IT'S THE *GYPSY* IN ME

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF
KONRAD BERCOVICI

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IT'S THE *GYPSY* IN ME

TO

NAOMI

AND

OUR CHILDREN

IT'S THE *GYPSY* IN ME

I

MY EARLIEST childhood memory is of a winter afternoon when a caravan of Gypsies crossed the frozen Danube River in front of the home of my parents. In the howling snowstorm the long file of covered sleds inched slowly forward over the ice. Gypsies in long sheepskin coats and tall, black fur caps marched ahead of each sled, probing the ice with long, iron-tipped sticks. The little brown horses snorted and neighed while their breath froze in the air. When the first sled pulled up on the shore, the Gypsy jumped into the driver's seat, let out a loud yell, and gave the horses their heads. One after another the covered sleds pulled up and ranged themselves in the form of a square. When the last one had crossed, the Gypsy men unrolled a huge tarpaulin canvas, with which they roofed the square. While some of the women were clearing the ground underneath, others were building fires under huge copper kettles set on three-legged iron stools.

What impressed me strongly was the order and the efficiency with which the work was done. There were a hundred pairs of hands in that caravan, and each pair knew exactly what to do without interfering with another's work.

When all was done, my father took them a demijohn of brandy and poured some of it into each cupped hand until he had emptied the large bottle of the last drop.

That same evening all the Gypsies—men, women, and children—trooped into our enormous kitchen, which was warmed

by two red brick ovens, and sat down to the yearly dinner father offered to the first tribe that crossed the frozen river.

The first words I learned to read were *Rinaldo Rinaldini,* the title of a novel mother was reading. Mother was always reading the latest sensational novel and loved to read aloud even when no one was listening. She would reread passages a dozen times if she hadn't hit upon the right intonation the first or the eleventh time. The rest of the family, willy nilly, learned by heart the novels mother was reading by hearing her recite them.

I had learned to read these words all by myself and didn't tell anyone until I had learned the other letters of the alphabet and was able to agglutinate them into words. Then one night as my older brothers and my parents each sat down with a book about the table, I, too, nonchalantly took a book from the shelf along the wall and sat down to read under the same kerosene lamp with the rest of the family.

Observing out of the corner of my eye that they were smiling at my conceit, I didn't protest, but began to read aloud, "The great Rinaldo rode his white horse that night. He had sworn to avenge himself, and the hour had come."

"Whom do you think you are deceiving?" father asked, taking the book away from me.

"I am deceiving nobody," I said quietly. "I can read as well as anyone in this house."

"Who taught you to read?"

"I taught myself."

"He has heard mother read the chapter aloud and has memorized it," my older brother said.

Without another word I took his book, a geography, from him and read aloud from it.

"You haven't read me aloud your book, have you?" I asked with all the irony of my four years, pushing the book toward him.

Then they all began to laugh and to kiss me. Father promised me a watch; mother, a new pair of woolen gloves; one of my older brothers gave me his own penknife; and the oldest one, six years my senior, gave me a small silver piece after I had read a whole page from his book.

Overjoyed, mother called Mama Tinka, the Gypsy woman who had nursed me at her breast, from the kitchen, and asked me to read for her first from the novel, then from father's book, and then from the books of my two brothers. Mama Tinka wept for joy. Such an event had to be celebrated. Father brought up from the cellar two bottles of the best wine, one for us and one for the kitchen; mother offered special sweets baked in honey; and I was allowed to drink wine unmixed with water. Then we sang, and mother played the guitar and sang with us. Mother had a beautiful voice and was very musical, but sang only on great occasions.

Our house was very spacious. It was built of stone and brick, with one wall facing the river, and with a wood-burning brick oven in every one of the fifteen rooms. During the long winter two men, a Turk and a Russian, who had attached themselves to our family after the Russo-Turkish War, were busy carrying firewood and stoking the ovens. The Turk, Mechmet, held the Russian in contempt because he was a drunkard, and Fedia, the Russian, despised the Turk because Moslems didn't drink.

Their quarrels furnished us with a share of the winter's amusement. Father often called them both into the living-room to discuss with them the Russo-Turkish War, in which they had fought opposite each other. When Mechmet had the better of the argument, father would regale him with an ounce of tobacco from his own pouch. When Fedia was declared the winner, he was given a glass of plum brandy from the bottle on the table.

The other servants of the house despised both the Russian and the Turk, and made them eat at a separate table in the

kitchen. All the other servants had specific duties and received monthly salaries. Mechmet and Fedia were hangers-on and received only such money as father pressed in their hands when he was in a good mood or remembered to give them something. The other servants wore clothes they bought or had made for them by their relatives; the Turk and the Russian wore father's cast-off clothes and boots except for the fez of the Turk and the military cap of the Russian.

We were a lusty family. Father was a tall, broad-shouldered man with a short-cropped black beard; he loved food and wine, song and laughter, and the sight of other people eating, drinking, laughing, and singing. He bred, raised, bought, and sold cattle, and was proud of his horsemanship. His business brought him in contact with Gypsies, and he, unlike anyone else in our neighborhood, was happy to have them about his place and to ask their chiefs in to eat with us and their fiddlers to play for us.

Any Gypsy in Roumania who came into possession of a really fine horse knew where he would find a ready buyer.

We were a polyglot family. Besides Roumanian, father and mother spoke German, French, and Greek, and I can't remember when I learned those languages. I always knew them. We switched continually from one to the other. Father didn't mind how much we mispronounced the other languages, but the slightest mispronunciation of a Greek word made him furious.

The town we lived in then, Galatz on the Danube, was Roumania's principal port. All the exports and imports of the country flowed through it, and because of this, people of all nationalities lived in our vicinity. But the Greeks predominated. Fifty per cent of the business was in their hands. The mayor of the city was a Greek. The chief of police and the prefect were Greeks. Greeks owned the steamboats, the flour mill, and the bank, and Greeks also set the price for the corn and the wheat that they exported to other lands. Because

neither father nor mother ever went to the synagogue, they had very few Jewish friends. Our relatives seldom came to see us and never remained in the house long enough to partake of a meal, because our kitchen was not conducted in accordance with Jewish ritual.

Out of respect for his people's beliefs, father wouldn't be seen smoking outside of the house on Saturday, nor would he transact any business on Jewish holidays, but he smoked in his room and worked at his desk when the other Jews were in the synagogue.

I don't know how he had come to abandon traditional Jewish ritualism. He was no atheist; he was a pantheist. I remember his saying, "God is not something. God is everything. Everything is part of God. All living things are Godlike. Life is God."

The spring following that winter when I taught myself to read, I was sent to a private school directed by a German. Being far ahead of the other pupils in my class, I was bored by them and the teacher. A month later I was lucky enough to acquire the measles. By the time the disease had run its course, the school closed for the yearly vacation, and Mama Tinka, my Gypsy nurse, took me to her relatives to show me off and to astound them with my learning.

We went from Gypsy camp to Gypsy camp, and I liked the Gypsy children better than the pupils at the school. They had seen the world and knew things. They could ride, swim, help shoe a horse, put up a tent, weave baskets, blow bellows, and play the violin, the reed flute, and the cymbalon. I learned riding, basket weaving, and enough of Calo, their language, to make myself understood and to understand them.

On the way home, a month later, Mama Tinka entered into a secret pact with me; I was to teach her to read, and she would teach me Calo. As we walked homeward, stopping here and there, Mama Tinka taught me to read the patrins,

road signs the Gypsies leave behind them for the information of those who follow. The patrins were made of two twigs and were left at crossroads. By their position the Gypsies informed those who knew how to interpret them where they went and what had happened to them on the way.

We were away a whole month. When I was tired, I rode on Mama Tinka's shoulders, but never when we approached a Gypsy camp. I must say here that Mama Tinka occupied an unusual position in my parents' household. She had come to us when mother's first child was born. Some years later she married and had a child of her own. The child died soon afterward; it happened to be on the very day I was born. I took the place of her child at her breast, and she remained with us to raise me, to take care of me, and to be more of a mother to me than was my own mother.

My parents wouldn't have permitted any of their other children to go away with a Gypsy servant woman, but when Mama Tinka asked that I be given to her for a month, neither of my parents saw anything out of the ordinary in her request. It was taken for granted by the whole family that I belonged to her at least as much as to them.

Mother was never a definite person. She identified herself with the heroine of every novel she read, and play-acted all the time. Her voice changed with every novel, and so did her manner, her dresses, and even her figure. She was an extraordinarily beautiful woman and very conscious of her beauty. We never saw her except at her best. When she thought she didn't look well, she would stay in her room day after day while she tried coiffure after coiffure and had dresses made and remade to suit her new mood. Despite our isolation, she had the furniture of the house changed completely at least once a year and cried like a child when father refused to allow her even more frequent and more costly transformations.

I remember how, after reading a novel in which the heroine's

husband had been arrested, unjustly of course, she threw her arms about me and my brothers, pressed us to her bosom, and cried out, "My poor innocent children."

"What German trash are you reading now?" father asked, looking up from his book.

"Trash!" mother said, rising. "Trash, eh? You heartless man. I never should have married you—never." And she left the room in her best Sarah Bernhardt manner.

When we returned home and I asked mother to buy me a violin, she said angrily that I was already dark enough to look like a Gypsy.

"With a violin under his chin no one will believe that he is anything but a Gypsy. That's the last time he will ever go away with Tinka."

Father, however, was willing and asked a Gypsy fiddler, Costa, to buy me a violin and to teach me how to play it.

Costa was a great fiddler, but he couldn't read music. I learned how from *Meyers Konversations-Lexikon,* a German encyclopedia on father's shelves, and eventually taught Costa how to read it, too. He was as eager to learn to read music as I was to play the fiddle. We made a fine team and learned so fast that even mother was pleased.

When school opened again, I said that I hated school and refused to go. This caused mother great anguish.

"All right," I said. "I'll go to school, but only because I can't stand your being angry with me," and I ran crying to father.

"So you don't want to go to school?" father asked.

"No."

"Don't you want to learn things?"

"I do. But not in a school."

"Then how?"

"From you. Why can't you be my teacher?"

"I don't see why not!" father said, hugging me. "You'll

ride behind me in the saddle, and I'll teach you when I have a mind to. Would you like that better than going to school?"

"But—" mother interposed.

"No coercion," father said. "We haven't used a whip on our horses in years; I wouldn't use one on a child."

"But who talks about a whip?" mother exclaimed.

"Any kind of coercion is a whip. It's all settled." Father turned to me. "Go wash your face and come back. I'll take you to Vadu Ungurului."

Vadu Ungurului was a village ten miles away on a lake, and was inhabited by a wild tribe of Hungarians who had settled a century before in the marshes.

I rode behind father. On the way he explained to me the multiplication table up to ten. On the way back he made me recite the multiplication table to him. That night, after dinner, he taught me to add and to subtract and was very happy when I grasped quickly what he taught me.

He took his teaching seriously. I had to rise earlier than the rest of the household and do an hour's work before going out with him. He had me sleep in his bed with him, so that I wouldn't oversleep.

I can still feel the warmth of his big body as I pressed myself against it and asked questions just to hear his voice in reply. Whatever has happened, and whatever may still happen to me, the memory of those nights near my father will always be what I cherish most.

Before going to bed I used to prepare the spirit lamp for the early morning coffee for both of us. While he supervised the morning chores, I did my lessons—multiplication, division, the Greek and German alphabets, and the spelling of the names of the capitals of the world and of great rivers and great mountains.

When he wasn't teaching or questioning me, he spoke to me about life and people. He was at that time reading Jean Jacques Rousseau and was greatly impressed by the great

Frenchman's writings. He was also reading a new book on anthropology and was clarifying its contents to himself by explaining them to me.

A month after our first lesson I became six years old. Father gave me a horse so that I could ride beside him like a man and not behind him like a child.

Often at noon we stopped and ate at some village inn. Father kept a little notebook in which he wrote down the daily transactions. "Bought from Stan Golean a horse—200 francs. Horse to be delivered. Sold to Vasili Stur a yoke of white oxen four years old—300 francs. Payable one hundred now, the rest to be taken in corn at 38 centimes a bushel after the harvest."

He gave me a notebook in which I was also to enter the transactions. "In case I lose mine," he explained, in order to make me feel that I was doing useful work.

Every once in a while he would check my book against his and was really angry with me when I had made an error. Those were great days, the greatest of my entire life. I had a hero, a father, a friend, a teacher, and a companion all in one.

My brothers continued to go to school. Mother smiled at the arrangement and said that father would get tired of playing teacher soon enough. When she spoke like that, father and I smiled and winked at each other. We knew we would never get tired of each other.

After my seventh birthday he often asked my advice about a horse before agreeing to buy it. When the horses were shod, I supervised the work of the Gypsy blacksmith and said what I had to say and more in Calo.

Father's business radius was so calculated that we never had to be away from home at night. He wouldn't leave the house until daylight and was back home before nightfall even when the days were shortest. He had a theory about that. The nights were long because when it was cold, all living

things needed more rest. During the winter the snowstorms kept us indoors most of the time, but that didn't prevent us from working and studying together.

Roumanian villages are very close to one another, and some of them overlap and run together, yet each one has its own character and very often its own costume and its own turn of phrase. The people of one village would drink only prune brandy, and those of the next one only corn whiskey. In one village the men would be naïve, and the women shrewd; and in the next the women would be angels, and the men inclined to every form of banditry and debauchery. There were villages whose people could not be trusted at all, and other villages in whose people father had absolute confidence, trusting them with large sums upon their word.

My violin lessons were sacred hours. Father used to postpone our trips when Costa and I were closeted in his room.

Father now varied our languages. One day we spoke only Roumanian; the next day, only German; the third day, Greek.

During the next school vacation he took my two brothers along with us. Mother would rise earlier than was her habit in order to see her four men ride out together. She was in a heroic mood. She was reading James Fenimore Cooper's Indian stories.

We went every day to a different village, ate at a different inn, and spoke to different people, Roumanian peasants, Hungarians, Tartar, Turk, Greek, and German settlers, and had different encounters and situations to meet every hour of the day. But whenever we met with Gypsies at an inn or at a camp outside a village, we talked to them and took shelter in their tents when it rained.

The winters are very harsh in Roumania. There were weeks in which my brothers couldn't go to school because of the snowstorms. Those were great days for all of us. Father was hungry when he was well. He loved caviar and ate it with a soup spoon at any hour of the day or night. I have

often seen him reading a book, smoking a cigarette, and eating caviar at the same time, and suddenly bursting out in loud laughter over something he had read or that had occurred to him.

Then a terrible thing happened, a series of pogroms in the villages and towns of the whole country. Jews were beaten and murdered in the streets and in their homes. Gangs of hoodlums broke into shops and stores in broad daylight, pillaged them, and then set fire to the buildings, while the gendarmes looked on or turned their heads away. When a murderer was arrested, the courts freed him, and the people made a hero out of him.

At first our own servants were ashamed of what their people did, but after a while they became insolent and behaved as if everything belonged to them. When a maid was dismissed by mother for insolence, instead of apologizing, she threatened vengeance. Only Mama Tinka, Mechmet, and Fedia remained faithful. When most of our servants had left us, Tinka went to a Gypsy camp and came back with a dozen men to work in the barns and the stables. Enraged, the servants who had left us returned to beat up the Gypsies.

"But," I argued with father when the peasants of Vadu Ungurului had fired our granary there, "you told me that all men are essentially good."

"Yes . . . that's how they are when they *are* good," he reflected.

On a spring day father went out all alone to see a lawyer on some business. At noon they brought him home on a litter, unconscious, his face and head a swollen mass of bleeding bruises, his clothes in rags and covered with blood. He had tried to halt a band of ruffians from pillaging a shop in the center of the town.

I had a feeling that the ground had melted under my feet and that the skies had crashed about my head. Had he been

shot dead, I shouldn't have been hurt half as much, but that he should have been beaten, beaten as horses, dogs, and oxen were beaten by peasants, was an unbearable humiliation.

My older brother left to call the doctor. With the doctor came the chief of police and several policemen to search the house for firearms.

I shall never forget the months of tiptoeing about the rooms while father's life hung in the balance. The doctor had shaved off his beard and the hair on his head. He had lost almost all his front teeth in the fight. His lips were split. His eyes were hollow.

When he felt a little better, he called his sons to his bedside and made us swear that we would avenge him.

Mother sent me to school with my brothers, accompanied by a ferocious dog and two Gypsies armed with cudgels. Every day, when we came home, after looking into father's room, my brothers devoted several hours to physical exercises to become strong and to avenge him. I wept.

Then one day my oldest brother, Max, got hold of father's revolver and set up a target at the farther end of the courtyard. Mother, hearing the shots, came running to take the revolver away and to drag us weeping and arguing to father's room.

"You are making murderers out of them," she cried. "Look what I found in their hands."

"Leave me alone with them," father ordered. He stroked our hands and said, "I am feeling much better. Soon, soon I'll be walking about. I'll attend to the rest myself."

He never recovered fully from that beating. When he left his sick bed, he had lost his gaiety, his laughter, and his business acumen. Mother sold her jewels to pay the more pressing debts. Then we lost our house and moved to a smaller one. As a result of further business reverses, we left Galatz and moved to Braila, a town thirty miles away. Mama Tinka, Mechmet, and Fedia came with us. Then Fedia died

suddenly, and Mechmet was so downhearted that he lingered for a while, and then he, too, died.

My oldest brother entered college. The second and I entered high school.

We were on our way up the social scale again and were beginning to cut a figure in local society because of our culture and versatility when father had to take to bed again. For the next two years of his life he was in pain day and night.

I was not yet twelve when he died.

I ran away from home, went to Galatz on foot, and there joined a band of Gypsy musicians. I played at a peasant wedding in a village. During the festivities two peasants, brothers, quarreled over some land. When their wives tried to pacify them, one of the brothers struck the other brother's wife on the mouth and called her a name. The next moment he was stabbed to death by a dozen knife thrusts from the hand of his brother. At the sight of her dead husband, the wife tore the knife out of the hand of the killer, killed him, and stabbed his wife before anybody was able to interfere. All this took less time than it takes to tell it.

I ran out of the inn with the other Gypsies and ran and ran. When I wanted to stop, the Gypsies dragged me along.

"Run, *dantchiuk*. When the gendarmes get there, the peasants will put the blame on us."

We separated. I threw my violin into a cornfield and ran as fast as I could. Just before daylight I jumped on the back of a hay wagon going to Braila and was home when the postman handed mother my first letter to her.

The newspapers carried headlines about some wandering Gypsy musicians who had killed a whole family of honest Roumanian peasants and wounded a dozen men and women in a quarrel about money. The gendarmes and the people started a Gypsy hunt. God alone knows how many innocent Gypsies were tortured in the basements of the gendarmeries and

how many were killed with pitchforks on the roads after that. Shortly after the Gypsy hunt, the pogroms against the Jews, which had been smoldering for a while, flamed up again.

Whenever the government had to divert the minds of the people from their misery caused by bad harvests and high taxes, it instigated a pogrom against the Jews. During years of comparative prosperity there were no pogroms in Roumania. What happened in Roumania followed a pattern of what had happened, was, and is happening in other lands. The pogroms in Russia, Poland, and Hungary were the safety valves of the stupid and criminal governments in those countries. The German pogroms could not have been instigated in years of prosperity.

Years later, Alfonso, the ex-King of Spain, said to newspapermen, "It is not true that I am hated by my people. Unfortunately for me there were no Jews in Spain. Had they been there in any considerable number, my government would have known how to use them as scapegoats. What forced me out of Spain was the expulsion of the Jews by the Inquisition hundreds of years ago."

I peddled Alfonso's words to every American newspaper and magazine, but nobody would print them with my explanation.

My older brothers began to dream of Palestine as a homeland. I had no such desire. I had discovered books on socialism and co-operatives on father's library shelves and was reading them wildly. Going to Palestine was a temporary escape but no solution to the problem of anti-Semitism. I was no Jew; I was a human being. Father had called for vengeance when he was in horrible pain, but during our long rides together, he had spoken to me of the oneness of all human beings. I was ashamed of the behavior of the gangsters who destroyed what they could not create, life, but I also pitied them, their ignorance, and their stupidity.

"They ought to be made to understand to what horrible uses

they are put, and then no government would be able to instigate pogroms," I said.

"And how will you do that?" my brothers asked.

"That's what I am trying to find out, how to do just that."

In due time my oldest brother sailed for Palestine, promising to send for the family as soon as he had established himself there. He didn't. The Arabs, too, made pogroms against the Jews when the locusts had eaten their grain. My brother's right leg was broken during one of these pogroms. When he got well, he sailed for Australia. His four sons are in the English navy now. The oldest is one of the youngest of the high-ranking officers.

I was fifteen years old when I became a member of the first workingman's club in Braila. The club had the only library in town. The majority of the books were on socialism, but the leader of the club, a local lawyer, had a large collection of books on other subjects in French, German, and Greek. He lent me whatever books I wanted to read.

I got a job as an apprentice engineer with a firm dealing in agricultural machinery and won great favor with my employers. Though only fifteen, I was big for my age and a year later I was being paid the wages of a full-grown man. I bought myself a good violin and took lessons from a really good teacher, the leader of the best band in Roumania. Between my second brother and myself, we were able to keep the family tolerably well fed and clothed. When the pogroms flared up again, I stood up in the middle of the street and denounced the instigators and told whoever would listen why such barbarism was unleashed. My employers asked me to stop speaking at the street corners and from the tables outside cafés. I stopped talking on street corners, but with a member of the workingman's club, a printer and a gentile, I wrote, set up, and printed protest leaflets at night and plastered them over the walls of the entire city.

Caught redhanded by a detective and brought to the police station, I said to the chief, "If you want to beat me, you had better kill me, for if you don't kill me . . ."

He looked me in the eye for a moment and then said, "I only wanted to tell you that it is against the law to paste paper on the walls. Now go home and be a good boy. I knew your father. He was a fine man."

In the morning my employer called me into the office, paid me a full month's wages, shook both my hands, and said, "I have to let you go."

I had three hundred francs (sixty dollars in gold). The month before, an old debtor of father's had come and paid his debt to mother. My older brother and I talked the matter over between us that evening.

"We must leave Roumania," my brother said.

I knew my brother was deeply in love with the daughter of one of our wealthy relatives. I, too, was in love with a girl five years older than myself and had written her many love letters and poems in all the languages I knew.

"Where can we go?"

The police decided that for us. We were declared dangerous to the security of the country, and our family was given a week to leave.

The whole family boarded a freighter sailing for Antwerp. In a month we were in Brussels. Six weeks later we arrived in Paris with only the clothes on our backs. In reply to my first letter to my lady love, I received an invitation to her wedding with a postscript in her handwriting, "Wish me luck, my love."

II

FATHER'S DEATH and our exile had somewhat taken mother out of the clouds. Although we had almost no luggage when we arrived in Paris, mother had managed to save half a dozen old paper-bound novels and was rereading them in a new light now. She pretended, or perhaps it was true, that she reread them to recall instances when she had read certain passages to father and what he had said about them. She had built up father as another book hero and was inventing stories about him. She told one of these stories while we were sitting in the waiting room of the Gare St. Lazare, waiting for the rain to stop so that we could go in search of our first night's shelter in Paris.

"He went directly to the Sultan in Constantinople," she said, "and told him: 'Your vizier is betraying you.'

" 'If you can't prove that, I shall have you boiled in oil.'

" 'Call the vizier.' "

"But, mother, that was in one of Lemaitre's novels."

"Ah, yes. Still that's what he would have done."

I should like to say that I was the best of sons to my mother in Paris, but it wouldn't be true.

After we had been in Paris a few months, my brother in Australia began to send mother a monthly sum which was almost enough to keep the family provided for. But mother had never been an economical or careful housekeeper. While

father was alive, her uneconomical ways of keeping house had not mattered, but they mattered considerably after he was gone. If anything, she had become more wasteful. In Paris she seldom cooked, but bought ready-cooked vegetables and meats at the grocery store and only warmed them up to serve them for dinner. She had a book in one of her hands even when she stood over the kitchen stove.

When I talked to her about her neglect of the younger children, she looked at me vacantly and said she didn't see what right I had to complain. When she received the monthly sum from my brother, she spent half of the money on silks and other materials with the intention of making them into dresses for herself and forgot all about them after she had cut them up into some fantastic pattern.

When I remonstrated with her for buying materials for dresses which she never made, she cried and said there was no one for whom she should dress beautifully.

"Then why do you buy the stuff instead of buying clothes for the children?"

"Because when I have the money, I forget that your father is dead."

We had come to a Paris seething with the turmoil of the Dreyfus affair. Alfred Dreyfus, a captain in the French army accused of treason, had been sentenced by a military court to spend the rest of his natural life at Devil's Island, the worst penal colony in the world. Because he was a Jew, the royalist papers howled that all Jews were traitors and demanded their expulsion from the army.

Dreyfus's wife and brother, convinced that the captain was innocent, eventually discovered proof of his innocence and presented the documents to the military court which had sentenced him. When that court refused to re-examine the case, the family engaged the attention of several famous writers, lawyers, and statesmen, Émile Zola, Labori, and Clemenceau

among them, and the "affaire" was aired in public and in the press of the whole world.

France became divided into Dreyfusists and anti-Dreyfusists, and there were daily fights in the streets, cafés, colleges, courts, homes, and meeting places. The Dreyfusists demanded a revision of the trial and the consideration of the new evidence. The antis retorted that because the highest military court had once decided that Dreyfus was guilty, a revision of the trial would be a confession of its fallibility.

I quite naturally joined the pro-Dreyfus elements and went to all the meetings, pro and con, listened to the impassioned speeches, heckled, applauded, argued, and wielded a stout cane with the best of them.

I had joined the Université Populaire in the Faubourg St. Antoine to hear lectures on literature, economics, philosophy, and science delivered by Anatole France, Jean Jaurès, Bergson, and Prince Peter Kropotkin, the famous philosopher, communist, and anarchist. At the close of every lecture, the audience discussed the Dreyfus case and ended up by fighting.

I had also joined the music class of Charpentier, the composer of the famous opera, *Louise*. There, too, discussions about music ended in fist fights. Women pupils fought among themselves and with the men, and gave and took many a blow defending their opinions.

In the end, after many ministerial cabinets had been overthrown, after many courts-martial and suicides, the Dreyfus case was reopened, and the military court, after examining the new evidence, ordered the captain brought back from Devil's Island and absolved him of the guilt of treason.

But that didn't quiet the royalist pack; on the contrary, the street fighting continued.

At the Université Populaire I met intellectuals, writers, and artists of all political and artistic shades. Jean Lorrain, one of the most gifted French novelists, a writer who surpassed de Maupassant in daring and brilliance, took a fancy to me and

introduced me to his friends, the poet Jehan Rictus and the musician Anton Guth. Lorrain, a big powerful man, was feared by all the writers and artists as much for his vitriolic pen as for his physical violence. He wrote three times a week in *Le Journal* and was one of the best swordsmen—a deadly combination. But he was always gentle with me, corrected my French, and dined with me in the most modest restaurants in the Faubourg because I insisted upon paying my share.

Jean Lorrain had rather an unsavory reputation in Paris, a reputation he had helped to create in order to attract attention to himself. Having created the reputation, he had to maintain it and did so by saying and writing the most shocking things about himself and others. To accentuate his eccentricity, he hennaed his hair, rouged a little, painted his nails, wore bracelets on his wrists and innumerable rings on his fingers, and often paraded in Turkish costumes. Because of a painful malady he had to take opiates, yet he spoke of himself as a morphinomaniac and informed everyone of his vice.

The truth of the matter was that he had fewer vices than most other Parisians of his class and was a prodigious worker. He also gave fantastic epicurean banquets at which he himself drank only milk and ate a few pieces of toast. Because of an unhappy love affair with Judith Gautier, the daughter of Théophile Gautier, the great writer, Lorrain posed as a cynic and as a woman hater. In their *Journals* the de Goncourt brothers, Lorrain's friends, tell something about the real Lorrain who had unburdened himself to them.

I earned my living first as a laborer in a furniture factory; then by painting the steel frame of the Eiffel Tower; and when that was done, as a traveling salesman for a clockmaker, and by the time the World Exposition of 1900 was opened, as a builder's helper. I never worked steadily at anything. I contributed my share to the upkeep of our home, but as soon as I had saved up a little money, I quit work and devoted my time to study, to writing, to the lecture rooms of the free universities,

and above all to music. Anton Guth was my teacher. He was a fine musician, but not much of a teacher and a very erratic sort of man.

On the floor below his apartment on the Rue de Rivoli lived a young pianist (who has since become famous). He was furious when he saw me talk to her one day and accused her and me of all sorts of "Schweinerei."

"But you haven't even met her!" I thundered. "How can you talk like that about her?"

"So! You are in love with her!" he grinned. "Go to her. Let her teach you."

I banged the door and left. He ran after me, caught me on the landing below, and begged me to come back.

While we were arguing, the door opened and the young lady herself appeared to ask what caused the commotion.

"You," the furious man shrieked.

"I?"

"Yes. You. You!" Looking at her, he calmed down. After he had smiled and apologized, she asked us in.

"He has no time for women," Guth explained. "He works as a laborer to earn his bread, spends hours on a hundred things that have nothing to do with music, and wants to be a musician."

I blushed to the roots of my hair, and my temper was about to get the best of me when the young lady said sarcastically, as she opened the door, "Which reminds me that I have no time for men."

He rose to go, and I followed him, but she pressed me back into a chair and said: "You stay here. You are only a boy."

Henriette was beautiful, very talented, and knew many people to whom she introduced me. Jehan Rictus, the king of the Parisian argot poets, was one of her admirers and second cousins. Rictus, whose work has been made famous the world over by Yvette Guilbert, the diseuse, used to recite his poetry in the night clubs of Montmartre, at the Chat Noir, the Con-

servatoire, and the Cabaret des Arts. Henriette often "improvised" piano backgrounds for his recitations, improvisations that were worked out days and weeks in advance. I often spent hours with her reciting one of Rictus's poems while she worked out the musical background.

Rictus's poetry was of the extreme left, poetry of protest and revolt in the language of the people. Tall, angular, pale, black-bearded, always in black and with a tall silk hat on his small head, he would stand on a platform and recite the most inflaming verses in an absolutely colorless voice. Henriette thought it a great joke to have me recite his verses to Rictus in my impassioned manner. Rictus used to laugh.

"He wants to set them on fire. I only want them to feel warm."

To Guth, Rictus and Henriette were anathema; to me, they were salve and balm, and I was in love with the girl.

I rented a room to be by myself and to use all my free time as I wanted. My mother's apartment was too crowded. Its inhabitants had been augmented by two of her relatives, a niece and a nephew, from Bulgaria, who had come to see the Exposition and had remained to become permanent residents. They were nice enough youngsters, but exasperatingly noisy and provincial. After I had taken the girl to the Louvre, she left me in the hall of statuary and ran home to complain to mother that I had taken her to an indecent place filled with naked men and women in stone.

I had another reason for leaving home. One of mother's old beaux, who had offered her marriage before she had married father, had suddenly shown up in Paris. He was still a bachelor, was wealthy, and was now more than ever in love with mother.

I disliked the man intensely, and was angry that mother hadn't shut the door in his face when he appeared. The thought that mother might possibly marry him was intolerable.

Because mother had not said "No" definitely, he began to act as if he already had gained authority over her children and criticized my conduct, my not working regularly, staying away from dinner, and coming home late at night.

"You may become mother's husband, but never my father," I told him. And that was that.

Poor mother, how I misunderstood her! She had no thought of marrying him, of all people, but after twenty years of a man's love, she was love hungry, hungry for some one to look with loving eyes at her, to listen to her tales, to admire her voice. She was incurably romantic. Here was a man who had remained for twenty years a bachelor after she had married another man, and he was begging her to marry him now. She had no thought of marrying him, but how could she resist wanting to listen to his entreaties?

The atmosphere of my home became even more insupportable when my younger sister, a great favorite with me, fell in love with a young Roumanian do-nothing with musical pretentions.

My older brother, mother's favorite, hewed the line. He was never late for dinner, worked regularly, brought all his earnings home, helped with the younger children, was polite to our guests, and spent his evenings reading and writing letters to his inamorata, letters which he kept in the drawer of his table instead of sending them away. He had his friends, of course, Russian students mostly, but he seldom spent a late evening with them.

When I said that I wanted to live outside our home, he didn't get angry. He looked at me and asked, "Have you no consideration for mother's feelings?"

"I will continue to give her what I can," I expostulated.

"I was talking about her feelings and not about your money," he said.

He was a much better son to my mother than I was and much more considerate.

I was in a turmoil of living. Being was not enough. I wanted to learn things, but had no patience to follow a normal course of study.

I like to suppose that the erratic manner with which I was allowed to begin my schooling had something to do with that. I took the bull by the horns in everything. I knew six languages well, but the theoretical grammar of none. I had taught myself to read music and was now studying Berlioz's great book on orchestration before I had mastered harmony and counterpoint.

Once in a room by myself, I plunged, literally plunged, into a sea of work. There were weeks in which I didn't leave the room at all. A pot of boiling lentils on the little cooking stove and a bottle of wine on the table satisfied my wants. When the money was gone, I went out to earn some, as a laborer in a bakery one week, as a carpenter's helper the next. A week's wages kept me in lentils and wine for a month. I had become a strict vegetarian and had no desire for meat. My strength was herculean in those days. I even earned money wrestling at the fairs around Paris.

Jean Lorrain came to see me occasionally in my room. He wanted me to go out with him, wanted to introduce me to people he knew who would facilitate my existence, but I refused. I didn't feel that I needed help; I had no hunger and no wants, and I didn't want other people to interfere with my way of living. I knew enough people as it was. Still, one night I couldn't resist temptation and went out with Lorrain to the Left Bank.

For a short time café life became a vice with me. I plunged into that as enthusiastically as into study. After a few months in the Latin Quarter I was suddenly filled with a disgust for myself and all my companions. The women were putrid. The men were worse. They called themselves students, but what they studied was . . .

They wore student's garb, long hair, heavy canes, wrote poetry à la Baudelaire, à la Mallarmé, à la Villon, and à la

Victor Hugo, and tried to surpass each other in degeneracy and villainy. Homosexuality and nihilism were in style. The prostitute, Casque d'Or, was the ideal woman; a criminal apache was their hero.

My affair with the young pianist got stalled when she returned to Alsace, her home. It had never been a love affair. We liked each other and enjoyed bantering away for an hour or so. It was pleasant to sit pressed close together on a rainy day and look out of the window over the fantastic roofs of Paris and talk about love and the future.

There were other girls, Gabrielle, Suzanne, Sonia, but they meant little and not for long. I suppose I mystified them somewhat. I was neither workingman nor artist, a hybrid. And I was not patient in my courtships. Girls were only an interlude between work, study, practice, the composition of too ambitious symphonies, too impassioned long poems, philosophical essays, tremendous financial projects which were never wanted, and grandiose dreams.

Then came Naomi, the sister of a friend. She arrived in Paris on a sixth of July morning, and I met her the same day. She was the first really serious young woman I had met. She had seriously studied economics, read considerably in several languages, had definite opinions on philosophy and art, and knew how to express herself clearly and vividly. She was my own age, but much more mature. And she was formidable. Small and thin, she towered over me when she spoke.

On the eighth of July she, her brother, and I went to see my mother, who was ailing. Mother looked at her and at me and smiled so that we both blushed. On the fourteenth of July, when all of Paris danced in the streets celebrating the fall of the Bastille, we danced together, first here, then there, and still elsewhere, and I took advantage of the traditional privilege of that day to kiss her.

When we sat down in front of a café for a glass of beer, she asked, "Did you kiss me because it is Bastille day?"

"No."

"I have come to Paris to study," she said. "Kissing is out."

We went to look for her brother, whom we had left dancing with a girl he had just met, but we couldn't find him. I took her home, walking silently beside her. I knew then that I had met *the* woman, but she had said kissing was out, and she was no Gabrielle, Suzanne, or Sonia.

At the door of her room she turned suddenly and kissed me.

"Bastille?" I asked.

But she was gone.

Instead of going to my room, I went to my mother's apartment. It was almost daylight, yet mother was not sleeping, but was waiting for my sister to come home from the night's celebration. She wasn't surprised to see me come. She asked for a cigarette, sat up in her bed, and asked me to make her a cup of tea.

"Well," she asked, "is it still a secret?"

The old romanticist! She was sick unto death, but wanted to hear a romantic story. We had never been so close as that night when I told her how we had danced, what Naomi had said, and what I had answered. She didn't let me slur over any detail, but wanted me to prolong the tale.

"And where did you go from that dance? What music was played? Who else was there? Don't hurry. Tell me everything."

When she had extracted the last drop of my tale, she sent me to sleep.

"Put out the light. Your sister is coming. I don't want to be disturbed. Good night."

I moved back home. The cousins were gone. The old beau, despairing of ever receiving "Yes" for an answer, had returned to his business in Roumania. My sister was getting married. My oldest brother in Australia had begun to skip his monthly remittances. He, too, was planning marriage.

Naomi's brother was a friend, but didn't favor me as a husband for his sister. She was the pride of the family. I was

too young, too wild, and too unreliable. Naomi's brother, a socialist, didn't like my political ideas. He called me an undisciplined idealist, an anarchist, and had no use for my cultural strivings and still less for my musical ambitions.

"Music," he said, "is an anodine."

He liked stirring marches and workingman's songs, but orchestral music he said was humbug.

"What good is music without words?"

Their family had been exiled from Roumania because they were all influential socialists. He, like the rest of the family, thought my courtship of his sister a piece of cheek. When I wrote to her, he intercepted my letters. When I came to see her, he told me she wasn't in or that she was too busy to see me. He disliked my friendship with Lorrain and with Guth. They were only bourgeois and not of the best.

In despair, I took a job as traveling salesman and left Paris, but wherever I happened to be, I wrote every night two letters, one to Naomi and one to mother, and gave my next address. Mother alone answered my letters.

Six months later, when I had given up all hope of ever receiving an answer to one of my nightly letters, there were two letters for me at the post office of Avignon. One was from her. I took the next train to Paris. She was alone. The rest of the family had gone to America. We went to see my mother.

"Marry him," mother said, kissing her.

"I will. But he must make something of himself," she said. "He wants to do too many things."

"He wants you more than he wants anything," mother said in her most romantic accents.

She died shortly afterwards.

On the money I had saved as a traveling salesman, Naomi and I took a walking trip to the South of France. We carried little baggage, all of it stuffed in a rucksack on my shoulders, stopped when and where we liked, lunched in any one of the

innumerable village inns along the road, spent one night here, another one elsewhere, following no itinerary or plan, talking, talking all the time.

We were two strangers in love with each other and trying to get acquainted. Our discussions ranged from vegetarianism to art, from poetry to economics. I, too, was exasperated by the economic inequalities that existed, but unlike her, I had not accepted socialism as a cure for all evils. I did not see eye to eye with her on many other subjects. She was imbued with the materialistic conception of history; I was not. Although exiled from Roumania, she glamorized the Roumanian peasant whom she had known only through the literature of the socialist writers who had frequented her parents' home. I had had contact with the peasants and knew them as they were, barbarous and sentimental. They sang beautiful songs and told marvelous tales, but they were quick to reach for the knife in their belts when they quarreled or when a wealthy traveler could be waylaid.

In the midst of a heated discussion, however, one of us would always stop the other with a kiss or attract the other's attention to a partridge flying out of the grain field or to a curious formation of clouds. Each of us was afraid to antagonize the other too much.

By the time we were on our way back to Paris, hard, brown, we knew each other and had influenced and moderated one another's views.

We rented a small apartment on the Rue Biscornet within sight of the Bastille monument, and I obtained employment with a picture dealer. The job paid quite well and gave me considerable leisure. And now Naomi began to put some order into my cultural, musical, philosophical, and literary baggage. We went to the lectures of the Université Populaire together and discussed them on our way home.

Because her education had been more disciplined than mine, she criticized mercilessly whatever I wrote. She knew little

about music, but her taste was a good guide. We had acquired many friends, but she didn't permit me to waste too much time with them. She disciplined me to regular hours of work. I was in the habit of working away the whole night, three and four nights in succession, and then relaxing for a week or so. She made me work two or three hours every night after dinner except on Saturdays and Sundays, when we received friends or went out, and proved to me that I did better work with less fatigue that way. I jumped the traces again and again. Instead of being angry with me for doing so, she jumped them with me. During such periods we were a familiar sight at brasseries and cafés in Paris and on the outskirts of the city. She could drink me under the table and never interfered when I got into a scrape with some other reveller. She enjoyed seeing me in a fight. One night at a café I left her alone for a few minutes. When I came back, she pointed her finger at a man who had insulted her and said, "Beat him up."

I went up to the man and smashed him in the face, although he was quite a big man. During the fight that followed, a fight across overturned chairs and tables, Naomi never left her seat.

When the fight was over and the other man was hustled out by the waiters, Naomi said, "Sit down. Have another glass of beer. You look thirsty."

From the Rue Biscornet we moved to a house on the Quai Voltaire, on the Seine, to be near a friend of hers. It was there that our first son was born on the second anniversary of our first kiss.

After the birth of our first son, Hyperion, I began to look at Paris, at France, not as a place in which I lived, but as a place in which my children would live. And the prospect frightened me. The end of the nineteenth century was not a reassuring picture to contemplate in France, especially in Paris. The unrest of the working classes was met by the new industrial bourgeoisie with a stupid arrogance which increased the

unrest. The old nobility hated the industrial bourgeoisie so deeply that it incited the working class against it.

I was not fooled when I noticed Count So-and-So and Baron This-and-That at the meetings of socialists and anarchists. They were ready to do anything to associate themselves temporarily with any group that would help them destroy the Third Republic of France. The air of France was stifling. The Germans took advantage of this state of affairs and filled Paris with "tourists" who spoke French well and literary men who came ostensibly to lecture on Wagner and Goethe, both of them in sudden vogue in Paris, but who actually preached anarchy, revolution, and rebellion against conscription.

It was this propaganda, hammered at by the French socialist press, that ultimately compelled the government to reduce the period of military service from three to two years and weakened the army that was eventually to oppose the army of Germany.

Hitler was not the inventor of the German tourism. The Kaiser had practiced it long before him. I was an antimilitarist and antiwar man by conviction, yet when I heard a German lecturer preach antimilitarism in Paris, I asked why he didn't preach the same thing in Germany. The audience of French socialists howled me down.

"Don't worry about France. Leave that to Frenchmen. Let the Germans come if they want to come. We won't stop them. They'll lay down their arms and sing the Internationale with us."

"Of course, of course," the lecturer said, and they all applauded and sang the Internationale forthwith.

The German militarists used the socialist Internationale to undermine and soften France for their onslaught. I saw that clearly forty years ago.

Another lecturer gave a course in sabotage, in scientific sabotage, and told the workingmen that this new weapon would

free them from the slavery of capitalism. I held no brief for capitalism, but I had a horror of willful destruction of machinery, and when employed factory workers willfully injured themselves to collect compensation for a week or a month or a year, I was filled with disgust and refused to have anything to do with those who had committed "macadam."

My socialist friends laughed at my attitude. They didn't see what I saw. They thought my sensibility amateurish and my suspicions of the "tourists" unjustified. In a few short years the street songs changed from vigorous and piquant to flabby and canaille. The whole business of the street song had passed into the hands of "Les Camelots du Roi," an organization of royalists and Catholics friendly to Germany. German propaganda used the royalists as skillfully as they used the socialists. To the royalists they promised the return of the Duc d'Orléans; to the socialists, a socialist state.

When I met Jean Lorrain again, on one of his trips from Nice where he now lived, and told him what I saw and felt, he said, "*Mon vieux, La France est pourrie.* (Old friend, France is rotten.) If I were not about to take another voyage, a voyage for which there is no return ticket, I should go to America. Why don't you go there? Go there and stay away from intellectuals. Work with your hands at some trade. Then some day you'll do something with what is in your head, if it stays there long enough."

I took his advice seriously. Selling cheap paintings to fools was a disgusting business. I thought of myself, but also of my present and future progeny for whom I desired a cleaner and healthier atmosphere than the one then prevailing in France, in Europe.

Naomi wouldn't hear of leaving France at first. She loved Paris. She had been brought up there and had only gone to live with her parents in Roumania when she was comparatively grown up. She didn't agree with me about the dark future of

France. She saw socialism on the march, not by the road of sabotage and macadam, but by the yearly increasing vote obtained by the socialist candidates for political offices.

"You are only just beginning to take root here," she argued.

"I don't want to take root."

"I won't go to America."

"I won't stay here."

We had many word battles day after day and night after night. We were very much in love with each other, but were both hardheaded and stubborn. In the end I resigned my job, bought two third-class steamship tickets for New York and gave her no choice in the matter. She cried, stormed, and threatened, but left with me when the hour came to take the boat train to London, and took the boat with me and the child to America.

III

THE OLD TUB took eighteen days to cross the ocean. Instead of three hundred passengers, there were fifteen hundred on the boat. We were packed like sardines. The food was miserable. The immigrants were mostly from Russia and knew little of sanitation or privacy. And they were all seasick. For eighteen days Noami huddled close to me and studied English with me from a French-English dictionary.

After a night spent on Ellis Island in a huge wire cage, we were ordered to fall in line behind hundreds of immigrants who had come over on the same boat with us. At the farther end of the line was a heavy door, which opened like a maw to let in the one nearest to it; then stayed closed and guarded by two men in uniform until it opened, as if by magic, to swallow the next human being. I thought of Flaubert's description of Moloch at Carthage.

Two hours later we were swallowed by that maw and stood before five men who sat on a dais, listening to an immigration inspector who looked into a notebook and told them why he had detained us for further examination.

I knew enough English to understand what he was saying. His report was biased. He had examined my wife and me briefly on the boat just before we had been taken to Ellis Island, but he now talked as if he knew me inside out.

After the inspector had made his report, the oldest of the commission, a gray-haired, blue-eyed man, looked me steadily

in the eye for a few moments, told my wife, who held the baby in her arms, to sit down, and then asked me at the top of his voice in German, "How old are you?"

"Twenty-two."

"Why did you come to America?"

"Because I thought I'd like it better here than in Europe . . . but if this is a sample of American hospitality . . ."

"No, it isn't," the white-haired gentleman interrupted angrily.

"I am glad to hear that," I said, and wanted to say more, but the white-haired man turned to speak to the other gentlemen beside him.

During the whispered conversation of the five gentlemen, the immigration inspector left the room by another door and soon returned with my wife's father, who had been informed the day before that we had been detained at Ellis Island for a hearing before the commission.

My reception was not an auspicious one. I had come to freedom and the first door that had opened to me was the door of a jail. The first American I saw upon our arrival was a man with a club. I had come as a free man to the free United States, but I was made the ward of my old father-in-law before I was allowed to set foot on its shores.

Before we set foot in New York, I wished that we were back on the boat, on the return voyage to London and Paris.

At the apartment of my wife's parents on the East Side some of their relatives were waiting to greet us.

They showed quite plainly their disapproval of the long-haired musician who had married into the family. When they had gone, my father-in-law, who had known my parents, said, embracing me, "I was afraid that you would fly off the handle. They have been here so long they feel superior to any greenhorn."

"They can't possibly like him less than he likes them," my wife interpreted for me.

The following day one of the younger set of relatives, upon hearing that I would accept any kind of work, informed me that there was a job open in an artificial flower factory on Bleeker Street run by one of his friends. Hard work. Five dollars a week. Ten hours a day. Six days a week. He looked at me in an infuriating manner while he spoke. I wrote down the name and address of the firm and sat down on the floor to play with the baby without paying further attention to him or to the other visitors.

"But why don't you want to continue with your musical profession?" he asked. "A musician is nothing to be ashamed of in America!"

The factory consisted of one large room in the top loft of a rickety old building, impregnated with the odor of urine, banana oil, and glue. It employed some twenty men and women. I was hired immediately, and the foreman, a burly Italian, showed me how to stamp out with a heavy hammer on a steel die the material from which artificial flowers are made.

The other workers were all recent immigrants from Poland, Russia, Italy, Roumania, and Germany. The boss, a dwarf-like hunchbacked woman with the head of a Quasimodo, sat behind a desk and kept an eye on everyone. On the walls of the lavatory in the hallway hung signs in eight different languages saying: "This is not a rest room," and Quasimodo, who watched the door to the hallway, often informed those who went out during working hours what was printed on the signs.

"Whatsa ma? You went out two times already," she said to one of the girls showing two fingers. "Two times. I see you."

That evening when I came home, the relative who had sent me to the artificial flower factory came to inquire how I liked the work. He asked the same question the following evening and the one after that. On his fifth visit I said, "I will stick to

the job long enough to learn how to make a funeral wreath."

I next saw him twenty years later.

As I went down with my first pay envelope that Saturday evening, a flat-faced young Russian woman who worked in the shop stopped me on the street corner to ask me to come to a shop meeting on Sixth Street near Second Avenue.

"Everybody will be there. You got to come."

We picked up the rest of the crowd at the next corner.

The back room of the saloon was the scene of another shop meeting when we got there. Beer was five cents a schooner and the free-lunch counter was loaded with squares of strong cheese, frankfurters, roast beef, herring, and salted mackerel. Men and women loaded up on the free fare.

I drank three glasses of beer while waiting our turn, leaning against the counter, and listening to the talk about me. They were all newcomers to the country. The steamship agents were there to collect the weekly payments on the tickets on which they had come to this country. Occasionally a woman, her head covered with a colored shawl, came in timidly to see that her husband didn't spend too much in the saloon.

The loudest talkers, the union organizers, spoke German, but a German bastardized with such words and expressions as, "Sag ich dem sonafabitch, 'Ein Scab, dats wass you are. Ein Scab ohne Klass bewustsein.' "

When our turn came, the young Russian woman called out, "Everybody from the rose shop come in, please. *Pozhaluĭsta.* Hurry up."

In the back room we sat about little tables, and while the waiters took my order for more beer, I heard a fat man on a platform in the back shout at us, "Who don't want to belong to unions and pay dues is scabs and lice. Initiation fee is one dollar, and dues is twenty-five cents a week. Pay dues to Sonia every week. If anyone tries any monkey business, he got the union to count with. So join the union now if you ain't no

scab. Initiation fee is one dollar; dues is twenty-five cents a week. How many new members, Sonia? Make 'm pay up."

Everyone paid up dues, arrears, and initiation fees. It was a great and convincing speech! Such speeches and such methods of organization eventually produced the Unione Siciliana, Lepke, Gurrah, and other shining examples of humanity.

By the time the meeting was over, I was short two dollars of my pay. At the bar the beer was five cents. It was ten cents in the back room. The extra five cents went to a secret fund of the union. Sonia gave me a receipt for a dollar and twenty-five cents.

"Shake hands everybody. A new member of the union. The rose shop is one hundred per cent organized."

She was a homely creature. Her nose was not larger than a button, but her mouth went from ear to ear. As we walked out, she asked me to come and hear Johann Most speak.

"Everybody goes there on Saturday night."

The hall in which Most spoke was thick with the smoke of a hundred pipes and twice as many fragrant cigars. White- and red-bloused girls went up and down the aisles selling anarchist papers and pamphlets.

"*Free Love,* five cents. *Bombs or Votes,* ten cents."

Sonia took the two pamphlets from a girl, handed them to me, and said, "Pay. Fifteen cents, that's all. Everybody buys them. It's good. It's education."

Johann Most, long-haired, one side of his bearded face swollen to twice the size of the other side, was one of the most famous German anarchists of the day. Colorful, witty, and vigorous, he lashed out with stinging eloquence and biting irony at governments and officials, at bourgeois traditions and exploiters of labor.

That night Most orated in German about Czolgosz, the man who had killed McKinley, and extolled the assassin as a man of courage and a martyr. Having explained to his audience that patriotism was a fable by which the workers were narcoticized

so they wouldn't awaken to the realization of their power and strength, that laws were made by the rich to enslave the poor, and that no millionaire had ever been hung or electrocuted by the state, not even for murder, he shouted that there was only one way to rid the world of kings, rulers, and oppressors, Czolgosz's way. The audience of pipe smokers and beer drinkers applauded frantically.

Suddenly the red-bloused girls in the aisles waved little red cardboards in the air and called out: "Tickets for the Czolgosz Ball. Who wants tickets for the Czolgosz Ball? Twenty-five cents now; fifty cents at the door."

When the sale of tickets was over, Most, who hadn't left the platform, but had drunk two large glasses of beer, read from the social pages of the bourgeois newspapers extracts describing receptions at famous hotels, the menus at great dinners, and the gowns, and furs, and the jewels worn by the ladies, and told the audience that all this was paid for by the sweat of men and women who worked ten hours a day for half the pay that it took to keep body and soul together.

When, after receiving tremendous applause, Most came down from the platform, Sonia beckoned to him, and he came over to drink another beer and talk to me.

I was no tyro. I had listened to anarchist speeches before. I had heard Sébastian Faure lecture at the Société Savante in Paris; had heard Libertad, the Christlike anarchist, debate on *Society's Future* with Paraf-Javal at the Manège Saint Paul; had heard Jean Grave, the stubborn, firebrand editor of *Les Temps Nouveaux,* argue with Prince Peter Kropotkin, the author of *Fields, Factory and Workshop,* on the difference between individualistic and communistic anarchism; and had read books by Élisée Réclus and Max Stirner, and "Libertarian" magazines which discussed and explained philosophic anarchism in all its phases.

Most did not talk about philosophical anarchism, but offered a justification of the reign of bombs, daggers, and pistols.

A world inhabited by such perfect human beings that neither law nor police would be necessary was a utopia which I should have liked to see. The propaganda to kill the lawmakers and law-enforcers before such perfect human beings had been evolved repelled me as much as advocacy of Hottentotism.

While I was arguing with Most against terrorism, the waiter continued to fill our glasses. When Most left our table with a gesture of disgust and I rose to leave, the waiter presented me with the bill for all our drinks, fifteen in all—a dollar fifty.

It was a long time after supper when I came home with only a dollar and a half in my pocket to show for a hard week's work.

"Why so late?" Naomi asked.

"It takes time and money to initiate a new man into the union," I answered.

I spent the following day, Sunday, looking over the East Side. Houston, Rivington, Delancey, Grand Street, and East Broadway were lined with pushcarts whose owners shouted the prices of their merchandise, eatables and wearables, in Russian, Yiddish, Polish, Italian, and Greek. At the corner of East Broadway and Essex Street, a Salvation Army lass was blowing a trumpet. Opposite her, from a soap box, an electioneering socialist was denouncing the American bourgeoisie in Russian, while a Methodist missionary twenty feet away was collecting pennies from the poor, to convert heathens in Asia.

The filth and the garbage littering the sidewalks and the gutters was being kicked about by street urchins who screamed at each other in half a dozen European jargons seasoned with mangled Americanese. Not knowing Yiddish, the most popular language on the East Side, which even the Italian peddlers spoke fluently, I only half understood what the "pullers-in" of the shops said to me, tugging at my sleeves as I passed them by.

Broken, tired, despondent, I returned home as soon as night had fallen.

"Ready to quit?" my wife asked. She did so want to go back to her beloved France!

"No. I'm ready to stay. Something has to be done here. I don't know what. I don't know whether I am the man to do it. But something has to be done in this city."

Four weeks later I was fired by my boss, the hunchback, on the pretext that I had been late two mornings in succession. The truth was that a batch of fresh immigrants, huge peasants from Lithuania, had just arrived and were being offered by the steamship agents to the sweatshops for three dollars a week.

Stinking, unsanitary, overloaded boats from Europe arrived daily at these shores, unloaded their cargoes of wretched immigrants from Russia and the Balkans, and left for more cargoes before the holds had even been fumigated. Starvation in Russia, hunger in Hungary, and persecution of Jews in Roumania and Armenians in Turkey filled all the boats.

Agents of steamship companies, posing as representing mining and lumber companies in the West, were hiring men in Poland, Lithuania, and Hungary to work in America at "fabulous" wages—fabulous when translated into the coin of those countries. When steamship companies entered upon a transportation price war, German boats carried passengers from Poland to New York for fifteen dollars for an adult and five dollars for a child under twelve. Because of this transportation war, the labor market here became glutted with unskilled workers. The owners of the ships in Hamburg, Rotterdam, and London didn't care a fig about what would happen to the human cargo they transported.

Eventually unemployment, hunger, cold, and illness destroyed the weak and aroused the anger of those who survived in that golden age of rugged individualism.

The greater the misery, the more popular Johann Most's *Kamerad*, the anarchist weekly, and the higher the circulation of all the other papers and magazines agitating for revenge

against the bourgeoisie became. Idle Polish, Italian, and Russian immigrants crowded the East Side street corners to listen to "class-conscious" workers translate passages from the *Kamerad* into their own tongues.

Most had spoken to a handful of people in New York before the transportation war; after that, he spoke to thousands there and to more thousands up and down the country.

Emma Goldman, fiery, clever, and eloquent, lectured on literature and the drama in halls and theaters and from the rostrums of liberal colleges, but always from the anarchist point of view. Italian, Russian, Danish, Swedish, Hungarian, Polish, Yiddish, and Greek revolutionary papers and pamphlets were sold by the tens of thousands. All preached revolt; all preached hatred of bourgeois society and capitalism.

Today the American flag waves over a stage or a soap box, even one from which the most un-American theories are preached, but in those days no such subterfuge was resorted to. The red flag was the only flag one saw in the slums and the foreign quarters. Only "traitors to the Cause" and sycophants waved American flags.

The leaders of the socialists and anarchists were Germans and Russians, mostly Germans. When an English-speaking American delegate to a socialist convention demanded that English be spoken so that he, too, could understand, the whole audience yelled, as with one voice, "Heraus. Maul halten." (Out with him. Hold your tongue.)

That wasn't the America I had envisaged before I saw it, but that was the America that I found when I came.

We moved into a two-room apartment on Monroe Street near the East River. We paid six dollars a month for it and furnished it with two beds, two chairs, a table, and a coal stove. When friends came to visit us, they sat on the floor. We weren't apologetic about our poverty. Naomi even took a certain pride in it. Instead of planning how to better our

situation, she helped me to formulate plans for the betterment of the world.

I roamed the streets answering want ads, searching for work. I wasn't any too lucky. Here and there I got a job for a few days in some factory, but I didn't last long. Often I was fired after two or three hours' work and refused payment. Some of the sweatshops that employed only immigrants regularly practiced this kind of petty robbery. And there was nothing one could do except yell, "Down with the bourgeoisie," at the nearest street corner meeting. Once when I refused to leave a shop before being paid for four hours' work, the foreman called a policeman and had me arrested. On the way to the station, the cop shoved the end of his club into the small of my back and shouted, "Move on, you goddamn greenhorn."

