VINTAGE

GOODBYE TO BERLIN

CHRISTOPHER ISHERWOOD

CONTENTS

About the Author

Christopher Isherwood was born in Cheshire in 1904. He began to write at university and later moved to Berlin, where he gave English lessons to support himself. He witnessed Hitler's rise to power first hand and some of his best works, such as *Mr. Norris Changes Trains* and *Goodbye to Berlin*, draw on these experiences. Isherwood travelled with W.H. Auden to China in the late 1930s before going to America in 1939 which he made his home for the rest of his life. He died on 4 January 1986.

ALSO BY CHRISTOPHER ISHERWOOD

All the Conspirators
The Memorial
Lions and Shadows
Prater Violet
The Condor and the Cows
The World in the Evening
Down There on a Visit
Ramakrishna and His Disciples
A Meeting by the River
Kathleen and Frank
Christopher and His Kind
My Guru and His Disciple
Exhumations
Mr Norris Changes Trains
A Single Man

With Don Bachardy
October

With W. H. Auden
The Dog Beneath the Skin
The Ascent of F6
On the Frontier
Journey to a War

TO JOHN AND BEATRIX LEHMANN

CHRISTOPHER ISHERWOOD

Goodbye to Berlin

VINTAGE BOOKS
London

The six pieces contained in this volume form a roughly continuous narrative. They are the only existing fragments of what was originally planned as a huge episodic novel of pre-Hitler Berlin. I had intended to call it *The Lost*. My old title has been changed, however; it is too grandiose for this short loosely connected sequence of diaries and sketches.

Readers of *Mr Norris Changes Trains* (published in the United States as *The Last of Mr Norris*) may notice that certain characters and situations in that novel overlap and contradict what I have written here – Sally Bowles, for instance, would have run into Mr Norris on Frl. Schroeder's staircase; Christopher Isherwood would certainly have come home one evening to find William Bradshaw asleep in his bed. The explanation is simple: The adventures of Mr Norris once formed part of *The Lost* itself.

Because I have given my own name to the 'I' of this narrative, readers are certainly not entitled to assume that its pages are purely autobiographical, or that its characters are libellously exact portraits of living persons. 'Christopher Isherwood' is a convenient ventriloquist's dummy, nothing more.

The first *Berlin Diary, The Nowaks*, and *The Landauers* have already appeared, in John Lehmann's *New Writing*. Of these, *Berlin Diary* and *The Nowaks* and also the second *Berlin Diary* have appeared in his Penguin *New Writing. Sally Bowles* was originally published as a separate volume by The Hogarth Press.

C.I.
September 1935

A BERLIN DIARY

Autumn 1930

FROM MY WINDOW, the deep solemn massive street. Cellar-shops where the lamps burn all day, under the shadow of top-heavy balconied façades, dirty plaster frontages embossed with scroll-work and heraldic devices. The whole district is like this: street leading into street of houses like shabby monumental safes crammed with the tarnished valuables and second-hand furniture of a bankrupt middle class.

I am a camera with its shutter open, quite passive, recording, not thinking. Recording the man shaving at the window opposite and the woman in the kimono washing her hair. Some day, all this will have to be developed, carefully printed, fixed.

At eight o'clock in the evening the house-doors will be locked. The children are having supper. The shops are shut. The electric sign is switched on over the night-bell of the little hotel on the corner, where you can hire a room by the hour. And soon the whistling will begin. Young men are calling their girls. Standing down there in the cold, they whistle up at the lighted windows of warm rooms where the beds are already turned down for the night. They want to be let in. Their signals echo down the deep hollow street, lascivious and private and sad. Because of the whistling, I do not care to stay here in the evenings. It reminds me that I am in a foreign city, alone, far from home. Sometimes I determine not to listen to it, pick up a book, try to read. But soon a call is sure to sound, so piercing, so insistent, so despairingly human, that at last I have to get up and peep through the slats of the Venetian blind to make quite sure

that it is not – as I know very well it could not possibly be – for me.

