THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF

Sol Bloom

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THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF Sol Bloom

ALSO BY SOL BLOOM

The Story of the Constitution

History of the Formation of the Union under the Constitution

Our Heritage

One with God Is a Majority

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Part I: San Francisco

I

On a day late in April of 1945, a little more than a month after my seventy-fifth birthday, I sat alone in my room in the Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco. I had come in by train from Washington a short while before. As I rested for a moment I thought about many things.

This was one of the great times in history. The German armies had been destroyed, and it was certain that the end of the war in Europe was a matter of weeks, perhaps only of days. It was a time for rejoicing, even though terrible battles were still being fought in the islands of the Pacific. But on my heart, as on the hearts of so many others at home and abroad, there was a heavy weight. Franklin Roosevelt, my chief and my friend, had died less than two weeks before.

There was another weight upon my heart, the burden of responsibility. In a few days the representatives of fifty-one nations would meet here in San Francisco to begin the task of drafting a charter. I had been sent, one of seven American delegates, to help write this instrument which men of good will everywhere in the world hoped and believed would be the foundation for a future free of war and destruction.

I thought about other charters that had been written through the centuries, and in particular about the one which begins "We the People." In substance and structure the United Nations charter which we were about to draw up would of necessity differ greatly from the Constitution of the United States. But in spirit there must be no difference. There could be no

High Contracting Parties playing poker with one another, perhaps to welsh when the time came to turn in the chips. This was the one thing I knew I would insist upon and, if necessary, fight for. "We the People": whatever the new charter might include, that was the way it must begin. Of that I was certain.

I got up from my chair and opened the door leading to the balcony and stepped outside. Then I called to my daughter Vera, who was in her own room unpacking. She joined me on the balcony, and we stood there together without speaking.

Vera knew, better than any living person, the things that were then in my mind. But no one could have sensed the visions and the memories that raced through my head as we stood on our high place above Nob Hill and gazed out across the wonderful city.

Straight ahead to the east, stretching over the Bay for seven miles, was the great bridge joining San Francisco and Oakland. Off to the left was Telegraph Hill, where semaphores had once signaled to the merchants and bankers on Montgomery Street that another clipper from round the Horn or across from China was entering the Golden Gate. On the right I could see the hotels in the neighborhood of Union Square; beyond them, the taller buildings of Market Street cut a rectangular pattern against the sky. San Francisco is a glorious spectacle.

But I was not thinking about the things I could see. I was thinking about a man, long dead, who used to operate a little factory some blocks down the same Sacramento Street that sloped so steeply past my hotel. I was thinking of a woman in a little wooden house on Brannan Street, near Seventh, close to the railroad tracks on the southern edge of the city. And I was thinking of the little boy who had daily trod the wooden sidewalks and the cobblestoned streets, carrying a lunch box, on his way from the house to the factory; and of the boy's return, long after dark on winter nights, to the plain, good supper that was always waiting for him; and especially of the return on Saturday, when the boy would give his mother the silver dollar and the quarter dollar which had been paid him for his week's labor, and then watch her, before she served his meal, place a coin in the Charity Box that hung on the wall beside the kitchen stove.

Other pictures whirled in my brain. There was the time, a little later, when General Grant had landed in San Francisco at the end of his world tour, and the boy, in a wild frenzy of exultation, tossed at the ex-President's feet his entire working capital—a small basketful of roses and violets he had intended, at a solid profit to himself, for the hands of more opulent enthusiasts. (Nor did the young profligate ever repent his mad gesture.)

There was the intoxicating experience when an assistant stage manager by the name of Belasco selected the lad—at fifty cents for his evening's work—to play in Mr. Augustin Daly's celebrated melodrama, *Under the Gaslight.* It mattered not at all that the character was an undersized urchin and that the actor was chosen for his resemblance rather than for any unusual histrionic gifts. It didn't even matter that the promised half dollar was for some unfathomable reason withheld. (In later years, when the former stage manager periodically tried to discharge his obligation, the sometime undersized urchin always replied, "No, Dave, I'd rather have you owe it to me—but I *will* take a drink." It was always an effective formula.)

Then there was the public recognition that came to this serious youth in his fifteenth year: the new edition of the city directory noted his name and address, and readers of the exciting volume were further informed that he was an entry clerk in the employ of Figer Brothers. After more than seven years in their service he had at last become a man of distinction, and he loved it dearly. No ribbon pinned on his coat by a minister of state ever pleased him quite as much.

My eyes roved the shore across the Bay, and I remembered the young man of nineteen, who by that time had added a modest affluence and an enormous assurance to his earlier distinction, starting on a tour of the world—never completed, because of his preoccupation with the exposition then being conducted in Paris. Had he not held the exalted position of treasurer of the Alcazar Theater for several years prior to his departure from San Francisco? And would he not return with a knowledge of extraordinary value to anyone with real money to pour into the crazy and magnificent speculation called "show business"? His time in Paris was well spent: two years later he was directing

construction of the Midway Plaisance for the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, at a salary so large he never could quite believe it was being paid to him in anything but stage money.

I considered the further activities of this brash and somewhat improbable fellow, his successive and frequently overlapping careers as a publisher of sheet music; as an entrepreneur of the clockwork toy which brought forth from a wax cylinder the sound of the human voice, of a string quartet, or of a brass band; as a theatrical producer; as a building-construction specialist; and as a real-estate operator on a large and occasionally terrifying scale. I reflected upon his plans, when he was a little past fifty, to retire from active business and spend the rest of his life with his family, traveling, learning about some of the things he had never had time to study before, and giving a little more time and thought to the lives of persons who had never known a tithe of his own good fortune. I recalled, too, the lucky frustration of his ambition for such a life of ease, and of its replacement with more than twenty crowded years in Congress. And then I thought again of the war still going on and the reason for this journey to San Francisco.

Crowding these images of seventy years were the ones of the past few days. The special train and the people at the station in Washington. The solemn man on the platform who had just succeeded Franklin Roosevelt as President of the United States. The stops along the way and the music of the bands. The expressions of confidence from governor and mayor. The warm cries of good luck from citizens everywhere. The upturned faces that told us even more.

And now here I was, about to sit in conference with foreign ministers and ambassadors speaking a score of tongues. Here I was, preparing to add my voice to those of men like Halifax of Great Britain, Koo of China, Smuts of South Africa, Molotov of the Soviet Union, Paul-Boncour of France, Mackenzie King of Canada, Loudon of the Netherlands, and Masaryk of Czechoslovakia. Yes, here I was, commissioned to help write a charter for the United Nations.

No! It couldn't be! Why, I was nothing but the child of penniless immigrants who had come from Poland.

It was preposterous! Why, I was just an ignorant runt who had quit school forever after one day because he lacked money to buy a single book.

This must all be a dream! I was only the kid who washed windows and swept floors and ran errands in a brush factory down there on Sacramento Street. I was only the little Jewish boy who peddled violets on Market Street near Lotta's Fountain.

II

In July, 1846, Sam Brannan, a native of Maine, landed in San Francisco. He had first gone to Ohio and had there become a convert to the new Mormon sect. Later in New York, where he was quickly marked for his zeal and vigor, Brannan was chosen to lead a band of the persecuted Latter Day Saints out of bondage in the United States. Their promised land was the Mexican province of Alta California.

When Brannan and his pilgrims sailed through the Golden Gate after months at sea they discovered the American flag waving over this village of less than a hundred that was still known as Yerba Buena. It was bitterly disappointing. But this first congregation of Mormons on the Pacific Coast decided it would be wise to remain in the community whose population had been quadrupled by their advent.

Brannan automatically became a force in the pre-Gold Rush community, and after the wild scramble for quick riches got under way two years later he shrewdly began to accumulate real estate. He became California's first millionaire, and was perhaps the greatest of San Francisco's early benefactors.

Sam Brannan's only monument in the city of his adoption is the street that bears his name. Sam Brannan was rough, tough, unkempt, dirty, and noisy. He received a fitting monument, and I have a peculiar affection for it. Brannan Street was my first home in San Francisco. Here I lived for four or five years, during my family's time of greatest struggle.

My father, Gershon Bloom, who with my mother, Sarah, had come to this country from their native town of Szyrpcz, Poland, some time before 1860, went alone to California in the spring of 1875. For several years before his departure we had lived in Peoria, Illinois, where Father kept a small clothing store. He was one of the countless little victims of the nationwide depression which followed the financial panic of 1873, and when he lost his business we were left almost destitute. California, and in particular, San Francisco, had so far been only slightly affected by the depression—Nevada silver staved it off—and Father hoped to be able to make a new start there.

He found a job, and after a few months he rented a house on Brannan Street and sent for his wife and children. There were six of us children, ranging in age from eighteen down to five. I was the youngest.

At the last moment before our departure it was decided that my older brother Henry, who was known as "Tonkey," would stay in Peoria with Uncle Sol Bennett, my mother's brother. The rest of us, with all our worldly goods—we were not excessively burdened—boarded the cars to begin the first part of our journey to the Mississippi. There we would take the ferry and then tackle the remaining two thousand miles on a train that averaged considerably less than twenty miles an hour across plain and mountain. Besides my mother and myself, there were my sisters Becky and Ethel ("Hattie"), grave little girls who already at fifteen and fourteen knew what poverty meant; my sister Celia, eleven, who was a tomboy and liked to be called "Dickie"; and my brother Mose, who was about three years older than I.

At this point let me answer a question that might naturally be asked: How could a family as poor as mine raise enough money to travel from the Illinois River to the Pacific Ocean? The answer is very easy. It was almost cheaper to take a train than to pay rent. These were the days of the rate wars between rival railroads. Though in noncompetitive territories they charged quite literally "all the traffic would bear," on the transcontinental run they cut one another's throats. Fantastic as it may sound, our aggregate fare, from the station platform in

Burlington, Iowa, to the train shed in Oakland, California, was precisely six dollars.

The trip itself? I don't remember very much about it, although certain recollections are still quite vivid. Before describing them, however, I want to quote from several letters written by Robert Louis Stevenson, who started across the United States in August, 1879. Since that was four years later than my first trip, I think I am safe in saying that conditions might have improved slightly by Stevenson's time. It is unlikely that they were any *less* favorable.

From New York Stevenson wrote his friend Sidney Colvin, "I go on my way tonight, if I can; if not, tomorrow: emigrant train, ten to fourteen days' journey; warranted extreme discomfort." After forty hours on the train (from somewhere between Pittsburgh and Chicago!) he added, "In America you eat better than anywhere else: fact. The food is heavenly." Just a week after his departure the then obscure young author, who was poor as well as tubercular, wrote to another friend, W. E. Henley, from some section of Nebraska, "I am sitting on top of the cars with a mill party from Missouri going west for his health. . . . I sleep with a man from Pennsylvania who has been in the States Navy, and mess with him and the Missouri bird already alluded to. We have a tin wash bowl among four. I wear nothing but a shirt and a pair of trousers, and never button my shirt. When I land for a meal, I pass my coat and feel dressed. This life is to last until Friday, Saturday, or Sunday next. It is a strange affair to be an emigrant, as I hope you shall see in a future work. . . . The car in front of mine is chock full of Chinese." Two days later he added, "What it is to be ill in an emigrant train, let those declare who know. I slept none till late in the morning. . . . All today I have eaten nothing, and only drunk two cups of tea, for each of which, on the pretext that one was for breakfast and the other dinner, I was charged fifty cents. Our journey is through ghostly deserts, sagebrush and alkali, and rocks, without form or color, a sad corner in the world. I confess I am not jolly. . . . We are going along Bitter Creek now, a place infamous in the history of emigration, a place I shall remember myself among the blackest. . . ."

Stevenson had his difficulties, no doubt, but I think they were

slight in comparison with the troubles borne without murmur by my courageous and wonderful mother. She was traveling on the same kind of "emigrant" train, and with five children to care for. She had no privacy either. We rode on hard wooden seats, with straight, hard backs, that were our beds at night and our tables at mealtime. There was no diner, of course, and when we came to the periodic wayside stops where food could be bought we encountered a problem that Stevenson never dreamed of. Nor have many other persons, I feel confident, ever considered our peculiar problem: We were Jews of the orthodox faith.

There is no need for me to wonder now whether we would have been able to afford restaurant prices, for taking meals in a Christian establishment was something unthinkable to an orthodox Jew. (I am sure that until I was at least twelve or thirteen I never knowingly ate a mouthful of food that was not kosher. This word, by the way, is simply Hebrew for *clean*—clean in the sense that the food has not come from a forbidden source, that it has not been prepared in violation of prescribed methods, that it has not been served on the "wrong" plates. No true orthodox Jew would ever, for example, eat meat from a plate on which any food containing milk or butter had *at any time* been served.)

Nor was there a great deal of uncooked food that we could buy from the hucksters who met the trains. Meat and poultry were out of consideration; they had not been handled by kosher butchers. We lived on fruits and vegetables—when they were obtainable—and on cheese and eggs. I have often thought how fortunate it is that I like eggs. I suppose half the meals I have eaten through decades of travel in all parts of the world have consisted of this simple, nourishing food, the only one that can be brought to the table, in the most alarmingly unappetizing surroundings, cooked in its own perfect package.

My mother prepared our food on the pot-bellied stove which stood in the middle of the car. This was communal living: forty or fifty men, women, and children together for ten days in a cramped "tourist" coach; cooking, eating, sleeping, washing and changing their clothes, playing cards, singing, laughing, and quarreling; and no doubt, making love! What a life!

Through the haze of time it all seems charming. I am sure the haze is what makes it so.

The arrival in 1875 of the Bloom family in San Francisco and our establishment in the little house on Brannan Street passed unmarked in the annals of the city, which then had a population of something less than 200,000. This is hardly surprising in itself. But even had we been persons of consequence, it is doubtful whether a committee of distinguished citizens would have greeted us when we stepped off the ferry at the foot of Market Street. For our coming coincided almost exactly with one of the most tumultuous periods in the career of even this normally wild and turbulent city.

The Bank of California had just closed its doors.

This institution, founded only eleven years before, had indeed become what its name implied. Hardly an enterprise existed in the state that did not depend in some measure upon the bank. Its reckless genius was William Chapman Ralston, who combined in himself many of the good, and most of the bad, qualities needed to develop natural riches quickly. To call him a promoter would be an error. He was an empire builder, a Bismarck, a Cecil Rhodes, and a John D. Rockefeller, all in one. He also had more than just a touch of P. T. Barnum about him.

Almost until the end Ralston did not doubt the infallibility of his schemes. It was really only one scheme—to make California independent of the East. To this end he poured money into railroads and steamship companies; into wool and silk mills; into irrigation projects, mineral developments of all kinds, and tremendous building enterprises. His fabulous Palace Hotel, largest in the world, with "a bay window to every room," had silenced all but a handful of his detractors. This gorgeous caravansary was about to open, and confidence in the great Ralston had never been so high.

In August, two of San Francisco's newspapers, the *Call* and the *Bulletin,* simultaneously attacked Ralston. They accused him of unprincipled speculation, and of deceiving equally the public and the bank directors. They said he was habitually confused about the separate natures of his own pocketbook and the depositors' vault. They berated him for high living, and

certainly his spectacular domestic establishments in town and country alike were somewhat at variance with the strict conventional pattern prescribed for the solid banker in most parts of the country. Where but in California would the common people have pointed with pride to this man who daily raced over the twenty miles between his house and his office, changing horses at frequent intervals, because the trains were too slow?

I don't know whether the newspaper crusade actually brought about Ralston's downfall, or whether the editorials simply provided the final punctuation to his career, but there was a sudden heavy liquidation of mining stocks, and on August 26 the Bank of California was forced to suspend payments. The wildest panic ensued. Nearly everybody was involved. Thousands of people lost everything. The disaster compounded the still-present effects of the 1873 collapse, and in the universal gloom of the following morning Ralston, owing millions, was found drowned on the sands of North Beach. The catastrophe was complete.

Just five weeks later the reorganized bank and the new Palace Hotel opened simultaneously, and on October 14 San Francisco honored one of her own particular heroes, General Phil Sheridan, with the most lavish and costly dinner given up to that time. Catastrophe has never been more than a passing inconvenience in California.

None of these giddy doings was a matter of concern to the Blooms. All of us, even I at the age of five and a half, were busy making a new home.

I can't remember any specific contribution that I made. Probably I helped most by not getting in the way. I know, too, that I was warned about the danger of being run over by the great drays that sloshed through the mud in front of our house, and of being crushed under the wheels of the trains if I strayed too close to the tracks behind it, and I know that I was obedient.

I was always obedient. I emphasize this not through any desire to set myself up as one of those appalling little angels so prevalent in Victorian fiction, but as a simple testament to

the character of my mother. It would have been impossible for me to disobey her.

I believe this would have been just as true if my mother had been a Roman Catholic or a Unitarian, or, for that matter, a Mohammedan or a Hindu. But the fact that she was a Jewess and I was a Jew made my reverence of her a little stronger. I say this not because I regard my own religion as better than any other. I do not so regard it, for true religion is no more and no less than the relationship between man and his God. I say it because the Jews are a lonely people, and they find strength and love among themselves when, as sometimes happens, fellowship is denied them outside. Family affection is not only a strong and natural trait with us as with everyone—with us it is protection as well.

My mother, though always deferring to Father, was nevertheless the real head of our family. She always had the courage and the strength to go forward. She made the important decisions. She laid the plans. In our Sabbath prayers, though Father led them, it was her soft clear voice that taught me the words long before I was old enough to learn the Hebrew letters in her prayer book. And in the synagogue how proud I was when other women crowded about my mother to follow the reading they could not decipher! Without her, they could only mumble the holy writ which her own children were already able to recite almost perfectly. Even the rabbis consulted her concerning the scriptures.

In an atmosphere of poverty and almost biblical piety we were bound to be a closely knit family. During those early years in San Francisco income was small at best, usually uncertain, and often entirely lacking. My father was an industrious, kind, and sober man. But though he had a fair education, he lacked any special talent. He spoke English with a slight accent. And he was a Jew. Even in a city where Jews were easily tolerated and even accepted—in those days San Francisco reserved its active antipathy for Mexicans and especially for "Chinese cheap labor"—when a workman had to be laid off, the decision was usually to "let the Yid go first." Whenever such a decision was made, the Blooms just tightened their belts again. And all of us prayed.

Help always came. We never starved. If absolutely necessary, my mother would buy a little food on credit. A glance at her face was as good as a banker's guarantee.

What Mother minded most about those periods without income was her inability to put anything into our Charity Box. Sometimes I laugh, and often I cried a little, about that box. And I know, regardless of the direction of my emotion, that if any single material thing in my life helped to make me strong, it was that Charity Box. *We never were so poor that we needed its contents for ourselves!*

Even when we lacked literally a penny of our own, Mother would gather up the coins in the box and take them—always going on foot to save carfare—to "a family less favored than we have been." I think she planned these excursions for the days that seemed darkest. The light always shone again when she returned.

III

ALTHOUGH I BEGAN selling newspapers when I was barely six, and started to earn money in other ways like running errands, I cannot truthfully say that I "went to work" until a little later. But before telling about my formal appearance in the marts of trade I shall devote a paragraph to my formal education. One paragraph will easily cover it.

I entered school in 1876. I left at the end of my first day, and never returned. When I was a child, although public schools themselves were free, books were not. For those children whose parents were too poor to buy books copies were available—but with a stigma. In each volume had been stamped a phrase, explained publicly by the teacher, stating that the book had been loaned. My parents were too poor to buy books. My parents had also taught me, by the example of my mother, that we *gave* charity. We never needed to *accept* charity, and I could not accept it, even to get an education. I told my mother. All she ever said was, "I will teach you, Solly."

She taught me, in lieu of schooling, two great things. To read with understanding was the first. To desire to know was the second.

I do not know the exact date of my going to work. But then neither do I know with certainty the exact date of my birth!

Biblical Jews calculated, and orthodox Jews still calculate today, by the lunar calendar. Just as the children of Israel in the Wilderness with Moses reckoned the anniversary of the

Passover by the moon, so do Jews today. So, for that matter, do Christians reckon their greatest day, Easter, which since the Council of Nicaea in the fourth century has annually been celebrated on the first Sunday after the first full moon upon or next after the vernal equinox.

We were Jews of the ancient faith. We used the lunar calendar. With us, too, anniversaries of the deaths of the departed have always been far more important than birthdays. All I know about my own birthday is that it was figured out something like this by my mother: "Now let me see. . . . Uncle Sol Bennett's cow had a calf in the waning moon, and Solly was born two days later."

The only difficulty about Mother's method was her inability to recall the day on which the population of Uncle Sol's barnyard had been augmented! That is why the date March 9, 1870, is only my *legal* birthday. In the absence of any supporting documentation from the town of Pekin, Illinois, where my parents then lived, it is the best I could do. So far it has been quite good enough—birthday greetings always reach me, just as they do other people, and the State Department continues to issue my passports without hesitation.

Returning to the subject of my real working career, I do know with certainty that it began in 1877. I established that beyond question as a result of some information which the Patent Office sent me a few years ago. I had written for the date of a patent granted my employers on a rotating spiral brush used in carpet sweepers. Since the year of the patent was 1878 and I had then been employed for at least twelve months, it is clear (to me, at any rate) that I really went to work at the age of seven.

My employers were the brothers Benedict and Joseph Figer. Their place of business—factory, warehouse, salesroom—was at 615 Sacramento Street. Jack's Restaurant stands there now; it is one of San Francisco's best, with a fine French cuisine.

It is perhaps ostentatious to describe Figer Brothers California Brush Factory (later changed to California Carpet Machine Factory) as a factory. There were not more than twenty-five workmen, and machinery in the modern sense was nonexistent. All operations were performed by hand except one. That one

required foot power, to operate a sort of lathe, as I remember. I am much clearer about the foot power itself, since one of my feet was so often involved in this activity. On either side of the lathe was a treadle, and whenever power was required two men would be summoned—and I was classified as a man on every kind of job but the ones requiring heavy lifting. One of us used his left foot, the other his right; then, at intervals of five or six minutes, we would switch places and feet. I would run up behind the lathe and the other member of the team would dart round in front of it. A good team could change places so fast that the machine never lost its momentum. The first few times I worked on the treadle I thought it was fun. After that I just got tired.

I found the job as a result of a connection that my father had with Figer Brothers. They sold not only the brushes that they manufactured but certain other cleaning equipment, such as chamois and sponges, and when Father was in one of his frequent periods without regular employment he would get himself a line of goods to peddle. Often I helped him, and I vividly recall trudging up Sacramento Street, or equally steep California Street, half buried under the load that I had just picked up at the factory, to canvass the kitchens of the mansions on Nob Hill. Our loads were not only bulky but quite heavy, for we always moistened the sponges before starting out. Why? Well, it was what professors of marketing today might call consumer appeal—a wet sponge "displays" better than a dry one. (Another feature of that "sponge routine" still stands out. Sometimes a kindly cook or maid would notice me as I rested my sack on the back steps and give me a piece of cake or a slice of newly baked bread. These little acts of generosity taught me several things. One of the lessons was the importance of noticing opportunities to help others; the effort is usually so slight, and the accomplishment always outweighs it. Another lesson had a use that was strictly selfish. I quickly learned that a boy who sighed as he set his pack down, or who looked up and smiled while his father was showing his wares, got more cake than one who stood by expressionless. I also found that a boy who attracted favorable attention helped to sell sponges. These

lessons are just as useful to me today as they were when I began to learn them more than seventy years ago.)

I got the job at Figer Brothers because I displayed an eagerness to do everything in the place for whatever they thought I was worth. It must have amused Ben Figer to hear me talk, but he put me to work. For the next couple of years I am sure I was tried at everything within my capacity. I swept floors and washed windows, opened boxes and wrapped packages, ran errands, took stock, sandpapered brush blocks, mixed glue, cut bristles, packed crates, and waited on all the other employees. It was automatically up to me to do every chore in the place. I got to work before six in the morning and was always there until six o'clock or later at night. My pay for the first two years was $1.25, for a seventy-two hour week. I thought it was a wonderful job. And indeed it was—it gave me my start.

The factory stood in the very oldest part of San Francisco. Just around the corner, on Montgomery Street, was and is the famous Montgomery Block, one of perhaps half a dozen buildings in the business district that survived the 1906 fire. When construction of the block began, in 1853, nearly everybody believed, and publicly stated, that its architect, Henry W. Halleck (later to be general in chief of the Union Army), was crazy. The waters of San Francisco Bay then came up as far as Montgomery Street (which now, in consequence of successive fillings, is a good half mile from the Embarcadero), and this madman was actually proposing to erect masonry on a submarine foundation of redwood logs! "Halleck's Folly" and "Floating Fortress" were the kindest epithets applied to the proposed four-story building.

From the factory it was about fifteen blocks to the house on Brannan Street where I lived, "south of the Slot." This is the San Franciscan's alternate way of saying "south of Market Street," and it has a very real significance, which I shall try to explain. One of the hallmarks of San Francisco is its cable cars, still used on some of the steepest hills. They are propelled by an endless steel cable which, during hours of operation, moves ceaselessly beneath the surface of the street. A car starts when its grip takes hold of this moving cable; it stops when the cable is released and brakes are applied. Contact with the cable is

made through a groove—the "slot"—cut through the surface of the street midway between the tracks. Market Street, long and straight, still is the Slot—although the cars that run there are no longer pulled by cables.

These fifteen blocks meant a zigzag walk of somewhere between a mile and a half and two miles to work in the morning, and the same walk at the end of the day. Only it was seldom the same walk. Its variations were almost infinite and always exciting to my senses. I could go past the theaters on Bush Street and read the playbills and stare at the lurid photographs of ladies in tights and spangles. I could wander through Dupont Street (now Grant Avenue) and enjoy the sights and smells and sounds of Chinatown, or speculate on the sinister mysteries hidden behind the red-lacquered doors. Or, after I was a little older in my career as a businessman, I might stroll along Montgomery Street and dream of becoming a great banker, driven in a carriage and distributing gifts to the gentlemen who bowed virtuously and lifted their hats as I rode by. I could even peep into the Grand Court of the Palace Hotel as I walked down New Montgomery Street—but not for a few years more did it occur to me that I, a little Jew boy who lived near the tracks, could actually venture inside.

Emperor Norton was still an integral part of the city during my first few years. This unique figure, an Englishman who had made and lost a tidy fortune through speculation in the fifties, was for twenty years San Francisco's best known citizen. After he had lost his money a mental readjustment took place, and there emerged a new personality who called himself "Norton I, Emperor of the United States and Protector of Mexico," and paraded grandly through the streets wearing an epauleted blue uniform and alternately swinging a cane and carrying a sword. Norton's peers naturally concluded that he was a lunatic —of the harmless variety—and his imperial career was at once assured. He assumed direction of the police force, visited and inspected (and sometimes condemned) buildings under construction, issued ordinances. On more momentous topics he wrote proclamations—and the newspapers published them without alteration, as they did his one-way correspondence with the crowned heads and prime ministers of Europe. When the state

legislature convened in Sacramento he betook himself to the capital city to advise the lawmakers, traveling with modest regal pomp on a Southern Pacific train and using his lifetime pass for both transportation and meals. He dined free of charge in restaurants of his own choosing and smoked only Havana claros. He levied taxes and issued bonds. When he needed cash he used his own currency, signed on the spot, in denominations ranging from fifty cents to two dollars. All his undertakings succeeded. Even the bridge he commanded to be built across the Bay was completed, after little more than a half century's delay! Upon Norton's death, in 1880, he was given one of the most impressive funerals in the history of San Francisco. More than 30,000 persons, including a ten-year-old brushmaker, waited outside the Masonic Temple at Montgomery and Post to follow the Emperor to his burial place. Undoubtedly Joshua Abraham Norton was eccentric. But crazy? I wonder.

There were so many wonderful things in San Francisco, and little by little I came to make them all my own. I loved the windy heights of Nob Hill—"a kind of slum," according to Stevenson, "being the habitat of the mere millionaire"—with the outlandish redwood castles erected by thrifty storekeepers from New England and up the Hudson who had built the Central Pacific. It never occurred to me, as I watched the fog curl around Mrs. Hopkins's jig-saw turrets or Mr. Crocker's mansard roof, that these dwelling places were in monstrous bad taste. How would I have known? I thought they were magnificent. Nor did it seem strange to me that Mr. Colton's residence was guarded, in the manner of a public library or museum of art, by stone lions with well-bred faces. And I certainly was unaware that there could ever be anything humorous in the decision of Mr. Flood, the dignified saloon proprietor who had made a fortune out of Nevada silver, to import Connecticut brownstone in order to build the most dismal of all these palatial abodes.

I loved, too, the gentler elevation closer to my part of town that the quiet rich of an earlier generation had chosen for their pleasant, simple houses. Rincon Hill had been doomed before my birth when Second Street was cut through, but in my boyhood it was still a section with charm. By the time I left

San Francisco, in the early nineties, hardly a single old house was left, and the remaining few all bore the sign *furnished rooms.* It was the final destiny of Rincon Hill to provide the approach to the Bay Bridge.

Still another spot that retained in my childhood much of its original character (although even then it was seriously tarnished) was South Park. When I visited London for the first time, some fifty years ago, I found myself one afternoon in a part of Mayfair that evoked what I can describe only as a mystic recollection. The place was Berkeley Square. I did not know at the time that South Park had been exactly copied from it. Both places have changed enormously with the years; but while Berkeley Square, even after the war, still has much of its old look, South Park could hardly now be recognized by anyone unless he were a geologist. (I remembered my strange London experience again about 1930 when I went to the theater in New York to see Leslie Howard, who was shot down in a passenger plane by the Germans in 1943, play the lead in *Berkeley Square.* To me it was an almost overpowering coincidence that the play should also have been built on the mystic theme of transporting certain characters to a past that was familiar yet one in which they had not existed.)

When I had the time—and it was not often—I would go a little farther afield, north along the Embarcadero, where I could see the ships unloading their cargoes from Honolulu and Shanghai and Melbourne; then I might climb the steep eastward-facing slope behind the wharves and survey all this and much more from Telegraph Hill. I could see from this height the little town of Oakland and all the other small communities of the Contra Costa that have since grown into a man-made whole. Jutting out into the water from the northern end of the peninsula which is San Francisco was the rickety pier which used to be known, for the picturesque rascal who built it, as Meiggs Wharf, and is now, in its reconstructed existence, famous everywhere under the name of Fisherman's Wharf. Alcatraz, "Pelicans Island," lay beyond, and off to the right was the greater mass of Angel Island, where the immigration station had been built. To the left, on the other side of the unbridged Golden Gate, the tawny slopes of Marin County rose sharply

out of the water, and a few miles inland from there Mount Tamalpais stood dominant. I never got as far as the wooded Presidio until I was eleven or twelve, and my first view of the open Pacific came about the same time. The sea was almost ten miles away!