When winter had set in in earnest, I got a job shoveling snow for twenty-five cents an hour. After ten hours of work, with burlap bags wrapped over my thin shoes, the Irish foreman asked me whether I wanted to work another two hours. I thought of the additional half dollar and said, "Yes." When, at the end of that period, the jovial fellow asked me whether I wanted to work another few hours, I said, "Yes," again, warmed by the thought that I would have three and a half dollars to take home. I turned in my shovel at midnight and was back at the tool shack the following morning at five to stand in line in the hope of another day's work.

A week later the foreman refused to give me a shovel. When I asked him whether I hadn't done my work right, he said:

"Sure, the work was all right, but ain't you got any brains under that black hair of yours?"

I understood.

"O.K., foreman. I understand now."

From then on, for the privilege of working sixteen hours a day, I kicked back fifty cents every day to the foreman. When

I mentioned the kicking back to one of the men working beside me, he called me a greenhorn and explained that the foreman paid thousands of dollars a year to keep that job.

Late one night, while loading a snow truck on Fourteenth Street, near Third Avenue, I heard the newsboys set up a terrific racket as they ran screaming, "Extra! Extra!"

People coming from the theaters bought the papers and read them in the glare of the lamplight, in spite of the snowstorm. I bought a paper and leaned on my shovel to read the headlines. There had been a revolution in Russia. Maxim Gorky and Father Gapon, a Russian priest, had led a hungry mob to the Czar's palace to ask for bread. The Little Father's Cossacks had allowed the mob to come within the range of their guns and had blown them to kingdom come. Though the revolution was drowned in blood and smothered under the hoofs of Cossack cavalry, the throne of the Romanovs had been badly shaken.

That night my wife was taken to the hospital to give birth to our second son, whom she named Gorky. When I came to work in the morning, Flanagan, the foreman, bellowed at me, "What makes you late?"

"My wife gave birth to a baby," I answered.

"A boy or a girl?" he asked, suddenly affable.

"A boy."

"Yiminy crackers, a boy! You ain't fooling me? A boy! A real boy, eh? Well, here is your shovel and don't forget to set up the cigars. Goddam it," he cried out, giving me a hug, "I've wanted a boy for twenty years, and here comes this greenhorn and gets one right out of the box. How do you do it?"

Ten hours later I went to the hospital to see Naomi and our second son. She was terribly excited about the revolution in Russia. I left her to go to Madison Square Garden to attend a protest meeting against the manner in which the Cossacks had smothered the revolution in St. Petersburg.

There were twenty thousand people in the hall. A dozen speakers, anarchists, socialists, and liberals, succeeded one another and spoke in Yiddish, Russian, German, and Polish. Between speakers, young party members hawked button pictures of Karl Marx, Engels, Kropotkin, Johann Most, Tolstoi, Gorky, Caserio Santé, and Czolgosz, all martyrs to the cause. The last speaker spoke in English.

As we all left the hall between rows of policemen and plainclothesmen, who had come to spot the "bad eggs," a tall, broad-shouldered young man with a small head and a pale face asked me in English whether I had understood all the speakers. Talking, he led me away from the crowd and asked me to join him over a glass of beer at a near-by saloon. The pale young man was Courtenay Lemon, the editor of the socialist paper *The Worker*, the boy orator, the terror of married men, and the darling of the women in the movement. He was a real American, a socialist, a writer, a critic, and a dramatist.

While I answered his questions, he corrected both my grammar and my pronunciation and was angry when I mispronounced the same word twice. Before we separated, he asked me to look him up at his office whenever I felt like having a chat.

Two days later, during a fresh snowstorm which had halted all surface traffic, the foreman, Flanagan, took the shovel away from me in the middle of the day, and told me to "get the hell out of here." I had been reported as having grumbled about the daily kick-back of fifty cents. At parting, Flanagan said, "You goddam foreigners. You're nothing but a bunch of socialists. If you don't like it here, why don't you go back where you came from?"

That second son of mine was brought home by his mother to a father who averaged a dollar a day, although he did enough work for three dollars for a window-cleaning company. The

company, two illiterate Italians, took the other two dollars as their honest share. When I attempted to become independent, bought a ladder, a pail, and a chamois cloth, and went out to wash windows on my own account, two toughs smashed my ladder, caved in my tin pail, and would have done the same to me had I not been the possessor of two good fists and learned to use the "savate," the kick, in Paris. We all wound up before a magistrate, who fined me two dollars for disturbing the peace and discharged the innocent toughs.

I felt wonderful when I came home. I hadn't used my fists in years. A good fistfight was a fine stimulant. I was a strict vegetarian and hated brutality, but I hated cowardice even more. I come from that kind of stock. We hate the idea of fighting, but once in a scrape, we enjoy it. Had I come home from the battlefield instead of from a street brawl, Naomi couldn't have been prouder of my scars. I had to tell her the story of that battle over and over again while we took turns at rocking the cradle in which slept our younger son.

IV

A "WANT AD" in the *New York World* sent me to a labor agency on the Bowery, to a large hall crowded with several hundred immigrants from every corner of the earth. The place, serving as a dance hall for sailors at night, was decorated with crude paintings of women in tights and girls with black stockings pulled up above their knees so that just a few inches of rosy flesh showed between the garters and the lacy pantalets. The place reeked of sweat, cheese, and pipe tobacco, and of that foul, sour breath sewered up from the bowels of the ill-fed, the worried, and the quarrelsome.

After a while two snappy young swells came out of the office at the end of the hall and ordered us to stand up against the wall.

"How long have you been here?" one of the swells shouted at me.

"Six months."

He looked at my calloused hands, found them satisfactory, asked me what country I came from, said, "O. K.," and marked my coat sleeve with a piece of chalk. I followed a line of men to a smaller hall in the back where we were given two corned-beef sandwiches apiece and told to wait.

"Does anybody know what we're supposed to work at and where?" I asked.

No one answered. Finally an elderly man with gnarled

hands and a bulbous nose said to me in Roumanian, "Do you need a job badly?"

"Yes."

"Then shut up. Nobody is paying you to ask questions."

Around noon, when we numbered sixty, one of the swells came in to tell us that the job was in Bridgeport, Connecticut. Three dollars a day. Ten hours a day. Steady work.

I telephoned the news to my wife's brother, asking him to tell her where I was going.

We were led to the railroad station by a private policeman who bought our tickets and traveled with us. No one said a word during the two-hour journey. At the Bridgeport railroad station, when a crowd in overalls called us "Goddam scabs," I understood why I had been hired. While we were being herded toward an open truck, I stepped away from my companions and ducked into the crowd.

"Come back, you. Come back, you bastard. No one is going to hurt you," the private policeman called after me. But I lost myself in the crowd and was soon on the main street of the town.

Here I was in Bridgeport, sixty miles from New York, in a snowstorm, with two sandwiches in my stomach and ten cents in my pocket. It was four in the afternoon. Resolving to walk back to New York, I spent five cents on a loaf of bread before I started out. The roads were not what they are today, and there were no automobiles to give one a lift.

At midnight, having covered almost half the distance, I crept into a stable off the road and lay down in the hay. An hour later I crept out. At ten in the morning, after fifteen hours in a blinding snow, I was at West Farms and faced with the decision of either spending the last nickel for a cup of hot coffee or taking the elevated train to downtown New York. The elevated won.

My wife, Naomi, approved what I had done. But we were at our wits' end. Naomi, who could have asked her relatives

for temporary assistance, which they would have gladly given us, refused to let them know our plight. She was fiercely proud and almost as fiercely confident in me.

My next job was in Brooklyn in a fire-escape factory at two dollars a day. I had to get up at four in the morning, to be on the job at six-thirty. Our factory, a shed in "New Lots," competed with much better mechanized shops by paying low wages and working immigrants longer hours. The boss, a polyglot, spoke all the languages, but the only English he used was "Hurry up. Move on. What the hell."

When an immigrant became "too smart," he was fired and replaced by a new one just come from Russia or Poland. Some of the men slept in the factory and cooked their meals over the fire of the forge.

Three months later, on a Saturday night, the boss handed me my pay, saying, "You are too 'smart.'"

Instead of going home from work that night, I went to a beer saloon in Cooper Square to hear capitalism properly damned.

When I came home, I announced that I was through, for a little while at least, with day labor. We had twenty dollars in cash and the house rent was paid for a month.

Three days later I walked out on East Broadway, where the scrawny trees at the edge of the sidewalk were beginning to leave out, and saw on the walls of the Lyceum Hall a large sign announcing a concert of Russian music by the famous pianist, Platon Brounoff. Although it was eleven in the morning, a short, stout man in a top hat with a magnificent head on a pair of wide shoulders was talking to the girl cashier behind the booth in the lobby. From the picture on the poster I recognized him as the pianist of the evening. I introduced myself, told him that I was a musician, and he promptly invited me to tea at "Sholem's," where all the East Side intellectuals met.

Brounoff spoke half a dozen languages, including French, loudly and volubly, but they all sounded like Russian. Be-

tween two glasses of tea he told me all about himself and what a great man he was. When Abraham Cahan, the editor of the *Forward,* the most influential Yiddish socialist newspaper, came in, Brounoff called him to our table and introduced me as one of France's "greatest" and most "famous" musicians. Tall, broad-shouldered, with a flowing blond mustache, Cahan looked like an arrogant Russian army officer. When he had left, Brounoff said, "This is America. You have to exaggerate." He asked me to accompany him to his studio in a basement on East Broadway, where he introduced me to one of his pupils, "Miss Gluck from Roumania."

It was Alma Gluck, later to become one of the most famous singers in the world, but at that time still an unknown. She was no newcomer to the United States. (I was thrilled many years later to see both our names inscribed on the "Wall of Fame" at the New York World's Fair.)

When I came home that afternoon, I found a shiny, bright, upright, golden oak piano standing against the wall, between the folding bed and the cradle. Naomi had bought it on the instalment plan, five dollars down and five dollars a month. Before the week was over, I had eight dollars' worth of pupils, sixteen in all. Twenty-five cents a lesson seemed to be the prevailing rate on Monroe Street.

My pupils were girls in their teen years, dark daughters of Sicily, corn-colored ones from Poland, red-haired ones from Russia, all ill-fed, ill-clothed, and very eager.

When my income reached twelve dollars a week, I was the busiest piano teacher in New York, and my wife and the children had to stay in the park the whole day, while the piano was being banged fifteen and sixteen hours at a stretch. My pupils stood four deep about the piano, or sat on the floor, or outside the door, talking, quarreling, and waiting their turn.

We moved down a floor to a larger apartment, and I raised my fee to fifty cents a lesson, but didn't lose a single pupil.

Then suddenly, in September in one week half their number stayed away; the capmakers had gone on strike. A week later I had only four pupils, the two daughters of my landlord and the daughters of our grocery man.

I went to visit some of my pupils. The poverty of their parents, the bleakness of their homes, made my heart shrink at the thought that I had taken money from them. Had I given them anything as valuable as what I had taken?

"We'll come back, teacher, as soon as the strike is over."

"Come back now," I urged. "You'll pay me later."

The girls were willing, but most of the parents refused to put themselves in debt to the piano teacher also, while going into debt to the landlords and the grocery store keepers.

Unoccupied, I went to "Sholem's" café on East Broadway and listened to the political disputes raging from table to table. At one table the Marxists advocated organization, discipline, and the dictatorship of the proletariat. At the adjoining table the philosophical anarchists shouted back that the world would be no happier a place to live in under socialism than it was under capitalism, and that a policeman with a socialist badge was no less a policeman than one with a capitalist badge. The Marxists, the anarchists shouted, wanted power and not the happiness of mankind.

The socialists sneered at the anarchists and called them foolish utopians.

The philosophical anarchists, the Kropotkinists of "Sholem's," didn't advocate bomb throwing. They believed that people could be educated to a degree that would make every form of constraint superfluous. To achieve that, these anarchists published the best literature, translated the best books from a dozen languages, and organized amateur theatricals, concerts, and lectures. They were saints without knowing it.

The anarchists of East Broadway believed in the essential goodness of man. The socialists didn't. The anarchists said

that capitalism would fall when and if men became capable of living and working without being whipped by exploiters. The socialists argued that a social revolution ought to be brought about at once, by any means, regardless of whether the masses were ready for the change or not.

I learned Yiddish rapidly and was soon able to voice my opinion in the brouhaha of the discussions. In one of these discussions I came up against Abraham Cahan, the editor of the *Forward.* Cahan, a former reporter on the *New York Globe,* had become the dictator of a powerful daily newspaper, brooked no contradiction from anyone, and accused me of arrogance when I disagreed with him.

Some weeks later, the *Forward* announced a short story contest. I sent in a story under a pseudonym and was awarded the first prize, twenty-five dollars. Abraham Cahan was incensed at my duplicity.

It was odd that the first language in which I learned to write in the United States should have been Yiddish, a language more alien to me than English was.

The twenty-five dollars prize money came in the nick of time. The capmaker's strike was still on. We owed two months' rent and a staggering grocer's bill. My wife still told her relatives that our affairs were running smoothly. We both studied English in earnest. We had discovered the King James version of the Bible, and spent hours of exaltation while we recited aloud to each other whole chapters of the great book. Even the "begats" were musical and majestic.

The day the piano company took the piano away for nonpayment of the instalments, I took an inventory of myself. I had not come to America to teach the piano. I had come to tear myself away from crumbling Europe, to live and raise a family in an atmosphere of youth and freshness.

I promised myself to make every hour count from then on, and to take inventory every night of what I had done during the day.

That night, when everyone was asleep, I sat down at the kitchen table with one foot on the cradle and wrote from beginning to end my first English story, *Brothers and Sisters.* In the morning I dropped it in the letter box of the *New York Call,* a socialist daily. It was published the following Sunday, illustrated by John Sloan. It occupied the whole front page of the magazine section, and I received a five-dollar check from the *Call* in Monday's mail.

That check was more than money to me. It confirmed me in my belief that I could write, although Naomi said that she hadn't needed any such confirmation.

My next job was as a piano player in a nickelodeon on the East Side. The pay was fifteen dollars a week; the hours, from nine in the morning to midnight. We comprised a three-piece orchestra, a violin player, a drummer, and I. When my left hand was too tired, I played with my right hand only. When I was hungry, I ate with the right hand while I played with the left. There was no set music for those movie operas. I looked at the screen and improvised something to suit the action of the drama or the comedy. The violinist, a young Italian, couldn't read music, but had a fine ear and followed me in whatever I played. The drummer, a blind man, just drummed. After a picture had played a day, I knew without looking at the screen when to play a waltz, when a thunderous march, and when a dirge. The owner of the theater, a Greek, who also owned the restaurant near by, repeated the same formula every Saturday night when he paid us, "Money, money for nothing, for playing. Easy money. You guys have it easy. How about a crap game?"

He often won half of the fifteen dollars from the violinist and raged because I refused to "take a chance."

Some of the people in the neighborhood came every night, although they saw the same picture, and I got to know them and talk to them when they sat close enough to me.

I wrote to Courtenay Lemon, asking him to see me at the nickelodeon some night. He came and took me out for a bite at "Beefsteak Jones'," where they served only steaks and coffee. Between two steaks Courtenay spoke to me about Samuel Butler's novel, *The Way of All Flesh.* He had read my story in the *Call,* and thought it somewhat sentimental. He promised to bring me the Butler book the next day. He did.

I propped the book up on the music rack and read it while I played, read it while pounding out waltzes, one-steps, and marches, repeating to myself aloud some of the great passages of the novel.

Courtenay brought several of his friends to the theater to watch me read a book while I played. He never slept at night and was glad to have someone to visit after midnight. Six foot three, this side of thirty, and very handsome, he was a master of English, a fascinating talker, a mathematician, a critic, a theorist, a socialist, a philosopher, and with it all one of the most charming of men. But lazy . . . irresponsible, forever in debt, and borrowing from Peter to pay Paul.

I thought Butler's *Way of All Flesh* almost as beautiful as the Bible and learned it by heart. The fifteen hours' daily grind passed rapidly in its company. But the Greek, Patapopolis, didn't like to see me read while I played. Every time he passed by the piano he threw the book from the rack, screaming, "I pay you for playing."

When my left hand had swollen so that I was compelled to play fifteen hours a day with the right hand only, the drummer and the violinist covered me up and made a great deal of noise, so that the Greek wouldn't notice that I was disabled. When my right hand had swollen to twice its size, I gave up the job.

While I was waiting for the swelling to go down, I roamed the East Side with Courtenay. The café socialists knew him as a great orator and fine writer, but they resented what they called our "slumming." The resentment grew still more when

I took Courtenay and one of his lady friends to the Thalia Theater to see Jacob Adler and his troupe play Tolstoi's *The Living Corpse.*

"Are we freaks? Why bring strangers here!"

The next day a columnist of the socialist *Forward* printed a biting satire on me.

"Why does he come to 'Sholem's'? He is a stranger. He speaks Yiddish as if it were a foreign tongue. He writes Yiddish as if it were French. He knows nothing of Jewish learning and tradition. He brings his friends to look at us as if we were animals in a zoo. Let him get a job with a sight-seeing car and wear the uniform and cap of a guide!"

A month later we were down to our last dollar again, and my left hand was still swollen to the size of a ham. The *New York Call* had published two more stories and paid five dollars for each, but when I sent in another story, the cashier informed me that there was no money in the bank for "outsiders."

V

SOME OF MY WIFE'S friends, who were living in Jamestown, New York, wrote to say that if we cared to come to Jamestown, I could probably find work in a factory there. I took the next train to Jamestown.

These friends in Jamestown were friendly people, but when they saw me, they didn't think my chances of getting employment were very good. "You don't look like a workingman!"

The next day, however, I got a job at the coal heap of a worsted mill and came home with the war paint on me. Two days later I was given a better job at the dyeing vats.

The mill employed about five hundred immigrants, Swedes, Norwegians, Macedonians, Greeks, and Hungarians. It was owned by a pink-cheeked Englishman, who walked about the premises in a morning coat and striped trousers and carried a cane in his gloved hands.

A few weeks later my wife and the two children joined me, and we set up housekeeping in a small apartment on the street floor. There was a backyard large enough for a vegetable garden. True, the backyard was under four feet of snow and ice just then, but I could imagine it growing vegetables the next spring.

We worked eight hours a day at the mill, and only half days on Saturday. The owners of the house, a Swedish couple, who lived above us, were kind and offered to stay with our children whenever my wife and I wanted to go out together.

The foreman of the mill, a florid-faced, blue-eyed Englishman, who called me "Frenchie," eventually gave me a cleaner job in the storeroom and often came up to smoke a cigarette, keep me company, and talk about his family, which consisted of a wife he didn't like and a daughter he adored. A Liverpool man, he had lived in France and loved France, but thought the French were the wrong people for such a beautiful land.

"England should have had it," he said.

His French vocabulary was almost entirely gustatory and amatory. He talked by the hour of the good food he had eaten at San Malo and Paris and of the girls he had slept with, and he smacked his lips at the memory of the good food and the women as if both were gustatory.

We had, meanwhile, made the acquaintance of a Dr. Jahnsen, a fine singer and a cousin of Knut Hamsun, the Norwegian writer. The doctor, a blond giant, often came to see us nonprofessionally, and brought with him a Miss Rumpell, a church organist. They were crazy about our children, one of whom was dark and the other blue-eyed, and they brought them toys and taught them Norwegian songs.

During the long winter I was looking forward eagerly to the spring and a vegetable garden. I wrote a little, and reread the Bible, Butler's *Way of All Flesh*, and whatever else the Jamestown library had on its shelves.

In April my foreman gave me an assistant, a young Macedonian Greek, who didn't know a word of English.

When the Liverpooler came up to smoke his cigarette and heard me talk Greek to my assistant, he was bowled over.

"So you speak Greek, eh?"

"So does this boy," I defended myself as if against a crime.

"Righto! But he is a Greek." And he looked at me as if he had suddenly produced the *corpus delicti* of my crime.

I tried to explain to him that people spoke Greek in the section of Roumania where I was born. But he didn't seem to believe me.

"Why don't you tell me your real name?" he asked.

I told my wife that evening that I would probably lose my job.

"They might give you a better one," she consoled.

When he was three years old, my wife taught our oldest son, Hyperion, to read. Because our Swedish neighbors and Doctor Jahnsen had talked about the phenomenon to their friends, they came to convince themselves. In this way our circle of friends became larger and larger with Hyperion the central point of attraction. We liked the Scandinavians very much. My wife, who had interested herself in Scandinavian literature and knew all of Ibsen's plays, became the pet of her new friends.

Early in May, a heavy warm rain melted the snow and left a lovely patch of fat brown mud in the backyard. A few days later Dr. Jahnsen and our neighbors helped me dig up the garden, while the children screamed as they watched the wriggling earthworms turned up by our spades. The whole backyard was turned over before nightfall.

The following afternoon the Liverpooler asked me to accompany him home after work to meet his daughter.

"My wife," he said, "is in New York."

The foreman's home was about a mile from the mill in the residential section of the city. The daughter was a wide-hipped, tall girl in her twenties, red-headed, freckle-faced, full-lipped, and groggy-eyed. She greeted me with *"Vous parlez français, n'est-ce pas?"* She had a most atrocious pronunciation.

An hour later my host told me that I was to leave the mill two hours earlier every day and complete his daughter's French education, which he had begun with *"Voulez-vous coucher avec moi? Je vous aime,"* and so on.

I gave her her first lesson then and there.

"Oh," she cried out, "if a table is a taable, then a chair is a chaar and a ladle a laadle. Oh, ain't it easy!" And she

laughed and laughed. Her father thought her very witty.

Compelled to stay for dinner, I listened to Miss Diana speak French in her own fashion. Some of it was funny. Her father was completely ga-ga about her. I had never suspected that such a relationship between father and daughter was possible.

By the time the peas in my garden had podded and we were eating the first radishes, the Liverpoolers had become unbearable. Mademoiselle refused to be called Miss, insisted on being French and doing as the French women do or as her father had told her they do. She craved a wild, French love affair. She was stupid and insane, and had been corrupted to the marrow by her own father. What a spectacle! On one side of the curtain the sane, solid, normal Scandinavians, Jahnsen and the Swensens, and on the other, the putrid Liverpoolers.

We left Jamestown suddenly without giving anybody an explanation, leaving behind us a vegetable garden at its very best and some very lovable friends. What I most regretted was the sweet corn, the peppers, the tomatoes, and the rows and rows of sweet peas and green beans. Who would take care of them, water them, cultivate them? And who would eat them? So green a garden, after months of white snow and ice!

I went to see Platon Brounoff, who, having been blacklisted by the *Jewish Forward,* had left East Broadway and moved uptown in the West Sixties.

"But what has happened? You and Cahan were such good friends!"

"I wrote something about a pianist whom I didn't like and whom Cahan did."

"And because of that you had to leave the East Side, where you are so well known?"

"Well, if I had crawled on all fours and licked Cahan's boots, he would have forgiven me. But I have my pride. I am a pupil of Anton Rubinstein," Brounoff said. "Cahan's paper

wouldn't even accept a paid ad for my concerts after my quarrel with the great socialist. *Bozhe moĭ! Bozhe moĭ!* (My God, my God!) What kind of a world will they make when they come into power?"

His big jowls were sagging. He still wore his top hat and Prince Albert coat, but he was in the dumps. I had come to be consoled, and I found myself consoling him. He laughed himself sick at the tale of my experiences in Jamestown.

"*Bozhe moĭ, bozhe moĭ!* A Potiphar in America! And a Joseph who had been brought up in Paris. *Bozhe moĭ, bozhe moĭ!* And he regrets the beans and the peas in his garden! What a finish to a story! What Chekhov wouldn't do with such a story!"

We drank vodka and tea. People came in. Brounoff repeated my story, embellished and embroidered, touched up here and there, but always ending with the pathetic regret for the vegetable garden.

"Who'll take care of the peas and cabbages? Who will water them, cultivate them, eat them? Like in the Psalms!"

His belly shook. All the bellies shook. We drank more vodka and more tea.

"If only Anton Rubinstein were alive to hear this story! *Bozhe moĭ, bozhe moĭ!* If only he were alive!" Brounoff repeated again and again. "Who will take care of the peas in my garden? Who will water them, cultivate them, eat them?"

Our little apartment had become the center for a group of young women who were being stimulated by Naomi to found a modern school for children. I obtained another piano-playing job at a nickelodeon, where I had better pay and shorter hours, and I learned how to manage my hands while playing.

Courtenay Lemon came to see us. "To hell with Jamestown," he said, and he hopped about the room dancing with the children, marveling to hear Hyperion read so fluently.

Having brought several stories and also an essay about music from Jamestown, I sent them to the new Sunday editor of the *Call,* one of Courtenay's friends. A few days later she wrote, asking me to come and see her at the office the following week.

Joanna was an ethereally beautiful woman in her late forties, tall, and blue-eyed. She told me that the first story, which had been set up, had gotten her into trouble with Herman Simpson, the editor-in-chief, because it did not conform to the Marxian theories. While we were talking, Simpson, the English-speaking counterpart of Abraham Cahan, broke in on us and told me what was what! I laughed at his conception of literature and art. Simpson banged his fist on the table.

"I am boss. I am boss here," he ranted. I laughed out loud.

"Get out. Get out!" Simpson yelled, beside himself.

"Did you have to quarrel with him?" Naomi asked, when I told her what had happened.

"Yes. Remember the fight with those toughs who broke my ladder? Well, it was the same thing only on a spiritual plane. He as much as told me that I'll either work for him or he'll smash my ladder."

Joanna knew all of Courtenay's faults, some of which were unknown to me, but she blushed like a little girl when she saw him. She lived with her sister, a biologist, and Courtenay often went to their house for supper.

One day, when we were alone, I told Joanna a Gypsy story which included the description of the Gypsies crossing the frozen Danube.

"Write it down," she said. "Write it down just as you told it to me."

When I brought her the written story, she said, after reading it, "You'll never see it in print in this country."

Courtenay was even more discouraging. "In Russia, yes; in America, no. It is not sweet enough for American magazines. A beautiful story, yes."

Courtenay was interested in an essay I had written on the sex of musical instruments and eventually had it printed in an obscure magazine published by someone who was "bugs" on abnormal psychology. The essay was based on personal observations of musicians and the instruments of their choice. Dr. Freud, and the eminent American psychoanalyst, Dr. Brill, have often quoted that essay since, and have enlarged upon it, drawing conclusions that hadn't been in my mind when I wrote it.

Some day in the future I shall write more extensively on the same subject. Hitler's admiration for Wagner's music, Mussolini's love of the bassoon, and Frederick the Great's virtuosity on the flute are not just so many accidents. The theory has its dangers, however. In the hands of charlatans it can become a terrible tool. I hate to think of a pseudo-psychoanalyst asking a patient: "What's your favorite musical instrument?" or "Who is your favorite composer?"

I didn't see Courtenay often. He had a heavy love affair on his hands. He had met his match, a lady who only shrugged her beautiful shoulders when he accused her of unfaithfulness.

We had some trouble with Hyperion, who had started school. He was too young to be placed in an advanced class, and too far ahead in his studies to be happy with children of his own age. One day he rose and left the classroom, saying to the teacher, "This is a class for dummies. I am no dummy." And he wouldn't go back to school any more. When I insisted, he went into a rage and was a very sick boy for the next few days.

My hands had swollen up again; so I got a job with a wrecking company which was demolishing a building on upper Sixth Avenue. I, who had come to the United States to build, now earned my bread by wrecking. The Poles who worked beside me enjoyed the work. Their eyes glittered when a section of a wall came down with a thud. When some Hungarians came

to work, there was a series of accidents on the job. First one, then another Hungarian was hurt by falling bricks. A crowbar, "accidentally" falling out of the hand of a Pole on the tenth floor, killed a Hungarian working six floors below. The following night the whole side of a wall came down unexpectedly and buried two Poles underneath. Poles and Hungarians fought with hammers and crowbars during "lunch time" at midnight. When I tried to act as peacemaker, telling them that they were neither Poles nor Hungarians, but wreckers on a job, they turned their anger against me.

Now that I worked at night, I roamed the streets every afternoon, from the Roosevelt slip to St. Marks on the Bowery, and became acquainted with Italian pushcart peddlers, and the *notabili* of the district. My knowledge of Greek and Turkish delighted the *cafegiis* on Henry Street and Cherry Street. I was welcome in sweatshops under the elevated on Allen Street, where almond-eyed Syrian girls made lace and repaired oriental rugs, and tall Moroccan Jewish women helped their husbands hammer out brass trays and other ornamental wares in brass and copper. These Moroccan Jews had a newspaper all their own, a weekly in which the Spanish that they spoke, the Ladino, was printed in Hebrew letters. Because I helped them explain their troubles to the landlord, to the police, to the school superintendents, to the insurance men, and to the steamship agents, I was asked to sit at their tables and eat their food, chick-peas cooked in oil and cabbage boiled in honey, and was invited to their curious weddings, barbarous affairs, neither African nor Moslem, but a mixture of both.

One such wedding between an elderly man and a young girl was broken up when the *chacham,* the minister, chose to deliver a sermon on "Just Measure" before the final ceremony.

"When an old man marries a young woman, *can* he give her just measure? And when a young woman marries an old man, *will* she give him just measure?" he questioned, looking first at the groom and then at the bride.

The bride fainted, and the groom edged out of the room. Then the old *chacham* gave the girl's parents a piece of his mind.

I wrote that story down twenty times, trying to capture the atmosphere of the wedding and the stunning effect of the *chacham's* words. And every time Naomi said it was still unconvincing. Years later I wrote the story again, and discovered that I had rewritten from memory the first draft of the story.

In the Syrian quarter below Rector Street near Battery Park, I watched the printing of a Syrian newspaper in Arabic, went to christenings and weddings in a Syrian Coptic church, and eventually met Khalil Gibran, poet and painter, a wealthy man's son, a combination Tagore and Maeterlinck with greater ability and talent than either of them. Gibran, a young man who looked like a Persian painting, published, at his own expense, a gorgeously gotten up magazine, *Al Funoon* (The Arts), in both English and Arabic. Although raised in Boston, he was an oriental of orientals to the tip of his fingers, lived in a magnificent studio on West Tenth Street, surrounded himself with beautiful models and sycophants, drank interminable cups of black coffee and glasses of arachi, and eventually died from overwork, arachi, exhaustion, and the influenza.

In the Italian sweatshops below Fourteenth Street, women worked their fingers to the bone hemstitching gowns to be sold on Fifth Avenue as "French" dresses. Children who should have been in school sewed on buttons to earn ten cents a day. Hat makers, cigar makers, bakers, and makers of costume jewelry employed consumptive Italian immigrants, who were at the mercy of the *padroni,* the Maffia, and the Black Hand, always in debt to the *banchieri* for a steamship ticket on the installment plan, or the expensive funeral, with music, of a mother, a brother, or a child.

On receipt of a telegraphed request for a hundred or two hundred men to be sent to Detroit or Chicago, Pittsburgh, or the Messabi Range, the *banchieri* would herd a crowd of their

debtors together, tell them what their wages would be, and pack them off under guard like slaves to the mines or the shops that had hired them sight unseen.

Every foreign group was hectored and bossed by some organization; yet not one was as murderous as the Maffia. It had a finger in everything. Its higher-ups made millions selling a patent medicine supposed to cure gonorrhea and syphilis. Many Italian doctors in the United States were compelled to prescribe it to their clients whether they had any such disease or not. Every pushcart peddler paid toll to the organization. It ruled church and political organizations and owned cemeteries and funeral parlors. Thousands of Italian midwives in New York and thousands all over the country paid twenty dollars a month to the *Societa* for protection. The children brought into the world by a midwife who hadn't paid her dues to the *Societa* died shortly after birth.

The only difference between the Maffia of those days and the Fascist Maffia of today is that Mussolini has clothed his gang in uniforms and black shirts and given it diplomatic status in the world. Fascism is the Maffia legalized. As members of the Lictor Federation, Dante Alighieri Society, Confederazione Italiano, Dopo Lavoro, and the Squadristi, these gangsters in uniform, who beat up the honest Italians who refuse to obey the orders of Mussolini and his New York representatives, give themselves cultural airs, but they are no less the Maffia, under new names.

While this was going on in the ghettos, all the immigrants heard of America was the prattle of Tim Sullivan's soap box speakers and the mutual vilifications of Democratic and Republican politicians.

The Russians lived below Second Avenue in the same way they had lived in Russia, the Poles below Monroe Street in the same way as in Poland, the Hungarians along Second Street in the same way as in Hungary, and the Jews like the Jews in the lands they came from. Each nationality had its cafés, its own

papers, its own theaters, its own gangs, its own midwives, its own bankers, and its own undertakers. The legal authorities treated them not as future Americans, but as future criminals. When, in later years, so many gangsters and killers rose out of this moral swamp, it was not the milieu that was to blame, but those who stupidly tolerated its existence and left the immigrant without guidance and education.

I had been appalled by the filth when I came to New York. A few years later, I was appalled at the thought of what would come out of it.

The only ray of light in this bleakness was the "Free School" on Madison Street near the East River, established by Alex Ferm and his wife. An empty store with a few chairs and a piano, the Free School was open to the children of the neighborhood from eight in the morning to seven in the evening. Mrs. Ferm was always there, to pose questions, to answer them truthfully, and to listen to complaints. Of Irish origin, tall, beautiful, with large green eyes, Mrs. Ferm, patient as an angel, directed the lives of hundreds of youngsters without seeming to do anything of the kind. Somehow she managed to feed the children when there was nothing at home, and managed to see that at least some of the parents were not always hungry.

Her husband, Alex Ferm, an engineer of Scandinavian origin, came to the school every afternoon. In a corner of the room he had placed a lathe and a workbench, and he gathered the older boys about him to teach them to work and to instill in them the joy and pride of work.

By themselves and with no fanfare or outside help, these two people, themselves immigrants, did more for the morale of the neighborhood than all the settlement institutions put together.

VI

ONE DAY I ran across a blue-eyed, blond young man in his early twenties, who was soliciting orders for button pictures, miniatures made from photographs. We walked up and down hundreds of flights of stairs. He screwed up his nose before every door, sniffed, and announced before knocking, "Irish . . . cabbage. Hungarian . . . paprika. Brussels sprouts and wurst . . . Germans."

At about four o'clock we stopped for a glass of wine. He paid his turn with a crisp five dollar bill. After the third drink he turned toward me quite belligerently and asked, "What do you think of the social revolution? Yes . . . tell me, where do you stand on the social revolution!"

It being Saturday night, when I did not work at my wrecking job, I asked him to dinner at my home.

"Naomi, this is Jack," I said. "He wants to know where we stand on the social revolution."

After dinner, Jack said to our youngsters, "Now, my young comrades, it's time to go to bed."

"What is your name?" Hyperion asked.

"Jack."

"Jack, will you sleep here?"

"If your parents will let me," Jack said, looking at us.

"Sure they'll let you," Gorky said. "Will you be here in the morning?"

"Yes . . . Now go to your room, climb into your beds, close your eyes, and sleep. I'll see you in the morning."

Jack talked social revolution the whole night long. The slums of London. Poverty and its causes. Hobos. Industrial workers. Music. Literature.

He was Jack London, seeking atmosphere for a chapter in a novel.

We met again and shared many a bottle at the old "Boulevard" on Second Avenue, where Emma Goldman and Lincoln Steffens listened to Jack's prediction that the coming dictatorship of the proletariat was around the corner. He almost wrecked the bar when Steffens contradicted him. A lamb when sober, he went berserk after a bottle of White Horse.

A week later, after a night in the Bowery, he knocked at my door, his face beaten to a pulp, and spoke of the "lark" he had had with some bums.

"Were you in a social revolution, Jack?" Hyperion asked, climbing on his knee.

"Yes," Jack said. "The bums thought I was a bourgeois."

Some years after our first meeting, I visited Jack London at his splendid ranch in California. He looked wasted and old. His hair had thinned, and there were pouches under his eyes. He had built luxurious pigstys to fatten the hogs, and also several cottages where he housed their human counterparts, idlers, bums, and sycophants, who fattened themselves at London's expense, but without benefit of Christmas. Of all the people on the ranch, George Sterling, the poet, was the only one worth keeping, but Jack treated him with contempt and lost no chance to humiliate him.

Everybody was drunk and vociferous before the day was over, yet Jack cursed Sterling at the top of his voice. "The bastard is swilling my whiskey," he said, and wouldn't let Sterling have another drink until the drunken poet had agreed to swallow two live goldfish from the fish bowl on the window sill. George got the drink first and vomited his guts out after he had gulped down the first fish, yet Jack made him swallow the second one.

"The bastard needs some discipline."

The London of the famous ranch had become a sort of pasha to a gang of intellectual bums, but was still hurraying the social revolution.

Jack London was a great writer. What his writing lacks in artistry and intellect is compensated for by an unusual supply of vigor and movement. His stories proceed by leaps and bounds. He was personally very much like his stories. He had guts and real feeling. But he was cruel, even with himself, and cherished the memories of the beatings he had received from cops and in drunken brawls.

"Boy, what a beating that was!"

As overseer on my next wrecking job, it was my duty to see that the trucks were well loaded with wreckage and to get a signed, itemized receipt from the drivers for everything on their trucks, but the drivers were in the habit of throwing something, a door, a window, or a length of lead pipe, on the trucks after they had signed the receipt. When I attempted to stop their pilfering, things just happened to fall on me. When we had torn down and cleaned up the old Mouquin place on Sixth Avenue, I was without a job again. I drew the line at working with mixed crews of Poles and Hungarians. The accidents on the previous job had cured me of being a peacemaker between them.

When Bolton Hall's book, *Three Acres and Liberty,* based on Henry George's single tax panacea, happiness to the world by a different system of taxation, appeared, Naomi and I read it with great enthusiasm.

Bolton Hall, called by Arthur Brisbane "the American Tolstoi," had bought a large tract of land in New Jersey and was inviting those who cared to try out the single tax theory to come and live on it.

At sixty, Hall was a mixture of practical idealist, business-

man, lawyer, banker, artist, real estate dealer, theorist, philosopher, and flirt.

We rented a shack on Bolton Hall's tract for the summer. Courtenay Lemon went to live in another shack a few hundred feet from us. There was a brook behind our shack and across the brook a piece of arable land. The rest of the sixty-five acres was brush.

Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle,* in which he described the Chicago slaughterhouses, had confirmed me as a vegetarian. Our children, three now, Hyperion, Gorky, and Rada, had never seen meat, fowl, or fish on our table.

Upton Sinclair, a vegetarian and a single taxer, lived in a single tax colony at Arden, New Jersey, after the burning down of Helicon Hall, where Sinclair Lewis, still unknown, had been janitor.

Having finished reading some twenty volumes of American history and all of Mark Twain and Bret Harte, and given myself a course in the American abolitionist movement, I planned a journey to Arden, and from there to Fra Elbert Hubbard in Roycroft, where he published *The Philistine,* when the newspapers published a sensational story about the Sinclairs and the tramp poet, Harry Kemp.

When Harry came to pay our "colony" a visit, I saw a tall, broad-shouldered, lanky giant, with the eyes of a Savonarola and the high cheekbones of a Slav, who looked and spoke like a village priest. The Arden episode gave Kemp a great lift with a young Russian woman, married to an American, who howled like a mad woman after Harry left in order to let us know how much she suffered. She even tried suicide. Some people thought the husband callous because he wasn't overjoyed when a neighbor saved her just in time. I was sorry she failed. She was a pest, the worst of a half-dozen pests that the single tax colony had attracted, not counting a few nudists, some theosophists, and a woman who believed herself to be Cleopatra reincarnated.

Naomi furnished our shack with more taste than furniture and bought a barrel of clay to teach the children how to model and make topographical maps in relief. It was while teaching them that she taught herself to model and to paint. Rion showed great ability with clay and pencil, an ability I have always been sorry he hasn't developed.

I planted my garden, wrote, composed some music, and gave music lessons to the daughters of a Silesian nurseryman, two buxom girls who wanted to learn to "make oompa oompa on the right chords" when their father played a melody on the zither.

I wrote two adventure stories and sold them to *Munsey's* for fifty dollars each. I had no illusions about their literary merit. I wrote to prove something to myself, that in a pinch I could do hack-work. Having proved that, I never repeated the performance. The pinch never seemed to be serious enough to warrant any departure from the standard I had set.

Two months after we had moved into the shack, the garden produced the major part of our food. We baked our own bread in an oven I had built in back of the house. The heat of the summer ripened the berries. The shady woods were full of fleshy mushrooms. The Silesian nurseryman sent us all the apples, pears, and other fruit we could use.

That whole region this side of the tracks, was inhabited by the descendants of English Seventh-Day Adventists, all looking very sexless though they had large families. Old lady Fernays, a Huguenot widow of a Seventh-Day Adventist, spoke French well, was the mother of nine grown children, farmed her land, sold eggs and milk, and was the tax collector of the township. When Madame Fernays was dissatisfied with her children, she thundered against the English blood in their veins. When they were dutiful, she spoke with pride of their English ancestry.

Most of the houses in the neighborhood were dilapidated farm homes. The Burgmillers, the Rogers, the Merciers, the

Goodhues, and the Bergers were the aristocracy of Stony Hill.

Across the tracks, Italian families had settled in shacks on neglected farmland, which they made productive again. The women peddled to the neighborhood what they didn't use in their own kitchens.

The leader of the Italian colony, Maria Lombardo, a squat woman in her thirties, as broad as she was tall, with an enormous elephantine rear on short stubby legs, liked us despite the fact that we never bought vegetables from her.

"They got land, and they buy vegetables. Fools," she said of the other colonists.

When I asked her why she wore no shoes, she said, "What's the ma with foot? They good. Shoes they cost dollars. Foots they cost nothing to buy, and nothing to fix."

When I asked her whether she ever went to the movies, she said, "What's the ma? I can have better fun for nothing. I got a husband," and she winked broadly.

When her oldest daughter gave birth to an illegitimate child, Maria didn't "die of shame" or order her out of the house, but said, "He boy. He make help grandma when he grow up. My girl she no wanna marry the man. He not much fun. *Capiccio?*"

Maria was with her third husband. The first one had given her four girls.

"I try and try. No good. I told him 'Gerade here.' Then I marry another feller. Four boys . . . Good, eh? Then he think he great feller . . . four boys, eh? And he no work no more. I say 'No work? . . . Gerade here.' This feller I got now, he no good at all. No girls. No boys. I try two more months. Then I say to him, too, 'Gerade here.' I got to have some more childs. I got to make 'em quick. I got no time for movie pictures. *Capiccio?* Sure you *capiccio.* You same like me, *paysano.*"

A few years later Maria had built herself a big house, had two more children, gardened sixty acres, and owned three teams of

horses, twelve goats, ten cows, and a car. The whole Lombardo clan of married sons, daughters, and grandchildren lived under one roof and ate bread baked in one gigantic oven under a shed. Maria, stouter, rounder, but with shoes on, shook with laughter when I pointed at a young man in the crowd and asked whether he was one of her sons.

"*Dio mio, dio mio . . .*" she laughed, slapping my arms. "He my new husband. I got money. I got everything. So I got a new husband. If he no good, I get another one. I got money. I got everything. *Porca madonna.* What for live? Go movie pictures? You understan', no?"

I was hailed before the local judge by the constable, on the complaint of a neighbor that one of my sons walked about stark naked without even a fig leaf.

"But he did wear a fig leaf, your honor," I protested.

"Where?" the judge asked.

"On his forehead."

"Complaint dismissed," the judge said, laughing. "Defendant has complied with the letter of the law."

We didn't see much of Courtenay that summer. He was busy writing a book and burdened with several love affairs in Berkeley Heights and in New York at the same time.

When the leaves began to fall, our children, who had run around naked, or almost so, the whole summer, were as brown and as healthy as nuts.

I copied out some music I had written, two short stories, and a long essay on Richard Wagner, and took a train to New York. After a look at my music, the music publisher told me to write something for the trombone, the zither, or the xylophone, offered me a cigarette, talked to me in a fatherly way, and asked me to leave my manuscript with him for a few days.

I mailed the two stories, one to *McClures* and the other to *Munsey's,* took the essay on Wagner to the *New York Call,*

where another Sunday editor was now presiding, and then went to the East Side to snoop around.

Almost the first man I met was Joseph Barondess, later, under Mayor Gaynor, commissioner of education, and at that time a labor leader and a social worker. Six foot four with a splendid head on stooped shoulders, he looked like the ideal operatic tenor.

When we had seated ourselves in the corner of a café with two glasses of tea in front of us, he said, "You love people, don't you?"

"Well . . ."

"You like people. I know you do. I have read your stories in the *Call.* The charity organization has a bunch of investigators who are heartless. I've got the right kind of a job for you. I want you to go through the files of the applicants, pick out the ones that have been rejected by the investigators, and reinvestigate them. The job pays twenty a week. Doctor Worthman, who is in charge, knows that most of his investigators are heartless and wants the job done by a man with a heart. What do you say? Take it. It's something constructive and helpful. It may lead to your real vocation."

The manner in which the applicants were handled by the institutions would have been considered inhuman in the dark ages. The investigators were not out to help the poor, but to uncover the petty lies, contradictions, and private secrets of the applicants and to pry into their morals and the morals of their relatives. The spied-upon poor were persecuted and deprived of all privacy once they had applied for assistance. When there was a strike against a sweatshop, the sick and the lame were forced by the investigators to take the places of the strikers. The employers, themselves recent immigrants, were as callous as the investigators. The East Side was dotted with sweatshops, ill-ventilated, dark, cold, dingy rooms, with the most meager and unsanitary toilet facilities. There were no

fire escapes. No factory inspectors ever inspected those fire-traps. No sanitation officer ever looked into the rest rooms or cared whether there was enough light or air. Thirty per cent of the sweatshop workers were consumptive, yet all drank from one tin cup chained to the faucet in the hallway.

I checked on the reports of the investigators. Some male investigators had been generous with women applicants for charity for reasons other than their poverty. The whole business of private philanthropy was nauseating, criminal, and stupid.

When I wasn't investigating, inquiring, listening to heart-rending tales, calling doctors, or buying food out of my own pocket, I was arguing with the directors of the institution who accused me of sentimentality and naïveté.

"Don't you believe them. They are liars, cheats, and degenerates."

The poverty-stricken immigrants told me in a babel of languages why their girls prostituted themselves, why the boys stole, why they became killers and paupers, why, in general, they were predatory animals.

Some of the most unsanitary houses in the city, the so-called "lung blocks" with the largest percentage of the city's consumptives, were owned by a wealthy old church. Other blocks of houses, in which only the poorest of the poor lived, were owned by other charitable, educational, or religious institutions that paid no tax to the city because they were nonprofit organizations. In houses that had no bathrooms, no running water, sick immigrants wrapped candy in fancy Christmas boxes, made toys, knitted lace, and hemstitched expensive evening gowns ten hours a day for ten cents an hour.

When I described these conditions to the assemblyman of the district, he told me to go back where I came from if I didn't like it here. When I spoke to the congressman, he reported me to the directors of the institution I worked for. When I denounced the owner of a sweatshop for his inhumanity to the

immigrants, Doctor Worthman told me that this gentleman was a generous contributor to "our institution," and that *I*, and not *he* was a danger to society.

"My dear man, you are as hysterical as a woman," Doctor Worthman said, "and totally unfit for America."

At the settlements on Rivington Street and Henry Street, the "workers" were interested in folk dances and reveled in the local color without the slightest awareness of the filth underneath. A Mrs. Clark, a tall gray-haired lady, very interested in the Poles living below Second Avenue and Fifth Street, asked me to come to her house for supper one night and talk to her guests afterwards.

When I was through talking, Mr. Clark said to his wife, "Don't you think it is rather depressing to hear about all this filth and poverty?" And turning to me, he added, "And don't you think that these people are still better off here than they were in their own country? They can always go back to the filth of their own countries, you know! Nobody will stop them."

Apologetically Mrs. Clark explained to her guests that she had thought I would speak of the "colorful" side of the immigrants.

"Poor as they are, the Poles have Chopin. The Russians have Tschaikowsky. The Hungarians have Liszt. Dear me, dear me, they are so colorful!"

"You should have told him what you wanted him to talk to us about," Mr. Clark said. "Really he has ruined our evening."

Naomi thought my stories unbelievable. I took her along with me one day. She was ready to scream before the day was over. When we came home, she hugged the children and cried, "We must do something for all the children, so that nothing like this can happen to them." Naomi was and is like that. She cannot see an isolated case anywhere.

Charles Edison, then a young man publishing a little maga-

zine in which he printed his own poetry under the pseudonym of Tom Thumb, one day came down to the East Side.

"What about the local color of these streets?" young Edison asked me.

I took him to see the homes of a few applicants.

When Doctor Worthman heard who had been making the rounds with me, he cried out, "Why didn't you bring him up here to let me talk to him? We need contributions. We are short of money. Who do you think pays your salary, the applicants?"

I went to see Barondess.

"What do you want me to do, change the world? The poor are no angels. You speak of sweatshops. They are horrible, I grant you that. But do you think the contractors and subcontractors are making millions? They hardly make a living. They'd go bankrupt if they had to put in toilets and windows and move into sanitary buildings. They, too, have families to support. This is America."

I sent in my resignation, gave up my files, and went to Stony Hill, in New Jersey, to breathe fresh air again. The trees were only half-clad that early spring, and the shack was cold, but it was clean, spacious, and didn't smell sour and sweaty. I dug up the same garden for the second time and went to see Maria Lombardo, who set a bottle of wine and some fresh baked bread and cheese on the table. All the Italians across the tracks were poor, but poverty hadn't destroyed them. Their hands were hard and dry, and not like the hands on Cherry Street and Avenue C, moist, soft, and cadaverous.

I was sick, sick with rage, impotence, pity, and revolt. Charity wasn't even a palliative; it was one of the toys of the rich, a pump to inflate their ego. What the manufacturers saved by not providing sanitary conditions for the workers was spent a thousandfold by the community on hospitals and jails.

Rion, my oldest son, taught his younger brother and his sister,

Rada, to read from the manuscript I wrote describing the evils of institutionalized charity. When it rained and we were all within doors, I told them that some day we should all of us work towards the abolition of charity in the same spirit that the abolitionists had worked for the elimination of slavery. We spent our most intimate hours, Naomi, the children, and I, talking and planning a society without institutionalized charity, and made many a sacred vow.

VII

THE EDITOR of a Yiddish paper agreed to accept a weekly article for its English page, provided it wasn't political or controversial.

"Be as poetical as all hell," he advised.

I wrote about birds and flowers, children, gardens, stars, and trees. The weekly check came regularly and paid for what didn't grow in the garden.

The single tax colony had grown in numbers. Tucker, the aristocrat of the colony, had enlarged his house. A lady carpenter in overalls undertook building work on contract.

Will Crawford, one of America's most talented illustrators, lived in the woods in a house that he had built with his own hands and filled with Americana, arrows, bows, coyote skins, squaw dresses, silver bracelets, the earliest editions of American books, and photographs of early settlers. Uncle Bill lived alone, ate, slept, worked, and cooked in one room, and loved company. The coffeepot was always on the stove. Bill Crawford's stories were like genealogical trees. They started with a root and then spread out branches and twigs and more branches and more twigs that twined and intertwined themselves. By the time Uncle Bill had told one story he had told a hundred, and he always wound up by asking, "Now, where did I start from? What was I going to say? Pour me a little more coffee, half a cup. So. Well, it doesn't matter where

you start from, does it? What the hell does it matter where one starts from."

Bill Crawford spoke of Emerson, Walt Whitman, and Thoreau, of the Civil War, of Lincoln, and of the North and the South. He was America.

On starry nights he'd lug out an old telescope and call the children of the colony to look at the stars.

He was Uncle Bill to men and women his own age, to children, and to the littlest tots. He found time to make dozens of bows and arrows, embellish them, build a target, clear a field, gather the youngsters of the colony about him, teach them to shoot, and tell them Indian and early settler stories. At night I often read to Uncle Bill what I had written during the day for my book about charity.

"Now," he would say, "it's good English, but people don't talk good English in America. Listen to the way I talk. It's bad English, but it's good American. And you want to write for Americans, don't you? Well, then. . . ." And Uncle Bill was right nine times out of ten.

Another single tax colonist was Thorne Smith, the future author of *Topper* and all the other excruciatingly funny books. At that time he was writing ads for women's undergarments. He lived in a shack with his wife and two children, his wife's sister, her husband, and their two children.

Thorne—Jimmy, as we called him—was a frail and delicate fellow. "*Une fille manquée*" my wife called him. Jimmy climbed an old scrub oak in the woods whenever he felt like writing, but before long his wife or his sister-in-law's voice would ring sharply through the camp.

"Jimmy! Where are you, Jimmy? Telephone, Jimmmmmmyy."

He often came to our bungalow to hide and do a little work and a little secret drinking. He was Topper, witty, fantastic, with no consciousness of what was real and what otherworldly. He cared little for single tax, socialism, or anarchism. It was

no novelty to see Thorne Smith on a Saturday afternoon in the nude with a whiskey bottle in one hand and a wad of paper in the other running to the woods to climb his scrub oak.

When in his cups, he went from door to door, clucking like a hen, "Cluck, cluck, cluck," to gather his brood.

Jimmy wept when he read some of the chapters I had written about charity. "Cripes, I'd better do something. I don't want my children to fall into their claws."

Another colonist was a young boy called Jimmy Cagney, a cocky, saucy gamin and Uncle Bill's greatest admirer. In later years, when Uncle Bill was ill and feeble, Cagney brought him out to Hollywood, put him up in his own house, paid doctor and hospital bills, and then set him to work on some panels in his house.

I learned much about America in Uncle Bill's shack. Indian friends and people from Alaska and Seattle, gold miners and fishermen just dropped in on Bill when they were in the East.

Bit by bit the story of Crawford's own life floated out from the maze of anecdotes and tales. Famous and successful as an artist, he had lived a riotous life for many years. Suddenly, one morning, while in his heyday, he took stock of himself and returned to the woods. Often while telling a story, wandering through half a dozen other stories, as was his manner, he'd suddenly stop for a moment, look vacantly into space, murmur to himself the name of a certain woman, sigh and say, "Oh, well, where was I? Yes. Well, that night I had just come from the theater . . ." and go on telling the story of an Indian friend.

Hyperion versified:

"Uncle Bill
With his quill
Is the nicest man I know.
Uncle Bill
With his arrow
Sees a bird and shoots tomorrow."

Our daughter, Rada, who was very little, would listen to one

of Uncle Bill's stories, then touch his hand to make sure that he was real and say, "There really is an Uncle Bill . . . really, really. Isn't there?"

There certainly was, and still is, an Uncle Bill, and we, the Bercovicis, are all happier for having known him. When we touched him, we touched some of the best in this country.

"Now—well—it's this way. Let's look at it from a distance first and work up close to it. Now—about these people who say 'it serves England right.' What's in their minds, the Hessians?"

Just before I reached my thirtieth year, a strange thing happened to me. I became aware of unusual physical power in my body, a power that clamored to be used. I tried to work off some of it cutting trees and splitting wood, but after eight or ten hours of the most violent exercise, I hadn't even begun to tap the resources of that strength.

My strength had always been better than average. At eighteen I won the long distance running championship in France. When I was nineteen, I pulled the second prize for long distance running at the *Championnat de France.*

I had done a little wrestling and dueling before I came to the United States, but there never had been so much strength in my body as there was that year in Berkeley Heights. It made me terribly nervous and fidgety and eager to pick a quarrel with anyone who looked as if he would give me a workout.

One night I went out into the field to do some bending exercises. Bending and stretching I fell into a definite rhythm and suddenly discovered myself dancing to it. From then on, for the rest of the summer, I waited until everybody was asleep, then went out into the fields and danced. When we had guests in the house and I couldn't go out to dance, I'd fret and become very nervous. As a matter of fact, I lived only for the few hours of secret dancing at night in the field. No one in the house knew what I was doing.

My weekly article for the English page of the Yiddish paper compelled me to go to New York every so often that summer. Quite by accident, one day I met an old Gypsy and his wife, relatives of Mama Tinka, who had come to America. Overjoyed, they took me to their home, a cellar basement on Rivington Street near the East River where I met a swarm of other Gypsies who had come from Roumania recently. As far as the Gypsies were concerned, America had just been discovered. They wondered that they hadn't heard of it until then. Now they couldn't make money fast enough to send for all their relatives in Roumania, Russia, Hungary, and other parts of Europe. There were already thousands of them who lived all over the city, before spreading over the rest of the country. The Roumanian Gypsies lived close to the people of Roumanian origin in New York, the Russian Gypsies close to the people of Russian origin, and so on, each Gypsy clan close to the people of their own origin.

Before I knew it, I was their bureau of information and adviser. Almost at once clan after clan was depending on my advice. When they didn't see me in town for a few days, they'd come to find me out in Berkeley Heights, a dozen or a hundred of them, clamoring that I had abandoned them. I was often embarrassed by their demands upon me and my time, but was always flattered and pleased by their confidence in me. What pleased me most was their appeal to me in the name of my father, who had always been friendly to them.

"You are Conu Yancu's son. You must help us. What would your father have done, eh? He would have said, 'We must help the Tziganes.'"

They made up stories and legends about father which put me under obligation as his worthy son. When I came down to their cellars, the women sang and danced for me and smothered me with their love and adulation.

When Stana or Lena's wedding was about to be celebrated, her mother would tell me:

"Well, Konack, she wanted to marry you, but . . ." and Lena or Stana would cry on my shoulders until I promised to come to the wedding.

I learned Calo all over again and how to play at their weddings. I learned to play the violin all over again, to play it Gypsy fashion, so as to play at their festivities and be part of them and spend nights in their company.

We often drove out at night on the other side of the Hudson to Nyack to an encampment near the river in order to sing and dance to our hearts' content. I sat by their campfires and listened to the stories of their old men and of the Daias, the old women, and told stories in my turn. They brought back memories of my early childhood and with them fresh courage and a freer outlook upon life. The whole Gypsydom in New York opened its heart to me, and I gave myself to it in return. I shouldered many of their troubles in those days, troubles they ran into because they were unacquainted with the laws and the customs of this country. One or another was often arrested for telling fortunes or for not sending his children to school or for disturbing the peace.

Half a dozen Gypsy women having a friendly talk on the corner of Second Avenue and Houston Street disturbed the peace. When they merely greeted each other, it looked to strangers as if they were about to cut each other's throats. They couldn't understand why they weren't allowed to make all the noise they liked in their own cellars; they paid rent for them.

As for their children going to school, whose business was it whether they went to school or not, anyhow? The *dantchiuks* didn't like school.

I tried to explain my friends to the police, to the landlords, and to the truant officers, and did my best to make them comply with the laws of the country when they got married or when a child was born, but they were like children and happy when they could cheat the law. And they crowded together.

Though they had rented separate cellars, five families would live in one for a week and then go to live in the next one. When one of them received a letter, they all went in search of me, combing the city, and followed me through the streets to the home of the one who had received the letter. Good news had to be celebrated with dance, wine, and song. Bad news had to be drowned in dance, wine, and song.