The extraordinary smell in this room when the stove is lighted and the window shut; not altogether unpleasant, a mixture of incense and stale buns. The tall tiled stove, gorgeously coloured, like an altar. The washstand like a Gothic shrine. The cupboard also is Gothic, with carved cathedral windows: Bismarck faces the King of Prussia in stained glass. My best chair would do for a bishop's throne. In the corner, three sham medieval halberds (from a theatrical touring company?) are fastened together to form a hatstand. Frl. Schroeder unscrews the heads of the halberds and polishes them from time to time. They are heavy and sharp enough to kill.

Everything in the room is like that: unnecessarily solid, abnormally heavy and dangerously sharp. Here, at the writing-table, I am confronted by a phalanx of metal objects – a pair of candlesticks shaped like entwined serpents, an ashtray from which emerges the head of a crocodile, a paperknife copied from a Florentine dagger, a brass dolphin holding on the end of its tail a small broken clock. What becomes of such things? How could they ever be destroyed? They will probably remain intact for thousands of years: people will treasure them in museums. Or perhaps they will merely be melted down for munitions in a war. Every morning, Frl. Schroeder arranges them very carefully in certain unvarying positions: there they stand, like an uncompromising statement of her views on Capital and Society, Religion and Sex.

All day long she goes padding about the large dingy flat. Shapeless but alert, she waddles from room to room, in carpet slippers and a flowered dressing-gown pinned ingeniously together, so that not an inch of petticoat or bodice is to be seen, flicking with her duster, peeping,

spying, poking her short pointed nose into the cupboards and luggage of her lodgers. She has dark, bright, inquisitive eyes and pretty waved brown hair of which she is proud. She must be about fifty-five years old.

Long ago, before the War and the Inflation, she used to be comparatively well off. She went to the Baltic for her summer holidays and kept a maid to do the housework. For the last thirty years she has lived here and taken in lodgers. She started doing it because she liked to have company.

‘“Lina,” my friends used to say to me, “however can you? How can you bear to have strange people living in your rooms and spoiling your furniture, especially when you’ve got the money to be independent?” And I’d always give them the same answer. “*My* lodgers aren’t lodgers,” I used to say. “They’re my guests.”

‘You see, Herr Issyvoo, in those days I could afford to be very particular about the sort of people who came to live here. I could pick and choose. I only took them really well connected and well educated – proper gentlefolk (like yourself, Herr Issyvoo). I had a Freiherr once, and a Rittmeister and a Professor. They often gave me presents – a bottle of cognac or a box of chocolates or some flowers. And when one of them went away for his holidays he’d always send me a card – from London, it might be, or Paris, or Baden-Baden. Ever such pretty cards I used to get . . .’

And now Frl. Schroeder has not even got a room of her own. She has to sleep in the living-room, behind a screen, on a small sofa with broken springs. As in so many of the older Berlin flats, our living-room connects the front part of the house with the back. The lodgers who live on the front have to pass through the living-room on their way to the bathroom, so that Frl. Schroeder is often disturbed during the night. ‘But I drop off again at once. It doesn’t worry me. I’m much too tired.’ She has to do all the housework herself and it takes up most of her day. ‘Twenty years ago, if

anybody had told me to scrub my own floors, I'd have slapped his face for him. But you get used to it. You can get used to anything. Why, I remember the time when I'd sooner cut off my right hand than empty this chamber . . . And now,' says Frl. Schroeder, suiting the action to the word, 'my goodness! It's no more to me than pouring out a cup of tea!'

She is fond of pointing out to me the various marks and stains left by lodgers who have inhabited this room:

'Yes, Herr Issyvoo, I've got something to remember each of them by . . . Look here, on the rug – I've sent it to the cleaners I don't know how often but nothing will get it out – that's where Herr Noeske was sick after his birthday party. What in the world can he have been eating, to make a mess like that? He'd come to Berlin to study, you know. His parents lived in Brandenburg – a first-class family; oh, I assure you! They had pots of money! His Herr Papa was a surgeon, and of course he wanted his boy to follow in his footsteps . . . What a charming young man! "Herr Noeske," I used to say to him, "excuse me, but you must really work harder – you with all your brains! Think of your Herr Papa and your Frau Mama; it isn't fair to them to waste their good money like that. Why, if you were to drop it in the Spree it would be better. At least it would make a splash!" I was like a mother to him. And always, when he'd got himself into some scrape – he was terribly thoughtless – he'd come straight to me: "Schroederschen," he used to say, "please don't be angry with me . . . We were playing cards last night and I lost the whole of this month's allowance. I daren't tell Father . . ." And then he'd look at me with those great big eyes of his. I knew exactly what he was after, the scamp! But I hadn't the heart to refuse. So I'd sit down and write a letter to his Frau Mama and beg her to forgive him just that once and send some more

money. And she always would . . . Of course, as a woman, I knew how to appeal to a mother's feelings, although I've never had any children of my own . . . What are you smiling at, Herr Issyvoo? Well, well! Mistakes will happen, you know!

'And that's where the Herr Rittmeister always upset his coffee over the wall-paper. He used to sit there on the couch with his fiancée. "Herr Rittmeister," I used to say to him, "do please drink your coffee at the table. If you'll excuse my saying so, there's plenty of time for the other thing afterwards . . ." But no, he always would sit on the couch. And then, sure enough, when he began to get a bit excited in his feelings, over went the coffee-cups . . . Such a handsome gentleman! His Frau Mama and his sister came to visit us sometimes. They liked coming up to Berlin. "Fräulein Schroeder," they used to tell me, "you don't know how lucky you are to be living here, right in the middle of things. We're only country cousins – we envy you! And now tell us all the latest Court scandals!" Of course, they were only joking. They had the sweetest little house, not far from Halberstadt, in the Harz. They used to show me pictures of it. A perfect dream!

'You see those ink-stains on the carpet? That's where Herr Professor Koch used to shake his fountain-pen. I told him of it a hundred times. In the end, I even laid sheets of blotting-paper on the floor around his chair. He was so absent-minded . . . Such a dear old gentleman! And so simple. I was very fond of him. If I mended a shirt for him or darned his socks, he'd thank me with the tears in his eyes. He liked a bit of fun, too. Sometimes, when he heard me coming, he'd turn out the light and hide behind the door; and then he'd roar like a lion to frighten me. Just like a child . . .'

Frl. Schroeder can go on like this, without repeating herself, by the hour. When I have been listening to her for some time, I find myself relapsing into a curious trance-like

state of depression. I begin to feel profoundly unhappy. Where are all those lodgers now? Where, in another ten years, shall I be, myself? Certainly not here. How many seas and frontiers shall I have to cross to reach that distant day; how far shall I have to travel, on foot, on horseback, by car, push-bike, aeroplane, steamer, train, lift, moving-staircase, and tram? How much money shall I need for that enormous journey? How much food must I gradually, wearily consume on my way? How many pairs of shoes shall I wear out? How many thousands of cigarettes shall I smoke? How many cups of tea shall I drink and how many glasses of beer? What an awful tasteless prospect! And yet – to have to die . . . A sudden vague pang of apprehension grips my bowels and I have to excuse myself in order to go to the lavatory.

Hearing that I was once a medical student, she confides to me that she is very unhappy because of the size of her bosom. She suffers from palpitations and is sure that these must be caused by the strain on her heart. She wonders if she should have an operation. Some of her acquaintances advise her to, others are against it:

‘Oh dear, it’s such a weight to have to carry about with you! And just think – Herr Issyvoo: I used to be as slim as you are!’

‘I suppose you had a great many admirers, Frl. Schroeder?’

Yes, she has had dozens. But only one Friend. He was a married man, living apart from his wife, who would not divorce him.

‘We were together eleven years. Then he died of pneumonia. Sometimes I wake up in the night when it’s cold and wish he was there. You never seem to get really warm, sleeping alone.’