But of all San Francisco's marvels, I think now that the one which stimulated me most was Market Street. It had been laid out in 1847, when Yerba Buena was a tiny grid of streets running almost exactly on north-south and east-west axes. As the village grew into the city of San Francisco, it expanded primarily to the north and west, retaining, regardless of hills that inclined frequently as much as 30 per cent, its grid pattern. But Market Street, for reasons that still elude absolute explanation, had been surveyed at an acute angle to the east-west axis, in a direction which, a friend of mine who served in the Navy during the recent war tells me, is approximately southwest by west—and all the streets south of Market, including my own Brannan, were cut either parallel or perpendicular to the new axis. Thus, San Francisco is today two grids of streets; they are most striking when seen from an airplane.

Why did the engineer Jasper O'Farrell cause Market Street to take the precise direction it does? Some people say his route followed the easiest terrain to Mission Dolores, and to other missions and settlements down the Peninsula. That may be partly the reason, but I am sure it is not the basic explanation. The real reason, I am satisfied, is that Jasper O'Farrell was a man of wisdom, a dreamer, a poet even. He could foresee the great city that rose after his death. He could picture its tall buildings which would block from view so much of the beautiful countryside. And it was in his hands to save one of the finest of these views forever, at least to every man who would lift up his eyes toward the western end of the street he had laid out. No, it was not an accident that today makes Twin Peaks appear to rise in the very center of Market Street.

Somehow, all this poetry escaped me while I was living there. What drew me first was the glow of life all along the broad untidy thoroughfare. At the foot of Market, in front of the Ferry Building (in my day, a low wooden shed surmounted by a squat wooden tower) was pandemonium. Here, in addition

to clattering drays and wagons of all kinds, all the streetcars in San Francisco seemed to be clanging their bells; four separate lines converged at this point, including the competing cable and horse-drawn lines of Market Street, each of which had double tracks. (There are still four tracks on Market, but now they are all operated by the city-owned company). All of the cars had to turn around at the Ferry Building, and it was one of the sights of the ages to watch half a dozen of them simultaneously swinging round the concentric loops. Only the most daring pedestrians attempted to cross here. They either made a wide circuit or abandoned the project entirely.

This bottleneck of course made traffic very dense on lower Market. There were no traffic officers to direct it, either, and crossing the street was a dangerous adventure here too, espepecially when the strips of foot stones at intersections were wet and slippery. Except for these smooth ribbons, the street was paved with cobblestones. I can't remember just when granite blocks or macadam began to supersede the bumpy surface, but I know it wasn't until after 1880.

It was not until well after this year that Market was to be the principal retail street. For blocks there were only warehouses and factories. One of the largest bore the sign STUDEBAKER BROS. PALACE CARRIAGE REPOSITORY. Nearby was the "messenger office" of the Pacific Postal Telegraph Company. At Post Street, just opposite the Masonic Temple, hung a large sign, with a finger pointing up the street, to help prospective travelers find the railroad ticket office. The Du Pont people took orders for powder on Market Street. Wire mills and flour mills flourished here. Silks and woolens were manufactured. Gloves were made by a firm with the interesting name of Lippitt, Leak. In the five-story Sheldon Block, at Market and First, wagons, saddlery, harnesses, and all sorts of agricultural implements were on display. From this same corner of Market and First, incidentally, one could get an unobstructed view of the Selby Smelting and Lead Company's famous "Shot Tower," which stood at the corner of Howard, two blocks to the south; here molten lead was poured through a heavy sieve, and the pellets, plunging into cold water after a drop of two hundred feet, emerged as shot. Schoolboys loved to visit this exciting

place. So did I, even though I was a serious-minded working man. The Shot Tower, which stood until 1906, dominated the landscape south of Market, just as the twin towers of Temple Emanu-El provided the sharpest architectural accent for the northern part of town.

The element which more than anything else determined the future of Market Street was the Palace Hotel. Even before this mammoth structure was ready for occupancy, there was no doubt in anyone's mind that this was the coming part of town for business. If Mr. Ralston, without batting an eye, could spend $5,000,000 to construct and furnish a single building, anyone would be a fool to hesitate. The rush was on, and in the following year a second large hotel opened to the public. This was the Baldwin, four blocks up the street. It was not precisely a rival—nothing could hope to rival the Palace—but it had its own great distinction. For the Baldwin was a hotel *and* theater. Probably it was the extra hazard of the playhouse that caused the place to be known as "Lucky Baldwin's Firetrap." In any case, the implicit prediction was fulfilled, for in 1898 the Baldwin went up in a spectacular blaze, a few hours after William Gillette had finished a performance of *Secret Service.* James Flood bought the site and erected an office building. Gutted a second time in the holocaust of 1906, the massive walls survived, and these enclose the present Flood Building.

One other thing I must note about early Market Street. This is Lotta's Fountain, and it is almost the only landmark that has not changed since my day. Lotta Crabtree, a gold-camp dance-hall entertainer at the age of eight, had, though never a great actress, gone on to extraordinary fame and riches. In 1875 she gave the people of San Francisco a fountain that provided drinking water from the mouths of four iron lion heads. Across the street from the upper end of the Palace, this fountain was for a generation the most popular place of rendezvous in the city. That is why I chose it as the most likely spot for peddling my violets in the evening. How Lotta's Fountain used to tower above me! How small and brave it now seems, an archaic note in the overwhelming city!

IV

IT WAS PERHAPS a year after I went to work at the brush factory that I got my first chance in show business—and I have been a showman ever since. Here and there a few people may have suspected this of me, and I feel it my duty to go on record at last. I can only hope that my occasional prominence as a showman has never obscured the meaning of any performance with which I have been identified. I like being called "a good showman." But I like much more to hear someone say, "Good show!"

When I was growing up the San Francisco theater, from the point of view of the critic and the historian, was a pretty poor thing—that is to say, it lacked freshness and originality. No plays of any consequence were being written, and serious drama, except for the perennially popular tragedies of Shakespeare, was hardly ever produced. But this barrenness was of slight concern to actors and managers, and least of all to audiences. San Francisco supported a score of playhouses when I was a boy, and in addition dozens of "melodeons" and "gardens" flourished, each with its little troupe of permanent or peripatetic entertainers.

This state of enthusiasm for professional amusement had prevailed, with ups and downs of intensity, since the day in 1849 when Stephen Massett, an English dance-hall comedian and singer (who was pleased to describe himself as "Jeems Pipes of Pipesville"), gave a one-man variety performance in the timbered structure on Portsmouth Square which served the furi-

ously growing town as both schoolhouse and police station. It continued through the seventies, eighties, and nineties and right on down to the sad era when the movies all but smothered the "live" theater. Even today, I suppose, when two theaters are enough to take care of a quadrupled population, San Francisco continues to deserve its old undisputed title of "the best show town on earth."

At the start the audiences consisted almost entirely of bearded miners with pouches of gold dust, enormous appetites for any pleasures available, and no taste at all. Tom Maguire, a saloonkeeper and professional gambler, was impressed with the possibilities of diverting some of the dust in his own direction; he built a stage in the second story of the Parker House (also on Portsmouth Square) and called this establishment the Jenny Lind Theater. Meanwhile actors and actresses were arriving in the new Golconda, and by the time the Jenny Lind burned, early in May, 1851, half a dozen other "theaters" were playing to packed houses. Among these was the Bella Union, which, in one incarnation or another, survived until 1906.

Scarcely a month passed before the second Jenny Lind had risen on the site of the original building—and less than a dozen performances later this one went the way of the first. Destructive conflagrations were common in the wooden town. San Francisco had six widespread fires in less than two years.

Maguire was not disheartened. The third Jenny Lind, on the same site, was completed late in 1851. This time stone had been used, at least for the main façade, and the people of San Francisco felt that the new temple of the drama had a better-than-fair chance for survival. It did survive—until 1906—but not as a theater. Less than a year after Maguire had opened it he sold it to the community for use as a city hall. The citizens were outraged, not because they considered the price of $200,000 excessive, but because they had been deprived of their finest house of entertainment.

In the summer of 1852, with the arrival of Junius Brutus Booth, San Franciscans had their first opportunity to observe a star of any magnitude. In Booth's first appearance, a melodrama entitled *The Iron Chest,* he was supported by his sons, J. B. Booth, Jr., and Edwin, who was destined to become the

foremost American tragedian of the century. Years later, in his memoirs, Edwin Booth referred to San Francisco as "the nursery of my professional babyhood." He stayed four years and did not play in New York until 1856, when he was a relatively mature actor of twenty-three.

I have no intention of trying to give a history of the theater, but the San Francisco entertainment world was so much a part of my life (just as I was a small part of that world) that it is impossible for me to tell much about myself without introducing solid chunks to suggest how things had come to be as they were when I arrived on the scene. This is almost as true of my relationship with the city itself. San Francisco is only a century old, and I have lived through more than three-quarters of that century. Through my acquaintance with so many of the early inhabitants (including both Tom Maguire and Edwin Booth) I feel almost as if I had been there at the beginning myself, and sometimes, I am afraid, I talk that way. It is so very easy for a man who has lived through nearly eighty lively years to remember certain events vividly described in his childhood more clearly than he does many of his own prosaic activities. I shall try not to make any of my prenatal "recollections" come forth as my own—for example, Adah Menken's performance in *Mazeppa,* seven years before I was born!—but if I should ever stray in this direction, I hope that my slip will be charged to enthusiasm rather than to innate wickedness.

At the outset the theater was simply another opportunity for me to work and earn money. I was always busy. Even before I found my job with the Figers I had no time for play. If I wasn't running errands or peddling sponges, I was down by the railroad tracks with a basket or scuttle picking up lumps of coal to burn in our kitchen stove. It never occurred to me that I was "underprivileged." I was just doing my share in a family that had to work unremittingly to survive.

One day on my way home from the factory, as I stood gaping at the new playbill outside the Baldwin Theater, a man called to me from inside the lobby. He was the son of a Jewish family named Belasco who lived a few blocks from my own home. David Belasco was then callboy at the Baldwin. This position

is probably the most humble in the whole hierarchy of theatrical management. But there was nothing humble about young David Belasco. Even then, long before he had begun to wear his famous clerical collar, there was an air of distinction about him and he was customarily treated with deference. He always seemed to know what he was doing and why he was doing it, and other people sensed a force that they later recognized as genius.

"Would you like to make four bits?" he asked. At best, he could have known only vaguely who I was, but I am sure he must have identified me as one of the Jewish children in his neighborhood.

"Yes, sir," I answered. I never hesitated when anyone suggested a job. And four bits! Fifty cents was more than two days' factory pay. I was always quick at arithmetic.

"Well, be back in an hour, and I'll see whether we can use you."

I didn't ask what the job would be. I just said, "Yes, sir," again, and started for home on a dead run. It was then about six-thirty, and I had nearly a mile to go. But I was back, having broken the exciting news to my family and gulped some supper, by quarter past seven. I was taking no chances.

Belasco was backstage, but he had left word for me to be sent to him. I knew where the stage door was. What man, regardless of his years, did not know in those days?

My imagination had not been equal to the task I had imposed upon it. The possibility that the job would consist in playing a part on the stage had not entered my mind. Yet that was the experience I was about to have. I was to play the part of Peter Rich in *Under the Gaslight*. What a moment in my life!

It seems hardly necessary for me to say that Peter Rich presented no extraordinary difficulties. The character was a young pickpocket. He had no lines to speak—at least not in this particular performance. He appeared in only two scenes, first, as a shadow in the gloom; the second time, when he was identified in the police station. That is nearly everything I can recall about the play. Perhaps my memory is a little confused here: there were so many plays with shadowy pickpockets, off-stage locomotives, and on-stage heroines being rescued from all the

fates that were considered to be worse than death in the age of Rutherford B. Hayes and Queen Victoria.

There were no hisses while I strutted my hour upon the stage, nor was there, fortunately, any untimely laughter. But I was not implored by the management to stay for the run of the play. Possibly the regular Peter Rich had just been indisposed for that one evening. Or perhaps *Under the Gaslight* had been billed for only a single performance and I had been chosen on merit—or because the manager had forgotten to engage a professional until close to curtain time. I do not know. But I recall distinctly that David Belasco never paid me the fifty cents! (This failure to receive my wages might have had something to do with my decision to stick to my job at the brush works instead of plunging immediately and exclusively into a career in the theater. I can't believe that I phrased my thoughts very exactly at the time, but I must have had a feeling that people would always need brushes and that I'd better keep on with my bread-and-butter trade. I never got entirely away from that feeling, and a few years later, when I was devoting my principal energies to the affairs of the Alcazar Theater, I always kept an insurance policy against the vagaries of make-believe in the form of several more earthy enterprises. Never in my life did I place either my full confidence or my entire capital in the wondrous but uncertain art of determining what would entertain other people.)

Even so, I had been bitten by the bug of the theater, and the effects were to be permanent. Occasionally I landed a job as an extra in a mob scene. Sometimes I got a chance to sing, as one of the "madrigal boys" in a minstrel show. Most of the time, however, I worked in front of the footlights, and there is literally no phase of the theater in which during my youth I did not have a hand. I was ready to do anything just for the privilege of being there, and I was able to justify my presence by earning money. It makes me smile when newspaper and magazine articles stress the poverty and deprivations of my boyhood. Poverty I knew. But from the age of eight any deprivation was more than compensated. How many boys today can spend almost every night in a theater?

During the late seventies and early eighties the principal

playhouses, in addition to the Baldwin, were the Tivoli, the California, and the Grand Opera House, which had an enormous stage, seated nearly four thousand persons, and boasted an art gallery over the entrance hall. They had their ups and downs and their ins and outs. Most stable, probably, was the Tivoli, a truly integral part of the city, which almost continuously presented a program of light opera at moderate prices. The Baldwin was stable, too, if only for the reason that it was a hobby of its owner and supported by his private purse whenever the figures in the ledger turned red. The Opera House had been built more in response to the demands of civic enthusiasm than to satisfy a real need. There just weren't enough San Franciscans, for all their love of good music, to maintain a first-rate opera company during a full season, but happily the Opera House had two of the "silver kings," Messrs. Flood and O'Brien, to keep it going through its always predictable lean seasons. Only the California, which had been built by the tragic Ralston, was dependent solely upon popular favor, and a year that began and ended under the same manager was a notable exception in its convulsive history.

At one time or another, over a period of five or six years, I worked in all of these theaters, and in a few others besides, including the Standard and the Bush Street Theater. It was just a question of keeping busy wherever and however I could. One week I might be an usher at the Baldwin, the next a vendor of candies at the California, and at another time a hat checker at the Opera House. I soon came to know not only the ways of the theater but the men who controlled them, or at least the men who were in charge of such operations as I could fit into. Whether working or not, I would keep in close touch with coming events all over town, and often I would discover some way of making money obliquely, if not directly.

An extraordinary opportunity of this sort presented itself at a time when I was best prepared by experience to cash in on it. The chance came on the occasion of Adelina Patti's first visit to San Francisco. She arrived on March 9, 1884, which I now realize was my fourteenth birthday.

It would be an exaggeration to say that as many people were present in Oakland when the one and only Patti stepped down

from her gold-and-satinwood-paneled car (also the *Adelina Patti*) as greeted Lindbergh in New York in 1927. I am sure, however, that half the population must have lined Market Street when, after crossing the bay, the incomparable diva was driven in an open coach from the Ferry Building to the Palace Hotel. For weeks the city had been in a frenzy of anticipation, and for once at least the Grand Opera House was completely inadequate. Fantastic prices were being asked and paid for tickets, and opera lovers stood in line all night to get them. Speculators swarmed the streets and crowded about the entrance to the theater. The premium, originally 100 per cent, rose to 500 per cent, and at that point Colonel Mapleson, manager of Patti's company called a halt; he canceled the regular sale and auctioned the remaining seats. Some persons were unkind enough to suggest that the extra profits went into his own pocket.

Meanwhile I had quietly been taking orders for tickets for Patti's first appearance, which was to be in *La Traviata*. I knew a way to get them that was not open to common mortals. I was one of the lords of the theater. And I was going to make a pretty penny out of the deal.

Rather patronizingly I glanced at the people in the queue. Then, fifteen minutes or so before the box-office window was scheduled to open, I wandered back to the stage door. I had already made my arrangements with the watchman, and I encountered no difficulty in getting inside and making my way through the caverns of the basement. Up near the front of the basement there was a trap door that opened into the lobby; I had placed a ladder there a few days earlier. Now all I had to do was lift the trap, climb through, and squeeze into the line right in front of the window.

The ladder was exactly as I had left it, but for some curious reason the trap wouldn't budge. I heaved my shoulder against it with no effect, and when I pried at the edges with a knife blade it still refused to yield.

Someone had double-crossed me by bolting the door.

No disaster during my first fourteen years had ever approached this one. With one stroke I had lost a fat profit and my faith in the human race. Even worse, although I was not then

familiar with the expression, I had "lost face" with the people who had depended upon my promises to get them in to hear Patti. I went out to hang myself, but I finally compromised on a dish of ice cream.

My successes, though usually of minor dimensions, were much more frequent than my failures. One of them provided me once or twice a year with a neat little harvest. Horseshoes were the medium.

For many years Joe Murphy, one of the great comedians of his day, had played to packed houses in a sentimental Irish drama entitled *Kerry Gow*. The hero was a blacksmith, and Murphy had repeated the role so many times that he was able to turn out a fair horseshoe on the stage. Audiences loved the realism of the fire and the ringing anvil, and at the moment when Joe actually shaped a shoe before their eyes all the Irishmen present would burst into cheers.

One night after the performance I heard a hearty Hibernian voice express an urgent desire to possess "the very horseshoe what Joe Mur-r-rphy made with his own two hands."

"I'll try to get it for you," I told the gentleman. Then, having warned him that there was a heavy demand for handmade specials by Murphy, I ran back through the theater, found the shoe, and returned.

"Well, now aren't you the friendly little lad!" he exclaimed when I delivered the prize. "Here's four bits for your trouble."

Next day I bought a small keg of horseshoes, and thereafter every performance of *Kerry Gow* found me spotting prosperous-looking Irishmen with soft expressions and soliciting their trade in a unique souvenir of the evening. I had to be careful, of course, not to pick my prospects too close together, but I must have sold hundreds of horseshoes before their "maker" finally retired.

Anybody with his wits about him could always find some opportunity in the theater to make a little extra money. By the time I had got to be an usher I had noted that there was always likely to be a patron who had forgotten his handkerchief, lost a collar button, or broken a shoelace, and I became a walking department store. Clients in emergency were not only willing to

pay two or three times the customary price but usually insisted upon pressing a tip into my reluctant hand.

Certain activities required co-operation, and some of them might even be classified as rackets by the purist. I will compromise and describe them as legitimate chiseling. Most common of all was the failure of the program supply. No matter how many programs had been printed, we ushers always seemed to run out of them just before curtain time. Then as we escorted latecomers to their seats we would apologize and promise to "try to find one." Just as the lights were about to be lowered we would rush back breathless and deliver the program that we had "luckily found." By judicious appraisal of our prospects we could pick the fat tippers four times out of five. It was a relatively lucrative enterprise, but, as I have said, co-operation was needed, and there was no way to audit the books. Sometimes, I suspect, there was not an equitable division of the profits.

I think the most ingenious of our inventions was introduced on the night of a big opening at the Baldwin. Gentlemen wore silk hats to the theater in those days, and they had no choice but to check them. The normal fee was two bits.

"Think how much we would make if we could get four bits!" sighed one of the checkers, surveying the hundreds of shiny toppers.

Somebody else immediately contributed an idea. We discussed it and decided that it was worth a try. At worst, it could cost us nothing if we failed.

At the end of the performance the usual hat-retrieving line formed. But a careful observer would have noted that very few of the gentlemen waited for their change. Even those who had put down silver dollars seemed eager to leave the window, and they were seen to breathe heavily for several moments after departing.

We had struck a bonanza in the checkroom, and at the very slight inconvenience of having to endure one another's society for twenty minutes. Each of us had chewed and swallowed two or three cloves of garlic.

A universal adjunct to the theater in San Francisco was the saloon. Or, with an eye toward historical development, it might

be better if I said that the theater was the adjunct. The saloon came first. Into it were introduced the singers and dancers and the comedians, first on the same floor level as the patrons, later on a raised platform. Profits came from hard liquor, and the soubrette of the fifties spent more time soliciting the purchase of "champagne wine" or, failing that, whisky than she did on the stage.

Coupled with this practice was the tradition of the German beer garden, early imported to the Coast, and as late as the early nineties, when I moved away from San Francisco, the great majority of the "theaters" were still primarily places where you sat at a table or, if you had a lady with you and could afford it, in a discreetly curtained box with a bottle of wine or a stein of beer while watching entertainment that varied directly in quality and novelty with the price charged for admittance. Originally, there had been no charge at all in most of the gardens of this type, but as their entertainment grew more elaborate and costly it was observed that an increasingly large number of patrons spent the entire evening nursing a single drink. That sort of conduct was literally insupportable, and before long the various managers went into a huddle and decided to make people pay to enter the premises.

For a time there was one notable exception. Gustav Walter, who had made a small fortune out of a basement "garden" called The Fountain, where a drink was the price of admission, decided to apply the same formula to The Wigwam. This was a huge barnlike building, at the corner of Stockton and Geary, which had been thrown up hurriedly in 1884 to house the Dirigo Club, a Republican organization that had labored earnestly but vainly to elect James G. Blaine President of the United States.* Walter took it over some time after the cam-

* James G. Blaine, James G. Blaine,
The continental liar from the State of Maine!

This jingle was chanted by Democrats at rallies and as they marched in parade. I don't know whether they were referring to a particular statement made by the candidate, or whether it was simply a reflection of normal partisan attitude.

The Republicans had a far more malicious bit of doggerel in their repertoire. It went:

Ma, Ma, where's my Pa?—
He's in the White House! Ha, Ha, Ha!

paign and refurbished it as a "concert garden." With a man named Tom Leary as stage manager, it was enormously popular for some years. My own favorite amusement here was watching the waiters, who apparently had been put through a special postgraduate course in drink snatching. Empty or full, your glass was whisked away in the wink of an eye if you released your grip on it even slightly. The business of the house was selling drinks, and nothing less than a complete indifference to insult could keep you from buying a fresh one at the pleasure of your waiter.

It was not long, however, before Gus Walter found that he could charge a modest entry fee—a dime or a quarter, I forget which—and keep right on bullying his customers. They loved it, as a matter of fact, and certainly no one could justly complain about the cost of watching such gifted comedians as Weber and Fields, and numerous others of almost equal caliber. David Warfield got his start here, after a fashion, when his name was still Dave Wollfeld. Although he was three or four years older than I, we had worked together and were consequently quite good friends, and at his invitation I was present at his debut. Although Dave in 1885 was something less than Peter Grimm or the Music Master—to be precise, he was then an usher in the Bush Street Theater—he had got himself billed to do a turn at The Wigwam. As I remember, he sang a song and did a buck and wing. Imagining that he had heard thunderous applause and repeated choruses of "Bravo!" he returned to the stage after his act, and this time he had the temerity to try Hamlet's soliloquy from Act III. There has always been an admirable independence of judgment on the part of San Francisco theatergoers, and hardly had Dave uttered the phrase "slings and arrows" then he was answered with boos, jeers, and a generous shower of orange rinds from the fancy-drink section up front. The future adornment of the American stage left almost at once for the East, vowing not to return until he had mastered his profession. He more than fulfilled his promise.

I have already suggested, at the beginning of this chapter, that the plays of this period were jejune and tawdry. One of the

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and was a somewhat less than subtle reminder that the Democratic candidate, Grover Cleveland, had an acknowledged illegitimate son.

reasons, I believe, for the general intellectual sterility of the times was that we were living in an ultra-hypocritical world. If the American people have improved in no other way since my youth, they have at least become more honest about admitting their weaknesses and vices: In self-criticism there is always at least the germ of improvement. Today we write and read and discuss books on social topics that were absolutely taboo in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and the same thing is true of the theater. When I was growing up, the portrayal of genuine human qualities, good and bad, could be witnessed only in *King Lear, Othello, Macbeth,* and a few other plays of Shakespeare—they were "classics," therefore beyond criticism or the tamperings of the pious—or in the relatively shallow dramaturgy of contemporaries like Sardou (when Sarah Bernhardt played in this country she always spoke in French, and the more obvious dialogue in such a play as *Divorçons,* for example, was kept from fastidious ears by the screen of language).

It is my notion that we had no better things to consider on the American stage because we didn't dare face ourselves. Any attempt by an honest playwright to display our sins, to prick our prejudices, or to overthrow a single one of our meaningless proprieties would have brought destruction upon him.

One man in San Francisco did write a play on a forbidden theme. The play, produced in 1879, aroused such controversy and brought so much abuse upon its author that he killed himself. His name was Salmi Morse. The fact that he was a Jew was mere coincidence so far as the play and its production were concerned, but when the trouble began this circumstance inevitably, if irrationally, swelled the enormity of Morse's "crime."

Morse had discovered in the Gospels of the New Testament the subject for a beautiful pageant. Expanding the King James version to fit the requirements of his dialogue and stage situations, he wrote a moving play which he named *The Passion.* "Lucky" Baldwin read it with enthusiasm and summoned Tom Maguire, who, still going strong after thirty years, was manager of the Grand Opera House. After a consultation among the three gentlemen, it was decided to produce *The Passion* on the large stage of Maguire's theater instead of at the Baldwin.

David Belasco, who was then a prompter at the Opera House (although with amiable exaggeration he called himself "stage manager"), has described the preparations: "How we scoured San Francisco—school, church, and theatre—for people to put into our cast! Every actor out of employment was sure of finding something to do in our mob scenes. I cannot conceive, in the history of the theatre, a more complete or a more perfect cast. We engaged two hundred singers; we marshalled four hundred men, women, and infants in our ensembles. And in the preparation everyone seemed to be inspired."

James O'Neill, father of Eugene O'Neill, was chosen to play Christ. Still a young man of slight reputation outside San Francisco, he was already recognized at home as a gifted actor. He was a devout Roman Catholic, and the solemnity of the play and his leading part in it persuaded him to lead a life of extreme austerity during the rehearsal period.

When it became known that a play about the life of Jesus was going to be given the popular reaction was one of excitement and enthusiasm, and there was a heavy sale of tickets. But a storm was gathering.

The storm broke a week or so before the scheduled date of opening. Salmi Morse was denounced from every Protestant pulpit and excoriated by every newspaper editor in town. The San Francisco Board of Supervisors threatened to prohibit the presentation of *The Passion* unless its withdrawal were immediately announced. Only the Roman Catholic archbishop, alone among dignitaries and self-appointed crusaders, uttered no objection.

To forestall possible action by the Board of Supervisors Maguire pushed the opening date several days ahead. The house was well filled, and there were no adverse demonstrations on the part of the audience. In fact, I remember that the audience was strangely hushed and that handkerchiefs were freely used. I worked on programs that night; since the owner of the Baldwin was coproducer of *The Passion,* his own theatre was naturally closed and many people who normally had jobs there were absorbed into the Opera House staff for the occasion.

The critics, taking their orders from the publishers, were uniformly condemnatory. "Blasphemous," "desecrating," and

"unholy" were the adjectives most frequently employed. Morse was most harshly attacked; not only was his play impious, but he himself, being "of alien faith," could have been inspired by nothing higher than the wish to line his pockets with gold. O'Neill, although his performance was praised, was condemned for having given it, and it was predicted with evangelical certainty that he would live the rest of his life in shame of this deed. Lucky Baldwin, "angel" of the play, was not censured for his part; he, naturally, was protected by the sanctity of great wealth.

A second performance followed several days later, and then *The Passion* was "temporarily withdrawn." A city ordinance which prohibited the performance of any play that tended "to profane religion" was meanwhile enacted.

Either the ordinance or genuine interest in the play caused Maguire to reopen it after a few weeks had passed. It had been predicted that the cast would be arrested, and the promise of excitement filled the Opera House again. The audience was not disappointed, although only O'Neill and a few other principals were taken off to jail. Doubtless the police officers assigned to duty at the Opera House had been warned not to overtax the facilities of the courts by taking the entire cast into custody.

Baldwin provided bail. At the trial O'Neill was found guilty of violating the ordinance and fined fifty dollars, which, upon advice of counsel, he refused to pay. He was turned over to the sheriff, but a writ of habeas corpus brought about his release. The case was next heard before the Superior Court, which affirmed the right of the city to have passed the ordinance. O'Neill, by now exhausted and disheartened, reappeared in court, pleaded guilty, and paid the fines that had been assessed against him and the other actors. Baldwin and Maguire had also had enough of the affair, but Morse was determined to seek vindication in action. He tried to have *The Passion* produced in New York. Failure crushed him, and he drowned himself.

A play—though the word is hardly descriptive, I use it for convenience—that was to have a profound influence on the American theater was *The Black Crook.* It opened in New

York in 1866 and ran there for nearly 500 performances. In 1867 it was brought to San Francisco, where it was produced by two companies, one of which, needless to say, used a pirated version. Maguire, as might be expected, put on one of the productions.

The play, in so far as it possessed the slightest true dramatic content, was an uncommonly silly allegory in which Virtue triumphed over the Forces of Darkness. The real attraction of *The Black Crook,* however, was golden-haired Stalacta, Queen of the Fairies, who appeared, as did all the ladies of the ensemble, in low-cut bodice and wearing tights. It was America's first leg show.

Legs, of course, had been revealed before. Nakedness itself (in certain noisome dives of the Barbary Coast) was not unknown. But *The Black Crook* was the first large-scale entertainment, in a respectable theater, which had been devised almost exclusively to "glorify" the female body. Burlesque, in its vulgar modern sense, had been born. So, for that matter, had the musical comedy and the revue. Flo Ziegfeld's *Follies,* George White's *Scandals,* and today's various sophisticated inventions by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein are all lineal descendants.

Already venerable when I first saw it, around 1879 or 1880, *The Black Crook* was in constant revival during my San Francisco years. I myself helped to put it on at the Alcazar some time during the late eighties. The last time I heard about it, in the early thirties, a couple of New York playboys had installed a highly exaggerated travesty on the original in a disused church. I suppose it is on the boards somewhere right now. It was just too bad to die young.