The men were excellent coppersmiths, and the young women made fabulous amounts of money telling fortunes to the wealthy as soon as they had learned a little English, while the older ones told fortunes to the poor on the East Side. At one of those weddings in a hall on Avenue A, I waded ankle deep in candy and drank only champagne. The guests, over five hundred, feasted three days and three nights without interruption, eating, drinking, and singing all the time. That wedding cost ten thousand dollars and was paid for by the sister of the bride, who had saved all that money in a little over a year.

At the end of the festivities, the Gypsies hired ten carriages from an undertaker, decorated them with flowers and ribbons, and drove me home to Berkeley Heights in state. I shall never forget that ride all alone in a carriage and covered with flowers up to my knees. Every few miles or so the procession stopped at the side of the road to drink champagne direct from the bottles. It was late at night when the carriages stopped in front of our little home, but that didn't matter. Naomi and the children were awakened, and the festivities might still be going on today, if I had not fallen asleep, exhausted.

I needed such sudden and violent relaxations. I grew stale when I didn't get them. I still need them. When everything goes too smoothly, I become nervous and ill. I have still much too much energy for it to be used up in the usual pursuits of life. No matter how hard I work, after a while a certain accumulated quantity of energy spills over, has to spill over. I have often asked myself whether whatever creative power I

have isn't simply the result of an oversupply of energy and vitality!

A wealthy middle-aged Jewish jeweler, a slight man with very intense eyes, came up to my table in a café on the East Side one night, and said, sitting down opposite me, "I think you could give me some disinterested advice."

"On what?" I asked.

"I am a rich man. I don't have millions, but I am a rich man. I came here fifteen years ago and have made a lot of money. I am married, have no children, and I will never have any. What can I do to perpetuate my memory? My name is Kaplan, Moritz Kaplan."

He spoke as simply as all that.

"What made you ask my advice?"

"Can't you tell what? I have been here many times hoping to meet you. Somebody told me you drop in here occasionally. And I knew you wouldn't tell me to give my money to charity. I know what you think of that. I want something done with my money while I am yet alive. I want, so to speak, to supervise my own monument."

On the spur of the moment I said, "Why don't you publish some books that would otherwise not be published, cultural books."

"Now you are talking!" he said, leaning forward. "What books?"

"Balzac's."

"Balzac. . . . Balzac. . . . Who is he, an acquaintance of yours?"

I laughed and then told him who Balzac was, and recounted briefly, very briefly, some of the stories, the scope, and the power of the French author. After a while, Mr. Kaplan excused himself and went to a telephone booth to talk to his wife.

"I told my wife I'll be late," he informed me when he came back to the table.

We were still at it at three o'clock in the morning. After a last glass of tea, we walked across the Williamsburg Bridge, stopped on the Brooklyn side for a cup of coffee, and talked Balzac and more Balzac.

At six in the morning, Mr. Kaplan said, "I live not far from here. Come home with me for breakfast and meet my wife, and we'll do something to let that Balzac carve me out a monument. I am excited about the *Père Goriot* story. I want my wife to hear it, too. And *Cousin Bette* . . . And *Modeste Mignon.*"

"Won't your wife be angry with you for bringing a guest to the house so early in the morning?" I asked.

Mrs. Kaplan was in the kitchen when we came in. The breakfast table was all set. A good-looking woman in her early forties, she received me as an old friend who had dropped in casually. The apartment was in a modest house and was furnished with the standard things of a Second Avenue furniture store. During the breakfast Mr. Kaplan told his wife one of the Balzac stories I had told him.

"I know the story," she said, proudly tossing back her head. "It's by Balzac, the French writer. I read the story in Russian."

"So you know about him," the husband said, looking at her. "There, you live with a wife fifteen years, and you don't know that she knows Balzac! What other secrets is she keeping from me!"

Mrs. Kaplan was as anxious as her husband to perpetuate their memories, and agreed that to publish Balzac would make a fine monument.

"And who is to translate him?" she asked.

"Who, but our friend here!" Kaplan answered, looking at me. "How many pages could you translate into Yiddish in one day? Four, five, ten? Tell me."

We agreed that five pages a day was a good average. He offered two dollars a page and wanted the deal closed there and then.

"I want to go to my shop with this affair off my mind, my dear Konrad. I am a busy man. We'll publish two books a year. We'll do it in great style. Each book a monument in itself. At this rate you have work for fifteen years or so . . . Done? Two dollars a page. Thirty pages a week. Let's shake hands on that."

I agreed . . . not without a shudder at the thought of the colossal enterprise.

The wife was jubilant. "I won't feel so bad about being childless," she said, putting a warm hand on my arm. "You are giving us children . . . yes . . . children," and she wept.

I was about to leave when the wife called her husband aside and spoke to him softly.

"Of course, of course," he said, going into the adjoining room. When he came back, he had four fifty-dollar bills in his hand.

"This is on account of our deal. A general deposit. As soon as you are done with the first thirty pages, send them to me, or bring them if you care to meet us again, and I'll pay you for the work. The two hundred will stay to the end. . . ."

The woman was even happier than the man and begged me to telephone to my wife and invite her to come to Brooklyn for supper. She wanted to celebrate. Naomi came and brought the children. The Kaplans said they had never been so happy, and Moritz gave each of the children a silver watch before we left.

I began the work joyously enough. I loved Balzac. I also felt relieved of financial worries. Sixty dollars a week was a fortune. Naomi bought more clay, paint, brushes, and canvas, and began to model and paint seriously every day. We bought a piano, and I played and composed a little every day and taught Rada the rudiments of piano music. I varied my day

by digging in the vegetable garden, cutting wood, and going out riding for an hour or so every morning on a horse I had bought. There were days in which I worked twenty hours at a stretch and other days in which I couldn't do a single page.

The Kaplans wanted to see me often. When I visited them, they plagued me to stay for lunch and dinner and to sleep there.

When I had finished translating the first book, *Père Goriot*, Kaplan showed me a transcribed copy of my translation in beautiful calligraphic script, done in three colors, red, black, and green.

"My wife and I have also been working," he said proudly.

I noticed immediately that they had left out many descriptive passages in their transcription.

"Why have you left out those passages?" I asked.

"They are not interesting. Nobody would read them. Why spend useless money to print them?" he answered.

I protested, and they reluctantly agreed to restore the eliminated passages. As I read on, I noticed that they had improved upon Balzac and added a page here and there of their own invention. When I remonstrated, Mrs. Kaplan said that they had read their version to several friends who had wept during the reading.

"You mustn't improve upon Balzac," I told them.

"He is dead, isn't he?" Kaplan asked.

"Yes, physically, but his books are alive, and they are his children. You are killing them. You are making a pogrom on Balzac. I won't stand for it."

"But *Gott behütte*! We don't want to make a pogrom on Balzac's children, God forbid! We wanted to dress them up, make them more pleasant," they both cried out. "We'll transcribe your copy exactly and publish it as it is. To tell us, who have lost all our dear ones in a pogrom, that we are *pogromtchikes*!" Mrs. Kaplan repeated again and again.

They were quite cold to me when I brought them some sixty

pages of *Modeste Mignon* in Yiddish. Their enthusiasm had cooled. They weren't interested in the bringing to life of children in whose making they hadn't collaborated.

They had just learned to play bridge and had little time to spare for literature.

When I brought the next sixty pages of *Modeste Mignon,* Mr. Kaplan said that he had informed himself about the cost of printing, paper, and binding. Manufacturing costs were rising every day. And he would have to get the work done in a union shop, otherwise the men in his jewelry shop would go out on strike.

"Why beat around the bush?" the wife said. "Tell him the truth, Moritz. I went to a great professor, and he said that he can fix me up so I could have children. You finish this book. If I cannot have children, we'll go on. But if I can have children of my own flesh and blood, there isn't any sense in having paper children. Don't you agree with me?"

A year later she had a child of her own.

Somewhere, in a trunk in Brooklyn, there are some seven hundred pages of Balzac in Yiddish.

I wrote two Gypsy stories and sent them out. The magazines returned them promptly.

While translating Balzac, I had composed a symphonic poem, which, in my naïveté, I offered to G. Schirmer, Inc., the music publishers. A month later the manager of the publishing house wrote to inform me that he had sent my poem to Franz Arens, who was the conductor of the People's Symphony Orchestra.

Weeks later Arens invited me to his studio on Fifth Avenue, received me very cordially, and asked me out to lunch with him and his son, who was his manager. He told me that he liked my tone poem and would give it a first performance the following season. He suggested some changes, and I agreed to make them although I was not convinced that they were needed.

When I came home, I burst in upon my family, shouting and singing and hugging them again and again.

"You should stick to your music," my wife said. "I have always told you not to spread yourself out thinly over too many things."

Unable to sell any of the Gypsy stories, I found a night job with a wrecking company and worked part of the day at the changes Arens had suggested. While digging into brick walls with my crowbar, I thought out fresh musical phrases and developed them. I didn't give a damn when the Poles and Hungarians fought and maimed each other, and I cared nothing for what was going on in the street. I had work of my own to do.

A month later, when I brought the manuscript to Arens, the studio was in the turmoil of moving. Arens took the manuscript from my hands, placed it on a littered table, assured me that he would look into it as soon as he had settled down in his new studio, and left me to talk to his son, who was busy with the movers.

I tried to hide my disappointment when I came home. Naomi had one look at me, raising her eyes from the easel on which she was working, and asked, "What happened?"

I told her.

"Well, you didn't expect him to study your poem while you were there, did you?"

"No, of course not. But he was so noncommittal! Besides I have no copy of the manuscript. What if it gets lost?"

"It won't," she consoled.

The nights at the wrecking job were awfully long after that. Every morning I waited for the mailman before going to bed, and I could not sleep because Arens hadn't written. And because I didn't sleep, I was often cross with Naomi and the children.

One day Rada told me, "You look like a bad man. We'll never play with you any more."

Two months later the People's Symphony Orchestra an-

nounced its program for the following season. My piece was not included. I went to see Arens.

"Hello," young Arens said, looking up from his desk. "We lost your manuscript. It must have been mislaid in the moving. Do you have a copy? No? Too bad! It will probably turn up one of these days."

I asked to see his father.

"He is very busy just now. I'll let you know when and if I have found it," he said, burying his head in the pile of papers on his desk.

I walked to the door as if on feet of lead. I felt whipped and shocked. I went back again to young Arens and demanded to speak to his father in such a tone that I was taken in to see him. I didn't say a word. I just broke down and wept.

Arens dismissed the whole matter lightly, as one of those things that happen every day, and called me a child for worrying so.

"You'll write other and better things," he consoled me. "Some day your manuscript will turn up, and maybe you won't be displeased that it hasn't been played."

My months of expectation and hope didn't seem to mean anything to him. And why should they have meant anything to him? His expectations and hopes had not been dashed. I had been living with the dream of hearing that poem played for the first time by an orchestra I had heard hourly in my imagination.

"It will turn up some day when you'll least expect it," he consoled me. "Go home and work some more. Let us see something else. It was a very interesting work, as I remember it. Goodbye."

I went to see my Gypsy friends and got drunk with them. This time I refused to listen to their troubles and made them listen to mine. Within an hour there were a hundred Gypsies in the cellar of Petru to weep with me.

Let me say now that Arens was a kindly man and really de-

voted to the cause of music in America. But he was somewhat volatile. He had been enthusiastic about my poem, but he wasn't heartbroken when it was lost.

VIII

WE MOVED back to New York where I worked at intervals as a street car conductor, a house wrecker, and a house painter. Later I wound up as a night watchman in a jewelry factory on Maiden Lane which was owned by two middle-aged Hollanders. About midnight one of the partners would come in with a lady friend and spend some time in the office. He always gave me a half dollar or a dollar with the injunction not to mention the midnight visit to anyone. I left that job when the partners began accusing each other of theft.

Benito Petroni, a stone carver, a philosophical anarchist, and the father of many sons, three of whom were born in New York and none of whom could speak English, gave me a job in his shop in East New York where he and his sons worked.

One of the sons leaned toward communism and subscribed to an Italian communist paper printed in Milan. Another son was a Kropotkinist, an anarchistic communist. The oldest son shared his father's individualistic philosophy. The disputes and discussions to the accompaniment of the thump, thump of heavy mallets and the brittle sound of hard steel chisels upon stone lasted the whole day.

Every two hours Signora Petroni would appear in the working shed with a pitcher and hand each of us a generous glass of goat's milk to wash down the stone dust in our throats. We lunched in the kitchen on heavy minestrone soup and polenta with cheese. Signora Petroni, buxom, tall, looking much

younger than her age in spite of a slight mustache under her nose, never permitted anyone to make an incorrect statement.

Other Italians of the neighborhood would drop in evenings to share dinner with the Petronis. Each one brought something along, wine, bread, or cheese. Naomi and the children came from New York almost every evening to dine with the Petronis. Rion and Gorky were so fond of my Italian friends that they always cried when we took them home. There were sometimes as many as twenty people at the table, and the discussions, heated and loud, went on until after midnight. In the end we all sang the Internationale, agreed on the main principles of philosophical anarchism, hugged and kissed each other, and drank a last glass of *vino* standing at the door.

It took me several weeks to acquire the knack of not "strangling" the mallet, but letting it fall of its own weight on the stone. Each one of the Petronis had a different rhythm. The older Petroni's mallet strokes were short and staccato in three-quarter time. His oldest son had a legato stroke in four-quarter time. At the end of the day father and sons shook hands, hugged each other, and stood in line to kiss Signora Petroni on the cheeks.

Caught in the vibrant mesh of the Petroni family, I worked with great gusto. That was the healthy life for which I had longed in America. My hammer stroke was now legato, like that of Octavio, the oldest son, whose girl friend, a Jewish girl of the neighborhood and a rabbi's daughter, visited him at work and sat beside us listening, talking, or singing.

It was all very ideal. But after three months of stone cutting I became hard of hearing. I heard very well in the noise of the shop, but was almost deaf in the comparative quiet of my home. So I had to give up stone cutting.

To make the change complete, I attached myself to Petru's Gypsies, Calos from my own country, and traveled with them over New Jersey and Pennsylvania. The sound of the violin,

of dancing feet, of the many nuances of the language of the Gypsies, in time gave me back my hearing.

When, brown and hard, I returned to my family, I found that in my absence they had received fifty-five dollars from *Munsey's* for a short story I had signed with a pseudonym.

Sholem Asch, fresh from Poland then, looked me up to express his admiration for some of my stories he had read, and invited me and my wife to his home the coming Saturday evening.

Abraham Cahan, who was among the guests, promptly offered me a job as music critic on the *Forward* and asked me to come to his office the following Monday to settle the matter definitely.

"You must not waste your energies on Gypsies," he said. "We need you on the *Forward.*"

Before he left, he asked me not to forget to call Monday at one o'clock to lunch with him and be introduced to the staff.

Mrs. Asch hugged me and my wife, saying that she was happy for Sholem's sake and because I was really needed on the *Forward.*

"Sholem won't be like in a wilderness there anymore."

On Monday at one o'clock Cahan's secretary, whose desk was at the door of the sanctum sanctorum, informed me that he knew nothing of my lunch appointment with his boss.

"He has said nothing to me about expecting anyone for lunch. As a matter of fact, he has already had his lunch."

Just then Cahan came out, took my hand between his limp fingers, shook it absent-mindedly, and asked at the top of his voice, "What can I do for you?"

"But you asked me to lunch with you!" I stammered.

"I have already had my lunch," he said, and he moved away to talk to one of the rewrite men at a desk.

"I didn't ask for this appointment," I said loudly, so that the staff could hear me. "I didn't ask for this appointment. You invited me. I didn't ask you to invite me."

I found out later why I had been treated so shabbily. Sholem Asch and Cahan had had one of their frequent quarrels that very morning, and the great socialist had hit back at Asch through me.

Shortly afterward I had two offers, one from an Italian weekly in New York edited by Ugo D'Anunzio, and the other from a Montreal Yiddish paper to write a daily story, edit the English page, and cover the theater and concert halls, all for twenty dollars a week. I accepted the Montreal offer.

I kept my job on the Canadian paper three months, three months of squabbles with the editor-in-chief and the owner.

A concert of my own music in Montreal got me an engagement for another concert in Toronto. When I returned to Montreal, I was invited to organize and direct the choir of the Workingmen's Circle. This in turn led me to organize a choir of five hundred children. The first concert of my choir filled the Monument National, the largest hall in the city. The proceeds of this concert and the ones which followed went to the fund of the Jewish Sunday School.

After the third of these concerts, Horace Traubel, Walt Whitman's biographer, came backstage to congratulate me. White-haired and blue-eyed, Horace looked like a composite picture of an idealized Mark Twain and Albert Einstein. When he wasn't talking literature or poetry, he was as Rabelaisian as Rabelais. He had a tremendous appetite for life, ate and drank at all hours of the day and night, and worked at all hours. While he edited the *Conservator*, a monthly magazine published in Philadelphia, he lived with friends here and there when he was not at home in Camden, New Jersey.

Horace was an inveterate baseball fan and a great music lover, and carried on a vast correspondence with hundreds of people all over the globe. He had already published several books, including *Chants Communal* and *Optimos*, and was spending the early morning hours between three and five on

a new volume of philosophical dissertations. He was as American as corn and prairie buffalo. Although of a different temperament, he was very much like Bill Crawford, always spoke of Whitman as Walt and Emerson as Ralph, and used an English that was almost Biblical in its directness and purity.

Horace, my wife, and I met every night after midnight in a little café and talked until two or three o'clock; that is, Horace talked about his years with Whitman. He had lived with the gray poet during the last ten years of his life when Whitman was partly paralyzed, had run Whitman's printing shop for him in Camden, and been Whitman's apprentice, nurse, cook, friend, slave, amanuensis, and manager.

Horace's hosts in Montreal, the Balins, often joined our talking feasts. The husband was the manager of a bank, and his wife was a fine composer.

Meanwhile winter had set in in Montreal. The snowstorms were so severe that my pupils couldn't all come. With my legs wrapped in blankets, I wrote up anew my experiences as an investigator for the charity institution.

One morning, looking out of the window, I saw a hatless, coatless man fighting the blizzard blowing from Mount Royal. It was Horace.

"How is the book coming?" he asked, as he came in and before the icicles on his mustache had melted. "Let's see what you have done."

I gave him what I had ready and left him alone in the room. When I came back an hour later, he said:

"Have no pity on the wolves. It's good. Keep it so to the end. Hit straight. Put no curves on your ball." And he rose to go.

"Don't go yet," I pleaded.

"If I stay, you won't work. But if you let me talk to Naomi while you work, I'll stay."

The whole family was in a fever of work that winter. Rion, the oldest, eleven years old, was writing a novel. Gorky was

rewriting some poems he had read, and Rada was writing at least one poem a day. It was indoor weather. We knew very few people. It was good to work, earn what was ample for our needs, and have something left over after the rent and the grocery bills were paid.

I finished the book early in the spring, and Horace took the manuscript with him when he left Montreal. A month later his publishers asked me to come to New York and sign a contract. I took the next train.

Some months later Horace wrote to tell me that the publishers had shown the manuscript of my book to Doctor Worthman, the man in charge of the institution I had worked for, and that he had dissuaded them from publishing it. However, Horace had taken the manuscript to another publisher and was hoping for the best.

Disgusted by this new disappointment, Naomi said, "I want to go back to France. We have been in America long enough."

Two weeks later she and the three children were on board a transatlantic steamer. I remained behind to wind up some affairs. That was the spring of 1914. Two months later Naomi wrote that there was war in the air and that the children wanted to come back to America. They were all back the month before the war broke out.

I was a pacifist. I was certain that if the plain people of Germany, France, and England were given a chance to talk the matter over, there wouldn't ever be any war. Why should people kill each other because a fool or a spy had shot an archduke?

But the war did break out. That war would have broken out if the archduke had not been shot. Germany goes to war against someone when she is ready. War making is a major part of German industry—in fact, the major German industry.

An anti-war meeting, called by the socialists of Montreal,

packed a hall with Germans, sprinkled with French, English, Jews, and Russians. The first speaker, a Frenchman, lashed out mercilessly at the French bourgeoisie and the English capitalists and held them responsible for the war. The chairman of the meeting, a German orthopedist, nodded his head in approval as long as the Frenchman denounced the French and the English capitalistic governments, but when the speaker lashed out with equal vigor at the Germans, the orthopedist disapproved violently, leaped from his chair, pushed the speaker aside and in German thundered imprecations at the French and the English who had the audacity to make war on the Germans, a superior race. My wife and I looked at each other in amazement. We had come to hear a denunciation of war and not of the French and the English. On the way home we read in the latest war bulletins in the window of a newspaper office that the French had stopped the Germans at the Marne. Elated beyond words, my wife and I sang the *Marseillaise* on the street at the top of our voices.

The following day many Frenchmen who had been present at the antiwar meeting the night before went to their consulate and asked to be repatriated. The speech of the orthopedist was sending them back to France to fight the Germans.

Rion, who was eleven years old, got into some of my old clothes and went to the French consul to say that he was a Frenchman and was ready to defend his country. Rada argued that he couldn't possibly join the army because he was a vegetarian. With great fortitude, Rion announced that he would consent to eat meat for the duration of the war.

Catholic priests denounced pagan France and said that the Lord had decreed the conquest of France to punish her for her transgressions. When one of the priests sat down after such a speech, I cried out, "Father Mercier means to say that the Germans are the scourge of God. I fully agree with him."

The result was pandemonium. I fought my way to the door through a mass of pacifists who were striking out at me.

With clothes torn to shreds and face and arms lacerated and bleeding, I came home from the meeting of the pacifists, washed, dressed afresh, and went to the French consul to volunteer for the French army. Naomi was in full agreement.

"Go. We'll get along somehow. You needn't worry. I'll see that the children have food and shelter."

She was a disappointed woman when I came back to tell her that the consulate had only taken my name and address, but said, "Well, if you can't go to fight the Germans in France, you'll have to fight them here."

She was already doing her share of fighting. She was talking on the street corners in the French section, where it was as dangerous to speak up for the Allies as in Germany. For some reason the French Canadians were anti-French, more so than anti-English. All the Canadian priests were on the German side of the fence.

I neglected my pupils and lost them. The choir I had organized hired another leader. All this, however, was unimportant to me at the moment. What mattered was that the Russians had bogged down in the marshes of Tannenberg, that the French counterattack after the Marne had also bogged down, and that the English were too slow to follow up advantages when they had them.

Despite his opposition to the war, the German orthopedist socialist was waxing rich, manufacturing crutches and wooden limbs for the Canadian wounded.

"I don't care who wins the war. In the end there will be a social revolution to wipe out all frontiers between nations and races," Horace Traubel said to me.

And the Balins and his other friends believed the same. The German socialists had prepared the terrain for the German armies well.

Montreal was gray and slushy. New recruits were being drilled in front of our windows, and the sound of their boots

squashing in and out of the mud pursued me day and night. One night at the house of some friends, Naomi said unexpectedly, "We have come to say goodbye."

"Where are you going? When? Why?" they asked.

"On the first train in the morning," I said. "Isn't it so?" I asked, looking at Naomi and divining her thoughts.

"Yes, on the first train, eleven twenty."

"When are you coming back?" our friends asked.

"We are not coming back," I answered.

"And the furniture and things?"

"They are yours if you want them," Naomi said.

"We are taking only our trunks. We don't care what happens to the rest," I said, feeling very superior.

I was on the East Side of New York the day after our arrival. Rion, Gorky, and Rada went out for a walk, hand in hand, but wound up at the French consulate to ask to be enlisted for the duration of the war. When the consul asked Rada, who was seven, what she thought she could do in a war, she answered, "I want to serve as an example, to tell the Frenchmen, 'See, I am only seven years old and I have come from America to fight for France.' "

Opposed to Czarist Russia, the Jewish liberals, as well as the non-Jewish radicals, were either openly pro-German or anti-war. It didn't matter to them that France and England would be wiped off the map by a German victory. The important thing was to see Russia defeated.

Few, if any, American radicals, liberals, socialists, Democrats, or Republicans paid any heed to the danger or tried to explain to the immigrants the situation from the American point of view.

Aleister Crowley, a renegade Englishman; Viereck; and Ernst Hanfstangel were behind the peace meetings of the anti-war societies secretly subsidized by the German embassy. Von Papen, Captain Boy-Ed, and such Irishmen as they could

hire or pervert, even James Larkin, the famous Irish labor leader, then in New York, spoke and wrote for them. Years later, Larkin told how Hanfstangel had asked him to procure hands willing to blow up our ammunition factories.

One evening I noticed a short, middle-aged, mustached man having a copious dinner in the company of some ladies in a Roumanian restaurant on Second Avenue. He wore a flowered vest, a heavy watchchain, spats over patent leather shoes, a three-inch-high collar, and a polka-dotted oxford tie, and looked like a dressed-up jockey. My table faced his. When I was the only other guest remaining in the restaurant, the man came over to my table and introduced himself, "I am Frank Harris. Come over to my table. You are a Roumanian. I know Roumania. I have drunk Roumanian wines, and slept with Roumanian women. They are both good, each in their own way. The men are horrible. Come over to my table and prove the contrary or confirm my judgment."

He said all this at the top of his voice, with one eye on the guests at his own table.

"Go back to your own table and stay there," I advised him.

"You wouldn't talk to me like that if you knew to whom you are talking," he said.

"Yes, I know who you are. You are the author of *The Bomb,* a well-written bad novel."

"I wrote *The Bomb* in two weeks," he said, sitting down somewhat nettled. "But have you read my book on Shakespeare? It is the best ever written. My *Contemporary Portraits* are unequaled in any literature. To know me only by *The Bomb* is to know the Bible by the 'begats'; is to know the perfume of a woman's odor by the sweat from under her armpits."

The little jockey was "high," but fascinating. He told me what the Prince of Wales had told him, and what he had told the Prince of Wales, on certain occasions; what Shaw had told

him and what he had answered; and how he had tried to smuggle Oscar Wilde out of England, and why Wilde had balked at the last moment. He suddenly remembered his other friends and shouted across the room the truth about Wilde from, so to speak, the horse's mouth. After four or five hours of incessant self-puffing, Harris finally asked me, "And to whom have I been talking all this time?"

Harris' braggadocio prejudiced me against him. I felt ashamed for his sake when the women snickered behind his back and winked at each other.

"We all know you are a great man, but you don't seem to believe it . . . or you wouldn't be reminding yourself all the time at the top of your voice," I said, and left him to his friends.

I used my mornings to roam the streets and the market places, stop at this and that little café along the wharf, sit on park benches, talk to pushcart vendors on Mulberry Street, and visit Syrian and Armenian rug dealers on Rector and Washington Streets.

Poles below First Avenue knew me well enough to invite me to their weddings, which nearly always ended up with a little shooting. No matter which girl was married, there was always a disappointed lover. Eventually we moved to Beekman Place, before it became fashionable and hoity toity. In those days the Czechs of New York gathered nightly in the Sokols of the neighborhood to drill and to work for the independence of their homeland.

The Poles, too, were working for their independence, but they were already fighting among themselves as to which party should govern Poland when Poland was free, and were discussing whether they should give citizenship to the minorities in Poland.

IX

SUMMER CAME. The city was struck by an epidemic of infantile paralysis. I moved the family to a house at Croton-on-the-Hudson. Courtenay Lemon came with us. He was working on his masterpiece, the perfect book, the book he never finished.

Croton-on-the-Hudson had quite an intellectual colony. Before we had made the acquaintance of our neighbors, our children became acquainted with their children. The three of them, with Rada trailing behind and screaming bloody murder when her brothers got too far ahead, used to absent themselves for a few hours every day and come back home with mice, frogs, and lizards in their baskets. Mabel Dodge's son, Max Eastman's son, Boardman Robinson's children, and Ralph Waldo Trine's son were members of their company.

Two or three weeks after we settled in Croton, Courtenay asked me to give him the manuscript of my "charity" book to show to Max Eastman, then the editor of *The New Masses,* and to John Reed, the stormy petrel of the magazine world. A few days later, a tall, broad-shouldered, heavy, boyish-looking man came up to see me while I was picking potato bugs in the garden.

"Hello. I am John Reed, Jack to you," he said, and sat down on the wheelbarrow to talk to me.

He liked the "charity" book so much that he offered to write

an introduction and find a publisher for it. He had also come to tell Mrs. Bercovici that Mrs. Robinson had asked him to invite us to dinner at her house that evening.

"Everybody will be there."

Boardman Robinson—Mike, as we soon called him—looked like a handsome red satyr. His hair and beard were like young fire. Mrs. Robinson and my wife, both interested in sculpture, got on splendidly. Max Eastman, brown as an Indian, lean and lanky, with a voice like the lowest register of a violoncello, was the spirit of the party.

When the conversation turned to the war in Europe, they, too, were against the Allies because of France's unholy alliance with Russia.

Eventually Jack went to Europe as a war correspondent. While visiting the French trenches, he reached for a soldier's rifle and shot at the Germans. When he was in the German trenches, he reached for a German rifle and shot at the French . . . for the hell of it.

Inez Milholland, the famous suffragette, a Diana in action when she played tennis on Eastman's court, told me that I didn't grasp the underlying causes of the European war.

"Had the women of France had the vote, France would not have gone to war."

"But the German women won't stop their men from going to war," I argued.

"Get ready, Inez," Max Eastman shouted. "Let's play."

Ralph Waldo Trine dismissed the war with a few well-chosen and unctious words. All this strife was due to wrong thinking, to people not being in tune with the infinite. He was sorry for me because I allowed myself to be disturbed by matters of no consequence.

"Life is beautiful. Life is harmonious. The Germans are not bad fellows. My book, translated into German, is selling in the hundreds of thousands."

To the New Thought colony flocked middle-aged women in

flowing white robes to celebrate nature and Annie Bessant in a glen in the woods overlooking the Hudson.

Mr. Slaving, an old farmer, was worried about the immoral dresses the women were wearing "this them there days" and the short tunics worn by the girls of the Duncan school, but not about the war.

"What is this Europe I hear you talk about? Where is it?"

Courtenay, pegging away at his immortal book at the rate of ten words a week, dismissed my anguish with quotations from Marx and Engels and urged me to read a special brand of socialist literature.

"The war won't end anything; the revolution will."

"What revolution? Where?"

"The World Revolution."

One day a publisher informed me that he had accepted my book, *Crimes of Charity,* for publication and asked me to come to see him. I did, and signed on the dotted line without getting a cent, spent a few days in New York, found the city indifferent to what was happening abroad, visited some Gypsy friends in a cellar, and came home to my patch of greens.

Meanwhile the famous Frank Harris had become the editor of *Pearson's* magazine, and Djuna Barnes, the poet, who was one of his friends, asked me to send her a copy of the manuscript Courtenay Lemon had talked to her about. Several days later Frank Harris asked me to have dinner with him.

The dinner was magnificent. Harris was in great form; spoke about his friends, Carlyle, Wells, Shaw, Wilde, Anatole France, Rodin, Cecil Rhodes, and Churchill; and imitated everyone's speech. Mrs. Harris—redheaded, thirty years younger than Frank, and beautiful—sang for us. Late at night the editor of *Pearson's* offered me five hundred dollars for the serial rights to the book. I accepted.

After *Pearson's* had appeared with the first installment of my book, *The New Masses,* edited by Max Eastman and Floyd Dell, asked to publish some chapters of *Crimes of Charity. The Humanitarian,* edited and owned by Misha Appelbaum, also asked permission to use some chapters and promised to pay for the privilege.

Early one morning, after a child in our immediate neighborhood had been stricken with infantile paralysis, we dressed our children, packed, asked Old Man Slaving to take us to the station, gave him the right to our vegetable garden, turned the key in the door, and were off without goodbyes to anyone. It was the second time we had run away from the dreaded disease.

We found another apartment on Beekman Place, slept on the floor until we bought new beds, and fed on milk and bread until we bought dishes and cooking utensils. I didn't despair. I had five hundred dollars coming from Harris, four hundred from *The Humanitarian,* and expected some money from *The New Masses.* I still had my job at the music school.

But Harris, so generous when he owed nothing, hated to part with money he actually owed and postponed payment from day to day. It was much later than I expected before I eventually received a check from *The Humanitarian.* Finally, *The New Masses* had no money. The manager, who later absconded with a goodly sum, lectured me about taking money from the holy cause.

Honors were coming thick and fast, but no money. The music school closed because of the epidemic. For some reason or other, Bob Davis returned my stories. Other magazines did the same. There were no wrecking jobs to be had. I made a few dollars here and there as an ambulant photographer. The poor diet was beginning to tell on me—that and my incessant preoccupation with the war in Europe.

Naomi had meanwhile found a circle of friends, mostly of

French origin, who insisted that she teach their children by the same methods she had employed in teaching ours.

I was rather surprised one morning when I was told that we were to move to Hewlett, Long Island, where the newly formed school had rented a house and that Naomi was to direct the First Free School in the United States. As a sop to my feelings I was told that a large garden went with the house and that I would be free to teach the pupils of the school music in my own manner.

The truth is that Naomi is a rather formidable person and not to be thwarted in her plans. She had had her heart set on such a school for years.

I didn't like the idea of our children being thrown together permanently with a single group of children, but I had to accept the situation.

The school, a rambling cottage on a three-acre piece of ground, opened with fifteen children, three teachers, a cook, and two servants. In addition to the main house, there was a smaller cottage and a large barn. I took possession of the barn, cleaned it, decorated it, put in a piano, and prepared to do some work. Writing was now a passion.

When a story came back from an editor, I no longer searched myself or doubted myself, but questioned the intelligence of the editor. I knew what I was doing, and they didn't.

Naomi's method was a good one, but worked only with children who had not been submitted before to another pedagogical system. Most of the children in her school had been to other schools before and had been sent to her because they were deficient or unadaptable. When they realized that they wouldn't be punished for laziness or petty waywardness, they ran around and disturbed even the few who would study or listen to an explanation on some subject. It was like having fifteen wildcats in a house.

The parents were even more troublesome than the children.

When they discovered that their devils hadn't been turned into angels in a month or two, they criticized the school.

Our own two sons ran wild with the other boys and became secretive. We had answered their questions about sex simply and truthfully without hedging, and had diverted their minds from smut. But the boys and the girls of the school hadn't had their questions about sex answered in the same simple manner by their parents.

Rada disapproved of the whole school and wouldn't associate with the other girls at all, clung to me from morning to night, and sat on the floor of the barn and looked up at me while I was working. She was still writing poetry, but of a different kind from what she had written before. It was all about trees and stars, very sad and somewhat mystical, as if she were trying to tell me something that she didn't dare tell in simple, direct language.

I called a conference of my own children in the barn, and we analyzed the situation together. The boys were difficult to handle for the first half hour. They shouted and argued wrongheadedly, anxious to maintain their assertions even when they knew they were wrong, but in the end their better selves prevailed.

An hour later we talked as we always had, calmly and reasonably, and called Naomi into our conference. I told her that I was not willing to allow my children to come down to the level of most of the pupils in her school. But Naomi had already reached that conclusion by herself and agreed with me.

I sent Naomi away to town and undertook to liquidate the affairs of the school. I wrote letters to the parents, asking them to come and take their offspring, dismissed the teachers, the cook, and the servants, and breathed freely three days later when I was alone with my own children in the house. The rest was easy except for several debts which I took upon myself. We moved back to town when *The Humanitarian* finally did

pay me for the serial rights of *Crimes of Charity* and I received a check of one hundred dollars for a water level I had invented.

Grist to the mill! The idea was a life saver. It was better than discovering religion. I could be serene and calm in the face of events that a short time before would have unbalanced me completely. Humility I still had, but also a greater, if not an absolute, belief in what I ultimately wanted to achieve. It was hard work to write in a language that wasn't my own and one which I had not studied systematically. It was an uphill struggle to change to a new profession. My pockets were empty and many obligations weighed on my shoulders, but the mere anticipation of success despite these handicaps was worth the price I was paying.

I was painting the floor of a tenement house on Nineteenth Street when Frank Harris published in *Pearson's* a long article to say that I had disproved one of his pet theories; namely, that no one could do creative work in a language that wasn't his own. I read Frank Harris's encomium during my lunch hour and worked with greater vigor for the rest of the day at painting floors.

I was cleaning the windows of the same tenement house for three dollars a day when *Life* printed an article by J. Kerfoot saying that what he had read by me made him think of the great Russians. I would have willingly accepted a job as a sewer cleaner after that. Nothing or nobody could have humiliated me or made me despair after that. Grist to the mill indeed!

The intelligentsia were favorably impressed by the literary quality of my book, but the contents meant very little to them. I had expected a minor social revolution as the result of the publication of *Crimes of Charity,* and they spoke of literary quality. Theodore Dreiser was the only one to talk about its social implications. I was still painting floors for a living.

Leon Trotsky came into the "Russian Bear" on Second Ave-

nue and sat down at a table. I didn't know who he was any more than did a hundred million other people in this country. A few minutes later men and women rose from their tables to go to shake hands with him and be introduced or introduce themselves. While this was going on, a man came in from the street waving the latest edition of a newspaper and shouting jubilantly, "Another Russian defeat."

The headline was "Germans Advance Toward Paris."

When I said that this should be no cause for celebration, a man shouted loud enough for everyone to hear, "Are you an agent of the British?"

I rose, went over to the man's table, and asked him to apologize. He refused. I hit him in the face. In another minute I was in a free-for-all fight with tables and chairs overturned, women screaming, and the waiters running to separate the antagonists. Hyman Strunsky, the owner of the place, puffing and spluttering, ordered the man and his friends out and begged me to return to my table.

"There is a man who can take care of himself," Trotsky said and then came over to shake hands with me without introducing himself.

"It's Leon Trotsky," a young man informed me from behind him. "You are shaking hands with Leon Trotsky."

"Won't you join me," Trotsky invited.

He was a fascinatingly brilliant man, so brilliant he gave depth to the shallowest thoughts. He was a born orator. Even while speaking to me across the table, he spoke as if he were addressing a large audience.

Yes, he was for the defeat of Russia, but not out of childish vengeance because of the pogroms. He was for the defeat of Russia because a social revolution was possible only in a defeated Russia. A victorious Russia would crush every effort toward freedom. The defeat of Imperial Russia was the salvation of the world.

"And what about a victorious Germany?" I asked. "Would

a victorious Germany tolerate a social revolution more readily than a victorious Russia?"

Trotsky launched an armada of glittering arguments on a muddy sea of complicated dialectics. But he was fascinating to listen to. His admirers cried out in horror every time I committed the lese majesty of contradicting their idol.

Trotsky cited page, chapter, and line to prove that France was degenerating, that England was the arch villain of the world, and that Italy was still the same crumbling old Rome under a new name. He admired German efficiency, *Kultur*, technique, literature, and intelligence.

He hoped and wished to see Russia defeated, but became ecstatic when he mentioned the muzhik, the same muzhik who had slaughtered and butchered tens of thousands of Jews, Trotsky's own people, in innumerable pogroms over several centuries and had butchered revolutionaries with less regret than when they slaughtered hogs.

I replied that I knew the muzhik, that we had him in Roumania, and that he certainly wasn't destined to lead the world to a better life, to freedom or democracy.

"If you have no faith in the muzhik," Trotsky asked, "then in whom do you have faith? In the French peasant? The English farmer?"

The "Russian Bear" was the rendezvous of German embassy spies and secretaries. Trotsky's and Lenin's subsequent passage through Germany to Russia would never have been allowed by the Germans had they not known from Trotsky's café talks in New York that he was eager to see Russia defeated. Trotsky, talking at the "Russian Bear," published his opinions to the German government with which he later signed the Brest Litovsk peace. No one can tell me that Trotsky would not have signed a pact with Hitler, would not have invaded Finland, would not have incorporated Latvia, Lithuania, and Esthonia, or would not have reached out like a ghoul for Russia's share in the corpse of Poland. And let no one tell you

that Trotsky would not have sent killers to Mexico to murder Stalin if Trotsky had been in the Kremlin and Stalin in exile.

Fanatics have neither decency nor morality and are devoid of scruples and humanity. Savonarola and Peter the Hermit have appeared in the past and the present under many aspects. Trotsky was another reincarnation of the mad monk of the Renaissance. Fascinating, yes, but a man with no understanding of individual human rights or emotions except his own—that was Leon Trotsky.

The present destruction of Europe is due to the fact that too many of his type were born within a decade—Lenin, Stalin, Trotsky, Hitler, Mussolini, and some lesser lights. Before exterminating each other, they have allied themselves to destroy the rest of the world.

I am heart and soul with Russia now and eager to fight beside her soldiers until the Nazis are crushed. After that has been done, I will oppose a totalitarian Russia as strongly as I will any other totalitarian government.

X

THE REVIEWS of *Crimes of Charity* were magnificent, but no one lifted a finger to remedy the situation to which I called attention.

Barondess was furious. Why hadn't I shown him the manuscript before it was printed?

Although the *Forward* published two installments of the book in Yiddish, Cahan stopped the publication of the third chapter when he returned from abroad and ordered that my name was never to be mentioned in his paper. The resident managers of the settlements on the East Side denounced me as a troublemaker and one who didn't understand the problems of charitable institutions.

And then, manna from heaven, came a letter from Louis Miller, the deposed editor of the *Warheit,* a Yiddish paper, asking me to lunch with him and Mrs. Miller.

Miller, a man of boundless energy, had come here from Russia at the age of twenty, gone to work in a sweatshop, and first made a reputation as the fastest shirt maker in New York. When the *Forward,* the first Yiddish socialist daily, was founded, he was appointed its first editor-in-chief. When the management later on asked him to share the title with Cahan, he quit the editorship of the paper and returned to shirt making, at which he was king. During the next few years he studied law at night. When he didn't rise quickly enough to the top as a lawyer, he quit law and organized the *Warheit* (The Truth), an opposition paper to the *Forward.*

Mrs. Miller, a graduate doctor of medicine, wouldn't merely practice medicine like other doctors, but aimed at being the medical chief of a hospital. Either that or nothing.

Although they were terribly self-centered people, I understood and liked them both at our first meeting. Before coffee, Miller said, "I intend to publish a weekly magazine. I can only offer you $25 a week, but we'll have lots of fun together. You'll be the editor. Full power. When you do something I don't like, we'll fight it out. When I write an editorial you don't like, you'll tell me so and we'll scrap. What do you say?"

I hesitated.

"Why the hesitation?" he asked. "Is it money?"

"No. But you are very self-centered and excitable, and I am not an angel either. We agree about the European war, but there are other subjects on which I am sure we don't agree. And I am probably as crazy as you are."

Mrs. Miller laughed and laughed.

"You know," she said, "I heard what you did the other night at the 'Russian Bear.' Louis will be afraid to lose his temper with you." And then the three of us laughed, and I went up to the office, a loft in a factory building, to begin my duties at once.

I didn't particularly cherish the prospect of editing a weekly in Yiddish, but I hoped to be able to enlighten the East Side on the European war, about which they were misinformed and misled by the other papers. The twenty-five dollars a week steady income had some influence on my decision, but was not mainly responsible for it. I was making almost as much painting floors and windows for the Excelsior Company.

The staff of the new magazine was composed of Miller and myself.

We had fun for the next six months. Our first issue was thrown off the stands into the gutters. Following the second issue, all our windows were smashed by hoodlums. The printers refused to set up what they called "pro-Russian" mate-

rial for the third issue and denounced us together and singly, directly and indirectly by implication, of being in the pay of the Allies. Yet somehow *Miller's Weekly* appeared regularly every Thursday afternoon, and the circulation grew despite all hindrances. We practically lived in the office. I wrote under twenty different names and translated stories from French, German, and English. When the children wanted to see me, Naomi brought them up to the office to lunch or dine with me at my writing table. Rion was particularly anxious to know what I was writing and made me translate for him page after page.

"Are you absolutely certain that everything in the paper is for the right side?" he asked again and again.

When people asked Rada where her father was, she answered, "In the front line trenches, fighting."

One afternoon a well-dressed man came in and said he wanted to see Mr. Miller.

"I am Mr. Miller," the editor said.

"May I see you privately?"

"Sure, come into my private office."

That private office was separated from mine by a thin partition.

A quarter of an hour later Miller called me in.

"Konrad," he said, "this is someone from the German embassy. He wants to buy our paper and then hire us both at a good salary. What do you say? I told Herr Fernholtz that you are a co-owner of the paper."

"I'd like to speak to you privately for a moment," I said to Miller. "The gentleman will excuse us."

"What shall it be, a bust in the jaw or a kick in the pants?" I asked when we were alone.

"Aren't we partners?" Miller questioned. "You'll do one thing and I the other."

Herr Doctor Fernholtz was six foot two and had a gun in his

pocket, but Miller and I managed with the help of a heavy bronze ink-well, a couple of chairs, and an overturned table. We had many other offers to sell out, one from Aleister Crowley who was then editing the magazine, *The Fatherland,* with George Sylvester Viereck. Cunningly enough, Crowley began the proceedings by writing a glowing review of my book, which he followed by extreme personal flattery.

When it finally began to dawn on the people of the East Side that we might enter the war, German victories in France ceased to be headlined as Russian defeats. I was pleased; Miller was disgusted.

"What! No opposition! The cowards."

Then came the Black Tom explosion, the Lusitania sinking, and our declaration of war against Germany. Louis Miller's son, Alex, not yet twenty, enlisted immediately. Our magazine's attitude was vindicated.

One day Miller said to me, "Do you want the paper? I give it to you lock, stock, and barrel. I don't want it anymore."

"Why? Now when it is gaining in circulation?" I asked.

"I have done my work. I have just about lost everything I had."

I didn't want the paper. Two days later *Miller's Weekly* went to press for the last time. We wrote the last editorial together.

"Both of us felt that we owed this country a duty. We have fulfilled it. We shall look for other tasks."

After a conference with Louis Miller, Judge Greenbaum, the president of the Educational Alliance, sent for me. The Educational Alliance on East Broadway had been organized in the Nineties as an Americanization institution. It was, however, headed by German Jews who were out of sympathy with the immigrants from Poland, Russia, and Roumania, and it became the most despised organization on the East Side. Its halls were

always empty; its English classes unattended. It was never more than a shell. Judge Greenbaum wanted to know what the Educational Alliance could do to correct the misinformation that the foreign-born of this country had been given by the foreign press. I was hired to do the work at the same salary Miller had given me.

I went to see the editors of the foreign language newspapers and explained that it was to their advantage to reverse themselves. The German and Germanified editors went pacifist on me. They who had quoted Nietzsche on the manliness of war now simply abhorred war. The editors of the Jewish papers fell in line readily enough regardless of their former political color. The editors of the Hungarian papers told me to mind my own business, that this was a free country, and so on.

The Educational Alliance became my headquarters. From there I sent out speakers and lecturers to parks and school halls. Preceded by bands that I obtained gratis from orphan asylums and other Jewish institutions, my lecturers spoke at a dozen schools every night from Brooklyn to the Bronx. Fathers and mothers whose sons were being drafted into the American army were made to understand that their sons would fight on the right side of the fence. Still, every once in a while I was buttonholed by an old man or an old woman who accused me of getting blood money from the Russians.

Not all the directors of the Educational Alliance were sympathetic to the Allied cause. The German Jews in the directorate of the Alliance tried to be good Americans without ceasing to be good Germans, an impossibility.

One day I was approached by a man who told me that Otto H. Kahn, the banker, wanted to see me. I met him at the Brevoort for lunch and promptly disliked him, his manner of eating, his arrogance, and his patronizing attitude.

"Why are you so bitter against the Germans," he asked, "any personal reasons?"

"Why are you so pro-German?" I asked.

"Don't ask such personal questions," he replied.

"I am not more personal than you are," I answered.

"I have a right to ask personal questions," he said bluntly; "I am figuring on employing you."

"You are . . . well, well!"

"I have written a book to explain that I have changed my attitude in regard to Germany," he informed me.

"Have you?"

"Of course. The book is written."

"But have you sincerely changed your attitude?"

He looked at me.

"I don't like your question, young man."

"You haven't answered my question, Mr. Kahn."

He turned in his chair and called, "*Garçon, garçon,* the check." Then he said to me, "I have written a book to be called *Above Race,* and I wanted you to look it over and make suggestions."

"George Sylvester Viereck is the man for such a job," I advised. "He is probably somewhat expensive, but you can afford him, I am sure."

Some days later, I heard of an amusing encounter between Otto Kahn and Steinmetz, the electrical wizard. While Steinmetz was visiting Otto Kahn's estate, his host showed him a chapel which he had built on the estate.

"Don't you find it remarkable?" Kahn asked. "It's an Episcopalian chapel."

"No," the hunchbacked wizard said, "I don't see anything remarkable about it."

"I was a Jew once," Kahn said.

"I was a hunchback once," Steinmetz replied and walked on.

Frank Harris dashed in on me one day.

"Leon Trotsky is in Canada, wants to go to France, and the English refuse him permission to sail," he said.

"Good for the English," I cried out.

"If I did not owe you a few measly hundred dollars for your miserable articles in *Pearson's,* you would be more sympathetic," Frank said, sneering as only he could sneer.

"You can go to hell, as far as I am concerned, Frank. I didn't suspect you of being anti-English because of Count Bernstorff's visits to you and never said that Aleister Crowley, who is Viereck's stooge, was the intermediary between you and the German ambassador."

"Have you been spying on me?"

"You yourself have boasted of Bernstorff's visits," I reminded him, "while mentioning other celebrities, the Prince of Wales, Carlyle, Oscar Wilde, Lord Douglas, Shaw, and the like."

My propaganda labors brought me in contact with newspapermen and politicians and made for me many friends as well as enemies. In my quest for speakers and lecturers, I sought the acquaintance of everyone who could help. But even after we had entered the war, many people on the East Side couldn't forget that I had been pro-Ally before we had entered the war. The younger people understood the situation well enough, but the older ones still thought in terms of Russia against the civilized world. They were for America, of course, but they also thought that it was too bad that America had allied herself with Russia.

Our entrance into the war also brought to the East Side an unhealthy prosperity and an unhealthy recklessness about money, as well as an insatiable desire for amusement. Where there had been two Yiddish theaters for New York and Brooklyn, six theaters were doing great business on the East Side and two played in Brooklyn.

The Yiddish theaters had played mainly heavy dramas before. Now the demand was for comedies and musicals of the lowest sort.

Charles Woods of the *New York World,* who had met me before while gathering material for a series of articles he was writing, came one day to tell me that John O'Hara Cosgrave, the editor of the Sunday magazine section of the *New York World* wanted to see me.

When I met Cosgrave, who was lanky and long-faced, and had a benevolent smile, at the *New York World* office, the former editor of *Everybody's* and the literary godfather of Frank Norris asked me to write some of the East Side stories which I had told Charley for the magazine section of the paper.

While continuing my job with the Educational Alliance, I wrote a story a week for the *New York Sunday World* and also worked on several novels, a play, a book on orchestration, and a biography of Alexander the Great, and was planning a series of Gypsy stories despite the repeated rebuffs encountered by my first one. Of all my literary projects, the Gypsy stories were paramount in my mind. My friendship with the Gypsies in New York and my short trip to Toledo with Petru's tribe had set my imagination on fire and revived my childhood memories. Thinking about Gypsies, I had to think about peasants. The passing years had wiped out whatever desire for vengeance I had had for my father's death. Instead of being objects of hatred, the peasants became figures of romance, as they would have been in reality, had they not been corrupted by scoundrels and gangsters.

Charles Woods introduced me to his friends on the *New York World:* Sam Cahan, who illustrated most of my stories; Ed Smith, the criminologist; Rolland Thomas, the Texan, who had won a literary prize with his first story, "Fatima," which appeared in *Colliers* and who later broke the Ku Klux Klan with his exposé; and Huneker, the music critic.

Huneker, an American European, was a man of great culture and unquenchable thirst. Anyone who has not been with him after his tenth seidel of beer doesn't begin to know what good

talk is. He had the size and the girth of a Gambrino, but his mind was as nimble as his fingers were on the piano, and they were of the nimblest.

I had been indifferent to food before. Even while doing the heaviest physical work, I had been able to replenish my energies with an apple, a few walnuts, and a handful of dry raisins. But now, when I was doing only intellectual work, I craved food all the time and became not only a gourmand, but also a gourmet. Although we continued to be vegetarians at home, I began to eat meat and fish outside and became very fond of wine. There was a minor revolution in the house when Rada discovered that I had become a "cannibal"; she refused to kiss me goodnight and wouldn't even speak to me. Naomi's objections were not so strong, but she, too, was somewhat upset by my defection.

The weekly stories on the *New York World* were good exercises. They really were literary miniatures, sometimes only studies for stories. I don't know anything better for a young writer than the necessity to keep one's invention alive. Invention in literature is half of the ingredients out of which the pie is made. My earnings were increasing. I didn't have to think any longer in terms of one dollar bills. We moved into a better apartment and often went to the theater and to concerts. Charles Woods introduced me to the manager of the Provincetown Playhouse, a former stable on Mulberry Street, where the first plays of Eugene O'Neill, John Reed, and Floyd Dell were being produced.

I offered one of my plays, a Gypsy play, to the group, O'Neill read it, and we discussed it over a long lunch and many whiskeys and soda while on the stage the actors were rehearsing *Emperor Jones.*

That play, destined to become one of the classics of the stage, was almost dismissed as a failure after the first performance. The drums disturbed the play. Gilpin, the Negro actor, was

superb in it. "But a play is not a monologue," the pundits argued. At the confab after the première, the consensus of opinion was that all the drums should be discarded for the second performance. I argued that they should be kept in, by all means, but should be used dramatically; that the dynamics and the rhythm should follow the development of the drama. The drums were rehearsed again with the play, following my suggestion, became an integral part of the play at the second performance, and remained with it forever.

I had argued so well for *Emperor Jones* that my own play was postponed and postponed again until—well, until never.

I still believe I am a better dramatist than the best ones we have, but I can't convince any producer that my plays are good. I have written and rewritten my plays ad nauseam. Many of them have almost been produced. At the last moment something has always happened to upset the apple cart. I have a sneaking premonition that, if the capitalist system continues long enough, my grandchildren will live in idleness and luxury off the royalties of those plays.

XI

THE END OF THE WAR terminated my job with the Educational Alliance and threw me entirely on literature for a subsistence, at a time when the cost of living was sky high and rent had been almost doubled. In addition to that, Naomi was painting and sculpturing, the materials were expensive, and she made no sales although the work was exceptionally fine.

And then Mirel, the youngest of our children, was born. We often had to choose between buying an extra pair of shoes and purchasing a few tubes of paint, new brushes, canvas, or clay. The art materials usually won. And we were not an economical family. We could not live on a budget. We treated every check as a windfall and celebrated. We went to concerts, plays, and circuses, and on excursions, bought expensive toys, and often spent in one splash what we should have kept for the landlord. Naomi's hospitality knew no bounds. Two or three times a week we had a dozen guests for dinner. When guests stayed late, she offered them her coats and shawls to wear home lest they catch cold. Our children also had acquired the habit of giving things and often gave away playthings for which they cried afterward.

For those who hold the treaty of Versailles responsible for the rise of Hitler, let them remember that the Brest Litovsk treaty antedated the Versailles treaty. Had the Allies lost the

war then, they would have been no less enslaved by the Kaiser than the nations Hitler has conquered. Had the Germans defeated the Allies after we had joined them, we would still be the slaves of Germany. The chains were forged and ready when the complicated Rube Goldbergian machinery that was Germany went out of gear. The Germany of today also will not be defeated from the outside. It will go out of gear within, and the world will witness such an economic and spiritual chaos as it has never seen before.

The signing of the Versailles treaty left Germany in a position to rearm.

The Germans had thrown up their arms and yelled "Kamarad" to avoid the destruction of their land and homes and before the army had suffered a serious defeat. While the German delegates were signing the Versailles treaty, the German military command was planning the next war and laughing at the stupidity of the Allies.

Brest Litovsk had taught the Allies little more than the occupation of Austria did twenty years later.

After we won the war, the German propaganda became subtle and masterful. To hammer into the minds of the people and the rest of the world that they hadn't been beaten on the battlefield, the Germans elected the beaten general, von Hindenburg, who later scuttled the Weimar Republic and delivered Germany to Hitler and his gangsters. The fake socialist republic, under Ebert, was only a sop to the world. Under Ebert, the real socialists, the Liebknechts and the Luxembourgs, were shot, or otherwise done away with, by Noske, Ebert's chief of police. Ebert, Noske, and the brothers Strasser paved the way for the Nazis. The Strasser who is now in the United States was one of the founders of the Nazi party and ran away from Germany not because he disagreed with Hitler's policy, but because he was afraid of the coming purge. A Nazi can never truthfully say, "I have been a Nazi"; he is always a Nazi.

Because the French used Senegalese troops to occupy the

Ruhr, the Germans took advantage of our prejudices against the Negroes to complain that a white people was being subjected to "niggers."

The peace movements, the youth movements, and the anti-military societies in America were directly or indirectly sponsored and influenced by Germany and Germans in preparation for the war to come. The youth societies and peace societies in Germany were drilled by officers of the army, while the youth of the peace societies of the rest of the world were being indoctrinated with theories of nonresistance. The International peace societies took periodic peace polls in England, France, and the U. S. A. and announced the results to the world, but never took such polls in Germany. Why?

I tried to explain that to our public, but was told again and again that the war was over, that there wouldn't be another war in our lifetime, and that I had better devote my energies to peaceful pursuits.

My liberal friends and my Jewish friends were as pro-Russian as they had been anti-Russian before the revolution. John Reed, who had denounced me as a friend of the Russians before the revolution, now denounced me as their enemy. He was heart and soul for Russia. The Russians, he now said, were the greatest people on earth, the most cultured and civilized. I was guilty in his eyes of a crime against the workers of the world after I had published several articles in the *New York Sun.*

At about this time John O'Hara Cosgrave informed me that Horace Liveright, a new publisher, wanted to publish the stories I had written for the *New York World* in a book.

Horace, handsome, elegant, engaging, got up from his desk when I came, asked me to sit beside him on the couch, and said, "You ought to get some new clothes. I don't like what you are wearing."

"Are you a tailor or a publisher?" I asked.

"Let's go to lunch and see about that."

For two hours we talked about everything under the sun except the publication of the book. Suddenly Horace looked at his watch. "Good God! I have thrown away three hours. Waiter," he called, "bring me pen and ink."

I thought he was writing a check to pay for the lunch, but when he had signed the check, he said, "This lunch is on you. Give the waiter a good tip. Celebrate. Here is five hundred dollars. I'll send you the contract in a day or so."

As usual the Bercovicis celebrated. New easels. A violoncello. A riding horse. Twenty friends for dinner at Moscovitz's on Second Avenue, and a shawl for Tina, my favorite Gypsy story teller and singer, a queen among women.

Horace was frequently brutally frank and often disconcertingly sly, but he loved writers. He took over from other publishers authors who hadn't made a cent and made their names famous and earned them wealth. It was a great loss to literature that unfortunate circumstances and temptations turned him to Wall Street speculations, the theater, and other ventures which ruined him.

