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NEWS FROM GERMANY:

"Never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee". But for the luck of geography, you and I might be among these - the thousands of displaced persons who still trek across Europe 13 years after the war's end. Camp Friedland, near the Iron Curtain which splits Germany and the world, is the official reception centre for refugees from East Europe. In the various regions of West Germany, 12,000,000 East Germans alone have been resettled since the war, and it's still going on....

This particular party is the first from the one-time German territories incorporated in Poland and Russia after the war - they've been allowed to bring personal belongings and livestock with them, to help start in their new life in the Federal Republic.

Five hundred men, women and children pass through Camp Friedland every day - mostly genuine refugees; some, doubtless rogues; even a few spies - but all of them the sad human aftermath for war which the youngest of them never saw...

Here's something which looks the same wherever it happens - a sale! Yes, they have them in Germany, too. Twice a year the German Hausfrau battles for bargains with all the vigour of her British counterpart - though perhaps just a little more grumpy. For the Germans take serious things seriously - and what could be more serious than the hunt for that genuine bargain which is always on the next floor - or on the next counter - or on that other woman's head?

It's all right as long as it's left to the women - they know what they're at. But (just as in Britain) the trouble starts when the men dare to voice an opinion.

After all, women never interfere in men's shopping - do they? And men always know exactly what they want - don't they? They're not vain, like women - they never try to squeeze themselves into something a couple of sizes too small, just because it looks smart - do they?