The formula consisting of nether extremities, flowing golden locks, and elaborate stage effects was seized by countless imitators. Almost immediately San Franciscans were subjected to *The Black Rook* and a burlesque on burlesque entitled *The Black Rook with a Crook.* Then came other "sensations," of which the most notable, not to say notorious, was Lydia Thompson's company, "The British Blondes." Lydia was, I believe, an Englishwoman, and quite possibly a few members of her troupe were also of English birth. Most of the ladies, however,

were local chorines wearing rather fewer garments than usual and with their hair a uniform golden hue. Not without due cause is the period of the seventies and eighties sometimes referred to in the theater as the peroxide era. Lydia Thompson was still active in tights at least as late as 1889, when I attended her "farewell" performance at the Bush Street Theater.

I recall two other female impresarios in the tights-and-peroxide circuit. Not long after my one-night stand in *Under the Gaslight* the management of the Bush Street presented simultaneously Madame Rentz's Female Minstrels and Mabel Santley's London Burlesque Troupe. One company's act followed the other, and there was quite naturally a certain rivalry between the two. Presumably the Santley girls had the edge, for they returned the following year. On this occasion Mabel had the good luck—or perhaps it was the foresight of the theater's manager, M. B. Leavitt—to get herself arrested on the double charge of "indecent exposure" and "excessive exhibitionism." It was a question whether the lady was more brilliant in the courtroom or on the stage, but the London Burlesque Troupe enjoyed a gaudy success. (Not long ago, while I was talking over San Francisco days with one of my oldest friends, he asked me, "Do you remember the time that the police raided the 'Belly' Union and took away all of the girls in the paddy wagon?" I assured him that I recalled every detail of the dreadful scandal. Then he chuckled, "Life's a wonderful thing, Sol. They pinched those girls for doing the same thing my granddaughter did for charity at the Mark Hopkins last Christmas season—they were dancing the can-can!")

I also recall a hefty entertainer of fragrant reputation in the melodeons who was billed as Big Bertha.* She and her partner, a celebrated character known as Oofty Goofty, succeeded in bringing the theater to a bathos not even achieved by the coarse

* This extraordinary creature first appeared in San Francisco around 1885. Contributing ostentatiously to synagogues and Jewish charities, she pretended to be a widow and was soon much sought after by unmarried gentlemen of her own faith. One by one, she fleeced them, and when at last she was arrested as a confidence woman the case against her collapsed because her victims dreaded the notoriety even more than they wanted back the money she had taken. Richer by thousands of dollars, Big Bertha now dropped her pretenses and returned to the burlesque stage from which she had briefly risen to become "Queen of the Confidence Women."

burlesque of the 1930's. Oofty Goofty had for many years made a living by circulating through the saloons and permitting customers, at the modest charge of fifty cents, to strike him with a bat which he carried for the purpose. He was insensible to pain in the ordinary measure, and it was not until John L. Sullivan, heavyweight champion of the world, took a whack at him that Oofty Goofty was forced to give up this mode of livelihood. He and Big Bertha did a take-off on the balcony scene from *Romeo and Juliet* which not only brought down the house but, during what turned out to be the final performance, compelled the stage manager to intervene; Oofty Goofty was fired for "unnecessary roughness." Big Bertha's greatest act was the climax scene from *Mazeppa,* in which Adah Menken had performed with such éclat a generation before. In the lurid dramatization of Byron's poem of the same name, Mazeppa, a Tartar prince, is strapped naked on the back of a wild stallion and sent off to his supposed horrible death. Menken, who might be described—and I bow in the direction of both ladies—as the Betty Grable of the sixties, was the original Mazeppa (the portrayal of male characters by women used to be quite common in parts that called for the wearing of stockings and knee breeches), and her appearance in nothing but skin-colored tights was the most daring and breath-taking theatrical innovation of her day. *Mazeppa* had almost as many revivals as *The Black Crook,* and it was, of course, meat for the melodeons. Big Bertha brought *Mazeppa* to a new low in the middle eighties when her more-than-ample form, in loose skin-colored "tights," appeared on a melodeon stage on the back of a donkey.

Of all the offerings of the American theater in the seventies and eighties the sturdiest and most ubiquitous was the blackface minstrel show. Still alive though moribund in the early years of the present century, this form of entertainment came to its end, so far as I know, about the time of World War I. By 1918 we as a people had begun to be adult, if something less than completely mature, and I suppose the minstrel show failed to survive for the reason that it was tuned to the reactions of an adolescent intellect.

For the possible interest of any reader of this book who was born too late to experience the delights of an old-time minstrel

show, I will give a very brief outline: As the curtain rose a group of young men, varying in number between a dozen or so and forty or fifty, their faces blackened with burnt cork, the size of their lips exaggerated, nearly all of them uniformly costumed in red, blue, or checkered tailcoats, would be revealed to the audience. As the introductory music of the orchestra ceased, usually with a crash of cymbals, the master of ceremonies, who was known as the interlocutor, would address his cohorts with the invariable phrase: "Gentlemen, be SEATED!"

A song, perhaps with solo parts, might then be sung by the entire group, after which the real business got under way. This consisted of a succession of jokes and an animated repartee between the interlocutor (who was always the straight man) and the "end men," so called by virtue of their positions on the stage. These two gentlemen were the chief comedians. One of them held a tambourine and was known as Mr. Tambo. The other, who from time to time rattled a pair of bones, was, not surprisingly, called Mr. Bones.

The second section of the program might be a serious, if sentimentalized, representation of darky life in the South—in the cabin, picking cotton, or along the levees—and there would be a good deal of singing. After the curtain fell a monologist might give a rendition, and perhaps the next act would be a parody on life in high society or a burlesque on some characteristic local problem. The finale always found the minstrels reassembled as they had been at the outset, and the entertainment would end, as it had begun, with songs by the group.

This is merely a typical framework, within which a great variety of performances could be staged. By the time I was growing up in San Francisco the minstrel show had already reached mellow middle age and was depending more and more on settings and mechanical effects and leaning less and less on old-fashioned song and humor. But it was still vigorous, and the times when no minstrel troupe was performing on one stage or another were few and far between.

Certain practitioners of the art of minstrelsy were famous all over the country, and whenever one of these favorites came to town his show was certain to be heavily patronized. Thomas D. Rice, who died before I was born, was still spoken of in minstrel

circles in the tones reserved for George Washington by a Fourth of July orator. Known as "The Father of American Minstrelsy," Rice not only was the most important pioneer in his field but contributed a phrase to our language which for generations has served as the sharpest epitome of racial discrimination in the United States. "Jim Crow," today still the brief and eloquent statement of effective segregation of the Negro, was originally the name of a juvenile character who was introduced onto the stage by way of a carpetbag. Jim Crow made his first appearance in the early 1830's, and the part is believed to have been "created" by the now legendary Joseph Jefferson at the age of four or five. When I first met Jefferson, during one of his engagements in San Francisco, he had long been famous for his parts in *Our American Cousin* * and *The Cricket on the Hearth,* and he had been Rip Van Winkle so many times in Dion Boucicault's play of the same name that he was almost thought of as being that character; but he liked best, I think, to sit down with other old minstrels and talk about the glorious early days of blackface. To be present on such an occasion was a treat indeed.

Tom Maguire, whose name was almost synonymous with theater from 1849 until after 1880, put on a long succession of minstrel shows and, at some point in the seventies, helped Billy Emerson to organize the great company known as Emerson's California Minstrels. Emerson, who quite literally rejoiced in his title, "King of them all," took over the Standard Theater; during his tenure, and later, this temple of the muses was known as Emerson's Standard. His stage career, which began in his infancy, extended over most of the reign of Queen Victoria, for whom, as he never tired of relating, he had once sung—and he had a superb voice. Emerson survived his royal patron by about a year.

I saw all of the great minstrels who played on the Coast, and many of them I had the privilege of knowing—Billy Sweatnam, Billy Rice, Billy Manning, Hughie Dougherty, Lew Rattler, Johnny and Jeff De Angelis are only a few of the names. Joe

* This is the comedy, by Tom Taylor, that was being presented in Ford's Theater, Washington, on the night Lincoln was assassinated by John Wilkes Booth, younger brother of Edwin Booth.

Murphy, the blacksmith of *Kerry Gow,* was another, and I knew him best of all. If things were dragging during a minstrel show in which Joe was appearing, all he had to do to start a gale of laughter was let a bit of his genuine Irish brogue slip out; the combination of the black face and a breath from old Erin was irresistible. Murphy took a fancy to me shortly after I started working in the theater, and on several occasions, always on Sundays, of course, he let me go fishing with him. When we got into the boat he would say sternly, "Now see that you don't open your phiz!" and then there would be absolute silence except for the rowlocks, the water, and Murphy's pipe, which he sucked methodically.

No show, minstrel or other, was considered complete until Joe had sung what in radio would be called his signature song, "A Handful of Earth from the Land of my Birth." In partnership with Murphy I used to sell copies of this song and others during intermission, and periodically the senior partner would demand a statement of accounts. Since I kept books in my head —and very accurate they were, even if it may be unbecoming of me to say so—I was always able instantly to tell him what the balance was. Then he would look at me gravely and say, "Times are hard, my boy. You'll have to be working harder if I'm to have anything to eat between shows." Joe was, of course, one of the best paid entertainers of his day; but he always persuaded me that the little fund I had accumulated selling music was his last bulwark against starvation in the off season. It came as a tremendous surprise when, at the end of his run, he told me to keep the entire profit.

Such a windfall as that, as Joe Murphy well knew, could provide my mother and sisters with new dresses. Actors as a group are traditionally the most sentimental, impulsive, kind, and openhanded of mortals. In my own experience they have been so too. And among all my good friends of the theater, none ever treated me with greater kindness than did Joe Murphy when I was a boy.

V

IN SPITE OF my preoccupation with the theater, my occupation within the theater actually took only a small portion of my time from one year's end to the next until I was fifteen years old. Six days a week, rarely taking time off (and then nearly always to improve an opportunity to make extra money), I worked at the California Brush Factory. After hours, when there was nothing for me in a theater, I would peddle violets to theatergoers; middle-aged gentlemen accompanied by young ladies were my best customers. On certain evenings I would sell newspapers,* and for a time I had a regular job in the folding room of the *Chronicle,* which then was housed at the corner of Bush and Kearny Streets. This was a morning paper, and the bulldog edition started running through the press around nine in the evening; after coming off the press the papers had to be folded by hand, and I was one of the kids who performed that tedious but necessary task. I got this job direct from the publisher, Michael H. de Young, who was a customer of Figer Brothers. From the day I first talked with him until his death in 1925 Mr. de Young was my friend, and to none of the men who helped shape my career do I owe quite so much as I owe to him. This

* Among them was the *Examiner,* then a feeble publication with a circulation of perhaps 5,000, which was owned by George Hearst, later to be Senator Hearst. When in 1887 he gave his son, William Randolph Hearst, the choice of managing any of a number of the great family properties, William chose the *Examiner,* and from it he built the chain of newspapers which today reaches across the country.

is not an idle expression of gratitude, as I think later happenings will bear out.

On Sundays I usually worked too, at least during part of the day, peddling novelties and souvenirs to picnic and excursion crowds. San Francisco, with its large groups of first-generation Europeans, went in for the Continental Sunday to a degree that amazed and often shocked visitors from the "Puritan" East. Mild climate and ease of access to numerous places of great charm abetted old-world temperaments and habits, and thousands of people regularly passed their day of rest out of doors. For those with money there was the Cliff House, outside the Golden Gate, where sea lions played on the rocks just off shore and gulls floated overhead waiting for handouts. For others there were Golden Gate Park, where less than a dozen years earlier nothing but sand dunes and tufts of grass had been known, and the Presidio. Across the Bay, to the north, was Sausalito, which has been likened to Sorrento and other Italian coast towns, and, not far inland, the grove of magnificent redwood trees that has since been set aside as a national monument under the name of Muir Woods. And across to the east was Alameda, which was then hardly a town at all and was thought of by San Franciscans simply as a place of rural refuge.

These and other romantic spots I knew in early boyhood only by repute. When the excursion steamer pulled out I was still standing on the pier with my canes and such other wares as convention deemed desirable picnic paraphernalia. There would be another steamer leaving in a little while, or at another pier, and my job was to earn money. Had I gone off on one of those trips, I would not only have limited my market but been forced to spend money, for excursion tickets never cost less than fifty cents.

My brother Mose could go on Sunday excursions, and that was all right, because it never cost him anything. He was one of those lucky fellows who are always finding things. Week after week he would come home, always on a Friday or a Saturday, and announce that he had found an excursion ticket. He just had an uncanny eye, it was clear to me, for spotting a ticket that somebody had dropped. I was proud of him, rather than envious, and attributed his gift to the same sort of genius that

enabled certain individuals to gather a dozen four-leafed clovers while a fellow like me was still searching for his first one. Even after I had taught myself to look for lost tickets as I hurried along Market Street or some other likely thoroughfare, I had no luck. It took me several years to figure out just what it was that Mose had. It was the gift of deceiving his brother. I caught him buying a ticket one day.

At this time I was also trying to make up for my lack of schooling by spending at least an hour daily reading and learning to write. My hours were so irregular that I seldom had any meal but breakfast with my family; I did most of my studying while eating lunch at the factory and again during my late supper at home. This unavoidable peculiarity of mine brought peculiar results. In the evening I learned Hebrew by reading, under my mother's tutelage, the Old Testament, and English through the perusal of *The Argonaut,* a local theatrical review. My literary style must have been extraordinary, and I regret exceedingly that none of my early works have survived for possible quotation here.

During the noon hour (actually a half hour) I studied arithmetic, only this activity was in no sense a task, for I pursued it incessantly throughout the day, noting lot numbers, prices, costs, and practical calculations of all sorts that had to do with the manufacture of brushes. Before many months had passed I knew the exact specifications of every article we manufactured. I knew the precise number of holes that had to be drilled in every brush block, the amount paid at piecework rates for every single operation, and the selling price for each item, whether it was sold over the counter at retail or in job lots to dealers. With no conscious effort I made up imaginary orders in my head, and I could have set down almost instantly the price, the gross profit, and the net after wages and operating costs had been deducted. It was fun to toss the figures around while my hands were occupied with some dull routine job.

As time went on I discovered that my store of detailed knowledge was useful. If a customer was asking for a quotation on a mixed order, it might take the clerk ten or fifteen minutes to figure the answer. Even then he might be uncertain, and he would perhaps have to check the stock room for specifications

and consult with the foreman on piecework pay. This exchange of information was accomplished by shouting from one room to another and, needless to say, it was not very efficient. But we were a small establishment, and no one ever bothered to think up a better way of doing things simply because it wasn't absolutely necessary. One day, however, when one of the men called to the stock room I piped up with the answer.

"How do you know that's the right answer?" he shot back.

"Oh, I just know," I said. It would have been impossible for me to explain my processes. I never worked out the answers on paper.

"A smarty, huh?" he grunted. "Well, you better be right!" Then he went to work with a pencil and a scrap of paper. Several minutes later he walked over to me.

"Now let's see whether you were just lucky the first time," he said. "What's the price for making up two dozen Number Forty's with long handles?"

I gave him the answer without hesitation, and after he had tried two or three more he walked away visibly shaken. But he passed the word about my memory for figures, and after that a day seldom went by without a test of it. It made me feel important to be consulted by grown men, and for some reason it didn't occur to me that there might be money in my "trick." I just kept on having fun out of doing what for the men was real work. (In later years I continued to use the arithmetical methods of my childhood, and I know that my lack of proper instruction not infrequently was the very thing that dropped a contract in my lap. When I was in the construction business in New York I knew building costs as I once had known brush costs, and I could listen to the reading of a long list of specifications, estimate the quantities, multiply them by the prices, calculate the total—sometimes in millions of dollars—add my profit, announce the figure, and offer to sign up then and there. I never needed a pencil and paper. They would, in fact, have encumbered me.)

One day in the early part of 1880, about the time of my tenth birthday, Ben Figer called me into his office and began to ask me questions. He found that I knew not only specifications and costs but piecework rates—in other words, that I was able to

figure payrolls. He realized, what was more, that I would be able to work them out without having to refer constantly to schedules. That was more than his chief bookkeeper was able to do. I was a freak, a veritable *lusus naturae,* and a valuable one to boot!

"On Monday, Solly, I want you to start working in the office," said Mr. Figer. "Somebody else will have to handle the things you've been doing. I don't want you to waste your time running around out there any more." He waved his hand in the direction of the workrooms. "Remember that."

At the end of the week I found that my pay had been raised to three dollars and a half. If that seems small, even for a ten-year-old, I can give my assurance that it loomed very large in the life of a family that paid six dollars a month for the rental of their house. It was not until some months later, after I had been raised another dollar, that we felt secure enough to move from Brannan Street to a larger and more comfortable house around the corner on Sixth Street, where we had to pay ten dollars.

If at this point it should occur to someone that I would have needed days that were seventeen or eighteen hours long for the regular accomplishment of all my tasks, both in and out of the factory, and that such an account of my life as I have given must therefore be regarded as preposterous (to use the most charitable adjective), let me answer in this way: it *is,* by virtue of the fact that my early career was contrary to normal experience, quite preposterous; and I *did* need days that were seventeen or eighteen hours long.

Never within memory have I slept longer than six hours at a stretch. My boyhood days began around five in the morning and ended somewhere between ten o'clock and midnight, and from the moment I got up until I went to bed I was in action. The necessity of childhood became the fixed habit of later life. Even today, although I sometimes spend more hours in bed, I find that five or six hours of sleep are enough. When I go to bed early I read until a late hour; when I wake up in the morning, whatever the hour may be, I get up at once. I have never known the experience of being awake without being in action.

It has been a great help to me to be able to start my day's work at full speed instead of warming up gradually.

When I am asked whether the fast tempo of my childhood didn't have adverse effects on my health I can only answer that I don't know how it could have. Except for an occasional cold, I escaped all of the illnesses that a child, even in the present relatively advanced age of sanitation and medical science, is expected to suffer. In recent years I have continued to enjoy almost perfect health, and although I go regularly and frequently to see my doctor—partly as a matter of good sense, but largely because Ben Salzer, whose patient I have been for years, is one of the most stimulating men I know—I have never in my life, thank God, been really sick. I don't even believe that the long hours of work and the short hours of sleep stunted my growth. My parents were both of small stature, and I am satisfied that genes, not too much work, determined my height of five feet, six inches.

One thing that my eccentric routine did affect was my religious observances. As I have already made clear, we were Jews of the strict orthodox faith. That meant a close adherence to ritual in all things. There could be no exceptions.

We began our Sabbath (as I still begin mine) in accordance with the ancient ordination that the seventh day of the week—"and God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it"—commences at sundown, an hour recognizable by all men, in every era, with or without the aid of mechanical means for computing time. Since the seventh day of the week (even in the civil calendar) is Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath is observed on that day; since the sundown that introduces our seventh day comes on the sixth day of the civil calendar, our Sabbath begins on Friday.

At that hour, in every orthodox household, comes the ceremony of lighting the candles and the taking of wine and bread. A simple prayer follows. I learned it first in Hebrew, from my mother:

> Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God.
> King of the Universe,
> Who gave us the light.

Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God,
King of the Universe,
Who gave us the fruit of the vine.

Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God,
King of the Universe,
Who gave us the bread of the earth.

I repeat this prayer in Hebrew every Sabbath.

On Saturday devout Jews, if they are able to, worship in a synagogue. Mother never failed to attend this Sabbath service, and Father was almost as faithful. We children regularly went to the synagogue too when we were small. Later on, for various reasons, we became less regular in our attendance. For me, working all day in the factory, it was difficult; but once in a while during my lunch hour I managed to take a little extra time and hurry to the synagogue that my family attended. It was on Turk Street, fully a mile from the place where I worked; but any inconvenience I experienced was more than repaid when I was able to tell my mother that I had gone to the synagogue where the venerable Dr. A. J. Messing was rabbi.

When I was growing up it used to trouble me to miss Sabbath worship in a synagogue. The sense of original sin was strong in me, as I am sure it has always been in most children, whether Christian or Jewish, brought up in homes where the Bible is constantly read. And although I didn't have a great deal of time for philosophical contemplation of my own wretchedness as a son of Eve, when Saturday came round my essential wickedness preyed upon me and I sought the soothing atmosphere of the synagogue.

Happily my attitude changed as I grew older; the notion that any temple of worship should be regarded as a place where one goes to discharge an obligation, as a man might go to his bank to pay interest on a loan, is one that I now find as ludicrous as it is pathetic. Whenever it is possible I go to a synagogue. But I go because I wish to go, in order to commune with my Maker, never with the idea that I am thus laying up treasure in Heaven. The absence of a synagogue does not interfere with my worship. I can have my own communion with God just as well in any other place. To me the differences are inconsequential. There

are perhaps five thousand creeds in the world, five thousand ways that may be followed to reach God. They are all good ways, for there is only one God.

The one thing completely lacking in my boyhood was play, at least play in the ordinary sense of carefree, undirected activities with children of my own age. When I was very small I undoubtedly had toys, but I cannot remember any specific objects that might have beguiled my days in Illinois, and after I arrived in California I know that there were no playthings. Not only had we no money for such luxuries but life was far too grim a reality to have allowed for even the slight detachment needed for the establishment of a mood of play. The older children did not play; they all had serious tasks to perform. Following their example, I did not play either, and it was not long before I had other completely occupying things to do.

This early elimination of certain conditions that characterize childhood for most of the population of our country has had, I feel certain, lasting effects upon the course of my life. Some of them seem very obvious to me. Others, no doubt, while their existence has eluded *me,* are apparent to those who know me.

It is clear to me, for example, that my emergence in infancy from a world of childish fancy into the world of men exerted a strong influence on my imagination. Never as a small child did I inhabit the land of elves and fairies, in which dumb animals converse and experience human emotions, in which castles and armies exist in one's own back yard or in the shadows of a bedroom after dark. There were no reveries of golden-haired princesses while idling on the bank of some bright stream, there was no transformance of myself into a hero rescuing a child from a burning building while flames held back all the firemen, and I never discovered a pot of gold under a storied oak.

My imagination belonged to the world in which I lived, the one I could see and touch. It has always been intensely practical.

I could imagine how my mother would look in a new bonnet, and then I would try to get the money to buy her one. I could imagine, when I passed a bank, how it would be to work there, and then I would decide that, after all, I preferred to keep on at the factory during the day and in the theater at night. I could

hear a new song, imagine how Anna Held or Nora Bayes would sing it, and then I would arrange, if possible, to have one of them introduce it for me. I could pass an old structure on Broadway and imagine the kind of building I would put up in its place, and then I would bring together the persons needed to consummate its erection. I could imagine a population of 130,000,000 uniting to celebrate the two-hundredth anniversary of George Washington's birth, and it became my privilege to bring that dream to fruition. I could even imagine a world in which all nations had agreed to unite and compose their differences under law—and I believe, whether or not I live to see it, that our own world will one day be like that.

And so it came about that my only play was in my work. Conversely, by the time I reached a level of economic comfort, my work had become so absorbing that it was almost the only play I wanted. I have never found satisfaction in participating in a game like golf or tennis, and although I learned to play cards—strictly as a social duty—I never once enjoyed a game. But I like to organize games for other people. This, I suppose, a psychologist would call a form of egomania. Quite possibly he would be right.

I can name one exception to my experience that playing a game of any sort is little short of torture for me.

I like to play marbles.

This was the one game I might really have gone in for when I was a little boy, for it was played on every open lot and needed a minimum of equipment. But I was so effectively discouraged on my first attempt, by one of the few acts of open discrimination ever directed against me, that I didn't make a second try for a long while. As I tried to join the circle of players on Brannan Street one day, a big boy hit me and snarled, "Go on home, you little Christ-killer!"

But I had a yearning for marbles that even such an act of childish cruelty could not destroy, and some fifty years later, while walking to my office on Capitol Hill one morning, I found my opportunity. Three or four boys were playing, and after watching for a few minutes I asked, somewhat diffidently, whether I might join their game.

"Sure!" they exclaimed, and one of them lent me a glassie to

shoot with. To my delight I found that I had a great talent for marbles! Latent through all the years, it appeared on a fine spring day in Washington, and I played blissfully for half an hour.

I am still devoted to the game, and if on an April morning my secretary should ever say to a visitor, "The Congressman is out playing marbles," her statement ought not to be taken as a sign that one or the other of us is on the verge of being committed. No—I would be out playing marbles.

VI

THE FIRST BIG and decisive change of my life occurred when I was fifteen, after more than seven years at the brush factory. I took a new job.

New jobs were something about which I knew a good deal, but up to this time they had all been additional jobs, not changes of the sort I now undertook. This new job meant breaking away from the factory entirely.

The decision to do so had not been a simple one to make, even though my new position brought me a substantial increase in pay, along with the opportunity to branch out in other directions. These inducements would have been sufficient for most ambitious young men, but I was in an unusual situation. It was clear that in the normal course of events I might some day expect to be head of the brush works. Joe Figer had started his own business several years earlier, Ben Figer was beginning to get along in years, and I was already more or less in charge of the California Carpet Machine Factory's office staff.

It was here that Ben Figer demonstrated his real caliber. When I told him that M. H. de Young was going to open a new theater and had offered me the job of assistant treasurer he sat for a moment without speaking. Then he asked me a question.

"What do you really want to do, Sol?"

I told him that if there were no considerations besides my inclination I would like nothing better than to make a career of the theater. When I started to elaborate my reasons he stopped me.

"I trust your judgment, Sol," he said. "Why shouldn't you trust it? I know you must have done a lot of thinking before coming to see me. If you had definitely decided against the change, I would never have heard about the job. What you are really asking me to do is not to give you advice but to justify your hankering after a career in the theater. I won't do that. Instead, I'll offer you a suggestion. Always make your own decisions. No one can make them for you—or take the responsibility for making them."

I thanked Mr. Figer and told him I would talk to him again in the morning. How right he was! And how much he did for me! I resolved then and there that whatever mistakes I might make in the future, I would take particular pains to avoid the kind that proceed from deliberate self-deception.

Next morning I said that I was going to take the new job.

"Now that you have decided, Sol," he answered, "I am going to ask you to tell me why."

"Because it's the thing I want to do more than anything else, Mr. Figer," I told him.

"Good boy," he said. "You'll make out all right."

The new theater, at 116 O'Farrell Street, was named the Alcazar. Mike de Young, member of a leading family, politically a conservative, and, through his ownership of the *Chronicle,* one of San Francisco's powerful figures, built it as an investment. He placed one of his own *Chronicle* men, George Wallenrod, in charge. Associated with Wallenrod as assistant managers were George Osborne and L. R. Stockwell, both of whom were experienced actors and stage managers. The other "officers" of the company were Frank Dodge, scenic artist, Otto Norman, proprietor of the saloon, and I. My title was assistant treasurer, and my job was to run the box office, take charge of the cash, keep the books, handle bank deposits, serve as paymaster, buy supplies and materials, and do whatever else seemed like a good idea.

My starting salary was fifty dollars a week. By any standard of the day, this was good pay. To me it was a fortune.

My first thought was to make my fortune secure. My employers had confidence in me, I knew. But would the public share

that confidence? At fifteen I was short, skinny, and beardless. Except for a grave expression, I looked my age exactly, and I wondered whether ticket buyers could reconcile themselves to the presence of what in their eyes was a child in the box office.

I solved my problem in a spectacular manner. Step Number One was the purchase of a satin-faced Prince Albert coat, the highest gates-ajar collars that ever imprisoned a human neck, and an assortment of ascot ties which would have stopped the horses had this finery ever been seen at the race track. Step Two was a visit to my barber, from whose establishment I emerged with my light brown hair parted exactly in the middle and my forehead adorned on either side with spit curls. The third move was revolutionary in the extreme: I had my nails trimmed and polished by a manicurist, something no San Franciscan male had ever done before.* It was a simple matter to augment my height: I stood behind the window on a low footstool.

It occurs to me now that some of our patrons at the Alcazar might have come to get a look at me as much as to see the performance inside. In any case, it all worked out very happily. I was uniformly accorded the same respect by ticket buyers that I showed to them. After a couple of days on the job I felt as if I had been at it for years, and within a few weeks I was making change like an old-timer.

Bank notes were then almost unknown on the Coast. There were different discount rates in different parts of the country, and people mistrusted paper money to such an extent that only gold and silver coins were accepted at par. Consequently, cashiers seldom handled anything but specie, and the good ones developed almost a sixth sense. During my years at the Alcazar I could tell by the sound of a coin on the marble slab whether it was gold or silver, and its denomination. Without looking, I would know, for example, that a twenty-dollar gold piece had been tendered. As I slid it into the drawer, I would be picking out the desired tickets; and as I passed them out with one hand I would automatically be making change with the other. I used

* At this time, and for years to come, no woman ever set foot in a barber shop, either as patron or employee. Conversely, at least in my youth, men did not have their hands cared for by professional manicurists. I took the daring step because I felt that well-groomed hands were desirable in the box office.

my eyes only on the tickets, making change always by the touch system alone. And my books invariably balanced at the end of the day.

Only a small portion of my time, of course, was spent in the box office. Half an hour after curtain time I would normally go inside to see what the audience was doing. By this time in my career I was no longer greatly interested in what was happening on the stage, except in so far as the entertainment evoked favorable or unfavorable response. If the customers were satisfied, it was a good play so far as I was concerned. If they were not enjoying themselves, something must be the matter with either the production or the actors, possibly both. I made it part of my job to analyze the reasons for success and failure alike.

Intermission time provided the best opportunity to pick up candid comments, and I usually made my way to the saloon to listen to these verdicts. The only trouble with the Alcazar bar—in common with all other theater bars in San Francisco, it could be reached directly from the lobby—was its lack of patrons. Poor Otto Norman had gone grand: He insisted on charging ten cents for his beer, with the inevitable consequence that the thirsty multitude by-passed his place in favor of a rival establishment across the street where good brew could be had for the standard price of a nickel.

It was a grave situation, and after a couple of weeks Otto decided to abandon his ruinous stand. But then it was too late. Nobody seemed to notice that the price had dropped.

"What would it be worth to you to have a hundred customers tonight, Mr. Norman?" I asked him after a few more days had gone by.

"Four bits," he answered. "*Ja,* I pay fifty cents."

"What will you pay if I get you a hundred every night?"

"Fifty cents."

"Counting matinees, that would be four dollars a week, Mr. Norman."

