told him about the book. "Well, what's your book about? Maybe it'll be a best seller like *Anthony Adverse* or one of those things Anna's always reading, and then we'll all be rich and go to California." He laughed and Anna laughed too, without conviction, and Heinrich looked at them, solemn and not understanding.

"I am going to write a history of the Postal System," Heinrich said; "it is very interesting. There is, naturally, Diocletian and his system of messengers, but it was not until the twelfth century that a true commercial postal system was established by the Hanseatic towns of northern Germany. I shall include the postal system of the University of Paris in the thirteenth century, but that was limited. I shall carry the history to modern times, to the organization of the Universal Postal System in 1878 at Berne. It is very interesting. There is nothing so interesting as stamps."

"Oh," Luther said, and Anna sighed. "Well," Luther said, "I don't hardly think that'll be a best-seller."

They sat in silence, and Heinrich looked at his salad plate and felt hurried, hurried. . . . What were they rushing ahead to? There were years for talk and thoughts and work and plans. Why were they so crowded in here together and so full of anxiety to be getting things done?

"Well," Luther said again, "we better figure out about how you're going to live and everything, Heinrich."

"But I am going to live here," Heinrich said, "and do my work and we shall all be very well together, and there is nothing to worry about."

Anna looked at Luther. She started to say something and stopped. Luther was smiling, had been smiling all

along. The smile of a salesman, who is trained not to offend the customers.

"Heinrich, you see the thing is money. We'll have to figure out some way for you to earn money, I guess. And so you can have a place of your own and everything . . ."

Heinrich had not heard the last sentence. "I do not need money," he said with dignity. "Four hundred dollars remains."

"Four hundred dollars won't get you very far." Luther's smile was giving out.

"It will last for more than a year," Heinrich said. He was beginning to resent this meddling in his business. "It lasts longer than that in Tübingen, and there also I had rent to pay."

"You'll have to earn money," Anna said, and hit the table so that the glasses jumped. Heinrich looked at her, disapprovingly.

"We'll talk about it tomorrow," Luther said. "Tell us about the Nazis. Did they beat you up much?"

"Beat me up?"

"Hit you, take a whip to you, or anything . . .?"

"But no, surely not."

Luther looked at Anna accusingly, remembering, after Heinrich's letter came, how Anna had said: He was afraid to write anything, I bet; I bet those awful Nazis have been beating him up or something . . .

"I have gone away from my country," Heinrich said, "because there is no truth left in it. The Nazis are making everything, even history, into lies. And because of Heine." He was silent. He found he couldn't speak of it now. Far away, Tübingen itself had grown into a dream, a town lying in the sun. A quiet town, left behind him in space and time, something to remember with love as the years went by and he could forget a little about Heine.

"Heine," Luther said, thinking: Ah, that was a friend of his, and the Nazis beat him up or killed him, and old Heinrich got scared.

"Heine was a great man," Heinrich said, talking to himself. "He was a great man, and he understood about how beautiful German is to write with, and he understood how beautiful the world is, all the world, and flowers and women. People will know about Germany always because there were men like Heine, born there. But the Nazis say he is a Jew, so he is not a good poet." Heinrich's voice was trembling now, and Anna twisted her napkin, embarrassed, thinking to herself that a man who cried was the worst thing there was, and crying for no reason anyhow.

"Let's go to bed," Anna said. "Oh, for God's sake, let's go to bed." She folded her napkin and got up and began to take dishes from the dinette to the kitchenette.

In the daytime Heinrich sat about the house and mourned his books—which were in the cellar in the unopened trunks—and got in Anna's way. She kept the house badly now, because Heinrich was always there and she couldn't move, and besides what was the use. No matter how often she tidied up the living room, it was a mess again in no time. Heinrich left papers lying on the

floor, spilled cigar ash, rumbled the pillows, pulled the curtains open to look out the window, and left them crooked and parted. She had nothing to say to him, and it infuriated her whenever he talked. Always talking about stamps, as if anybody cared about stamps, as if people—in fact—didn't *hate* stamps . . .

Luther came home later and left usually right after dinner, saying there was an Odd Fellows' meeting or he had to do extra work at the store or he was going over to Charlie's and have a talk with the boys. Their friends had stopped coming in, evenings, to play a little game of poker, or just drink a highball or two and gossip and listen to the radio, because Heinrich was there—and he made them sad and uneasy. An accusation had grown up in silence between Anna and Luther. Luther had thought of himself as giving shelter (briefly) to a hero, and all he had on his hands was an old fool, a lazy old fool who wouldn't work, and splashed so much water around the bathroom you had to wade in and mop up after him, and ate his food slowly, slowly (Oh God, why won't he swallow it?), making awful, slow, crunching sounds. And when he talked—stamps. . . .

