

Experience on Vacation by Sofia Gruber née Merle

My friend Sali and I already know each other from childhood on; after all, we went to school together.

Now we were lucky to work close together in the textile factory TEBA¹. Our looms were not only in the same department but close beside one another, as desired.

We went to Bad Busiasch² on vacation at the same time. There are medicinal springs there for various illnesses. Autumn still had not come completely; nevertheless, leaves already fell from certain trees which were gigantic and very old, too. One walked as if on a carpet there.

One day, we strolled in the park. There, an older gentleman, who has already followed us a fairly long time, spoke to us. We could not explain why that can be. Now, he asked us whether we speak German; we answered in the affirmative. He said it seemed that way to him but he could not understand us. We said to him that we are Banater Swabians. He thought we could be Dutch, who are here for treatment. Then, he let us know that he is a Saxon from Transylvania.

We then walked together quite slowly; we were on vacation, after all, and had enough time for it. We talked for a while; all at once, he asked why I did not wear a bonnet like my friend's (by that, he meant the Pretschl).³ I said because I am not married.

Then he stopped and we, too. He said, how is that possible that those who are married are more finely adorned than the unmarried. We explained to him that it is the costume and custom required among us. Again, he came to the bonnet, what he called it and thought: he had taken this head cover for the Dutch costume.

This memory is newly awakened in me since we are far from land and people who have meant a lot to us.

Translated by George Bretträger
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Nowadays, Mrs. Gruber lives in Chicago.

¹ In Arad.

² 18 miles SE of Temeschburg

³ Traditional headwear for married women in Glogowatz