"*Ja,* I know. I pay you."

"Four dollars every week, Mr. Norman?"

"*Ja, ja,* I pay."

When the lights came up at the end of the first act I stood in

the lobby and, with appropriate gestures, called out, "This way to the barroom! Beer five cents! Beer five cents!"

The saloon was well filled that night, and Otto paid me without demur. Thereafter I regularly advertised the saloon until Otto informed me that he thought his reputation for dispensing nickel beers had become firmly established. By that time I had found so many other ways to increase my income that the loss of four dollars a week was inconsequential.

Every theater in San Francisco, as I have mentioned, had its own bar. A couple of them, notably the Grand Opera House, possessed art galleries. The Baldwin was a combination hotel and theater. The Alcazar had its own distinction: a gymnasium, which occupied the entire second story of the building.

Included in the original plans, this gymnasium was in my day the finest in the city. It was leased by the Olympic Club, which is the oldest amateur athletic association in the United States and whose teams (especially the track team) continue to be among the most successful in the land.

In the eighties and nineties boxing had somewhat the same hold upon the fancies of young men that college football has today. Now every schoolboy dreams of scoring touchdowns. In those days the young blood was given to imagining himself in the act of planting a winning uppercut on the jaw of the world's champion—except that no decent youth really wanted to. The champion, ever since he had beaten Paddy Ryan in a bare-knuckle fight in 1882, was John L. Sullivan; and John the Great was not only invincible but, in the minds of young and old alike, possessed of the virtues of Hercules, Galahad, and King Arthur combined.

In any case, every young man with two arms, legs, and eyes * tried to be a boxer. I tried, and I attained a fair measure of success as an amateur lightweight. Possibly my instructor had something to do with my ring ability, as well as with my pleasure, even today, in open-hand sparring. A man four years older than I, his name was Jim Corbett.

* Theodore Roosevelt boxed regularly as a Harvard undergraduate in spite of his being so nearsighted that he was unable, without glasses, to distinguish features at arm's length.

Son of a prosperous livery-stable proprietor in that western quarter of San Francisco known as "Hayes Valley," Corbett was a bank clerk during the day and the Olympic Club's paid boxing instructor in the late afternoon and evening. By the late eighties he was a professional fighter of growing reputation. Intelligent, well groomed, quiet, and courteous, he was the antithesis of the noisy brawler who typified prizefighters in an era when fighting for purses was outlawed in nearly all states, including California. A little later he acquired the soubriquet "Gentleman Jim," by which he was known until his death in 1933. He was perhaps the greatest of the heavyweight boxers—in the sense that he relied upon science and skill rather than upon punching power—yet he was never, even in his home town, a great popular champion. When he beat the invincible Sullivan, in September, 1892, he destroyed a ten-year-old tenet of American folklore, and a grieving and disillusioned public never quite forgave him the deed.

The building of a gymnasium above the theater had necessitated radical innovations in the construction of the Alcazar. We had a relatively low ceiling over the orchestra pit, and, very unusual for the time, only one balcony instead of the usual "family circle" topped by "nigger heaven." Behind the footlights there was also a ceiling of the same height. This meant that the curtain and drops had to be rolled up instead of being hoisted into the flies, as was (and still is) the case in most theaters. But the most extraordinary feature—inconvenience might be better—of the Alcazar was two heavy columns, about twenty feet apart, right in the middle of the stage. These were the main support of the gymnasium up above.

It was our habit to regard these columns as an asset, or at least as a challenge, and Frank Dodge was most ingenious both in adapting them to the needs of a play and in trying to hide them. For a palace or drawing-room scene they were very satisfactory. In a play like *After Dark, A Tale of London Life* (which Boucicault had hurriedly written in 1868 as an English counterpart of *Under the Gaslight),* they could serve admirably as bridge piers. But when stage directions read "a humble Yorkshire cottage" or "deep in a bosky Andalusian dell" there wasn't much that could be done. Even such a gifted man as Dodge

found it hard to convert a pair of fluted columns into noble oaks or a brick fireplace.

It was only when a concert singer appeared that these columns could be left unadorned, or, on gala nights, richly festooned with potted smilax.

There was plenty of smilax on the night in 1885 when the Alcazar opened its doors for the first time and Emma Nevada stepped out upon the stage. Known as "The Sagebrush Linnet" and "The California Patti," Emma Wixom had exchanged her real name for that of the state in which she was born in 1862. Beginning, like Lotta Crabtree, as a child entertainer, she early won the plaudits of silver miners as Lotta had done before her with panners of gold dust. Sent to Paris in her teens to study music, she developed a fine soprano voice, and when she returned to the West she was an acknowledged diva, who had not only made her debut in London, at Her Majesty's Theatre, but had actually been presented to Queen Victoria. Mapleson, the same man who managed Patti, had Nevada under his wing, and her first post-European appearance in America, at the Grand Opera House in the spring of 1885, was a triumph never before equaled except in the preceding year when the marvelous Patti herself came to town.

It was a few weeks after this that Emma Nevada's idolatrous subjects again paid court to her, now at the Alcazar. The heady flavor of our opening might be suggested by the circumstance of my presiding in the box office dressed in a suit of rented tails and a plug hat of vertiginous height. I cannot describe them as my "working clothes," for I had little to do in the hours before the performance. Every ticket had been sold days before.

I have been unable to locate a copy of Nevada's program that night, but I know she sang arias from a number of operas, interspersing them with such popular favorites as "The Last Rose of Summer," "Coming Through the Rye," and "Home Sweet Home." Once again she was an unqualified success. And the Alcazar was off to a rousing start.

In addition to box-office receipts and the volume and duration of applause, we had another valid criterion of success that night—the quantity and richness of the floral tributes. People were not satisfied to present mere bouquets to renowned artists

in those days. In addition to such humble offerings a favorite could count upon a number of enormous pieces, some of which were so elaborate that they had to be put together on frames backstage and wheeled on at the appropriate moment. Emma Nevada received dozens of these oversize confections, and when she retired after her final encore the stage was completely filled with flowers. (I have known only one other person who ever got so many flowers in an evening as Nevada or Patti. That was my sister Dickie. Upon her graduation from high school, when I was eleven or twelve, my usher colleagues at the Grand Opera House, where the exercises were held, arranged the matter. Knowing that the Bloom family was in no position to buy luxuries, my friends removed the cards from hundreds of bouquets intended for other graduates; and when Dickie went forward to receive her diploma the entire crew rushed out on the stage and gave all the flowers to her. I still recall this as the most embarrassing moment of my life.)

Life at the Alcazar was always interesting. Concerts, minstrel shows, skits, comedies, and serious dramas followed one another in rapid succession, and at least once a year there would be a production of *Uncle Tom's Cabin,* which continued to be the most popular play in the United States. There was even a vogue for what was called a "double" Uncle Tom's Cabin, with two Evas, two Topsys, and two Simon Legrees; they alternated from scene to scene,* and the partial uncertainty about identifying the characters seemed to increase the delight of audiences in this period piece.

We had a permanent skeleton stock company on our payroll, and whenever an actor of top billing came out from New York most of the supporting roles would be given to these regulars. Probably the local actor who might one night be a Negro slave, the next a Roman soldier, and the next a Bowery bum lacked a certain professional finish, but nobody minded much. People came to see the visiting stars, and most of them realized that it would have been far too costly to import an entire troupe.

* An even more bizarre effect was produced by putting both members of each "double" on the stage at the same time. I never happened to see such a production, but William A. Brady reports one—and certainly he should know.

One of the members of the Alcazar stock company was an experienced actress named Annie Adams. She had a daughter of fourteen or fifteen who had played child parts in the late seventies, and who now, with L. R. Stockwell's daughter, was sometimes given a minor role in a play at a "salary" of fifty cents an evening. I don't know whether Polly Stockwell continued on the stage, but Maude Adams went on to become one of the darlings of the American theater.

We had burlesque at the Alcazar, too, and we began the year 1887 with an importation from New York called *Little Jack Sheppard.* It was a "refined" production, relying more upon comedy lines than on female legs and torsos, and the star was a local favorite of minstrel fame named Charley Reed. Some of the reviewers compared Reed unfavorably with the New York lead, Nat Goodwin—the *News Letter,* indeed, made a permanent enemy of Charley by referring to him as "a provincial comedian"—but the gentleman writing for *The Bulletin* told the important part of the story (at least so far as the management was concerned) by writing: *"Little Jack Sheppard* drew 200 people more than the house will fairly accommodate."

If an overcrowded house was a manager's happy dream, a small audience was his nightmare, and we always tried to have the theater well filled, even if we had to "paper" the house. Complimentary tickets were liberally handed out and exchanged among managers, and one of the perquisites of successful actors was free tickets for their friends. Sometimes this practice could be embarrassing.

I think it must have been in 1887 or 1888—I know it was after I had been promoted to treasurer and raised to $3,500 a year—that the great Irish comedy team composed of Ned Harrigan, who had come to the stage by way of the shipyards, and Tony Hart came to the Alcazar. With such moneymakers as these on hand, George Wallenrod, who was plump and ruddy cheeked and spoke like a German comedian, issued a thunderous ukase:

"No gomblimentaries! Possitiffly no gomblimentaries to nobody!"

I knew that Nat Braham, Harrigan and Hart's manager, had already handed out an order for three "gomblimentaries," and when it was presented to me I decided to honor it.

After the performance, when we were going over the records, Braham noticed that there was no notation to cover the tickets he had given away. My books showed that every seat in the house had been paid for. Braham turned to Wallenrod.

"There's something funny here, George," he said. "This boy's books show more money than he could have taken in."

Wallenrod looked at me, inviting my comment.

"The money is all here, Mr. Wallenrod," I stated.

"Then what about the three complimentaries?" asked Braham.

Wallenrod's face turned purple when what he inferred to be a violation of his orders was revealed, and he looked at me again.

"You want me to tell you the truth, don't you, Mr. Wallenrod?" I inquired after a moment's hesitation.

"Possitiffly!"

"Well, I decided it would make everything easier if I paid for those three tickets myself," I explained uncomfortably.

Wallenrod's face became its normal red again. Then he let out a roar of laughter.

"Vell, Braham?" He looked at Nat. "Vell, Braham? You vant to stay und get some more lessons in diblomacy from Bloom?"

Braham took me out to supper after that, and over our food he invited me to go back to New York with him as treasurer of the new Garrick Theater. But I wasn't ready to go to New York just yet. I couldn't afford to—I was making too much money in San Francisco, in various ways that I will describe a little later.

The Alcazar, while not one of the best arranged theaters in the city, was always a moneymaker. It had been carefully planned to be just that. Our ceiling was low, but we regularly collected our rent from the Olympic Club above us. Our floor was level instead of sloping toward the stage, and that had been planned, too—so that the theater might be used as a ballroom. The seats were not fixed to the floor, either; thus, in sixes, they could be folded up and quickly stacked away. When we anticipated a sellout we set them up clear to the back wall. The only people who ever seriously complained about this crowding were those individuals with limited funds for entertainment

who normally paid twenty-five cents for standing room: On such occasions, there wasn't any standing room.

I got an idea that would provide room for perhaps thirty standees. My motive was not altruistic. I always had a healthy preoccupation with box-office receipts.

The idea (which I put into effect) was to place a low, narrow bench behind the last row of chairs. There wasn't room to sit on it, but the standees really had a better view of the stage than anyone who was seated in the back part of the house.

Ten years later in Chicago I met a girl who had been born and brought up in San Francisco. When she learned that I had once worked at the Alcazar she asked me whether I knew who had installed the bench for standees.

"When I was in school," she continued, before I could blushingly claim the credit, "I used to save my nickels until I had enough money to pay for standing room at a matinee. During the entr'acte I would carefully slide my legs between the bench and the chairs in front of me and sit down. I always used to think that anyone kind and thoughtful enough to provide a resting place for standees would make an ideal husband."

She really must have thought so, for within a few months she became my wife. For nearly forty-five years we shared a life of complete happiness that only her death was capable of interrupting.

VII

My years at the Alcazar were in certain respects the liveliest and most gratifying of my life. My income was constantly on the increase, and I was able not only to support my mother and father in a manner to which they had never before been accustomed, but I was in a position to put aside more and more money for use in enterprises that I conducted on the side. And to top it off, I had loose cash in my pocket that almost cried out to be spent.

It must be hard for a person who has always been used to the possession of money, even in small amounts, to comprehend what it means to a boy who has reached his middle teens without ever having felt justified in the expenditure of so much as a nickel for his own idle pleasure suddenly to find himself rich. Yes, I was rich, unbelievably rich, that first time when all our bills were paid, when everybody was decently dressed, and I still found myself with a couple of dollars in my pocket.

Even so, I spent with care what I felt I could afford. One of the greatest of my pleasures, for a long while, was the knowledge that I *could* spend money as I wished.

I could now drop into Jack Reagan's restaurant at 57-59 Third Street—why I am able to remember the exact address I cannot say—and drink a cup of coffee whenever I pleased. I could take lunch, if I liked, at the Clipper Restaurant, on lower Washington Street, where patrons were served from a little railway which ran down the center of the room; this was known as a "three-for-two-bits house," because three courses cost twenty-five cents. I could patronize the dining rooms of the

Occidental Hotel, on Montgomery Street, and the California, a block or so around the corner on Bush Street; and that of the Cosmopolitan, also on Bush, where the Standard Oil building now stands. And though I hardly ever took a drink, once in a while, because it was a devilish thing to do, I would stand at the bar of the Bank Exchange and command a Pisco Punch, that subtle depth charge compounded on a base of Peruvian brandy, from the hand of its inventor, Duncan Nicol.

Both the Bank Exchange and Duncan Nicol were the stuff of which legends have been woven. In 1853, when the Montgomery Block was completed, the saloon opened and Duncan simultaneously took his place behind its bar. On the ground floor, at the corner of Montgomery and Washington, it stood in the very center of the business world and catered to a clientele largely made up of merchants, bankers, mining promoters, ship captains, and gamblers. The rush started before breakfast and continued until long past midnight.

The name of the saloon derived, of course, from the secondary activity (in sequence at least) of its patrons, and for a number of years more stocks were traded over drinks at the Bank Exchange than in all the rest of California. The erection of a building by the members of the San Francisco Stock Exchange naturally reduced the importance of the place where Duncan Nicol presided, but it continued its career until, after an almost incredibly long service behind the bar, Duncan died. The building, as I have earlier stated, was one of a handful in downtown San Francisco that came through the fire of 1906. It still stands, and fastened to the wall is a bronze tablet with this inscription:

Here in the
Bank Exchange
1853-1918
Duncan Nicol
invented and served
Pisco Punch

Benefactor Humani Generis

Dedicated by E Clampus Vitus
29 January 1938

In my day Duncan Nicol's hair was already white, his bar had the soft patina of age assisted by a million elbows, and Pisco Punch from the hand of the master was an emotional experience rather than a drink, or even a work of art. The man who wanted only to drink at the Bank Exchange could order whisky. Or if he came for art, he could quench his thirst by gazing on a large oil painting of Samson and Delilah. Only Pisco Punch could reach the soul.

I now scorned the shabby old hotel called What Cheer House, at Sacramento and Leidesdorff Streets, where once I had been happy to have a nickel to spend for my lunch. This repast, consisting of an enormous jelly doughnut and a cup of coffee, I had taken as three courses—first the doughnut, next the jelly, for dessert, and finally my coffee.

When new, in the early sixties, What Cheer House had been the favorite resting place of many travelers. General Grant had once stopped here. Sea captains used to regard it as a second home. The atmosphere was conducive to informal comfort, and Robert B. Woodward, the proprietor, did everything possible to support What Cheer's reputation as a hotel of quiet ease. One of his contributions was a library, which for a time was supposed to be the best private collection on the Coast. As more and more steady patrons returned from distant parts of the world they would bring gifts, and within a few years the library room was housing, in addition to its books, an extraordinary assortment of exotic objects. On the shelves, on tables, on chairs, and on the floor, hanging from walls and ceiling, were such things as ostrich eggs, coconuts, Zulu spears, shriveled human heads from the Andes, stuffed crocodiles from the Nile, neatly coiled cobras from the Indian jungle, elephant tusks and rhinoceros horns, Chinese carvings, bric-a-brac, what-nots, thingumajigs, and plain rubbish.

This was San Francisco's first museum. But accommodating the collection, as more and more enthusiasts forwarded or brought back their contributions, became burdensome, and Woodward was forced to remove it from his hotel. He conveyed everything to a building in the garden behind his house.

Thus came into being what for a generation was to be the most popular outdoor amusement resort in San Francisco. At

first admitting the curious free of charge, Woodward quickly observed that he had a real moneymaker in his back yard. He began to advertise "Woodward's Gardens" and to charge an admission fee of twenty-five cents.

Woodward's Gardens soon covered two entire city blocks, and the attractions of the place increased and multiplied until the original museum had expanded into a combination art gallery, zoo, circus, and freak show. By the time I was able to patronize this amusement park freely a theater had been added, and I remember hearing there such Gilbert and Sullivan favorites as *The Mikado* and *Pinafore*. In its last years, beginning with 1889, Woodward's Gardens annually provided the setting for a great charity affair built around the anniversary of the fall of the Bastille. This has always puzzled me faintly, for I can think of no reason why this day should have been important for San Franciscans.

Robert Woodward died when I was nine or ten, and I never knew him. He has interested me, however, not only because he was one of the most consistently successful showmen of his day (and therefore a valuable source of instruction for me), but also because he had a highly developed gift for discerning the hidden potential in any situation that concerned him. Two illustrations of his shrewdness come to mind.

One had to do with the low price of admission to Woodward's Gardens. His profit here was small, but he made it up several times by first luring a large number of customers inside the gate, then collecting again and again as they patronized concession after concession. Woodward was also chief owner of a horsecar line called the City Railroad, which passed the park, and he thus profited by transporting daily thousands of people who sought amusement at his own resort. (The light cars drawn by a single horse and used on this line in large numbers were known as "Woodwards." Their originator was also a pioneer in making the drivers double as fare collectors. It took the Fifth Avenue Coach Company in New York another seventy years or so before they caught on to this money-saving idea—which, however, is still not very popular with either the passengers or the drivers.)

The other example of Woodward's keenness that I want to

mention also had to do with his interest in the City Railroad. When Mechanics Pavilion—the fourth of that name, I believe, in which manufacturers' fairs were more or less continuously held—was constructed on Eighth Street between Market and Mission, Woodward arranged to have stipulated in the building contract the provision that the building's only entrance should be on Mission Street. That was the street on which his railroad's tracks ran.

During these years it was my duty as well as my pleasure to keep in touch with what was going on in the other theaters and music halls. My greatest activity in this direction came, of course, when nothing was playing at the Alcazar.* At such times as these I ventured forth even more splendidly attired, if possible, than when I stood inside the box-office window. Wearing a boutonniere and swinging a cane, I would go the rounds.

I might drop in at the Baldwin to observe the newest antics of Harry Dixey in a burlesque, or to hear the soprano warblings of Fay Templeton. Or perhaps there would be a spectacle at the California, such as an adaptation of Jules Verne's *Around the World in Eighty Days,* for which William Voegtlin, one of a gifted family, had designed the settings. And there was always likely to be a talented newcomer at one of the lesser places, such as the Bijou, or the Cremorne, on Market, a couple of blocks below the Baldwin; the Palace Variety, at Post and Dupont; or Platt's Hall, one of the real old-time spots, down on Montgomery Street.

But the place to keep an eye on, for a number of reasons, was the Orpheum, which opened in 1887 or 1888.

Late in 1886 the *Chronicle* published the following news item: "The Wigwam continues to do a large business with novelties. The best sign is that the proprietors are about to build a new place opposite the Alcazar big enough to hold 4,000 people."

* Our matinee days were Wednesday and Saturday. The Baldwin's were Tuesday and Friday. Other theaters held matinees on Monday and Thursday. Thus, in addition to open evening at the Alcazar, there were four afternoons when I could attend performances at different theaters.

Gus Walter had decided that the time was at hand when he could profitably display his "novelties" in a real theater.

It is a common error among West Coast historians of the theater to say that vaudeville was born in the Orpheum in San Francisco. They would be more accurate if they said that vaudeville came of age here. Programs consisting of a sequence of brief, unrelated acts by comedians, musicians, jugglers, acrobats, educated dogs, and trained seals were nothing new. What Gus Walter and his colleagues did was to strengthen and expand a system that had gradually been evolving in the East. The basis of the system was a circuit of theaters and a central booking office, or, to be more precise, several circuits and booking offices, the existence of which made it possible for numerous medium-sized cities and towns throughout the country to present the same quality of vaudeville that had hitherto been restricted to a few metropolitan centers. Gus Walter and the chain of Orpheum Theaters which grew from the San Francisco original added to the effectiveness of the system, but the real pioneers were Easterners, foremost of whom were Frederick F. Proctor and B. F. Keith. (The movies, which finally destroyed vaudeville because they provided uniformly high-grade entertainment at greater profit, were for years a sort of poor relation. They owe much to the chains of theaters that flourished when vaudeville was king of entertainment.)

In these years, as in those which had gone before, a manager could be reasonably sure of filling his house if he was in a position to advertise either a "benefit" or a "farewell." We still have benefit and farewell performances, of course, but the circumstances now surrounding them are so different that I want to touch briefly on their history.

The benefit was no more invented in California than was vaudeville, but conditions favoring its growth here (as with so many other institutions) gave it a flavor all its own. This was especially true of the first few years, before the railroads were completed, when actors spent many weeks, usually via Panama or Nicaragua, making the journey from the East.

If a star had enjoyed an unqualified success in the theaters of San Francisco and Sacramento, he would perhaps be ready to

start home after a month or two with his pockets weighted with gold. In that case he would be entitled to a benefit performance, he to play any part he chose, as a testimonial of appreciation. Seats might be auctioned, and the fortunate actor could easily carry away with him an extra two or three thousand dollars. Such a benefit had something of the character of insurance, for the generosity of theater lovers on departure was a sort of premium paid to induce the early return of their favorite of the moment.

When, however, as was the case more frequently, an individual or a troupe had not made a profit, the benefit was an act of charity. However chary San Franciscans had been of their applause during the regular engagements, they seldom sent away an actor without a hearty hand at the end. And however misbegotten his characterizations, he could leave with at least enough money to pay his expenses home.

Another form of benefit was that provided upon the occasion of a marriage. When, as so often happened, both the bridegroom and his lady were of the theater, the performance and the party that followed could be very lively indeed. The wedding benefit I remember best was one given in 1878 for Joe Grismer and Phoebe Davies. Then a relatively young actor, Grismer was already distinguished for the personal charm that some years later brought him the honor of election as Shepherd of the Lambs, New York's most important club for inhabitants of the theater world. (If it should seem unconvincing that I am able to remember this benefit more vividly than certain others, I can add that it was on this occasion that I played the part of Peter Rich in *Under the Gaslight.*)

As for farewell performances, there were two general categories, the kind written in quotation marks and the genuine. Of the latter variety two stand out above all others in my personal experience. Early in 1886 Walter M. Leman retired after fifty-nine active years on the stage; his first performance had been in *The Taming of the Shrew,* in the Tremont Theater, Boston; his final appearance was in Boucicault's *Jilt,* at the Bush Street Theater. The other retirement came a year or so later, when Edwin Booth and Lawrence Barrett gave at the Baldwin what proved to be their San Francisco farewell. I am

not quite certain about the play, but it is likely that it was *Othello,* in which they had appeared so often, alternating the title role and the part of Iago from performance to performance. (It was Barrett who once made a remark in my hearing that has helped me ever since in my dealings with people, outside the theater as well as inside. He said, "If you want to get the best out of an actor, applaud him!" A little praise usually works with all sorts of people, I have found.)

Farewell performances, with or without quotes, are far less frequent nowadays. One reason, obviously, is the decline of the legitimate theater and the consequent reduction in the number of actors who grace it. Another important reason, probably the most important, is that the attitude of patrons has changed. We have grown blasé, and our small excitement about attending farewells is approximately in direct ratio to their frequency.

But it used to be different. I can recall fierce competition between gentlemen who claimed records. One *aficionado* of my acquaintance was able to document his boast that he had attended three "farewells" by Bernhardt and not less than four by Patti! I myself have only two of each to my credit.

I suppose the greatest surface change that money brought me was freedom on Sundays and holidays. On weekdays I worked almost as many hours as I had as a child, but at other times I no longer stood on the pier peddling canes when the steamer pulled out for Schützen Park in Alameda or for Shell Mound, Emeryville. I was now on board, with my own cane on one arm, and, like as not, a girl * on the other. Usually there would be three or four couples who made up the parties, but sometimes as many as twenty of us arranged an excursion together. I still have hanging on my office wall a faded photograph of one of these larger groups. Time and light have been kind in their

* One of my girls—her name, alas, I have long since forgotten—worked in a candy store on Market Street. Three or four years older than I, she soon gave me up for a more mature companion. Upon my dismissal I addressed these touching lines to her:

Accept this as a token
From a friend who was a friend:
Though our friendship's somewhat broken,
May it never, never end!

almost complete obliteration of the repulsive blond mustache which I sported in my late teens.

For five dollars a young man could give his girl and himself a lavish time, especially if the girl had packed a lunch. A dollar or a dollar and a half paid for the excursion tickets for two; another dollar or so took care of incidentals like ice cream, popcorn, candy, and beer; and the rest of the five-spot was ample to cover rides on the pony cart or the merry-go-round. That ultimate refinement in mechanized amusement, the Ferris wheel, lay in the future. It was not to make its appearance until the World's Columbian Exposition at Chicago in 1893.

More costly entertainment was by no means difficult to discover. If one wished to cut a dash—and it was frequently my pleasure to do so—there was no better place than the Cliff House.

Built in the sixties by a French restaurateur, later acquired by Adolph Sutro, who had made a fortune in the seventies by accomplishing the almost impossible task of digging a tunnel to drain the mines of the Comstock Lode in Virginia City, it was in the late eighties a favorite rendezvous of San Francisco's "sporty" crowd. And I fancied myself, although almost spectacularly innocent in the ways of gilded wickedness, as one of the sportiest.

There were two ways to reach the Cliff House when I was a young man. One way consumed something more than an hour and involved no less than four systems of transportation to cover a distance not greater than ten miles from the main part of San Francisco. First one took the Geary Street cable car, transferring at some point I have forgotten to a steam line with open cars. When the train turned south to continue on its way to Golden Gate Park it was necessary to transfer again, this time to a horsecar. About a mile east of the Cliff House the horsecar line came to its end. The last leg of the journey offered transportation by stagecoach or the option of walking.

The other way took quite as much time, but it was the way of the "nobs" and the "swells." And so, when I was particularly flush, I too would engage a victoria and have myself driven to the Cliff House, like any prince of fashion, for my bird and bottle.

It was really an excellent restaurant, and most of its patrons were drawn there solely by the knowledge that they would get good food and wine, well served, in an inviting atmosphere. A few gentlemen, however, had a strong preference for private dining rooms, and it was hinted that now and then they and their feminine companions not only dined but breakfasted there. But open scandal was infrequent. Adolph Sutro, later to be mayor of San Francisco, owned the Cliff House only because it happened to be on the large property he had purchased to live on; determined that proper decorum should be observed, he had leased the restaurant to a man named Jim Wilkins with the proviso that he conduct "a respectable resort." Sutro must have been satisfied, for at the time of the owner's death in 1898 Wilkins was still in charge. He was a suave host. Even when the schooner *Parallel,* carrying a cargo of dynamite, blew up after it had been driven ashore in a storm a little way below the Cliff House, Wilkins was unruffled. While stonemasons worked on the damaged foundations his calm demeanor gave assurance to even the most apprehensive visitors that they could enjoy his cuisine in full safety.

Other restaurants of high quality and with prices to match—the table d'hôte dinner cost seventy-five cents, sometimes a dollar!—included Maison Dorée, Maison Riche, the Poodle Dog, and the Pup. Of these the Poodle Dog, at Bush and Dupont, had the greatest renown, which derived in part from its unique name (said to be a corruption of Poulet d'Or), in part from the exaggerated yarns of "high life" behind the heavy curtains of its private rooms, and mostly from its splendid kitchen and wine cellar.

It was here, at the towering age of sixteen, that I gave my first dinner party. There were five or six of us, all men. I chose the Poodle Dog, which I had never before entered, because I wanted to impress my guests with my *savoir-faire.* Most of them were rich men's sons who had from time to time entertained me. Among them were Jimmy Fair, son of Senator Fair, one of the fabulous "silver kings"; Adolph Sutro's son; and George Baldwin, whose father, E. J. Baldwin,* had built the Baldwin Hotel and Theater.

* Always known as "Lucky" Baldwin, he delighted in his nickname and never

After the first course of shrimps and crab meat (which, incidentally, was always served gratis) my *savoir-faire* was put to a stern test.

The waiter placed before me a huge covered soup tureen and went away.

I can't remember when I first learned that in an emergency it's likely to be good policy to sit tight and wait for the other fellow to make the first move. Perhaps it was on this occasion. Having no choice, I sat tight and did my best to carry on a lively conversation with my friends. Meanwhile I glanced around the large dining room in search of hints for action.

My eye caught a nearby table on which stood another covered tureen. I watched, and presently the man serving there arrived with a stack of soup plates. These he placed in front of the host. Then with a flourish he removed the lid from the steaming bowl. The host dished out the soup. The waiter placed a plateful before each guest. After that he went away again.

Feeling somewhat relaxed, I continued to converse with my friends. Presently our own waiter arrived with soup plates. He placed them before me and removed the tureen lid with a flourish. I dished out the soup. The waiter served it. Then he went away again.

I can't remember anything else about my first dinner party. I was worn out.

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contradicted any story about its derivation. The following explanation, given to me years ago by a man who had known him intimately, is probably, since all of the circumstances may be verified, the true one: Some time in the early seventies Baldwin took a flier in one of the more speculative silver stocks, buying 700 shares of Crown Point at $1.50 a share. A little later he went to Honolulu on a business trip, leaving with his broker instructions to sell if the stock ever reached $5. Shortly after his departure, the Crown Point mine struck a bonanza, and shares shot up. Baldwin's broker got out the certificates, and then he noted that they lacked the signature of their owner, without which they could not be transferred. Since there was no telegraphic cable between the United States and Hawaii, the broker couldn't even wire for instructions and he had no choice but to hold the stock. When Baldwin came back to San Francisco, Crown Point bidders were clamoring for stock at $1,100 a share. He sold his 700 shares at that price, and he was never known to complain because he missed the subsequent high of $1,800. A few years later holders of Crown Point were using their certificates to paper their children's nurseries.