There are four other lodgers in this flat. Next door to me, in the big front-room, is Frl. Kost. In the room opposite, overlooking the courtyard, is Frl. Mayr. At the back, beyond the living-room, is Bobby. And behind Bobby's room, over the bathroom, at the top of a ladder, is a tiny attic which Frl. Schroeder refers to, for some occult reason, as 'The Swedish Pavilion'. This she lets, at twenty marks a month, to a commercial traveller who is out all day and most of the night. I occasionally come upon him on Sunday mornings, in the kitchen, shuffling about in his vest and trousers, apologetically hunting for a box of matches.

Bobby is a mixer at a west-end bar called the Troika. I don't know his real name. He has adopted this one because English Christian names are fashionable just now in the Berlin demi-monde. He is a pale, worried-looking, smartly dressed young man with thin sleek black hair. During the early afternoon, just after he has got out of bed, he walks about the flat in shirt-sleeves, wearing a hair-net.

Frl. Schroeder and Bobby are on intimate terms. He tickles her and slaps her bottom; she hits him over the head with a frying-pan or a mop. The first time I surprised them scuffling like this, they were both rather embarrassed. Now they take my presence as a matter of course.

Frl. Kost is a blonde florid girl with large silly blue eyes. When we meet, coming to and from the bathroom in our dressing-gowns, she modestly avoids my glance. She is plump but has a good figure.

One day I asked Frl. Schroeder straight out: What was Frl. Kost's profession?

'Profession? Ha, ha, that's good! That's just the word for it! Oh, yes, she's got a fine profession. Like this – '

And with the air of doing something extremely comic, she began waddling across the kitchen like a duck, mincingly holding a duster between her finger and thumb. Just by the door, she twirled triumphantly round,

flourishing the duster as though it were a silk handkerchief, and kissed her hand to me mockingly:

'Ja, ja, Herr Issyvoo! That's how they do it!'

'I don't quite understand, Frl. Schroeder. Do you mean that she's a tight-rope walker?'

'He, he, he! Very good indeed, Herr Issyvoo! Yes, that's right! That's it! She walks along the line for her living. That just describes her!'

One evening, soon after this, I met Frl. Kost on the stairs, with a Japanese. Frl. Schroeder explained to me later that he is one of Frl. Kost's best customers. She asked Frl. Kost how they spend the time together when not actually in bed, for the Japanese can speak hardly any German.

'Oh, well,' said Frl. Kost, 'we play the gramophone together, you know, and eat chocolates, and then we laugh a lot. He's very fond of laughing . . .'

Frl. Schoeder really quite likes Frl. Kost and certainly hasn't any moral objections to her trade: nevertheless, when she is angry because Frl. Kost has broken the spout of the teapot or omitted to make crosses for her telephone-calls on the slate in the living-room, then invariably she exclaims:

'But after all, what else can you expect from a woman of that sort, a common prostitute! Why, Herr Issyvoo, do you know what she used to be? A servant girl! And then she got to be on intimate terms with her employer and one fine day, of course, she found herself in certain circumstances . . . And when that little difficulty was removed, she had to go trot-trot . . .'

Frl. Mayr is a music-hall *jodlerin* – one of the best, so Frl. Schroeder reverently assures me, in the whole of Germany. Frl. Schroeder doesn't altogether like Frl. Mayr, but she stands in great awe of her; as well she may. Frl. Mayr has a bull-dog jaw, enormous arms, and coarse string-coloured hair. She speaks a Bavarian dialect with peculiarly

aggressive emphasis. When at home, she sits up like a war-horse at the living-room table, helping Frl. Schroeder to lay cards. They are both adept fortune-tellers and neither would dream of beginning the day without consulting the omens. The chief thing they both want to know at present is: when will Frl. Mayr get another engagement? This question interests Frl. Schroeder quite as much as Frl. Mayr, because Frl. Mayr is behind-hand with the rent.

At the corner of the Motzstrasse, when the weather is fine, there stands a shabby pop-eyed man beside a portable canvas booth. On the sides of the booth are pinned astrological diagrams and autographed letters of recommendation from satisfied clients. Frl. Schroeder goes to consult him whenever she can afford the mark for his fee. In fact, he plays a most important part in her life. Her behaviour towards him is a mixture of cajolery and threats. If the good things he promises her come true she will kiss him, she says, invite him to dinner, buy him a gold watch: if they don't, she will throttle him, box his ears, report him to the police. Among other prophecies, the astrologer has told her that she will win some money in the Prussian State Lottery. So far, she has had no luck. But she is always discussing what she will do with her winnings. We are all to have presents, of course. I am to get a hat, because Frl. Schroeder thinks it very improper that a gentleman of my education should go about without one.

