

1972

## CHAPTER 70

## TRIPS TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND RUMANIA.

During the last few years, Hedy had developed an arthritis in many joints, especially in the fingers of both hands and the right knee. The X-rays showed an atrophy and thinning of the medial meniscus (cartilage) in the right knee, also adhesions of the patella and other deformities, causing a bow-leg. She had pains on walking and especially on climbing and descending stairs. One bone specialist, Dr. Wolf, had recommended an operation, a removal of a wedge-shaped slice of bone from the tibia and fibula, so that the leg would get straight right away. But we were not ready to consent and wanted first to try other things, medication, physical therapy, etc. There came the summer and we decided to go to Czechoslovakia, where there are many famous spas, among others Pistyan and Trenczyn-Teplitz, which the Czechs call Trenczyanske-Teplice, and we chose this last one and made arrangements for the trip. We decided that I would go with Hedy there, but would stay with her only for one week and then would leave her there and would go alone for 2 weeks to visit my brother Carl and his family in Bucharest, Rumania, and that Hedy and I would meet again in Vienna and stay there together for another week, and that we did.

We took a plane to Vienna, but had to change there for a bus, which took us to Trenczyn-Teplitz. We both enrolled there for treatment, I only for one week, while Hedy got the real thing, besides daily standing (not swimming) in a very large pool together with many others for about 15 minutes and then resting for half an hour, covered with blankets and finally massage, she got

1972

also mud packs, consisting of heavy black mud, covering the whole body up to the neck, very hot mud, covered with heavy blankets for half an hour, causing her to sweat profusely, and they put a cold compress on the heart-region. She also got bubble-bath treatments, and exercise treatments with massage.

I had seen Carl in 1969, when he visited us in New York, but Lotte I had not seen since my wedding in 1928, that means for 44 years, and had never seen their daughter Mausi, nor, of course, her two children, Monica and Adrian, called Adi. There was also cousin Alice in Bucharest, almost 80 years old, and her two daughters and a grand-daughter, whom I now visited. Bucharest I had seen in 1919, that means 53 years back, and it had changed a lot, but I was not too impressed now. I liked it better as it was in 1919, had liked especially the elegant horse-drawn cabs.

There were a few very high new buildings in Bucharest, but the rest was old, and new buildings were cheaply built and looked already old after a few years. There was at certain hours more automobile traffic in the center of the city, but in general there were few cars in the streets. Most cars were very unattractive Russian cars, some were Italian. But for a city of 2 million inhabitants, there was very little movements of cars. There were 6 taxi-stands in that big city. To get a taxi, one had to walk half an hour to a taxi-stand. There were busses, but one had to wait very long till one came. My people were used to walk for half an hour or an hour each way, when they went out shopping or visiting and found it very natural. But I got very tired when walking with them. Food was not scarce, but far from abundant and the quality far from good.

It was great to be together with my people and we sat toge-

1972

therefor hours, talking about the past, about what we had gone through. They had many friends, to whom I was introduced, and we went together out in the evening. Restaurants were always filled up already early and one had to get out early to get a table. Very annoying was the loud music in all these places, so that one was unable to have a conversation, unless one shouted. Very pleasant were smaller excursions to parks, where one could talk and be heard. I visited the grave of my mother, saw also the urns of Else and of cousin Marcell. Lotte is a fine, noble person, a good soul, Mausl intelligent, good-natured, but unhappily married, since her husband is a heavy drinker. At the time I am writing this, they are already divorced. Mausl has a good job with a newspaper company, with a relatively good salary. Adi, her son, at the time of my visit about 12 years old, a lovely boy, and I fell in love with him.

After strolling about in the city, two visits to Alice and her family, visits to the museum and some other places, we decided to go on a tour to Transylvania with a rented car, and we all went, Carl, Lotte, Mausl, Monica, Adi, and myself, that means 6 altogether. We drove through Ploesti, famous for the oil-wells, to Sinaia, where the famous castle of the Rumanian royal family stands, a tourist attraction. We could not get in, since there was only one guide, and he was taking in a big group of people for half an hour, and we did not have that much time to wait. We stayed there over night and continued our trip, went through the Carpathian Mountains to Brasov (Kronstadt), where we spent two days, went from there to Sigesoara (Schaessburg), where we visited good friends of Carl and his family, Tusinski, who showed us around in that highly interesting walled town, with



buildings and towers, many hundreds of years old.

The next bigger city we visited was Sibiu (Hermannstadt). We then traversed again the Carpathian Mountains and went along the Alt River, a tributary of the Danube River, to Pitesti and back to Bucharest. I had caught on that trip quite a number of butterflies, the ones I had known so well, when I was a little boy, and I later gave them in a display box to Francis as a gift. He also knew them very well, when he was a little boy.

In Bucharest I bought a few nice things to take along as gifts, among other things a nice sheep-skin coat for Johanna, which she liked very much.

The trip to Rumania was in general a very pleasant experience except for the end, when I had to say good-bye to everybody, probably forever. Carl has a few very fine paintings of Else, which I probably will also never see again.

When I visited Alice, I saw there one of Else's paintings, which she had called 'The music angel', a beautiful, impressive work. That painting was taken by one of Alice's daughters from Else's apartment after her death. The claim that Else had given them the painting as a gift, could not be verified. It may be true, also that she had given them the key and had told them to go there and take the painting. Not only did they take that painting, but also all the papers which Else had accumulated, essays, poems, etc., which she had written over the years, also photos, and little things like a pair of scissors. One day, Carl saw another painting, which they had also taken, in Alice's apartment. When he asked how it came that they had it, he was told that they liked it. Whereupon Carl took it down and said that he likes it too, and took it home.

1972

The whole thing is outrageous and should be taken to the court. I wanted to have a photo of the painting 'The music angel', but they refused to consent to the taking of a picture. At present I am trying, by writing to these people again, to get their consent and hope they will change their minds.

As planned, I met Hedy in Vienna in the Hotel Kaiserin Elisabeth. She had arrived the day before. Vienna in summer was a sleepy city and very hot. We disliked the people there and, except for some shopping, had nothing left to do there. It so happened that Paul Rosegg was also in Vienna and had planned to go for a few days to Bad-Gastein. We decided to do the same and we went together there, spent 4 quite pleasant days there, enjoying the Alps and the refreshing air. Paul had to go then home via Munich, to catch a plane there, whereas we left via Vienna.