

Henry and Henrietta

Henrietta was a world traveler, and her husband Henry insisted on coming along even though he would really rather have stayed at home. In each exotic port of call, Henrietta learned the native customs, sampled the local cuisine, and immersed herself in the culture of the country. She made many friends, had a wonderful time, and learned a lot about the world. But all Henry could do was complain and find fault. Whenever he didn't understand someone, he snapped "What's the matter with you people? Speak English!" Whenever someone offered him a local delicacy he said "What's the matter with you people? Don't you even have a McDonald's? Where I come from we have food people can actually *eat*." In England he fumed "Look at these morons, driving on the wrong side of the road!" In Canada he told everyone he met "This currency you call a dollar isn't really a dollar at all. Now *this* is a *dollar!*" as he waved a greenback in their faces. Henrietta found Paris in the springtime delightful, but all Henry could do was complain about the traffic and point out the countless little things that "we do better in Cleveland." At the end of their travels Henrietta decided that there's no place like home, but she returned there with a deep understanding and appreciation for the wide world, and she cherished her memories of the fascinating places they had seen. Henry was happy to get back too, just because it was more comfortable to be surrounded by things he found familiar, and he rushed down to the barber shop to tell all of his friends just how screwed up those foreigners really are. When they heard Henry's stories about world travel, they all congratulated themselves on having had the good sense never to leave the town where they were born and grew up.

Many programming languages have come (and some have gone) since Classical FORTRAN first appeared, and they all differ from it in various ways. If you are already comfortable with one of those languages you might be tempted to adopt Henry's attitude as you explore the foreign territory of Fortran programming, but you will probably have more fun and learn more about the world of computing if you act like Henrietta instead. In the end you might decide as she did that there's no place like home, but while you are traveling you should try to keep an open mind and enjoy the scenery. You might even find that you like some of the quaint local customs once you get to know them. Please try to remember the story of Henry and Henrietta as you read *Classical FORTRAN*, and have a pleasant trip.