Heinrich went to the movies, in the afternoons, by himself. Wanting darkness and wanting to be alone. But the air worried him, it was too hot and not real air, and his legs got cramped. The figures moving over the screen hurt his eyes, and the music was agony to him. He used to go and sit in the art museum, not looking at the pictures much, but just sitting in a great room where he could be quiet. He counted his money in his mind, waking and sleeping, and saw that it was melting away. And he couldn't work on his book, and the days were longer than all the winters he had spent in Tübingen.

Then one day Luther came home drunk. It wasn't very serious; it was a cold, gray day, and he had been bored at the store and the thought of Heinrich, at home, bored him more, so he went out with two friends and drank gin quickly and got drunk. It was more than Anna could bear and she screamed at him, in fury and in terror (thinking: Is he going to come home every day now like this?). Heinrich appeared from the bedroom and wondered what it was all about. When he saw that Luther was drunk, he, in disgust, said, "Shame." Anna turned from her husband, stood with her hands on her hips, white in the face and beyond caring, and told Heinrich that Luther had never been drunk before Heinrich left Germany on account of a fool poet, and Heinrich's stamps were enough to drive anybody to drink, and they couldn't live like decent people because Heinrich was there all the time, in the way, messy and tiresome and, and . . .

Heinrich said nothing. He got his hat, wrapped the skinny scarf about his neck, tugged on the great black coat, and went out into the street. He walked by himself for hours, and ate somewhere, not noticing what food he had asked for. He came back, when the house was quiet, and went quietly to bed. The next morning, with dignity, he said that he was leaving: he would find a room for himself. He thanked them.

Luther and Anna made polite if somewhat muted sounds but they let him go, only asking that he leave his address. He wouldn't have done this, but it was necessary to get his trunks from Anna's basement to his new home, and he needed help. So Anna arranged for the trunks to be sent and she went to see him. It was an ugly room in a boardinghouse which smelt of shoe polish and escaping gas and cabbage. The wallpaper in Heinrich's room was blotched and swollen in places with damp, and the fixtures on his washbowl were rusty. The bed had heavy lumps in it, and the upholstery of the chairs was without color or design, just gray and weary. It was altogether a gray room, looking out onto a dingy back yard and a narrow alley, and no sun came into it. Heinrich put the busts of Beethoven and Goethe on a shaky card table, where they did not belong, but it had become necessary for him to see them, and have them close to him for protection. Anna spoke to Luther about that room and said: we must find him work; he'll be going on relief next.

Luther had a friend whose uncle owned a secondhand bookstore. Finally, after many visits and many lies (saying that Heinrich was a distinguished professor from Tübingen whom the Nazis had deported), Heinrich was given work. He was to earn ten dollars a week and catalogue books and give advice on what books Mr. Schmidt should stock, and he was to dust them and sell them if he could, and do anything else Mr. Schmidt thought of. Mr. Schmidt wondered if he could ask Heinrich to wash the windows, which were very dirty (and that would have saved Mr. Schmidt one dollar), but he decided against it because Heinrich was so clumsy.

For a month Heinrich worked. He dropped books always; and he was so awkward with a ladder that Mr. Schmidt could not trust him to put things away on high shelves. His cataloguing was neat and exact but slow. If a customer came in, with fifteen minutes to spare at the lunch hour, Heinrich would painstakingly launch into the history of any book the customer looked at, the life of the author, the reasons for writing the book. There was rarely time left to buy anything, after that. Every once in a while, when the store was empty, timidly Heinrich would try to talk to Mr. Schmidt about his own book, about the postal system and how interesting it was and how amazingly it had developed: you could trace the whole growth of civilization through the postal system. And he would describe certain stamps. Mr. Schmidt stayed in his office more and more, separated from Heinrich by a glass door. At nights, Heinrich's room was cold. He tried to work with a quilt about his shoulders, but that hampered his writing arm. The light was poor for reading, and his eyes burned in his head. He could hear the other boarders, quarreling or snoring or brushing their teeth. Far away, Tübingen lay gently in the sun, but it was a town he had known in another life . . .

A customer came into the store—in a hurry. She had deep lines alongside her nose and her voice rose, sharp and scratchy, asking for books. She had a husband sick

at home in bed and she thought she'd bring him a novel to read. Heinrich found a somewhat torn-up copy of *The Magic Mountain*.

"It is by Thomas Mann," he said. "Thomas Mann is one of the greatest of the new German writers, and this is a very fine book, perhaps his best."

