



Title 424

Happy Family together in about 1920
after my father's return to Berlin. *Author's
Collection.*

My father's demobilisation from the Army Medical Service must have taken place in 1919 and his return to Berlin would have followed immediately — but I have no documents to prove the date. His home-coming undoubtedly gave him and my mother great joy and satisfaction, they were united again in their love for each other, and my father had the special pleasure of seeing his now 3 year old baby son, Kurt.

But his return home was also full of grave anxiety. Quite apart from re-starting his medical practice as an independent specialist for children's and internal diseases, he had lost for the first time all his savings, invested in war loans. They were completely valueless after the lost war of 1914-1918. The end had come in November 1918, when sailors in Kiel mutinied, revolution broke out in Berlin and Munich, the Kaiser abdicated and fled to Holland, after his family of Hohenzollern had reigned in Brandenburg, Prussia and Germany since 1417.

The year 1919 had started with a General Strike and a Civil War fought between the '*Spartakus Bund*', the Communist hard core, and against them the remnants of the defeated German Army and its right-wing sympathisers. Small scale battles were fought all over Berlin, and I was told that one such engagement occurred at the Lützow Platz, less than one kilometer from our home in the Landgrafen Strasse. The rifle and machine gun fire must have been heard by my parents and by me.

Gradually law and order returned, and later in 1919 the National Assembly in Weimar accepted a democratic-republican Constitution with Ebert as the first German President and a new flag, black, red and gold. For my parents too a civilised life was returning, with my father acquiring new and regaining old patients, my mother resuming her sculpture, and myself growing up, going to school, learning Latin and working hard, following the then still prevalent Prussian tradition of the older teachers in Berlin schools. [Title 4]

Once again, my parents lost all their money during the hyper-inflation which started in 1921 and finished in 1923, when US \$ 1 was equivalent to one billion Mark [10 to the power of 9]. Like other professionals, my father had to adopt an immediate use of money earned. While my father treated a patient and was at once paid for his service in cash, my mother waited at the entrance to the house downstairs, received my father's earnings, and immediately bought essential food and other necessities, before a new rate of exchange was announced at noon, and the money had lost its value. As my father had a few foreign patients, who paid cash in dollars, he was very fortunate indeed.