

CHAPTER XV

ARRESTED IN GERMANY

Before the War, American travelers, and especially American tourist conductors, met so many petty annoyances that these annoyances appeared to be a part of definite policy. A single illustration will suffice. One day in Germany the train coach in which we rode was separated from the dining car by an old type car which had no corridor. At one of the stops Grandfather got out of the coach, ran ahead to the dining car to give instructions for lunch and quickly back to the coach. Meanwhile, one young man of the party stepped over to a fruit stand to buy some fruit and another, who was on a honeymoon trip with his bride, stepped off "to stretch his legs". When Grandfather returned, the coach door was closed. He started to open it, but was stopped by the platform conductor who ordered us back, closed the door and ordered the train to proceed.

Now it happened that Grandfather had all the tickets for the party and besides he alone knew the name of the hotel in Munich for which the party was scheduled. He needed to make the train. The young man who bought the fruit had an appointment for the evening with a young lady in Munich; so unusual an opportunity could not be lost. But the most excited of all was the bridegroom, and when he saw the pale face of his bride looking beseechingly out of the window at him, he jumped the train; the other young man did the same.

Grandfather ran past the platform conductor, intending to jump the train the other side of him; when the platform conductor swelled up like a bullfrog in a pond and blew a whistle as loud as possible. The

train was stopped and the three of us were put under arrest - the two young men for jumping the train, Grandfather presumably for intending to do so. We were allowed to enter the train, but the tickets and baggage of the entire party was seized for bail.

At Munich we were conducted to police quarters in the station and listened to a lengthy document stating that we had been arrested for the crime of jumping on a moving train. The two young men pleaded guilty. Grandfather pleaded not guilty, but when he found that he must appear next morning and defend his case, changed his plea to guilty. We were then told that the fine would be ten marks (\$2.50) each; but since we were foreigners and had not known how serious a crime it was to jump on a moving train, the judge might let us off with a fine of five marks each, in which case the difference would be returned to the address we gave (Grandfather's home address).

When he returned home, Grandfather found three very lengthy letters in German explaining that we were guilty of a serious crime in jumping on the train, but in view of the fact we were foreigners, if we would write an acknowledgement that the penalty imposed was a just and proper one, they would remit five marks (\$1.25) each.

Grandfather wrote an acknowledgement that a fine of \$1.25 seemed to be a reasonable punishment for jumping on a moving train, but that since he had not jumped on the train, he thought he should have all his money back. In the course of time he received five marks each for each of the young men and five marks less postage on a letter of explanation to himself, which said that it was fully as great a crime to put your foot on the step as to jump upon a moving train.