While I was fingering the last of the five hundred dollars, the *New York World* sent me to Boston to cover the Ponzi case.

"Here is the lay-out," Gavin, the city editor, said to me. "Anybody who invests one hundred dollars with Ponzi gets a hundred and fifty dollars forty-five days later. He has paid out millions in the last few months, but he won't tell anybody where he invests the money of his customers. Go to Boston and find out. Ponzi often breakfasts at Young's Hotel. Goodbye."

I went to Boston, took a room at Young's Hotel, and asked the waiter in the dining room to point Ponzi out to me when he came in.

Ponzi, a slight, undersized, foppish little Italian, came into the dining room that evening followed by a dozen reporters. Something in the manner with which he handled the silver suggested to me that he was an ex-waiter.

I also knew that every Italian waiter wants to speak French,

a language that enables him to serve in the more expensive restaurants. When I addressed Ponzi in French as Monsieur Ponzi, he answered in French and asked me to sit down. Without beating about the bush, I told him why I had come to Boston.

"Is New York talking about me much?" he asked.

"*Oui, Monsieur, beaucoup.* The Italians of New York are making up pools to send to you to invest."

"They don't *send* it, they *bring* it," he interrupted me. "The people of Lawrence, the plain workingmen, also make up pools to *give* me the money to invest, but they *bring* it, they don't *send* it."

"In what do you invest their money?" I asked.

"That's my secret," he grinned. "Have you any money to invest? *N'ayez pas peur.*"

The following day a lawyer friend explained to me why Ponzi had insisted that the Italians of New York *brought* and did not *send* him their money.

"Using the mails would give the Federal Government the right to ask to see his books, and he would have to prove to them that the money was actually invested in a business that brings enough profit to pay 420 per cent a year."

I visited the Ponzi offices. Behind cashier's windows like those in banks, stood young girls, mostly Italian, who issued printed and countersigned certificates promising to pay fifty per cent more than was deposited when the certificates became due.

The line of depositors extended down the stairs and clear around the block and was kept in order by a dozen policemen. The girls behind the windows took the money, issued the signed certificates after filling in the bearer's name, and dropped the dollar bills into a wicker basket at their feet.

From time to time, a customer would present a due certificate, demand that it be cashed, and the cash was handed through the window without a word. But nine times out of

ten the investor reinvested at the next window what he had received at the first one.

Twice a day Charles Ponzi transported sealed bags of money to the Hanover Bank, a private bank, where the money was dumped into a large safe.

Ponzi had bought the bank, lock, stock, and barrel, from its former owner after the affairs of the bank had been more or less liquidated. There wasn't a clerk or a cashier on the floor of the bank. Charles Ponzi was its only customer.

Italian pushcart peddlers and storekeepers had mortgaged their homes to invest with the great wizard. On Trenton Avenue the haberdashers, opticians, dentists, doctors, and furniture dealers turned everything into cash in order to hand the money over to Ponzi.

In Boston, to know Ponzi was equivalent to being on speaking terms with the president of the United States. Ponzi was Boston's hero. Every time his open car passed a street, people clapped their hands, and Ponzi bowed to the right and to the left.

I had a long interview with Ponzi and quoted him verbatim in an article I sent to the *New York World.* The following day, in the *Evening World,* an interview written by one of the sob sisters on the paper who had gone to Boston to ask Mrs. Ponzi for a message to American womanhood, represented Ponzi as a highly educated Italian, of the nobility, who spoke perfect academic English.

"Who is right?" Gavin, my editor, telegraphed. "You report him as speaking like a wop, and she like an academician."

"He talks lawyer's English," I replied telegraphically. "Uses 'whereas,' and 'in consideration of the fact' when he talks to the press."

Mrs. Ponzi, interviewed again and again by the sob sisters of the press, continued to deliver messages to America's womanhood.

Meanwhile the Boston police had gone on strike and left Boston at the mercy of thieves, thugs, crooks, gamblers, and criminals of every shade. Calvin Coolidge, then governor of Massachusetts, broke the strike eventually, but it was frightening to see Boston overrun by gunmen, their molls, and crooks and becoming the paradise of all the human rats.

Few people realized that Ponzi was in a measure responsible for the strike of Boston's policemen. A majority of the policemen had invested in Ponzi's certificates and had become wealthy, on paper of course, beyond their dreams. An original thousand dollars had become $1500 in 45 days, $2250 in ninety days, and so on. With money multiplying so fast, their salaries appeared negligible. The policemen, from the captains down, knew that Ponzi was a crook, but expected that Ponzi's bodyguards, who were allowed to carry on a major business in alcohol under their protecting wings, would warn them before the crash.

"What are you up to?" a desk sergeant asked when I told him that I had gone to Providence and from there to Canada to look up Ponzi's record.

"To put Ponzi in jail," I said.

"Don't you dare do it before my certificates are due, or I'll break your neck," he warned me.

Fifty other crooks from New York and San Francisco, from Milan and Rio de Janiero, opened offices in Boston to clean up on the same swindle as Ponzi. There was no law in Massachusetts to compel them to show where they invested the money of the customers. They neither advertised nor wrote letters to anybody and carefully avoided using the mails.

Success had so completely turned Ponzi's head that he actually believed he had discovered something new in banking, something as simple as taking money from Peter to pay Paul, who turned it back to pay Peter, who reinvested it. Even the school children of Boston broke their clay banks to take their savings to Ponzi, their hero.

When the undersized little Italian appeared at a motion picture house, the audience rose to its feet, applauded him, and made him take a dozen bows. I have seen him standing up in an open car and riding through the streets of Boston like a conquering hero in his chariot.

Eventually, Ponzi, against the advice of his lawyers, sent a letter to a friend in New York, asking him to organize a New York branch of his bank.

The letter fell into the hands of the Federal Government, who stepped in and found that Ponzi had never invested a cent of the money that had poured into his coffers except for buying the defunct Hanover Bank. Ponzi's financial tangle was never disentangled. A few people were compelled to disgorge the profits they had cashed, but thousands of little people lost all their savings. Many a father committed suicide. Many a mother went mad with grief.

Ponzi went to jail for five years.

"Stay on and write me the story of how Ponzi started the business and all his antecedents," Gavin, my editor, telegraphed.

Ponzi had come to Boston from Providence, after a stretch in a Canadian jail for swindle, and brought with him a buxom girl friend.

A middle-aged furniture dealer, a widower, befriended the girl. One day Ponzi asked the man for a loan of three hundred dollars and promised to pay $450 in a month and a half. When the furniture dealer refused to give up so much money, the girl closed her door to him. The middle-aged Lothario was too young to do without a woman and too old to be seen running after one. A few weeks later he gave Ponzi the cash, never expecting it back. The girl agreed to pay it back in nature, ten dollars for every time the Lothario paid her a visit. Ponzi used part of the money to buy himself some flashy clothes and began to do a little gambling in an Italian gambling house. Lady

Luck favored him so well one night that he won a thousand dollars or more.

In the morning, when the furniture dealer came to pay his visit to the lady, Ponzi, who didn't know that Carma had already paid back a good deal of the money in her own coin, handed the Lothario $450 and told him to go to hell.

Instead of putting the cash in his pocket, the elderly Lothario handed it back to his dear friend Charley, begged him to reinvest it at the same rate of interest, and added another few hundred dollars to make it a round sum.

Unable to keep a good thing to himself, the old gallant told his relatives and friends that he had discovered a financial genius. The news spread from mouth to mouth in the foreign quarters and was carried to other cities from New York to San Francisco. A month after Ponzi had paid back four hundred and fifty dollars to the furniture dealer, he was taking in twenty thousand dollars a day. His old pals from Providence, Canada, and New York, thugs, pimps, card sharps, and white slavers, descended upon him and muscled in on the take. The Maffia, the Italian Black Hand, also came in for a share of the boodle.

The Ponzi affair was part and parcel of the era of rugged individualism. Even after the blatant, empty-headed crook was convicted, my editor said to me, "Do him justice, man. He is a genius."

Too obtuse to notice the scientific and artistic giants of our epoch, people hail every conspicuous, beady-eyed rat crawling out of a sewer as a genius.

I brought back a reputation for colorful journalism when I returned to New York and had several offers from newspapers. I refused them all. My experience had been grist to the mill, but that was all. I had a mind and a notebook full of stories that had nothing in common with journalism. I wanted to stay home. My own family was becoming daily more interesting

and exciting. They were all working. Naomi's work was really remarkable. Mirel was painting like a grown-up. Rion and Gorky were writing, falling in and out of love, and coming to me with their troubles. Rada was studying music and showed great promise as a singer. Home was more exciting than a circus. I wanted to write all the time. Writing intoxicated me. We intoxicated each other at home talking about our plans. An hour after promising Rada to write and compose for her the first opera she would sing, I was working on *Tinka.* I gave up working on this opera only after Rada had given up singing.

Horace Liveright published *The Dust of New York,* and the book did splendidly. There wasn't a day in which I didn't get a dozen letters from people who had read the book.

Herbert Gorman, then writing book reviews for the *Sun,* and the late John Weaver of the *Times* were my most enthusiastic reviewers. John Farrar, now of Farrar and Rinehart, wrote a long article in *Time* to tell the world about the Gypsy who had learned to write English.

The legend of my being a Gypsy was growing, and I didn't care to dispute it. I wore flamboyant cravats and vests and welcomed the excuse to wear them; everybody said I was a Gypsy.

Bob Davis, a literary agent then, called me one day to his office in the Selwyn Building, and said, handing me an envelope, "Listen, boy. I am giving you six stories by . . . " and he named a famous woman story writer. "I want you to read them carefully and study her technique. Her technique and what you have to say is an unbeatable combination. It will make us both rich. We'll live in palaces and travel in Rolls-Royces. Now go home, read her stories carefully, and come back in a week with a story of yours with her technique."

I couldn't make myself read that famous writer's stories despite the prospect of palaces and Rolls-Royces.

A week later I handed the envelope back to Bob Davis and

said, "I haven't brought you a story, but I have written an epitaph for the tombstone over my grave."

"What is it?" Bob asked.

"Here lies a man who died in poverty because he couldn't read six stories by Mrs. G."

I had decided to do my own work in my own manner and style. It was a wise decision even from a practical point of view. When one writes or paints or composes in the style of some successful artist, one comes naturally in competition not only with the successful artist but with all his imitators. But when one does work in his own original style, he is unique and therefore in competition with no one. Then, if one's work is only half as good as it should be, it stands a much better chance of winning a place for itself than when it is very good but imitative.

The only times I went to the trouble to reply to critics were when one compared my work to de Maupassant's and another one wrote that I was as good as Chekhov. I had unbounded admiration for de Maupassant and Chekhov, but wouldn't be compared to either. No matter how fine a work is, if it can be compared to the work of another writer, it is on the road to nowhere.

One morning as I was about to leave home to take the train to New York, the postman handed me a letter from the editorial rooms of *The Dial*, which under the editorship of Roscoe Thayer had moved from Chicago to New York. In that letter, Gilbert Seldes, the managing editor, inquired about the Gypsy story that was making the rounds of the magazines.

"Let's see it," Seldes wrote.

I placed the manuscript in an envelope and sent it to Seldes. Three days later I found a fat envelope from *The Dial* in my mail box. Certain that the Gypsy story had been returned again and in a hurry to catch a train, I left the envelope in the mail box and went my way.

I forgot all about *The Dial* envelope when I returned home that night, and did not take it out of the letter box the next morning. As I sat down at my desk in the editorial rooms, Sam Cahan, the illustrator, told me that *The Dial* office had called several times and asked that I call them back.

"What about the proofs?" Seldes scolded me over the phone. "Have you sent them back? We must have them today."

I took the train back to Morristown, New Jersey. The envelope was still in the mail box. With the proofs was a check for $50.00. *Ghitza* had been sold.

The lesson I learned was worth a thousand times that. When one has written a story one considers good, he should send it out again and again.

Most editors have an entirely different slant on a story after they see it in print. Though *Ghitza* had been returned by their readers, half a dozen editors wrote to ask me for Gypsy stories when they saw *Ghitza* in print. I had six other Gypsy stories in my desk. I now sent them out and sold them all for what I thought were fabulous sums of money. They were something new in literature, romantic, philosophical, colorful, and vigorous. When they were reprinted by magazines in England, the journals of Gypsy folklore said that I must have heard the tales in Gypsy camps, for "no modern writer could possibly have invented them." The truth is that I hadn't heard those tales in Gypsy camps, but had often told them to Gypsies to test their truthfulness as to character. The Gypsies have been my test stones after having been my inspiration.

I continued to frequent the homes and cafés of the immigrants of New York, spent all the time I could with them, and one day discovered that a number of physicians, some very eminent ones, were using the babies in orphanages as guinea pigs. One of the medicos, who had written copiously on scurvy and rickets, described in a book he had published how he had been able to provoke scurvy and induce rickets in healthy

children, and how he had cured some of them by his methods.

In order to understand the immensity of the crime better, I read every book on scurvy and rickets available, acquired the friendship of an eminent metabolist, and sat for hours listening to his explanations of what caused scurvy and rickets.

The medical profession knew and had known for hundreds of years an infallible cure for scurvy. A direct descendant of Shakespeare, Captain Hale, during a long voyage back from America accidentally discovered the cure. As to rickets, that dreadful deficiency disease that attacks the bones of children, it was known that any female who had had rickets in her childhood was in mortal danger when she bore a child herself. Yet those hyenas of the medical profession induced rickets in perfectly healthy babies to experiment on them because there were not enough ricket cases to supply their thirst for fame.

Armed with proofs, affidavits from nurses, extracts from books and papers, I offered the exposé to the *New York World* for publication. The office checked and rechecked the facts, and I was given galley proofs to read a week later. But it wasn't in the paper the following morning. Someone had reached someone and suppressed it. When I inquired what had happened and why the stuff wasn't published, I was told, "It will appear soon. Don't you worry."

That same evening one of the doctors implicated pleaded with me in the name of his own children to withdraw what I had written.

When my exposé hadn't appeared in a month, I took my material to the *New York Evening Post,* whose editor reinvestigated the facts, found them as described, and let me read galley proofs, but that was as far as they went along with me.

In the end, condensed and abbreviated, "Orphans as Guinea Pigs" was printed in *The Nation,* under the editorship of Doctor Gruening, now chief of our Territorial Possessions. The district attorney and other authorities were aroused. However, nothing ever came of their indignation.

One prominent doctor had a few unpleasant moments with someone from the district attorney's office, and the affair was squashed.

In retaliation, the owner-editor-publisher of a scurrilous little magazine was hired to denounce me as an anarchist, to tell the world that I was really a Moslem, that I had four wives, and that my Gypsy stories were "probably" translations from the Turkish. As a postscript he added that these stories were only signed by me, but were done by my official wife who was in mortal fear of me.

"Pops," Rion, my oldest son, asked, "what are you going to do about this?"

The rest of the family, too, was up in arms. The honor of the Bercovicis was at stake. But I was too busy with several Gypsy stories to devote my energies to a quarrel just then.

Emboldened by my silence and eager for more boodle from the hyenalike medicos, the rat published another chapter on me. This time he said that I was an Albanian and here for no good purpose.

Feeling in excellent spirits one day after a steak and a bottle of wine, I invaded the editorial offices and trounced the editor so hard he had to go to a hospital. One simply cannot go to court with every human rat. I'd sooner be fined for assault and battery than have a jury or a judge listen to me as a party in a dispute between me and a slimy rat.

We had a family party and the escutcheon of the family was declared undented after I gave an exact account of every blow. What I didn't tell them was that a blow on my left shoulder had made my arm practically useless for the time being and that I should have to see the doctor every day.

I was always like that after a fight. I gloried in the blows I had given, but tried to minimize the ones I had received. Bad bookkeeping.

XII

THAT GYPSY PLAY which O'Neill had read was kicked around until it came into the hands of Al Woods, the Broadway producer. Sam Hoffenstein, the poet, whose book, *Poems About Practically Nothing*, was yet to appear, was Al Woods's press agent. Sam had read many of my stories, liked them, and fearing that I might be shocked or offended by his boss's manner, he took me to his cubicle before introducing me to the great man.

"He is a diamond in the rough," Sam explained, "and not such a fine diamond at that. You get what I mean, don't you? He'll call you sweetheart, bastard, and other endearing names and most likely tell you the story of his life, how he has risen from peanut vendor to peanut vendor. A diamond in the rough."

Woods was at the phone when we came in. The great Broadway producer, his mouth loose, his eyes loose, his coat and his pants loose, his talk loose, was talking to an actress at the other end of the wire, "Listen, sweetheart . . . you gotta bitch the part up a little. Don't fine lady it . . . no, sweetheart. Love me? O. K. Bitch it up. I ain't gotta tell you more. It ain't coming hard to you to bitch up the part a little, is it? O. K. That's a good girl. If you do it right tonight, I'll buy you a box of candy . . . atta girl."

When he put the receiver down, he looked at me and said to Sam, "Hello, Samke . . . is this the sweetheart who wrote the Gypsy play? Sit down . . . what's your name? Sit

down, sweetheart. So you wrote a play . . . eh? A Gypsy play, eh? I like Gypsies. I ain't read it. Fay, my star, has read it. Know her? Sure you do. Who don't? Some girl! Redhaired all over. Says it's got something. Have a drink? No? What's the matter? Liver? Sit down, sweetheart. Got a wife, kids? You ain't just off the boat, are you?"

The manner and the tone were inimitable.

After two hours of palaver we were just where we had been.

Sam Harris, the famous Broadway producer, also liked my Gypsy play, but when I went to see him, he said:

"It is too bad that Madame Nazimova is at least twenty years too old for the part! Brother, you should have shown me a play like this twenty years ago."

"You weren't producing plays twenty years ago," I said.

"That's right. What was I doing then? Yes, promoting prize fights. It wasn't so bad. It's a good little play, but it does need a lot of work yet," Harris remarked. "Play around with it for a couple of months and show it to me again when I am back from Florida."

And that was that. To this day I can't understand why he had sent for me!

The tables of the Brazilian coffee house on West Forty-fourth Street were occupied mostly by young hopefuls of the stage. Blonds from Wisconsin and Minnesota. Dark-eyed ones from the Carolinas and Louisiana. It was also the hang-out of Herman Shumlin, Paul Streger, Luther Adler, Jed Harris, and Alex Miller, Louis Miller's son.

One day Alex brought Jed Harris over to my table and introduced him, "Jed Harris, Konrad. Now still a zero, but some day soon a great producer on Broadway."

"What do you mean a great producer?" Jed said, sitting down. "A great producer nothing! The greatest."

"Expect no modesty from Jed," Alex said, sitting down beside him.

"Let's have some coffee first. I want to talk to you."

When the coffee was brought, Jed leaned over the table and said, "I have nothing in my pockets and nothing in the bank, but I know the theater. That's my capital."

Spare, lean, dark, thin-lipped, not too clean, coarse-haired, and feverish, Jed spoke incessantly for two hours. At the end of that time, he pushed me back in my chair, "Now, what about your play? Let's talk about your play. If I had the money, I'd buy an option on it and see whether I couldn't raise the cash to produce it."

"I can get the money," Alex spoke up. "If Konrad has enough confidence in us . . ."

"Us. Who's us?" Jed asked.

"You and me," Alex said.

"You? What the hell do you know about the theater? I'll let you raise the money, give you a percentage, but for you to say us, including me! What the hell!"

Some days later the American Play Company called to tell me that Jed Harris and Alex Miller were ready to put up the option money on the play. That night the new producing company were my guests for dinner at Moskowitz's.

Mary Fowler, a very beautiful and gifted actress who had had a great success in *Roger Bloomer,* was to play the title part in my play. Jeanne Cassals, the wife of Alexander Sachs, the economist, was to play the other female lead. Between the time when the contract had been signed, at two in the afternoon, and the dinner hour, Jed Harris had broken with his partners and didn't come to dine with us. Another hope gone.

Writing plays is one thing, selling them is another. And it's the selling that is the more important of the two talents.

While I wasted time on the play, Otto Liveright, my literary agent, sold three Gypsy stories to Arthur Vance, the editor of *Pictorial Review.* I wrote two more the following week and

sold them to *Pictorial* immediately. There were days in which I finished the whole first draft of a short story at one sitting. When work went well, I wouldn't leave my table until I had revised the story again and again and made it presentable.

Bigelow, editor of *Good Housekeeping*, bought four Gypsy stories and paid me five thousand dollars for the lot. Vance of *Pictorial* then upped the price to $1500 a story and bought every one I wrote for the next two months. The stories sang themselves into me while I was asleep, ate, talked, walked the streets, or listened to music. Everything I had ever thought of translated itself into Gypsy and Tartar stories. Color, odor, snatches of conversation which I had heard as a child on the banks of the Danube, the memory of a bear tamer in the market place, the shrug of a Gypsy woman's shoulder, or a gesture integrated itself into a complete tale and practically wrote itself. Naomi and I roamed the lower East Side where we met Gypsies and more Gypsies, listened to their talk, their music, and their quarrels, went to their christenings and their weddings, and gathered more inspiration for Gypsy stories.

These stories formed themselves into epics of love, of strength and truth triumphant. I wasn't concerned with plot, but with the philosophical content of a story. What made these stories Gypsy stories was the color in which I encased them. They were universal melodies played by a Gypsy orchestra.

Those were the golden days of the magazine editor. He was king. When he liked a story or a serial novel, he bought it without consulting anyone. He was sole arbiter of what he wanted, and he fixed the price for what he bought. To be sure he had readers who winnowed out the stuff that came by mail (and often sent back material they should have kept), but when a story reached him, he was the only one to decide—whether the decision was for sixty thousand dollars for a serial or two thousand dollars for a short story.

The touch of the great editors led the circulation of their

magazines up into the millions. Not everything they published was literature of Class A, but they had an eye out for the best to be obtained and didn't hesitate to publish from time to time a novel or a story that was somewhat above the heads of their readers.

Men like Vance, Arthur Hoffman, William F. Bigelow, and Loring Schuller, to mention only a few of the editors of women's magazines, had comparatively high literary standards. When they bought trash for popular consumption, they didn't fool themselves about the quality of their purchases.

When, however, the circulation of magazines began to fall off as a result of the depression, the promoting geniuses of the business departments began to take an interest in the stuff that was published and began to interfere with the decisions of the editors. The promoting geniuses refused to admit that the circulation fell because of the depression and believed that if they were able to spend on promotion some of the money that was spent for literature, they could raise the circulation back to par.

A magazine is a business. Those who own it are chiefly interested in profits, dividends. Some of the geniuses of promotion had their way and sheared the editors of their powers. And then the trash crowded out whatever good stuff might have gone in. Instead of one editor with a decisive voice, many magazines instituted a new way of buying material. Every story was read by five or more readers who gave it points. A hundred was the ideal. Every story was judged separately for plot, for novelty, for suspense, and for timeliness, and each item received so many points. When all the points received by a story from all the separate readers averaged more than sixty, the story was acceptable.

A group of us once sent one of de Maupassant's best stories to a magazine having such a system. It averaged less than thirty points and of course was sent back as unacceptable. There would perhaps be little cause to protest if this new sys-

tem helped the circulation of most magazines, but it doesn't. Where are the *Delineator*, *Designer*, and *Pictorial Review*, to speak of only a few women's magazines?

The Century was one of the oldest magazines in this country, and one of the best. When the promoting manager, Glenn Frank, was made editor, he spent so much of the budget on promotion that he had little left to buy literature with and could only buy what was cheap to fill its pages. In the end *The Century* was promoted to death.

Shorn of his powers by the business department, Arthur Vance died a brokenhearted man, watching *Pictorial Review*, his creation, go to the bow wows. I have seen him weep like a child when the business department refused to confirm one of his purchases for the magazine.

Some of the best story writers this country has produced haven't had a story published in magazines in four or five years. And since books of short stories are not profitable for publishers, some of the best literary efforts in the country are wasted unborn.

Most of what is published in the majority of magazines is mechanical, written to formula, and has little value as literature.

I know that this is only a temporary condition, but in the meantime the standards are lowered continually. The day may come when there won't be many who know how to write a short story that is a short story and not a hair raiser or a thriller. We know what happened to the machine tool trade because the old mechanics could find no work during the last decade, and no new ones had been apprenticed. Now, when they are badly needed, the old ones have lost their skill, and the new ones haven't acquired any yet.

The most pitiful thing is to watch the growth of a thousand and one pulp magazines whose owners have never had any standards and are reaching ever lower and lower for new read-

ers. In the end many of them published, and are publishing, magazines for those who cannot read at all, picture magazines. How much lower can they possibly go?

The wheel of fortune was certainly turning in my favor! Dame Luck was catching up with me. Had *The Dial* not come to New York and changed its policy from a book reviewing magazine to a general magazine, the first Gypsy story might still be unprinted. Had that story not taken the fancy of Roscoe Thayer and Gilbert Seldes, it might still be kicking around in editorial offices. And who knows whether I would have written more of them without the encouragement of publication!

Perseverance is a great virtue no doubt, but often a combination of circumstances defeats all virtue or prospers all vice. I am not ashamed to say that luck has played a fair part in whatever success I have had.

We moved to a larger apartment. I bought a dozen of the most vivid scarfs and cravats and let my love for color run riot. No one had ever worn such red, yellow, and green shirts as I dared to wear at that time. I bought the best piano money could buy. I had my hands in my pockets all the time. No one who came for money was refused. Relatives. Friends. A thousand dollars to one. Two thousand to another. Every time I received a check I went down to the East Side and paid the check of everybody who happened to be at this or that restaurant; or remembering a woman I had investigated for the charities, I pretended that I represented a new organization and bought her groceries and paid her rent. And lest our children forget what poverty was like, we used to send them or take them along on such errands. Although conditions had improved on the East Side since my first arrival, they were still heartbreaking and hopeless. I was often deeply ashamed of my prosperity.

Now that the war was over and the Czar was driven out of

Russia, the Russian Jews were greater Russian patriots than were the Russians. Every intellectual Russian Jew wrote about the "soul of Russia," the "heart of Russia," the "literature of Russia."

Prohibition was on. Corruption and gangsterism reared their hydra heads. Idlers and bums were wearing ten dollar shirts. There wasn't a chicken in every pot, but there was a still in every other basement. You could buy whiskey and gin in every candy store and in every Italian, Polish, Czech, Syrian, Hungarian, and Jewish restaurant.

An old lady, whom I had known as terribly destitute, laughed at me when I bought her a bag of groceries. "Meester, you wanna gallon or a quart?" she asked. "Mine son is in business. I deliver for him."

The son wasn't sixteen.

An Italian woman told me that "Prohibish" was made for the poor "to sell vino and pay no tax's."

I spoke to several editors of the foreign language press and attracted their attention to the bad reputation their nationals were acquiring.

"Brother, bother about your own business," they answered each in his own tongue. "We'll attend to ours."

And what was their business? The Italians in New York were told to hate the French and the English because Italy didn't get enough out of the war, the Germans to hate the Poles in New York because of Danzig, the Hungarians to hate the Roumanians because they had lost Transylvania to them, the Russians to demand Bessarabia, and the Slovaks to demand separation from the Czechs.

A backer of *Rain,* the play which elevated Jeanne Eagles to fame, invited me to have dinner with him at Sheriff Bob Chanler's house on East Nineteenth Street. That house was something out of Dante, Boccaccio, Rabelais, and the Walpurgis Night. The walls were decorated with giraffes, birds of para-

dise, and parrots, painted by a mad genius, Bob himself, who was as fantastic and exotic as his paintings.

Six foot four tall, with a head like that of Dumas *père,* enormous and woolly, he met me in his slippers and open shirt and put out one paw while he held up his pants with the other. Pushing me into a room and speaking as if he had a potato in his mouth, he said pointing to another room from where I heard loud laughter and screams, "A lot of fools. They come to drink my wine, eat my food, and fornicate. Just fools. I was married to Lina Cavalieri, the opera singer, once. Cost me a million dollars to get rid of her. Cheap at that. Very cheap. What a fool. Well! Slept with Lina twice. No good. Got better service for a dollar. Gave her a million dollars because she wasn't worth fifty cents. Isn't that funny?"

And he laughed and slapped his enormous thighs.

"I put up some money for *Rain.* Interested in the woman. Ha, ha, ha. Read the play. It doesn't look so good on paper but how it plays! I read your play. Good. I'll put up the cash. I say to him what the hell, why do you want a blonde Gypsy for? What the hell . . ."

"What blonde Gypsy?" I asked.

"You'll see. Blonde! Blonde! Beautiful blonde. His whore. But no Gypsy. Well, you'll see. Hope you spit in his face." And Bob Chanler spat to show me how, left me alone for a moment, and returned to the room with a copy of *Crimes of Charity* which he wanted autographed.

"The poor poor. Why the hell don't they come here to dynamite this place? Rich. Too rich. My father was robber baron. I am the same. This is like Rome. Debauchery. Why the hell don't they throw dynamite on this place? I have no respect for them. That's what I would do if I were poor. Dynamite. Zum, boom. Dynamite. Dynamite."

There were about twenty people in different stages of drunkenness in the next room, women of doubtful sexuality and painted young boys sitting on the laps of elderly men. A famous pianist, drunk to the gills, was playing a Chopin noc-

turne and crying. Two females were drinking from one glass, looking soulfully into each other's eyes and whispering, "Darling! Sweetheart."

"That's enough," Chanler thundered, crowding his guests to the door.

"Get out. Get out!" he yelled, still holding up his falling pants.

"Hey, there," he called to two girls on a couch, "you two bitches in heat, no fornication today. Come Thursday. Today is Tuesday."

When they were at the door, he asked me: "Sodom and gonorrhea! Why the hell don't your poor dynamite this house. Every form of vice, every degeneracy nests here."

"Why do you let them nest here?" I asked.

"Why! Why, he asks! Because this is a puritanical country. These lepers have to have some place to go. And sometimes they amuse me. I like to see people eat, drink, and fornicate in and out of order, to revenge myself, as Freud or who the hell says so, on my puritanical ancestors. Have a drink."

He poured a pint glass full of champagne for himself and as the street door opened, he bellowed, "To the death of the sonofabitch who comes in now."

My host waddled into the room, stewed, and accompanied by a young woman with a golden head of great purity on a sturdy Polish peasant body.

"And this bitch," Chanler said, grabbing the girl, throwing her across his knees, raising her skirt, and slapping her dimpled buttocks, "this bitch wants to play a Gypsy."

Screaming and clawing, the girl got to her feet and called Chanler names a truck driver would have hesitated to use.

Her escort slumped into the nearest chair and watched what was happening out of his big bleary eyes.

"Go to sleep," Chanler yelled at him. "Get out of my sight before I kill you."

When my host had stumbled into the adjoining room,

Chanler said to me, "Take her to the other room and tell me how she is afterward."

"Please! Please, Bob!" the girl pleaded, raising her eyes like an offended Madonna.

"Oh," Bob said, "you want to pray! Good. Go upstairs and pray. To hell with you."

A few minutes later Bob beckoned me to follow him upstairs. In a niche in the wall, at the first landing, was a statue of the Virgin. The blonde Madonna, with her golden hair loose on her shoulders, was on her knees before it.

"Whenever she is drunk, I spank her. When she is spanked, she prays to the Virgin. *À chacun son gout.*"

Bob and I had dinner alone, and he talked. Art, music, literature, history, and politics. He was tremendously interested in the Russian experiment, chiefly "because the poor have blasted hell out of the rich. Great people, the Russians. Guts. Savages. Asiatics. There must be some Asiatic blood in me. Maybe African. Look at me. I look like Dumas *père*. Half African."

The colored servant girl came in.

"Look at her. Beautiful, isn't she? Don't try no monkey business with her. She'll stick a knife into you. Won't you, Liza? Tell him. Some day the Africans, Liza, the Africans, will do to us what the muzhiks did to the Russian noblemen. Won't they, Liza? Don't stand there and look at me! Get the hell outa here and bring us some more wine.

"The wealth of this country ought to be redistributed again. I am getting too much money. My relatives are getting too much money. My ancestors were all pirates.

"Have some more caviar. Twenty dollars a pound. I eat a pound a day. It's bad for the stomach, but it's good for my virility. One day I say to hell with sex and save twenty dollars. The next day I say to hell with the stomach and it costs me a million.

"Don't let that louse have your play. He'll never do any-

thing more. He'll live for the rest of his life on *Rain.* A great play played by a great actress. She'll be here after the theater. Glad he brought you here. Want to see you often. Come whenever you feel like it. Call me when you want to have dinner. And if you want to sleep here . . . good. If you want to bring your own bitch, it's O. K. with me. If you don't, you'll always find one here."

By the time we finished our dinner, the rooms were again filled with people, and two colored girls walked about with trays of sandwiches, bottles, glasses, and packages of cigarettes. All New York was there. Ethel Barrymore, resplendent in her glory and maturity. Rubenstein, the pianist, on his first visit to this country. Tallulah Bankhead, flaming youth, saucy, piquant, was giving an imitation of Ethel Barrymore to Ethel Barrymore's face.

When Jeanne Eagels came in, looking smaller than she really was, and blonder than she was, Chanler, the millionaire genius and playboy, lifted her high up in the air and shouted at the top of his barrel voice, "This is the greatest actress of all time. And who don't like what I say can get the hell out of here."

Ethel Barrymore applauded.

A colored orchestra appeared, as if from nowhere, and began to play dance music. Bob tore off his coat, threw the slippers off his feet, grabbed Jeanne Eagels and danced with her out of step, out of rhythm, a sort of savage dance, until he collapsed puffing to the carpet. Jeanne Eagels sat down beside him, and the two talked seriously, there on the floor, while the music played and couples danced around them. I had a good look at her. Her face was commonplace, but her eyes weren't; they had fire and strange vacancies. When the music stopped, Bob helped her to her feet, and the two went to a corner of the room and continued their conversation, undisturbed by the noise, the going and the coming of people, the drunken cries, and the love shrieks in the adjoining rooms.

I looked upon all human emotions with tolerance and under-

standing, but that night I saw more than I could stand. I am not speaking of all the guests, but only of those hermaphrodites sprawling on couches behind painted screens and swilling whiskey between lascivious kisses. I was near vomiting when I left.

A few blocks away I came upon a long breadline which stretched behind a truck distributing coffee and sandwiches an hour after midnight. Hundreds of thousands of people were starving in New York that winter. I convinced fifty or more of those derelicts to follow me to Chanler's door.

When Bob heard who was outside, he invited them to the basement, gave them a separate party, and even sent the colored orchestra down to play for them.

When the derelicts were gone, he said to me, "There were fifty of them. They could have smashed us all to a pulp. Goddam the poor. They'll never amount to anything. They have no guts. Give them a sandwich, and they kiss your hands. It would have been fun if they had run upstairs and held up the bunch and beaten them and raped the women and smashed and set fire to the place. But they are no good. They have no guts. Some night you should come in with a bunch of real men, muzhiks from Russia."

The whole affair left a bad taste in my mouth. I liked Bob. There was something gargantuan about him and his amorality. He was above man-made morals, but most of the others made me feel that they were below the lowest standard of morality. It's the same with nakedness in art. On an immense scale it is hardly noticeable; in a miniature it can be very offensive and smutty.

XIII

I WENT to hear Clare Sheridan, who had just returned from Russia, lecture on the Soviets. Six foot tall and lean with a chiseled blonde face and large blue eyes, a peach-and-cream complexion, and golden hair, she lectured beautifully, but when people fired questions at her, she became confused and looked to the chairman for help.

A Russian friend took me backstage after the lecture. Although this was the first time she had seen me, she reached out her long bare arm, touched my fingers with hers, drew me close, and said, "You look like Maxim Gorky. Stay near me. Don't go away. I am leaving for California tonight. Come to the car and see me off."

Four other cars followed us. We were old friends when she kissed me goodbye.

"Have you known her a long time?" one of her communist friends asked me when the train had gone.

"Years and years," I answered.

"Then you must have known her before she. . . ."

"Before what?"

"Before she saw the light. She is a great power, an aristocrat that has seen the light. She can go everywhere. She can speak to everybody. We need women like her. Russia needs her."

"And what will happen to her when Russia no longer needs her?" I asked.

"Well, what am I, a prophet?" he questioned as he walked away.

As soon as she reached California, she was reported engaged to marry Charlie Chaplin.

A month went by. Two.

The night before leaving for California to join my family, which was there, I went to see *The Tidings Brought to Mary* at the Guild Theatre. Just before the curtain rose, Clare Sheridan, in a fur cape, rushed down the aisle, followed by a very short man, and sat down on a seat in front of me. I tapped her shoulder. She turned, recognized me, shrieked, and turned again and again to smile at me while the first act was on.

During the intermission, followed by the short man, we walked out into the lobby, where I told her that I was leaving the following day. She begged me to take her home after the performance.

We went to her studio. Within five minutes it was crowded with actors and bolsheviks. When her little son, Dicky, came down from his room, awakened by the noise, she handed me over to him and told him not to let go of me under any condition. I went up to Dicky's room and listened to his stories about California and Mexico. Dicky was fascinated by Mexico, but above all he was fascinated by Chaplin!

"So amusing, so entertaining, don't you know," the little Englishman said.

By the time Clare came up to put her son to bed, Dicky and I were fast friends. Clare and I went down to the enormous studio, which was littered with trays of leftover sandwiches and empty bottles, and sat down to talk. She sobbed out her Russian and California adventures. She told me how she had studied sculpture during the war because time had weighed heavy on her hands after the death of her youngest baby. How and why she had gone to Russia. How Wolodarsky, Trotsky's alter ego, whom I had known in New York, was shot

before her eyes in Moscow. How she had stood before the Kremlin at the funeral of Jack Reed, and had tried to comfort Louise Bryant, Reed's wife, who had arrived in Moscow a few hours before Jack's death.

Frightened by these events, yet fascinated by them, she had been telling herself that she was an active participant in a world-shattering drama. She didn't really understand bolshevism, but she was for it. She didn't have to understand. Trotsky understood. That was enough for her. But now people questioned her. She had to answer theoretical questions about communism!

She talked on for hours in a torrent of words mingling the past with the present, memories of her husband killed in the war, snatches of conversation with her American relatives, who were scandalized by her Russian adventures and now more scandalized by the publicity resulting from her engagement to Chaplin. While we were talking, someone knocked discreetly at the door and entered. A Russian.

"Oh, excuse me, comrade," he said, backing out after seeing me. "I only wanted to ask Comrade Sheridan one thing. Is Mr. Chaplin a comrade?"

"Why don't you ask him?" Clare Sheridan said, rising.

"It is too far, California, three thousand miles, you know," he said, edging forward as he picked something out of the tray of sandwiches and filled himself a glass of scotch from a bottle. "Too far, you know," he said, throwing his head back and tossing the drink into his wide-open mouth. Then pointing the half-munched sandwich in my direction, he asked, "Is he a comrade?"

"Why don't you ask him?" Clare said. "He isn't three thousand miles away."

"Well!" the man asked, coming closer to me. "Are you?"

"No. I am not."

"No? *Bozshe moĭ!* No? Why not?"

"Tell me," I asked. "Why are you a comrade?"

"It's natural, no? The best people are comrades. No?"

"No. They are not. Get out now."

Retreating to the door, he grabbed a few more sandwiches, shrugged his shoulders, and left.

"That's how it was in Russia. People walked in and out of my room at all hours. You were not supposed to close your door. Conspiracy. Counterrevolution."

"Then why do you go on praising the Soviets?"

"Because it is a fascinating experiment. Because they are everywhere. Because I don't know why."

Poor befuddled human being.

The next moment she was talking about Roumania and laughing about her adventures there.

"They are a crazy romantic lot. An hour after he met me, an army officer threatened to commit suicide when I refused to elope with him."

"Did he?"

"No. He only got drunk."

At daybreak we had breakfast together at Childs at Columbus Circle. On the front page of the morning newspaper was the world-shattering news, that, when asked whether he was going to marry Clare Sheridan, Charlie Chaplin said, "Ask the lady."

"And what does the lady say?" I asked, showing her the paper.

"That it is so sudden," Clare laughed.

I bought five magazines on the train. I had a story in each of them. I read them in a row to see what effect they would produce. I was as objective as one can possibly be about one's own work. In the end I was somewhat confused. They were good stories, but wasn't the color a little forced? Separately the color was pleasant, but read one after the other, the riot of

color they presented obliterated the design. Living in plenty, as I did, I was much more concerned with the beauty than with the more sober aspects of Gypsy life. One simply cannot dine on caviar and champagne and keep a sober eye. I had been so proud of my ability to write story after story. On that trip to California I concluded that I was driving myself too hard and living too fast. Money had dug its teeth into me.

The editors drove me to write more and more while the going was good, as if they wanted to squeeze me out before the source had gone dry, and I was too proud of my virility to say, "No, I am tired." Some of the stories I read on the train were the product of that pride.

I was having dinner with Ralph Block, once a shining light on the *New Republic,* but then a motion picture story editor, and Paul Bern, who, later, after marrying Jean Harlow, committed suicide, when Chaplin came in.

Bern, who had the complexion of a girl and the soft eyes of a fawn, adored Chaplin. Any opinion of Chaplin on any of a hundred subjects he knew nothing about was eagerly accepted as gospel by Bern. Chaplin was not to be contradicted on anything. He was the genius. The one and only one. I called Chaplin on all his misstatements.

Feeling like an animal trainer who had tamed all the animals in the cage but one, he set out to conquer me also and by any means. After placing a disk in the phonograph, he grabbed a tablecloth, draped himself in it, and danced a Pavlova dance, better than Pavlova herself had ever done it. When the music stopped, he grinned all his teeth at me and said, "Pretty good, eh? Pretty good, I calls it. How about you? Give us a dance. Show us, eh," and he grinned.

An hour later he rose to go and asked whether he couldn't drop me off somewhere. I mentioned where I was staying.

"Perfect. It's on my way. Come along." In the car he asked, "A cup of coffee, eh? Coffee and cheese cake at Lewis's.

Best cheese cake in the world, eh? Yes? Good car, eh? Yes? Locomobile. Very expensive. Marvelous shock absorbers. Travels like on air."

Across the table from me at Lewis's, Chaplin said, "Got a wire from Clare about you. Didn't answer it. Figured we'd run into each other some day. Same people gravitate to the same places, you know. How is Clare? Don't know how that rumor about our getting married got into the papers! Don't do any harm to me or to her. Good publicity. No harm. Marvelous woman, Clare. I'll show you the bust she made of me."

When we left, Chaplin insisted that I accompany him to his house up in the hills.

In the car he talked to me about the autobiography he was writing. But even as he talked, he told four different versions of one early childhood incident. Even as he affirmed that he intended to tell the truth, the absolute truth about his life, he told two or three different truths. In one and the same breath he said he had never known his father and also that his father had been a famous music hall performer.

"I can still see the poor man coming home after a wretched night at the theater."

It was all play-acting, a thousand Chaplins all revolving about a nonexistent axis. No one applauded Chaplin more abundantly than Chaplin. No one's disapproval threw him in so deep a gloom as did his own. When he gave an imitation of himself at the age of seven when he had run away from the workhouse in London, he looked a forlorn, undersized seven-year-old street urchin.

"I danced in the streets. Sidney went around with the hat. We shared the coppers with the Italian organ grinder. How do you like that in an autobiography? Knock 'em for a goal. They want truth, eh? I'll give them truth up to their eyes. I'll tell them how the children of the poor find out the facts of life by themselves!"

Hollywood was but a sprawling village with a Main Street, Hollywood Boulevard, not more than ten blocks long. Intellectually it was smaller than that. The movies, with their nefarious beauty contests, had attracted young girls from every corner of the world. For the few who got employment, thousands lingered on, haunting the studios, the coffee houses, cocktail parties, and ultimately winding up at Mme. Florence's establishment in Los Angeles.

The winners of beauty contests carried their prizes and their clippings in their bags and made you look at them and read them while they whined for a few dollars to pay a week's rent. There were a dozen cults on the hill, Bahais, New Thoughters, Sunworshippers, Nudists, Balthazars, Moonworshippers, Buddhists, and Rosicrucianists, but not a free cup of coffee in any of them.

To be sure, there was a small group of more serious men and women, who shied from parties and cults, but they were few, pitifully few. I spent fine evenings with Leatrice Joy, John Gilbert, Pearly Poor Shehan, and Aileen Pringle.

Chaplin was interested in Pola Negri while beauteous Claire Windsor was interested in him. Just before Chaplin and Pola were about to be married, they quarreled because Pola had expressed herself in a derogatory manner about the Jews.

"Thank God that is over," Chaplin said after he had broken the engagement. And as an afterthought he added, "Didn't hurt her. She got barrels of publicity. Never hurt anybody."

While he was filming *The Pilgrim,* Chaplin insisted that I work in a bungalow on his lot. I watched him work when I was not working on my book *Murdo,* which I dedicated to him. He told me that his mother was a Gypsy, a Romany, and that his grandmother, whose photograph he showed me, had lived in a "vardo," a Gypsy wagon.

Chaplin was already a millionaire, but when a restaurant check came to five dollars, he never failed to exclaim, "A whole family could live on that for a week."

Paramount bought a story of mine for Rudolph Valentino, and I met the Sheik. He looked like a million dollars on the screen, but was absolutely insignificant off it. He had surrounded himself with worshippers, male and female, and acted the Sheik even after work hours. The promise that was in his eyes on the screen was but a vacant stare across the table. He had no more intelligence than a ten-year-old, but he was shrewd and calculating. He bathed in cheap perfume, used cheap, highly scented soaps and lotions, but wore twenty dollar shirts over unlaundered underwear.

His table was set like one in the movies. The butler was a movie butler. His bedroom was a motion picture bedroom, with a four-poster baldachined bed inlaid with gold and silver. The black marble bathroom was an Elinor Glyn dream.

The poor man wasn't living. He was acting out an enchanted life. He didn't even die. Someone was just buried, and I am afraid he'll have to play the part of a buried man a long time. June Mathis, his discoverer, mentor, and screen writer, came in every night to read the publicity notes to her cardboard god.

Poor June! She, too, was leading an enchanted life. With no talent and no ability whatsoever, she was making several thousand dollars a week as Valentino's special writer.

"Isn't he the most wonderful thing on earth?" she asked while Valentino looked at me to hear the answer.

Why did females lose their hearts and heads over this tenth-rate male? Suddenly somebody riding by shot a bullet into the door. Valentino wasn't scared at all. Why should he have been? His own publicity man had done it.

"Some jealous husband," the Sheik said calmly and proceeded to fill his wine glass.

At the Paramount studio the publicity man asked me to write something about the imperturbable courage of Rudolph Valentino.

"What courage?"

"That bullet, man. And how his hand didn't even tremble, and he continued to fill his glass."

I laughed.

"You ain't co-operative," the publicity man complained. "It ain't going to do you any good, Mister."

Frank Woods and Thompson Buchanan, Paramount's story editors, suggested that I give a party to celebrate the sale of the story for Valentino.

The party was held in Thompson's house while his wife was away in Chicago. At midnight, all the guests, except four, were in horizontal positions on the floors, on the staircases, in the beds, and on the couches. Two beauties quarreled and pulled one another's hair. A wife came to take her husband home, discovered him with an arm about another woman on the staircase, and made a scene that woke up the neighbors. Chaplin, Aileen Pringle, Penrhyn Stanlaws, the artist, and I sat in a corner and discussed music and art. At four in the morning we turned down the lights and left. More than half of the guests were in the arms of Morpheus.

After I paid the bootlegger's and the caterer's bill, there wasn't much left out of the first payment on that motion picture story.

Chaplin became a regular dinner guest at our house and told his life story to my wife and children over and over and every time differently. I suggested that he call his autobiography, *Variations on the Theme of My Life.* Rada and baby Mirel adored him. He and Gorky, my second son, became fast friends, but quarreled continually over art and literature. When Chaplin offered Gorky a part in one of his comedies, the boy replied that acting was the lowest of all art forms and that he would never demean himself to that extent. Chaplin was furious, but took long walks with him to convince him that acting was a great art. Naomi and I kept aloof from their quarrel. We saw no reason to interfere with Gorky's opinion.

The Fairbankses had built Pickfair on the top of a hill and were receiving only distinguished guests, patterning themselves after royalty. Doug got his intellectual patter by osmosis by his constant association with Chaplin, who got it by associating with the passing intellectuals and lecturers. They were great friends and admired each other. Doug looked upon Chaplin as a great philosopher, but disapproved of his radicalism.

What a curious perverted, inverted, convex little world Hollywood was! Because I was seen with Chaplin, I was asked out for tea and dinner by the élite of the industry. I was much more interested in the people of Boyle Heights in Los Angeles than I was in the Hollywood fraternity. The Mexican quarter and the Mexican theater of Los Angeles fascinated me.

Enough was enough. We bought a car and were off to Carmel-by-the-Sea to meet Fred Beckdolt, Van Wyck Brooks, Harry Leon Wilson, and Adreana Spadoni, who had been corresponding with me.

There we rented a bungalow at the seashore, and I was beginning to do some real work when I was called back to Hollywood to close a story deal with Joe Schenck. At the last moment something went awry, and the deal was off.

We returned to New York by boat, by way of the Panama Canal, Mexico, Cuba, Florida, and Baltimore. We really traveled. While in Panama, I wrote two stories in two days and mailed them to *Harper's*.

As soon as we were back in New York, I set to work and wrote ten stories, half of them Gypsy stories, in three weeks, and sold all of them as fast as they were on paper. Latin America had set my imagination on fire again.

I worked from six in the morning to one in the afternoon on an empty stomach. After lunch at the Algonquin, at the Brevoort, or at some Greek place, I kept appointments with editors, publishers, and interviewers. It was good to earn a lot of money by one's work in New York. Hollywood had been

the graveyard of literature. The talent of more fine writers was buried there than in any other place. Many empty human shells are strutting around in fine clothes there and living in gorgeous homes while their souls are in Potter's Field graves.

When Clare Sheridan came back from a second visit to Russia, the New York comrades accused her of having come away with many expensive fur coats that the propaganda department had lent her.

Poor Clare. For one reason or another the order had come from Moscow that she should be smeared in America and smeared she was. The smearing technique was not yet perfected, but it was done with great gusto.

When Isadora Duncan was no longer useful to the bolsheviks, they assassinated her character also. Character assassination was one of the great lessons taught by the great Lenin, who was past master at it.

Poor flaming Isadora! I have seen her tear her hair and rage like a madwoman.

"Have they no scruples! No hearts! How can they do that to me, me, Isadora Duncan! After what I have sacrificed for them."

I have seen her throw herself on the floor and scream, while her Russian husband, a peasant poet, laughed, kicked her in the shins, and called her "*Amerikansky curva.*"

My London agent cabled to tell me that he had sold the Scandinavian rights to four of my books, the French rights to three, and the Italian rights to one. What a haul! We spent all this money buying some paintings by modern American painters.

Rion was writing a novel. One day he read me two chapters. I disagreed with the contents and the style and was probably too violent in my expressions. In self-defense he said that

my style wasn't so hot either and that he often disagreed with the contents of my stories. I bore him no ill will for not liking what I was doing, but he, I am afraid, has never forgotten what I said about his first literary labors.

Gorky, too, thought he could do better than his father and said one day that I would be remembered as his father only. He was reading Walter Pater at the time and had no use for anything else. Naomi appraised these discussions better than I did. I enjoyed disagreeing with my own sons. I liked their independence.

The truth of the matter was that three males in one household were as bad as three females in one kitchen. And it happened that we were all three of us pre-eminently male.

At the next Authors' League ball I was introduced to Rebecca West, the English author. I had read Rebecca's novel, *The Return of a Soldier*, her criticisms, and her essays and wasn't prepared to meet one so young, so gay, so vivacious, so dark-eyed, black-haired, and so like a bouncing peasant girl. She said something complimentary about those of my stories that had been published in England and asked me to dance with her.

"Your friend, Clare, has spoken to me about you."

"How is Clare?"

"Still blonde and beautiful."

A little later Lawrence Langner, the lawyer, dramatist, and guiding spirit of the Theatre Guild, asked us to join him at the bar. After Lawrence had told her that I knew New York well, Rebecca insisted that we go sight-seeing immediately. Poor Lawrence! We walked him off his feet, going from one place to another, to a Jewish actors' café, to the Gypsy rialto, to a Harlem night club, and back again to the East Side. At break of day we were at the Coptic Church on Rector Street to hear early morning services. And how Rebecca could laugh! Between laughter and laughter she told amusing tales about Shaw

and D. H. Lawrence and discussed James Joyce, whose work was still contraband here.

Her conversation was scintillating. Her impromptu remarks were perfect. Her must cutting remarks were gems. And she knew literature, philosophy, economics, politics, and people.

We dined together the following evening in a Roumanian restaurant. After dinner she wanted to see the Gypsies by the East River again and have her fortune told.

The next evening she delivered her first lecture from the stage of the Times Square Theater, to an enormous public. It sounded like improvised music. But the feminists were furious with her. Ruth Hale, Heywood Broun's wife, thought Rebecca had committed an unpardonable sin because she had lectured in an evening gown, décolleté, and had had her hair marceled for the occasion.

After the lecture I accompanied Rebecca to Langner's home. Poor Courtenay Lemon had been so eager to meet Rebecca West that he had come to the party ahead of all and was already drunk.

"You Roumanian barbarian," he shouted at me. "Tell her who I am. Tell her that I am not an ordinary drunkard."

Poor Courtenay! What a far day from the day when we had first met, when he was everything and I nothing. I introduced him to Rebecca, said he was a most magnificent writer, and went overboard in my praise. But the more I praised him the somberer his face became. My praise was gall; for he knew he had done nothing yet to deserve the praise.

Horace Liveright joined us to inquire about the European situation. Rebecca told us.

"We are headed for another war. The trouble with the Versailles treaty is that it is not enforced to the limit. This is not peace. It is an armistice from which only the Germans will benefit. England will not arm itself. The upper crust is so afraid of communism, it will hand England over to whoever will promise to save *them*, not England."

When those around her were very serious, she wanted to dance. She was an indifferent dancer, but she was always eager to step out to the center of the floor. Men adored her. Women hated her.

XIV

HAVING WRITTEN twenty stories, a play, and a number of articles and edited a book of short stories in twelve weeks, I felt exhausted. One evening at dinner, my wife said to me, "I have booked you on the *Paris.* You are sailing for France on Saturday. You'll work some more when you come back. You have worked enough this stretch. You need some relaxation."

Wise Naomi! I wouldn't have dared to suggest such a trip for me alone just then. The children had grown, were more or less headstrong, and needed considerable and delicate management to fit them into the grooves of life. Their education had been such that the process of adapting them to life was no easy one. Neither Naomi nor I had ever held back our criticism of society, its injustices, inequalities, and stupidities. Our prosperity had not changed our attitude. The children had grown up in this spirit of rebellious criticism. I knew it was a handicap, but would rather know them handicapped by truth than by lies. Their very vegetarianism was in the nature of a rebellion. They weren't easy to get along with. None of us was, though we loved each other. We were intellectually at each other's throats when we disagreed on anything, and they never gave in to me or to Naomi because we were their elders or their parents.

I felt uneasy about leaving Naomi alone with them, but they

scoffed, "Naomi can take care of herself. She can hold up her end better than you can. You don't have to ask mercy for her."

At a goodbye luncheon at the Algonquin, F. P. A. asked me to communicate with Esther Root, care of the American Express in Paris and Granada.

"Look up Joan M——," Horace Liveright said in the same tone of voice, "care of the American Express."

At the end of the luncheon Horace leaned over to tell me, "I am going to learn how to play tennis. I'll get myself the best teacher and work at it day and night."

"What for?" I asked.

"Just so that I beat F. P. A. at it. Good God," he cried out, his eyes raised to the ceiling, "just one set, please, one set. That's all I want; to beat F. P. A. one set at tennis. That isn't asking too much, is it, God?"

Ludwig Lewisohn, a guest at the luncheon, was eying me across the table. He had written a very laudatory criticism of my latest book, in the *Literary Review*, and wondered why I hadn't said a word of thanks.

"You ungrateful wretch," he finally blurted out, "I haven't praised a book so in years."

The review in question was not signed, but Ludwig said that I should have recognized from the style who had written the piece. "A man with your style should recognize the style of another."

Ludwig was always the writer. He went about being the writer while he ate, danced, or talked with friends.

I gave another farewell luncheon on the East Side to my East Side and Gypsy friends, at which we ate, drank, and sang until the morning, when the Gypsies accompanied me to the boat and played until the anchor was raised.

I traveled in a cabin de luxe on one of the most luxurious boats afloat. The late Ernest Schelling, the famous pianist, was a fellow passenger and helped me raise hell. We had fun

mystifying people with talk about the occult sciences, politics, economics, and genetics.

On the fifth day out we discovered that our captain was a poet. Schelling manoeuvred an invitation to his quarters, where we were served very good champagne and cognac and some very weak poetry, sentimental trash recited in the grand style.

Another one of the passengers, also traveling de luxe, had been a passenger with me on the boat on which I had come to the United States. He had made a fortune in the plumbing business.

"It's good to see that another ship's brother has been successful," he said, "but what's your business?"

When I told him, he said, "America! Everything is a business in America! Even telling stories. Who would have thought of that!"

Paris again! Paris again after so many years. The Paris of 1923. Early morning. Outside the Gare St. Lazare. The smell of fresh vegetables and *fromage de Brie.* The odor of freshly brewed coffee and the scent of fresh bread intoxicated me. The *midinettes,* with saucy little noses and inviting eyes, trotting hastily on their way to work in their rhythmic gait, quickened my pulse. The iron tables and chairs in front of the *brasseries* with the bearded men in corduroys reading their papers while dunking *croissants* in the coffee cups, reminded me of my own mornings before those cafés. Couples kissing as they separated at the street corners; a wide-hipped, red-headed woman in wooden shoes pushing a pushcart heaped with ripe dark red cherries; the *urinoires;* the circular tin fence covered with medical advertisements; the double-decked cars—all this was Paris.

I left my bags at the station and walked to the coffee house I had dreamed about for my first breakfast in Paris, the Café du Palais Royal.

I was walking on air. It was almost indecent to love a city so.

If any woman had made me suffer half as much as Paris had, I would have abandoned her forever, no matter how much I loved her. Paris I adored despite hunger, humiliation, and pain. Paris was filthy, dirty, casuistic, rapacious, whorish, but I adored her. What is Paris? Not the Opera. Not the Café de la Paix. Not the heavy set woman with the long black ear pendants behind the cash register of Procope. Not the Seine, the Louvre, the Porte Maillot, or the cancan dancers at the Moulin Rouge. Not the Halles, the Père Lachaise, or the glue-smelling Faubourg St. Antoine, and certainly not the one-legged, pale prostitute whose wooden leg is heard all around the block when you sit at the Deux Magots across from the Church of St. Germain. Paris is none of those. All of them and more, a thousand times more, are a little bit of Paris.