"Oh, I don't want anything by a German," the woman said.

Heinrich looked at her in amazement.

"But why, Madam?"

"Oh I dunno," the woman said crossly. "I never have thought much of the Germans since the War. I wouldn't want to buy any of their old books."

"Madam," Heinrich said, his voice cold and loud with anger, "Madam, you are a fool."

The woman put her hand up to her face as if he had struck her, made a furious crying sound and rushed from the shop. Mr. Schmidt fired Heinrich; he was grateful for that woman. He paid Heinrich an extra five dollars, out of relief to see him going.

Heinrich walked straight to Anna's house. He wanted Anna and Luther to know that he had done as any intelligent, decent man would do, and that he had not lost his job for base reasons. It was the first job he had ever had, and he wanted his honor clear.

Luther and Anna listened in silence to Heinrich's story. When he had finished, Luther said to him, not angrily, but finally, "Heinrich, I'm through with you. You just don't fit anywhere. I had a hell of a time getting you that job, and it's none of your damn business what a customer thinks. If we were all as choosy as you, we'd starve. You can just go out and run your own life. We can't do anything more for you. You just don't fit in America, Heinrich, that's all there is to it."

The stairs up to his room seemed narrower than before, and darker. The air lay on them, in different distasteful layers of smell. He turned on the dim light, and peered about him, looking for Beethoven and Goethe and trying to feel safe here, because he knew these things at least. His mind was stupid with fear. You just don't fit in America. But where could he go; what country was left; where was there peace and sunlight and a library to work in? Where could a man live, and be at home? He knew how much money he had—only two hundred left now. Only two hundred dollars. You don't fit in America. He had lost his job. How would he find another; where should he go; to whom should he speak? What could he say to recommend himself? I am Heinrich Fleddermann from Tübingen and I am fifty-one now and tired. . . . He had not even written a book, not one book, after all the years of learning truths to make a book with. He had not explained how beautiful stamps were, little colored squares of paper to carry ideas and plans and inventions and greetings around the world. There was no air in the room, only the thick air of the hallway and the cold. He stood under the light and shivered and thought to himself: I have come too far away. Suddenly he thought, for the first time: I am an exile, I am a man

who doesn't belong anywhere, and I have grown old without noticing it, but now it is too late.

He sat on the edge of his bed and waited, thinking: It will be tomorrow soon and perhaps I shall know what to do then. Heinrich Fleddermann, Heinrich Fleddermann, he kept saying, as if to prove that he was alive and at least belonged to himself. Finally he said it aloud. He heard his voice, a little later, coming from some other place, weak and uncertain, mouthing his own name. So he tried saying it bravely. That was better. "All right," he said aloud, "I shall run my own life."

But it wasn't so easy, after you'd said that. It was good to have decided it, but then what? He rose and looked out into the darkness and faintly he saw an ashpit and a worn-out tree. I'll go away, Heinrich said, I'll go to a little town where the streets are cobbled or just dirt, and you can breathe, and there's sun. I'll live in a house where there are not other people moving all the time, cooking or washing or sleeping. Two hundred dollars will be more in a little town. And when they're gone, I'll get work. I'll work in the fields or I'll give German lessons or, or . . . Or I'll die.

He knew he could never find Tübingen lying in the sun again; because it was another sun, another Tübingen, something he had lost when history changed and he became old. There was nothing to go back to, and who knew the future? Perhaps he would write his book and perhaps not. But anyhow, he could live for a while, as he wanted, in a small town with cobbled streets or dirt on

the roads—where the days were long but not heavy and confusing. He could read and dream to himself about stamps, and feel the sun on his face, walking in the afternoons. That anyhow, for a little while.

He pulled a chair up to the card table and moved Beethoven and Goethe so that he would have space to write. The letter was hard to read, each word embroidered in a fine German script.

Dear Anna:

I am very sorry that all has not gone well and I am thanking you and Luther for your goodness. I am perhaps too old to have come to America. It is hard knowing how to be an exile. I will go away and take care of myself and you will not need to be worried for me again. I wish I could have found some men who also loved stamps.

Goodbye,

Heinrich

He took the letter out and mailed it and came home to sleep. He had two hundred dollars' worth of time, and he was going to a little town and he was not afraid any more.

*

Every once in a while, washing dishes, or mending, or when the radio was playing quietly, Anna would say, in a strange, tight voice, "I wonder where Heinrich is, Luther. I wonder what's happened to Heinrich."

Luther would rattle his paper and pretend he hadn't heard . . .