When not engaged in laying cards, Frl. Mayr drinks tea and lectures Frl. Schroeder on her past theatrical triumphs:

'And the Manager said to me: "Fritzi, Heaven must have sent you here! My leading lady's fallen ill. You're to leave for Copenhagen tonight." And what's more, he wouldn't take no for an answer. "Fritzi," he said (he always called me that), "Fritzi, you aren't going to let an old friend down?" And so I went . . .' Frl. Mayr sips her tea reminiscently: 'A charming man. And so well-bred.' She

smiles: ‘Familiar . . . but he always knew how to behave himself.’

Frl. Schroeder nods eagerly, drinking in every word, revelling in it:

‘I suppose some of those managers must be cheeky devils? (Have some more sausage, Frl. Mayr?)’

‘(Thank you, Frl. Schroeder; just a little morsel.) Yes, some of them . . . you wouldn’t believe! But I could always take care of myself. Even when I was quite a slip of a girl . . .’

The muscles of Frl. Mayer’s nude fleshy arms ripple unappetizingly. She sticks out her chin:

‘I’m a Bavarian; and a Bavarian never forgets an injury.’

Coming into the living-room yesterday evening, I found Frl. Schroder and Frl. Mayr lying flat on their stomachs with their ears pressed to the carpet. At intervals, they exchanged grins of delight or joyfully pinched each other, with simultaneous exclamations of *Ssh*!

‘Hark!’ whispered Frl. Schroeder, ‘he’s smashing all the furniture!’

‘He’s beating her black and blue!’ exclaimed Frl. Mayr, in raptures.

‘Bang! Just listen to that!’

‘Ssh! Ssh!’

‘Ssh!’

Frl. Schroeder was quite beside herself. When I asked what was the matter, she clambered to her feet, waddled forward and, taking me round the waist, danced a little waltz with me: ‘Herr Issyvoo! Herr Issyvoo! Herr Issyvoo!’ until she was breathless.

‘But whatever has happened?’ I asked.

‘Ssh!’ commanded Frl. Mayr from the floor. ‘Ssh! They’ve started again!’

In the flat directly beneath ours lives a certain Frau Glanterneck. She is a Galician Jewess, in itself a reason why Frl. Mayr should be her enemy: for Frl. Mayr, needless to say, is an ardent Nazi. And, quite apart from this, it seems that Frau Glanterneck and Frl. Mayr once had words on the stairs about Frl. Mayr's yodelling. Frau Glanterneck, perhaps because she is a non-Aryan, said that she preferred the noises made by cats. Thereby, she insulted not merely Frl. Mayr, but all Bavarian, all German women: and it was Frl. Mayr's pleasant duty to avenge them.

About a fortnight ago, it became known among the neighbours that Frau Glanterneck, who is sixty years old and as ugly as a witch, had been advertising in the newspaper for a husband. What was more, an applicant had already appeared: a widowed butcher from Halle. He had seen Frau Glanterneck and was nevertheless prepared to marry her. Here was Frl. Mayr's chance. By roundabout inquiries, she discovered the butcher's name and address and wrote him an anonymous letter. Was he aware that Frau Glanterneck had (*a*) bugs in her flat, (*b*) been arrested for fraud and released on the ground that she was insane, *(c)* leased out her own bedroom for immoral purposes, and (*d*) slept in the beds afterwards without changing the sheets? And now the butcher had arrived to confront Frau Glanterneck with the letter. One could hear both of them quite distinctly: the growling of the enraged Prussian and the shrill screaming of the Jewess. Now and then came the thud of a fist against wood and, occasionally, the crash of glass. The row lasted over an hour.