These were the days when everybody who was anybody at all sought to demonstrate his importance by owning and driving a smart trotting horse. The favorite rig was a single-seater with two big hard-tired wheels, a forerunner of the modern pneumatic-tired racing sulky, and hundreds of these could be found on the roads on a fine afternoon with no other objective than going along at a fast pace. Gentlemen of fashion vied with one another not only in speed but in flashiness of appointment.

The money was rolling in, and I was in a position to buy for myself what George Baldwin and Jimmy Fair's fathers had already given them. I decided, not long after my seventeenth birthday, that I, too, would be a gentleman of fashion.

Some people had regarded me even before this as a pretty fresh kid. Now they must have found me insufferable, and if they did, it was not without ample provocation. My Prince Albert coat and ascot ties had been hard enough for many of them to take. But my street raiment was as nothing compared with my driving outfit. It consisted of an off-white suit of Melton cloth, a high stock of white satin, white cap, gloves, and shoes to match.

But that was not all. What really offended my contemporaries was to see me wheeling down Golden Gate Avenue, whip and reins held high, glancing neither to the right nor to the left, wrapped in a heavy white coaching apron. That apron slayed them.

One day, dressed all in white preparatory to a late-afternoon drive, I received word that Mr. Wallenrod wished to see me in his office. When I entered I found there, in addition to Wallenrod, Mr. Stockwell and Mr. Osborne. I also found my mother. As usual, she was wearing the black dress and bonnet which no improvement in the circumstances of her life could ever persuade her to give up. Her orthodoxy never allowed for any kind of variation.

"Anything the matter?" I asked. It was a fatuous question. I knew very well that something was the matter—and I had a good idea what it was.

George Wallenrod looked uncomfortable. So did Osborne and Stockwell. My mother looked very tiny, but she smiled at me.

Wallenrod cleared his throat.

"Mrs. Bloom," he began, "ve vanted you to come here to talk to Sol."

"What do you want me to say to him?" asked Mother.

Wallenrod cleared his throat again.

"Vell, Mrs. Bloom, Sol goes to barties. He goes to the Pootle Dog. He goes to the Gliff House. He goes to other blaces." He raised his arms appealingly. "Now he buys a horse and vears vite clothes!"

"People are talking about Sol, Mrs. Bloom," said Osborne. "We thought you ought to know."

"Do they say kind things about him?" asked Mother in complete innocence.

"Most of them do, Mrs. Bloom," answered Stockwell, eying Mother closely. "Sol is a good boy, a very good boy. He does his work very well. But *some* people think Sol is leading a pretty fast life for his age."

Mother turned to me.

"Solly, have you done anything wrong?" she asked.

"No, Mother, I haven't done anything wrong," I told her. "But maybe . . ."

Mother got up from her chair.

"Solly hasn't done anything wrong," she said. "If Solly ever does anything wrong, he tells me."

Then Mother went home. Somehow, I didn't feel like driving my horse that afternoon. No one ever referred again to the meeting in Mr. Wallenrod's office. It wasn't necessary.

VIII

When I was seventeen my income was somewhere between $15,000 and $20,000 a year. I never knew exactly how much it was for several reasons. With no income tax to worry about, I had no need to keep a set of books—the books of the Alcazar, on the other hand, were ready for an auditor's scrutiny at any time—and all I cared about was to be in a strong cash position so that I could take advantage of any chance to turn a quick profit. Another reason why I wasn't sure about the size of my income was that I didn't differentiate between business and personal expenses, and so I never knew what my "operating costs" were.

All I am sure about now is that around the time of my eighteenth birthday I had $25,000 in cash. And I mean cash. I had a bank account, too, for ordinary expenses, but the $25,000 was in gold. Most of it I kept in the vault of my bank, but I always had two or three thousand on hand, mostly in double eagles, in the safe at the Alcazar. And in my pockets I normally carried twenty or more of those same reassuring twenty-dollar gold pieces of fond memory. People did business in hard money in those days, and the man who could lay it on the barrel head generally got the nod over the one who suggested closing the deal at his bank the following morning.

My salary at the theater was $3,500. In comparison with the thousand a month and more that I was averaging on the side, it was small. But that didn't trouble me. I would have worked for nothing, or, if necessary, I would have been glad to pay out

that much money, just for the privilege of holding my position and the title of Treasurer of the Alcazar Theater. The title gave me prestige in the theater world and a solid standing in the community. The position enabled me to be on the inside, where plans were made and where real opportunity flourished.

I have previously remarked that at no time in my career did I rely exclusively on show business to support me. Even when I was most heavily involved in the theater, I kept in mind the danger of putting all of one's eggs in a single basket.

One of my "other eggs" was a tidy importing business. When I was twelve or so I had taken orders for sponges around our neighborhood on Seventh Street, and my customers so often asked me to get them other household items that I expanded my list of wares to include such things as twine, toothpicks, willow baskets, washboards, wooden kitchen utensils, corks, carpet tacks, feather dusters, and the like. I shopped carefully for bargains and discounts, and in the course of time I got to know many dealers and their market practices.

One day I had a relatively large lot of willowware offered to me, and although I didn't know where to dispose of it, the price was so attractive that I took it. Making three or four trips on foot, my brother and I carried the stuff home—we had recently moved to a bigger house, on Seventh Street—and stored it in the attic. I then wrote letters to a few storekeepers on the outskirts of town, and in a week we had sold everything at a profit of about 300 per cent. (Mose and I didn't know much about cost accounting. Our only cash outlay had been for stationery, stamps, and carfare when we delivered the goods. We didn't charge for our time and work. If we had paid ourselves wages at even the most modest rate, our "profit" would have evaporated. The important thing to us was that we ended up with four times as much money as I had paid for the willowware.)

Thereafter I devoted such little time as I had at my disposal to a search for bargains, and I developed the nucleus of a solid business. This enterprise grew rapidly after I went to work at the Alcazar and could regularly give attention to it early in the morning, and within a few months I was ordering from Eastern markets in carload lots and doing business with retailers in towns all along the Contra Costa and down the Peninsula.

I think it was in the spring of 1886 that I hired a horse and light wagon and went off on a week's selling trip. I carried samples of all sorts, and I also thought it would be a good idea to become personally acquainted with as many customers as possible. One of the best of them was the firm of Black Brothers of San Jose.

So far I had done a brisk business in window screens, and I felt confident that I would land a fat order here. But I was too late. One of the brothers Black informed me that they had a large stock on hand.

"That's really too bad," I said, shaking my head.

"Well, try us again, Bloom," answered Mr. Black. "Sorry."

"I mean it's too bad for *you,* Mr. Black," I responded.

"Why for us?"

I produced one of my screens. It was painted bright green.

"Ever see one of these?" I asked.

"No. And I don't think the color's so good, if that's what you mean."

I laughed in a polite way. Then I became very solemn.

"You are looking at something never before seen in Santa Clara County, Mr. Black," I stated in a measured tone that our stock-company heavy might have copied to his advantage. "This screen is *medicated!*"

Black examined the screen carefully. He held it up against the light. He sniffed it cautiously.

"Medicated," he repeated. "Hmm. What do you get for these, Bloom?"

"Regular price," I answered. "Usual discounts."

"Better send me a gross."

"I'll get them to you by the early part of next week," I told him. "You'll never reget it."

A second order from Black Brothers a few weeks later made it clear that my inspiration had been a happy one. I began to advertise Bloom's Medicated Window Screens, and within a month I had exhausted my stock and was buying every small lot I could lay my hands on. A couple of gallons of green paint provided the desired treatment not only for the screens but for Bloom's Medicated Brooms, which also went over in a big way.

Today, no doubt, such practices as this would have me in the

toils of a dozen better-business bureaus, and I do not seek justification for my youthful chicanery. At the same time, customers must have been satisfied, for there were no complaints. My "medicated" screens kept out flies quite as well as the ordinary kind, and in addition they gave their users a sense of comfort. Like vitamin pills at the present time, which may or may not do any good, my screens of two long generations ago contributed to domestic morale.

During these years I also had a lucrative advertising concession, which came my way through a curious relationship with Christopher Buckley, the blind political boss of San Francisco, to whom I had been introduced when I was fourteen or fifteen.

About forty years old at that time, "Blind Chris," who had lost his sight through illness ten years before, was in complete control of the political machine. That meant, of course, control, among other things, of gambling houses and the red-light district. Concessions to operate in either field were sold by Buckley and his henchmen, and the amounts paid for "protection" were enormous. If the phrase "cesspool of iniquity" had not been coined in an earlier age, it would certainly have been necessary to coin it to help describe San Francisco. Nowhere else did organized vice flourish as it did in the city where I grew up.

Be that as it may, "Blind Chris" appeared in my fifteen-year-old eyes as a kindly, helpless old man. He sensed in me the feeling of genuine compassion, and knowing that I had no personal ax to grind, he liked to have me with him. Once a week or so I would take time to drop in at the saloon he owned and where he spent many hours a day and invite him to go for a walk. These walks, with my hand on his elbow, were always interesting to me, for Buckley was constantly being buttonholed by men in all walks of life, from beggars to bankers. And, although I didn't realize it for a while, I came to be recognized as one of Buckley's confidants. (In his lively and instructive book, *The Barbary Coast,* Mr. Herbert Asbury writes this about Buckley: "He always sat in the rear of his saloon and recognized visitors by the way they shook hands." To this information I can add the following: As we walked along the street together

and I noted that somebody was coming our way, I would say, "Here comes Mr. Hoopingamer." Before that gentleman could open his mouth Buckley would call out cordially, "Why, Dick! How are you? It's nice to see you again." He was able to do this so easily and naturally that most people went away and told their friends about Buckley's "sixth sense" that was almost the equivalent of sight.)

Occasionally Buckley would send me on an errand—partly because he trusted me, partly to give me the chance to make some money—and I came to know some of the quiet hangouts of his "agents." Some of the men were Chinese, and I was quickly admitted, upon mention of a password, into the presence of these lords of the Oriental underworld. Some of the women were proprietresses of fancy houses in the red-light district. Dupont Street was the main thoroughfare of both this district and Chinatown. It still is the main street of Chinatown, but the name was changed a good many years ago to Grant Avenue. In my day "Dupont" was literally a dirty word, which no decent woman could bring herself to utter and which was never avoidably spoken by a gentleman in the presence of a lady. (An even dirtier six-letter word was "Morton," the name of the narrow street that cut across Dupont, running one block east, to Kearny, and one block west, to Union Square. Morton Street was lined with "cribs," which were occupied by the most vicious and depraved harlots to be found anywhere except perhaps in the very foulest hideaways of the Barbary Coast. Its name was changed, presumably just after the Spanish-American War, to Manila Street. But San Franciscans have never done things by halves and, after a decent interval, to allow time to forget the scandalous past, they named this street Maiden Lane. It is now so respectable that even such a pillar of propriety as the ninety-year-old firm of Charles Brown & Sons does not hesitate to maintain a branch there.) *

* While on the subject of street names, I want to mention Kearny, which was named for General Stephen Kearny. Some people are still under the impression that it was named for Dennis Kearney, the rabble-rousing Irishman who in 1877 incited serious riots against Chinese labor. The name of the street is very frequently misspelled, and even municipal authorities appear occasionally to be confused; at this very moment, at Washington and Kearny, the word

Now and then Buckley would dispatch me with a message to someone at the Southern Pacific offices, on whose "payroll" he was for years. I didn't know that this railroad was utterly corrupt, but I did recognize a chance to make money when I saw it. One day, when I was sixteen or seventeen, I suggested to the advertising manager a new avenue of publicity. My plan appealed to him for several reasons. First, it was a good idea. Second, I offered to carry it out at no cost to the railroad. In addition, though I am sure I could have swung the deal without it, I had Buckley's approval.

As soon as I had the Southern Pacific sewed up I went to work. It was a very simple plan based on a well-written and printed booklet about San Francisco (with emphasis on Chinatown) which I distributed among train "butchers" for sale en route, and newsstand dealers at the Oakland and San Francisco terminals. I was able to sell this little book in large quantities because I was satisfied with a very small unit profit. I made my real money out of it by selling advertising space to hotels, restaurants, and stores; they paid for insertions at the rate of ten dollars for every thousand copies of the book I succeeded in selling. My only expense was the commissions I paid the two full-time advertising solicitors in my employ, and I netted a clear profit of about twenty-five cents on every copy. I was scrupulously exact about reporting circulation, and everybody concerned was so well satisfied that I continued to draw an income from this source for several years after I had left San Francisco.

By the time I had known Buckley for a year people were coming to me with propositions they wanted to present to the boss. Most of them simply requested small favors, like permission to organize a church social. I am not exaggerating. People who didn't see "Blind Chris" in advance often found that they were violating a statute when they tried to carry through their plans. Those who took the precaution of clearing the way usually got what they asked for—at a price, of course, if anybody was going to make any big money. But most of the favors Chris granted brought in no cash.

"Kearny" is stamped into the concrete sidewalk on one side of Washington, while on the other side "Kearney" is stamped.

Buckley was a sympathetic fellow, and when he felt that anybody was a victim of injustice he favored direct corrective action. I took a man around one day to tell him about the hard luck that had befallen his Cousin Aloysius, who, it seems, in a moment of exuberance had thrown an empty bottle at a policeman. Cousin Aloysius had already been in jail for a week by this time.

Buckley listened attentively. Then he reached into his pocket and brought out a huge ring of keys, which he handed to me.

"Here, Sol," he said, "let this man's cousin out of jail."

Once in a while somebody would approach me with a serious problem. He might be a building contractor who wanted to be sure that no expensive "violations" would be discovered when his structure was half completed. Or he could be a popular restaurateur who wanted to add a few private rooms upstairs; or a big-time gambler who wanted to run some rival out of town. After I had talked with individuals like these I would tell Chris their stories, and he, after asking me a few questions, would finish either by saying, "No," or, "Tell him I'll talk with him."

I was a very, very small wheel in the Buckley machine, and at the time I didn't even realize that I was a part of it. All I knew was that once in a while after I had taken somebody around to see "Blind Chris" I would get an unexpected opportunity to buy a lot of merchandise at a low figure, followed, perhaps the same day, by an unsolicited offer to take the same goods off my hands at a good profit. If I considered it at all, I considered such a profit completely proper, and I pocketed the money not only with satisfaction but with a feeling of downright virtue. Had I not, after all, helped somebody to get what he wanted?

The city I inhabited as a youth was a cruder, looser, more complaisant city than it is today. I was a product of that city, and of the times.

In California, as in most other parts of the world, a highly popular form of gambling was the lottery. Even the most sanctimonius person could persuade himself that it was "respectable" to purchase a ticket, for part of the proceeds of the only legal lottery then in operation in the United States went to

charity. That provision, indeed, had been written into the constitution of the state of Louisiana, where the lottery was chartered, in 1879!

As I remember, the Louisiana Lottery was run monthly. Tickets were sold all over the country, at a dollar apiece, and practically everybody knew somebody who had once won a prize. This lottery was completely honest. Its proprietors would have been fools to conduct it on any other basis—at its peak the profits considerably exceeded a million dollars a year.

One day while I was sitting at a table in Chenowith's Saloon, on Market Street, with a man named Louie Metzger and another named Bowes, a vendor of lottery tickets made the rounds.* He sold a few, but one fellow turned him down with the remark, "Come back and see me when you've got some for two bits."

This sentiment was taken up as a sort of chorus: "Yeah, come back and see us when you find some for two bits."

Metzger, who had been active as a speculator until his sight went bad, handed me a Louisiana Lottery ticket of his own and asked me to read what it said.

"What's the matter with getting up a little lottery right here?" he inquired. "We could print tickets with the same series of numbers and sell thousands of them at two bits."

"And the same numbers that won in the Louisiana drawing would win ours," added Bowes. "Then everybody would know it was on the level."

"We could call it the Little Louisiana Lottery," I contributed, my mind as usual running in the advertising channel.

After hashing it over for an hour we decided to go ahead with the project. The biggest problem in our minds was how to determine the prize winners in case we failed to sell the number or numbers which corresponded with the lucky tickets in the Louisiana. We solved it by closing the sale of tickets several days in advance of the monthly drawing date, publishing the list of such numbers as had not been sold, and announcing that the winners in the Little Louisiana would be

* San Francisco was a "wide-open" gambling town. Many of the places had show windows, with continuous demonstrations of whatever games were going on inside.

the holders either of the exact numbers or, failing those, of the nearest ones.

The Little Louisiana Lottery flourished until 1893, the year in which the charter of the "big" Louisiana expired and the last legal lottery in this country was forced to go out of business.

I also had a small hand in real estate. Mike de Young and some of his associates on the *Chronicle* and at the Alcazar had bought a big piece of land in Southern California on speculation, and they let me come in on it. They had picked up a tract of nearly 10,000 acres at the price of one dollar an acre—this was long before the day of "subdivisions," Los Angeles had a population of no more than 30,000, and Hollywood was only a name—and on an investment of three or four hundred dollars I became a landed proprietor.

Much as I enjoyed the feeling at first, the novelty soon wore thin. I was then, and I have continued to be, a trader looking for a fast turn. Perhaps I would be a rich man today if I had possessed the patience of an Astor or a Rockefeller, but I never minded if the other fellow made a bigger profit so long as I was able to make mine quickly. And so I presented my partners with a plan to move our real estate in a hurry.

The idea was to give it away free in small lots.

We calculated, allowing for streets and boulevards, that at the rate of eight lots to the acre we had close to 80,000 lots—for which we had paid about $10,000. To each purchaser of a ticket to the Alcazar we proposed to give a coupon entitling the bearer to own one of these lots.

We advertised our intention, and the rush began. For over a month every performance was a complete sellout. Scores of persons (mostly little boys) stood around the lobby begging for coupons from theater patrons who might not want them. It was a terrific promotion stunt, and had we profited in no other way, expanded box-office receipts would have made up the cost of the land several times.

But we did profit in another way: Every "free" offer has its catch.

The lots, as advertised, cost nothing—but there was a charge for recording them and issuing deeds. We set up a temporary office to take care of this operation and collected $2.50 a lot for

the service. Half of it went to the Recorder of Deeds, the other half was ours. Fully three quarters of the lots were recorded, and that meant a gross take for the syndicate, after the payment of recording fees, of about $75,000. We netted over $50,000 on an investment of $10,000.

Not bad. But subsequent owners of this real estate haven't done badly either. All of it lies within the present limits of the city of Los Angeles.

The theater itself, as I had known for half my short lifetime, offered all sorts of chances for picking up money on the side. Most fruitful of these was the "treasurer's benefit," which was an annual event at most of San Francisco's theaters. During the three years that I was treasurer of the Alcazar the three performances of which I was beneficiary brought me more than my entire salary for the same period. I don't believe there are many businesses today which pay bonuses of more than 100 per cent!

There were other opportunities waiting to be seized.

Every night thousands of patrons attended the theaters, gardens, and melodeons, and every night they spent not only thousands of dollars for tickets and drinks but hundreds of dollars for candy, copies of popular songs, and souvenirs, to say nothing of the money they handed out in tips to the hat checkers. It worried me to see this rich stream flowing by undammed.

Suddenly I knew what to do.

I talked with Mr. Wallenrod, and he agreed to let me "reorganize" the personnel of the Alcazar along my own lines. All the ushers and checkers and candy peddlers were placed in my charge. From among them I appointed captains, and to them I explained our new scheme of operation. It was very simple.

Hereafter all tips and gratuities were to be pooled. Twenty-five per cent of the gross would be reserved for the theater, and the remaining 75 per cent would be distributed among the employees on an equitable basis.

The plan depended for its success upon my ability to prevent leaks. I accomplished this in two ways. The captains were given shares which were not only larger than the amounts they had been accustomed to collecting as tips but much more stable; it was thus to their interest to keep their juniors from chiseling.

All of the boys were required to turn out their pockets at the end of a performance and put the money into a padlocked box which rested on the shelf of the checking booth.

At the end of each week the captains and I would count the money and determine the amounts to be distributed, and it was the weekly distribution on payday that was the real key to the acceptance of the new system. Previously if a boy had had a good evening he would be likely to spend his money idly. Now, collecting his week's share in a lump, he regarded his extra dollars more as a bonus than as a tip.

The Alcazar's 25 per cent, of which I got half as a management fee, ran as much as a hundred dollars in busy weeks, and naturally Wallenrod and his associates were pleased. They were also pleased, as was I, by a by-product of the new system. This was the gradual improvement in the type of personnel. The fly-by-nights were largely eliminated and their places taken by steadier, more reliable boys.

After I had got the wrinkles pretty well smoothed out at the Alcazar I began to study the situation at other theaters. Each one had its own peculiar problems, and I worked out a detailed plan of operation for ten or twelve of the leading places of entertainment. Then I talked with the individual managers. Would they, I inquired, pay me a regular commission of 10 per cent if I introduced and supervised a new system, requiring no investment at all, which would both improve their service and increase their revenue?

There could be only one answer to that, and I quickly sold Al Hayman, manager of the Baldwin. With both Hayman and Wallenrod as references, I soon lined up M. B. Leavitt and Charlie Hall of the Bush Street Theater; Joe Love, business manager for Billy Emerson of Emerson's Standard; and half a dozen others.

Once the ball got rolling, I had a very nice thing of it financially. In addition, I built up a sort of clearinghouse for ushers and checkers, along with a reference file, which simplified the process of hiring boys both with and without experience. I also increased my prestige in the theater world.

While I was still working at the brush factory I used to be

able to pick up four bits now and then by practicing what is perhaps the third oldest profession in the world (acting being the second oldest)—I mean the profession of the claque. A well-trained claque can be not only a beautiful and sensitive instrument but a profitable one, and after an apprenticeship of three or four years I organized and coached one of my own. By the time of Patti's first visit to San Francisco, in 1884, I had a picked dozen applauders who could hold their own, if necessary, against all the rest of the audience.

If it should seem odd that a magnificent performer like Patti could ever have been in the position of requiring a claque, I must explain that professional applauders did a great deal more than clap hands and shout "Brava!" at the end of one of her songs. They called upon her to sing a *particular* song, and they didn't abate their clamor until the accompanist had struck the opening chords of the one they demanded. All front-rank artists, as well as the second-raters, planned it that way—by fixing things with the claque leader in advance of their concerts.

It was also to the interest of the management to have a claque on hand, partly to swell volume, but largely to take care of songs requested by prominent patrons. Often these requests were made to the manager and passed on by him to the claque leader, but quite as frequently the enterprising leader would solicit business directly from affluent opera lovers. San Franciscans genuinely liked to hear music, and they had a remarkable breadth of knowledge and very positive preferences.

Thus, the skilled claque leader was in a position to collect three times. The *cantatrice* (perhaps Patti herself) might have a fancy to do the Jewel Song from *Faust,* or *"Ah, fors'è lui"* from *Traviata*—and the claque would provide the demand. The manager might give instructions to deliver *"Una voce poco fa"* from *Barber of Seville, "Ah, perfido!"* from *Fidelio,* or an aria from the then popular *La Sonnambula*—and the claque would deliver. A man like Senator Stanford might prefer to hear the Mad Scene from *Lucia di Lammermoor,* or, more likely, "The Last Rose of Summer"—and once again the claque would come through. There were so many encores in those days. On my best night, when I was fourteen or so, I collected twenty dollars by serving three masters. This was clear profit for me. The only

thing my claquers demanded, ardent amateurs all, was free tickets; these, of course, a necessary business expense, were always provided by the management.

Naturally I had to give up personal direction of my claque when I assumed more serious responsibilities in the theater. I always enjoyed leading applause. I am still likely to be the first man to clap his hands when a witness steps down after testifying before a congressional committee.

Another minor flow of income came through advertising shops and restaurants and trade names by interpolating lines in the scripts of plays. It was very common practice for matinee idols of the eighties and nineties to mention places like the Poodle Dog or the Cliff House on the stage, or to comment on the merits of certain brands of champagne.

In gratitude for a "plug" I had fixed up for a wine merchant in one of our productions, he sent me a case of vintage Roederer one day, and it happened that at the very time of its arrival our doctor was just prescribing champagne as a "tonic" for my mother. Mother would ordinarily have been reluctant to take such expensive medicine, but I was able to persuade her that the dozen bottles just received were indeed a gift.

"Drink all you like," I told her. "My friend who sent it is in the business, and I can get all we need free."

Three days later I was astounded when Mother asked me whether I would ask for some more of "that nice wine from your friend." Four bottles of champagne a day seemed an unusual rate of consumption, especially for such a frugal and abstemious woman as my mother. I bought another case and had it sent home. The price, as I recall, was sixty dollars.

The next afternoon I had occasion to return home somewhat earlier than usual, and as I opened the door I heard a lively chorus of women's voices.

"Open another bottle, ladies," Mother was saying. "A glass of light wine never hurt anybody, and my Solly can get all we need free from his friend at the store."

I tiptoed out of the house and went straight to the doctor's office.

"Mother doesn't seem to be taking her champagne the way

you hoped," I gravely announced. "I wonder whether a little sherry wouldn't be better for her. You see, I think the bubbles . . ."

"Maybe a still wine *would* be better," the doctor agreed.

Dear Mother! How distressed she would have been had she ever learned that she was giving away champagne at a rate which, if maintained, would have cost her son more than a hundred dollars a week!

By 1888 my income had risen to at least $25,000 a year—again I have no way of knowing the exact figure—and I was beginning to get restless. I wanted more action and excitement. I was a very cocky kid.

Always on the lookout for something unusual, I was a habitual reader of the leading theatrical publications of the day. The trouble with so many of the opportunities mentioned in these papers was that as soon as a novelty appeared it would be imitated all over the country and quickly debased in value. Plays were pirated in the crudest manner, and sets and costumes were copied without a pretense of alteration. The problem was not so much a matter of strengthening copyright laws *—for on paper they were more or less adequate—but of catching the culprits. There was no hope for redress in civil suits, for most of the managers who had judgments rendered against them were quite unable to pay. It was not until show people themselves got together for mutual protection that these abuses could be checked.

One day I noticed a brief item about an orchestra that appeared to be having a great success. Consisting entirely of stringed instruments and wood winds, it was called the Mexican Typical Orchestra, and it had so far been heard only in Mexico. I liked the idea of this band for several reasons. Imported into the United States, it would be a genuine novelty—and it would be hard to imitate.

I wrote the manager in Mexico City and asked his terms for

* My long-time friend William A. Brady, in his memoirs, *Showman*, tells how that prolific old fox, Dion Boucicault, protected himself by deliberately failing to copyright his plays. Thus he retained permanent personal ownership of his works, theft of which would be, under the common law, a criminal act, as well as grounds for civil action.

a tour of this country. He answered that if I could come to Paso del Norte, just across the border from El Paso, Texas, he would be glad to meet me there for a discussion. I at once agreed, and in great excitement I made my arrangements for the trip.

It was early summer when I left San Francisco, and I wore the kind of heavy wool suit that was (and still is) customary male attire in the Bay country during that chilly, foggy season. Long before I got to Texas I was acutely uncomfortable. Not only were my woolens exhaustingly hot, but I was carrying an extra burden round my middle—$5,000 in gold was in my money belt.

I reduced that weight substantially before returning to California. The Mexican manager, dubious at first, because of my youth, quickly yielded to the persuasiveness of my gold pieces, and we signed a contract on terms that were very favorable to me. (I didn't visit Mexico a second time for more than fifty-two years. In December, 1940, as a member of the official American delegation, I attended the inauguration of Manuel Avila Camacho as President of Mexico. But I got my biggest kick of the trip at a concert given at the Bellas Artes. Not only was the music furnished by the Mexican Typical Orchestra, not only was the orchestra conducted by the son of the 1888 conductor, but the original conductor himself, now a very old man, took the podium and led the musicians in a rendition of the first piece I had ever heard their predecessors play.)

I had previously negotiated, of course, with enough booking agents to be assured that I wouldn't lose my shirt in my first real adventure as an impresario. But I need not have worried. The Mexican Typical Orchestra proved to be a sensational success, and I cleaned up. My profits from the tour came to nearly $40,000.

Examining my position in the world in the spring of 1889, when I was a little more than nineteen years old, I found it very satisfactory. My various advertising and theatrical concessions and other enterprises, which now required a minimum of personal attention, were providing a net annual income of about

$25,000. And I possessed, all in hard cash, a capital of $80,000. The time had come, I decided, to broaden my operations.

First of all, it seemed to me, I ought to try to broaden myself. Cocky as I was and successful as I had been to date, I was very conscious of my shortcomings. Mother had seen to that. My lack of schooling never ceased to trouble her, and she took special pains to help me fill that void. To her my ability to make money was an accomplishment of trifling importance; and though I was puzzled by her indifference to material possessions, I came slowly to a crude realization that if I wanted to get a fuller enjoyment out of my wealth I would have to increase my *capacity for enjoyment* by learning more about the world. (A base reason, perhaps, for wanting to improve one's education—but if it was a lower motive than education for service to others, it was considerably higher than my first one had been. When I was a child working in the brush factory I wanted an education only because it would increase my power to *accumulate* money.)

In any case, I decided that before doing anything else I would make a tour of the world. I had a talk with George Wallenrod, and then I went to tell Mike de Young what I planned to do.

"Don't stay away too long, Sol," Mr. de Young said when I informed him that I was resigning from the Alcazar. "I think I'll have something that might interest you after you get through looking at Paris and Venice and all those other foreign cities."

He didn't elaborate, but as I was leaving his office he said, "Be sure to take a good look at the big fair." He was referring to the Paris International Exposition, which was scheduled to open shortly and was expected to be the most elaborate in the history of world fairs.

"It's my first stop," I told him. "I thought it might give me some ideas."

"Oh, you'll get ideas," he laughed. "Just don't forget that if you have any *good* ones and need help, you can call on me."

I had arranged to sail about the middle of June, and I first thought I would leave San Francisco early enough to spend two or three weeks in New York at the end of the theater season there. But eager as I was for my first look at a metropolitan

stage production, I found that I couldn't bring myself to miss the fight that was about to come off between Jim Corbett and Joe Choynski.

Choynski, like Corbett, was a San Francisco boy; his father kept a little book store, where he sold Hebrew religious tracts and prayer books. Choynski, like Corbett, had a kid brother. One day the two kids, after an exchange of genealogical compliments, went to it with their fists. Thereafter they fought on every encounter, and a feud of Hatfield-McCoy dimensions soon involved the Jewish Choynskis and the Irish Corbetts of all generations. It was a perfect build-up for a professional match between the older brothers.