The voice of the tolling bells. The curses of the taxi drivers. The *"allors, allors"* of the policemen. The black-aproned children running to school. The *chaussons, croissants,* and the long breads in the windows of the bakery shops. The Bries, Camemberts, and Gruyères outside the grocery stores. The baskets of oysters against the walls of the *bistros.* The bitterish odor of morning wine. The *goutte du matin* in the coffee. The sloppy waiter. The wide-awake girl at the next table who measured you from head to foot with a discreet eye. The slinky, fish-eyed peddler of pornographic postal cards. The Place de la Concorde. The Pont Alexandre. The Arcades on the Rue de Rivoli. Youth. Old Age. Wisdom. Foolishness. An aphrodisiac of the mind and body. A quickening of all the senses. That is Paris, the most beautiful city in the world. A saint and a whore.

After breakfast I went to the Hotel Regina and registered. I had always wanted to stay there, close to the Vendome, facing the Louvre. I took the best room available, and then went to see my sisters and my brothers, who weren't expecting me.

At the end of ten hours of almost continual walking, I dined alone at the Madeleine and then went to the Moulin Rouge to see the cancan dancers, and stayed there until morning because I had a breakfast appointment.

I interviewed Clemenceau. The old tiger was fierce, ironical, clear-sighted, and cynical.

"Listen, my friend, and don't say that it was I who told you this. There will be no peace in Europe as long as there are Germans. And not only will there be no peace, but there soon will be no Europe, only a province of Asia, of the Asiatic spirit. The European is an individual. The Asiatic has no individuality. The European counts himself a man; the Asiatic, a particle of a man. Ah! Your Mister Wilson . . . *Quelle affaire!* A book historian and a Methodist. He preached humanism to me, he who was so good he was no more human than are the Germans, who are so very bad. 'We mustn't press too hard on the vanquished,' he said to me. 'Forget Vae Victis. This is the Twentieth Century.'

"*Votre* Mister Wilson! All the consideration for wolves, but none for the *brèbis! 'Elle est belle L'Âmerique! Très belle,* Monsieur Wilson,' I said. 'But do you know what is the most wonderful thing about the United States?' 'What?' he asked. 'That she is not a neighbor of Germany. It would not be so good if Mexico were Germany.' Your Mr. Wilson was confused. He hadn't read that in a book.

"I look at our young people, and I am sorry for them. I am glad I shall die soon. Mon Dieu, mon Dieu! What they will see, those *pauvres diables*! Wolves out of a forest by the thousands. By the millions. Barbarians who will use all the science invented or discovered by others to destroy the very laboratories where these inventions were made. Predatory. Destructive. Unimaginative. Absolutely immune to horror. Without conscience. Begging for pity before they are hurt, but themselves without mercy. *Votre* Mister Wilson said I

was too cynical; that *les boches* were not like that. *Alors, vous comprenez,* I threw up my hands. When you tell a man what you have seen, and he, instead of demanding proof, says you are too cynical, there is nothing you can say or do. And when the fate of your country happens to be in that man's hands and not in yours, *alors, vous comprenez,* there is nothing you can do, you can only weep."

And the old tiger's eyes filled with tears, and his Mongol face twitched and twitched.

"Oh, *la salope, la salope de vie.* There is a good man who loses our country for us, and there is nothing you can do!"

We had *la soupe* together, and the old tiger was amused because I had as much trouble with my mustache as he had with his, drinking *la soupe* from a bowl!

"Soup is good in France. You have to come here to eat it."

And suddenly angry he shouted, hammering the table with his fists.

"Everything is good in France. Women. Wine. Soup. *Bon Dieu de Bon Dieu!* If only we didn't have the *boches* as neighbors. They came here in 1870, and Paris is still *empuanté.*"

When I repeated Clemenceau's words to my sister, she cried out, "*Papa La Guerre.* What does he want? War again! We have had enough of it. I have a son. I don't want him to go to war. The Germans are men just as we are. *Papa La Guerre* would want to lock them all up behind bars."

My brother, who had been in the war, said, "Monsieur Clemenceau was all right during the war. Now he should keep quiet. That's why we didn't make him president of France. He deserved the honor for what he did for France during the war, but we were afraid of what he might do as president in peace time. You understand? I, too, have a son. With Mr. Clemenceau as president he has all the chances of dying in the trenches. *Ce n'est pas gai, tu sais!*"

And what happened fifteen years later! Where are the

bones of my brother's and sister's sons? Where are my poor sisters! My letters to Paris are returned to me by the post office with "no mail service" stamped on them.

At dinner Paul Morand, diplomat and author of best sellers, directed the conversation to the women of Bali, the cocottes of Bucharest, the quality of *Fraises* at "La Rue," and the better soufflé at Foyot. When I told him what Clemenceau had said, he exclaimed:

"At Mont St. Michel in Bretagne there is a woman who specializes in omelettes. It's worth going there for an omelette. By the way, do you know Dijon? The Hotel de la Cloche in Dijon is famous for its pâté and its wines."

"But . . ."

"Oh, *mon ami,* forget about all this. Let us Frenchmen worry about the future of France. Eat, drink, and spend your dollars while you are here. Paris has the best food, the best wines, and the gayest women. What are you doing tonight?"

The Boulevards were crowded with German tourists. The Parisian workingmen hated the sight of them, of their heavy boots, and the guttural sounds they made when they spoke, but French businessmen said, "Let them come in masses. It is good for the commerce. Ah, ah, monsieur. *Le commerce et la politique* don't mix. *Non,* monsieur, don't mix. Let them come. The more, the better. They bring gold. They spend money. Our hotels are empty without them. We should lower our franc to make France more attractive, interesting, to the Germans, the English, the Americans, and to the others. I, too, was in the war. But now we are at peace. When I see a customer, I am glad. It matters not to what nation he belongs when he buys something from me."

Prince Anton Bibesco, the Roumanian ambassador to Washington, who was then in Paris, looked me up at the Regina and said, "Princess Martha Bibesco, my sister-in-law, has ordered me to bring you to her. So, come."

As a young boy in Roumania, I had looked at the outside of the Bibesco castles and wondered about the people within. And now the princess asked that I be brought to her; it was like a fairy tale!

Princess Martha Bibesco lived in the Faubourg St. Honoré in an old French house, *porte-cochère,* paved courtyard, *belle étage,* and everything.

Although the Germans had occupied her castle in the Carpathians, while they were in Roumania, and had partly wrecked it, her opinon of *les Allemands* was not the same as Clemenceau's, not by a long stretch.

"You cannot judge a people by its soldiers," she said, looking out of her sky-blue eyes. "War is barbarous. Our Roumanian soldiers in Hungary were as destructive as the German soldiers in France. France was lucky to have had a Clemenceau during the war. *Mais . . . après!*"

She spoke French, German, English, and Italian perfectly, but Roumanian, the language of the country of which she was a princess, only haltingly.

"I was telling Monsieur Herriot only the other day," Princess Bibesco informed me, "the political direction of France ought to be one of conciliation now. France ought to disarm and show her neighbors that she has no further grievances against them."

"And what about the neighbors?" I asked. "Will they disarm and stay disarmed?"

"Ah, *mon ami,* we shall find out."

I was somebody in Paris now! Newspapermen came to interview me and published my picture on the front page. It was good to know that my reputation as a writer had crossed the ocean. I thought of the days when I had first come to Paris from Roumania!

I remembered that two years after my first arrival in Paris, I came in contact with the really great French poets. Jean

Lorrain, Jehan Rictus, Xavier Privas, Aristide Bruant, Montehus, and Jean Richepin. They were not rhymesters who rhymed "late" with "mate" and "soon" with "moon." They were poets. Their conceptions were of the stuff of the gods. They were the spiritual descendants of France's Villon and Rabelais. They were France, not the fumbling degenerate *clique* that has surrendered to the Nazis, but the real France, the France of Martel, the one who stopped the hordes of Osman before they became complete masters of Europe.

I had written music for many vigorous poems my friends had written. It wasn't pretty music. The poems weren't pretty either. They were not for the salon of *comtesses* and princesses, but for the factory worker and the peasant, the sailor and the soldier.

We were all poor, dreadfully poor, and shared each other's rooms and shoes and divided with each other the bread and the wine that came our way. And then one by one they began to succeed financially. People began to buy these street songs. They became fashionable.

Musicians and poets were engaged for private parties. The rich bourgeoisie loved to be insulted to its face. Jehan Rictus, the poet, whose invective was stronger than that of any man alive or dead, became the most sought-after entertainer. The women of the *Haut Monde* in evening gowns and furs loved to hear themselves called whores and heartless bitches while their men looked soulfully into their eyes or filled their glasses for them.

I preferred the company of the peasants and the truck drivers to the company of the bourgeoisie. It repelled me to make money out of the degeneracy of the spiritual masochists. The risky job of painting the top of the Eiffel Tower was preferable, very much more preferable, than I could tell.

And I was in love, always in love. And whenever I was in love, I questioned my purity and fitness and worth. Whenever I was in love, I analyzed my manner of living and corrected it.

Peasant-bred, love to me meant a home and children, and not corsages and lies. I admit I wasn't a comfortable lover for any girl. I was strong and buoyant, but I was too serious, especially for Parisian girls. I danced them off their feet and kissed them until their heads swam, but in the end I made demands they were incapable of fulfilling. I wasn't concerned about their pasts, but I painted the future for them. "We'll go to a small town, get a house and a piece of ground and work and raise a family," or "We'll go to the Indies or to Africa, and devote our lives to raising the standard of living of the natives."

When I did find the one and only woman, I took her away from her studies and left with her for the United States.

One of the girls I had once been in love with appeared at the door of my hotel room to bring me back a heavy cane which I had left in her room years before. She had grown into a stout middle-aged woman, had eventually gotten married, and had two children, but remembered me well and had spoken to her children about her youthful lover, who had now become famous.

We wept a little and then hugged and kissed and shouted and laughed. Suddenly she remembered that her daughters were downstairs. She had brought them to meet the *"Monsieur de l'Ámerique, autrefois l'amant de Mama."*

"Because of the victory to which you helped us, we are going to have bolshevism in France. Forty-four hours a week! Who ever heard of such a thing! Forty-four hours a week! Better the Germans. *Oui,* better we had lost the war," the owner of an automobile factory told me.

I can understand the fall of France, better even than the fall of Poland, whenever I remember that conversation. I am sick and tired of hearing and reading the explanations of the apologists for the French army. France didn't fall because the soldiers didn't fight as well in 1940 as they had fought in 1914. France fell because its great financiers and industrialists pre-

ferred German domination with profit, to an independent France that was unprofitable.

For twenty years the Germans armed themselves to conquer France and during these twenty years the French financiers and industrialists prepared, too, but for the eventual capitulation to the Germans.

France wasn't conquered; France was handed over. Like the proverbial Chinaman, Monsieur Petain and company have burned down the house to roast the pig. Petain, Laval, Bonnet, and Weygand were ready and willing to surrender France to Germany in 1935, but Hitler wasn't ready to take it over.

I saw it then. It is clearer now. The Germans have made a practice of introducing the rot of greed and dissension in every country they intend to overpower. The Nazis didn't invent the method. They took it over from the gang before them and perfected it. Great God! Why don't proud nations commit mass suicide rather than live under German heels! Has all pride been destroyed?

XV

I ARRIVED in Madrid after Primo de Rivera had with the tacit consent of the king become the dictator of Spain.

The next day Don Ramon, who had translated several of my stories, took me to Perez D'Ayala, the short story writer of whom I had heard so much. Don Ayala, married to an English woman, was greatly interested in O'Neill, Dreiser, Sherwood Anderson, and Bret Harte. We sat in front of the Negresco Café, drank *manzanillas,* and talked and talked.

In the evening Ramon took me to see the slums of Madrid. The poor people were so emaciated they seemed to have only eyes. Most of them were tubercular. All the younger men were in the army. Tens of thousands had already died in the Moroccan adventure. Tens of thousands of the dictator's critics were in the prisons, which were no different in the twentieth century from what they had been in the tenth. As a matter of fact, they were the same prisons.

The following day, Ramon said, "I caught hell for taking you to the quarters of the poor, *amigo.*"

"Who gave you hell?"

"Who? Don't you know? The police gave me hell. Come to the Prado to see beautiful pictures."

"But I don't want to see pictures."

"No? Well, then, let us go to Negresco, or to see the churches."

Poor Ramon was embarrassed.

"When is the next train to Granada?" I asked.

"In two hours from now," he answered.

"I'll take it."

"Oh, you North Americans," he groaned. "Hurry up, hurry up, all the time. I made an appointment for you to meet a very extraordinary gentleman."

"Who is it?"

"The man who was the lover of Mata Hari."

"Not interested, Ramon. I wouldn't even be interested in Mata Hari herself."

Esther Root, fiancée of F. P. A., doubly famous now as a columnist and for his radio work on "Information Please," met me at the station and took me to the Alhambra Palace Hotel where she was staying and had reserved a room for me. She had only just arrived in Granada herself.

Tall, blue-eyed, with reddish blonde hair, Esther was a sensation in Granada. When we visited the Alhambra, a group of Spaniards followed us step by step and discussed us.

"They are not brother and sister. They don't look alike. They are no *matrimonio*. What are they to each other?"

One of the men offered a solution. We were legal relatives. Either my brother was married to her sister, or her brother was married to my sister.

"*Es clara,* eh?"

"*Clara.*"

All eyes were on us during dinner in the dining room of the hotel. After dinner we went out to a café. Half a dozen men followed us and huddled together at the table nearest us. Suddenly one of them, an army officer, "psste'd" a tourist guide and called him to their table. The man looked at us, then came over, humble and embarrassed beyond words, and asked in English, "Please, please, these mens want to know you and the *doña* what?" and he rubbed the index of the right hand against the index of the left.

"Brother-in-law," I said. "Her sister my wife."

"*Gracia,*" and he backed away from our table to deliver the answer.

Their faces beamed. The mystery was solved.

"*Es clara,* eh?"

"*Clara.*"

"Why did you tell him that story?" Esther asked.

"To end their agony. There is no more curious a people than the Spanish. They got that from the Moors. It's a harem habit."

A moment later a Gypsy flower girl handed Esther a beautiful bunch of roses and pointed to the officer who had sent it. Esther acknowledged the roses with a nod. The officer rose to his feet and clicked his heels.

Granada is a city of roses, music, Gypsies, and dancers. Whenever I happened to be close to the Spanish military, I could tell the rank with closed eyes and without turning to look. A soldier just stank. An officer's stench was perfumed. The quality of the perfume designated the rank.

The next morning Esther and I visited Emanuel de Falla, the most famous modern Spanish composer. His house overlooked the Alhambra.

A dry, slight, dark little man with flashing eyes, he lived with an older sister who took care of him and approved or disapproved his compositions. He asked us to his workroom and played and sang for us the "Three-Cornered Hat" from the manuscript. Later on I heard Arthur Rubinstein, the famous pianist, play the same composition much better, yet it didn't have the quality, the genuineness of the composer's playing.

Miss de Falla hardly spoke to us and didn't come out in the *carmen,* the garden where we were served *dulces.* Esther was so entranced by her meeting with de Falla she was blissfully unaware of the social ostracism to which she was subjected be-

cause she went arm in arm with a man who was not her husband and not her brother.

A letter from Rebecca West introduced me to Don Fernando de Los Rios, of the University of Granada, and the socialist member of the *Cortez* (parliament) from that same city. Esther and I rode to Passeo de la Bomba expecting to find a venerable white-bearded professor, but met a charming, black-bearded man in his early forties, who smiled even when he was very serious.

Our social status improved considerably after we were seen with de Los Rios. True, they were socialists and anticlerical, but the de Los Rios had a fine reputation in Granada. After de Falla had joined us for coffee the next day, we were considered almost good enough for anyone to associate with.

Esther and I went to Seville together and stopped at the Regina because Joan M—— was there.

Dark and very beautiful, Joan went wild when she noticed how the Spanish men were attracted to Esther. One day I suggested that the three of us go to Triana, the Gypsy town across the Guadalquivir River from Seville. I wanted to take them to an old Gypsy singer whose relatives had given me a message for her. At the other end of the bridge we stopped at a *bodega* for a glass of *manzanilla.* It was so good Joan and Esther clamored for a second one. I drew the line at a third glass and warned Joan. I knew how potent the drinks were.

"I am no sissy. What's three *manzanillas* to me! *Nada, nada,*" Joan said, tossing back her magnificent head.

There was a curious look in the eyes of the waiter when I ordered a third set. Joan's color was already high and her voice louder.

The drinks were two cents apiece in our money. Many a Gypsy, a driver, and a peasant, turned his back to the bar to

see the North American dona drink more than was good for her.

We didn't go to see the Gypsy singer. We crossed the bridge back to Seville with Joan singing at the top of her voice, talking to every truck driver, and lifting her large black sombrero to the passers-by.

That afternoon a messenger brought her a note from the Marquesa Davilla canceling a tea appointment without giving any reason or excuse. Poor Joan had angled for that invitation for months. It was the door to Spanish society.

A few days later, while I was being entertained by the Gypsies of Triana, she gathered her bags and Siamese cats and went to Madrid to start a new social campaign there.

I returned to Madrid to find a note from Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford, who were at the Ritz. Doug, who wasn't well known in Spain, was jumping tables and climbing walls to the delectation of everyone in the diningroom. He had hired a local publicity agent, who had arranged to have one of the matadors dedicate the next bull he killed to Doug and present him with the animal's ear, a mark of great honor in Spain.

Doug got the ear of the second bull—a decent animal who put up a square, but tame fight against a rather plodding matador —and held the center of the stage up in his box, as the matador in resplendent uniform made his little speech from the arena, looking up at the movie hero, and presented him with the limp little hairy lobe.

The Associated Press cabled the story to the United States. The S. P. C. A. raised a terrific row. All the women morality groups attacked Doug for his countenancing such cruelty to animals. Informed by cable of the storm the news had created, Doug cabled to America, "I deny ever having seen the barbarous spectacle known as a bull fight. Miss Pickford and I are horrified at the thought that people home could believe that we countenance cruelty to animals."

"How's that for a cable?" Doug asked the next day at breakfast. "That will put an end to my detractors, eh?"

I went alone on a walking trip to Bilbao, Victoria, and Barcelona, industrial towns where the wages were pitifully low, and the upper classes were living in oriental luxury, dabbling in politics and philosophy, and forever grandstanding.

A Bilbao factory owner whose workers were on strike said to me, "I won't open my gates until the men and their wives and children throw themselves on their knees and beg me to hire them. I'd sooner see them all starved to death than give in to them. You don't know those creatures. If we give in to them, all the glory of Spain would be lost. They shouldn't be allowed to use the sidewalks, those dogs. They must learn anew who is master in Spain."

"*Señor,*" the wife of a grandee of Spain said to me, "I have read somewhere that in North America you used to condemn to death those who taught the slaves to read and write. We ought to have the same laws here. All our trouble comes from the fact that our workingmen are taught to read by the agitators."

The Gitanos, the Gypsies, were happy. They were free and predatory, smugglers and entertainers, and cared little for the people they entertained at fiestas and cabarets. Among them were the best bull fighters, too, Belmonte, Chicuela, Lalande, El Gitanilla, and Joselito, who had pegged up their fees to princely sums.

In Barcelona a cable from Rebecca West asked me to come to London.

On the way to the railroad station I stopped at a second-hand bookshop and found an autographed book by Shelley, with a long inscription to Mary. I bought it for a *peseta* (ten cents) and gave it to Esther as a present.

In the train I wrote to Naomi, "The people of Spain are on the eve of a revolution. It is foreshadowed in the eyes of the

poor, downtrodden peasants and workers and in the desperate repressions employed by a government which does the bidding of the Church and the wealthy reactionaries. Spain is a bleeding country."

XVI

THE FIRST TIME I sat down to dinner at the Savage Club in London, where I was lodging, Baerlein, the novelist, traveler, and author of many exotic stories which had delighted me, said, "And of course, being an American, you want to meet George Bernard Shaw."

"No, I don't," I replied. "I'd rather hear you tell me more of your experiences at Mount Athos. Are the Greek monks really as ignorant as you wrote?"

"Not as, but a little more," Baerlein said. "Don't you want to meet Shaw?"

The second day, at lunch, another English writer asked, grinning, "And of course you want to meet Mr. Shaw."

"No, I don't."

"You don't?" and he had another look at me.

The same evening some one again said, "And of course you want to meet Mr. Shaw."

"No, I don't."

"How then? All American writers always want to meet Mr. Shaw."

"But Konrad is not an American," Frazier Hunt (Spike), Hearst's representative in England, roared. And that answered the question. Spike, tall, towheaded, was the best-liked American at the Savage Club.

One day my London publisher told me that Kipling had expressed himself in a very complimentary way about my latest book.

"He can tell a story, that man of yours, and he writes with freshness and vigor," Kipling was supposed to have said.

Some time later, when I was introduced to him, Kipling said to me, "I hope you won't use what I said to advertise your book. I only *said* it; I didn't *write* it."

At dinner at Rebecca's home with Karel Capek, the Czech author of *R. U. R.*, and H. G. Wells, during a discussion of Wells's *Outline of History,* I told the author that his chapter on the Gypsies was erroneous and unfriendly. Capek, who admired Wells unboundedly, looked daggers at me and kept on repeating, "If Mr. Wells says it is so, it is so."

Later in the evening Wells told Rebecca that she should have read his book on the U. S. A. before writing her articles for a newspaper.

"The cheek!" Rebecca flared up. "How long have you been in America?"

"Two weeks."

"And I was there nigh on to a year and traveled all over the country," Rebecca stormed.

"Just the same, you should have read my book before writing your stuff for the papers," Wells insisted stubbornly in his high-pitched voice.

"The cheek!" Rebecca repeated, her eyes ablaze.

"I shall write to the papers and contradict you," Wells warned her.

"You will, will you?" Rebecca flared. "It's probably not beyond your cheek. No, it isn't."

And it wasn't.

On another day, while somewhere with Rebecca, I pointed to a handsome dark-skinned man and asked, "Who is he?"

"That's Lord Birkenhead," she said.

"He is a Gypsy."

"Are you crazy?"

"No. He is a Gypsy. I caught the Gypsy stare in his eyes."

Some time later Lady Eleanor Smith, Lord Birkenhead's daughter, wrote a Gypsy novel and acknowledged that her father was a full-blooded Gypsy.

Augustus John, the English painter, he with the flowing beard, the earrings in his left ear lobe, and the scarlet vest, asked me at our first meeting, *"San tu Rom?"* (Are you a Gypsy?)

Several days later he took me to the Derby where we saw and spoke to many brown brothers, a little different, but essentially the same breed as the ones in Roumania, Hungary, Spain, or Turkey. The Romany women were not as beautiful as the Gitanos and had no particular talent for dancing or music, but they were marvelous story tellers. We sat around a fire outside a *vardo* and drank wine and told tales until the early morning. When the sun rose, Augustus John took his shoes off and danced while the rest of us clapped our hands. On the way back to London, the great painter said, "I always dance in the morning. My father and my grandfather also danced in the morning."

"San tu Rom?" I asked. He made believe he hadn't heard me and spoke of other things.

I wrote to Joseph Conrad, who had written to me in New York, asking to be notified whenever I came to England. He came to see me in my room. When the tea came, he confessed that his hands were so badly crippled by rheumatism he couldn't hold up the cup. It was one of the reasons he didn't go out as much as he would have liked to.

I fed him the tea and the marmalade, and broke up the cake and put the pieces in his mouth. He talked French better than English. He had a great mind, but not a lofty one. He was absolutely devoid of pity, but was overburdened with a sense of irony. There was no kindly twinkle in his gray eye. And he was literary, literary from top to bottom. He wasn't concerned with anything for itself but only as to whether it

was or was not fit for literature. When I spoke to him about Spain, he said, "You can't do anything with that. It's no good."

Our conversation was interrupted by a charming young lady, who came to interview me. Conrad lit up and employed all his Polish charm to captivate her. When she left, I asked, "Could you do anything with that?"

"*Oui,* she'll be in the next novel."

"I would rather have her in a more agreeable place."

He looked at me and said something in Polish.

Informed by Rebecca West that I was invited to the next P. E. N. luncheon, at which Queen Marie of Roumania was also to be one of the guests, I refused, saying that I wasn't bothered by the queen's morals, but wouldn't break bread with one whose arms had been up to the elbow in the blood of thousands of people.

"But," said Rebecca, "guests will be seated at small tables. I am the hostess at your table. Marie's presence shouldn't bother you. You will be at my table. Do you still refuse?"

I didn't.

Back at the hotel I found a cable from my agent, Otto Liveright, that two stories I had sent had both been purchased by the *Ladies' Home Journal.* He advised me to return to America as soon as possible. Someone wanted to dramatize one of my stories.

I felt very elated to know that I was in demand, that people were thinking of me. It was a precious feeling.

The day of the P. E. N. lunch, Rebecca phoned.

"Can you imagine this?" she said. "The great Galsworthy, the president of P. E. N., tells me that Buckingham Palace has ordered us to genuflect before her majesty, and that once the queen is seated, the doors must be shut and no late comers allowed in. Are you coming?"

"Definitely not. I'll not genuflect to any queen and still less to that one."

"Let's have lunch together instead, and go there after lunch, and tell Galsworthy, in plain language, how supine he was to accept Buckingham's decree," Rebecca suggested.

We had lunch together at Lyons, and reached the restaurant where the P. E. N. lunch was held just as the doors were thrown open and Marie walked out, followed by the obese Chesterton, who waddled behind her, his back bent to the floor, like a fat gargoyle. The queen was flanked by her own two secretaries, and neither Rebecca nor I bowed as the cavalcade passed us by.

I was talking to Bessie Beaty, who had just returned from Russia where she had been the first American newspaperwoman to report on the condition of women under the Soviets, when an attendant handed me a card, requesting me to appear at the Roumanian consulate without delay. I went, and the man at the consulate told me not to forget that I still had relatives in Roumania.

I was reminded of the existence of those relatives again and again.

"If you have any consideration for them, bow low when the queen of Roumania passes you. If you don't . . ."

I almost felt relieved the other day, when news reached me that our last relative in Roumania, Uncle Rubin, a man of seventy, had been found on the street, dead with his throat cut from ear to ear, victim of the latest pogrom engineered by the harbingers of *Kultur* to a new world.

Raymond Savage, the London literary agent, asked me, "Are you a relative of the Palestine Aronsons?"

"Yes. Cousin."

"Did you know Sarah?"

"I wish I had known her. But I know Alex and Sam!"

"Oh, you don't know Aaron? Too bad. I don't know his equal. I served under Allenby in Palestine. Good old Allenby. Heard Aaron talk about his cousin, the writer, in America."

Someone at the table, Spike or Tomlinson, asked, "What are you two talking about?"

The Aronsons lived in Palestine and wanted to free Palestine from the Turks. Aaron crashed in a plane. Sarah, a girl about eighteen, was caught by the Turks signaling to Allenby's men by smoke from her father's chimney. They tortured her for days on end to make her give them the code she used. When that failed, they bastinadoed her old father in her presence, but while being beaten, the old man begged his daughter not to weaken if he should cry out. Then they bastinadoed her youngest brother, who, though only a child, cried out in Hebrew to his sister, "Don't tell, Sarah . . . don't . . . don't . . . in the name of God, don't tell."

Even when the soles of his little feet had been shredded to the bone, he still cried out, "Don't tell, Sarah."

In the end her own father managed to get hold of a Turkish officer's revolver and gave her the weapon to kill herself with.

Allenby's men entered Jerusalem a few days later. They would not have been able to do so if Sarah had given the Turks the signal code.

Baerlein, who had just said something derogatory about the Jews, shuddered when he heard the story of Sarah.

"You should have told me you were Jewish," Baerlein complained.

"I'd rather hear your frank opinion about us," I said. "As a rule, people attribute to the Jews their own defects, and I want to know you, Baerlein."

A day or so later, the porter of the hotel told me someone was waiting for me outside. At the door a slight, short man, blond and lantern-jawed, moved forward and said, holding his hands deep in the pockets of his raincoat, "I am Lawrence. T. E. Lawrence, friend of the Aronsons," he added to introduce himself better. "Let's get out from under the rain to a pub. Have a drink, eh?" He talked, as he walked, in large strides.

"A drink is just what I wanted."

"Good. Beastly weather."

The pub was just around the corner.

Lawrence threw his raincoat on a chair, but kept his dripping cap on. He was dressed in crumpled rough tweeds which seemed never to have been touched by a pressing iron. He looked sallow and unhealthy, and his colorless hair was matted on his forehead.

When the bartender brought us hot grogs, Lawrence paid him and carefully counted the change from the half crown before he separated a few coppers for the tip.

"Heard Aaron mention you once or twice," he said after the first sip of the grog. "A man, that's what he was. A man. How many of the family do you know?"

"Alex, Sam."

"Didn't know Sarah, did you?"

"No. How was she?"

"Can't describe her. No one could." He looked me steadily in the eyes. "I can't yet. Well, she was ten or twenty people with one purpose. But all the Aronsons are like that, each one ten or twenty people. Aaron was a hundred. You ought to have known him."

Lawrence finished his grog, and I called for another set. He looked annoyed because I didn't count the change from the half crown.

"Shouldn't do that, you know. How are you for time?"

"Have all the time in the world."

"Let's go to Lyons; get something warm in us, eh?"

"Let's."

"Remarkable that you learned to write English. Said so the other day to Shaw. You want to see him, don't you?"

"No. I prefer the British Museum."

He laughed as he put on his coat and put his arm under mine as we went out in the rain.

"Heard Conrad talk about you. Mind the rain?"

"No."

"Know many people in London?"

"Quite a few," and I told him a few names.

"All the people in the world," he commented. "And more than I know. Fond of Rebecca? Grand person."

At Lyons we found a convenient table, and Lawrence hung up his cap; I could now see that he had a good head of hair.

"You are outdoors a great deal," he commented, looking at me.

"As much as possible."

"Aaron was happy only outdoors. He could walk any man off his feet."

"And Sarah?"

"Well, I don't know. I suppose not happy anywhere. You know the whole story, do you?"

"Whatever has been told."

"Well, not all. It can't be told. It would serve no good purpose now. My job was with the Arabs. Beastly job in the end."

After a while, he leaned forward and just looked at me.

"What is it that makes people speak of you as an anti-Semite?" I asked.

"Because my job was to make certain promises to the Arabs, and having made them, I wanted them kept by my government, regardless of whether conflicting promises had been made by other agents to the Jews," he answered. "That's the British; they always lose one set of friends by promising the same thing to both. But I made my promises to the Arabs and was intent on seeing them kept. You understand. When there is trouble again, the Arabs won't forget. It's like the debt to America. It will work out the same way. The war isn't over. It's only an armistice. The Heinies are rearming. But—"

He closed the conversation on the subject, saying as he looked toward the window, "Beastly weather."

Suddenly he leaned his head on the table and groaned in

Arabic, "*Ana Shebaan min Umri.*" (I have had my fill of life.)

When he raised his head again, we talked literature and history, and he was childishly pleased when our opinions on German *Kultur* coincided.

On the way back to my hotel, he said, "You ought to meet Joseph Conrad while you are in England. If you admire him," he added; "I know he likes your work."

"I have already met him."

I told him about the Kipling incident, and we both laughed heartily as we stood in the rain.

When *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom* appeared with Lawrence's dedication and poem to "S. A.," few people realized that the person to whom the book was dedicated was a woman, a woman who had died so that England should live.

I left London the following day. My meeting with Lawrence topped my stay there.

XVII

ON THE RETURN VOYAGE to America, I had dinner with Dudley Field Malone; his wife, Doris Stephens, the suffragette; and William C. Bullitt.

As long as I talked about the foreign settlements in New York, Mr. and Mrs. Malone were an interested audience, but they refused to look below the surface of international affairs. Dudley Field Malone, at the height of his success as a lawyer and politician, filled with his own importance, was certain that the World War had been the last great war, and that that too could have been avoided if he had been consulted in time.

Mr. Bullitt praised the Russian experiment, but didn't become belligerent when he was contradicted.

I talked to dozens of young German immigrants in the steerage and found all of them convinced that Germany had not lost the war.

"We should have fought on, on our own territory. The Krupps had pushed us into the war and then forced us to give up before our territory was invaded and their plants destroyed. The Kaiser and all our generals were stockholders in the Krupp plants. Next time it will be different."

"But you are going to America. Why be concerned about what will happen next time?" I asked.

They turned their heads away from me.

During my absence from New York Mirel's drawings and paintings had been praised in the art columns. Now some

friends slapped me on the shoulder and introduced me as the father of Mirel, the painter. My older son had been made editor of *Fourth Estate,* a newspaper for newspaper men. Rada, my older daughter, had had several poems published and was learning to sing. Gorky had done nothing. He was too superior actually to do things; he was a critic. Naomi was painting beautiful things and keeping them away from strangers.

"Later, later on, I will show them."

We sat up many hours together while I told them of my European experiences. Rion was having his troubles. He had been given the power to hire and fire whom he wanted, but the men now under him had worked on the paper some twenty years and were more than twice his age. He couldn't bring himself to fire them no matter how incompetent they were, and they sabotaged his work. As a matter of fact, although Rion didn't know it, he had been hired by the owner in the hope that he would "clean out the old men," a cleaning the owner didn't have the heart to do because he had known the men too long.

My wife and I went to the Provincetown Theater to see a revival of *Emperor Jones* with Paul Robeson. Although not so finished an actor as Gilpin, Robeson gave something to the play which it had not had before. A towering figure with a magnificent body and a beautiful voice, he made the African lost in the jungle appealingly picturesque. The women in the audience admired the beauty of Robeson's All American body, even if it was black.

After the performance, we went up to Jimmy Light, the director, and met Paul and his wife.

"You are wasting yourself as an actor. You ought to sing," my wife said to Robeson after hearing him sing.

"What's the matter with my acting?" Paul questioned, taken aback. "I know, I am no Gilpin, but—"

"Nothing is the matter with your acting," she soothed him,

"but think how limited the opportunities. You can't go on playing *Emperor Jones* all your life, but Rolland Hayes can change his repertoire every day."

Essie and Paul looked at each other.

Naomi asked Paul and Essie to dine with us the following day.

"Really?"

"Do you mean it?" Paul asked.

"Of course," my wife said.

The following evening, when we sat down to dinner with Sherwood Anderson; Horace Liveright; Don Fernando de Los Rios; Zuloaga, the Spanish painter; and Paul Robeson and his wife, the colored maid shed her apron, declared that she wouldn't "serve no 'Niggers'," and left.

When Paul came to see us again, the colored elevator man refused to take him up.

A day or so later the agent of the house informed us that the other tenants threatened to cancel their leases unless I ceased having colored men go up in the same elevator with them. The sale of the motion picture rights to a story gave me enough money, in a lump sum, to buy a beautiful brownstone house at Eighty-first Street and Riverside Drive. It had enough room for the family to roam and romp in, and a room where Paul Robeson and Brown, his accompanist, could come to practice and "clean up" the spirituals Paul intended to sing at his first concert.

Our New York home was the first one opened to a Negro artist.

De Mille sent his agent to my agent to tell us that he'd pay me five thousand dollars for my trouble if I came out to the coast and didn't like his suggestion for a special story, but would pay me fifteen thousand if I should decide to develop the story. We accepted, and I was put on the train that very afternoon.

At Phoenix, Arizona, I telegraphed Chaplin that I was arriving. When the train stopped in Los Angeles, I had the choice of two limousines, Chaplin's and De Mille's.

"You'll have lunch with me, then we'll spend the week end on my yacht," De Mille said when he saw me.

"Mr. De Mille," I interrupted him, "I'll have lunch with you, and you'll tell me what you have on your mind during the lunch. I'll agree to write the story or not, at a single session, for I am taking the next train back."

"Why?"

"I have promised to be back home for my baby's birthday."

We sat down to lunch with De Mille's intimate entourage, some twenty people. At a prearranged moment, De Mille put on a record of the "Song of the Volga Boatmen," sung by Feodor Chaliapin, and asked me, "Ever heard it before?"

"Hundreds of times."

"Ever see a painting called the *Volga Boatman*?"

"Yes, in Paris, at the Luxembourg."

"Right. I want a story based on this song and the Russian Revolution, and the clash between the old Russia and new Russia."

While drinking coffee, I began to weave aloud a story with the revolution and the song in it. When I stopped for a sip of coffee, De Mille urged me on, "Go on, go on. It's just the story I had in mind. Go on. Put on the record again, the other one with the orchestra."

That story became *The Volga Boatman*, a motion picture made in America about the Russian Revolution. In that story I attempted to show that the inhumanity of the Russian aristocrats and princes produced the eventual inhumanity of their erstwhile serfs. The picture was a great success, but incurred for me the enmity of both factions.

"Nothing succeeds like success," is a trite but true saying. There were at least a hundred writers in Hollywood who could have done as well. But I was successful; my name was on the

covers of magazines every month. It made me tremble when I thought of the day when perhaps my name wouldn't be seen so frequently, and when even a better story than the one I had improvised for De Mille might not be found good enough.

I had dinner with Chaplin and left for New York that night. I had been in Hollywood exactly twelve hours.

The family was in an uproar. Real estate speculators had bought out all the houses to the right and to the left of us and would build around our house, making it an airshaft if we refused to sell to them. I liked the house. It cost no more to maintain than an apartment, it was convenient, and it gave us privacy.

That night, after dinner, a real estate agent came to explain why we should sell the house, and offered twenty thousand dollars above what the house had cost me.

I asked ten thousand dollars more.

"Done," he said, and pulled out a wad of bills to bind the agreement.

An hour later I didn't feel at home in my house. It was sold. We had six months in which to leave, but already I didn't feel at home. I had made thirty thousand dollars. The whole transaction was preposterous. I was sorry that the house had had to be sold. But we couldn't have lived in it while the wreckers tore down the other houses, and certainly not while the big building to the right and left of us was being raised. Naomi and the children were desolate. Gorky said that I should have held out. He loved the house.

"We could have gone away for a year and then have come back after they were through building," he said.

"But the expense!" I argued.

"What of it? You could have written another Gypsy story or two," he said, not without a slight sneer.

I was averaging a short story a week, rewriting it three or

four times to get it right. The magazines published Gypsy stories and stories of Roumanian peasants as fast as they got them.

In writing these stories I relived my younger days in the wooded marshes of the Danube, heard the shepherds' flutes and the Gypsies' fiddles, and would often get out of bed to fix a scene on paper and to describe what I had just seen and heard in my sleep.

Those stories seemed to write themselves. Physically I was in New York with my family and my friends; spiritually I was roaming somewhere between the Carpathian Mountains and the Black Sea.

Both my sons thought of money in terms of stories and what I was paid for them.

"Buy a new car. It only costs two short stories."

When Gorky lost a valuable watch he had taken to a party, he said, "Don't be so angry with me. The watch wasn't worth a quarter of a Gypsy story."

Glenn Frank, then the editor of the *Century Magazine;* Carl Van Doren, his assistant; Joseph Anthony, author of "The Gang," and the "Golden Village," but then one of the editors of the Century Publishing Company, asked me for lunch at the Algonquin and proposed that I write a book about New York.

I had spoken to Horace Liveright about just such a book, but he had dismissed the project as unprofitable. While we were lunching, Horace stopped at our table to say "Hello" to Frank.

"Sit down for a moment," I said to Horace. "They want me to do a book on New York."

"Whose idea was it?" Horace asked.

"Mine," Joseph Anthony said.

"Go ahead and do it for them. I am sorry I didn't take it up," Horace said, leaving us.

Otto, my agent, was called over and settled the terms over coffee and cigars. Otto was a great agent. Every one of his clients was his friend and the friend of his friends. He worried over them all and warned them when they worked too hard or when they didn't work enough. I had never grudged him his commission. A good agent, especially an intelligent one, is a great asset to a writer. It was Otto's habit not to offer a story to an editor unless he liked it himself. When he liked a story, he not only offered it to an editor, but made him buy it. We spent many an hour, Otto and I, discussing a passage in one of my stories or the construction of a sentence.

I finished *Around the World in New York* in less than two months. When the book appeared, Loring Schuler, then editing the *Country Gentleman*, proposed that I do a book about the whole United States in the same manner as I had done the book on New York, seeking out the non-Anglo-Saxon populations of the country and describing them, their customs, their manner of living, and their relations to each other.

Otto and I went to Philadelphia and closed the deal then and there. I was eager for just such a tour of the country to get acquainted with its people and see them at work and at living.

Day after day, week after week, month after month, I traveled from city to city, village to village, and state to state. I spoke to Finns in Michigan, Menonites in the Dakotas, Poles in Ohio, Czechs in Montana, Dalmatians in Seattle, Croats in Arizona, Germans in Wisconsin, Scandinavians in Minnesota, and Dutchmen in Illinois. I traveled with Gypsies and roamed with shepherds, slept one night in a hut and the next in a de luxe hotel. And all the time my notebooks were being filled. I had neither itinerary nor timetable while traveling.

Six months later Otto telegraphed me at Seattle to look up Irving Thalberg, the general manager of Universal Pictures, when I was in Hollywood.

Eventually I called up Universal Pictures Corporation, told

who I was, and was informed that a studio car would be sent to my hotel for me. I was to have an appointment with Mr. Thalberg at four that afternoon.

At a quarter past three the studio car was outside.

Since the reception room outside Mr. Thalberg's office was crowded, I told the fat boy at the desk to announce me to Mr. Thalberg.

"Sit down."

A quarter of an hour later I told him that my appointment with Mr. Thalberg was for four o'clock.

"What about it?" the boy replied. "That lady there had an appointment for one o'clock, and she may not see him today at all. Sit down please."

"Look here, go in and tell him."

"Sit down, please."

At half past four the boy went in to take my name to his boss and said as he came out, "O. K. You can go in."

At the farthest end of a very long room a young fellow, his head buried in papers, sat behind an enormous desk, and acted as if he hadn't noticed that anybody had come in. I walked up to the desk with leaden feet and fire on my tongue.

"Yes?" he questioned without raising his head, still busying himself with the papers.

"I want to see Mr. Thalberg."

"I am Mr. Thalberg," he said in a bored voice.

"You? Oh! I thought you were another office boy," I said. "You are as arrogant as the boy outside."

Before he had recovered from my tongue lashing, I was at the door.

The Universal studio was miles from my hotel. Montague Glass of *Potash and Perlmutter* fame, coming out of the studio driveway in his car, picked me up, and I told him what had happened. He was amused. Dear Monty was always amused. As far as he was concerned, half the people in the world were Potashes and Perlmutters. We stopped for a drink

at the Writers' Club, and Monty told and retold the story to everyone who would listen to it.

I told the story to Chaplin at dinner. Thalberg, who was a friend of Chaplin's, came over to our table.

"I don't talk to office boys," Charlie said.

"We got off on the wrong foot, Mr. Bercovici. I am sorry," Thalberg apologized.

"If you had been in Hollywood three months, you wouldn't have felt insulted by his behavior. They have taught us how to take insults, us who have been here long," Monty said, and to take the bitterness out of my mouth, he asked me to a party in honor of Feodor Chaliapin, the famous Russian singer, given by a famous dancer residing in Hollywood.

It was the kind of a Hollywood party one reads about: with vodka, large bowls of caviar, champagne, and girls. At midnight Chaliapin, as handsome as an aged Apollo, sat down to a serious discussion on love. American women were worthless in bed, but generous. French women were wonderful in bed, but terrible outside of it. The German women treated sexual relations as duties to the male and read books on how best to perform them. Drawing from his fund of innumerable experiences, he had something to say about every race and nation.

Every Russian at his table became mournful, and each one, in turn, told a tale of personal frustration that had given him wealth but not happiness. Each one had wanted to be something other than what he was. They were all terribly unhappy, rich and famous, gorged with champagne and caviar, with beautiful women in their beds and ten carat diamond rings on their fingers, but terribly unhappy.

How Daumier would have liked to etch them in steel!—a bunch of fat, sprawling, sexless, weepy Russians. Nobody can be so blissfully unhappy as a Russian. What is generally called Russian depth in literature or music is seldom anything more than torpor which doesn't permit a Russian to have anything end happily. Happiness makes Russians profoundly mis-

erable. A happy ending to a story produces upon the Russians the same effect as an unhappy ending upon our readers. Russians always scratch their right ears with their left hands and then groan about discomfort. And yet, they are a very practical people and know how to take advantage of the unrest they create about them. They never go straight to the point, but they never let the aim out of sight. They are past masters of confusion, a confusion in which they only seem to be enmeshed.

I returned to New York, finished the book, *On New Shores,* and then proposed to the family an extended European tour with a base in Paris. Writing about Gypsies and peasants had awakened a nostalgia for Gypsies and peasants. I simply had to go back, back to where I had come from, had to listen to and play Gypsy music with Gypsies, and eat peasant food again, and talk peasant language with peasants in their own homes.

Rada, our oldest daughter, was studying singing and could do that better in France than she was doing here. Mirel would have an opportunity to study under others besides her mother. Naomi, too, could do with a few years' work under different conditions. Oh, we had dozens of reasons, now that we had the money, to sail for France. So, since we had to vacate the house we had sold, we stored our things and began to make the necessary arrangements for the trip.

XVIII

WE HAD a whole suite on the A deck of the *Paris*. The sea was smooth, the food was excellent, but I was ill, exhausted. We had enough money to live on and travel for five years. I had worked twenty years for that. Even during my previous trip abroad, I had been writing every day. In eight years I had had fifteen volumes published and had written over two hundred stories. I examined my achievement with pride, now that I felt a little tired of the effort. Was it worth while? Yes. Now, I felt, I could say "we Americans" and "us Americans" when I spoke of the people of the United States. I was sailing to Europe to go back to my native land, but I was going there as an American. I had not only bred and raised a family in the United States, but I had contributed with all my powers to make it a more agreeable place to live in. Should I die suddenly, America would know that I had lived within its borders. I had done my best to instill in my children the idea that one has to give to one's country more than one takes from it.

After we had settled down in Paris in a beautiful apartment on the Boulevard Haussman, we began to meet the American expatriates, the prohibition expatriates, the variegated lot at the Café du Dôme or the Select, sulking in front of their beer or whiskeys or acting very French at the bar. Paris was just one big bordello as far as they were concerned.

It was pitiful to see Isadora, the great Isadora Duncan, in her shabby room back of the Dôme, her magnificent nude legs spread far apart, her eyes watery, her lips drooling, totally unaware whether anyone was there or not when she was drunk.

Twenty-five years before, I had seen her first public performance in Paris, at the Châtelet. No spectacle I had seen before or since has quite equaled it.

I and a few hundred others had come because it had been advertised that the young American dancer would dance bare-legged.

Twenty-five years ago this was uncommon even in Paris. At the Moulin Rouge and the Folies Bergères, girls danced the cancan and other *risqué* dances, but they wore tights or long flesh-colored stockings. The few hundred people of Isadora's audience, however, forgot why they had come after Isadora had danced a few minutes. We had brought lewd minds to her performance, but were purified by the cleanliness of her art. Had she stripped nude before us, we couldn't have experienced other than a high esthetic joy in looking at her.

When she came to New York years after that first performance, I saw her dance again, but always with the recollection of how I had first seen her. In that little room back of the Dôme, I realized for the first time that I was twenty-five years older and that Isadora was flabby and fat, a human ruin and not a magnificent one.

"So, you remember first performance? Didn't know you were that old. Gimme that bottle. Remember what Catulle Mendès wrote in *Le Journal*, eh? Great Catulle. He had a funny beard. Have a drink with me. Fill up, fill up. So, that's so! Jean Lorrain, you knew Lorrain? A great writer. Greater than Maupassant. They said things about him. Him and Oscar Wilde. Ah. I have no money, not at all. Russia. Yes, Russia. No money. Nothing. Don't dance no more. Great Isadora Duncan, finest dancer this side of heaven. Catulle Mendès said so. No money. Look where I live.

Gimme that bottle. So you knew Lorrain! Remember when they said he and Liane de Pougy would marry! Never believed it. Remember when he wanted to shoot Mendès? Poor Lorrain. He was in love with Mendès' wife, Judith Gauthier."

Naomi went to see her, found her sober, and talked her into dancing again. We argued the point, but Naomi, with tears in her eyes, affirmed that a few months of rest and freedom from worry would restore Isadora completely.

"Isadora will yet give to the world a second great conception of dancing, a mature one. Watch and see."

Naomi's admiration for Isadora was undying. Shortly afterward Isadora danced again, and was getting ready to dance some more but was strangled to death by her flowing scarf which caught in the turning wheels of a car. When we heard the news, Naomi and I sat up the whole night holding hands and weeping. It was too sad an end for such a great artist. The two of us wore black clothes for a month.

Isadora Duncan's influence on the women of the world is perhaps the most lasting and most powerful one they have experienced. She literally took the shackles, the corsets and long skirts, off their bodies. The women of the world could be divided into those before Isadora Duncan and those after.

At a Peruvian poet's apartment in Passy, I met James Joyce; Sherwood Anderson; Julian Green, the American-French writer; Ludwig Lewisohn; Elmer Rice, the playwright; Jean Richard Bloch, the novelist; and Bazalgette, the translator of Thoreau and Walt Whitman.

Joyce's voice had the vibrations of a well-played 'cello. He seemed well-poised but wasn't. A good looking man, deep-eyed, red-bearded, and with a strong, coarse mane of hair, Joyce was idolized by women.

Elmer Rice and I sat down by ourselves to talk about the French company which was then rehearsing Rice's *Adding Ma-*

chine. Léon Bazalgette, looking like an Armenian rug dealer, joined us, glass in hand, to talk to Rice in his very precise English. Sherwood Anderson sat down on the floor. Then Joyce came over to ask me something about Gypsy music, and the whole crowd followed him.

The host kept our glasses filled and led the discussion toward the injustices caused by the Versailles treaty. His American wife reflected aloud that France was a wonderful country, but it was too bad that the Germans didn't live in it. I flared up. Here they were, guests of France, eating French food, drinking French wines, the men sleeping with French women, and some of the women doing the same, and yet they wished that the Germans, the enemies of France, possessed the country.

Joyce looked uncomfortable, but said nothing. Julian Green turned his back and left the room. Naomi, Rada, and I followed him.

Paris was crowded with Germans. They were everywhere, in cafés, theaters, restaurants, and in the big hotels. They spent money freely, but never failed to complain about the injustices of the Versailles treaty and how it had impoverished them. Somehow they managed to be at every party where there were Americans.

One day a German writer said to me, "Look at what the French have done with their victory! Can you imagine what we would have done if we had been victorious?"

"What?"

"Ach—" and his eyes looked up. "Ach, ach—"

We moved into an apartment of our own, in a newly built co-operative house on the left bank of the Seine. I broke the walls of the two maids' rooms in the garret and made a workroom for myself with windows overlooking a million housetops and part of the roof of the Louvre. On clear days I could see the frame of the Eiffel Tower, which I had once painted for ten francs a day.

The gods being good to us, we discovered Louise, the best cook in the world, who loved to cook and knew exactly which wine to serve with each course. Louise judged our guests by the way they appreciated her food. Emma Goldman was tops among the ladies. "Oh, la, la, *cette dame-là,* how well she eats!"

Dosh Fleurot, the newspaper correspondent, was "a gentleman who eats like an angel."

A Russian-born violinist and his wealthy American wife lived on the same floor. She adored him in a cold, pure way. The best decorators had painted and furnished their apartment.

When we were shown their bedroom, Rada asked, "Yes, but where do you actually sleep?"

That room didn't look as if it had ever been slept in. Though they had six rooms, the husband practiced six hours a day in the bathroom. "Because he smokes," the wife explained, "and drops ashes."

Before going to Vichy, for a cure, our neighbors sublet their apartment to Lee Simonson, the Guild's theatrical designer, who was so outraged by the purity of the apartment that he painted all kinds of Rabelaisian pictures on the walls of the bathroom.

Lee took Mirel, who was knee high to a grasshopper, wherever he went, endlessly fed her ice creams, and visited all the museums with her while she acted as his interpreter. I watched over Rada's musical education and did some work myself. Naomi was busy with clay and paint. Rion, who had left his job as editor of the *Fourth Estate,* came to Paris for a vacation, but was too unhappy over a girl in New York to have much fun. Gorky had found a crowd of appreciators of art —in all its phases—and was spending most of his time appreciating art and the girls.

At Bernadine Szold's house I met Ernest Hemingway, whose stories had already been published in the "advanced" left bank magazines. He looked familiar. Suddenly I remembered

that I had seen him in Spain at Pamplona in the Basque country. It was the morning of a bull fight, and he was running ahead of the bulls.

Before dawn the side streets crossing the Avenida that leads from the bull pen to the arena were roped off and the whole populace of Pamplona and the villages within fifty miles ran like mad, with the bulls at their heels, to the arena. At every *encero* at least a half dozen people are gored by the wild beasts, but in Spain *costumbres* (customs) are not abandoned for such trifles.

Sitting there in Bernadine's room, in a heavy black suit, Hemingway didn't look much like the fellow with his back to a black bull in Pamplona.

He smiled when I told him where I had first seen him and remarked that he preferred Spain to France because it wasn't effeminate.

"He has just sent a manuscript to Horace Liveright," Bernadine, who had just divorced Otto Liveright, my agent, informed me.

"What do you call the book?" I asked Hemingway.

"In Our Time."

"I hope Horace takes it," I said.

"It's a wonderful book," Bernadine assured me.

Embarrassed by her praise, Hemingway said something especially complimentary about my stories. I hadn't heard my work praised in a long time. I was starved for a little flattery. We had a drink and then another one. By the fourth drink I was absolutely certain that his book would be accepted and be a great success. By the sixth drink I was willing to stake my life on it.

Weeks later I saw Bernadine again.

"Horace took the book," she told me.

"Whose book? Oh, yes. Well, I knew it, didn't I? Where is Ernest?"

"In Spain. Cashed the advance check and left for Spain.

Some people say he's the greatest writer America has yet produced. What do you think? Do you think he is better than Glenway Westcott?"

At that time Bernadine measured all writers by Glenway Westcott.

My countryman, Panait Istrati, was already a legend in Paris when he came to see us; that is, when he burst in upon us. His first book, *Kira Kiralina,* introduced to the world by Romain Rolland, had made him famous.

Panait knocked at the door, embraced me, my wife, and the children, put down a suitcase, and said, "I know you'll find a place for me in your apartment, but I have picked up a stray waif, a stowaway, on the train, so please find a place for him, too, somewhere, anywhere, in the kitchen, in the garret, if you have a garret—"

"We have a garret."

"All right then. He's outside. I'll call him in."

A moment later a ragged, pimply, disagreeable boy of about fifteen came in.

"I know you'll feed me," Panait said, "but he, too, is hungry. I couldn't eat knowing that he is hungry."

Slight, nervous, long-faced, dark, with deep-set, coal-black eyes and blue-black hair, Panait ate ravenously, drank wine and cognac, smoked, and at the same time talked incessantly about his mistress in Nice, his former wife in Roumania, and his uncle in the Dobrogea.

We compared notes. We were raised in the same town on the same street. His father had been a Greek smuggler, his mother a Gypsy washerwoman. Panait and I were the same age. When I mentioned the daughter of the Greek priest in our town, Panait cried out, "Nerantzula! Did you, too, know her?"

He had been her first lover. Suddenly he began spinning a tale about her, describing the Danube River, the sailboats,

the other boys, and the other girls of our town. The tale grew and swelled as his voice rose and became more passionate. He only stopped to fill his wine glass and to light one cigarette from another.

At midnight we filled our platters from the ice box. At daylight Panait finished telling the tale, went to his room, and began to write it, drinking interminable cups of black coffee and small glasses of cognac.

Two weeks later the manuscript of the novel he called *Nerantzula,* exactly word for word as he had told it to us, a masterpiece of story telling, was finished.

We had our troubles with Panait. He played cards with our American friends and emptied their pockets. He had the contempt of the smuggler and the Gypsy for all the amenities of civilized life. One day he was a communist; the next day he was something else. He went to Switzerland to lecture and returned with a new mistress, a beautiful and very intelligent young girl, the daughter of a university professor.

He met, casually, very casually, a Greek banker, noted for his avarice, talked to him a half hour, and extracted ten thousand francs from him. He would have gotten more if the banker had had more at the time in his pocket.

A great writer, but what a beggar! What a crook!

I ran away to Nice. A week later he was there with his new Swiss girl friend, registered at the same *pension.* He charged everything up to me. When I refused to foot the bill, he played poker with the manager and robbed him of more than the bill he owed.

"Why do you think I came to Paris?" he shouted at me one day. "For your beautiful eyes? I should say not. I came because I had heard that you were rich. That you had dollars. And then what do I find out? That you don't play cards. Writing is my art, but I make my living playing cards."

That same night he told me a story, which he later wrote as

The Thistles of the Baragan, one of the most beautiful prose poems in any language.

Eventually Panait Istrati went to Russia at the invitation and expense of the Soviets and came back with two books against them. Pleased with his antibolshevism, the Roumanian government invited him to return to Roumania. He returned, and there he, the great idealist, engaged in the dirtiest and most scoundrelly of politics. As a writer he was like a mountain; as a man he was the size of a peanut.

Born in Roumania of Bulgarian parents, Doctor Christian Rakowsky, son of wealthy land owners, was for a long time head of the socialist party in Roumania. At the end of the last war, following an agrarian revolution, he made himself master of the country, but was dislodged by the military authorities, imprisoned, and sentenced to death as a traitor. The night before he was to be executed, he escaped from prison, crossed the border into Lenin's Russia, and was made the president of the Ukraine, one of the first Soviet States.

In 1924 he came to Paris, where his personal charm and his wide acquaintance among journalists and politicians of the left helped him to gain France's recognition of the Soviet Union despite the opposition of the Church, the French investors in Czarist Russian bonds, and the antagonism of the military clique.

As soon as Rakowsky and his family had moved into the old Russian embassy, we were invited to dinner. Rakowsky, very handsome, embraced me like a brother when he saw me, and we soon sat down to dinner and a discussion of the situation in Russia.

The Russian government, having confiscated all the large properties of the nobility and the landed gentry, was now promising the land to the peasants.

"From having been against us," Rakowsky explained, "the peasants will now be for us. They may not understand com-

munism, but they'll be for us because we give them land. We won't have any more trouble with them."

"That's how peasants are," Madame Rakowsky, tall and ample-bosomed, said to Naomi, "the Roumanian peasants as well as the Russian." Turning to me, she asked, "Do you know a peasantry that has any other ambitions?"

"No," I said, "I don't. And I don't know any peasantry that will ever feel otherwise. But will they own the land they till in Russia?"

"Make yourself clear," Rakowsky urged.

"I suspect that after the support of the peasantry has served its purpose, and the bolsheviks have entrenched themselves solidly in power, they will take the land away from the peasants again. Isn't that so? You can't have a collective industry and a property-owning peasantry at one and the same time."