This morning we hear that the neighbours have complained to the portress of the disturbance and that Frau Glanterneck is to be seen with a black eye. The marriage is off.

The inhabitants of this street know me by sight already. At the grocer's, people no longer turn their heads on hearing my English accent as I order a pound of butter. At the street corner, after dark, the three whores no longer whisper throatily: 'Komm, Süsser!' as I pass.

The three whores are all plainly over fifty years old. They do not attempt to conceal their age. They are not noticeably rouged or powdered. They wear baggy old fur coats and longish skirts and matronly hats. I happened to mention them to Bobby and he explained to me that there is a recognized demand for the comfortable type of woman. Many middle-aged men prefer them to girls. They even attract boys in their 'teens. A boy, explained Bobby, feels shy with a girl of his own age but not with a woman old enough to be his mother. Like most barmen, Bobby is a great expert on sexual questions.

The other evening, I went to call on him during business hours.

It was still very early, about nine o'clock, when I arrived at the Troika. The place was much larger and grander than I had expected. A commissionaire braided like an archduke regarded my hatless head with suspicion until I spoke to him in English. A smart cloak-room girl insisted on taking my overcoat, which hides the worst stains on my baggy flannel trousers. A page-boy, seated on the counter, didn't rise to open the inner door. Bobby, to my relief, was at his place behind a blue and silver bar. I made towards him as towards an old friend. He greeted me most amiably:

'Good evening, Mr Isherwood. Very glad to see you here.'

I ordered a beer and settled myself on a stool in the corner. With my back to the wall, I could survey the whole room.

'How's business?' I asked.

Bobby's care-worn, powdered, night-dweller's face became grave. He inclined his head towards me, over the

bar, with confidential flattering seriousness:

‘Not much good, Mr Isherwood. The kind of public we have nowadays . . . you wouldn’t believe it! Why, a year ago, we’d have turned them away at the door. They order a beer and think they’ve got the right to sit here the whole evening.’

Bobby spoke with extreme bitterness. I began to feel uncomfortable:

‘What’ll you drink?’ I asked, guiltily gulping down my beer; and added, lest there should be any misunderstanding: ‘I’d like a whisky and soda.’

Bobby said he’d have one, too.

The room was nearly empty. I looked the few guests over, trying to see them through Bobby’s disillusioned eyes. There were three attractive well-dressed girls sitting at the bar: the one nearest to me was particularly elegant, she had quite a cosmopolitan air. But during a lull in the conversation, I caught fragments of her talk with the other barman. She spoke broad Berlin dialect. She was tired and bored; her mouth dropped. A young man approached her and joined in the discussion; a handsome broad-shouldered boy in a well-cut dinner-jacket, who might well have been an English public-school prefect on holiday.

‘*Nee*, *Nee*,’ I heard him say. ‘*Bei mir nicht!*’ He grinned and made a curt, brutal gesture of the streets.

Over in the corner sat a page-boy, talking to the little old lavatory attendant in his white jacket. The boy said something, laughed and broke off suddenly into a huge yawn. The three musicians on their platform were chatting, evidently unwilling to begin until they had an audience worth playing to. At one of the tables, I thought I saw a genuine guest, a stout man with a moustache. After a moment, however, I caught his eye, he made a little bow and I knew that he must be the manager.

The door opened. Two men and two women came in. The women were elderly, had thick legs, cropped hair, and

costly evening-gowns. The men were lethargic, pale, probably Dutch. Here, unmistakably, was Money. In an instant, the Troika was transformed. The manager, the cigarette-boy, and the lavatory attendant rose simultaneously to their feet. The lavatory attendant disappeared. The manager said something in a furious undertone to the cigarette-boy, who also disappeared. He then advanced, bowing and smiling, to the guests' table and shook hands with the two men. The cigarette-boy reappeared with his tray, followed by a waiter who hurried forward with the wine-list. Meanwhile, the three-man orchestra struck briskly. The girls at the bar turned on their stools smiling a not-too-direct invitation. The gigolos advanced to them as if to complete strangers, bowed formally, and asked, in cultured tones, for the pleasure of a dance. The page-boy, spruce, discreetly grinning, swaying from the waist like a flower, crossed the room with his tray of cigarettes: '*Zigarren! Zigaretten!*' His voice was mocking, clear-pitched like an actor's. And in the same tone, yet more loudly, mockingly, joyfully so that we could all hear, the waiter ordered from Bobby: 'Heidsieck Monopol!'