By 1889 they had already fought once, with Corbett winning after a bloody bout. At that time he couldn't have weighed more than 165—when he beat Jake Kilrain at New Orleans, in 1890, he was still under 180—and after the fight he said to me, "I can tell you something that Joe Choynski doesn't know: he can punch harder than any man in the ring—and that goes for Sullivan and Charley Mitchell and the rest of them."

During the weeks preceding the second fight I was reveling in the luxury of the first vacation of my life, and I frequently went over to Alameda to watch Corbett train at an amusement park called Neptune Beach, a favorite place among boxers and wrestlers preparing for matches. Training was so different in those days when fighting was outlawed and purses were lean, when an ordinary boxer had to have a fight once or twice a week just to be able to pay for his groceries. The run-of-the-mill fighter was quite literally never out of training, and a "training camp" was really no more than an enclosure to which the public was admitted on payment of a small fee. Here boxing enthusiasts could watch their favorites sparring, buy signed photographs (from those who were able to write), and get into endless arguments. It was all lots of fun.

The second Corbett-Choynski fight was scheduled for an afternoon about the end of May. The site was a large barn across the Golden Gate in Marin County. Only a couple of hundred admirers of the manly art of self-defense were on hand, but, even so, the fight had been far too well advertised. At the end of five or six rounds the sheriff showed up and stopped the

bout. All bets were off, of course, and, for the record, the fight was declared a draw.

This was very upsetting to the sportsmen present—how upsetting may be judged by the circumstance that Choynski's backers were paying Jack Dempsey, "The Nonpareil," the greatest middleweight boxer of all, the sum of $1,000 to second their man. Corbett's followers were equally upset, and both sides got together to find a place where the battle could be resumed with minimum risk of interruption.

Officially the site of the third fight was unknown, but every man within a hundred miles of San Francisco, including the police, could have given detailed instructions about getting to the place: a grain barge anchored at Carquinez Strait, where the Sacramento River flows into San Pablo Bay. The fight was scheduled to begin at eight o'clock on the morning of June 6.

Wilson Mizner, the playwright (and one of the most picturesque figures in and out of the theater during the nineties and early decades of the present century), had a summer house near Benicia. Somebody had arranged to borrow this house, and Jim Corbett and his party moved out there the day before the fight. Early on the morning of the sixth, in buggies and buckboards, we drove to the shore and then were rowed out to the barge. The day was airless and sunny, and even before eight o'clock it was uncomfortably hot on board.

One delay after another ensued, and the fight didn't begin until noon. The last delay had been about gloves, and a great deal of misconception exists today among boxing authorities about what really happened. The trouble with these authorities is that they were not present—most of them hadn't been born—and so I will try to straighten things out.

When Corbett at last stepped into the ring he was wearing, as specified, five-ounce gloves. Choynski wore no gloves at all. He explained to the referee that he had "lost them." Billy Delaney, seconding Corbett, knew most of the tricks of the trade, and he emphatically refused to let his man fight with bare knuckles. Corbett had broken his right hand in the interrupted fight, and Delaney knew that Dempsey hoped Corbett could be persuaded to fight now with unprotected hands. When Dempsey realized that Corbett would not remove his gloves, he asked

whether anybody present would lend Choynski a pair of ordinary gloves. One man offered his, which were the kind I used when driving my horse. Choynski fought the entire fight with these, and that is why the phrase "skin-tight gloves" is often used to describe them.

The fight lasted nearly two hours under a burning sun, and I have never seen another to equal it. Many times in later years Corbett said it was the hardest of his whole career. In one of the early rounds he broke a bone in his left hand, and it was only by taking a frightful beating himself and waiting until his opponent was exhausted that he could risk a finishing punch. About the fourteenth or fifteenth round Corbett was out on his feet for a moment, and it was only because Choynski suspected a trick when his guard came down that he didn't drive in and finish his man. The end came in the twenty-eighth when Corbett, having tested Choynski repeatedly with right-handed feints to the head, followed this maneuver with a crushing left to the jaw. The punch that finished Choynski finished Corbett too. If Choynski had not stayed down for the count of ten, it is doubtful whether Corbett, who had been unable all through the fight to use his right hand for a solid blow, could have hit hard enough to produce a second knockout try with his now battered left.

This was the final meeting in the ring between these two fine fighters and sportsmen. The punch that ended this fight also ended the feud between the Choynskis and the Corbetts. Joe later became boxing instructor at the Pittsburgh Athletic Association, and whenever Jim, either as champion or as an actor, stopped in that city the two would get together for a meal and a discussion of their boyhood battles.

Next day I left San Francisco for New York and Europe. I was to return the following year. I was even to live here again for a little while before moving away permanently. But when I left in June, 1889, I knew that a phase of my life had ended. My "San Francisco days" were over.

Part II: Chicago and New York

IX

WHENEVER I THINK of the enormous changes that have taken place within my memory in the four cities I know best—San Francisco, Chicago, New York, and Washington—I consider how great a contrast Paris provides in this respect. I could go today to the heights of Montmartre, and from the steps of Sacré Coeur I would see everything exactly as it was when I first gazed from this spot nearly sixty years ago. I could walk through the streets, and, except for minor variations, such as methods of transportation and styles of clothing, every detail would appear as it had in 1889. Notre Dame and the Opéra, the Louvre and the gardens of the Tuileries, Place de la Concorde and the Place Vendôme, Rue de la Paix and Champs Elysées, the Etoile and the Luxembourg, the bookstalls along the Seine and the silent fishermen sitting by the *quais,* all were there on my first visit precisely as they are today—externally, at least, there is no difference now. Even the Eiffel Tower was there in 1889. This wonder of wonders, nearly twice as high as the Washington Monument, had just been completed. It was the physical and spiritual center of the International Exposition which I had come to see.

This was the fourth exposition open to exhibitors of foreign nations in Paris, the first having taken place in 1855. Each succeeding one had surpassed its immediate predecessor in size and splendor, and the newest filled the entire Champ de Mars, from the military school to the Seine, and in addition occupied the Trocadéro, across the Iéna Bridge, which had been the chief

edifice of the 1878 fair. More than four years had been given to the construction of its buildings (many of which were of steel, with glass roofs) and the planting of the grounds, and anyone who had not been present to watch the progress might have been justified in assuming that the exposition, or something very like it, had been on the site long before the revolution whose centenary it was commemorating.

During the first few weeks after my arrival I systematically visited the various buildings and solemnly inspected the exhibits of nation after nation. My method was a good deal like that of young Thomas Edison, who thought that the way to get an education was to begin at the "A" section of the public library and read his way through all the books alphabetically. I, too, was out for culture, and continent after continent fell before my well-planned attack.

In time, however, I found that a kind of natural selection (though not precisely the theory enunciated by Darwin) was governing my movements. I came to realize that a tall, skinny chap from Arabia with a talent for swallowing swords expressed a culture which to me was on a higher plane than the one demonstrated by a group of earnest Swiss peasants who passed their days making cheese and milk chocolate. I acknowledged to myself that the spiritual intensity of the performance presented by a troupe of Bedouin acrobats exceeded the emotional power of a pre-Renaissance tapestry; I confessed that a Japanese juggler did more for my soul than any silkworm could hope to do; and I could not pretend to deny that God's handiwork seemed more clearly shown in the music of even a second-rate band than in all the products of the world's mills and factories here on display.

Then there was the small theater where a troupe from the Opéra Comique presented light operas based on themes of the Revolution; and the larger Théâtre des Folies Parisiennes, where a ballet of forty or fifty performed and variety artists appeared. The Folies Parisiennes reminded me (in one respect, at least) of Gus Walter's Wigwam in San Francisco. There was no charge for admission, but you had to spend not less than a franc for drinks. Even a franc that was worth twenty cents didn't carry you very far, and the waiters saw to it that you kept buy-

ing. Though hardly drink-snatchers of Wigwam caliber, they were a very competent lot.

In brief, I found the Paris International Exposition of 1889 a very good show. That is the aspect I remember now. The "culture" I got is gone with the wind. And all my French is forgotten—it is remarkable how much French one can forget in sixty years.

I stayed in Paris until after the closing of the exposition. The date I am not sure of, but I know it was not before the end of October, which to me is the finest month of the year in the French capital. On this my first visit, however, it was something more important than the weather that prompted me to stay over. I had business on my mind.

Of all the exhibits at the fair I had found those of the French colonies the most fascinating, and my favorite among favorites was the Algerian Village. I doubt very much whether anything resembling it was ever seen in Algeria, but I was not at the time concerned with trifles. The Algerians themselves were genuine beyond question, and what was really important was that they presented a varied entertainment that increased in excitement in proportion to my familiarity with it. I knew that nothing like these dancers, acrobats, glass-eaters, and scorpion swallowers had ever been seen in the Western Hemisphere, and I was sure that I could make a fortune with them in the United States.

For weeks I considered ways and means. The one thing I was sure of from the beginning was that I neither would nor could finance the project unaided. Importing fifty-odd entertainers from Europe required not only big money and an organization, but a place to put on the show.

I bided my time. A week or so before the exposition closed I had a conversation with the Frenchman who managed the Algerian Village—his English was as bad as my French, and we got along splendidly. I learned that about half the troupe expected to return almost at once to their own country, while the others had been booked for a provincial tour.

"What will they be doing next year at this time?" I asked.

Monsieur Guinon shrugged his shoulders.

"How would you like to bring them to the *Etats Unis?*"

His black eyes brightened.

"With the supreme pleasure!" he answered in ardent tones.

I was only nineteen, and I thought I had better do something to impress Guinon. Signaling for my bill, I paid for our beer with a thousand-franc note which I carelessly peeled off a thick sheaf of currency I had procured especially for this occasion. When the waiter brought my change I left all the coins and a fifty-franc note as a tip.

"See you tomorrow," I said, shaking hands with my guest. "I have now, *malheureusement,* another appointment."

I deliberately avoided the Algerian Village on the following day, but some time in the afternoon a messenger from the manager caught up with me in another part of the grounds. Would Monsieur Bloom, the note inquired, do him the honor of partaking with him that evening a modest dinner?

Monsieur Bloom would, and did. During the meal I told my host that I represented "various distinguished American producers" and that, while not authorized to sign a definite contract, I was prepared to take an option on the services of the Algerian troupe. It was agreed that we should get together to arrange things as soon as the exposition closed.

The American consul recommended a lawyer, and ten days later an agreement was signed. For 5,000 francs, or approximately $1,000, I bought a two-year exclusive right to negotiate a contract to exhibit the Algerian Village in North and South America. I wasn't much interested in the South American clause, but since it had a nice sound and cost nothing extra, I had it inserted.

I had already decided to postpone the rest of my world tour. Somewhat speciously, I almost persuaded myself that I had taken it right here in Paris, where all the world had come to me. In any case, I knew I had to hurry back home. The rest of the globe would have to wait until I had brought the Algerian Village to the United States.

By early December I was in New York, where I remained for more than a month. It was my first real visit to the metropolis, and I didn't want to miss anything.

Then, as now, the Statue of Liberty stood on Bedloe's Island;

Trinity Church looked down Wall Street; George Washington in bronze faced Broad Street from his pedestal in front of the Sub-Treasury Building; and elevated trains (drawn by steam locomotives) ran uptown from the Battery. All else, save the pattern of the streets, has changed almost beyond recognition.

Not a single skyscraper had been reared—the very word was unknown, and such a striking architectural innovation as the Flatiron Building was not yet even a dream. Travelers from the South and West left their trains on the Jersey shore and crossed the Hudson by ferry; not for another twenty-odd years would they come into Pennsylvania Station through a tunnel under the river. Passengers arriving on New York Central and New Haven trains approached the shabby and smoke-blackened Grand Central Depot through a cut below street level; one day Park Avenue would be built over this cut, but in 1889 (and until after 1900) the noise and smoke and dirt combined to give it the aspect of a fearsome corridor that Dante might have invented. At Fifth Avenue and Forty-second Street, where the Public Library and Bryant Park have since been built, was the high stone wall that surrounded the reservoir; streetwalkers plied a brisk trade here. On Fifth Avenue north of this intersection were only residences and churches. South of it as far as Madison Square were other churches and private houses. The *first* Waldorf-Astoria had not yet been built where the Empire State Building now stands. The Fifth Avenue Hotel, between Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth; the Holland House, at Thirtieth; and the Hoffman House, at Twenty-fifth and Broadway, were still the last word in hotels. And very fine they were, too.

The new smart shopping district was Twenty-third Street, but Fourteenth still vied with it. A. T. Stewart's, the big department store, at Broadway and Eighth Street, was beginning to be thought of as "downtown." Tiffany's, which with some misgivings had moved from lower Broadway to Union Square a number of years earlier, now felt that their decision had been justified by events.

Twenty-third Street, with the Grand Opera House, Proctor's, and Koster and Bial's Concert Hall, was also one of the principal theater streets; but there was as yet nothing comparable to modern Broadway as the concentration point of everything

that has to do with show business. Fourteenth Street housed Pastor's and the Fourteenth Street Theater (where in January, 1890, I saw Robert Mantell in *The Corsican Brothers*). The Bowery still had a dozen places of entertainment, including Miner's Theater, whose proprietor, H. C. Miner, operated another on Eighth Avenue; Kramer's Atlantic Gardens; the London Theater; and the People's Theater, where, at the very time of my arrival in New York, Billy Brady, whom I had first known in San Francisco, was presenting *After Dark*. Niblo's was down on lower Broadway, and the Armoury Hall Vaudeville was on Hester Street.

Yet the trend was clearly visible. The Metropolitan Opera House had already been built at Broadway and Thirty-ninth. Daly's and Palmer's both occupied corners at Broadway and Thirtieth. The Fifth Avenue Theater (which had never been on Fifth Avenue, but always at Broadway and Twenty-eighth) had been an important institution for twenty years or more. And Klaw and Erlanger, already a famous theatrical agency, occupied offices on Thirtieth Street just off Broadway.

Yes, the trend was clear—as trends always are in retrospect. But it wasn't quite clear enough to compel me to go out and buy frontage just north of Forty-second Street at a place they now call Times Square!

My interest in New York and its theaters did not keep me from working on the business that had brought me back from Paris. On the contrary, I discussed the Algerian Village with everybody in the entertainment world who was willing to listen. But I never found any interest—at least not in a measure to approach my own.

Then one day I picked up a piece of information that I found very exciting. Plans were under way to hold an exposition in Chicago to commemorate the four-hundredth anniversary of the discovery of America. They had, in fact, been under way for months, during most of the time that I had been away in Europe.

I rushed out and bought a ticket for Chicago. I could see the whole fair centering about my Algerian Village, and I didn't have a minute to lose. After all, the exposition was less than three years away.

The people in Chicago seemed to be going about their affairs as if they had never heard of Columbus and the discovery of America. A policeman even laughed when I asked him how to reach the exposition grounds; all he knew was that there had been "something in the papers" about starting a fair.

At the office of the Chicago *Tribune* I got all the information that was available. The project went back as far as 1885, when a Mexican, one Dr. Zaremba, had been licensed by the state of Illinois to organize "The Chicago Columbian Centenary World's Fair and Exposition Company." But nothing much was done until the early part of 1889, at which time the Chicago City Council resolved that a committee be appointed to address Congress on the subject. Other cities, notably Philadelphia and New York, were interested in holding expositions to commemorate the discovery of America, and the decision of its location would soon have to be made.

I was told that Chicago seemed to have the edge. In December Senator Cullom of Illinois had introduced a bill to make Chicago the official site, and in January, just a few weeks past, Mayor Cregier and other prominent Chicagoans had testified before a Senate committee on the advantages of holding the exposition in their city. Things looked good. That was all anyone could be sure about.

Yes, my informant at the *Tribune* agreed with a smile, it was a little early for me to try to discuss concessions with anybody. He suggested that I relax. Even if Chicago should be chosen, I would have to wait until an organization could be set up to handle such matters.

I spent a few more days in Chicago talking with people and familiarizing myself with the city. Then I packed up and took a train to San Francisco. I could await developments there.

All my life I have been a person who could settle down anywhere and become completely absorbed with the things at hand; no matter how eager I might be to reach a fixed destination, any interruption has provided its own rewards. I suppose that is one reason why I have never experienced homesickness. A deeper reason is that neither time nor distance has ever had any effect upon the spiritual closeness of those dearest to me.

So it was with my mother. When we greeted each other, after a separation of eight months, it was as if we had never been parted.

After kissing me, Mother put her hands on my shoulders and looked into my eyes for a moment. Then she said, "My! You *do* need a haircut, Solly!"

For a few days I enjoyed the acclaim of my family and friends —Europe was very remote from the Pacific Coast in those days— and on all sides I was consulted as an authority on everything from politics to Paris fashions. Then I settled into a comfortable routine that differed in only one respect from my previous habit of life in San Francisco—I was without a regular job. I had neither the need nor the desire to return to the Alcazar Theater. My brother Mose had kept a close eye on my other interests during my absence, and everything was flourishing.

I resumed my contacts with Chris Buckley and got into the habit of letting myself be seen about City Hall. Despite my being still too young to vote, I was beginning to think about politics as a career. I knew a great many people in San Francisco, and it seemed to be a good idea to establish the impression that I was civic minded. Perhaps my thinking was juvenile and my approach naïve, but I got results.

I was appointed to the mayor's committee of "distinguished citizens" to welcome the King of Hawaii to San Francisco!

Not until some years later did it occur to me that I was included in this august group because I was willing to work my head off. I was an ambitious kid who could afford to give the time, and for more than two months I slaved in absolute delight.

I had my reward. It was a place on the Clay Street dock just behind the Governor of California, Mayor Pond, and other notables, when King Kalakaua came down the gangway of the U.S.S. *Charleston*. Twenty-one guns roared, the Fifth Artillery band burst into music, and I removed my silk hat and bowed from the hips. Everything, including my bow, turned out exactly as I had planned it.

When Kalakaua arrived on these shores toward the close of 1890, he was middle aged and suffering from some serious ailment. But he had the energy of a young athlete. Everybody

wanted to entertain this amiable and enthusiastic gentleman, and he refused few invitations. Above all, he liked to play poker, and no matter how strenuous a day he had put in, he always insisted in winding it up behind a stack of chips in his suite at the Palace Hotel.

I suspect that "King Calico" (as many of the newspapers referred to him) knew he had only a short while to live and that he was determined to make the most of his time. Only a few months after his arrival he died, and the committee of welcome now became a committee of mourning. I helped to escort Kalakaua's body back to the *Charleston* to begin the final journey to Hawaii. Possibly my sentimental attachment to the last king of these islands had something to do with my voting, fifty-seven years later, in the Congress of the United States, in favor of granting statehood to the present Territory of Hawaii.

Meanwhile an old friend of mine had been coming up in the world. Jim Corbett, on the strength of his victory on the barge over Joe Choynski, found himself with a reputation. He increased it substantially in 1890 by beating Jake Kilrain in New Orleans, accomplishing in nine rounds what the Boston Strong Boy, Sullivan, had required seventy-five rounds to do less than a year before. It was absurd, of courst, to think that Corbett might ever beat Sullivan, but he was considered good enough to provide a real match with any of the other heavyweight aspirants.

One of these was Peter Jackson of Australia, who had been in the United States for some time, fighting wherever and whenever he could get a bout. A Negro, he was unable to get a match with Sullivan, who had drawn the "color line." Corbett had no pretensions of superiority based upon pigmentation. He was a fighter by profession, and he was prepared to establish his superiority in the only way possible. When the Olympic Club proposed a match with Jackson he accepted with alacrity. A victory would bring almost certain assurance that he could challenge the champion.

The fight was staged in May, 1891, for a purse of $10,000, an unprecedented sum, which Corbett himself had been instrumental in raising through his suggestion that tickets be sold

only to members of the Olympic Club. Hundreds of new members were added, the club treasury was filled to overflowing, and the prize was offered on the basis of $7,500 to the winner and $2,500 to the loser.

I don't know exactly what happened, but I have no reason to doubt what Jim Corbett told me after the fight. It was something like this:

Peter Jackson, one of the most competent and intelligent fighters who ever entered a ring, was the "wise money" favorite. Professional gamblers had backed him heavily, at odds of four and five to one. The popular favorite, naturally, was Corbett, and he had been loyally supported by the nonprofessional element.

For twenty-five rounds or more Corbett took a beating. Jackson outweighed him, and it appeared to be only a question of time before he would break through for a knockout. But Corbett kept boxing and dancing away, and slowly Jackson tired. By the time fifty rounds had been fought the professional gamblers were getting worried. Ten rounds later it was Corbett who was working for a knockout, and during the sixty-second round the referee inexplicably left the ring.

When he returned he stopped the fight and announced that it was a draw. Even in the tumult which followed it was clear to many what had happened: Somebody had signaled the referee, and that worthy gentleman, presumably under orders from the gambling syndicate, had stopped the fight to save his skin. When he declared the fight a draw he automatically called off all bets.

The worst of it, from Corbett's point of view, was to be robbed of the victory he had all but won. In addition, the club withheld the full amount of the purse, and both he and Jackson had to content themselves with a few hundred dollars apiece.

Whatever the precise circumstances may have been, it was the universal opinion in San Francisco that Jim Corbett had been shabbily used. Within a few days plans were being made to stage a benefit. The openhanded city was running true to form.

I was a member of the arrangements committee, and our first job was to work out an entertainment of the sort that

would pack the Grand Opera House, which seated more than 4,000 persons. We were not long in finding what we were after. The only problem was to get the co-operation of a certain individual. With that a sellout would be assured.

At this time John L. Sullivan had been heavyweight champion for nine years, and his name was known all over the world. He was due to arrive in San Francisco early in June, en route to Australia, where he was booked for a tour as hero of a play (written especially for him) entitled *Honest Hearts and Willing Hands.* He was a dreadful actor, but for years people had been paying good money to see the champion on the stage. What he did and how he did it made no difference to his enthusiastic followers.

Our idea was to persuade Sullivan to engage in an exhibition match with Corbett.

Jim called on the champion at his hotel. He drew a persuasive picture and offered Sullivan half the gate. John could count on at least $2,500, a sum not to be sneezed at. Sullivan said he would think the matter over. Then he went off to a saloon, followed by several hundred admirers.

A day or two later Sullivan said he would box Corbett—under certain conditions. The bout was to go only four rounds. They would wear eight-ounce gloves. *They would spar in evening clothes.*

It was clear that Sullivan wanted to take no chances, even in an exhibition. Corbett, knowing he had nothing to lose, accepted the conditions. He wanted to get into the ring with the champion on any basis. In addition to the prestige, there was the benefit money to be considered, and nothing would pack in the paying customers like a Sullivan-Corbett match of any sort.

On the night of June 26 the Opera House was filled, and seldom has an audience been more disappointed. Most of the spectators had been unaware of the conditions to which Corbett had agreed, and while it made no difference to them that heavy gloves were to be used, they were unprepared for the sight of boxers entering the ring in tails and immaculate linen. It was absurd, and there were vigorous expressions of displeasure.

When Sullivan and Corbett removed their coats and starched cuffs the atmosphere improved. But the boxing itself was disappointing. Sullivan obviously wasn't trying very hard, and Corbett was content to feint and jab. Not a single solid punch was landed by either fighter, and the great benefit match, to use an expression that had not then been coined, laid an egg. Only the participants were satisfied: the purse was as fat as they had expected.

Changing his shirt in his dressing room, Corbett was in buoyant spirits. As he picked up his tie I heard him say to Billy Delaney, "I found out something important tonight—I know now that I can surely beat this fellow!"

I wish I could say that I shared Jim Corbett's optimism that night. Jim was my friend, and I admired him both as a man and as a fighter. But if he thought he could whip the champion, he was just deluding himself. Didn't he know that Sullivan was invincible?

William A. Brady, whom I had got to know well several years earlier when he was nightly rescuing the heroine of *After Dark* from drowning, had more faith than the rest of us. He wired Jim to come to New York at $150 a week—he had written a sparring scene into *After Dark,* his old breadwinner—and the offer was accepted. Jim could act, too, and he packed them in. It was really his acting ability that persuaded Brady to go after a championship match with Sullivan. If Corbett could win, he would be the biggest drawing card on the stage, and in anticipation Brady had a new play written. Things worked out pretty much as Brady planned. In 1892, under his management, Corbett won the championship in New Orleans and a few weeks later Gentleman Jim began a long run as hero of the new melodrama *Gentleman Jack.*

Shortly after this I made a trip to Chicago to see what I could do about establishing the Algerian Village at the forthcoming fair. I found things very poorly organized. Although admirable progress was being made in construction of the principal buildings, under Daniel H. Burnham, Director of Works, no single person appeared to have been placed in charge of taking care of people like myself who wanted to set up amusement con-

cessions. I talked with members of a committee, but the best they could do for me was to suggest that I be patient. At the very moment, they assured me, plans were being drawn for a great avenue to be known as the Midway Plaisance, and as soon as they were completed I would be informed. For the present I was advised to withhold my application.

Back in San Francisco, I went around to have a talk with Mike de Young, who had been appointed one of the commissioners for the exposition. He listened attentively to my comments and said he would look into the matter.

About a week later he sent for me.

"How soon could you be ready to go to Chicago?" he asked.

"In a couple of days, I guess," I answered, "but I can't see any point even in thinking about it until the exposition people show signs of getting somewhere."

"The situation has advanced since our talk, Sol. A lot of telegrams have passed back and forth. All we need now is somebody to take charge." He handed me a telegram from Chicago. "You've been elected."

I read the wire. It authorized Mr. De Young to engage a manager for all the amusement concessions.

"I can't do it," I said. "It would mean moving to Chicago and staying all through the fair. I don't want to leave San Francisco. Even if I did, I've got too much at stake here to consider it."

Mr. De Young looked at me and saw that I meant what I had just said.

"I don't want to hear another word from you till tomorrow," he stated firmly. "Between now and then I want you to figure out how much money you would need to make it worth your while. When you come back you can name your salary. I will either accept or reject it. There will be no argument. Is that agreeable?"

I told him I would do as he wished. He was really making it very easy for me. All I had to do was name a fabulous sum, and as I walked down the street I decided what it would be. The President of the United States was then receiving a salary of $50,000 a year. The more I thought about it, the more I enjoyed the prospect of telling Mike de Young that no less a sum

could compensate me for my sacrifice in leaving San Francisco. I even worked out a little speech.

"Much as I appreciate the compliment," I began somewhat unctuously when I returned to Mr. De Young's office, "I find that my interests lie right here in this city. As I look ahead I can see myself . . ."

"Now, Sol," came the soft interruption, "I thought you were going to tell me how much you wanted us to pay you."

"I didn't want you to think I didn't appreciate . . ."

"You said that a minute ago. Now tell me how much money you want."

I took a deep breath.

"A thousand dollars a week!"

"Well, that's pretty good pay for a fellow of twenty-one," smiled Mr. De Young, "but I have no doubt you'll earn it. We'd like you to take charge right away."

X

WITHIN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS after stepping into my new job, I found out why there had been no progress. The Midway Plaisance, a vast entertainment area which was to become a fair in itself, had been placed under the direction of the chief of the Department of Ethnology, a distinguished educator and scientist who was a professor at Harvard University. There never was any question about Professor Putnam's qualifications as head of the ethnological section, but to have made this unhappy gentleman responsible for the establishment of a successful venture in the field of entertainment was about as intelligent a decision as it would be today to make Albert Einstein manager of the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus.

Since Mr. Putnam was in Cambridge at the time, I found it necessary to discuss the problem with Harlow N. Higinbotham, who was president of the World's Columbian Exposition. A very busy man—he was also a partner in Marshall Field & Company—he listened to my recital of difficulties and then turned me over to Daniel Burnham. One of the great architects of his time, a city planner of international reputation, a man of unlimited imagination as well as a master of the practical, Mr. Burnham was in charge of all planning and construction at the fair. He was the perfect choice for this task. No other exposition—and I have seen two world fairs in Paris, two in Chicago, one each in St. Louis, Seville, New York, and San Francisco—ever equaled the World's Columbian Exposition.

When we had finished our conversation Mr. Burnham said to me, "You are a very young man, a very young man indeed, to be in charge of the work entrusted to you. It is clear to me that you must have established your fitness, or you would not have been chosen. I want you to know that you have my full confidence. You are in complete charge of the Midway. Go ahead with the work. You are responsible only to me. I will write orders to that effect. Good luck."

I plunged in and set up an office. I put up signs and inserted notices in the newspapers and in various periodicals catering to the theatrical trade. I had applications printed and circulated. I let it be known through every possible channel that the Midway Plaisance was going to be the biggest thing of its kind ever known. (My flair for what in those days was considered spectacular advertising attracted the attention of various members of the fair family, and I was always called in when there was a publicity matter under discussion or when a statement was requested by the press. I remember when ground was broken for the Manufacturers Building the reporters were given a long list of statistics about its tremendous area. I could tell that they weren't in the least interested in the number of acres or tons of steel, so I said, "Look at it this way—it's going to be big enough to hold the entire standing army of Russia!" I had no idea then, any more than I have at this moment, of the size of the Russian army; but the boys from the papers liked the phrase, and from that time on "big enough to hold the standing army of Russia" was on everybody's tongue.)

Once the preliminaries had been taken care of, the biggest part of my job was to work out the details with the concessionaires, to secure approval of plans, and to supervise the actual construction. None of the physical work got under way until the spring of 1892, and though perhaps half of the structures were completed by the end of the summer, the heaviest pressure didn't come until 1893.

Many people at the time were under the impression (as are many still) that the fair was originally supposed to be held in 1892 and that confusion and incompetence forced its postponement until a year after the quadricentennial of the discovery of America. They were mistaken. The act of Congress signed

by President Harrison in April, 1890, which provided for the fair, directed that the dedication ceremonies be held in October, 1892, and that the exposition itself open not later than May 1, 1893. This schedule was maintained—though not without frantic efforts during the last weeks of April.

By the spring of 1892 I had also taken care of two important personal matters. The first had to do with winding up my business affairs in San Francisco and arranging to have my family move to Chicago. My brother Mose handled everything on the Coast, and as soon as the weather turned warm—my parents were no longer young, and I didn't want to expose them abruptly to a harsher climate—he brought Mother and Father and my sisters Hattie and Dickie to Chicago. My oldest sister, who had been married for several years and remained in California with her husband, and Tonkey, my older brother, who had never left Peoria (where he had since become a prosperous manufacturer), were the only ones missing when our new house on Elmwood Place was opened.