He could live for a while in a small town with cobbled streets

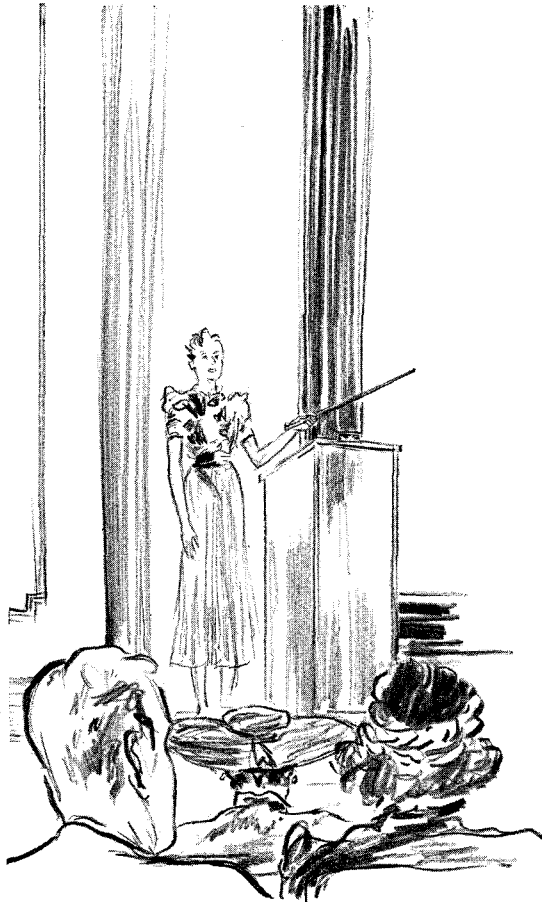
The Lady Explorer

A Sketch

MARJORY GANE HARKNESS

THE moment the fatal lecture date was set, a definite change took place in the consciousness of little Mrs. Goss. Her native element, the very air she breathed, suddenly became a thing to be afraid of. It was like those smooth tropical waters full of sharks and sunken reefs. She would wake in the morning vaguely aware that something was the matter, and it might take several moments to locate what it was—that terrible lecture that she was booked to give! Why ever had she gone to the office of that lecture agency with the portfolio of their African pictures? Obviously, because Bert had lost the Museum job after they got back, and the apartment rent was always giving them cold chills. Everyone they knew kept saying that the stories they told about their trip and the photographs Bert made were good enough for the lecture platform. But it was just on an impulse that she went down to that lecture office, really just to inquire. She never thought of being taken up so promptly. That man was very quick. "Why, yes," he said quizzically, looking at the little figure in the chair from over the pictures he was rapidly thumbing, "we haven't many lady explorers. It might go very well, if you can do it. Have your slides made and work up a talk. We have a New Jersey group that uses beginning lecturers without fee—we can try you out down there."

Bert was arranging for slides anyway, and working up the talk was not bad fun. She practiced when Bert was out, standing in one end of the living room with a cane, pointing to the pictures spread out on the floor as she came to them. She quite fancied herself as a lecturer. She could tell pretty vividly about the bull elephant's charging; and the dead lion that suddenly came alive when she had his head on her lap posing—he always brought a laugh. She knew she didn't look the part, small as she was, and fair



in spite of her leathered face. But Bert's pictures were pretty sure-fire—they'd carry the thing.

And now here, long before she felt really ready, had come a call from that agency that she was booked for the 18th in a town called Bannockburn. And nothing was the same any longer. Something idiotic was the matter. She seemed headed for some horror that was going to end the world, and the strange thing was that she was absolutely not to escape getting hooked by it—she who had always had such a blameless good time, just going along with Bert. Something was threatening her now; she was caught. She was rapidly being pushed along from each day to the next, and everything about her was in the conspiracy. Before this the things in the room were just things in a room, but now they were sinister forces rushing her to her destruction. Everything, the sofa, the table, the window—they weren't going to let her stop or hesitate.

For the first time in her life she began to be conscious of the actual passing of time. Time had started. It was on the way. Silently but irresistibly, time had got the better of her. It was like being in some flood, bound for a cataract. Probably beyond the cataract she would come out somewhere, but first there was that thin-lipped line like a dam stretching clear across the way in front of her, and nothing could stop her being plunged over it. She was the man who goes over Niagara in a barrel, for a bet and probably for good. How he shrieks for the nice safe bank moving by, and keeps guessing at how much distance there is left him before the fall.

Little Mrs. Goss had never been anything but a sensible person in all her thirty-three years. Bert often told how cool she was in a crisis. But in Africa there was never anything to get especially excited about. Well, of course, there were times—but Bert knew pretty well how to handle