"But we'll educate the peasants to believe that they'll be better off in collective farm groups than owning the land individually," Mrs. Rakowsky said.

"Will you ever convince them of that? Will you wait until you have educated them? Will you be able to make the peasants give up the land voluntarily—mark you, voluntarily—to the collective of the state?" I questioned.

"Of course," Rakowsky said. "Why not?"

I laughed aloud.

"That you, Christian Rakowsky, should say that! You, the son and grandson of peasants. Russia will bathe in blood before you take the land back from the peasants. You will have to torture them, imprison them, starve them, lay siege to their villages, to get the land you have given them when you needed their support. They'll detest you, sabotage, kill you, destroy you! And I, and millions like me, shall be entirely on their side."

"You?" Madame Rakowsky asked. "You will be against us? I don't believe a word you say."

"Let him talk," Rakowsky urged. "What would you do if you were in Russia now?"

"I'd go to the peasants and tell them that they were being fooled and that the bolshevists don't mean that they shall keep the land."

"And if I were in Russia with you," Rakowsky said, looking at me with tears in his eyes, "if I were in Russia with you, brother, dear brother, I would shoot you myself for telling this to the peasants."

The food stuck in my throat. Rakowsky looked down into his plate and tried to eat, but couldn't.

"We must achieve communism at all cost. I, a peasant, who knows what ownership of land means to the Russian muzhik, say that. We must win the peasants to our side now. I was myself against giving the peasants something we will ultimately have to take back, but once it has been decided to do so, I'd shoot my wife and child if they opposed the decision of the party."

"But I don't oppose it," Madame Rakowsky cried out.

Koka, their daughter, a charming young girl of eighteen, trembled, paled, and left the room without excusing herself. Rada followed her out of the room. The dinner which had started out like a reunion of old friends was a complete fizzle.

"You shouldn't have said that about shooting your own child," Madame Rakowsky said to her husband. "Look at the effect it had on Koka!"

After a while, Rakowsky said, "This hasn't been a very pleasant dinner. Now that we know where each of us stands, we won't talk politics when we meet again."

I didn't expect to see Rakowsky again. Much to my surprise, however, several days later we received an invitation from him, asking our presence at the Grande Soirée given by the Russian embassy to celebrate the official recognition of the

Soviet Union by France. At the bottom of the card were the words *"De rigueur!"*

The Soviets, the country of the workingmen, soldiers, and peasants, gave a soirée and the two little words *De rigueur* excluded workers and peasants from the soirée! For what workingman or peasant in France possessed an evening suit? The inconsistency was amusing.

All Paris was at the Russian embassy that night, artists, cabinet ministers, journalists, writers, bankers.

Wine and champagne flowed freely. The buffet was laden with the finest sturgeons, a score of crystal bowls filled with fresh caviar, and platters of lobsters as big as lambs. The whole of the renowned *largesse* of Russian hospitality was exhibited on that buffet.

On the landing of the main staircase of the ballroom sat Anatole Lunacharsky, the Soviet minister of culture and education, flanked on either side by gorgeous young women, to whom he was telling *risqué* stories.

"Are you enjoying yourself?" Lunacharsky asked me. "Excellent caviar. Fine champagne. Beautiful women. Is there anything else you would like? Sit down with us. This young lady is a very serious young lady. I talk to her about the secret springs of life, and she asks me to tell her whether it is true that the Ukrainian peasants are dying of starvation. Isn't that funny?"

"What's there so funny about starvation, Anatole Lunacharsky?" I asked. "Is it true they are starving to death?"

"Well," Lunacharsky said, standing up and combing his pointed beard with his fingers, "of course it's true, but it is greatly exaggerated. The truth, you know, can be greatly exaggerated, greatly, indeed. Russians have starved for hundreds of years under the reign of the Czars. They are accustomed to starvation."

Rakowsky, in high spirits, joined us on the staircase.

"I am very glad you came, Konrad," he said, hugging me fraternally and pointing to a little group in the center of the crowded ballroom, added, "Look at your beautiful daughter and mine. They get along well. And look how many men are about them! And there is your wife and mine. It is wonderful to see them together."

"Christian, he doesn't approve of us. He won't even drink our champagne or eat our caviar. He's troubled by starving Ukrainians; so is this young lady. Can't you do something about it? I don't like troubled people. They are not very amusing," Lunacharsky complained.

"Let him feel as he wants to," Rakowsky said. "As long as he is here, I am satisfied."

"And why shouldn't I be troubled?" the young lady asked between clenched fists. "With what you have fed this satiated crowd, you could have bought enough bread to feed a starving village a month."

"I don't understand what's happened to the youth," Lunacharsky said, half drunkenly; "all so serious." And he joined another group of guests.

"If the young lady had said in Russia what she said just now, would Lunacharsky have ordered her shot?" I asked Rakowsky.

"If only *she* had said it, yes. But if a hundred thousand girls had said the same thing, no. Come, let's have a drink together and not talk of shooting. This soirée here, tonight, is also an expedient. I was against it. But we have to impress the French. We need loans. Machinery. You can't obtain loans of tens of millions of dollars by pleading poverty. You must show yourself rich, and put up a prosperous front; otherwise they'd say, 'Why should we lend our gold to paupers?' I was against this grandiose soirée, but once the committee decided we should have a soirée, I carried out the decision to the best of my ability. You were never one to work with committees.

You don't know what it is, or knowing, you refuse to submit."

Despite Rakowsky's willingness to obey orders, Moscow later recalled him from Paris and banished him to Siberia in the first great purge.

Naomi saw him eight years later, shortly after his return from Siberia. Although hardly more than fifty, he was gray and bent, could hardly see, and remembered his old friends only dimly. Eight years of Siberia had wrecked his spirits and his health. After his return to Moscow, he lived on, a government employee without an occupation, discarded like a cog in an overhauled machine.

During a subsequent purge, Rakowsky was brought before a revolutionary tribunal presided over by Stalin's eunuchs and was accused of having plotted against the Party, of having given lavish entertainments to the French bourgeoisie in the Parisian embassy, and of having associated with capitalists and other enemies of the Soviets.

Rakowsky denied nothing.

He admitted participation in conspiracies, espionage, bribery, the dissipation of public funds, and intrigues with foreign powers.

Broken, dispirited, disillusioned, hardly understanding what was said to him, the former president of the Ukraine and ambassador to France, standing in rags between armed Ogpu men, repeated mechanically the confession of his crimes. He came to life only once, when the sentence of death was *not* pronounced against him. It was a cruel disappointment. He was carried out of the courtroom protesting, not his innocence, but screaming, "You promised me death; you promised it to me."

"And Koka and Madame Rakowsky?" I asked a friend who had just come from Russia.

"Probably alive and in Russia."

"What makes you think so?"

"Would Christian Rakowsky have confessed to crimes he had not committed if Koka and his wife were not in the hands of Stalin's Ogpu?"

What I could not understand was why they hadn't pronounced the death sentence on him!

A few months later, at another purge trial for the edification of the Russian people, Christian Rakowsky was dragged out of his cell to give state's evidence against several of his old comrades.

XIX

ROSENTHAL, my Roumanian publisher, came to Paris. Boon companions in the grand style, we became the joy of La Pérouse, Foyot, Prunier, and a dozen other restaurants and cafés in Paris. He knew where the tripe was best, where the escargot was the juiciest and the wines were the finest.

A brilliant mind, he had curious little inadequacies. He couldn't lace his shoes or tie his necktie. He couldn't say "No" directly. He had done business in millions, but had no idea about the value of small sums of money. He knew every newspaperman, every diplomat, and every cabinet minister in or out of office of every major or minor power in Europe, and knew all the *dessous* of politics and diplomacy in the world, but didn't know the name of his secretary.

The year before we met, Rosenthal's paper in Bucharest had launched a series of articles which unveiled the machinations, the speculations, and the intrigues of the royal court of Roumania, of which Queen Marie was the head.

Queen Marie had sent word to the publisher to desist and to retract what he had published. Rosenthal paid no attention to her orders and went on merrily publishing more and more of the rascalities of the upper clique which had despoiled the country and destroyed its moral fiber.

One day Rosenthal was commanded to appear immediately at the palace before her majesty. The office of the paper was within walking distance. Five minutes later the publisher

stood before Queen Marie, who, walking up and down the room, cigarette between her fingers, told him what was what.

When she had had her say, Rosenthal said, "Your Majesty, before I left the office, I told my secretary where to find my last will and made orally the last dispositions. So you see, I am not totally unprepared! Now as far as the paper is concerned, I want you to know that I am its editor-in-chief and not you. Roumania still has a constitutional government and a free press. I can be sued for libel, but cannot be dictated to. I shall continue to publish what I think proper and disregard your objections."

The queen looked at him hard, and said, "You have made your choice. Goodbye."

At the gates of the palace Rosenthal was shot down by the queen's hoodlums and left for dead on the sidewalk. No one, not a passer-by, dared to stop to look at the crumpled figure in a pool of blood.

As luck would have it, Rosenthal's brother, a surgeon, passed by in his car, stopped to look, recognized his brother, carried him to his car, and discovering life in the body, he nursed it back to health, comparative health.

When Rosenthal was well enough, he was smuggled out of the country. The queen and her banker friends took advantage of the publisher's illness and disability to deprive him of his properties and to rob him of almost everything.

After this noble deed, she departed for America to appeal for poor downtrodden Roumania and to sell her endorsement for creams and lotions.

Long before Hitler had even been heard of outside of Germany, Rosenthal, a former prisoner of war of the Germans, said to me, "They'll make one great bid, the Germans. Either they'll achieve world power, or they'll perish. A brutish sort of mysticism has convinced them that they are superior to the whole world. However, should they conquer, the European nations will never be allowed to shake off the yoke."

I had a wonderful time with the Gypsies who were living in shanties at the Porte Montrouge outside Paris. Passing Gypsies, Romanishels, Gitanos, Tziganes, and Roms have been living in those shanties for the last hundred years. No one owned those sheds. Gypsies just camped in them for a few days and left. No one bothered them.

When I spoke to the editor of *Vue,* an illustrated magazine, about the Gypsies at the Porte Montrouge, he was amazed. No one in his office knew anything about them, or that there were some twenty thousand native traveling Gypsies in France.

Princess Martha Bibesco wasn't shocked when I told her what a French aviator had told me about the state of military aviation.

"The Frenchman is very patriotic, *pour la gloire,* and all that, but when his taxes are increased, he goes berserk. The French bourgeois and industrialist would sooner risk the loss of his country than pay another cent tax on the franc," Martha said. "The politicians out of power say such terrible things about the ones in power, the public has no confidence in either group. France is doomed."

Henri Barbusse, the author of *Under Fire,* one of the greatest books that came out of the last war, was Moscow's mouthpiece in Paris.

"I don't care whether France falls or not! What do I care if Germany beats France or not? A beaten France will be more amenable to communism than a victorious one. The minute France declares war she'll find out something about her army. The French army is antiwar. We haven't been sleeping."

"Neither have the Germans," I retorted.

"Good for the Germans," he answered.

"There won't be much of France left, ground as she is between the upper class who prefer a German victory to com-

munism, and the communists who believe that a German victory would lead France to communism.

"And what of it?" Barbusse asked.

"*Merde. Merde,*" I shouted, beside myself, and left him.

When I saw Prince Carol of Roumania in Paris, he was in his early thirties, and looked like a well-dressed dry goods salesman and bon vivant. There was nothing majestic in his slouchy walk.

Magda Lupescu, statuesque, with golden red hair and plenty of rouge on her face and lips, had her big brown eyes on the entrance of the night club as if she expected someone. Carol was cocking an ear to the Gypsy music and absent-mindedly drinking glass after glass of champagne without paying the slightest attention to Magda or his table companions. At the twentieth drink, Madame Lupescu put her hand on top of his glass to stop him from refilling it. Carol pushed her hand away angrily, filled his glass, gulped down the wine, filled the glass again, and gulped it down, then rose and walked drunkenly across the floor to ask an unmistakable *fille de joie* to dance with him.

Furious, Madame Lupescu gathered her furs, drew on her elbow-length gloves, and left the place in a huff, despite the entreaties of the other table companions. It was just one of those nice, princely, public family squabbles.

At the end of the first dance, Carol sat down at the young lady's table and played with the cheap ten-cent-store bracelets on her wrists.

"So, you are a subject of mine, eh?" he blubbered, when I was introduced to him at his request that night.

"You like Paris, don't you? Paris is paradise in exile. Good, isn't it? Paris is paradise in exile! Pretty good line for a prince in exile, eh? So you are a writer, eh? My mother is a writer, too. How good is she?" he asked. "I have never

read her stuff. My great-aunt was a writer, too, Carmen Sylva. Never read her stuff either. Not amusing. She didn't like Paris, my great-aunt. She liked Berlin. Stuffy Berlin. I like Paris. Don't you? Everybody does. Not such a bad place to be exiled to, eh? Mlle., pardon me, Mlle., I don't know your name. What's the difference? I'll call you Mademoiselle Nitouche. Agreed? Charming girl, isn't she, my honorable subject? But make love to her, and in two days she'll want to stop you from drinking a glass of wine. What's the matter with drinking a glass of wine? I am a prince. I can be king whenever I want to. Can't I, Dimitru? Speak up."

"Of course, of course, your highness. Any time you want to," Mr. Dimitru Stefanescu, his factotum, assured him.

"Tomorrow?" Carol asked slyly.

"Tomorrow, if you wish, your highness," Stefanescu assured.

"Tomorrow? No, not tomorrow. Some other day. I like Paris. Paradise in exile. I'll be king later on. No hurry. Next week. Next month. Next year. Roumania will wait. Won't it? Speak up, Dimitru!"

"Yes, your highness. Of course, of course, Roumania will wait."

"See," Carol turned to me. "Anytime I choose to be king of Roumania, he will make me king. Isn't it great to have such a friend? Excellent man, Dimitru. I'll make him ambassador to Paris. And what about you in America? They know me there, don't they? I have had a big press in America, but a bad one. Why don't you say something? You are one of my subjects. I'll make you an ambassador, too. Tonight is ambassador-making night. Have a glass of champagne. Don't say 'No.' I order it. You are my subject. It'll untie your tongue. In Roumania I could do that without champagne. He doesn't approve of me, Dimitru. But you do, don't you, Dimitru?"

"Yes, your highness, I do. Of course, I do. We all do. Your highness will be the greatest king Roumania has ever had."

"Nitouche, do you approve of me?" Carol turned to the girl.

"Oh, oui, monsieur," Nitouche said.

"Prince, *altesse,* not *monsieur.* I am not a *monsieur,"* Carol bellowed, foaming at the mouth.

"Pardonez moi, mon prince," Nitouche apologized.

I was embarrassed, but Carol didn't seem to notice even the existence of the people at the twenty other tables.

"Pardonez moi, mon prince."

"That's better, Nitouche," Carol exclaimed. "Nice girl, eh?"

Suddenly Carol rose, swayed on his feet, stuffed a few banknotes in Mlle. Nitouche's handbag, and stalked out without saying "Goodnight" or "Goodbye" to anyone.

"Where would he be going at this time of the night?" I asked Stefanescu, the would-be ambassador to France.

"He can't be without Magda longer than an hour, but he will make the best king Roumania has ever had."

"Will he ever be king?" I asked.

Dimitru smiled.

"Not if it depended on France or England. But, there are others, you know. Roumania is a very rich country. You know that, don't you? And we are not exactly sleeping. Everything is ready. Everyone has his price."

Nitouche touched my sleeve and asked, "Who was that man?"

"Prince Carol of Roumania."

"Oh, mon dieu! What a chance I missed! But, *diable,* how is a girl to know! Princes don't look different from champagne salesmen, and they are awful, simply awful. They fill you with champagne, take up your time, and then they slip away. What do you say, *monsieur*? *Ce soir je suis toute pleine d'amour. Vous en verrez des choses.* You wouldn't be able

to even look at another woman after you have had me tonight. So, he is a prince. *Ou, la, la. Ou, la, la.*"

I was lunching with Panait Istrati in Montmartre, when Pascin, the great painter, who resembled Panait and had the same manner of speech, came over to join us.

While he ate an excellent omelette covered with caviar, Pascin sketched on the tablecloth a profusion of lascivious nudes and gave them the faces of the waiter, the waitresses, and the guests.

After lunch I called the proprietor over and offered to buy the tablecloth from him.

"*Oh, non, monsieur.* I have a collection of them," the Frenchman grinned.

"You are not the only appreciator of my art." Pascin laughed and asked me to accompany him to his studio on the Boulevard Clichy.

"Let's go by the Place Pigalle, by the fountain, and pick up a few models."

Pascin looked at the girls leaning against the rim of the fountain of the Pigalle, and signaled to three of them to follow us. He called them by their names, Yvonne, Suzette, and Marcelle. They addressed him as "*patron.*" As we walked away from the fountain, he seemed unconscious of their existence and didn't bother to look at them when we stopped at a *bistro* for another *petit verre.*

This premier painter of Paris—yes, of our epoch—was unshaven and in rags, but wore an expensive silk shirt and fresh cream-colored kid gloves.

His studio on the top floor of an old house on Boulevard Clichy, at the foot of Montmartre, was furnished with three couches that had seen much usage, four easels, a table, a folding screen, and a species of dangling temporary kitchen arrangement, a gas rubber pipe hanging from one of the gas jets on the wall.

Without being told to do so, the models shed their dresses behind a screen whence they emerged nude to make themselves comfortable on a couch. After a while one of the girls, who had kept on her black stockings and shoes, began to busy herself with the coffeepot over the gas flame, while Pascin talked to a frowsy parrot chained by one leg to a chair. A moment later the painter was at his easel and talking about his youth in Roumania. He only blinked at the models who were talking and laughing, and never once asked them to hold a pose.

The girl who made the coffee, Suzette, was from the south of France, probably of Italian origin, and had the body and the legs of a dancer. She poured cups of coffee for the *patron* and me, then for her friends. Then she sat down to smoke and talk to her companions without the slightest embarrassment and acted as if it was the most natural thing in the world for her to be nude. After coffee, Marcelle straightened out the room and washed the coffeepot and the cups while Suzette bent over to talk to the parrot. Front and back, from head to toe, Suzette was a magnificent specimen. What made her even more magnificent was the absence of even a hint of inhibition.

"She is still a virgin," Pascin informed me, *à propos* of nothing. "She is saving money and everything else for a great marriage with a sergeant in the army. *N'est-ce pas,* Suzette?"

An hour later a rather fleshy woman in her middle thirties came in without knocking, greeted the girls by slapping their buttocks, said, *"Bonjour, patron,"* went up to the easel to have a look, filled the coffeepot, placed it over the gas, and sat down on the couch to smoke a cigarette.

Pascin made a gesture with his hand, a questioning gesture that asked whether she wanted to undress.

"Pas aujourd'hui, patron," she said and then beckoned the three nudes to the semidarkness of the far corner of the room to talk to them. Grouped like that, they looked like a living tableau by Fragonard.

Pascin reached for a block of paper, turned the easel to an angle, and began to draw them as they stood. Suddenly they knew that they were posing and remained in the same position until he had clapped his hands.

"Tu est en belle peau aujourd'hui, Suzette," Pascin remarked.

The fleshy blonde looked professionally at the young model, came bending over to look at the skin of the girl, and agreed with Pascin. *"Elle est vraiment en belle peau aujourd'hui."*

Then we had a general conversation. Yvonne was a communist. Marcelle was a right-wing socialist. Suzette had no political opinion. The fleshy blonde was a royalist. I watched them discuss politics and gesticulate wildly to drive home a point.

"Don't wonder," Pascin said. "All of Paris is deeply immersed in politics. They shed their dresses, but not their opinions when they come to pose. The Germans are at the gates."

A while later he paid them off and dismissed them.

"Bonjour, patron. Bonjour, monsieur."

Pascin told me that he sold well in America, but the Americans bought his paintings, drawings, and water colors, not as art but as pornography. His nudes were hanging on the walls of rich bachelors in New York, San Francisco, and Chicago.

"I suppose I'll have to paint some still lifes to become immortal," he joked. "There is nothing immoral about a carrot or an apple."

He begged me to join him for dinner at his *pension.*

"The food is marvelous. The wines are first class."

The *pension* was really a brothel. We sat at a long table with the madame, a former *pierreuse,* at one end of the table, and the monsieur at the other end. The *pensionnaires,* a dozen girls of every shade, size, and girth, sat on both sides of the table. During the two hours of dinner I didn't hear one word or notice one gesture of which Mrs. Grundy might have disapproved. Emily Post herself couldn't have advocated better table manners. After the coffee the ladies left, following

madame, and we, the three men, drank cognac, lit our cigarettes, and talked politics.

"*Et les affaires?*" Pascin asked the *patron.*

"*On ne peut pas se plaindre,*" the husband of the madame said. "It could be worse. *On ne peut pas se plaindre.*"

"I am glad to hear it," Pascin said.

"*Et vos affaires?*" the man asked.

"*On ne peut pas se plaindre.* It could be worse," Pascin replied.

"I am glad to hear it. And in America, monsieur, how is business there?" the man turned to ask me. "I used to do some business with Rio de Janiero, years ago, but there is nothing doing now. The exchange is too high. I used to send twenty or thirty girls, *de la belle merchandise,* to South America every year. This year not one. They get them from Austria. It is cheaper to get them from Austria. The whole luxury business of France is losing out to Austria. We have lost South America completely."

Outside I asked Pascin. "Do you always dine in this place?"

"Almost always. It's the only place where nobody flirts, and one is immune from dirty stories. These women don't carry their profession into their private lives."

When I next went to see Pascin, he had hung himself in his room.

The husband of the madame was desolate.

"Ah, *monsieur, quel malheur*! Why did he do it? We loved him, madame and all the *pensionnaires.* We are desolate. He was like one of the family. We'll never again have a *pensionnaire* like him. *Ah, monsieur, quel homme d'esprit et de talent*! Some day I must show you our bedroom which he has decorated. You should come to see us often, monsieur. *Pas pour du business, mais en ami. Oui, venez en ami de la maison.*"

The man wasn't at all conscious of the degrading nature of his business. He dealt in sex with the same aplomb as bankers

deal in money or cheese dealers in cheese. He spoke of his brothel as *"le commerce"* and of the girls as merchandise. *"Nous venons de recevoir deux pièces de Cologne, épatantes en peau et en manières. Faut voir ça, monsieur.* How Monsieur Pascin would have liked to see them! He was a real connoisseur. *Et de la delicatesse, monsieur! De la delicatesse!"*

The Bullitts lived in an old house five minutes' walk from us. Beautiful, sparkling Louise Bryant—Mrs. Bullitt—and my wife were intimate friends. We often dined with the Bullitts or had coffee with them in their house or in our apartment.

They had adopted a young Turkish boy whose father had been decapitated by the sultan's men. He acted as the Bullitt doorman on great occasions, when he put on the gorgeously tasseled costume of an Arnaut. He was devoted to Louise. His eyes shot fire when anyone looked at her too long. I stopped kissing her "Goodbye" because of the eyes of that young Arnaut.

The Bullitts gave musicales, especially of George Antheil's new works with the composer at the piano, and all Paris was always there. Antheil's music made me angry. Louise was amused to see me rage. At one of these musicales she sat between Walter Damrosch and me, highly amused at the discomfiture of both of us.

Bullitt and I took long walks and talked. Russia hadn't fooled him. He had been in Turkey and had seen that land in the throes of modernization. He had been in Germany and come away distrusting German republicanism. He had a weak spot for Vienna (as have most Americans) and Budapest (as have most romanticists), but he loved France and above all Paris.

On the surface, Cocteau, Gide, and a host of others were just being ultra modern. It was ultra chic to chant the vices of Germany and depreciate the virtues of France. It was *"fin*

de siècle" to praise Wagner, Strauss, Schönberg, and Toch and run down the modern French composers. It was very, very civilized to admire the work of abstract German painters and to accept the decrepit monstrosities they shaped in glass and in clay as modern sculpture.

Naomi and our two daughters worked hard. Rion went back to the States and his girl friend. Gorky roamed the cafés where he vociferated about art and literature. I worked hard to get back to music.

Music had one advantage over literature. One could say what one pleased without fear of being censored. One could express in music one's wildest erotic emotions without restrictions. No composer has ever been hauled before a magistrate for pornography, as has often been the lot of painters, sculptors, and writers. There is much more voluptuous emotion in a piece by Bach, Mozart, or Beethoven than there is in a story by Boccaccio, de Koch, Maupassant, or the most unexpurgated stories of the Arabian nights. Music is the only uncensored art in existence. But, *mon dieu,* musicians are, as a rule, the most stupid of men. The more intelligent musicians are comparatively sterile. Thought, the ability to think, is not conducive to musical composition. I had been thinking too much.

When I went to the Roumanian consulate in Paris to get the necessary visas for my homeland trip, the consul introduced me to a Mlle. Rose, a tall, dark young Roumanian beauty, and asked us to join him for tea at the Ritz. Eventually the consul left us, saying that he had to return to his office, and Mlle. Rose asked me to accompany her for a walk.

At dinner time Mlle. said she knew a charming little place to dine and talk. Across the table she assured me that she had more talent than any other actress, but had gotten nowhere because she was too tall. Queen Marie had promised her a pension, but hadn't kept her word, and, here she was. . . .

She ordered caviar, lobster, fish, fillet mignon, topped the dinner off with crêpes Suzettes and Roquefort, changed wines expertly with every dish, but complained bitterly of poverty.

Halfway home she confessed that she was part Gypsy, and asked me why I had wasted our time since I had arrived in Paris.

"Tell me," I asked when we had entered her *réz de chausée* apartment on the Place Victor Hugo. "Why did you expect a pension from Queen Marie? What have you done for the royal house of Roumania?"

She didn't answer. She pressed a button on the wall. A maid came in.

"Are the children up yet, Irene?"

"Oui, Mlle."

"Bring them in for a moment."

A few minutes later a boy of six and a little girl of four rushed into the room crying, "Mama. Mama."

I took one look at the two blonde heads with the slightly receding chins and knew why Carol's mother had promised Mlle. Rose a pension. When the children had been taken back to their room, Mlle. said:

"After that, she married me off to a young officer, who left me the night of our wedding, and then she palmed me off on Prince G——, a stingy old man. In olden days it may have been worth something to have been the mistress of a prince heir; today it means nothing," and becoming hysterical, she cried out, "I have to prostitute myself to feed Roumanian royal children."

"Be careful," Rosenthal advised me the following day. "You shouldn't have gone to her apartment. Marie has tried to palm her off on everyone. It's a very mixed-up affair. No one can make head or tail out of it. Don't get mixed up in the mess."

A week or so later Princess Bibesco said, "I didn't think

you'd get mixed up with that woman, or I should have warned you."

Mlle. Rose had spread the story of our friendship to the four corners of the earth. Unbeknownst to me we were photographed together, and the picture was published in all the papers. I had to do quite a little explaining to Naomi and Rada when Mlle. called up persistently every day, demanding to talk to me.

In one week my French publishers gave me a handsome advance on two books, I received money from Italy and Germany, and my English publishers sent me a hundred pounds. I looked upon this money as a windfall and spent all of it buying wines for my cellar. When the racks were filled with several thousand bottles of wine and champagne, we gave a party to our American and French friends, writers, musicians, and painters, and sampled our beverages. After the first party we had to give a second and a third so as not to offend those we had not been able to accommodate at the first one.

Following those parties we entered upon a series of parties which left me little time to work and played the devil with my health.

The real reason for those parties, the half-subconscious one, was that I craved to show myself off to myself because of the poverty I had once endured in Paris. I took pleasure in inviting my Parisian relatives who had treated mother so shabbily when the family first arrived in Paris twenty years before. True, they had become richer in the meantime, but I had become famous, and the famous of the world came to our house and not to theirs.

I am ashamed to tell that one night, when the rooms were crowded with people from everywhere, I said to my cousin at the top of my voice, "Remember when we came to Paris twenty years ago?"

"Yes."

"You didn't call me 'Cousin Konrad' all over the place then.

You and yours treated me and mine rather shabbily. And you still would today, if things were not as they are. You must be of the bastard branch of the Bercovicis."

I am sorry I told him that. I was sorry a moment after I had done it, but, great God, at best I am but a man with all a man's failings and shortcomings, and it does feel good to have them.

The French franc had been hammered down by a Dutch bank to fifty for a dollar, and Paris was now crowded with British, Spanish, Italian, Scandinavian, and German tourists who changed their money into the depreciated currency of France and bought linen, furniture, antiques, and paintings.

When the Paris shops raised their prices, the tourists fell upon Orleans, Lyons, Lille, Bordeaux, Marseille, and Nancy, and bought and bought to their hearts' content.

Thousands of cases of champagne and old cognacs and thousands of cases of antiques, linens, books, statues, paintings, furniture, and porcelains left France every day. The Amsterdam bank daily offered tens of millions of francs at lower and lower rates. The other banks followed. New York unloaded. The cost of living finally rose so high for the French that there were daily fights between tourists and natives. Unless you looked like a Frenchman, you were considered a criminal if you bought anything in a store. There was no doubt that France was being systematically looted, and it wasn't long before the discovery was made that the looting was done under orders from Berlin. It really took the Germans twenty years to soften France up for the *coup de grace.* The German bankers, Schacht and the others, performed the same service for Hitler, the ultimate, as do banderilleros in the bull rings, bleeding the bull to soften him up for the matador.

At an international literary gathering I noticed a young German who flitted from group to group and made himself agreeable to all.

When somebody in my group made a cutting remark about

the Germans, a young Frenchwoman brought the man up short by saying, "My husband is a German."

Before leaving to join another group, she remarked, "It's too bad about the franc. I am as sorry as you are. A banker told us that it will go down to a hundred to the dollar. *Le pauvre franc est fishu.*"

A little later Charles Young, the playwright, Kathleen Millay's husband, said to me: "Heard the news? The franc will go down to a hundred."

"Who told you so?"

"Otto."

"Otto who?"

"That fellow there. Nice sort of German. Married to a French girl. Loves the French."

When I asked Ignacio Zuloaga whether he knew that man, the famous Spanish painter said, "Oh, he! Charmant type. Comes up to see me sometimes. Charming wife, poor as church mice. Crazy about Paris. *Tout à fait charmant.* Very intelligent, very, very. *Il y a longtemps,* he has warned me that the franc will fall. I have saved lots of money thanks to his advice."

A Hungarian German princess was a frequent guest at literary-artistic parties, and pestered everybody to tell her, "what Americans *really* feel, but *really* feel, about my people."

Knowing her origin, I said, "The Hungarian Jews in America, Madame, are quite well thought of in America."

The princess left me in a huff and complained about me to the Comtesse de Noailles, our hostess.

"You are no diplomat," the countess said to me.

"No. No diplomat and no spy."

"You are terrible."

Franz von Pappen shuttled in and out of Paris and was often at the "Deux Magots" for his breakfast. He stayed at the Hotel Cayre, on the Boulevard Raspail and was frequently, incognito, at the "Rotonde" or "Montparnasse," the cafés frequented

chiefly by Americans, where Otto Abetz and his wife came for their nightly glass of beer and to give people advice about the franc.

And the franc fell. When I gave our concierge the usual monthly *pourboire,* she held the banknotes in her hands and asked ironically, *"En dollars, monsieur, combien que cela est?* How much is that in dollars?"

"The franc still is French currency," I replied.

"Malheureusement," she remarked and turned away.

The Abetzes were working. Their innuendos were seeping below the surface, below all the surfaces. French patriotism is tied down to the pocketbook. For hundreds of years now every French generation was either born during a defeat and died after a victory, or was born after a victory and died after a defeat.

When I dropped an American dime in the hands of a beggar woman on the steps of Notre-Dame cathedral, she said *"Merci"* with unusual fervor. It got so little shopkeepers hesitated to part with their merchandise at any price.

Otto Abetz, in a loose tweed suit and hatless, greeted me familiarly at the Select one day, and, as a favor, informed me that the franc was down lower than ever.

"How many Otto Abetz's are there in Paris?" I asked.

"Only one," he said, and then added heatedly, "What do you mean?"

"What are you doing here? Helping the franc along on its downward path?" I asked. "Who pays you for this kind of work?"

Otto squared off for a fist fight, but the proprietor of the Select came over and separated us:

"Allons, allons, monsieur, the war is over. Everyone is a customer."

Several American friends also interposed themselves between us and told me that Otto was all right. He was a pacifist, an internationalist, a socialist. And married to a charming French

girl. And poor. And he had advised them so well about the franc.

Naomi took one look at Abetz some hours after the affray and said, "That man there is a spy."

Naomi is uncanny about such matters. A hundred times she has pointed at men and women as spies and never been wrong once.

XX

I PILED the family into our car and we drove to Saint-Jean-de-Luz, near the Spanish border, where Louis Bromfield and his wife, Edna Ferber and her mother, and a host of other friends had already gone. We rented a Basque cottage close to the ocean, paid a season's rent, but had to leave a few weeks later because the water system of the city could not supply all the new cottages that had been built that year. Saint-Jean-de-Luz was ideal in climate and geographical position, but we had no water in the house. It made us all very irritable.

During that season the same cottage was rented four times, always to Americans, who eventually left because of the water situation. We crossed the border into Spain, for a short stay with the painter, Zuloaga, at his island home in Zumaia. A great painter, and clever as a fox, Zuloaga had bought off all the good El Greco paintings in Spain before he informed the world of his discovery of the great master. When the noise about El Greco was at its highest pitch, he "reluctantly" parted with some of the paintings at fantastically high prices, and kept the best of them for his private collection in Zumaia. At one time the Morgan interests offered him nine million dollars for the collection. Zuloaga said, "Why should I sell? I already have all the money I want."

At the fiesta of Pamplona I saw Hemingway again, running ahead of the bulls.

A hundred thousand people slept on the sidewalks of Pam-

plona. Outside the hotel, I stepped over legs and more legs. It was like walking on ties between railroad tracks. The cafés were open day and night. People danced in the streets. There were Gypsies everywhere.

Tens of thousands of people were dancing in the street, yet there was a terrific sullenness about it all, as if all these thousands of people were playing *Pagliacci* at one and the same time.

The *guardia civiles,* in comic opera hats but with carabines across their shoulders, broke up the crowds of peasants grouping and regrouping themselves here and there.

I found myself a fine Gypsy tribe of dancers and coppersmiths, with whom we spent a highly exciting week roaming in the hills. I bought all the bread, meat, and the wine for the whole tribe, to keep them with us, and we hardly slept that week. We danced and sang and talked night after night under the stars, and there wasn't an hour in twenty-four when a guitar wasn't played or a tale wasn't told. Those Gitanos had heard about my writings and insisted that I tell them the stories I had written. I did, and talking to people who understood, I told them much better and in greater detail than I had written them. Eventually our party was broken up by the *rurales,* gendarmes, who asked too many questions and wanted to know why the *señor* from North America and his family were roaming with Gitanos when he had enough money to stay in hotels!

At Hendaye, on the French side of the border, I visited Unamuno, the Spanish philosopher, and told him that his recent book, *The Agony of Christianity,* was a thick spread of anti-Semitic merde. I had to show him the merde in his book.

"But anti-Semitism is totally alien to me," he clamored, shaking his goatlike head.

"And what do you call this?"

"*Señor,* a mistake."

The whole Basque country was seething; the ground under one's feet was throbbing like a sore pulse.

In Victoria, an industrial town, the son of a wealthy manufacturer asked us ironically, "Have you also come for local color? Watch and see! There may soon be rivers of blood running in the gutters," and quoting Jehan Rictus, he added, "*Ça ce met en drame, en vers, en prose, et ça fait faire des tableaux.* It can be couched in a drama, in verses, and prose, and it does make selling pictures."

We motored back to our home in Paris. I went up to my garret and worked for a few weeks at a symphony which didn't come and refused to be cajoled, then threw it aside and worked fifteen and more hours a day every day on my book about Alexander the Great.

I had lost the faculty of thinking in musical terms. There was no music left in me. There was no music in the air. I could write but not compose. When the manuscript of the book had been sent to the publishers, I began to make serious plans for the trip to Roumania, which I had continually postponed, but couldn't postpone any more.

A few days before we left Paris I unexpectedly met a certain young lady at the American Express Company.

"Well, well," she said, kissing me, "where have you been?"

"Who else is with you?" I asked.

"You," she said. "Take me to a café and let's sit down. I like Paris."

"Where is Penny?" I questioned when we had reached Café de la Paix. "Is he here?"

"I wouldn't know. I wasn't married to him," she replied.

"Where are you staying?"

"You'll see with your own eyes," she said winking.

She was very beautiful, more so than I had realized. I couldn't look at her without thinking of how Penny had once raved about her charms and passions.

"I am going to Roumania," I said.

"Have you just decided to go?" she asked.

"No. It was decided long ago. Passports visaed. Packed."

"Well, then change your plans. You won't regret it."

"Why did you come to Paris?"

"Why did you run away from New York?" she questioned. Just then Penny came into view.

"Darling," he cried out, embracing her. "Darling! Why didn't you wait for me at Havre, as was agreed?"

"I got tired waiting," she said, disengaging herself. "You haven't said a word to Konrad yet."

"Hello, you. He doesn't count when you are around," Penny said, punching me in the chest. "But what luck! At the hotel they told me you had gone to the American Express, and here you are! Darling. Did you change any dollars? How much did you get? The robbers! Cheated you two francs on the dollar. There was a young German outside the American Express, charming fellow, who told me to hold on to my dollars."

I rose and offered both my hands, one to her and one to Penny. "Goodbye. See you when I get back."

"Where are you going?" Penny asked.

"She'll tell you all about it. Must run just now."

It had become that casual. One met American friends at the Café de la Paix as casually as if one came upon them in the lobby of the Algonquin.

I went to the American Express. Otto Abetz and his wife were outside talking to a group of Americans, and telling them that the franc was on its way out. I punched him in the face. It was the only thing I could do. There were a hundred Abetzes all over Paris telling people that the French franc was on its way out.

"Why, Konrad, what the hell is this?" Carl Harriman, the editor of the *Redbook*, who was listening to Abetz, asked, separating us.

"Hello, Carl. How would you like to see your own country destroyed by termites?"

"What do you mean?" Carl asked.

"We are doing it out of friendship to our American friends,"

Madame Abetz cried, "and he comes and punches my poor husband in the face. I shall have you arrested."

"Why don't you? There goes a 'flick,' " I urged her, pointing to a policeman.

But Madame was on her way.

"What the heck is all this?" Carl Harriman asked, while the group melted away.

When I had explained the matter to Carl, at a little table on the terrace of the Café de la Paix, that unique terrace, Carl said, "It's unbelievable. How about a piece about this for the *Redbook*?"

When I had written him the piece, Carl said to me, "I know it's so, but it still is unbelievable. I just can't believe that such a diabolical scheme is being enacted now in full daylight, so to say. And if I can't believe it, my readers certainly won't."

Carl's words froze my blood. I knew then that the Germans would be able to do as they chose, for no one would want to believe they could be so diabolical, so far-sighted in their Machiavellianism.

A later conversation with Barbusse convinced me that the Germans were even then using the French communists as pawns in their game, and that the French communists under the orders of the Internationale in Moscow were helping the Germans.

"The poor downtrodden German worker is closer to me than the French bourgeois," Barbusse said to me in the office of *Le Monde,* the communist weekly he was editing and publishing.

"And what about the downtrodden French worker?" I asked.

"He, he gets what he deserves. He has had La Victoire," Barbusse replied with a sneer.

At that moment, Leon Vert, Barbusse's assistant, rose from behind his desk and yelled at Barbusse, "*Merde.* I have had enough of this. I won't play the German game," and he picked up his hat and banged the door after him.

That was Paris in the summer of 1927.

We left Paris early one morning in our open car, a Renault of seasoned vintage but reliable and solid, with our pockets bulging with passports, American Express checks, letters of credit, and dollars, and crossed into Switzerland. After some trouble at the Italian border with the customs men, we entered Vienna the first day of a revolution. We had reserved rooms at the Bristol, but the Bristol, in the center of the town and of the revolution, was now threatened by the leaping flames engulfing the burning Palace of Justice, so we put the car in a garage, loaded ourselves with bags and suitcases, and followed a little woman who offered to put us up in her apartment not far away, on Marie-Hilferstrasse.

The stores and shops were shuttered. The wide street was empty one moment and swarming with a running crowd the next; quiet one moment and crackling with machine gun bullets a second later. Those hit lay on the pavement until they were dragged in behind hallway doors.

Suddenly I heard a shot coming from behind us, looked up, and saw a boy who had been looking out of a fifth story window slump over the window sill like a deflated doll in a puppet show.

"That's the house I am living in," our would-be hostess said, turning to face me, and walking a little faster though backward for a few steps.

Just as I entered the lobby of the house behind my little family, I heard several shots, several screams, the gallop of horses, and the ratatat of machine-gun bullets upon the walls.

"Up, up," I shouted to my family while I shut the heavy oaken door against the crowd at our heels.

But the little one, Mirel, wouldn't leave my side.

"T'as ton rigolo? Have you your gun?" she asked in Parisian slang, touching my hip pocket. *"Oui, tu l'as."* And then it occurred to me that I didn't know which floor our hostess lived on. The crowd was battering at the door I had shut.

Mirel and I hurried up to the second floor. I knocked at a door. No one answered. No one answered my knocking at

the doors of the third floor. Below, the mob was battering at the heavy door of the hallway. I released the safety catch of the gun and looked at Mirel. She didn't bat an eye.

"Are you sure it's loaded?" she asked.

On the fourth landing my wife threw open the door of an apartment, despite the insistence of our hostess, and pulled us in. Soon afterward mounted police dispersed the mob on the street.

Our hostess, the wife of a consumptive physician, had braved the bullets and gone to the railroad station to offer her home as shelter to those who couldn't reach a hotel. There was a magnificent kitchen, but not a morsel of food in it.

"Could we get some food?" I asked.

"*Ja,* we could. I think so."

I gave her a ten dollar bill and said, "Go get food. Don't forget milk."

Madame, being the wife of a physician, had a maid, a maid who had starved with the rest of the family. Frau Doktor was hungry, but Frau Doktor wouldn't think of carrying a market basket. So she called to the maid to follow her with the basket.

A half hour later madame came back, followed by the maid with a basket of food. They had crawled over the roof of the house and climbed down a fire escape to the window of a woman who had hoarded food against the pending revolution.

Frau Doktor's three youngest children had tears in their eyes at the sight of food, but their manners were perfect. The Herrschaften ate in the diningroom; the maid—the starved, unpaid maid—ate in the kitchen. Madame had bought white bread for the Herrschaften and black bread for the maid.

Several hours later, Frau Doktor's two older sons came home from the center of the town and reported that everything was under control.

"Revolutions don't happen every day. We may never get a chance to see another one," Naomi said. "How about having a look at this one?"

Frau Doktor's son said all danger was *"ausgeschlossen."*

Marie-Hilferstrasse, lit only by the light of the moon that night and by the sudden burst of flames in the distance, was empty between sidewalk and sidewalk. A procession of people walked hurriedly, but in single file, close to the buildings like two lines of human ants. From afar I saw a large group of people in the center of the street. When we got there behind hundreds of others, someone was haranguing the crowd.

Suddenly the crowd began to mill, much like a herd of horses before it is stampeded by a strange sound or smell. Someone shouted, *"Die Polizei!"*

A hundred mounted police, riding in upon us from the side streets, slashing the air with their naked swords, broke us up. The crowd crumbled and ran in all directions with the horses at their heels. I lost all sense of individuality and felt like part of a mass that had fallen apart, but ran on holding fast to my wife's hand.

The clattering hoof-irons on the stone pavement and the brakelike clatter when a horse was reined in too suddenly pursued me. I ran and ran.

Halfway home the clatter behind us receded, the running crowd that had spread all over the street slowed up, and straightened itself out soon again in two endless antlike lines crawling along the walls away from the town. In the center of the street a redheaded woman, with the moon shining in her great face, disheveled and with outstretched arms, tried to stop the crowd from passing her and shouted, "Why do you run away? This is no time to run away from anything. How many of us have we left behind us sprawling in their blood? Stand up and fight the murderers. Stand up. Don't run away. Here they come again. *Die Polizei.*"

The clatter of the hoofs upon stone became sharper and sharper, but the human mass was now like a wall although the horses plunged upon it. The mass held. The disheveled woman's voice rose.

"Stand your ground against the murderers. They have killed enough. Stand your ground."

Suddenly the mass of humanity opened up and closed like a monstrous maw upon horses and riders. A dozen rapid shots were followed by the awful shrieks of falling horses, a spasm of clattering hoofs, and the ripping noise of steel upon stone.

Naomi and I were on the outside fringe. When the crowd had parted, I saw a dark heap of quivering men and horses on the pavement, and a curving dark line that was thickening as it spread over the stones. And then I too began to run, holding on to a warm hand.

Behind us a police car was spattering the walls with machine-gun bullets. We ran, ducked into doorways and hallways, and ran again until we were at our own door, and up the four flights of stairs leading to Frau Doktor's apartment.

The whole night we listened to the spattering machine-gun bullets, rifle shots, and the rumbling of army trucks clattering into Vienna from the outlying districts. In the morning at breakfast, Frau Doktor's oldest son, who was fifteen, told us what had caused the *Krawall.* A delegation of workingmen had been shot upon by the police when they had demanded an interview with the Minister of Justice. Then the crowd set fire to the Palace of Justice with the policemen in it and prevented the firemen from extinguishing it.

"Now the crowd is out of hand. And so are the police. The unions have called a general strike. The rest you know."

"Such a thing could not have happened while our Kaiser Franz Josef sat on his throne," Frau Doktor said.

"But, *mutter,*" the son pleaded, "the fascist police started it all by shooting into a crowd of workers."

"Had our beloved Kaiser been on the throne, there wouldn't have been a crowd of workers on parade," she snapped back.

Frau Doktor was an old royalist. Her sons were socialists. Frau Doktor had loved to waltz with young officers in resplendent uniforms to the tune of Johann Strauss's melodies, and

though starving, still thought of those days with fervor and regret.

At the Bristol, the following day, behind the shuttered windows of the bar, Sinclair Lewis, George Seldes, and a few others toasted the revolution. Anita Loos and her husband, John Emerson, who had made Vienna their residence, came in, a little frightened and a little anxious to explain away what had happened to their beloved Vienna.

Red Lewis raised his glass again and again and shouted in his fluent but very bad German, *"Hoch die Revolution. Hoch. Hoch die Revolution."*

Grim, gray-clad young soldiers from the provinces, with rifles slung on their shoulders were patrolling the streets, breaking up the crowds, and running down the underworld, which had muscled in on the quarrel between the workers and the police.

Doctor Sigmund Freud, the famous psychoanalyst, whom I visited, said that it was only a *"Kaffee und Milch Revolution,"* a coffee and milk revolution, and psychoanalysed the soul of Vienna, a frivolous soul even during a revolution.

"They had expected music and waltzes during the last war. They thought they would be enacting a *Lustige Witwe,* a *Merry Widow* play on a grand scale, and were disappointed. People actually were killed and not in heroic poses at all."

While he was talking, a machine gun from a running military truck sprayed the outside wall of his building. The good old doctor, annoyed by the interruption, said, "I hate noise, don't you?" and continued his dissertation, "They are just using up a little ammunition and getting in a little practice for the next play."

He may have been right, but he was too Olympian for me. As a matter of fact, I thought then and think so now, too deliberately Olympian. To see someone *soar* to Olympian

heights is a divine spectacle, but the spectacle of one *plodding* up is a sore sight.

The days were comparatively quiet, but every night the mounted police rode in from the side streets into the crowds and slashed at them with their naked swords. The police looked upon every civilian as an enemy. The civilians reciprocated the hatred, and always there were at least a few deflated bodies sprawling on the pavement when *Die Polizei* rode away. I had never realized until then how small a body became immediately after the last gasp!

On the fourth day, in front of the house we lived in, a woman street peddler, selling a self-threading needle, called out, "Buy now, while the shilling can still buy something."

I thought of Otto Abetz and his wife in Paris, telling their friends that the franc was falling still lower.

The banks were closed. Our cash dollars had dwindled.

When it looked as though Vienna would soon return to a more or less normal state, the communists started fresh trouble. A soldier was killed, a policeman torn limb from limb, and the murderous feud between policemen and civilians was on again with the added animosity of the soldiers out to avenge the death of one of their own.

Before this new outbreak a man in civilian clothes was at least sure that another one so garbed was not his enemy. When the communists got into the fray, guns popped indiscriminately. The agents of the communists shot at policemen to enrage them against the civilians and at civilians to enrage them against the police and the soldiery.

On the sixth day the bakers' syndicate allowed the baking and selling of bread, the banks were opened, and, although the shilling was freely offered at twelve for a dollar on the street, the banks refused to give more than seven for a dollar. There were hours of absolute quiet followed by sudden flashes of shooting activity. The communists wouldn't let the fire die out.

At the end of the revolution, the Vienna anti-Semites put in their oar.

"The revolution is a Jewish plot to divert the Vienna tourist trade to Budapest."

Swarms of street peddlers selling self-threading needles, mostly women with intellectual faces, appeared on every street. "Buy now, while the shilling can still buy something. Don't keep your shillings. We want *Anschluss* with Germany. We can't exist alone. Do you want Austria to become an English province? Buy self-threading needles made in Germany while the shilling is yet worth something."

I want it noted that this was going on five years before Hitler came into power. The *Anschluss* was prepared by the German Republic. Hitler inherited the result of its labors after killing the Republic that had nursed and endowed him. We, here, and now, sit and look on while fools and scoundrels, under the protection of our laws, are attempting to soften us up for a more gigantic *Anschluss*—so gigantic we refuse to believe it could be accomplished.

As against such a possibility we have the *"assurance"* of Lindbergh that Hitler would not disturb himself to bother us. Who has given that assurance? And to whom? And how much more is it worth than the assurances given to every country before it was invaded? Austria, Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, Denmark, Norway, Holland, Russia . . .

XXI

AFTER A FEW more nights of screams and shooting, we got into our car and took the road to the Hungarian border. People turned to stare at the car, saw the French license plate, and called something after us, but let us pass. Here and there some local constable outside Vienna raised his hand to command us to stop, but we drove on at top speed, making sudden turns on two wheels with screaming brakes and soon reached the border of Austria. The Austrian customs inspector took a dollar bill and let us drive on to Hegeshalom, the Hungarian border. The Hungarian customs inspector took another dollar and let us get into Hungary.

Two hours later we stopped to eat at a peasant inn in Hungary. The owner, delighted to hear us speak English, called his four children, and pointing to the older two, he said, "They are Americanos. Detroit. Jesus Christ, what a fool I was! What a fool! I came back for visit after war, and America she made a law and I no can go back. So I stay here. But them sonofabitches are Americans. Yes, sir! They lookit, no? Talk American to the peoples," he urged his offspring. "Talk American, you sonofabitches."

We stayed overnight in Budapest at the biggest hotel on the Danube shore. In the morning one of our suitcases disappeared while a porter carried our belongings to the car.

When I became vociferous, the manager, in striped trousers and tails, called all the porters of the hotel outside and asked

me, "Mister, which one do you accuse of stealing your suitcase? You'll have to prove it in court. Go ahead now. Which one of us do you accuse of stealing?"

I said something unprintable and started the car.

After some more trouble with grafting, corsetted, rouged, and powdered Roumanian officers at the border we crossed into the land of my birth and entered the valley of the Oltu. An hour later, as we passed under the bower of trees on a road strewn with toylike houses, Rada, my older daughter, said, "I have to apologize to you, father. I was sure you had romanticized the beauty of your homeland. I am apologizing."

Mirel didn't utter a word. She didn't believe she was alive. Naomi's eyes were filled with tears.

We stopped, for the night, at a hotel three hours' ride from Bucharest. I was talking and laughing. I ate and ate and drank and drank. I sent wine and more wine to the Gypsy musicians and sang with them. When a newspaperman came to talk to me, I asked him to join us, called for more wine, more food, and talked and talked. When another newspaperman came to our table, I called for still more wine and more food.

People stood in back of our table, identified me, and said, "So that's him. Away so many years and he still speaks our language. What do you think of that?"

"I have a cousin in New York; maybe you know him?" a woman inquired.

"I am sure I don't, but sit down. All of you. Waiter. Push the tables together. So. Sit down, friends. Bring some fresh wine, waiter. Send a dozen bottles to the Gypsies. Hey, Prala. Play. Play on your heartstrings. I have been away. I have come back. Play. Sing. Don't you know me? I am Conu Jancu's son. Mama Tinka was my nurse. She was Murdo's daughter."

The women looked at my wife and daughters. Rada had burst into song and was singing with the Gypsies songs I had taught her in New York and in Paris.

"I have come back," she sang. "I have come back to the green of my homeland."

Mirel fell asleep in her chair with her head on the table in a mass of plates and glasses.

"Tell us about America," someone asked.

"Tell us about Paris," another one urged.

"Tell us about London."

"I read in a Bucharest paper that he gets a million lei for a story. Is it true?" a woman asked Naomi.

"One million? He gets two million for a story," she said with pride.

"I could marry off my four daughters with half that amount. Even a doctor doesn't get as much dowry as he gets for a story."

"Why did you ever leave such a country?" Rada asked.

"Play. Sing, Prala. Come closer to my table and play. Waiter, more wine," I called out, trying not to remember that I had once been driven out of the country that was now making grandiose arrangements for my reception. The newspapers had kept reporters and photographers at the border for two weeks.

In the early morning on the road to Bucharest I saw peasants, chained to their oxcarts laden with bags of wheat, being taken to the market place by gendarmes. At the market place, after the wheat had been sold for half the current price to speculators in the pay of the queen, the money was taken by the tax collectors, and the peasants' chains were removed. This was how the noble Hohenzollern royal family had enriched itself.

A few hours later, upon entering the office of the prefect of police of a small town, I found the great man sipping coffee and smoking a cigarette while four policemen were whipping two Gypsies curled up on the floor.

"What have they done?" I asked.

"Nothing."

"Then why have you ordered them whipped?"

"Because I am bored," the prefect answered. "Great God!" he cried out, walking up and down the room, "Great God, what kind of a government have we? They take a man like me, a university graduate, who has studied in Berlin and Vienna, a poet, and they stick him in this hole. And now, you, you who are on a pleasure tour, ask me why I beat up a few Gypsies! Am I not to be allowed any diversions at all? *C'est à crever le plafond.* If I didn't know the respect I owe you for what you have done for our country, I would say your question is impudent, monsieur. Do you realize that I haven't seen a play in six months and haven't heard a concert in a year! Do you realize what that means, monsieur?" And he broke down and wept.

As we entered Bucharest, we came upon a long convoy of bedraggled peasants flanked by policemen who were beating them with horsewhips.

"Why don't you stop them? Why don't you?" Mirel cried out. She who had been so calm during the Viennese revolution was now almost in tears. Rada covered her eyes with her two small hands. Naomi and I could hardly hold the two girls down. They wanted to throw themselves out of the car.

Those peasants were a delegation who had come on foot to Bucharest to protest against some special taxes imposed upon their village. Penniless, they had slept on the streets and had begged food from the farmers who came to the market place of the big city, but were determined to see the *voda,* the king, and to tell him what they had come to say to him.

"Was it like this when you left your country?" Rada asked when she calmed down.

"No. Not quite like this."

"You shouldn't have come back," Rada cried.

Naomi didn't say a word. She looked as if a world had died within her.

The following morning the Bucharest newspapers were bordered with black. The king had officially died during the

night. On the front page, under a large photograph of the dead king was a proclamation, signed by John Bratiano, the prime minister, stating that, before dying, his majesty, Ferdinand of Hohenzollern, had ordered that his oldest son and heir, Prince Carol, then in exile, should not be permitted to come to the funeral.

"Do you believe that?" the porter of the hotel asked me.

"What do you think?"

"I think that this is the work of the old bitch, Marie. Shame! To forbid a son to come to his father's funeral!" the porter said.

"Was King Ferdinand his son's father?" another porter asked, winking at me.

"He was, legally, anyhow!" the first porter insisted.

"How will it look to the world, that's what I want to know? Domnule Bercovici, you know the world. How will it look to the world, eh?" the second porter asked.

Outside the entrance of the hotel, the Atheneu Palace, were two machine guns manned by four soldiers with black armbands on their sleeves. At the next street corner were four machine guns. Outside the Royal Palace were twenty machine guns, and there was a cannon in front of the post office and one before the telephone and telegraph building. On the terrace of Capsha, the Café de la Paix of Bucharest, obese congressmen and senators dunked *croissants* in their coffee cups and complained bitterly that Bucharest was short of silk hats.

"Don't you think it was a mistake to forbid *Him* (it was forbidden to mention Carol's name) to come to the funeral of his father?" I asked a senator who looked like a peeled pig.

"What I think doesn't matter," he replied. "She wanted it so."

"Why do you think she did it?" I asked.

"Have you seen the machine guns on the street?"

"Yes."

"Why do you think they are there?"

"Someone is afraid of a revolution."

"Now I can see that you are smart," he laughed. "Did you become that smart in America?"

Three days later George Seldes and several other newspapermen representing a dozen news agencies, stood at my window and watched the funeral procession. First behind the hearse and the royal carriages marched several hundred peasants in their bare feet. Among them were the peasants who had been arrested and whipped the day before, but had been released from the prison to march behind the funeral cortege of their beloved king. Then came the army officers, in resplendent uniforms, marching in parade steps, behind the peasantry, and looking up at the ladies on the balconies as the cortege passed by.

The funeral over, everybody rushed to the wine houses.

"What about those peasants?" I asked an official of the Palace.

"They? Well, I don't know. They have probably been taken back to jail. Bucharest is one of the great capitals of the world. We can't allow peasants to sleep in the streets. You wouldn't allow such a thing in New York, would you?"

"No."

"There. Of course not. Anyhow we have to cut this delegation business short. Tell me, *mon cher ami,* are the American girls really so beautiful? And have you been in Hollywood? Yes? What made you come back? I never would, you know!"

We left Bucharest and went to Sinaia, in the Carpathian Mountains, where Yehudi Menuhin and his family had preceded us so that the boy could be near his teacher, the composer and violinist, Georges Enesco.

In Sinaia a medical student, the son of an old friend, took Rada for a walk in the park. The following day, when he came to see us again, his right cheek was swollen and his lower lip split. He had been set upon and beaten by Iron Guard students because he had refused to introduce them to my daughter.

"What's happening here, Daia?" I asked a Gypsy woman who was telling fortunes to the guests in the hotel.

"Prala, the rats are gnawing at the root of the tree. Tell us something of the Prala in America. Are they beaten there? Are they being spit upon? Are their daughters being raped in the cellars of the police before the eyes of their parents? Is their flesh being used to feed dogs? Tell us how is the Prala doing across the big ocean?"