The other matter was my negotiation to bring the Algerian Village to Chicago. After more than two years of uncertainty I suddenly found myself in a position to go ahead with the deal. All I had to do was approve it myself! I forwarded the contract to Paris. A few weeks later it came back signed, and I was now a concessionaire myself.

At this point I visited my bank.

I had made my first bank loan when I was sixteen or seventeen, and after that, even if I had a substantial credit balance, I would periodically borrow money. I had two reasons for doing this. First of all, since a bank's income derives from interest on loans, I wanted to be thought of as a good customer. Second, I wanted my bank to regard my requests for loans as customary and routine, so that when I needed capital in a hurry I could get cash on the spot.

For several months I had maintained a substantial balance in Chicago, and I now found no trouble in opening a line of credit as a concessionaire. I did not expect to need any money for some time to come, but I wanted to be sure about the future.

The future came with a rush. About the middle of April,

1892, I received a cablegram that informed me that my Algerian troupe was on the high seas. There had been some slight misunderstanding about the date, apparently. They had picked the right month but the wrong year!

It was too late to do anything but laugh. I didn't even bother to figure out how I would feed this crew who would soon be descending upon me. I could see that my thousand dollars a week wouldn't be much help.

I got hold of my construction foreman and told him he had a week in which to build temporary quarters. Then I left for New York, where I made arrangements to meet the Algerians and transport them immediately to the railroad station, where two special cars would be ready. One was a day coach, the other a baggage car.

When the ship docked, the proper stage direction for me would have been: *Enter Bloom, shuddering.* I waited in that condition until the troupe started coming ashore. They were a very mixed lot. Through the centuries the original Arab and Berber stocks had married freely with other groups. Some of them were pure white; most of them had brown or reddish complexions; a few of them, though their features were not markedly Negroid, had black skins.

As they came ashore, talking exitedly, laughing and shouting in wonder at the new sights, they started moving rapidly in all directions. Nobody seemed to be in charge. I could see them getting lost, being run over, and landing in jail.

I started shouting too, in English and in French. I called them names that would have made a top sergeant blush.

As I stormed and ranted in complete futility, a giant Kabyle came up to me. Anger was written upon his handsome dark face.

"I suggest that you be more civil," he said, with an accent normally heard in an English drawing room. "Otherwise I may lose my temper and throw you into the water."

"Who are you?" I asked.

"For simplicity, you may call me Archie," he answered, with some condescension. "That is the name they used in London, where I lived for ten years as bodyguard to my master. At present I am responsible for conveying my associates to a place

called Chicago. I understand it is somewhere in the hinterland."

"Have a cigar, Archie," I said, nervously handing him a perfecto, "and forget about what I just said. From now on I want you to be my assistant. You're also my chief bodyguard. How's that?"

"Your offer is quite satisfactory," Archie responded, lighting the cigar with great dignity.

Relations thereafter were splendid, not only between Archie and me but between me and the other members of the troupe. With Archie's ready aid, the trip to Chicago was completed without serious difficulty. After a short while even the problem of supporting the Algerians was resolved. Archie made them understand that they had come to America a year earlier than they were needed, and that it would be necessary for all of them to work in the meantime. I was able to use a number of the men as laborers and two or three of the women (who spoke English fluently) in the office. By midsummer part of the Algerian Village had been built and we were able to give regular performances; many visitors came daily to the grounds at Jackson Park for a preview of the fair, and the concessionaires who got set up early did a thriving business. I was one of these, and by September I was out of the red. It was a good thing I was, too—there was a long winter ahead!

In October the exposition was dedicated, and in the Manufacturers Building, where the principal exercises were held, more than 70,000 persons were on hand to hear speeches by Mayor Hempstead Washburne, Chauncey Depew, Cardinal Gibbons, and Levi P. Morton, Vice-President of the United States. There were many other speeches by dignitaries whose names I have forgotten, and the affair, lasting over several days, was most impressive. It was also rather tiring, and I welcomed the chance to get back to my work again.

During the winter of 1892-1893 I found time to broaden my acquaintance in Chicago, and that meant, of course, getting to know most of the people in show business. I also got to know quite a number of men who were engaged in what might be called allied industries. These included Charley Rector, who

was breaking into the restaurant business about this time; Herman H. Kohlsaat, who had got his start operating a "bakery lunchroom," now owned a chain of them, and was publisher of a conservative journal called *Inter-Ocean;* Messrs. Chapin and Gore, who owned the biggest and fanciest saloon in Chicago; and the proprietors of several other big restaurants, such as John Vogelsang's, Emil Demme's, Billy Boyle's, and Kingsley's.

The respectable theater, restaurant, and saloon people had one important thing in common. So had the big gamblers—the men who ran houses along "Hairtrigger Block," which was what people called Randolph Street between State and Clark; "King Mike" McDonald, who operated The Store, at Clark and Monroe; "Prince Hal" Varnell, Billy ("The Clock") Skakel, and Sol van Praag—and so had the proprietors of those dangerous dives, Little Cheyenne and The Levee, and literally hundreds of other men and women who among them had almost a monopoly in the vice mart.

The thing they had in common was the First Ward.

Containing all of the downtown business district within the Loop,* extending south to about Twelfth Street, west to the Chicago River, and bordering on Lake Michigan on the east, the First Ward was the overwhelming influence in Chicago politics. The wealth of the city was concentrated here. So was the underworld. The men who controlled the First Ward controlled Chicago and the second richest municipal loot-bag in the land. Only Boss Tweed and the lords of Tammany Hall in the seventies and the old Philadelphia Republican gang had committed depredations to rival the thievery during the nineties in Chicago. The organ of power was the Board of Aldermen. The will of the First Ward aldermen and "the interests" that controlled them determined, in most important situations, the action of the board. Serious opposition to the First Ward

* I can't remember exactly when the Loop got its name. Today it is loosely applied to the district within and adjacent to the business section. Strictly speaking, it is the rectangle formed by the real loop of elevated railroad that runs on Wabash Avenue, Lake, Wells, and Van Buren Streets. I am not sure whether the Loop was so called when part of it consisted of surface lines, or whether it entered the Chicago vocabulary when the elevated road was completed in the late nineties.

crowd could, if it was thought desirable, defeat a candidate in any part of the city—thousands of illegal votes would be cast (by bums corralled in First Ward flophouses), and on the day following election the recalcitrant alderman would find himself ex-alderman.

The First Ward controlled more than Chicago. Its influence was felt in Springfield, the state capital. It swung its weight in the election of governors and of United States senators, who in those days were chosen by the legislature. On one occasion at least, by a fantastically brazen maneuver, the First Ward of Chicago forced the nomination of its favorite as President of the United States. The fact that Grover Cleveland, running for a second term after a lapse of four years, was the successful candidate (for both nomination and election) and probably would have been chosen without the assistance of the First Ward, is irrelevant. The important thing is that the First Ward was in a position to influence the choice of a national convention. If the gang had been *opposed* to Cleveland, it is quite possible that a different candidate would have been named.

Before telling what happened at the convention, I shall have to introduce two remarkable characters. Their names were John Coughlin and Michael Kenna. (Kenna may still be alive. I know he survived Coughlin, who died in 1938 after a career of forty-six continuous years as alderman.)

John Coughlin, one of a large family sired by an Irish-born grocer, was born in the First Ward about the beginning of the Civil War. Clumsy and slow-witted, he was endowed with a massive physique and an eagerness to please people. He had little schooling. The devastating fire of 1871 wiped out his father's business, and John got a job. In later years he often referred to the fire as a personal blessing: "If there wasn't no fire, I might of been a rich man's son and went to Harvard and Yale—and never amounted to nothing!"

When he was eighteen or nineteen, John took a job as rubber in a Turkish bath. He loved his work. He had the perfect physical equipment for it, and he had the additional knack of ingratiating himself with the fine gentlemen who were suffering from hangovers and other excesses. They not only liked this amiable lout but discerned in him the type of young man

who is capable of being very helpful in precinct politics. He was impressive to behold, he was popular, and he was dumb enough to do what he was told without thought (of which he was incapable) or question (which would never have occurred to him).

Soon John had a bathhouse of his own, and in his early twenties he was made a Democratic precinct captain. The magnificent discipline of his cohorts marked him as a man of real value, and "Chesterfield Joe" Mackin, boss of the First Ward, honored him with the presidency of the Democratic Club in his domain.

Bathhouse John—he was seldom otherwise referred to, either in conversation or in print—had one overpowerng ambition. He wanted to be an alderman. He dreamed it, he talked it, he worked untiringly to get the nod from the bosses. After years of faithful service he was allowed to have the nomination, and in the spring of 1892 he made his first official appearance in City Hall.

The Honorable Bathhouse John was, though quite unconsciously, one of the greatest comedians I have ever seen. He regarded himself (and not without reason) as an *arbiter elegantiarum*. He considered himself a gifted orator and parliamentarian. He thought of himself, after the Mayor, as Chicago's most distinguished citizen. Probably the best free entertainment in the city was to watch Bathhouse John, wearing fawn-colored trousers, green Prince Albert, lavender waistcoat, and a crimson tie embellished with diamond-horseshoe stickpin, denouncing a good ordinance or supporting a bad one in the City Hall.

Bathhouse's straight man was Michael Kenna, a nervous wisp of a man known, for one reason or another, as "Hinky Dink." He, too, had aldermanic aspirations. But for the moment he was content to play mostly behind the scenes. Where Bathhouse John was fumbling and inept, he was adroit. Where John was loudmouthed, Hinky Dink was discreetly silent. Where John jumped in with both feet, he walked on tiptoe. Together they were almost unbeatable.

Only a few weeks after Bathhouse John's first election, the Democratic convention was held in Chicago. A building called the Wigwam (always a popular name with political organiza-

tions) had been especially constructed to house it. The 15,000 seats had been carefully distributed by the National Committee to state groups in proportion to population.

Then rumors of skulduggery began to circulate. An investigation disclosed that the Wigwam contained, not 15,000 seats, but nearly 20,000—and that the Chicago crowd was planning to moss onto the extra 4,500, more or less, with the idea of packing the house in favor of their particular candidate. (The roar of the crowd is still a factor to be considered at nominating conventions, whether Republican or Democratic, and in the somewhat more earthy atmosphere of the nineties it was, at least potentially, of a very considerable importance.)

The National Committee sternly demanded the extra seat tickets, and they were turned over with pious protestations of innocence. The Illinois gang—or the Chicago, or First Ward gang—it didn't matter which, in this instance—wasn't alarmed by the turn of events. It had been foreseen as likely. The important thing was that the 4,500 seats were in a solid block, and that, since they were extras, they would be handed out to the small fry, convention visitors from the various states who were politically insignificant, people who could be pushed around without raising too much of a fuss.

Meanwhile Bathhouse John, freshman alderman from the First Ward, had been given his orders. This was to be his first big test. Would he be equal to it?

He came through magnificently.

John had been put in charge of Section C at the Wigwam, where all 4,500 of the extra seats were located. His ushers were several hundred stalwarts from the First Ward. In ordinary life most of them were third-rate pugs who would climb into a ring against almost any opponent for six bits; draymen and keg heavers, or simple plug-uglies any of whom would brass-knuckle a man for a stein of beer or just because he felt like it. The rest were saloon bouncers; they, the aristocrats of this pretty group, had been commissioned captains. All of them knew exactly what to do.

When the legitimate holder of a Section C ticket appeared, an usher would look at the cardboard and point in the opposite direction, saying, "Entrance to Section C that way!" If the

ticketholder protested, the usher would repeat his directions in a louder tone. Any further objection might cause the poor man to be jostled by the usher's "assistant," who might also step on his feet or kick him in the shins. If the victim struck back, or even looked as if he might be considering such a rash act, he usually went out on a stretcher.

While this sort of thing was going on, Section C would be quietly filling up with the same flophouse inmates who were always so useful on election day. At a given signal they would cheer the mention of one candidate or boo the name of another. Nearly five thousand men cheering in unison could create a very definite impression that their candidate was indeed the people's choice. It was outrageous. But as an old claquer myself, I was forced to admit it was superbly effective. And very inexpensive, too. The top price was fifty cents a voice.

As it happened, Grover Cleveland really was the people's choice. Once the Illinois delegates had passed over their earlier favorite, General John M. Palmer, senator and former governor, nothing could have stopped Cleveland. Boss Croker of New York, who had come to the convention hoping to snag the nomination for Senator David Hill, quickly got into line, and the choice of the people and the First Ward became the Democratic candidate. But I still wonder what would have happened had Croker and Bathhouse John both been on Hill's side of the fence.

XI

STRANGER PARTNERS than Grover Cleveland and Bathhouse John Coughlin could scarcely be imagined. Yet, despite the gulf that separated them, both were members of the same Democratic party.

The passing years have certainly not narrowed the gap between the solid, responsible members of a party, whether Democratic or Republican, and what Theodore Roosevelt so aptly described as the lunatic fringe. And tying together the extremes are men with motives and methods of every complexion. In other words, each of the two major political parties is a full cross section of the population, and, technically at least, every Republican and every Democrat in the land has something in common with every other member of his own party.

The point I want to make is that under a republican system of government, political parties are pieces of machinery without which voters would be unable to express effective preferences. The significant word here is *effective,* and a vote is rarely effective unless it is cast for a regular party candidate. In national, state, and most local elections the normal number of opposing candidates for office is two. If the individual voter casts his ballot for either of the two, he is being effective. If he votes for any other person he is almost certainly throwing his vote away, and he might just as well not have bothered to enter the polling booth at all. The thinking man or woman can never be wholly in favor of one party's objectives, nor wholly opposed to those of the other party. He must make his decision on balance. That

is, he must compose his differences and vote for the man or for the party whose action he believes will best serve his country's needs or advance his own selfish interests.

In so far as I was ever in politics during my youth in San Francisco I was inspired to play my trifling part by two motives, both of which at the start were rather vague. First, there was the glamour of it—and that has never ceased. Second, I came gradually (and with some surprise) to realize that friends in politics could sometimes be helpful to me in a business way.

When I moved to Chicago it was almost inevitable that I should get into politics. It was helpful for me to do so. That I should become a Democrat was also inevitable. Circumstances determined that: the Democrats were the ones who, in return for my support, could help me most.

Shortly after the turn of the century, when I moved my principal office to New York, I again found it helpful to establish friendly relations with men who were active in politics. The fact that they were Democrats, so far as I was concerned nearly fifty years ago, was mostly a coincidence.

In simplest terms, I became a Democrat in my youth because it was helpful to me to be one. As I matured I continued to be one largely for the same reason. I was approaching middle age before I sought, through reading and study, a philosophical justfication for the side on which I found myself.* (Not long ago someone asked me whether, had I moved from Chicago to Philadelphia instead of to New York, I might not now be a Republican. As an abstract possibility I must allow for it, nightmarish as the idea now seems.)

The final stage in my political growth came only with my election to Congress. This was the recognition that my office was first of all an instrument of service. I do not mean service with a capital S, and I do not mean service of a partisan kind. I mean the kind that is available to everyone in need of

* From the national point of view the differences between the two major parties are now very slight indeed. The real cleavages are found within the parties. To illustrate with personalities, Secretary of State Marshall and Senator Arthur Vandenberg think alike, though the former has charge of international affairs in a Democratic administration and the latter is a leading member of the Republican opposition. But do President Truman and Senator Pepper *ever* think alike? Or Harold Stassen and John Taber?

help. For more than a quarter of a century, at an average rate of fifty a day, people have been coming to my offices in Washington and New York with problems of every conceivable nature. These people are white and colored, Democrats and Republicans, Jews and Protestants and Catholics. All of them are treated alike. My secretaries ask no impertinent questions. Cases are considered solely on their merits and my ability to give practical aid. Many of these cases can be taken care of by a word of advice, a telephone call, or a letter. Others may be more complex. It was not so simple to save the life of the young American who was convicted of conspiring against the life of the President of Cuba a few years ago; I wasn't called in until the day before he was to be shot (but managed to save him). The case of the eighteen displaced Europeans who came from Shanghai to Los Angeles with the promise of visas that would permit them to settle in Rio de Janeiro was not simple; when they reached the United States the Brazilian consul refused to stamp their passports (but now, after more than a year's delay, they are living happily in Brazil). The problem of the American Jew who was thrown into Dachau ten years ago was not easy either (but the man was back in New York with his family hardly a month later). Things like this add up to the kind of service I have been privileged to render. And my reward—the opportunity to go on helping people in this way—has been very great indeed.

My first participation in a Chicago campaign came with the mayoralty contest in the spring of 1893, only a short while before the opening of the exposition. I supported Carter Henry Harrison, and I worked hard for his election because I thought he would be the best possible man to have in City Hall during the fair.

Harrison was unquestionably the most experienced man available. He had served four previous terms, retiring in 1887; after a long holiday in Europe he ran again in 1891, and was defeated. In addition to his political experience in and out of office he had a background of breeding and education, and he was endowed with great personal charm. It seemed to me that when Harrison decided he would like once more to be mayor,

the people of Chicago could have no choice but to return him to City Hall almost by acclamation. I was still rather innocent in the ways of politics.

There is little question that Harrison possessed the qualifications I believed him to have. He also had vanity and personal ambition. And he owned a lot of property in the First Ward.

He started his campaign in the summer of 1892 by coming out unexpectedly against an old supporter, Mike McDonald, the gambler, and he focused his attack on the race track in Garfield Park. The men who really knew what was going on realized that this was simply Harrison's bid for the support of "the better element." But a lot of other people were fooled, too. Among them was the new alderman John Coughlin. He doggedly resisted Harrison's nomination, and, failing there, he continued his opposition to the chosen candidate until close to election time. Finally even Bathhouse John saw that the Republicans couldn't win, and he came into line.

Carter Harrison made an ideal mayor during the fair. As a welcomer of visiting royalty and other distinguished guests no other man could have equaled him. He personified Chicago to all important strangers, and his contributions to favorable publicity can hardly be overestimated. He helped the fair. That was enough for me.

At the same time I was getting an advanced course in practical politics. At the start of the campaign Harrison had been in my mind a knight in shining armor. Everybody in any way opposed to him was not only his enemy but my enemy. Bathhouse John and his ilk were anathema to me. I was a sincere crusader, intent upon their extermination.

As I began to comprehend that things were not altogether as they seemed to be on the relatively smooth surface—Bathhouse John's welcome back into the fold, Mike McDonald's continuing prosperity, the wide-open gambling houses, and the crowded bagnios—I searched for justification and explanation. How could Carter Harrison, I specifically wanted to know, be at once a decent man and a bad citizen? How could he be an excellent mayor in every activity that met the eye and at the same time the head of such a notorious administration?

I never fully succeeded in answering these questions and cer-

tain others that I posed myself, but I picked up a lot of information in my search and I was able to make up my mind about a number of things, including politics. One thing was very clear to me: if I wanted to have a hand in politics I couldn't be squeamish. The practical politician, like the practical voter, must make compromises. He must always work for end results. He cannot jeopardize a campaign because he disagrees with details, even important ones, and he cannot quarrel with individuals because he dislikes either the men or their methods. Like the voter, he must weigh the various considerations and decide on balance. If necessary to the achievement of a goal, he must learn, temporarily, at least, to submerge his own ideals.

If this seems sordid, I can only remark that every great accomplishment outside the realm of pure art has been brought about through compromise. Without compromise the Constitution of the United States could have been neither written nor adopted. Without compromise it would be impossible to legislate and to govern. And without compromise within himself the individual could seldom make a decision. Compromise, in fact, is the difference between contemplation and decision. It is the essence of action.

The things I learned about politics in 1893 have stayed with me, and so have many of the conclusions I came to concerning them at the time. And of all the things I began to learn in that distant day, I think the most important is that no man is wholly bad. The great thing is to find the good in every man and put it to work.

Carter Harrison was inaugurated as mayor about mid-April, and on the twenty-ninth of that month he performed his first official duty in connection with the World's Columbian Exposition. This was the presentation of a gold key, symbolizing the freedom of the city, to the Duke of Veragua, who, with the Duchess and their suite, arrived that day in Chicago as emissaries of the King of Spain. As the representative of his government the Duke was a uniquely appropriate appointee. He was a descendant of Christopher Columbus. The Duke and his party may or may not have had a good time at the fair, but I know that at least one Spanish visitor did. This was the Infanta Eu-

lalia, aunt of the boy king, Alfonso, who came less formally to Chicago as the personal representative of the Queen Mother. When she arrived in her coach-and-four to visit the Midway Plaisance she expressed a desire not only to see things from a distance but to participate. I was presented to this vivacious blond young lady, and for nearly an hour I escorted her from concession to concession—and I *know* she had a good time. Later in the summer, when the various concessionaires decided to give me a token of appreciation, it was from the hand of the Infanta that I received the diamond-studded medal they had designed for me. Nearly forty years passed before I was to see her again. Still vivacious and blond, she received my wife and daughter and me when we visited Paris, and the Infanta and I spent most of the next hour in gay reminiscences of the fair. Not long after that, when she was invited to be the guest of Chicago's second great exposition, A Century of Progress, she declined, but in private conversation, I was informed, she said she would reconsider if Sol Bloom were appointed as her official guide! Unhappily I was deprived of this privilege.

On May 1, a few minutes before noon, President Grover Cleveland took his place on the platform erected in front of the Administration Building and was greeted by the cheers of more than a hundred thousand persons. In a brief, simple address the President declared the World's Columbian Exposition to be officially open. Then he pressed a button that started the machinery throughout the grounds; fountains began to play, the flags of all nations were hoisted, and the great fair was under way.

And it was a great fair. Though I had already put in a year and a half helping to get it ready, nothing in it ever staled for me. At the end of a hard day I always had the interest and the energy to look for something new, or to savor again the many things that had become familiar. I never even got tired of my own Algerian Village. When October came and only a few weeks remained I spent nearly all my time with the people of whom I had grown so fond and whose performances I so greatly admired.

What artists they were! Particularly the ballet troupe, with their great specialty, the *danse du ventre*. People still talk about it.
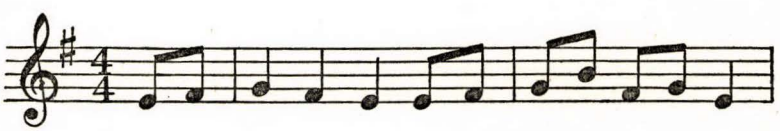
It is regrettable—or, if anyone should choose to disagree, it is at least a fact—that more people remember the reputation of the *danse du ventre* than the dance itself. This is very understandable. When the public learned that the literal translation was "belly dance" they delightedly concluded that it must be salacious and immoral. The crowds poured in. I had a gold mine.

As a matter of strict fact, the *danse du ventre,* while sensuous and exciting, was a masterpiece of rhythm and beauty; it was choreographic perfection, and it was so recognized by even the most untutored spectators. Whatever they had hoped to see, they were enchanted by the entertainment actually placed before them.

Almost at once this dance was imitated in amusement parks all over the country. As it became debased and vulgarized it began to acquire the reputation that survives today—the reputation of a crude, suggestive dance known as the "Hootchy-Kootchy."

Unwittingly I contributed an essential ingredient to the success of the bastard version of the *danse du ventre.* Shortly before the fair opened I was invited to put on a "preview" for the Press Club of Chicago, and, jumping at this fine chance for free publicity, I brought a dozen of my dancers to their rooms. Only a pianist was available to provide our music, and to give him an idea of the rhythm I hummed a tune, then sat down at the piano myself and picked it out with one finger. From this improvisation a score was later arranged, and the music became far better known than the dance itself. The faintly exotic air in a minor key is still played at sideshows offering "Oriental" specialties, and I believe that my failure to copyright it cost me at least a couple of hundred thousand dollars in royalties.

Hardly a grandfather is now alive who won't remember my piece. It goes like this:



If today I am more or less deservedly known, if not as the originator, then at least as the inspirer, through the music I wrote, of the "Hootchy-Kootchy," I most emphatically deny that I had anything whatever to do with a female entertainer known professionally as Little Egypt. At no time during the Chicago fair did this character appear on the Midway. She was introduced at Coney Island, and there and elsewhere she acquired great renown for her actual or reputed stage appearances in the nude. A couple of years after the fair a young woman identified in the papers simply as Little Egypt became famous when she rose unclad out of an enormous pie served in the Waldorf-Astoria at the stag affair that is still so felicitously called the Awful Seeley Dinner.

I know what happens to people who protest too much: they reinforce the legend they are trying to destroy. So I am resigned to probable immortality as the man who gave Little Egypt to the world. If I am very lucky, perhaps one or two of my real activities will be recalled along with this fiction.

Throughout the six months that the exposition lasted, the affairs of my own concession occupied only a small part of my time. My big job was to see that the whole Midway ran smoothly, and that meant doing all sorts of things not specified in my contract. I was the trouble shooter, and when something went wrong, or threatened to go wrong, I was expected to know how to straighten out the difficulty. Sometimes the situations could be amusing.

I remember one problem I was called upon to solve, although it was only incidentally connected with the fair. Just a short distance from the grounds Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show had set up its tents and was doing a thriving business. One day I was surprised to have a representative of Colonel Cody come to ask my co-operation in keeping his Indians sober, at least sober enough to attack the stagecoach without falling off their horses. (It was illegal, as it still is now, to sell firewater to the noble Redskin, and the law was usually scrupulously complied with—quite possibly because saloonkeepers lived in terror of being scalped if the Indians got too much liquor under their belts.)

"Why do you come to me?" I asked. "I've got my hand in a

good many things, but bootlegging to Indians is not included among them."

"After careful study, Mr. Bloom," the gentleman continued, "I find that some of our boys have been getting together with some of your boys, and whenever that happens my boys end up with a snootful. Wouldn't you do something?"

I sent for Archie, still my faithful Algerian "bodyguard," and told him to investigate. He didn't have to investigate. He knew all about the brisk trade.

"Tell them, Archie," I directed sternly, "that the next time an Indian gets drunk all the Algerians in the United States will be sent to jail."

After that only three or four Indians a day got drunk, and there were no more complaints from Buffalo Bill.

Another problem, although of minor dimensions, was getting enough ostrich eggs to satisfy the demand.

One of the most consistently popular places was the Ostrich Farm. A couple of thousand people a day paid a quarter to look at the silly birds, and about half of these customers also patronized the restaurant where the *spécialité de la maison* was ostrich-egg omelet. This delicacy consisted of the finest chicken eggs, and everybody sent postcards home to Kansas or Iowa or South Carolina describing its subtle flavor. A crisis arose. A minor strike interfered with egg deliveries, and there was the possibility that the famous ostrich-egg omelet might temporarily disappear from the menu. Obviously the manager could not attribute the threatened dearth to a delivery strike (since the omelet ingredients were advertised as having been laid that very day by the ostriches on the premises), and he came to me to see whether I could suggest anything. I recommended that he canvass the grocers and restaurants of the South Side and buy everything with a shell around it. This he did, and for a few days the ostrich-egg omelets were more subtly flavored than usual: in addition to hens' eggs, they contained duck, goose, and turkey eggs. For all I know, they might have had a few ostrich eggs in them. (Along toward the end of the exposition I rented six or eight ostriches from the farm and sent them to Toronto, where the annual local fair was about to get under way. In addition to

my sincere desire to contribute to the cultural advancement of our Canadian cousins, I hoped and expected to make a profit out of the enterprise. But once again I discovered that the art of guessing what will entertain other people is a very uncertain art indeed. In Chicago the customers were mad about ostriches. In Toronto they sniffed in a superior way, and their sniffs cost me several thousand dollars.)

Then there were a couple of incidents in connection with the Ferris Wheel, that gigantic contraption designed by the brilliant young engineer, George Ferris, in an attempt to provide the Chicago fair with an attraction as striking as the Eiffel Tower. I first met Ferris in March, 1893, upon his arrival to supervise the erection of his great steel hoop, which was 300 feet in diameter, carried thirty-six cars on its rim, and had a capacity of 1,440 passengers.

"I guess I want to see your *father,* young man," he said with a pleasant smile when he came into my office the first time.

"I'm sure Father would be pleased to see *you,* Mr. Ferris," I remarked as I got up to shake hands with him, "but I'm afraid you'll have to make out with me. I'm your man."

We discussed the undertaking at length, and on the following day workmen began to put up the scaffold. The job advanced much more slowly than Mr. Ferris had calculated, and it was not until late June, nearly two months after the fair had opened, that the big wheel revolved with its first paying passengers. On the trial run, held one morning before the grounds were open, two little difficulties had come up. The first concerned my Algerian Village in a mild way. When the cables that had kept the wheel from turning in the wind were unfastened, the one anchored to the foundation of one of my buildings was forgotten, and as the wheel started to move under power, a corner of the structure moved with it. (That cost the fair about a hundred dollars to fix up.) The next difficulty was that the mechanical brakes were too weak to stop the wheel, which weighed over a thousand tons, and Ferris had to install power brakes. But these were trifling matters, and the Ferris Wheel proved to be the biggest attraction of the fair. Many persons bought tickets by the dozen and spent the day in it. Each car

contained a tiny lunch counter, and, as I remember, as many meals were eaten on board as in some of the restaurants.

Another problem that was placed before me involved a substantial investment by the Fleischmann's Yeast people. Somebody in the firm had conceived the idea of opening a restaurant, with a large swimming pool adjacent. It was reasoned that after a swim (at a quarter or fifty cents) the customers would flock into the dining room with prodigious appetites and tuck away twice as much food and beer as they would have without any exercise. But the Fleischmanns were years ahead of the times. Their restaurant did extremely well, but without the aid of the pool; people didn't have to swim to work up an appetite in those precalory days, and the Fleischmanns were stuck with an expensive pool and a lot of square feet that produced no revenue.

I got in touch with Billy Brady, who was then on tour with Jim Corbett, and outlined a plan. The pool was boarded over, a platform was set up, and seats were installed. With Corbett as headliner, a program of sparring and other athletic exhibitions was advertised, and a dead loss was transferred into a fat profit. One of the novelty exhibits was a boxing match between a man and a kangaroo. The bewildered beast was able to do very little with the gloves on his short forelegs; bored with the whole procedure after five minutes or so, he lazily tilted back on his tail, let fly with one of his powerful hind legs, and kicked his opponent through the ropes.

I also recall a crisis which, happily, did not come within the area of my responsibility. It occurred at the very beginning of the fair, in connection with the much advertised appearance of the pianist Ignace Jan Paderewski, whose leonine hair caused the ladies to swoon and whose virtuosity was acknowledged by all. He had been engaged as soloist for the inaugural concert on May 2 by Theodore Thomas, conductor of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and musical director of the exposition, and he planned, as usual, to play on a Steinway piano.