With absurd, solicitous gravity, the dancers performed their intricate evolutions, showing in their every movement a consciousness of the part they were playing. And the saxophonist, letting his instrument swing loose from the ribbon around his neck, advanced to the edge of the platform with his little megaphone:

Sie werden lachen,
Ich lieb'
Meine eigene Frau . . .

He sang with a knowing leer, including us all in the conspiracy, charging his voice with innuendo, rolling his eyes in an epileptic pantomime of extreme joy. Bobby,

suave, sleek, five years younger, handled the bottle. And meanwhile the two flaccid gentlemen chatted to each other, probably about business, without a glance at the night-life they had called into being; while their women sat silent, looking neglected, puzzled, uncomfortable, and very bored.

Frl. Hippi Bernstein, my first pupil, lives in the Grünewald, in a house built almost entirely of glass. Most of the richest Berlin families inhabit the Grünewald. It is difficult to understand why. Their villas, in all known styles of expensive ugliness, ranging from the eccentric-rococo folly to the cubist flat-roofed steel-and-glass box, are crowded together in this dank, dreary pinewood. Few of them can afford large gardens, for the ground is fabulously dear: their only view is of their neighbour's backyard, each one protected by a wire fence and a savage dog. Terror of burglary and revolution has reduced these miserable people to a state of siege. They have neither privacy nor sunshine. The district is really a millionaire's slum.

When I rang the bell at the garden gate, a young footman came out with a key from the house, followed by a large growling Alsatian.

'He won't bite you while I'm here,' the footman reassured me, grinning.

The hall of the Bernsteins' house has metal-studded doors and a steamer clock fastened to the wall with bolt-heads. There are modernist lamps, designed to look like pressure-guages, thermometers, and switchboard dials. But the furniture doesn't match the house and its fittings. The place is like a power-station which the engineers have tried to make comfortable with chairs and tables from an old-fashioned, highly respectable boarding-house. On the austere metal walls hang highly varnished nineteenth-century landscapes in massive gold frames. Herr Bernstein probably ordered the villa from a popular *avant-garde*

architect in a moment of recklessness; was horrified at the result and tried to cover it up as much as possible with the family belongings.

Frl. Hippi is a fat pretty girl, about nineteen years old, with glossy chestnut hair, good teeth, and big cow-eyes. She has a lazy, jolly, self-indulgent laugh and a well-formed bust. She speaks schoolgirl English with a slight American accent, quite nicely, to her own complete satisfaction. She has clearly no intention of doing any work. When I tried weakly to suggest a plan for our lessons, she kept interrupting to offer me chocolates, coffee, cigarettes: 'Excuse me a minute, there isn't some fruit,' she smiled, picking up the receiver of the house-telephone: 'Anna, please bring some oranges.'

When the maid arrived with the oranges, I was forced, despite my protests, to make a regular meal, with a plate, knife, and fork. This destroyed the last pretence of the teacher-pupil relationship. I felt like a policeman being given a meal in the kitchen by an attractive cook. Frl. Hippi sat watching me eat, with her good-natured, lazy smile:

'Tell me, please, why you come to Germany?'

She is inquisitive about me, but only like a cow idly poking with its head between the bars of a gate. She doesn't particularly want the gate to open. I said that I found Germany very interesting:

'The political and economic situation,' I improvised authoritatively, in my schoolmaster voice, 'is more interesting in Germany than in any other European country.

'Except Russia, of course,' I added experimentally.

But Frl. Hippi didn't react. She just blandly smiled:

'I think it shall be dull for you here? You do not have many friends in Berlin, no?'

This seemed to please and amuse her:

'You don't know some nice girls?'

Here the buzzer of the house-telephone sounded. Lazily smiling, she picked up the receiver, but appeared not to