Princess Bibesco, who summered in a castle at Possada, five miles from the royal summer palace at Sinaia, knew nothing of what was going on, or didn't want to know. She talked literature, poetry, art, philosophy, and folklore, and was happy that her roses were in bloom again.

During the World War the Germans had looted her garden and sent her rose bushes to Germany, but not before Vasili, the old gardener, had secretly taken enough cuttings to grow another garden of roses. She called Vasili to introduce him to me.

"This is our Vasili."

The white-bearded old peasant bowed and knelt before the "*alteza*" and listened with bowed head to her praises.

"What wonderful people our peasants are!" Princess Bibesco exclaimed. "And so devoted!"

I told her about the peasant delegation which was released from jail to follow the funeral cortege of the king, but was rearrested immediately after the funeral.

She said that something ought to be done about it. The dead king had been a friend of hers, and he certainly wouldn't have countenanced such a thing.

"But," I argued, "those peasants have been in Bucharest months trying to see him."

"The poor dear had so much on his mind. And he wasn't well. And what could he have done if he had seen them? You know how it is."

Even the Gypsies, who had retained their individuality and

dignity during hundreds of years of slavery, hadn't been able to withstand the stench of the *Moeurs speciales* that had risen in the last thirty years or so. Their music had become vulgar, and their women—I won't speak about them.

The queen, the princess, the princesses, the generals, the politicians, the police, and the financiers were either in the service of Germany or in the pay of England. Some of them served and betrayed both masters.

"Why did you come back? You'll never again be able to write beautiful stories about your homeland," Rada said.

"I had to come back. Don't you see? You can't go on dreaming about your homeland. I had to come and touch it. Don't you see?"

"Well, now that you are here, look at it. Look at it. The peasants chained to their oxcarts, the peasants jailed and taken out to lend color to the king's funeral, then herded back to jail. The beaten Gypsies. The beaten Jews. The machine guns on the street. The Iron Guards. Look at them all," she cried.

Invited to the Palace, I refused the invitation and all the other honors. When the chief of police ordered that my daughters should come and explain why they hadn't registered with the police when they had arrived, I refused to let them go.

"You have been talking too much. Get into your car and leave," a friendly newspaperman said to me.

"Why?"

"Must I tell you everything! Well, then. Our government is trying to arrange a loan of a hundred million dollars in America. Some people now say that what you'll write about us when you return to America won't help us get the loan. This isn't the Roumania you have known. People are killed for much less than in those days. Now, will you get into your car and leave the country?"

That night I noticed *Sigurantza* (gestapo) men outside the door. I called them in and said, "I warn you! We can all shoot well."

"We won't make any trouble," one of the men spoke up, "if you leave today."

"We'll be ready in half an hour," I said, "if you'll help us pack."

They did. We left an hour later, and drove back to Paris, via Italy, Venice, and Switzerland, but I didn't talk until we were back in our apartment in Paris, and then only after I had wept hysterically on Naomi's shoulders. I had buried a long-cherished dream. For a month or more, we couldn't laugh or be gay. Rada and Mirel felt our mourning and respected it by their silence.

In Paris Otto Abetz was now on friendly terms with many Americans, artists, and writers, and was acting as their financial adviser. He and his wife were actively helping to organize the French youth and peace societies. There were more German "tourists" than ever in the capital of France. At night they occupied all the terrace tables of the Rotonde and the Select at Montparnasse and paraded their homosexualism on the Boulevards.

XXII

ON MY NEXT TRIP to New York I talked to magazine editors about some articles I had sent them.

"What has gotten into you?" the editors asked. "The war is over. Haven't you heard about the armistice and the peace of Versailles? Go ahead and write about lovely Gypsy girls and peasant women. Let the French and the English worry about Europe."

At Hull House in Chicago, Jane Addams took me aside after dinner and said, "I don't know what makes you talk like that! Talk like this is not conducive to peace, to disarmament."

Jane Addams didn't like to hear that there was neither communism nor democracy in Russia, any more than in Italy or Germany. She had been glad to see me; she was even more glad to see me go.

The Chicago bunch, Ben Hecht, Anderson, and a few others, weren't interested in the politics or the literature of France and Germany. Young, vigorous, and American born, they were interested in their own emotions and reactions.

"France. Marvelous food. Germany, good beer."

I lectured on the Gypsies to the women's clubs and state universities. When I spoke about the coming world war, a professor in Minneapolis shouted at me, "The Germans are only trying to regain their rightful position in this world. It is too bad that they lost the war."

In Madison, Wisconsin, Glenn Frank, now president of the university, said, "Don't be more Catholic than the Pope. We went to war once for France and England and to save democracy. Never again."

In Hollywood a famous producer showed me a life-sized inscribed photograph of Il Duce on the wall behind his desk.

"He gave it to me himself. A great man, Mussolini."

"What is great about him? That he made the trains run on time?"

"Well, yes. That is symbolic," and rising and swelling his chest, he added, "That's what I am trying to do, make the trains run on time. Discipline. Respect for authority. Obedience. The use of a firm hand. We need many Mussolinis here. Supermen."

Chaplin, who had finally become accustomed to being wealthy, owned a yacht, no longer looked at the right side of the bill of fare, had lost some of his shyness, was no longer a hypochondriac, and loved laughter and fun. We went out together evenings and roamed about Los Angeles.

Because, probably, of atmospheric conditions (the climate of Southern California is exactly like the climate of Palestine), there are more religions born every day in California than babies. Self-ordained priests stand on soap boxes in the parks and shout to the world that they, and only they, have received the blessed word from the great beyond. Those self-ordained priests are to religion what the pushcart peddlers are to the department stores. Occasionally, however, such priests get there, too, and, with the assistance of some wealthy widow, build temples and tabernacles, and join the ranks of big business. Aimee Semple McPherson isn't the only one.

On a Saturday afternoon we picked up two young working girls who agreed with Chaplin's interpretation of socialism. We asked them to join us for ice cream. Chaplin introduced himself as a school teacher and me as a fiddler.

Toward evening, Chaplin suggested that we have dinner to-

gether. Helen and Ruth agreed to this on condition that we go Dutch.

During coffee, Kuno, Chaplin's Japanese driver, bodyguard, and valet, burst in on us and said, "I have been looking for you all over town, Mr. Chaplin."

The girls turned pale with anger and smothered their cigarettes. Charlie grinned, laughed a hollow laugh, and left me to deal with the two infuriated women.

"So you have had some fun with us, have you? Fooled two working girls, have you?"

They were furious.

I talked fast, explaining that Mr. Chaplin had little opportunity to live a normal life, talk to people, and be treated like a human being and not a celebrity.

They couldn't have been more furious if an impostor had masqueraded as Chaplin and had turned out to be only a school teacher.

Rion, my oldest son, got married. His marriage made me feel old for a few days, but I was rejuvenated when I became aware that several young and beautiful women sought my company. When I introduced Rion to them as my son, they refused to believe me and said that he was my younger brother—there was a family resemblance—but son, never.

In one week I sold five short stories which I had brought with me. During our travels in Europe I had not let a day go by without working at least four hours at some sort of literary project. When I had to skip a day, I doubled the hours the following day.

Back in New York, at a party at Theodore Dreiser's, one of those gorgeous parties he gave weekly in those days, Grant Overton, then the fiction editor of *Collier's,* took me aside.

"You are the gayest fellow here tonight. I was watching you the whole evening. Things are well with you, aren't they?"

"Fine, Grant. Let's have a drink with Teddy."

Dreiser's parties were very fashionable. Literature, art, the theater, music, the dance, and finance were well represented at them. Otto Kahn was one of the frequent guests, to watch some protégée make her début and to give, as a great favor, financial advice to friends only.

Poor sheep. They took his advice in 1928. A famous banker art patron was making Broadway rich. When the crash came, the banker had their wool, and the poor sheep stood naked and shivering in the cold.

When I was about to leave the party after an impossible exhibition of African dances by a troupe of genuine African dancers from Harlem, Grant Overton pulled my sleeve, "Let's have some coffee and talk outside."

At the table he looked at me out of his mellow eyes and said, "I can't make you out, Konrad. You were so gay tonight, yet your recent stories have an undertone of great sadness. What is the matter?"

We talked until morning.

"You are always in your stories. You were the gay, the strong, and the lucky one in every one of your stories. Of late you are the sad and the unhappy one. And suddenly I see you jumping over tables and cutting capers. You are tearing yourself to pieces, boy."

Naomi and Mirel followed me back to New York. They had developed a nose for danger and had come home to avoid it. Naomi put the matter tersely when she said, "There are too many Otto Abetzes in Paris and everywhere else in Europe. They fall over each other. Let's forget about Europe. I want to forget."

While I was sunning myself in Miami to recuperate from an attack of the grippe, Naomi fell in love with a beautiful house and a magnificent piece of land on the border line of Connecticut. The day after I returned to New York, we drove out to see it. The grounds were still covered with snow. The naked branches of the maple trees on the lawn were encased

in sheets of translucent ice. The house was beautiful and enormous.

There were a dozen cows in the main barn, two big black Percheron horses in the stable, pigs in pigsties, chickens in chicken coops, and a tool shed filled with well-oiled modern farm machinery.

"Well?" Naomi asked.

"Buy it," I said. "Our children should have something to fall back upon, have ground of their own under their feet and be part and parcel of the soil of this country."

We bought the place at the asking price, popped some champagne bottles to celebrate the buying, and moved in immediately.

Arthur Vance and Grant Overton complimented me on my next stories. Papa Bigelow of *Good Housekeeping* voluntarily increased the price of the next story, and Loring Schuller of the *Ladies' Home Journal* enclosed a beautiful letter with the check for a story I had sent him.

After we had taken possession of the farm, I worked with my men mornings behind the plow, on the tractor, in the machine shed, or at cutting down trees in the piece of forest, then sat on a stone fence and wrote stories while listening to the chop, chop of the tractor, the fall of the ax, and the neighing of the horses.

Our friends and the friends of our sons and daughters filled the house every week end. There were seldom less than a dozen at the dining table and often more than twenty. We had brought our cook, Louise, from Paris, and our meals were banquets. There were six large fireplaces in the house and a fire in every one of them every evening.

Everyone we knew was making a "little extra" on the stock exchange.

"Don't sell America short," a literary friend cried when I wouldn't take his advice on a stock about which he had an absolutely certain tip.

And then, suddenly, the crash. How will I ever forget the haunted looks in the eyes of my friends when the brokers hounded them for more margin and sold them out when they didn't get it?

The gentlemen on the estates in our neighborhood dismissed their laborers, gardeners, and caretakers, closed their houses, and sold their prize cattle for butcher meat. Twenty lovely red-haired Irish setters owned by one of our neighbors roamed the fields and fed themselves on our and other people's fowls.

"Nothing has happened. There was a little too much speculation. When the small fry is squeezed out, everything will be as it was. Don't worry. President Hoover says we have hit the bottom already. We can only go up from now on," people said.

On an early December morning, I heard shooting in my forest and came upon two Italian gardeners who had just killed a magnificent deer.

"What the hell do you mean by that?" I shouted before I realized that they were armed, and I wasn't.

I did a Charlie Chaplin and grinned as I looked at the dead animal. "Fine. You'll have plenty of meat for Christmas."

The two poachers, with their fingers on the triggers of their guns, looked at each other.

"When you finish this meat, come and get some more. Take it out the back way. Or better still, put it away in the ice house by the pond, and come and take it at night," I advised.

They still looked at each other.

"How about selling me a hind quarter?"

"O. K., boss," one of them said, putting out his hand. "I think you O. K. And I hope you are O. K. I trust you. I gots family and children."

"Sure. So have I."

"Boss, twenty years I work. The bank she buy the gas company stock with my money, and every time the bank she says, 'Tony, you make hundred dollars, two hundred dollars.' Then the bank she says, 'Gimme a thousand dollars; if not, you lose

everything.' Jesus Maria, where I get thousand dollars? And now my boss she says, 'I can no pay wages.' Jesus, boss, what happened? Who stole our money?"

I tried to explain to them what had happened while I helped them drag the carcass to the ice house and hang it up from the rafter.

While in New Orleans I met Huey Long at the house of a friend. That bouncing, bumptious, leaping, shouting politician spoke of Louisiana as if it were his private backyard. After the third "special" cocktail, he was barely willing to agree that Louisiana had existed before he was born. After the fourth, he didn't concede that much. After the fifth, outsiders had no God damn business interfering in his affairs. "Come to ma Louisiana to tell me in ma Louisiana what all I's to do!"

After the sixth special, his excellency talked from the bathroom that opened upon the livingroom and came out holding a cocktail glass in one hand and buttoning his fly with the other, too contemptuous and too superior to impose upon himself the most ordinary restraint. When he heard that I had been in Italy, he came up to me.

"Italy! The greatest man in the world governs Italy now! Don't tell me you have actually seen him! You have? Quiet there! This man has something to tell me. Quiet there. Shut up. So you have seen him! What do you know about that! He makes them jump through the hoop. Nobody asks him what he does with the money, and why he wants this guy up and this guy down, eh? Top man. Makes things go. Run. That's what we need here. A top man. Me. That's what the sonofabitches need. Me. A top man. There won't be no depression with me as the top man."

The bouncing, frog-eyed, leaping piece of arrogance jutted his small chin out and wanted to know how Mussolini had done it. How had he engineered the march on Rome? Who

had given the cash to organize the movement? And what did I know about the castor oil treatment?

"Made them fill up their pants, eh?" Huey Long guffawed.

"Yes," I said. "Mussolini rose to power on a heap of excrement."

"What difference does it make as long as he rose to power?" Huey scoffed. "On a wave of blood or a heap of shit, it's all the same."

He had heard something about the Nazis in Germany and that man Hitler. Had I seen him? Had I heard him? Who was in back of him, and why? And did I think he, Hitler, would ever get to the top? Hell, no. Hitler didn't interest him half as much as Mussolini, but if he got to the top, it would be another story.

"To hell with aristocracy. It is now the day of the men of the people. Stalin in Russia. Mussolini in Italy. Hitler in Germany. Three men of the people. To hell with democracy. As long as you get there. Votes, bullets, castor oil, it's all the same, isn't it?"

As I walked out, our hostess followed me.

"You have been talking to the future dictator of America."

"Did he tell you to tell me that?"

"It doesn't pay to be too smart in Louisiana," she replied.

Some months later I saw Huey Long again at "21."

"Hey, you, come and tell me mo' about ma friend from Italy. Ah love to hear you," he called to me across the room. Turning to his table companions, he asked, "Ever heard him tell about Mussolini? No? Never heard him tell about the castor oil and how he made them take it? Never heard that Mussolini rose to power on a heap of shit?"

Huey Long spent half of his time in a lavatory and never stopped talking. And it was in a New York lavatory that he was beaten up by someone he had offended.

XXIII

IN JUNE I sailed to Europe to collect some more material for a book I intended to write about Roumania.

On board the *Paris,* I met Dr. Willys, a professor of political economy at Columbia, who was on his way to Roumania to make a study of Roumanian finances for a group of American bankers.

Carol, heir to the throne of Roumania, lived in Paris with Magda Lupescu on the income of his Roumanian estates, but his formidable mother and her friend, Prince Shtirbey, the power behind the throne, regulated that income according to his behavior. Marie was painting such a picture of her son to her people and the world that he would never have the face to claim the throne. Half the scandals about Prince Carol originated from the Royal Palace in Bucharest. Queen Marie, the Bratianos, and Prince Shtirbey looted the country to their heart's content and left what they couldn't take to the minor thieves. These minor thieves then worked up a conspiracy with the representatives of an American utility company, to whom they promised a fat contract if they would finance Carol's return to the throne.

All of Carol's sympathizers in Roumania then set to work. John Bratiano, Carol's enemy, died during an operation by the physician general, Doctor Argentoiano, who dropped a knife down the ministerial throat.

Vintilla Bratiano, a brother of John, died suddenly and con-

veniently. Carol's men traveled through the country, spoke to gatherings everywhere, and told them that it was better to have a virile king on the throne than a baby or a woman.

Other men addressed business meetings and said that America would lend Roumania two hundred million dollars if Carol were on the throne, but would not lend a dollar as long as Marie was manipulating the regency.

The hoodlums of the Iron Guard said that Germany would like to see Carol back on the throne. Carol's father had been a German. Marie was an Englishwoman. It was much better to have someone on the throne whom the Germans liked than one they didn't.

When the ground was well manured with propaganda, Prime Minister Maniu, a heavy, stupid stooge, gave the green light. At the last moment, however, Carol, on the advice of Magda Lupescu, hired an actor to impersonate him on the journey to Bucharest. The poor thespian, disguised as the would-be king, flew to Roumania, landed at Cotroceni, motored to Bucharest to the acclaim of the populace, and bowed to it again and again from the balcony of the Royal Palace. What a stage for an actor! Hours later, on receipt of a telegram from Prince Nicholas that all was well, Carol himself flew to Bucharest, entered his palace by a back door, and came out on the balcony to substitute for the actor and to acknowledge the well-managed acclaim of the populace.

By that time the queen and Prince Shtirbey, Marie's friend, had gathered their large coffers filled with gold and jewelry and crossed the border.

Carol crowned himself king the day I arrived in Paris.

I asked Doctor Willys, who was to report about Roumania to the American bankers, whether he knew what had happened there. He told me he didn't and thought that what I had told him were stories.

"Queen Marie is a noble lady. The young king is a fine man."

I hadn't been at the Hotel Regina in Paris an hour when a Roumanian acquaintance called to tell me that he was coming up to my room with a young lady, precisely the young lady who had engineered the deal with the American company.

A charming, dark-eyed, vivacious young woman who spoke several languages fluently, she made no bones about her business in Paris.

When we were alone, she said, "You have done a lot for our beloved country. It won't be forgotten. You have made the riches of our country known to America. We love you. Now that you are here, you'll have to help me."

"How?"

"Come to dine with me tonight at my apartment." She refused to tell me more.

"I love you and want to be with you every minute while you are in Paris. I might even accompany you to Roumania and see that you receive all the honors due you."

She told me all this an hour after we met, and what she said was accompanied with appropriate gestures and sighs.

Mlle. Elena Borshu's apartment on the Champs Élysées was decorated by Roumanian artists. The walls were hung with homespun silk tapestries. The carved wall panels were painted in peasant colors. The rugs of the floor were priceless pieces that would have honored a museum. Tables, chairs, divans, and corner pieces were carved by the greatest artists and artisans of Roumania. The servants were dressed in Roumanian costumes.

Mlle. Borshu was dressed in a seductive, peasant-style, handwoven silk gown that allowed her shoulders and her beautiful arms to be seen in their full glory.

"Do you like me like this?" she asked and sat on my knees for an *apéritif*.

A band of Gypsies, of the best musicians, played in the adjoining room. An international lawyer and his wife, a former

Roumanian minister and his wife, and, in their wake, two American gentlemen already mildly plastered, came in shortly afterward.

When Lucullus feasted Lucullus, he didn't have anything half as good as was served for dinner that night. The caviar was from Roumania. The Danubian sturgeon, brought on a platter four feet long, had arrived that day on the Orient Express from Roumania. The pheasants and partridges were from the Carpathian Mountains. The wine was from the best Roumanian cellars.

"The tobacco in the cigarettes comes from your own Dobrogea, Mr. Bercovici," Elena Borshu said.

"Is there much tobacco grown in Dobrogea?" one of the Americans asked.

"Mountains, mountains of tobacco," my hostess exclaimed.

The older of the two Americans, a bulgy sort of fellow, had lost his heart to Mlle. Borshu, and his eyes were almost continually on her bare, honey-colored arms and shoulders.

Around eleven o'clock the diplomat and his wife departed, leaving the two Americans, the international lawyer, the hostess, and me to ourselves.

An hour after midnight, we crowded into a Rolls and drove to the Scheherazade, a small, expensive, and exclusive night club, where the American utility magnate and Mademoiselle sat close to each other and kept up a continuous whispering in each other's ears. At five in the morning, I left while they were still whispering nothings.

Two hours later Mlle. Borshu called me on the phone.

"I am going to Venice for a few days. See you in Bucharest."

One of Mlle. Borshu's "dearest" friends was a French aviator married to a Roumanian woman. She had telephoned him to look me up and keep an eye on me. During our first conversation he said quite frankly, "France is through. The Germans

will have us. They'll take us when they are ready, and nobody will stop them."

"And the Maginot line?"

"The Maginot line is a strong door, but it has two open windows on each side, Luxembourg and Belgium. And there is treachery above and pacifism below. France is through."

Such opinions were not rare in the French army, and Mlle. Borshu helped to foster them. She was one of Otto Abetz's friends. So were the French aviator and his Roumanian wife. They couldn't see why I hated Abetz so. He had been giving them the best financial advice. He was charming. His wife was amusing. As a matter of fact, they hoped Abetz would some day come into his own as a diplomat and financier.

I entered Roumania by the back door through Yugoslavia.

One day the scion of a princely Roumanian family told me that King Carol was anxious to abdicate his throne.

"He can't live without Magda, and he has been warned that she would be killed if she set foot on Roumanian soil."

In this dilemma, Carol had asked several of his liberal friends to conspire, compel him to abdicate the throne, and then declare a Roumanian republic. The conspirators were, of course, obligated not to confiscate Carol's properties after he had abdicated.

I was taken to a castle ten minutes from the royal castle in the Carpathians where I was introduced to the future ministerial cabinet of the Roumanian republic.

Five minutes before the conspirators were to march to the palace, the would-be president of the Roumanian republic went to the bathroom, got cold feet, and disappeared by a back door. When the other conspirators discovered that the would-be first president of the Roumanian republic had left them in a lurch, they got into their cars and drove away as fast as they could without telephoning to the king that there would be no abdication that night; that the would-be president had reflected

while on the reflecting seat and renounced the honor and the pleasure. Realizing that the "conspirators" would blame me for the intended court revolution, I left Roumania in a peasant's one-horse buggy, crossed into Hungary, and took the first train out.

When I arrived at Venice, Mlle. Borshu was at the landing of the Danieli.

"I know all that has happened," she said, embracing me. "I am ruined."

"You?"

"Yes, I was in on it. I suggested that they take you in on it to give you a chance for a journalistic scoop. And I made such beautiful arrangements for the president and the new government!"

"What happened to the American utility magnate?"

"He? Oh, he? That was yesterday, long ago. Why such questions? He meant nothing to me. *Mon cher ami,* as far as I was concerned, it was all strictly business. Oh, I am so tired, so tired. Magda will be furious. She expected Carol in Vienna. She really loves that fool. Don't leave me alone here. *Mon Dieu,* I am so tired, so lonely!"

"What do you think will happen now in Roumania?"

"Haven't you read the papers? They already say that you tried to engineer a revolution, and that you were backed by American gold."

"How did you know I was coming through Venice?" I asked her after a while.

"You really are deliciously naïve, *mon cher.* Did you really think that you traveled alone, that I wouldn't protect you?" And she laughed and laughed.

Magda was back in Paris at the Ritz, and exhibited herself to the newspapermen and photographers to prove that she was there and not in Bucharest. She had put on some flesh, but was very pale.

For two weeks she appeared every afternoon for tea at the

Ritz to let the newspapermen see her. During those two weeks, there were daily rumors in Roumania that she had been seen at the window of the palace.

I was home before the last ears of sweetcorn had been picked, and sat down to write the book. When the first chapters were done, my wife said, "This book may cost me your life. Do you have to write it?"

Rada, Mirel, and my two sons asked, "Must you write that goddam book?"

"I must. I just have to tell what I know about those gangsters and murderers who are about to take the Americans for a ride."

I shut myself away from everything and everybody and worked day and night.

Roumanian officials in New York heard what I was doing and sent emissaries to advise me not to publish the book and to tell me that I would be amply compensated if I followed their advice. When I showed them the door, they threatened to avenge themselves on my relatives still living in Roumania.

I was torn between what I believed to be my duty and my emotions and could ask no one's advice.

In the end I did not pull my punches. All reason for moderation had been eliminated by those who had threatened the lives of my own flesh and blood.

When the book was done, an old schoolmate came to see me and wept and wrung his hands, saying that I was endangering his people's lives. He had just received a letter from his sister in Roumania in which she wrote that something would happen to her if and when my book appeared.

The appearance of the book, *That Royal Lover,* created a sensation. All the reviews appeared in one day. The book was hot. My phone bell jangled. Magazines wanted pieces on the same subject. Friends called to advise me not to come to town unarmed or without a bodyguard.

Roumanian papers in New York, Chicago, and Cleveland called upon Roumanian patriots everywhere to do their sacred duty by me. Only a traitor, they wrote, could have written such a book before Roumania was about to obtain a loan in America.

The Roumanian embassy sent its legal representatives to the publishers and threatened to sue for libel unless the book was withdrawn.

When that failed, one of the American utility companies I had mentioned by name in the book threatened to obtain an injunction, but in the end was satisfied by having its name eliminated from the subsequent editions.

A week after the book's publication, while I was in New York, I was attacked in Central Park one evening. Gangsters in the pay of Roumania hit me over the head with a lead pipe and jumped on my stomach when they had me down.

I have since spent many months in bed flat on my back, in consequence of that attack on me, and I still bear the marks made by those assassins, but I have no regrets. What has happened to Roumania since was predicted in that book, even Carol's flight and the occupation of the country by the Nazis. It was fitting that a country ruled by gangsters should fall under the sway of supergangsters. I only hope that at the hour of reckoning, the sob sisters of America will not plead for leniency and "understanding" and forgiveness.

We must never forget that after a little prompting, the gentle citizens of Roumania herded hundreds of men, women, and children into the slaughterhouses and cut their throats there "to conform to rules of sanitation, rules that do not permit the slaughter of animals on the streets."

At any rate, I won't forget what they did to my uncles, cousins, and nephews and the uncles, cousins, and nephews of others.

XXIV

ARTHUR VANCE had died, and the new editor of *Pictorial Review,* Van Zieckurch, a Philadelphia newspaperman, asked me one day, "How soon can you sail to Europe?"

"As soon as I want to. My passport is in order."

"Good. I want you to interview the most important people in Europe, not only statesmen, but important writers, editors, and educators on the subject of peace."

I took the assignment. That was on a Wednesday; on Saturday I was on the boat. I had no illusions about the prospects of peace. I knew the Germans were arming themselves, knew that the French politicians and financiers had sold out to them, and that all the reactionaries were eager to overthrow the Republican regime in France.

The third day out, the bulletin on board ship informed me that a bloodless revolution had been carried out in Spain; that the king had abdicated and left the country; and that Don Fernando de Los Rios, my Granada friend, had been released from jail to become the minister of justice.

I cried out "Hurray" and shook the hands of the person next to me, a tall, middle-aged woman, who was accompanied by a tall, young, and very good-looking woman.

"What are you yipping about?" she asked.

"The Spaniards have kicked their king out."

"I wouldn't yip about that," she said.

"And why not?"

"Because my daughter, Marquesa D'Alorso, is married to a Spanish nobleman."

"I am sorry about that, I mean about your being personally concerned in this affair."

"I am Mrs. Crouchley," the lady said. "I know who you are. This is my daughter. She was saying to me— (Let's go out on deck. Do you mind talking to us?) She was saying to me— (Our chairs are there. You'll sit with us, won't you?) She was saying to me— You tell him, Joanna, what you said. Do."

"I was saying to mother," the younger woman said as she tucked herself under the blanket, " 'Wouldn't it be fun to get Mr. Bercovici to talk to us?' I read your book on Roumania, *That Royal Lover.* Queen Marie was certainly no lady. I was saying to mother, when I saw your name on the passenger list, 'Wonder what he looks like?' I had a picture of you in mind, see. And you look like the picture in my mind."

While she was talking to me, the older lady closed her eyes in sleep.

Marquesa D'Alorso didn't like Spain or the Spaniards. She was an oil heiress from one of our southern states.

"Mother talked me into marrying this goddam marquis because he has a title. And that's all he has ever had. He has gambled away gobs of my money, and his family treated me like dirt. And I don't even have a child by him to pass on the title. And it sure isn't my fault. You can tell that by looking at me, can't you? I hope to God they kill him."

"Who, they?"

"The ones who made the revolution, of course! He won't divorce me, you know. Mother is crazy about titles, but she hasn't been to bed with one of them."

We left her mother asleep on the deck chair and had several drinks at the bar. She was a full-lipped, wide-eyed, long-limbed Texan girl with golden hair and steel gray eyes.

"Mother says to go back and get me a child, she don't care

how. I'll pick me up some good-looking fellow. Let's have another drink."

It was a new Spain. It was easy as soon as one crossed the border, to see that the face of things, if nothing else, had changed in Spain. The voices and the eyes of the people, the behavior of the custom house inspectors, and the manner of the gendarmes had changed. I stopped in Victoria in the Basque country with some people I knew, to find out how the revolution had been engineered.

Primo de Rivera, the dictator, after many years, came under the illusion that the people of Spain actually liked him and his régime and called for a free election, a municipal election over the whole of Spain, to replace the people he had appointed to office.

Some time before the election, Primo de Rivera had arrested seventeen thousand Asturian miners who had protested against Primo's régime. The socialist, the republican, and the liberal candidates for municipal offices, however, taking advantage of Primo's stupidity, promised on large posters and by word of mouth to free the Asturians, to give the vote to the women, and to end the war in Morocco, which was draining the blood of Spain. The dictator, the king, and the grandees soon saw the danger they were running in that election, but it was too late to withdraw the order they had given.

When the votes were counted, it was discovered that ninety per cent of the cities and towns had voted the republican, socialist, and liberal candidates into office. The king, dictator, and grandees wanted to suppress the whole thing by force of arms, but the *guardia civiles*, the dreaded gendarmes, had literally turned their coats and wore their capes with the red lining on the outside to signify that they had changed sides and were with the new order.

After Primo de Rivera had packed his boodle and crossed the border into France, Don Fernando de Los Rios, now minis-

ter of justice, obtained an abdication from the king and saw him, the royal family, and their personal belongings, including the crown jewels, safe across the border, before the released Asturians moved to avenge themselves.

When I visited Don Fernando at the Palace of Justice in Madrid, I was elated to see a photograph of my youngest, Mirel, on his desk. Her photograph had been in his suitcase when he was jailed on his return from America, and because he had gone to the palace from his cell, he had taken the photograph with him for luck. And there it was on his desk.

The new government had already patched up a peace in Morocco, was repatriating the soldiers, and sending them back to their homes.

Church and state were separated, but priests who wanted to continue to live in Spain as free citizens were given three years' salary by the new government.

Spain, which had the largest percentage of illiteracy in Europe, was now busy building schools and turning every vacant building into a school.

No, the millennium had not come with the new government. There still were thousands of starving people roaming the streets.

Because there were no textbooks, schoolteachers used blackboards and gave oral instruction to the children. Under the old régime, tens of thousands of these children would never have seen the inside of a classroom.

Week ends, college students, intellectuals, and members of the government went out to villages, hung blackboards on trees in the public squares, gathered crowds, and taught them their ABC's.

After a while, the grandees who had fled the country, seeing that the new government did nothing to avenge past misdeeds and hadn't even suppressed the reactionary press, returned to Spain. The reactionary papers were polite and subdued at first, but realizing that the new government actually meant to

keep its promise about a free press, they abused that freedom and began to attack the government on every inch of paper.

The salaries of the ministerial cabinet members were so small that Don Fernando lived in a five-room apartment in the workingmen's quarter and came home from the palace in a street car. The de Los Rios's one servant girl, who had come with them from Granada, was the only member of the household who put on airs. When I rang the bell of the apartment and asked whether Don Fernando was in, she corrected me, "You mean, *sua excelenza.*"

In the meantime, Rex Smith, then the resident correspondent of the U. P. (now the managing editor of *Newsweek*), looked me up. Although he wasn't enthusiastic about the new government, he had an open mind. Most of the other American newspapermen in Spain were colder than that toward the new government, and often sent out unfavorable and highly colored reports to their papers. They had friends in "high society" and had come to the conclusion that the republican government was a weak government: (1) because it allowed freedom to its enemies, (2) because it had not yet distributed the land to the peasants, (3) because it had not suppressed the reactionary press, and (4) because it had not thrown its political enemies in jail.

Marie D'Aragon, a magnificent specimen, a former actress and dancer, took me to the homes of some workingmen in Madrid. The Spanish women, still under the influence of the priests, were bitterly opposed to the coeducational school system proposed by the new government.

When I spoke up in favor of the system and pointed out that no harm had come from it in the United States, one of the women said, "If you want to bring up millions of bad women, that's your business."

"My dear Konrad," Don Fernando said, when I told him that it would be dangerous for the republic to give the vote to the women, "we promised the women the vote in our pre-election

campaign. We shall keep our promise. The people of Spain must learn that we, the republicans, keep our promises."

When I pointed out that the reactionary newspapers were undermining all confidence in the government, he replied, "You have a free press in the United States. We must have one here, too."

"Yes, but how free will *they* let your press be, if *they* succeed you?"

Don Fernando shrugged his shoulders. "One shouldn't be democratic only in promises."

At the Military Club, and at the Negresco Café, the German businessmen and tourists joined forces with the English in their denunciation of this and that member of the cabinet, and in spreading rumors that the new government surreptitiously was replacing the famous paintings in the churches and museums with fakes and selling the originals to America.

When I went in Don Fernando's company to see the famous synagogue of Toledo, the newspapers in Toledo and Madrid reported the next day that I had come to Spain to buy the synagogue and transport the building to New York.

Marie D'Aragon assured them that I was a writer and not a millionaire, but they knew "on good authority" and had absolute proof—yes, absolute proof—that I had come to buy the old synagogue.

In Malaga, one of Marie's friends wouldn't let her little daughter out of her sight for a moment because of the Yudeos who had come to live there. She told us what her neighbor, a German woman, had said to her.

I talked to the German woman, the wife of an engineer, explaining to her how wrong and barbarous it was to calumniate innocent people.

"*Unschuldig!*" she screamed. "*So sagen Sie!* But what about the butter that has risen in price? It's almost as expensive as in Germany. We came here because living was cheaper."

"It's the merchants who have raised the price and not the Jews," I tried to explain.

"*Ja, Ja,* I know that. But the Jews, they pay; they always pay what is asked of them."

In Cordoba an old Gypsy woman said, "I know what is the matter with the Spaniards. There has been no blood letting. They love to see blood, something red and sticky that oozes and spreads. Watch them at a bull fight. They gloat, looking at the splotches of blood in the sand of the arena. They must have murder. Believe me, *pariente,* this government isn't going to last. *Los Utopias* of the Republicans are fine, but they should have brought them to the people at the end of a sharp *spada.* Spain cannot be ruled *'con lanta e gilly,'* with love and kisses."

In Barcelona, at the syndicate, a heavy-set, wide-eyed longshoreman, one of the leading communists, said, "This is a namby-pamby government, a government of reform. We want a revolution, a real revolution."

"What do you call a revolution?"

"When blood is shed in the streets. Have they killed their enemies? No. Have they killed the royal family? No. They let them leave with their gold. Look at what the Russians did. They spilled plenty of blood. There was blood in every street, ankle deep. That was a revolution!"

The poor edifice of the Spanish republic was being sapped and gnawed from above and below. On the one hand, the republican government was accused of instigating the burning of monasteries, the murder of priests, and the raping of nuns, and on the other hand, it was accused of protecting the monasteries, the priests, and the nuns.

At a meeting of workingmen in Bilbao, a tall fellow, simply dressed, denounced the government for not carrying out promises made to ameliorate the conditions of the workers.

Several weeks later, I heard the same man, faultlessly dressed, at the Military Club in Madrid, tell his audience that

the economic policy of the government was ruining Spain's industry and finances.

"Heraclio," I said to the friend who had brought me to the club; "I have heard this same man speak at a meeting of workingmen in Bilbao, where he denounced the government for being too kind to the capitalists."

Heraclio called the Prince of Bourbon to our table and repeated what I had told him.

The hollow-eyed, heavy-jowled, squat prince buttonholed the man and brought him to our table.

"Señor Weidler," the Prince introduced the man.

"Have you been in Bilbao recently?" I asked.

"Bilbao? Bilbao, you ask? No, of course not."

"Then it must have been your twin brother I saw at the workingmen's meeting in Bilbao. Yet I would swear it was you."

"I don't know what you are talking about," Herr Weidler said, walking away from our table.

When Heraclio and the prince tried to find out who had introduced Herr Weidler to the club, no one there could tell.

A few months after the new government had come into power, many of its adherents, workers, peasants, and even liberal intellectuals, were saying that the change was not all for the better, that the government was too weak and was composed of visionaries, of people afraid to shed a little blood.

Blood. Blood. One heard the word everywhere. The Spaniards were disappointed by the "dry" revolution.

At a night club in Madrid, where I went with Rex Smith, a Gypsy matador sighed:

"*Pariente, pariente.* This is a bloodless Spain. A Spain of schools and meetings. More schools and more meetings. And now they want to forbid bull fighting," he added, spitting on the floor with disgust.

In Granada at the Hotel Alhambra, a French newspaperwoman told me, "Monsieur, I am warning you, *je vous avertis,*

that some people think you *de trop*. After what happened to you because of your book on Roumania, you should be more circumspect. For instance," she said, "I wouldn't drink open wine," and speaking, she spilled the wine out of the pitcher, "but order bottled wine and inspect the seal to see that it has not been broken. I didn't intend to flirt with you last night when I followed you out to the café. The Germans in Spain don't like you. *Pas du tout, du tout.*"

Marie D'Aragon wept on my shoulders at the railroad station. "Ah, *amigo*," she cried. "It could have been so beautiful. At the next election they'll vote our friends out and then throw them in jail. This is the beginning of the end of Spain. Ah, *amigo*, I shall never see you again. My heart tells me so."

In my train compartment were two engineers and a chemist on their way back to Germany after two years in Spain.

"*Was denken Sie über Spanien?*" I asked.

"This new government won't last. Those utopians don't know how to govern. They are idealists."

Before we had crossed the border into France, I caught a glimpse of Otto Abetz and his French wife in the corridor of the train. She wore beautiful clothes, and he had filled out considerably. After we had crossed the border, I looked into their compartment and wasn't at all astonished to find Herr Weidler and the Abetzes together.

"Monsieur, this is our compartment and you have no right to come in here uninvited. Please leave, or I shall call the conductor," Madame Abetz cried out, when I appeared.

At the next station, Herr Weidler and the Abetzes left the train. At the station after that, a detective came up, asked to see my passport and identification papers, interrogated me on my visit to Spain, asked me where I usually stayed in Paris, and how long I intended to be there this time.

"Why this interrogation?" I demanded.

"Telegraphic orders from Paris," he said, "as a result of a denunciation. Well, I can't hold up the train much longer.

I suppose it's one of those quarrels among foreigners. He denounces you; you denounce him. It's all very disturbing. *Bonjour, monsieur,*" and he left.

Ernestine Schumann-Heink was in Paris. The great singer was also a great human being. One of her sons had fought on the German side and been killed. Another son of hers had enlisted with the American army and had likewise been killed. Ernestine Schumann-Heink was a good American, one of the best, but would have liked to see again the Germany she had once loved, where she was born, and before whose people she had first sung the German Lieder that had made her famous.

"But efen if I go dere now, vat vill I see?" she deplored. "Peoples who haf lost their souls?"

The dear old lady with the ample bosom and beautiful eyes loved sweets and took me to Rumplemeyers, under the arcades opposite the Tuileries, for coffee.

As we came in the door, she cried out, "Is dat not Ysaÿe dere, he und Chaliapin?"

But they had already seen her and compelled us to sit with them. They couldn't keep their hands off Schumann-Heink, pawed and kissed her and ate the *kuchen* out of her plate when she did not feed them into their mouths herself.

When there were no more *kuchen* on her plate or mine, Chaliapin, Russian to the core, called the waiter and ordered a huge platter of sweets, *trigones* bathed in honey, *chaussons aux pommes* with mounds of whipped cream, *tartes aux fraises,* and a dozen other sticky things.

"*Mein Gott,*" Madame Schumann-Heink cried out, licking her fingers, "I will get so fat as a house."

Chaliapin and Ysaÿe dispensed with knife and fork and ate out of their hands while they laughed and talked and stuffed Madame Heink's mouth with pieces of this and that.

Suddenly Madame Heink's face darkened.

"But, Fedia, I remember now, you must not eat such things.

Not *babas au rhum.* Fedia, only saccharine you must have."

"Me, too," Ysaÿe said stuffing a whole baba in his mouth.

"You, too?" the great Russian laughed. "Shake hands. We are just a couple of diabetics, eh?"

That night, after dining at a famous Roumanian restaurant near the Comédie Française on fresh caviar, sturgeon, broiled partridges, baklava in honey of roses, and bottles and bottles of Roumanian wine, Chaliapin opened his shirt collar and began to sing. Madame joined him.

The place was jammed. People sat open-mouthed and listened to a concert such as they had never heard and never will hear again.

And then, abruptly, Chaliapin stopped, hid his head in his arms on the table, and sobbed.

"Vat is it, Fedia?" Madame Schumann-Heink asked, kissing the back of his neck.

"Nothing. *Rien, de rien,*" Ysaÿe consoled. "He is a Russian, isn't he? They always cry when they are very happy. *L'âme Russe,* don't you know. *Moi, ça m'enmerde de voir ça.*"

"Are you not feeling well?" Madame Heink asked the Russian.

"I feel pain here," Chaliapin pointed to his heart.

"Do you still have one?" Ysaÿe laughed. *"À ton age!"*

"I feel pain for Russia."

"It's the same with me for Germany," Madame Heink said with tears in her eyes.

"Both the same," Ysaÿe grinned, "weepers in their wine. Russians and Germans. Some day they'll combine and bathe the whole world in blood."

"Poor Fedia," Madame said, watching him leave.

At the door of her hotel, Madame Heink suddenly asked, "Did you hear what Ysaÿe said about what would happen to the world if Russia and Germany united?"

"Well, he just said that to say something."

"Oh, no. Not Ysaÿe. He has more intuition than any liv-

ing man. I am frightened already. *Grosser Gott. Nicht dass. Nicht dass.*"

"*Mon Dieu,* it's as plain as the nose on your face," Ysaÿe said to me the next day in his hotel room. "*C'est simple comme bonjour.* But don't talk about it. It will give them ideas. And then poor Belgium. How do I know? Well, how do I know that a certain passage in a Beethoven concerto should be played this way and not another way? Beethoven hasn't told me. Intuition! You play a thing ten years, fifteen, and suddenly you see it as plain as the nose on your face, and you wonder that you have been so stupid the day before. Crying in their wine is not the only thing the Russians and the Germans have in common. But, to hell with them. I am no politician. I am a musician. I said something. So I said something."

He sat up on the edge of his bed and doubled his huge feet to find the slippers, feeling for them.

After taking another pull from the bottle, he pointed a finger at me and said, "Go and see Paderewski. He knows everything . . . and he knows the Russians and the Germans. He is at the Hotel D'Orsay. He is a politician. Poles are like that. Writers, artists, musicians, thieves, wrestlers, and prostitutes are all politicians. Go and see him. He is a diplomat. Hasn't he been premier of Poland! Ever slept with a Polish woman? They do it to save Poland like that one who slept with Napoleon. *Dieu du bon Dieu, quel peuple!*"

Paderewski was hale and vigorous and moved about with the ease of a young man when I went to see him. We had met before, years ago, and now talked freely after the first few minutes.

"What I never could understand was your anti-Semitism," I said after we had talked about the new trends in music and literature.

"I wouldn't call it that," Paderewski corrected me. "It was

merely intense Polish patriotism. Once Poland had become an independent country, I wanted it to be entirely Polish, absolutely Polish."

"Well, the only way you could have obtained such a purity would have been to kill off all the minorities in Poland," I suggested.

He shook his head. "No, don't say that. I hate brutality, but those minorities exasperated me by refusing to be assimilated, by not allowing themselves to be made into Poles."

"This is precisely what exasperated the Germans and the Russians against the Poles, the fact that they wouldn't allow themselves to lose their national identity. You yourself insisted on being a Pole while your country was part of Russia."

"Of course, I did. I was a Pole. I am a Pole. I shall always be a Pole. Tell me," he asked, "have you no dislike for any nation as a whole?"

"I am sorry to say that I don't like the Poles," I answered.

"The Poles!" Paderewski cried out. "How could anyone not like the Poles?"

"How could one *like* the Poles after what they have done to the Jews?" I answered his question with a question.

After a long pause, during which Paderewski chewed his graying blond mustache, he turned to me with moist eyes.

"I hate the Germans. I hate their women, their wines, their beer, their food, their music, their language, their odor, and their literature; there isn't a thing German that I don't hate. I disliked the Jews in Poland because they spoke a German dialect, Yiddish. If they had spoken Hebrew, I would have felt differently toward them, I am sure."

When I told him of my conversation with Ysaÿe, Paderewski cried out, "Did he say that? Ysaÿe is the most intuitive man in the world today. Tell me, how did he come to speak about it?"

When I had recounted the events of the dinner with Schumann-Heink and Chaliapin, Paderewski said, "That's it. It's as plain as the nose on your face."

"You are repeating his very words," I remarked.

"His very words, eh? It has happened before. Thirty years ago I repeated his very words. Ah! If our statesmen only had the intuition of artists! So Ysaÿe said that the Russians and the Germans will unite against the rest of Europe! *Mon Dieu!*"

"Do you believe it is possible?"

"Possible! It's inevitable! Western civilization is doomed if the two Asiatic powers in Europe combine."

After I had sent off the interview with Paderewski, I took the train to the birthplace of Adolf Hitler, who was then on his last lap toward the conquest of Germany.

The very racial theory which Hitler and his entourage of pseudo-anthropologists expounds stamps the Schukelgrubbers or the Schuklers, his family, as mongrels.

The section of Austria in which Adolf Schukelgrubber was born was trampled upon by all the Asiatic invaders of Europe a thousand years ago. Goths, Comenes, Tartars, Avars, and Huns followed each other over that corner of the world for several centuries. There are not two people in the village of Hitler's birth with the slightest resemblance to each other either in bone structure or in coloring. The great Adolf himself has the cheekbones of a Slav, the neck of a Tartar, the gait of a Polish peasant, the voice of a Breton, and the heavy-lidded, bulgy eyes of a Turk. Indeed, this infamous Aryan looks more like the offshoot of the seed of an Asiatic planted in a Mediterranean womb than the get of any other known mongrel combination.

Usually, when visiting a town where a famous man was born, one finds scores and scores of people who claim to have known him, playmates, schoolmates, people who claim to have first noticed how remarkable he was, and people who tell you of his pranks and eccentricities.

In that man's birthplace, no one wanted to admit having known him or remembering him, not the priest and not even the schoolteacher. True, Adolf Schukelgrubber had left the little

border town of Bavaria when he was only thirteen, but there were now grown men and women his own age who must have known him in school or met him at church. Each and all denied having known him as if he were a criminal whose acquaintance sheds no honor upon the town he was raised in or on the individuals who had known him.

When an old custom house employee finally admitted having noticed the boy years ago with his father, he begged me not to tell anyone.

"He may one day wipe out the town and the people who have known him, so he can tell that he came down directly from heaven," the old man said. "Hasn't he already changed his name? Who was that Hitler after whom he calls himself?"

Adolf Schukelgrubber's sister in Vienna wasn't any more communicative. She shut the door of her apartment in my face when I asked her a question about her brother.

I had met similar treatment as a reporter on the *New York World* when I came to interview the immediate relatives of a murderer who was about to be executed, but the doors of near and distant relatives of people who had suddenly become famous were always wide open to inquirers.

"Your brother may one day rule the whole of Europe," I pleaded with the little woman who had opened the door just a crack.

"*Nein, nein. Ich weiss nichts. Es geht mich nicht an. Mir ist alles schnuppe,*" she replied in her impossible dialect. "*Ich kenne ihm überhaupt nicht.* I hardly know him. I haven't seen him in years. Leave me be," and she banged the door.

On the street to do her marketing, she hurried along the walk, basket on her arm, shawl over her shoulders, like one ashamed, and not like the proud sister of a man who was already being "*Heil*"ed by millions of people.

In Vienna, at the Bristol Café, I found one man, a vendor of pornographic pictures, who was proud to have known him.

"*Der Kerl* wouldn't have had to leave Vienna if he had listened to me and painted the kind of postal cards I advised him," he said.

"Why don't you go to Munich?" I asked. "Now that he is a somebody, he might give you a good job."

"*Er!* He! *Na! Lieber treibe ich mein Handel!* I'd rather continue my own business."

Back in Berlin, Stephan Grossman, the poet, said to me over a glass of wine, "The attitude of Hitler's sister is the true measure of what we are to expect from him if he succeeds. She wants to deny any kinship with him so as not to share his infamy. Watch out."

XXV

I ONCE asked Doctor Menas Gregory, the eminent psychiatrist of Bellevue Hospital, what was the best clue to a man's sanity.

"The voice," he answered. "Pay no attention to the sequence of his words or to their sanity. Remember this: an insane man can play a sane man much more successfully than a sane man can impersonate an insane one. I listen to the voice when I am called upon to pass judgment on the degree of sanity of a criminal. I make a chart of it like a cardiograph of a beating heart, and know by the wavering of the voice line the condition of his sanity. Voices of insane people limp and squint and mirror all the infirmities of their minds. I have heard crazy people say very sane things, but because they said them in an insane way, I wasn't fooled. I say, listen to a man's voice and not to what he says. If the strings of a musical instrument are not tuned, the finest melody, played on a million dollar fiddle, will still be crazy and out of tune."

In Berlin I went to hear the *"Schöne Adolf"* speak in the Sports Palast. Ernst; Roehm; the brothers Strasser, Otto and Gregors; and the ubiquitous Streicher were on the platform. The hall was decorated in the grandiose style that Doctor Goebbels, stage director for the Nazis, had devised for such occasions. The Nazis were not yet in power, but they had been given money by the Krupps and other armament manu-

facturers to get going. It was Thyssen, the great industrialist, who had originally advised Schukelgrubber to change his name to Hitler.

"You'll get nowhere with a name like Schukelgrubber," he is supposed to have said to the leader of the gang of street-brawlers and expropriators. "Change your name, or no money."

Meetings, pamphlets, expropriations, collections, and the sale of Storm Troopers' brown uniforms were already yielding profits. Amter, the Nazi business manager, had managed very well. From a workingman's organization, it had transformed itself into a *Herren* party with some of the old Kaiser's sons and grandsons among its members. Nazism had been in bad odor as long as it was preached in beer cellars only, but it became stylish when it moved into the Sports Palast, although what it preached was still below the level of the lowest stage of civilization.

Julius Streicher, as the first speaker, got up and delivered a long and obscene speech in which he praised Adolf's courage and gave filthy descriptions of the anatomy of those who opposed the party—the Jews, the democrats, and the bolsheviks.

Hitler, his dark-brown hair plastered down and his face ornamented by that funny little black Chaplinesque mustache, looked like something out of an old wax museum.

Ernst spoke after Streicher.

Roehm, who spoke next, looked as though he had been put together from the rear of a rhinoceros and the belly of a sow. He reeked obscenity, the obscenity of a stinking, festering, slimy animal.

When Roehm had sat down, Adolf rose, and the audience stood up and cheered. Hess, looking like a cross between an Arab and a square-headed Egyptian (he was born in Cairo), cheered the loudest.

When the applause subsided, Hitler began to speak. He spoke a language I knew, yet it sounded as if he spoke no

human language at all, as if some robot had been wound up to speak. Each word seemed to be broken off a piece of crockery.

After my ears had somewhat attuned themselves and I began to catch words, then sentences, and finally phrases, I understood that he was telling why only he could save Germany from the Jews who had written the Versailles treaty and put him in jail. In the midst of an interminable peroration, he began to splutter and stutter, wipe sweat from his face, curse, and rant about the dear comrades and the criminality of France and England, two bolshevik countries, two negroid, dirty bolshevik democracies. He spoke a hundred words on an even keel, then suddenly screamed and repeated on a still higher key what he had just said. He spoke nine words one minute and a hundred the next, looking all the time elsewhere and not at his audience.

His body neither moved nor swayed. Only his hands moved up and down, and his fingers crooked themselves into claws, clasping and unclasping an imaginary foe.

Then I remembered Doctor Menas Gregory's dissertation on speech and voice. Even if the words made some sense, the voice did not. What that crazy man said was under some control, emotion, or intelligence, memory or conviction, but the voice was under no control at all; it was an unregulated clock ticking without timing.

After an hour, when almost any other speaker would have been exhausted, Hitler's voice rose to a still higher pitch as he shook his head and pounded his chest like an unco-ordinated mechanical robot with an old broken phonograph record inside.

Never did German sound so harsh. In another hour, he lowered his voice to an intimate whisper and began to tell what he would do to the communists, the democrats, and the Jews. He would take them down to a certain place he and his friends knew and count off his grievances with steel rods upon their bare backs until they gasped out their last cries, the cowards.

He would compel their women and children to live like rats in dark holes in dank gutters and make them lick with their tongues the streets they had polluted. He'd show them what German fury was.

As for the hypocritical Christians, whose churches had sucked the German people dry, their end also was at hand.

By that time he was standing in a pool of his own sweat. The audience no longer heard what he said, his voice having disordered their nerves.

Suddenly Hitler stopped, stopped on a loud scream, wiped his sallow face, shook hands absent-mindedly with the friends on the platform, and sat back beside Hess, who cooed over him as over a baby.

I shuddered at the thought that that man might some day rule Europe and perhaps the world.

A newspaperman I knew dragged me to the platform to meet Hitler. But I couldn't bear the thought of shaking that sweaty hand, a sweaty hand that would cause the disappearance of nations and cause fire and death to rain from the skies and pour from the mouth of cannon. I was just filled with horror and was repelled by the slime that oozed out of his mouth and pores. But, had I known, had I known! I would have gladly died to . . .

(I heard him speak again after Warsaw, and again after Chamberlain's speech saying "No!" to Hitler's offer of a Hitlerian peace.

(One of the radio companies here made a diagram, like the one Doctor Menas Gregory had spoken about, of the voices of Hitler, Chamberlain, Roosevelt, Daladier, and the king of England. On that comparative diagram, Hitler's voice varied from thirty to sixty-eight; the average of all the others was from thirty to thirty-four.)

I remembered an old story I had once read or heard of how a man once found himself trapped in a granary with a thousand fat but hungry rats. I thought of my sons and daughters, my

wife and friends, my brothers' and sisters' children in France and elsewhere, and the millions of people, all being trapped in a granary with fat and hungry rats. Those Nazis looked like human beings, but they weren't. They used a human language, but what they said wasn't human. The faces of Hitler, Himmler, Goehring, Goebbels, and the others were faces of rats upon two-legged bodies. I couldn't make myself believe that the skin of their bodies under the clothes wasn't covered with the horrible fur of gutter rats.

Before leaving with his army for Poland, Hitler designated Field Marshal Goehring as his immediate successor if anything should happen to him on the battlefield. Physically the two men are the very opposite of one another. Hitler is thin and narrow-chested; Goehring is stout and barrel-chested. Hitler is on the dark side; Goehring is blond. Hitler's face is oval; Goehring's is round.

Hitler has had no amours with women; Goehring has had many amours. Hitler is sallow; Goehring is ruddy. Hitler walks as though he were following a funeral; Goehring prances like Falstaff. Hitler seldom smiles; Goehring laughs even at the funerals of his best friends.

A scion of an old family, Goehring, although offering lip service to Hitler, is neither his sycophant nor his slavish admirer.

Goehring, the jovial Falstaff, cares little for what history will say about him. He doesn't shrink from committing cruelties and abhors the sniveling sanctimoniousness of Hitler. His sadism is open and frank. He speaks of power and not of truth. He knows the difference between truth and untruth; Hitler doesn't.

A capable flier during the last war, Goehring was wounded severely, was in a hospital long after the peace of Versailles, and came out a confirmed drug addict. Eventually he was brought before a criminal court under the Weimar republic and accused of debauching a young boy.

Shunned by his own caste, not because of his immorality, but because of the public ignominy, Goehring eventually fell in with the Roehm-Ernst-Hitler combination, before it was fashionable to do so.

Goehring's frequent changes of glittering and flamboyant uniforms have long been the butt of ridicule and jokes inside and outside of Germany. That well-advertised vanity, however, is only a cloak for a physical infirmity, a worn-out stomach. Field Marshal Goehring has no control over its evacuation, *has* to change uniforms frequently, and *must* use strong scents.

Goehring has given his new wife mounds of historical jewelry rifled from the museums of the world. He has confiscated stores, factories, mines, automobiles, bank accounts, clothes, boats, and houses, and paid for them with receipts much as Pancho Villa, the Mexican bandit, paid for what he took with paper money bearing his signature.

I have seen Goehring, in Berlin and elsewhere, when he was so heavily doped he didn't know where he was. I have seen him drunk at the Kaiserhof. I have watched him at table, like a costumed pig, tear the meat with his hands and bite chunks of bread out of the whole loaf, while he grunted and belched. And he stank like a cesspool between changes of uniform, while he sat in his own excrement and ate and ate.

At the Louvre Museum in Paris in 1930, this "tourist" stood before one of Giotto's paintings, looked at it, and turning to one of his companion tourists, said, "*Das nehme ich wann wir Paris nehmen*" (I'll take this when we take Paris). The Giotto picture now adorns his Berlin bedroom. Goehring's truculence is not yet fully known. He may in a mood of boyish expansion set fire to half the world or to the whole of it. The Reichstag fire was his invention. The word "fire" appears several times in every one of his discourses. Any student of pyromania knows what that signifies. And may the Lord help Europe when a pyromaniac also has a worn-out stomach!

My interview with Goehring was very brief. He looked at

the questions I had submitted in writing and said with appropriate gestures, *"Soll mich die Welt in Arsch lecken. Die Amerikaner überhaupt."*

In 1932 I met Herr Doktor Goebbels at a night club in Berlin a few months before Hitler was made the Reichskanzler by President von Hindenburg. The Herr Doktor, in a new uniform with Sam Brown belt and sidearms, was celebrating all by himself with a bottle of French champagne. Two uniformed Storm Troopers stood behind him, but came forward every five minutes on the dot, clicked their heels, extended their right hands in salute, and stood at attention until the Herr Doktor dismissed them.

I couldn't help laughing.

"Stop laughing," Fräulein Schurtz, my companion, admonished.

"I don't have to be afraid of him."

"You don't. You'll leave Berlin in a week or two, but I must live here," she remonstrated.

A few moments later, Putzi Hanfstaengel, six foot four, appeared. There was no love lost between Goebbels and Putzi, any more than between Goebbels and any other of Hitler's close associates. They weren't even on speaking terms with one another.

On his way out, Hanfstaengel, an old New York acquaintance, nodded to me.

I was just about to leave when one of Goebbels' troopers came up, clicked his heels, extended his right arm, and informed me that Herr Doktor Goebbels requested the honor of my company at his table.

"Tell the Herr Doktor that the gentleman will presently come to his table," Fräulein Schurtz told the Storm Trooper.

