

From Alfred Rix Habershon, holidaying with his Uncle Joe in Germany, to his mother, Mary Gidley Habershon, Parkfield Road, Rotherham, Yorkshire

Gutenbach

Monday July 11th 1898

Dear Mother,

My last letter was written at Allerheiligen on Thursday. On Friday we walked to Oppenau and from there took the diligence¹ to Griesbach. Just before we started from Allerheiligen a lady and gentleman set out, the lady carrying a hand camera. Part way on the road to Oppenau it began to rain but we put on our capes and continued walking. Nearing Oppenau we sat down to rest; it then stopped raining. Whilst sitting there the camera lady passed evidently having stood up somewhere for the rain. On reaching Oppenau a little after one o'clock, we found we had to wait till 3 for the diligence. We had lunch near the station and then went to look at the town of Oppenau, taking snap shots in the principal street. At three we took the diligence to Griesbach arriving there at about 5. On alighting from the diligence we came face to face with the camera lady, a fearful grin o'erspread her visage. We however left her in Griesbach and proceeded to cross the hills over to Rippoldsau. From Griesbach to Rippoldsau was a lovely walk right through the forest, the air was quite cool then, it being evening. About half past eight we reached Rippoldsau and on entering the village we came upon the camera woman again – the grin this time was little short of miraculous – how she came there we could not imagine.

Freiburg Tuesday

From Rippoldsau on Saturday morning after rising at six we took the diligence to Wolfach, from there railed to Hornbeg and then walked on to Freiburg up the Gutach valley. In the evening we went to see the Freiburg waterfall. It is a tremendous fall, the largest in West Germany, 500 feet high altogether. On Sunday we walked from Freiburg to Furtwangen arriving there early in the afternoon. We put up at the Ox hotel and had dinner in the middle of the day for once. In the Speiseraal or eating room there were a crowd of German gentlemen (?) drinking beer, playing cards and making a tremendous noise. This is how the Germans seem to spend Sunday, all the hotels seemed full of a noisy crowd of people. After dinner we slept all the afternoon, till about half past five. Then we went out on to a hill close by and ate cherries after which we came in, had tea and went to bed. When we got up on Monday morning we found rain coming down in a steady drizzle and the clouds right down in the valley shutting out all the view. By the way I should say that at Furtwangen our luggage had not caught us up so we had to sleep in our shirts; at Freiburg we had left it at our hotel to be sent on during the day but it had been forgotten and did not arrive till Monday morning. I said it was raining on Monday but since we found that the diligence did not go till one o'clock we decided to walk

¹ A type of horse drawn carriage

through it and so directed our luggage to be sent on to Waldbirch about 19 or 20 miles off. After leaving Furtwangen we had to cross a mountain pass; this involved our going right through the clouds. We got simply soaked. So at Gutenbach we put up to have our clothes dried. The landlord lent us a pair of trousers each. I then began this letter as you see. About half past eleven our clothes were dry so we put them on and went downstairs to lunch. Here we met an Irish parson and his wife who were just about to have dinner. We then set out again for Waldbirch. It drizzled the whole way. Soon after starting again the parson overtook us in a carriage. Later on the diligence with our luggage passed and inside was the same lady with the camera, the gentleman was looking out of the window and saw us just taking a photo.

We reached Wadkirch about half past six wet and tired. But a good dinner set us right. This morning we came to Freiberg by the 9.40 train. From the station we sent our luggage on to the Angel Hotel and went to see the town. We first went up the Schlossberg and took one of the two views of Freiburg then came down and took a snapshot in the Kaiserstrasse. Afterwards we went into the cathedral, here we set our cameras in a corner exposed a film and left it for ten minutes while we walked round, then came back and shut them thus giving a ten minute exposure. After lunch we went up the Lorrettoberg from which we got a splendid view over the Rhine valley and could see the Vosges at the other side. I forgot to say that today started very wet but cleared up and was quite fine by noon. I have got your second letter, thanks very much for it. Much love to everyone.

From
Your loving son
Alfred