"Go for my sake," she pleaded. "Otherwise he'll think that I told you not to go."

The diminutive Goebbels rose on his clubfoot, clicked his heels, and invited me to sit opposite him.

"*Ach,* so you know the Herr Doktor Hanfstaengel?"

"I knew Putzi in New York years ago."

"How long have you been in Berlin?"

"A few weeks."

"*Ach, so,* a few weeks already! From New York?"

"No. From Hollywood."

"*Ach, so.* Hollywood. Then you are in the moving picture business. *Ach, so.* Hollywood! Some day I shall be there. I have ideas. Great ideas. Great ideas for the films. They are worth millions. Have you heard me speak already?"

"Yes, I have, at the Sports Palast, last week. But I am not in the moving picture business; that is . . ."

"*Ach, so!* Last week. You must admit it was colossal! They are very much interested in me in America, are they not? *Ja.* My picture is in all the papers there, is it not? *Ja.* American directors have no idea of the colossal. The real colossal, that is *my* invention. *Ein noch nicht dagewesenes.* How long have you known Fräulein Schurtz?" he asked, suddenly changing the conversation.

"I have always known her."

Just then a female singer, having finished her song, sauntered down from the platform and came over to our table.

"*Sie waren unherhört. Kolossal. Wunderbar,*" and remembering me, he added, "Fräulein Gerber, permit me. A famous impresario from America."

"*Ach, so.* Impresario!" Fräulein Gerber smiled, sitting down.

"The gentleman has come from America, especially to invite me on a lecture tour."

"America!"

"Look here," I said. "I am afraid there has been a misunderstanding."

"But, my dear gentleman from America, I am sorry. I can't accept your offer," Goebbels said. "The party needs me. Germany needs me. We are laying the foundation for a new civilization that will last a thousand years. I can't think now of personal glory, of personal advantage. I will come to America, certainly, later. . . ."

"Let's get this clear, Doctor Goebbels," I tried to explain.

"Can't you understand the situation, my American friend?"

"But Herr Doktor, you are laboring under a delusion . . ."

"*Liebchen,* you tell the American gentleman that Germany cannot spare Doctor Goebbels just now." Goebbels turned to the young lady.

"This is no time to think of one's personal fortune."

Suddenly he cried out, "Don't say any more, Fräulein Gerber. For all I know it may be a trick of our enemies to get me out of Germany."

I looked at the mad runt.

"Pardon me," he apologized. "I take that back. I take it back. Our enemies are too stupid to have thought of that. Ha, ha. *Ja,* too stupid. Accept my apologies. It is the duty of men of historical importance—and I have historical importance, have I not, Fräulein Gerber?—to be on their guard always."

"Look here, Herr Doktor, let's get this straight; let me talk for a minute."

"I understand. Don't say a word," Goebbels said. "You there, in America, think that dollars can buy everybody. You have already robbed us of our greatest artists, musicians, great actors, and actresses. But, my dear friend from America, my answer is, 'No.' I remain here."

I rose.

The four Storm Troopers approached and saluted.

"Escort the gentleman to his hotel," Goebbels ordered, and, turning to me, he said, *"Gute nacht."*

And thus it happened that I returned to the Esplanade Hotel escorted by four Storm Troopers.

"*Du lieber Gott in Himmel,*" the porter cried out. "Are you one of them? Are there such in America, too?"

"*Gott bewahre.*"

The following morning, Irma Schurtz, a well-known German actress, blew into my room like a whirlwind.

"What's the matter?" I asked.

" 'What's the matter,' he asks? Why didn't you tell me anything about it?"

"Tell you about what?"

"That you had come to offer Goebbels half a million dollars to go to America on a lecture tour. Why didn't you let me in on your plans?"

I told her what had happened and how Goebbels had made it all up of the whole cloth.

An hour later, Doctor Goebbels' private secretary 'phoned to inform me that Herr Goebbels had talked it over with several friends, but all had advised against his leaving Germany just then. . . .

At Agnetendorf, Gerhart Hauptmann, the famous dramatist, received me at the gates of his villa in a pearl gray Prince Albert coat.

Frau Hauptmann joined us in the library.

"How are things in Berlin?" she asked.

"Crowded with Storm Troopers."

"*Ach, so!*" she sighed.

"But *Liebchen,*" Hauptmann reassured her, "this is nothing. Our Germans are happy when they can see thousands of uniforms on the street."

"And sidearms," I added, "and drill grounds outside Berlin, and cellars in which they beat people up."

"Well, a few people have to be beaten up," Hauptmann sug-

gested philosophically. "You can't have an omelette without breaking the eggs."

"What omelette?" Frau Hauptmann questioned.

"The happiness of the Germans, *Liebchen.*"

I looked at the white-haired head of the great writer.

Was this the man who had written *The Weavers, Hanshel Fuhrman,* and *Hanele*?

"Von Papen is not going to let that paperhanger rule Germany. He'll have dinner with us tonight, and you'll hear it from his own mouth," Hauptmann pacified his wife.

Von Papen had dinner with us, but didn't say whether Hitler would or would not rule Germany. He sat there like a gray fox, his eyes wandering from one guest to another, and came to life only once, when I mentioned casually the Black Tom explosion which he had engineered in America during the World War.

Frau Hauptmann enjoyed my bluntness, but Herr Hauptmann changed the conversation and asked whether I knew his friends in Milford, Connecticut.

When von Papen asked for my impressions of Germany, I asked, "What role is Otto Abetz playing in France?"

"Who?" von Papen inquired.

"Abetz, Otto Abetz, a young German I met in Paris and in Spain."

"Do you know him?" Frau Hauptmann asked von Papen.

"Never heard the name."

When we walked into the next room for coffee, Frau Hauptmann brushed her lips against my shoulder and whispered, "You are a very rude boy, but I like you."

After Herr Hauptmann had retired to his library for a snooze, I asked his wife, "What about your son who had accompanied you to America some years ago?"

"Not my son. His son. I am not old enough to have a son as old as that."

"Pardon me. But what about him?"

"He is probably enjoying his new uniform," she sighed.

"Oh, he is one of them, too?"

"Let's not talk about him."

Later, when Shapiro, the dramatist's amanuensis, took me to my room, he said, "Young Hauptmann is one of Hitler's great friends. The old man doesn't like the Nazis, but he rather likes the idea of having somebody at court in case anything happens."

On my return to Berlin I met Ben Huebsch, the American publisher (Viking), at Compinsky's restaurant. Ben thought I was too pessimistic and almost refused to believe what he saw with his own eyes.

Even Rohlwog, the German publisher, who later turned Nazi, couldn't convince him that anything serious was afoot.

After Huebsch had gone, four Storm Troopers came into the restaurant, dragged two men out from behind a table into the center of the floor and beat them mercilessly with rubber truncheons.

Rohlwog held me down in my chair.

"Stay where you are."

"Why doesn't someone call the police?" I yelled.

"Come, let's go. Let's have a drink somewhere," Rohlwog urged. "This is the prelude to a new Germany, a new German *Kultur.*"

I struggled to tear myself out of Rohlwog's embrace, to go to the rescue of the screaming men who were being beaten to a pulp by the grim brown-clothed murderers, but his arms were like a vise about me.

"Don't waste your pity. They are merely beating up people of their own gang."

Herr Doktor Alfred Rosenberg, the theoretician of the Nazis, was born in the Baltic provinces and probably has no more of the blood he calls Aryan in his veins than the average Russian or Pole. Rosenberg resided in Paris during World War I, from 1914 to 1918. Why he was in Paris at the time instead of being at the battle front has never been explained.

While living in the Jewish district of Paris, he became engaged to a Jewish girl, the daughter of his employer.

After the Versailles treaty, Rosenberg returned to Germany, made the acquaintance of the editor of the *Völkischer Beobachter*, then a struggling anti-Semitic weekly, fitted his literary contributions to the policy and the language of the paper, and became a *Judenfresser.*

Rosenberg's *Judenfresserei* in the *Völkischer Beobachter* attracted the attention of Hitler, who shortly thereafter bought a partnership in the paper and appointed Rosenberg its editor-in-chief. From then on, Herr Doktor Rosenberg's paper every day has reported lurid rapes of "pure Aryan" girls in Germany, in Patagonia, Brazil, New York, Chicago, Mexico City, Rio de Janiero, Bucharest, Budapest, and St. Louis. According to him, the fifteen million Jews in the world have no occupation other than the raping of Aryan girls.

I interviewed Rosenberg in the office of the *Völkischer Beobachter* in the summer of 1932. By that time he was the editor-in-chief of five other publications, all owned by Hitler. Tall, thin, angular, gray-eyed, he sat behind an enormous desk and looked like a very intelligent and worldly young man, the kind one meets at publisher's tea parties and intellectual gatherings. He smiled, leaned back in his revolving chair, rubbed his thin hands, and asked, "What is it you want to know?"

"What I want to know is how you can get away with so much in republican Germany? We in America also have a free press, but . . ."

He laughed. "Free press! America! You don't have a free press there."

"If the Nazis ruled Germany, would they allow more freedom to the press than we have in America?" I asked.

"*Gott bewahre!*" he cried out. "Only democrats believe in a free press. I spit in their faces and kick their behinds, and they take it because of the free-press fetish. We tell them daily that we don't believe in freedom, in parliamentarianism,

in democracy, that once in power we will close the political avenues by which they could ever come into power again, and what do they do? Nothing. How can an intelligent man believe in a democratic form of government in the face of all this?"

"But tell me, Herr Doktor, do you believe in the theory of race published in your papers and your magazines?"

"*Das ist eine nebensache*" (that is beside the point), he answered. "The question is not whether I believe in them, but whether I can make our readers believe in them."

"But what about intellectual honesty?" I ventured.

"A bourgeois virtue, a weakness."

"You have lived in France, have you not?" I asked.

"Who told you that?" he shouted in a voice that was almost a shriek.

"Oh, somebody."

"It must have been that *Schweinhund,* Hanfstaengel. He goes about telling stories about me! Some day I shall settle his *Quargel.* Who told you?"

"A man by the name of Lichansky."

"Lichansky? I don't know anybody by that name."

"You never heard the name of Lichansky, on the Rue des Écouffes, in the ghetto of Paris? Think again, Herr Doktor!"

"Never heard of him. Never. Never," he repeated in great agitation.

"His daughter's name is Miriam. Does that refresh your memory?"

"I don't know any Lichanskys and don't know any Miriams. Look here, my dear fellow, I am a busy man."

He pressed a buzzer. A uniformed doorman, a Storm Trooper, appeared.

"Show the Herr out."

I jumped into the first cab.

Back at the hotel, I told Fräulein Schurtz where I had been. She grew pale. Her lips went white.

"What's the matter?"

"Nothing. I am glad I didn't know where you had gone. I would have died of anxiety. *Du lieber Herr Gott! Er geht überall, wie ein Kind.* (He goes everywhere like a child.)"

"But I had to interview Rosenberg. He was on my list."

"That murderer! He makes me feel ashamed to be a German. I swear to you, he is no German."

Poor Irma. She was so intensely German that she denied the Germanism of anyone who ran counter to her conception of what Germans were. When I said something uncomplimentary about Germans and Germany, she drew herself up to her full five feet eight, looked at me out of her sky-blue eyes, and beat her chest, shouting, "I am a German. I. I. I."

On an afternoon in September, she took me to see some friends of hers, five young actresses who lived in one small apartment on the Alexander Platz and were all out of work. Not one of the girls owned a complete outfit of clothes. Since they were more or less the same size, when two girls had to go out, three had to stay home. To preserve their clothes, they practiced nudism in their rooms.

"You see," Irma said, "they feel it is more indecent to be partly dressed than totally nude."

On the way to their apartment we bought *Aufschnitte* (delicatessen, cheese, butter, bread), and several bottles of beer to take to them.

Their nudity didn't shock me; at least I didn't act as if it did. They were young and good looking, and acted so casually that after a while I was more embarrassed by my clothes than by their nudity. We were still eating when a fine young fellow, neatly dressed, came in, kissed one of the girls, shook hands almost formally with the four other nude girls, and was introduced to Irma and me.

Suddenly I heard screams, shots, and windows crashing in the street. I went to the window to look out, but the young man yanked me away.

"You don't want to be shot, do you?"

While the girls dressed hurriedly, I asked, "But what has happened?"

"Hitler's boys are looking for someone," the young man informed me. "One of theirs was killed last night. Now they are searching every house, every room, to find a known communist and kill him."

"And the police?"

"They know better than to interfere. Keep your temper if they come up here."

A moment later heavy boots marched up the stairway. The girls acted at being indifferent. One was in the kitchen, washing the dishes. One sat at the writing table to write a letter. One was knitting. A heavy boot thumped our door and a harsh voice called, *"Aufmachen."* The young man opened the door. Two S. S. men came in with revolvers drawn and left the door wide open.

They were pimply young boys in their early twenties, but they walked into the kitchen and from there into the other room, opening doors with their boots and looking into the cupboards and under the beds, as if they were the official masters of Germany.

One of them looked at me for a long time and then asked the girls, *"Wer ist der man?* (Who is this man?)"

"Ein Amerikaner," Irma replied.

"Ach, so!"

"Can I see your papers?" he asked me in New York-ese.

When he had handed me back my passport, I said, "You couldn't do that in New York, could you?"

"Not now, but someday—"

"Don't be so sure, buddy!"

"Maul halten," he shouted, and turning to the girls he ordered, "No one leaves this house tonight."

"Can't I leave?" I questioned.

"I said nobody," he bellowed. "Nobody, that means you, too."

A shrill whistle from the street called the two uniformed

gangsters to the window. After a few rapid words with someone below, they left and ran down the stairs at top speed.

"The communists," Irma said, looking out of the window and shutting it quickly.

"This has been going on for weeks," one of the girls explained. "The Nazis shoot, the communists stab, and then each set searches all the houses for their enemies."

When the noise and the shooting had subsided, Irma said to me, "Let's go."

We shook hands all around and left.

At the bottom of the dark staircase, Irma stumbled over a uniformed body curled up like a snail.

"What do we do?" I asked.

"Run," Irma Schurtz answered, dragging me after her, "run back to the hotel."

We ran hand in hand to get the streetcar two blocks away, but the end of the street had been barricaded with beds, tables, chairs, doors, and packing boxes, and we were turned back by people in workers' clothes with revolvers in their hands.

When we attempted to go back to the apartment we had just left, we found that the people had hastily thrown up another barricade behind us to protect the houses of that street from an invasion by the S. S. men.

The women, disheveled and strong, kept on building up the two barricades while the men shot at the S. S. men on the other sides.

A little boy, not twelve, picked up the revolver which had fallen out of the hand of a wounded man, called to a woman to take the *Kamerad* away, and took his place behind a splintered oaken door.

I was fascinated. Irma was hysterical. She ran between the two barricades like an animal in a cage and pleaded that she had to go home.

Suddenly two police cars with *Schupos,* armed police, moved

in close to both ends of the street. The next instant the people disappeared from behind the barricades.

Irma pulled me into a hallway.

"Where to?"

"Any door will open. Come."

She knocked at a door. A moment later it opened into a dark room, and a voice whispered, *"Herein."*

When we were inside, the same voice urged, *"Ins bett. Geschwind,"* and a hand guided me into the next room and into a bed that was already crowded by four bodies.

When the noise had subsided, one of the men lit a lamp and recognized Irma who had been in bed close to him a moment before.

"Ach! Fräulein Schurtz. What an unexpected honor. *Kinder,* Fräulein Irma Schurtz, the actress, is here."

Irma scrambled out of bed and smiled at me.

"We gave it to them tonight," a flat-chested, middle-aged woman said, going to the kitchen to set a pot of coffee on the fire.

"Tomorrow, they'll give it to us," a man said.

"Ja, but Moscow will never allow six million of us to fall into their hands."

"No?" the man remarked sarcastically. "She has too much confidence in Moscow," he said to me. "I haven't. Not since Moscow ordered the communists to vote with the Nazis to defeat the Social-Democrat candidate and elect Goehring as president of the Reichstag."

The barricades were still there in the morning. The firemen of Berlin refused to remove them, because cleaning streets was not one of their duties; the street cleaners, because carrying heavy furniture was no part of their work; and the police, of course, wouldn't dirty their uniforms with such work.

Even at that early date, and long before the Nazis seized power, Moscow was playing ball with them. If the German

communists had not obeyed Moscow and kept their skirts clean, Hitler would not have been able to smother them and all the other socialist organizations in Germany. Hitler rose to power hoisted upon a scaffold of many stupidities and treasons, but all those crimes together were not so horrible as the crime of Moscow that delivered the world into the hands of the enemies of civilization.

XXVI

I LEFT Germany and went to Constantinople. At the bar of the Hotel Europe, one of the Associated Press men said to me over a whiskey and soda, "What the hell do you want to go to Ankara for? Stay here. You can have lots of fun. Now that the harems have been broken up, there are some pretty dames loose in town. Have a gander at the dame coming in now with that French runt."

"Who is she?"

"Italian, Austrian, and maybe Russian. A countess. Tall dame. Me, I like 'em tall. How about you?"

"Depends on the season of the year, color, age, and a few other things. What is she doing in Constantinople?"

"Plays the piano, sings, paints, and sells ammunition."

"Who is she working for?"

"For Basil Zaharoff. Say, that's the guy you ought to meet. I'll see whether I can fix it for you. I'll be back in a moment."

The A. P. man went to a little table near a window, clicked his heels smartly, bowed, and was invited to sit down by the woman after being introduced to the man.

A moment later he called me to join them.

"Roumania! So. Whom do you know there?" the countess asked, heaving her perfumed bosom.

When I had enumerated a dozen or so names, she exclaimed, "Then you must also know Mlle. Elena Borshu."

"Of course I know her."

"Your friend here, Mr. Smith, tells me you want to meet Sir Basil. What about?"

"To talk to him."

"Business?"

"No."

"If it is business, you'd better talk to me."

"What could I use a couple of cannon or a hundred machine guns for?" I asked. "To shoot a publisher?"

"Well!" she reflected. "There are always revolutions, you know. Captain Fournier, here, wants to dispose of a batch of Loebels and Manlichers. Museum pieces. Couldn't even have sold them to the Berbers a year ago, but now they, too, will find customers."

"And if we don't sell them, I shall have had the pleasure of having met you," the sparrowlike little Frenchman said, kissing her fingers.

"Mexico used to be one of my best customers," Madame sighed, powdering her nose, "but now they, too, have too many newspapers."

I thought of the keeper of the brothel in Paris, Pascin's friend, who had complained that his business was being ruined by too much enlightenment of the people.

"Tell me the number of your room, and if I can arrange a meeting with Sir Basil, I shall do so. He happens to be at the Istanbul just now," the countess suggested.

"How soon do you think that could be done? I am on my way to Ankara."

"Ankara!" the countess cried out, replacing her powder puff in the golden compact. "Ankara! Whom do you know there?"

"No one."

"Oh! Sure? No one?"

"No one, unless Ismet Pasha happens to be there."

"Oh, so you do know Ismet! He is Kemal Pasha's closest friend."

Two hours later I found a note under my door on which was written, "Sir Basil will see you at 6:15 in his room at the Istanbul."

Sir Basil Zaharoff, the mystery man of Europe, the man who had made thousands of millions out of the traffic in instruments of death, bounced up from a reclining chair by the window when I was shown into the small room by his English butler, and came forward to greet me, holding a small leather-bound volume of poetry in his thin hands.

"Come, sit by the window. There is a lovely view over the Bosporus this time of the day. So. Smoke?"

"What are you reading?" I asked, when I had sat down.

"Musset. Alfred de Musset. My favorite poet. Do you like him? Intoxicating poetry. Absolutely intoxicating."

With his gray goatee, Zaharoff looked like a middle-aged professor of literature from the South of France. His voice was almost too melodious.

"America! Interesting. But too harsh. Too young. Not mellowed by time. Beautiful women. Beautiful. Beautiful."

"Is there a great demand at present for ammunition?" I asked, with my characteristic lack of tact.

"I thought you wanted to talk literature, poetry, music," Zaharoff said, rising. *"Pour autre chose il y a mon bureau.* (For other things there is my office.)"

"Please understand," I pleaded. "Ever since I can remember, I have heard of Sir Basil Zaharoff, the famous dealer in ammunition, but never a word about his love for de Musset. I have to pinch myself to make sure that I am talking to the man I have come to see."

"C'est un commerce comme un autre," he said, sitting down and pushing the gun-metal cigarette box toward me as a token of forgiveness.

And again I thought of the Parisian brothel keeper, who probably would have used the same words. "A business like any other."

"I love poetry because poets alone can understand," he said ecstatically.

Basil Zaharoff, a thousand times a millionaire, the mystery man of Europe, the dealer in instruments of death, was a sentimentalist. The "Blue Danube Waltz," he said, brought tears to his eyes. The greatest play was *Les Deux Orphelines (The Two Orphans).*

When I rose to go, he begged, "Don't go yet. It's a great pleasure to talk to someone who loves literature. Madame la comtesse also likes poetry."

"The same kind?"

"Yes and no, she is a little more sentimental. She is Hungarian. Splendid woman. Great company. She speaks many languages. Plays the piano. Paints. I, too, write a little. I have just written something about this view. If you care to listen! 'The last quarter of the fireball disappearing on the distant rim of the shimmering Bosporus is burning now with a thousand living colors. Petulantly the blinking stars mirror themselves in the sea . . . sprinkling the sea with myriads of luminous little quivering points that rock themselves on the rippling, dark-blue, bottomless sea.' How do you like it?" Zaharoff asked, wiping his moist glasses.

At the door he asked, "Having lived so long across the ocean, do you think America will fight in Europe in the next war?"

"What do you think?" I questioned.

"I, I prefer de Musset to all the other poets."

When I came back to the hotel from my interview with Zaharoff, the comtesse invited me up to her apartment.

"Did you have a nice talk with Sir Basil?" she asked.

"Very nice. Quite a lover of poetry, isn't he?"

"Yes," and changing the conversation quickly, she said, "I sent a telegram about you to Mlle. Borshu. She has delegated me to take care of you while you are in Constantinople."

"Very, very thoughtful of her."

"She is a dear. Would you mind dining with me at a nice place I know?"

"With pleasure."

"That's a dear. I've sold Captain Fournier's collection of old sticks, and now he wants to come up and thank me. Let's go before he comes."

"I thought you said they were not salable," I remarked, helping her put on the cape.

"Everything is salable nowadays. I cabled to my agent in Shanghai, and she took them. Fifteen minutes later my agent in Hungary telegraphed to take them."

"I suppose," I asked, entering a car waiting outside, "you are an expert on guns, eh?"

"*Moi?*" she replied. "*Moi?* I never see one." And settling back in the car, she explained, "We don't actually handle guns and ammunition. We sell them. We seldom look at the things. Somebody in China informs my agent he wants this and that. When I have an offer of something like what he wants, I cable what I have to our nearest agent, who transacts the business with the seller and the buyer. We have agents all over the world. But does this interest you at all?"

"Immensely. Go ahead. Please."

"How can such piffling things interest a man like you?" she flattered, lighting a cigarette. "But you see how it works, don't you? Some Balkan ordinance officer loses heavily at roulette or baccarat. He knows our agent. She takes five hundred or a thousand old sticks off his hands; that is, if we can deliver them without involving her."

"I understand. Go ahead."

"Of course, you understand! It's simple. Someone wanting to start a revolution in Afghanistan needs a thousand guns. You understand, don't you? Sir Basil, of course, never bothers with this stuff. This is really more or less my domain."

Across the table at the Fanoon, a dimly-lit, heavily gilded restaurant looking like an ornate birdcage, Madame looked like a naïve widow on an escapade.

"What sort of man is Sir Basil really?" I asked.

"Very romantic. Thirty years ago he fell in love with a certain lady of the nobility and, being a good Catholic, he waited faithfully until she should be free. Last year her husband died. Now he is waiting out her year of mourning, and then they'll get married. That's Sir Basil."

"From what I have heard about him, I would have expected Sir Basil to have the husband shot thirty years ago."

"I have heard that in America they are saying terrible things about him just because of his business. *C'est un commerce comme un autre.* You'd love him if you really knew him. The soul of honor and charity."

After dinner we went to another place, a night club where a Gypsy band was playing beautiful Gypsy music. The leader, Tanasse Stan, of a world-renowned musical Gypsy family, recognized me and came over to greet me. He and I had once been in love with the same Gypsy girl. Tanasse told the comtesse about it, and she laughed.

After the second glass of champagne, Madame hooked her arm under mine and said, "If I weren't afraid of Sir Basil's disapproval, I'd be tempted to go with you to Ankara."

"Would he disapprove?"

"He? He wouldn't ever talk to me again."

After a while she pressed herself close to me and asked, "There is one gun in America I am interested in. A light gun. With the mechanism of a machine gun. The inventor is one Garrand or Garland! Have you ever heard anything about that gun?"

"No. Never."

"In certain circles everybody speaks about that gun," she said, powdering her nose, "so I supposed everybody knew about it. I suppose in your circles you take for granted that certain books are known to everybody."

"Very, very philosophical, Madame."

"Call me Theresa . . . it's been a long time since anyone has called me Theresa. Funny Sir Basil! Thirty years. She is an old lady now. I have seen her. An old lady. Loebels and Manlichers are museum pieces, but they still can shoot. He, too, is a museum piece. Hello, there! A little more champagne. A little more. Only a little. Sir Basil is a great friend of Goehring, yes, indeed. Great friend. I'll go to Samoa, maybe to America. Should I go to America? I think I'll go to Ankara with you. So you and that Gypsy were in love with the same girl!"

After two weeks in Ankara, the hell hole of Asia Minor, the new capital of Turkey, I honestly wished I had never heard of the goddam place. Kemal Pasha, the ruler of Turkey, whom I had come to interview, had gone to his farm in the hills, and no one could tell me when he would be back or assure me that he would receive me when he came.

My room was always abuzz with flies, mosquitoes, and bugs of every variety. In the lobby and the diningroom, clerks, bellboys, and members of the diplomatic corps were continually scratching themselves. The food was uneatable, the bottled water from America was tepid, and the whole city reeked as if it had been dunked in a pool of sweat, urine, and dust.

When I complained to a French representative of an industrial company that I had been there already two weeks, Monsieur Berard laughed.

"Two weeks! Two weeks! And you complain! I have been here three months. And there are others, from Italy, Sweden, and England, who have been here longer than that! And on appointments, monsieur! On appointments! But why should he care? He owns this hotel. The longer we stay here—"

Suddenly, one afternoon, the hotel came to life. Clerks and bellboys got into new uniforms, the tables of the diningroom

were freshened up with newly laundered tablecloths, the piano was dusted off, and a pianist, a violinst, and two extremely painted young women descended upon the place.

"What's up?" I asked the head waiter.

"Kemal Pasha has come down from his farm."

The government house, only a few minutes from the hotel, was pullulating with black-coated people carrying briefcases under their arms and cluttering the lobby of the place.

I spoke to one of the secretaries and told him that Ismet Pasha had arranged for an immediate interview for me.

"His excellency knows you are here. If he wants to see you, he will let you know," the man said.

"When?"

"Today, tomorrow, next time he comes down from the farm, how should I know?"

Four days later, on a Thursday night, the diningroom door was thrown open, and the pianist and the violinist interrupted a Viennese waltz to plunge into the Turkish national anthem. Everybody rose as a six foot, broad-shouldered, clean-shaven man, bareheaded, with his collar unbuttoned, his coat on his arm, and a cigarette-holder between his teeth, appeared at the door.

After Kemal Pasha had signaled that everyone should sit down, he picked himself a table against the wall opposite me, and sat down. Eight giants in long black coats appeared and placed themselves, two in each corner of the room. At a nod, the head waiter, a white-haired old man, brought a bottle of cognac and a glass and placed them on Kemal's table.

Kemal wiped the inside of the glass with his napkin, and then, after looking at the seal and the label on the bottle, poured himself a full wineglass of cognac and drank it in one gulp.

His head sat like a huge bullet between his shoulders. His face was sallow and slightly pock-marked. His chin was almost as wide as his forehead. His hands, hairy, enormous, and with spatulated short fingers, were the hands of a peasant.

He ate the pieces of broiled goat's meat directly from the spit without troubling to use knife, fork, or plate. When he was through with one spit, the waiter handed him another.

He slowed up after having eaten half a dozen spits of broiled meat. He put the last one down only partly consumed, pushed the chair back a little from the table, filled his glass with the rest of the bottle, looked around, lit a fresh cigarette, and stuck it slowly in the amber cigarette-holder. Throwing his head back, he looked vacantly into space for a moment. Then he squirmed in his chair, rose, grabbed one of the painted girls, and began to waltz with her in the center of the room, whirling from the piano in the rear to the door by which he had entered.

A quarter of an hour later, Kemal Pasha unceremoniously left his dancing partner, took the other painted woman, danced her limp, then danced the girl violinist off her feet, and returned to his table to finish the cold meat on the spit and to pour himself another drink from the fresh bottle that had been placed on his table.

I was fascinated by the strength and flexibility of his movements, but I was suffocating in the stagnant air of the room.

After a third glass of cognac from the second bottle, Kemal rose and put his coat on. Everybody rose. The men who had stood at the four corners of the room began to converge toward him when he signaled them to stay where they were, motioned to everybody to sit down again, then crossed to my table, and said to me in French as he sat down opposite me, "I am Mustapha Kemal."

When the waiter came over, he growled at him to bring a fresh bottle with two "clean" glasses.

We looked each other straight in the eye, *à la Turque,* and I had a chance to fathom the wolfish gray-green eyes fixed upon me. We were still looking into each other's eyes when the waiter placed the bottle and the glasses on the table.

And then the ruler of Turkey proceeded to interview me. Where was I born? When did my father die? When did I

first leave Roumania? What languages did I speak? Whom did I know in Europe? Why had I come to Ankara to interview him?

I answered every question simply and directly and then said, "I have come six thousand miles to interview you, and you are interviewing me."

"You are being paid in dollars to interview me, aren't you? I, too, want to be paid—in information," he said, chuckling and smiling as he offered me one of his cigarettes.

"Tell me, how much wheat does the United States produce a year?"

"I don't know."

"Within a million bushels?"

"I don't know."

"Guess."

"I could look it up in an almanac and let you know."

"Do you know how much corn you produce?"

"No."

"Tell me, is it true that every home, every apartment, in North America has a bath?"

"Not every one, but some sixty per cent of the homes have baths."

"How do you know that?"

"I remember having read it somewhere."

"And you haven't read how much wheat or corn America produces?"

"I probably have, but don't remember."

Again he chuckled and smiled as he filled my glass and his.

"It isn't very important or you would know. What did you see in Germany?"

When I had told him, he said, "You should tell this to your people at home. The vultures are sharpening their claws. You Americans are selling them the very guns with which you and your children will be killed. Are you stupid, or are you crazy? Does profit mean more to you than life? Why does

your government allow you to sell ammunition to the prospective enemies of your country? You are selling them the tools and the machines with which they'll make the bombers to blow you to pieces. If I had the raw material you have, but had no immediate use for it, I'd let it all become rust and powder before I'd sell an ounce to my potential enemies. You, born in the Dobrogea, ought to know the Russians. They talk world peace but they're selling ammunition to the Germans. And they'll side with them in the next war. I have listened to MacDonald's speeches. He should be teaching elocution in a girls' school instead of being the prime minister of England. And that fool Baldwin! Why are your people doing nothing at all? Do you want to commit suicide by handing another the gun with which to shoot you?"

He filled our glasses again.

"What do they say about me in America? That I am cruel, profligate, and a drunkard? I know. I know. I am an Albanian Moslem, not a Turk. I am the son of a soldier, and I am keeping my *Beza,* my holy promise not to allow the enemies of the people I rule to destroy us. And we Albanians keep our *Bezas,* as you no doubt know."

While he talked, the music played, and no one moved from his seat.

"Do you want to dance? No. I like to dance. It limbers me up. But these women get tired too easily. I'll dance a little more, and then you'll come with me to the farm and meet my mother. Do you still speak Turkish? . . . Why only a few words?" And with that he left me to dance the two women off their feet again.

When he had left the second woman, he returned to my table, put on his coat, looked contemptuously at the half-empty bottle, and asked, "Do you care for another drink? No. Good. Let's go."

I asked permission to go up to my room and change; I was wet through and through. One of the men in the Prince

Alberts wanted to follow me to my room, but Kemal waved him aside. Stepping out of my clothes to sponge myself, I noticed that I was trembling, that every part of me was aquiver. Was it pneumonia or excitement?

A few hours later at break of day, after a most excruciating trip on a corduroy road, a heavy-set old woman received Kemal with loud reproaches at the gate of the farm, scolded him for being unclean, unwashed, for staying up nights, being drunk, and for bringing a *giaour,* an unbeliever, to her home.

The dictator of Turkey stood the scolding of his old mother with bowed head and then said, "Mother, he may be an unbeliever, but he understands our language, and," as I was taking off my shoes before crossing the door, he added, "knows our customs."

The old lady patted me on the arm, murmured something, and appeared in the room a few moments later bearing a wooden tray with small squares of bread, a saucer with salt, and two glasses of water in each of which was a teaspoon of *Peltea,* rose-petal sherbet.

"Give me your *Beza,*" Kemal said, after I had eaten bread in his house, "that you will show me what you have written about me before you send it to America."

I promised. A moment later he was asleep in his clothes, reclining on the couch.

Soon afterward, his mother opened the door softly and beckoned me to follow her out. Outside, she handed me a small cup of black coffee to drink standing up, then gave me a bag of food and told me that the car was waiting for me down the road so that the noise of the engine shouldn't wake her *chiuzhuck,* her little boy.

Kemal was a true Albanian. Nothing is so sacred to an Albanian as the keeping of a promise. One day an officer of

the army came to Kemal's room and said, "We have sentenced a soldier to be shot for insubordination. According to custom we have asked him what his last wish was, and he said, 'I want to see Kemal Pasha.' Shall I bring him in now?"

Kemal was in no mood to see anyone just then and said so.

Two weeks later the officer asked Kemal to see the sentenced soldier, but again Kemal was in no mood. Two weeks after that, the officer said to Kemal, "That soldier is our only prisoner. We have to keep a dozen men because of him, feed them, and keep them warm. He has become the town's hero. Boys and girls promenade beneath the window of the prison. Please see him, and let's finish the business."

"Bring him in," Kemal said.

When the soldier was brought in before Kemal, he called out, "Kemal Pasha, I am an Albanian. I give you my *Beza.* Let me go home to see my wife before I am shot."

"Let him go," Kemal said to the officer.

Six weeks later the officer rushed into Kemal's office and shouted, "He has come back."

"Who?"

"The Albanian soldier we have sentenced to death! He has come back."

"And why shouldn't he have come back?" Kemal asked. "Didn't he give me his *Beza*?"

"But . . . you will pardon him now, Kemal Pasha, won't you?" the officer begged.

"He hasn't come back to be pardoned," Kemal said. "He has come back to be shot. Do your duty."

Knut Hamsun, the great Norwegian writer and Nobel Prize winner, had never had a greater admirer than I was. Hamsun, too, had plied all the trades and had done every kind of manual labor. He had been a shoemaker in St. Paul, a street car conductor in Chicago, and a school janitor's helper in New York.

He, too, had been in love with Paris, despite the privations and humiliations he had suffered in that city.

Hamsun's early début as a writer, except that he had written in his native tongue, had been almost like my own. *Hunger, Pan Ideal, Redaktor Lynge,* and *Victoria,* his first four novels, were cries of revolt against man's injustice to man.

When a famous young Danish writer who had translated several of my books into Norwegian, called on me in Copenhagen to say that Hamsun was in Denmark and wanted to see me, I didn't believe him. I had met the man accidentally on the *Orka,* a small transatlantic boat, and he, his wife, Lisle Bell and his wife, and I had spent many hours together over whiskeys and soda in the bar of the boat. Knowing him to be a practical joker, I suspected that he was pulling my leg in good old Danish fashion. He was one who might take me somewhere, introduce me to some peach-hued, stout barmaid, and say, "Isn't she better to meet than that old scrooge, Hamsun?"

But the Dane hadn't been spoofing. It was Knut Hamsun and not a barmaid that we met in a little hotel room that gray, rainy day.

Hamsun, tall, thin, sharp-faced, and austere, looked at me from under his bushy eyebrows, but said nothing, while my friend, six foot six and three hundred pounds, hovered over us and smiled.

"If you were a young woman, he wouldn't be so shy," my friend finally said, bursting out in peals of laughter.

"Of course not," I said, and regained my composure.

"My publisher in New York also published your first book," Hamsun finally opened the conversation. "Was anything done about those awful conditions you described in your book?"

Because my friend did not know the book in question, Hamsun told him what it was about and began a discussion on economic conditions in Europe and America. He was on the right track as long as he spoke about conditions in Europe and

America, but he held the opinions of Hitler and Goebbels about democracy and parliamentarianism, thundered against the international bankers, and grew sarcastic when he spoke of the political set-ups in England, France, and the United States.

"How can the man who wrote *Hunger* have such political opinions?" I asked.

Hamsun dismissed my question with a gesture of the hand and continued his bombast against the degenerate democracies. And he wouldn't be contradicted, he, the oracle of Aryanism in Scandinavia! The world, he said, must be ruled by dictators who owe no account to the ruled.

The Danish writer's face twitched, and his eyes narrowed down to slits, as he said, "That kind of theory may be what the Germans would accept, but you can't expect the Scandinavian countries to accept it, Knut Hamsun."

"Yes, I do. I hope soon to see Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, and all the other Germanic nations brought together into one unit," Hamsun shouted, "governed by one theory and one head."

"Come," my friend said, taking me by the arm, "we shouldn't have come here. Good day—" and he dragged me to the door.

I looked back several times, as one does when he is torn away from the coffin of a dear friend, and was still stunned when we reached the street.

Hours later, the two of us sat opposite each other in a barroom with our second empty bottle between us, and we cried and cried. When one of his friends asked why we cried, Hjalmar answered, "A very dear friend has died. We are just back from the funeral."

Late that night we were still drinking. Before going home, Hjalmar read something out of Hamsun from a book he had carried in his pocket for Hamsun to autograph.

"No, no," he cried, "it can't be the same man."

"Of course not, Hjalmar. I know it wasn't. You played another one of your practical jokes on me."

My memory about what happened during the next two weeks in Copenhagen is very hazy. I remember going to see my Scandinavian publishers with my friend, both of us not exactly sober, and Hjalmar telling them that I had been drinking because of grief, because someone very dear to me had died. Touched by my bereavement, the publisher, a charming old viking, took us out to give me another and yet another *kvich* to help me over the first hours of grief.

At another bar we met a magazine editor who had corresponded with me for years. Hjalmar explained to him that I wasn't a habitual drunkard, but that someone dear to me had died, and that he had to keep me drunk lest I do myself harm. The editor, a very understanding fellow, bought me a couple more drinks to help me overcome the first hours of my grief and invited some friends of his, artists, journalists, and musicians, to help me get over the shock of my friend's death.

Having been invited to appear before the Swedish Anthropological Society, whose secretary had written a long monograph about my *On New Shores* in the yearbook of the society, I kept sober the whole day, but took a drink just before leaving, when I read a speech Hamsun had delivered the previous day, and never appeared at the hall.

"Was it a man or a woman?" the magazine editor asked, late that night.

"A man," my friend whispered.

"Well," the editor mused, "now I understand. A woman one forgets eventually, but a man, a friend, is more difficult to forget. I understand now. Have another drink. I know what the loss of a friend can mean to a man."

While I was drinking with the magazine editor, Hamsun came into the tap room. I felt a strange exhilaration as I walked up to him and said, "What are you doing here? You are dead. I have buried you and mourned you and drowned you in fifty bottles of fire water. Step back into your coffin."

"Please!" Hamsun said, brushing me aside. "I don't know you."

"Of course you don't, I am your undertaker. Dead men don't know their undertakers. But I know you. I have seen you naked and touched the corpse of the you that once lived, Knut Hamsun."

"Please, won't somebody free me of this individual?" Hamsun pleaded, but nobody would take me off him.

"Go back to your coffin, Knut Hamsun. You are dead. Don't come among the living."

In the end, someone lifted me up in his arms and carried me to my room, where I slept the clock around.

That drinking spree was a grand experience. I said things and did things I would not have said or done while sober.

The ability to get drunk is one of those faculties, like laughter, which distinguish man from the other mammals. It is a distinction for which I am very grateful to the gods. Shocks a trifle too hard to bear while sober, like some of the more serious surgical operations, can be weathered comfortably with the help of a potent anaesthetic. And even if good liquors are dangerously pleasant to the taste, that is no reason why we should avoid them when we need their soothing quality.

Knut Hamsun had been my ideal. The discovery that he, too, was in the ranks of the betrayers of civilization had unnerved me. Italy had its Pirandello; Germany, its brothers Strasser and Gerhart Hauptmann; France, its Doriot and La Roque; England, its Mosley; and Spain, its Unamuno. Poland and Czechoslovakia were swarming with ghouls waiting to feed their vanity on the corpses of the dead. Russia had its Maxim Gorki, who sold out to Stalin for a mess of dollars in the banks of Capri, but I had not expected Hamsun to feed on the slime left by the passing of the Asiatic hordes a thousand years ago.

In Rome I listened to that orangutan-mouthed Mussolini orate from the balcony of his palace to the bareheaded, empty-headed, vociferating mass underneath. A dead man was talking to tens of thousands of gesticulating dead men, stinking as

if they had been dead a long time, yet anomalously singing "Giovineza," the song of youth.

Like the Russians, the Germans, and the Japanese, who have sunk back a thousand years to find a level of culture which they hadn't really risen above, the Italians are now calling themselves a young nation! What is there so young about them, the rejection of even the implications of civilization?

Civilizations, like human beings, are born, mature, and die. The death agony of a civilization is a horrible thing to watch. Its bowels empty themselves unchecked, and the rotting body wallows in its own excrements while the toothless, sore-eaten mouth sings "Hosannas." The maggots that feed on such putrefaction spread themselves and cause the disintegration of even healthy bodies. It is possible, though not probable, that should the "young nations" prevail, the general dissolution of modern civilization would not reach America until after the end of my natural days, but I was brought up by a pantheistic father and cannot think of myself as separate from the eternal mesh and fabric of the past and the future. We pantheists do suffer in our flesh for all that has happened in the past anywhere in this world to any human beings. Our minds anticipate, by more than we dare tell, all that will happen anywhere to any people in the future.

Personally, I can take a drink to level myself down to the unfeeling or abandon myself in the arms of a woman until I have lost all consciousness of the agony of this world, but I cannot keep on drinking or holding the ecstasy of forgetfulness forever.

Neither drink nor sex has ever been more than a temporary anaesthetic. Music, dance, back-breaking work, fist fights, and loud talk have often given me some joyous respite, but when I sober up, I realize that I, myself, must do something to retard or avoid the disintegration of the world in which I live. Such behavior is as selfish as cleaning out a flesh wound in my own body before general gangrene has set in.

Listening to Mussolini, I tried to analyze what has made the youth of certain countries flock to the banners of totalitarianism. The leaders of the totalitarian movements and states are easy to understand. They lust for power, power unchecked, untrammeled. When they propose the Führer principle, it is with the understanding that they would not submit to the dictates of a Führer, but that they would be the Führers.

Nietzsche said that only those who know how to obey can also command. Sophistry! Stalin didn't obey, not even Lenin, whose last will he refused to make public.

Kemal Pasha never obeyed an order while he was an officer in the Sultan's army and slapped the face of General Lyman von Sanders when the German general of the Turkish army insisted that his orders be obeyed.

Mussolini, a deserter from the Italian army before the first World War, returned from Switzerland to serve in the Italian army only after he had become a paid agent of the French.

Of Hitler, Goehring, Goebbels, and Himmler so much has already been said that I can only repeat that not one of them has ever obeyed orders, not even the dictates of reason.

Why, then, do the youth of so many countries flock to the banners of the Führers? The more intelligent do so because they want to become leaders. With them totalitarianism is not a philosophy, but a career, a business. The unintelligent ones accept the Führer principle because obeying orders relieves them of responsibility, of individual action, and permits them to commit mass cruelty, anonymous cruelty.

The cruelty of any mass is greater than the multiple of the usual cruelty of the individuals of that mass. Revolutions, wars, pogroms, purges, and liquidations are expressions of mass sadism.

As an apology of Nazism, it is often suggested that the Germans are considerably happier now under Hitler than they were under the republic or under the Kaiser. Has, then, the happiness of the German people depended on the axman's

block and the daily murders committed in the Gestapo cellars and in the concentration camps? Are the Italians also happier since Mussolini has reduced them to thoughtless rubber stamps and amused them with the stomach cramps of those to whom he has given the castor oil treatment? Are the Russians, too, happier since liquidation has become a theory of government, and the Spaniards now that the garrote functions again.

The truth is that under a totalitarian government no one is permitted to be unhappy. The unhappy ones are shot, liquidated, beheaded, or made to swallow a liquid bomb, the castor oil of Benito Mussolini.

The Poles watched with glee the maceration of the Jews and applauded the Nazis who had thrown them a temporary bone from the body of the Czechs.

Had England, France, and the Scandinavians not allowed the Nazis to wax strong on the blood of their victims, there would have been no war today.

The answer to Cain's "Am I my brother's keeper?" is "Yes." But the financiers and profiteers are more anxious to keep their boodle together than to preserve the integrity of their souls and their countries.

Bolsheviks, Nazis, Fascists, and Phalangists hoisted themselves to power by denouncing dictatorships. Mussolini marched on Rome to break the dictatorship of the unions; on Ethiopia to free the natives from the tyranny of their rulers; and on Greece to save them from the clutches of England. Hitler orated against the illegal procedures of the Weimar republic. Japan invaded China to rescue the Chinese from the Chinese.

If we are to save civilization, we should destroy its self-appointed saviors wherever found and under whatever guise, before it is too late.

Because love relations are beautiful, we don't absolve the rapist and the degenerate. Because we believe that every mature man and woman should perform some sort of daily work,

we don't excuse slavery and do not urge that the murderers, the thieves, and the hangmen should be required to operate so many hours every day.

The people of this country have their backs up against a wall and are faced with the choice of either fighting to remain individuals or surrendering to the despoilers and becoming pieces of jelly with no responsibilities of their own and no will of their own. One has to choose one side or the other.

We are fools to allow the totalitarians in our midst to continue their political opposition to us and to treat them as legitimate political opponents. Totalitarians kill their political enemies after they have defeated them!

Stalin, Mussolini, and Hitler have killed all those who have allowed them to grab power. We in this country should know by now the processes of the political wolves. Totalitarians of all shades should be treated as predatory animals, as criminals at large, and not as political antagonists.

All this presented itself clearly to me while I was in Italy in 1932. The Italians are simple people and no good at hiding or covering up their thoughts. They don't obscure their simple-mindedness with more obscure philosophies and theories. They said quite simply, "We are poor. We can become rich by robbing the wealthy. Individually we know how to do it, but as a nation, we must proceed in a different way. Mussolini knows that game. Countries don't become wealthy by working hard, but by robbing other countries. That's how France and England have become rich. Now Mussolini plans to take it away from them. *Viva Mussolini!*"

XXVII

WHEN I came home from Europe, I realized that the house in the country, which had given me so much pleasure, was now too big. Three of our children had married. Only Mirel, the youngest, was with us. In the studio I had built for her she was working on a large mural in which a hundred or more people were standing about a speaker whose glaring eyes and open mouth stamped him as a fanatic. The other faces showed ecstasy, desire for vengeance, and religious transport. Some looked as if they were on the road to Golgotha; others as if on the road to a paradise. Mirel had digested well the letters I had sent from abroad. At the next family meeting, my in-laws and my married children thought I was generalizing and exaggerating.

"You are too pessimistic. It is preposterous to think that Germany could be ruled by a man like Hitler. Don't publish your fears. You'll look ridiculous and ruin your reputation," they said.

A few months later Hitler was in power, and the Reichstag palace was burned; the Nazis unleashed their fury upon all those who had opposed them, and Gerhart Hauptmann, after running away to Switzerland, came back to his beloved fatherland and wrote the first Nazi play, *Die Goldene Harfe.*

"But, Konrad, who could have believed it!"

Ever since, whenever the totalitarians have done something

to outrage the world, I see people raise their eyes to the heavens and say, "Who could have believed it!"

I talked to editors and publishers about the danger to our democracy, to all democracies. No one was much interested, and no one wanted to understand that the governments of France and England did not represent their people. It was hard to make them realize that the ocean was no obstacle to the radio and the telephone, weapons that can be used in a more destructive manner than tanks and bombers.

"Too fantastic," they said. Von Zieckurch, the editor of *Pictorial Review*, published only part of the material I had gathered for him in Europe. A German-American in the organization prevented him from printing anything derogatory to Germany or the Nazis. When Von Zieckurch put up some fight in my behalf, he lost the editorship of the magazine, and died shortly afterward.

In November we closed and shuttered the house, bought a trailer wagon, hitched it to our car, and Naomi, Mirel, and I went a-Gypsying through our country, stopped wherever we felt like stopping, and traveled sixteen thousand miles in five months to reach California.

A story about the trials and tribulations of the migratory workers in California was returned to me by the editor of a national magazine with the following note, "Such conditions don't exist in the United States, and if they do, we ought not to talk about them."

The note frightened me not a little. "Such conditions don't exist, and if they do, we ought not to talk about them." What else should I talk about? Had I not earned the right to talk about conditions as I saw them in this country?

Meanwhile the women of Spain had voted out of power the liberal government that had given them the vote and had returned to power those who had repeatedly said they would take the vote from them. Had women ever been more perverse!

What was significant was the fact that the first Spanish republic had been defeated by Hitler and Mussolini in their first battle against democracy.

No one here saw the danger to our country. No one wanted to realize that a wedge was being driven in Spain at the weakest point to split open the democratic structure under which we here live.

I spoke about Spain before women's clubs and universities, in Pennsylvania, Illinois, Louisiana, Texas, Arizona, and Arkansas and tried to explain that we were part of the world and not a fragment of a continent.

I was glad to see Chaplin again, but was disappointed in him.

Twenty years of success, adulation, and riches had dulled his perceptions. He was no longer incensed at injustice, believed in capital punishment now that he was no longer in danger of ever being subjected to it, thought the Japanese were a wonderful people and were civilizing Asia, and believed that success, either individual or national, was a proof of superiority. I had loved the impish elf and was pained to see him fall prey to such mental slush.

After six months in California, during which Naomi and Mirel painted and exhibited, and I talked and talked, but did little else, we went back East in our trailer by a different route, the Southern one, and camped here and there, wherever we could or were allowed to.

After one of my lectures in Virginia, a woman jumped up on the platform and shouted, "We have come here to hear a colorful personality talk to us colorfully about a colorful people. Instead of that, he has painted a dismal picture of a world we are not interested in. We are not interested in what is happening in Europe."

After several such experiences I stopped lecturing and began to write again.

Instead of love stories, I wrote a book on the Crusades and another on the Balkans. The last chapter of *The Incredible Balkans* pictured Carol's flight from Roumania. There was only one trouble with the Balkan book; it was six years ahead of time.

The house in Connecticut was too big. I had taken great pride in the barns and the fields, but now that I wasn't permitted to do any physical work as a result of the beating I had received from the Roumanian hoodlums, barns, fields, horses, and cows were of no interest to me. My two black Percherons, Jimmy and Lady, were getting fat and lazy.

Before all the leaves of the maple trees were on the lawn, we were again on the go. I was happier in the ten-by-twenty trailer wagon than in the big house.

We were in Texas when President Roosevelt was elected the second time.

While we were on the road, the Franco rebellion had gotten into full swing. England and France could have avoided what has since happened to them if they had come to the assistance of the legally elected government of Spain. The Tories of England and the cowards of France, who ruled their countries, knifed the loyalists in the back, refused to sell them armament, and winked at Hitler and Mussolini, who sent guns and planes to Franco and tens of thousands of "volunteer" soldiers and officers. The stupid Tories and cowards were afraid to have a liberal Spain as neighbor. Should England, as I hope, win the war, England will emerge a much more socialistic country than Spain was at the time of the Second Republic. As for us, we refused to sell arms to the government of Spain, but sold guns and ammunition to Germany and Italy, who passed them on to Franco and his Moors. The wedge was widening the crack in the democratic structure, and we sold the hammers to the wreckers. And now we must buttress the walls we have helped to undermine, lest we, too, be buried also under the débris.

Had the democracies acted then in self-preservation, we wouldn't now be running the danger of losing what we have striven for during a thousand years. As things stand now, it looks as if the profit system is about to swallow itself after destroying democracy. What I dread is not economic communism, but political communism and totalitarianism.

When we arrived in Hollywood again, my agent told me one day that a motion picture producer, who had Gary Cooper under contract for one picture, was in the market for a special kind of a story.

Needing money, I thought of an unfinished novel, based on the life of Sir Richard Burton, that I had on hand. I reduced the content to a dozen pages, and sent the synopsis to my agent.

Two days later the producer made me an offer.

Unwilling to haggle, I told my agent to accept the bid and make the contract.

When he offered to close the deal, the first offer was withdrawn, and a more disadvantageous one was substituted.

I then offered the story personally to a second producer who became interested in my story, but the first producer informed him that he had priority, and, since the producers wouldn't compete against each other, I was forced to accept a still lower offer by the first one or lose the sale altogether.

Every producer in Hollywood had become a Mussolini, had rebuilt his office, placing his desk far away from the entrance, and was issuing ultimatums.

The money from the sale of the Burton story bought a new car and a new trailer and gave me leisure to do some relief work for the refugees of the dust bowl camped at Schafters, some ninety miles from Hollywood. It seemed incomprehensible why a nation that made a present of sixty-five million bushels of wheat to the Chinese shouldn't feed the hungry of its own people!

Melvyn Douglas and his wife, Helen Gahagan, and some

other members of the motion picture profession raised enough money to give a Christmas dinner to fifteen thousand hungry Oakies.

My wife, my daughter, and I lived in a cabin in Schafters and did what we could to help them. Half of the people were practically naked. Many of the children had pellagra. Families of ten slept in one bed or huddled on the floor of a tent.

Some of those landless farmers had been on the road five years, but still carried a plough on their trucks, hoping to use it some day.

It was strange to see them group themselves by states, the people from Arkansas in one bunch and those from Oklahoma in another. The burden of their talk was that they were not to blame for what had happened to them. No one would admit that he had been tractored out of his home and land, or that they were all victims of their own stupidity and ignorance, having ploughed up land that should have been left for grass.

Before the influx of the Oakies in California, when labor wasn't over-plentiful, cotton pickers had been paid a dollar and twenty-five cents a hundred.

To reduce the price of picking, the large cotton growers sent out agents and leaflets and used the radio to inform the Oakies on the road that there was plenty of work, well-paid and pleasant, in the land of perpetual sunshine.

The Oakies swarmed into the Golden State. When there were ten times too many laborers, the growers cut the price down to seventy cents a hundred.

The Oakies refused to work for that price and fought sheriffs and vigilantes who burned their tents down or ordered them out of the county, ostensibly for sanitary reasons. When some of the hungrier bands of Oakies did accept work, fields that were ordinarily picked in a month by a hundred men were picked in a week by a thousand.

The picking over, the migratory workers were ordered out

of the county lest they become a plague on it. The same people who had enticed the dust bowl migrants to California to obtain cheap and plentiful labor were the loudest to protest against their presence after the labor was done.

All this was in a play I was working on, but before I had finished it, John Steinbeck's splendid book came out, and I dropped my project.

The wounds inflicted upon me by the Roumanian hoodlums years before opened again, and I was taken to the hospital on Christmas day.

I was doing some work on a picture for Deanna Durbin, when Benito Mussolini's son, who had come to Hollywood at the invitation of a producer, sent word that he wanted to visit our studio. During the noon hour technicians and actors got together and sent word to the front office that they refused to vouch for Vittorio Mussolini's life if he set foot within a stage building.

During that noon hour someone had read aloud the passage in Vittorio's book in which he described the poetico-aesthetic joy he had experienced watching one of his bombs fall into a group of Ethiopians.

All the other motion picture studios advised Vittorio that his life was not safe if he visited them. Some actors and actresses threatened to abandon work the moment he appeared on a motion picture set.

Oh, yes, the political instincts of our people are healthy. The political instincts of most people under a democracy are healthy. The English and the French peoples were not to blame for the attitude of their government toward totalitarianism. The French and the English peoples were pleading with their governments to let them go to the rescue of the Spanish democracy. It had just happened that both the English and the French were ruled by the most cowardly and undemocratic elements of their political machines.

The people of America, too, were with the loyalists and were

shamed by the hypocrisy of those who refused to admit there were German and Italian soldiers and armament in Franco's camp even after they had seen those things with their own eyes.

Hats off to the workers in the motion picture industry for their reception to Vittorio Mussolini in Hollywood. It was the first ray of light in the dismal picture of three hundred million ostriches keeping their heads buried in the sand.

The producer who had bought my Burton story went out of business, but, before doing so, he sold my story to another company for ten times as much as he paid me.

"It's a very good story," he informed me, grinning.

I sold another story, one based on the life of Hans Christian Andersen, for Gary Cooper, and that, too, is about to be sold to another producer, for twenty times what I was paid for it.

And so we went back East, by car and trailer—Gypsies De Luxe.

XVIII

AFTER THIRTY YEARS of writing, I feel that I am at the beginning and not at the end of my career. I have published thirty-five volumes and more than five hundred stories. There isn't a word that I have written that I regret.

This country has given me honors and fame for which I have paid in my own coin. I have given the best that there was in me. I shall continue to do so. I have not written for money; I have demanded money for what I have written.

We are on the eve of a great struggle, a struggle that will decide whether we shall live with greater and greater dignity as men, or in lower and lower abjection as slaves. I shall fight on the side of more and not less democracy, of more and not less freedom, and for a greater measure of folk participation in the affairs of this country. I know that all my children are with me to the last struggle; that they would rather we all perish than live in a slave world.

Our democracy has made mistakes, and it will continue to make them. But only under a democracy can past mistakes be corrected. We'd much sooner be wrong in a democracy than right in a totalitarian state.

We, the Bercovicis, know our country. We have been through it a dozen times and listened to the hopes and aspirations of myriads of people in a dozen languages. I know this country. Our democracy can be betrayed, but it cannot be defeated. It may stumble, but it will not fall.

I look back at the last thirty-five years and ask myself, "If you had to do it over again, would you?" And the answer is "Yes, I would."

I would come again in an immigrant boat, marry the same woman, have the same children and the same friends, suffer the same disappointments, enjoy the same successes, make the same mistakes, quarrel with the same enemies, kiss the same women, drink the same wine, and write the same stories. But there is one thing I wouldn't do again, and that is face empty-handed, a monster in the Sports Palast of Berlin.

However, millions of others have made the same mistake. And while there is life, there is hope.