Mr. Thomas was informed that it would be impossible for Paderewski to use a Steinway. The company was not an exhibitor at the fair (the reason being that this distinguished manufacturer did not wish to take part in a competition that would

be decided by a jury that was known to be "packed"), and only the products of exhibitors were allowed on the fair grounds. Paderewski announced that he would play his own Steinway, which always accompanied him on the road; Thomas of course supported him. The opposition stated that if the Paderewski Steinway, by this time the most famous individual musical instrument in the country, should be brought inside the gates it would be smashed to pieces. It was all very silly, very undignified, and, incidentally, a tremendous advertisement for the Steinway company.

It was also very effective publicity for the recital. The Music Hall was packed with swooning ladies and lovers of music. The Steinway was in perfect tune. Paderewski tossed his tawny mane in triumph. And Theodore Thomas beamed.

Do you suppose they could have planned it that way?

XII

As THE FAIR PROCEEDED toward its close and I looked into the future I was clear in my mind about one thing: I was going to stay in Chicago. The opportunities here were tremendous. I had already established myself, through my successful management of the Midway, as an enterprising young man with a knack for making money, and I knew that I had attracted favorable attention among experienced businessmen. Whatever else a man may lack, he will always be sought after by other men if he knows how to make money.

Already I had been let in on several good things, and by the time the fair wound up I was trading in commodities on a fairly broad scale. But whereas in San Francisco I had been simply a dealer (in the sense that I actually handled the goods I bought and sold), I was now involved in the futures market as well as in spot sales. I was a "speculator."

It seems to me unfortunate that there should be any opprobrium attached to this word. Everybody who ever undertook to produce anything is a speculator. Every farmer who plants a garden and every dairyman who starts off to town with a truckload of milk is taking a risk. Every man who shears a sheep or tans a hide or feeds a flock of chickens is doing so on chance. Without risk there could be no enterprise, progress would cease, and human existence would be reduced to brutishness.

I would disdain to be an apologist. I simply repeat that to me it is unfortunate that the true function of the "speculator" is so widely misunderstood. But so long as he is believed to be the

wicked fellow who profits most when the producer of physical goods loses most, his real service will be lost sight of. Certainly my own experience in 1894 isn't going to change any popular misconceptions, but because this experience was important to me for a number of reasons I am going to tell about it.

First of all, I want to make it clear that, although I believe I have a substantial share of what the phrasemakers call "social consciousness," I have never in my life made a personal investment without expecting to profit financially. If I have chosen now and then to give away money, that is an entirely different matter. I have never confused gifts and investments.

At the beginning of 1894, adding my profits from the fair to my earlier savings, I found myself with a very comfortable working capital. I was not a rich man. But I intended to become one, and to this end I energetically applied myself.

Largely through the medium of two local markets, I became a buyer and seller of foodstuffs, especially of dairy products. I dealt partly in futures, but chiefly in spot transactions. That is to say, the bulk of my operations was in such foods as milk, cream, butter, cheese, and eggs in actual existence. In simplest (if slightly oversimplified) terms, I was a large-scale purveyor of perishable foods, and all risks involved from point of origin to point of disposal were mine. If anything happened from the time my milk and butter left the farm until it arrived at the retail grocer's, I took it on the chin. The fact that I had partners in this speculation does not alter its basic circumstances. If my dairy products were delivered in good condition, I made a profit. If part of a shipment spoiled, I might break even. If the entire shipment spoiled, I lost my investment.

There were risks in such an enterprise. But they were calculated risks. It was not gambling. I was in the food business.

In the late spring of '94 a strike was called at the Pullman plant, in the town of Pullman, which at that time was outside the city limits of Chicago. The entire United States was then in the grip of the depression that followed the financial panic of the preceding year, and the unfortunate strikers were soon in desperate plight. The refusal of the Pullman company (based at least in part upon this company's reduced earnings) to come to terms provided Eugene Debs with the opportunity to test

the power of his newly organized American Railway Union. He ordered a general strike among the rail unions, and for a period of weeks train service in and out of the Chicago area ceased. Disorder and rioting attended the strike, a great deal of railroad property was wantonly destroyed, and a number of persons were killed.

In the hot weeks of July millions of dollars worth of perishable foodstuffs were left on sidings or in motionless freight cars. The first effect was a crisis within the city—the second-largest urban population in the country faced a famine. Next, the food in transit was ruined and its owners were deprived of the money they had invested in it.

I was one of the men who lost heavily. Within a few days my capital had been reduced almost to the vanishing point, and with its disappearance went also my means of recouping. No capital, no more trading in commodities. It was very simple. I was broke, and I had no job. I ordered two expensive suits from my tailor and set out to investigate the future.

At the time I didn't realize the full significance of my experience. But one thing was quite clear—being broke didn't disturb me in the least. I had started with nothing, and if I now found myself with nothing, I was at least even. Actually, I was much better than even: I had had a wonderful time, and I knew so many ways of earning more money and doing it all over again. Money meant nothing to me for itself. Even now I value it only for the independence it gives me.

Another valuable lesson—and this one gradually became my first criterion in making decisions, whether in business or in the course of any other public or private relationship—came to me in the form of a question: how much can I afford to *lose?* I never again measured the size of possible profits; any profit is good, and its size is therefore relatively unimportant. Conversely, any loss is bad, and so my first concern when I analyze an investment opportunity is the amount that I can stand to lose. Not until I am sure of the answer (or as nearly sure as one can be in this turbulent world of ours) will I go ahead. I follow the same course when I deal with the human element. My first question is not—Will my action make new friends? It is—Can I afford to lose an old one? (I hope no one will think that I am

governed only by expediency. When I am certain that my course is right, I am ready to proceed without thinking in terms of losing friends and making enemies. But there are so many things in life, especially in public life, that cannot be decided on simple terms of "right" and "wrong." Most of the time I find that the "right" thing is looked upon also as "wrong" in other quarters. I know of no touchstone. To paraphrase Oscar Wilde's epigram on truth, Right is seldom pure and never simple.)

It was inevitable, I suppose, that I should look to the entertainment world to give me my second start. Only I was careful not to let it appear that I was looking. I wanted to have people come to me.

I dropped the hint here and there that I was "considering putting some money into a good thing." I lunched at places like the Palmer House and the Wellington, where I was most likely to be seen by the men whose attention I wanted to attract. In the afternoons I would stroll past the theaters and drop in for a chat at places like Hooley's, on Randolph Street, the leading Chicago house, which Harry Powers took over a little later under his own name; the Columbia, on Monroe, which had originally been called Haverly's, for Colonel Jack Haverly of minstrel fame; the Schiller, which was the center of light opera and included on its board of managers Gustav Luders, the composer; and the huge Auditorium, on Michigan Avenue.

It was not long before various people in show business started coming to me, as I had hoped they would. The only trouble was that they were all looking for money. Thoughtfully I considered the various proposals. Regretfully I turned them down. I began to develop a reputation as a shrewd picker. That did me no harm. But at the time it wasn't much help.

One day as I was leaving my table after lunching at the Wellington a young man rushed across the room to greet me. It was Julius Witmark, whom I had last seen in San Francisco, when Juley, on tour with a minstrel show, was professionally known as "The Boy Soprano." A year or so younger than I, he had accepted my invitation to stay at our house, and we quickly became very good friends.

Juley took me back to his table and introduced me to his older brother, Isidore, whom I knew by name as head of M. Witmark & Sons, of New York, the biggest publisher of popular music in the United States.

"You might be just the man to help us, Sol," said Juley. "We're planning to open a Chicago branch. Do you know of anyone with the proper background who might be interested?"

I told them I would give some thought to the matter, and we arranged to lunch together the next day. Twenty-four hours later I handed the Witmark brothers a summary of the experiences of one Mister X. Isidore Witmark read the account carefully.

"With your recommendation, Mr. Bloom," said he, "I would have no hesitation about engaging this man—assuming, of course, that we can get together on salary."

"He doesn't want a salary," I answered. "He is convinced that he can make enough money on a commission basis. In fact, he wouldn't accept a salary. He doesn't want to be tied down by the obligations that go with that kind of pay. He's used to running his own business."

"Very interesting indeed," the elder Witmark commented. "Where can I meet this fellow?"

"Right here," I grinned. "I'm the fellow."

My association with Witmark's was a happy and profitable one, but after a little more than a year circumstances forced me to terminate it. I had contracted an obligation that I could not otherwise discharge. This was an agreement with the Rothschild department store to take over, for Witmark's, the management of their large music section. When, after a preliminary assent, Witmark's decided against making the relatively large investment required, I felt that I would be risking both honor and prestige if, having made the bargain with Rothschild's on my own responsibility, I failed to give the store the choice of going ahead with me in charge. Satisfied with the prospects I had outlined, Rothschild's turned the music department over to me and accepted my note in lieu of cash.

It is likely that even had this situation not developed I would have broken away from Witmark's before very much longer. I had learned a lot about the music-publishing business in the

year I spent as their Chicago manager, and I wanted to start a firm of my own. I had several ideas that I wanted to try out, and I could see no reason to give them away free. Besides, I always liked operating on my own.

Within a few months I was doing so. Early in 1896, while continuing to supervise Rothschild's music department, I set up shop at the corner of Wabash and Jackson and hung out my shingle. It was a big one (the shingle, I mean), with SOL BLOOM in large bold letters. I always liked to be able to read my name from way down the street, and I was even more interested in helping other people to do the same.

It didn't take a great deal of capital to launch oneself as a music publisher fifty years ago. But it took all the money I possessed except twenty-three dollars. I gave myself a permanent reminder of this amount in the trade-mark I designed. In a small circle were the initials S.B. Above the letters was the number 96, for the year of founding, and below was 23. (This occurred not long before the phrase "Twenty-three skidoo" began to be employed as the wittiest possible rejoinder to practically any statement. I modestly disclaim the authorship.)

With such a thin cushion as twenty-three dollars, I began very cautiously. I picked my song writers with great care and put out only a small number of songs at a time. It didn't cost much to buy song rights. Even some of the leading hit writers would take as little as a twenty-five-dollar advance against royalties. Other consistent producers would settle for five or ten, and it was not unusual to be able to pick one up outright for a sawbuck or less. In those days before the phonograph—though in existence, it was hardly more than a scientific curiosity—and long before the radio, ambitious writers and would-be writers of lyrics and music were willing to take a chance. The only road to fame and money in the field of music (except for great singers and instrumentalists) was a published song. A failure, obviously, wasn't worth any more than five dollars. A hit meant publicity for the writer, and if he had been paid too little for it, he could perhaps make up for his loss on the next try. Furthermore, no intelligent publisher would risk alienating a new star through niggardliness.

By a combination of caution, continuous effort, and good

luck I had a thriving business within four or five months, and before the end of my first year I was beginning to be spoken of as one of the "big" publishers. But before going into the story behind my fast developing reputation, I want to tell about two young writers whose songs I published in those early years. As song writers, their names will probably not be recognized by many persons, but these two were the most important of all to me.

One of them was a girl named Nellie Revell, who had come up from Springfield, the state capital, to work as a reporter on the *Chronicle*. Even then she was celebrated as "the lady newspaperman." No women's-page or sob-sister stuff for her. She was a police reporter and a sports writer. She never asked special favors—she didn't have to. When she ordered a meal in a restaurant, she picked up her own check. She paid for her own whisky, too (and no one ever knew her to put water into it). In 1897 she covered the Corbett-Fitzsimmons fight in Carson City, and for more than twenty years after that she was, as every newspaperman of fifty or over will testify, one of the outstanding members of the working press. Her date line might be London or San Francisco; Melbourne or New York; Shanghai, Rome, or Buenos Aires. She covered the world.

It was this woman who rather timidly brought me a song one day. Perhaps she wrote it to win a bet—I wouldn't put anything past her—but in any case I liked it. I published it, and both Nellie Revell and I made money. I now find it rather difficult to believe that the title of the song was "Don't Send Me Away, Daddy."

I have not finished the story of Nellie Revell. Around 1920 she was the victim of a terrible automobile accident. She spent four years in a hospital in plaster casts, and during most of that time only Nellie herself believed she would ever walk again. As she prepared for what she was sure would be a normal physical life Nellie wrote a book. It was entitled *Right Off the Chest* —most of it she scribbled in longhand, using the cast on her chest as a desk.

By 1924 Nellie was beginning to be active again, and some time in the spring I attended a dinner given in her honor in New York by the Lambs Club, of which she was then, and I

believe still is, the only woman member. Some twenty gifted friends sat on the dais that night to pay tribute to this courageous woman. Among them were Will Rogers, George M. Cohan, and Irvin S. Cobb, but I remember nothing they said. I can remember only Nellie and her triumph after nearly hopeless defeat.

Today Nellie Revell lives in a single room in a side-street New York hotel. She hasn't very much money, but she has four great-grandchildren, hundreds of devoted friends, and a bookcase filled with correspondence and scrapbooks. Nellie is writing her autobiography, I understand. But she spends only a part of her time reliving the past. At the age of seventy-five Nellie passes most of each day working on a new radio program. And she still drinks her whisky neat. Nellie, I bow to you!

The other of these two song writers was a girl from San Francisco named Evelyn Hechheimer. I published a composition of hers called "Cinderella White." It was a fine song and a great hit, but there were more impelling reasons than these that made the composer important to me.

XIII

IT WAS IN the latter part of 1896 that Miss Hechheimer visited Chicago, as the guest of a family named Friedman. Their son Leo was one of my song writers, and he invited me to come to dinner and hear her sing some songs she had composed. Leo was quite enthusiastic about the young lady's music and thought I might be interested in publishing some of it.

By the end of dinner, although I had not yet heard a note, I was sure I wanted to publish everything she had ever written or hoped to write in the future. She was the most enchanting creature I had ever seen. In less than an hour I was reduced to a state of mumbling adoration, and before we left the dining room I had practically decided to publish no other songs but hers.

When we returned to the parlor I found another quality to admire in this lovely girl. In an age when it was fashionable for young ladies to be "coaxed" into demonstrating their talents, she was straightforward. Knowing that I wanted to hear her songs, she went at once to the piano.

She ran through the opening bars of "Cinderella White," playing gracefully and with evident enjoyment. I was too far gone to think, but I didn't have to use my head to know that this girl could play the piano.

Then she began to sing. Her voice was a rich contralto and her pitch was true. In a large auditorium it might have been lost, but here it was perfect. I tried to concentrate on the song. That I found impossible; the singer was too distracting.

She sang perhaps half a dozen of her own compositions. Her interpretation was exquisite. Listening and watching (but mostly watching) was sheer delight. I had never in my life been so happy.

When she finished the last song and got up from the piano I noticed in a dim way that we had been left alone in the parlor. The Friedmans had delicately withdrawn, presumably to give us the chance to discuss publishing contracts. They had good reason to believe that my intentions must be serious, for at the conclusion of every song I had enthusiastically cried, "I'll publish it!"

Evelyn and I talked about music and life and this and that. We covered every topic conceivable except the most important one—which was, of course, the state of my emotions about Evelyn herself.

"Heavens!" she exclaimed, looking at the watch on her breast, "it's past midnight. What will Mrs. Friedman think?"

"About what?" I asked, so solemnly that Evelyn laughed heartily. Then she saw me to the door. I walked four blocks in the wrong direction before I noticed.

On my way to the office early next morning I stopped at a florist's to order flowers for Evelyn. Suddenly I realized that I had forgotten her surname. What to do? I sent two bouquets to Mrs. Friedman instead. It turned out to be a stroke of pure genius. Not only did my hostess credit me with thoughtfulness, but with delicacy as well: This was an age when it was considered bad taste for a gentleman to send even a gift of flowers directly to a young lady to whom he had just been introduced.

I also bought a lot of flowers for the office, and then I stopped at a confectioner's for chocolates. Evelyn had promised to come in at eleven o'clock to sign her contract.

"Who's the boss getting ready for?" I heard one of the men inquire when I walked in with my purchases. "Madame Calvé?"

When Evelyn arrived, chaperoned of course by Mrs. Friedman, I was out in the front office to meet them. The papers had meanwhile been prepared, and we went into my own office to sign them.

"What a pleasant place you have, Mr. Bloom," said Evelyn

as I offered her some candy. "I've never been in an office that was decorated with flowers. And do you have chocolates all the time?"

I assured her that plants and sweets were standard equipment (and after that they were, just in case she might drop in). Then I invited her to read the agreement. It provided for the payment of royalties at the standard rate of five cents a copy. The usual stated price of popular songs was fifty cents, and although in practice prices were often cut, the writer's share remained stable. Only writers whose songs regularly ran into very large editions received more than 10 per cent.

Evelyn read the contract rapidly, and I could see that she was displeased.

"Only last evening, Mr. Bloom," she said coldly, "you told me that anything I had written was worth at least as much as John Philip Sousa's marches. Apparently you have revised your opinion."

"Doesn't the contract say 15 per cent?" I cried in wild alarm. "I told the clerk you were to get 15. You heard me say 15, didn't you, Leo?" A fit of coughing overcame Leo Friedman at this moment, and he was unable to reply to my question.

"Clerks make so many mistakes," responded the dear lady as I crossed out the abhorrent 10 and inserted 15. "It looks so much better this way. Now show me where to sign my name. . . . Thank you *so* much . . . there . . ."

We went to the Wellington for lunch after that. I ordered a bottle of champagne. Perhaps it was two bottles. How could I know?

In the following weeks I went about my business in a daze. I could concentrate on nothing but flowers for Evelyn and sweet accompanying sentiments for Evelyn. Ah, the tenderness I poured into every card that went with the daily box of violets. If I had needed anything to assure me further that Evelyn and I were intended for each other, it was her love of violets. I even tried to imagine that she must have noticed me when as a small boy in San Francisco I used to peddle them beside Lotta's Fountain. The fact that she had then been a child of three or four did not disturb the image.

My only trouble was that I didn't know how to proceed from ecstasy to action. I was so fearful that Evelyn might say No that I was unable to face the risk of asking her to marry me. And so I dithered along, without a plan, hoping for a break. Unexpectedly I got one—and it almost ruined me.

Before taking Evelyn to see a new play at Hooley's one night I had spent an active day in the open air, and I was satisfied to relax in my seat and contemplate the vision of loveliness by my side. She watched the play. I watched her. Then the lights went up after the first act, and Evelyn refused to speak to me.

During the rest of the play she ignored me completely, and on the way home an occasional monosyllable was all I could get out of her. As soon as we entered the Friedmans' hallway she said, "Thank you for taking me to the theater. Good night."

"But, Evelyn, what's the matter?" I asked in despair. "What have I done?"

"Why, nothing," she answered. "Nothing at all. You were too *tired* to do anything. How you could ever have pretended to be interested in me I cannot understand. It would have been insulting enough if it had happened here, but to humiliate me in public by falling asleep is too much. You have degraded me, and I never want to see you again. Good-by." Evelyn burst into tears.

"Degrade you, darling?" I cried, taking her in my arms. "Why, I love you better than all the world. I want you to marry me."

"It's a funny way to tell a girl you love her," she answered after I had kissed her again. "I'll have to think it over."

Then I kissed her once more, and after that she stopped talking nonsense.

At breakfast next morning, as I was putting sugar on my eggs, I informed my family that I was engaged to the most wonderful girl in the world.

"Is she the *right kind* of girl, Solly?" Mother asked. I knew precisely what she had in mind.

"Yes, dear, she is," I answered. "She comes from a fine Jewish family in San Francisco." I took a swallow of coffee. "They belong to the Congregation Emanu-El."

It was a little like a Catholic boy's announcement that he was going to marry into an Episcopalian family. Congregation Emanu-El consisted of reformed Jews. My people were orthodox. I waited for Mother to say something.

"Tell me her name, Solly," she said.

"Evelyn."

"And her family name?" continued Mother.

Unbelievable as it may appear, I had the same lapse of memory I had experienced at the florist's the morning after Evelyn and I had met. I told Mother that Evelyn was good and true and kind; that her hair was auburn and her skin like alabaster; that she was talented in all things and sang divinely. But I could not remember that her name was Hechheimer.

Mother's eyes twinkled. "In that case, Solly, I hope you will marry Evelyn soon. Then all of us will know her name."

That was all. Mother had instantly and completely accepted Evelyn. She knew I loved her, and that was enough. More than sixty years of inflexible orthodoxy did not obscure a fact even more fundamental than all the teachings of her creed. Her son loved a woman. For her that was of transcendent importance.

A few days later I brought Evelyn to the house to meet my family. My sisters were friendly but reserved. They were spinsters as well as orthodox Jewesses, and a little jealous of any woman who wanted to marry their brother. Mother was perfect, and so of course was Father—they always concurred in everything. But the most enthusiastic (in her outward demeanor, at least) was my blind Aunt Amelia, Mother's sister, who happened to be visiting us from Peoria. She also happened to be a woman of positive opinions.

Aunt Amelia at once invited Evelyn to sit by her, and for perhaps thirty minutes she monopolized her. I could observe that Evelyn was making a tremendous hit. It was particularly gratifying that the charm of her personality could be sensed so readily by a woman unable to see her animated face and flashing eyes.

Evelyn was as pleased as I by her conquest of this critical old lady, and as I was taking her home she said, "Did you see how she kept patting my hand and arm? And twice while we were talking she hugged and kissed me. It was so natural and spon-

taneous that I didn't even feel embarrassed. I do think she must have liked me. It makes me very happy."

I found Aunt Amelia still sitting up when I came home.

"You've picked a fine girl to marry, Solly," she announced. "She's got good manners and good sense. She'll make you a good wife." Aunt Amelia patted my hand. Then she continued in a low, confidential voice, "She's got good bones, too, very good bones. *And,* what's more important, she's got *flesh* on her bones. That's the kind of woman to marry, Solly. Strong and healthy. She'll make you a good wife, and she'll be a good mother for your children. I can't abide skinny girls. Why, they can't even do a day's work. Give me a girl with flesh on her bones every time."

I did not confide to Evelyn the practical objectives of Aunt Amelia's effusiveness until some time after our marriage.

Our engagement was announced at a large party given in the Wellington Hotel. In addition to personal friends, I had invited dozens of men and women who were associates of mine in the music world, and many of them contributed to the entertainment by playing and singing their own compositions. One of Evelyn's greatest pleasures in the evening, she told me later, derived from the letters she wrote to friends in California describing her thrill when Paul Dresser sang his own "On the Banks of the Wabash" and Charles K. Harris rendered his "After the Ball Is Over."

The wedding took place on June 22, 1897, at the Wellington Hotel, and after the reception we set out for a honeymoon in New York. No man, I feel, can ever write about his first days of intimate companionship with the woman he has chosen to spend his life with. Certainly I cannot. But I can say of all our years together that nothing ever changed. We were always sweethearts.

Early in the spring we had taken an apartment, at 4736 Prairie Avenue, and here upon our return we set up housekeeping. The South Side was still a fashionable part of Chicago in those days, and the broad street on which we lived, with its large, handsome houses and small, well-kept lawns, was one of the pleasantest in the whole district. The superficial aspect of this

quarter has changed surprisingly little with the passing years, but its social character is now utterly different. The present population is almost exclusively Negro.

Far from regretting this encroachment, I find considerable satisfaction in it. I am pleased that even a small portion of Chicago's large colored population is able to live in houses so well built, with plenty of light and air. And I am pleased that Washington Park is near at hand, and that Lake Michigan is only a few blocks to the east. Externally, at least, living conditions for the Negro appear to be better in a large area of Chicago than in any other metropolitan center I know. (On my last visit I noticed a line of sixty or seventy small children waiting to enter a Catholic church near Washington Park. I walked up close to the line, for all small children delight me, and then I saw that without exception they were colored. I asked one of the white sisters in charge what the occasion was. "They are waiting for the school bell to ring," she answered. "These are the children of our parish.")

Evelyn herself, during the months preceding our marriage, had selected the decorations and furniture for the apartment. Her taste in all things was excellent, and both of us took great satisfaction in our little home. We entertained quietly and inexpensively. A few friends would come to dinner once or twice a week, and afterward there would be music. People really liked to sing together in those premechanical days.

One evening when we had invited half a dozen friends to join us for a buffet supper I noticed that Evelyn had brought a chair from the parlor into the dining room. I thought it odd that there should be too few places, but it seemed too trifling a matter for comment.

Several days later I missed a small inlaid table that had stood in the hall. Assuming that Evelyn had moved it to another room, I said nothing about it. But when, in the following week, my favorite armchair suddenly disappeared, I thought the time had come for a family council.

"Oh, I changed my mind about some of our things," said Evelyn disarmingly. "They didn't seem suitable."

"You mean you gave them away?" I asked.

"Certainly not," my wife answered with spirit. "You see,

there's a man who buys used furniture. He gave me quite a lot of money. It seemed a pity not to sell them."

The phrase "come clean" was not yet current, but I managed to convey the idea that I would welcome a more detailed story. Evelyn then confessed that she had underestimated her household expenses and couldn't bring herself to ask me for more money than she had originally told me would cover everything. She was writing a new song, she continued, and just as soon as *I* had published it and paid her the royalties, *she* would buy back the furniture. It was a beautifully simple plan, as Evelyn outlined it, but I produced a still simpler one. I stepped up the allowance for household expenses and got the missing furniture out of hock. I felt sure that Evelyn could find another way to spend the royalties from her next song. Besides, I dreaded the possibility of coming home some evening and finding the bedroom suite missing.

In all our years together we never came closer than this to a disagreement. A serious quarrel would have been inconceivable under any circumstances. What a fortunate man I was!

XIV

As I PROSPERED in my new life with Evelyn, so did I prosper in my business affairs. I had two sources of income. First, there was the music department at Rothschild's, which from the outset had provided enough money for the comfortable maintenance of my parents and sisters. By the time of my marriage Rothschild's music sales had grown sufficiently to enable me to support the two households for which I was now responsible. I had brought about this increase partly through newspaper advertising, partly through novelty. Strange as it may seem, no one had ever tried to sell sheet music by direct presentation, that is, by having it played and sung in the store. I simply introduced a piano into the department and hired a singer. After that the section was crowded by shoppers who had come to make purchases elsewhere in the store, and we sold hundreds of songs to customers who would never have visited the music department if we had not drawn them there by offering entertainment. It was not very long before many shoppers were coming primarily to visit the music section, and that of course boosted sales in other parts of the store. The management was so pleased that at the end of the first year I was given a handsome bonus by the company.

With Rothschild's providing my bread and butter (and some ice cream and cake besides), I was not obliged to draw any money from my publishing venture. Every penny left after expenses went into advertising and promotion, and as soon as things were reasonably stable I started to test the big idea I

had had in mind while I was still managing Witmark's Chicago branch. That was selling music (and, later on, musical instruments) by mail.

At the risk of presenting the obvious, I want to draw a partial sketch of life on an American farm fifty years ago, a farm in Illinois, Indiana, or Wisconsin, say a hundred miles from Chicago. I am not concerned here with the work of the farm, only with the transportation, communications, and general conveniences afforded the men, women, and children who inhabited it. First, in this preautomobile age not one farmer in ten traveled those hundred miles to Chicago in the course of a year; most shopping was done at the general store in the village, a little by catalogue (Mr. Sears had begun to sell watches by mail about ten years earlier). This farmer had no telephone, no phonograph, no radio. Except for his newspaper (usually a weekly), he passed much of his life in isolation from the outside world. His amusements during the short evenings between supper and bedtime might be reading or listening to his daughter play the pump organ (far less frequently the piano), to the music of which she probably sang. What did she sing? Hymns and old songs, or perhaps songs not so old, that had been collected into a book by some publisher. But the "new" songs were rarely for her.

I considered the deprivation of the farmer and his daughter and her swain; I also considered all the people in villages and small towns without music stores, and I calculated that, given the opportunity, they would buy five million copies of songs a year. Or perhaps it was ten million copies. Having forgotten the basis for my calculation, I cannot now be sure. It doesn't matter. I was staggered by the possibilities.

My first step was to organize The World's Musical Library. This was one of the easiest jobs I ever undertook, for at the outset it consisted solely of its name. Then I began to take space, two or three lines at first, in just a few newspapers. Orders flowed in, and I increased the number of papers and the size of my ads. There was such a close relationship between total circulation and amount of space on the one hand and the volume of business on the other that, within close limits, I could predict a whole season's sales in advance. With this ad-

vantage over most of my competitors, I was soon printing relatively very large editions of my best songs. This, in turn, through lowered unit costs, made it possible for me to cut prices without reducing profits. Part of the profit I took out for myelf. The rest I used to make my product more attractive. A better quality of paper was one way. Photographs of singers and famous actors and actresses on the cover were another. I was the first music publisher to introduce photographs.

By 1899, when William Randolph Hearst entered the Chicago newspaper field, I was one of the best-known publishers of popular music in the country, and people everywhere referred to me as "Sol Bloom, the Music Man." Andy Lawrence, Hearst's publisher, was on the lookout for anything that would build circulation, and he and I worked out a novelty that profited both of us. The Sunday edition of the *American* began carrying my songs as a separate feature, thus becoming the first newspaper in the country to provide a Sunday supplement. In this manner I got display advertising at no cost, and in addition, through the *American*'s own advertisements of the supplement, free space the other six days in the week. (As time went on, other papers in different parts of the country took up the idea of giving away popular songs with their Sunday editions. But there was an important new factor: they not only provided free display advertising for my firm but paid for the right to publish my songs. Royalties were determined by circulation, and at one time the total circulation of the papers using my service exceeded 6,000,000.)

In addition to carrying free advertising in newspapers and paid space in magazines and in various publications of the musical trade, I succeeded in hitting the news columns with great regularity. One of the best pieces of publicity I ever got came in connection with the tragedy in Havana Harbor in February, 1898.

Early in the morning the news came to me that the battleship *Maine* had been blown up. I wanted to do something about it, and I wanted to do it at once. Today it is the fashion (and with undeniable justice) to decry our war against Spain as "imperialistic aggression," but at the time few men doubted that

the explosion had been caused by a Spanish mine or torpedo in a deliberate act of war.

Rushing through breakfast, I started for my office an hour earlier than usual, and while riding downtown on the Cottage Grove Avenue streetcar line I jotted down the rough draft of a song of tribute to the several hundred victims of the disaster. By the time my staff came to work I had completed the first stanza and chorus, and I announced that we were going to get to work on the music immediately and finish the job before the end of the day. I got everybody steamed up by references to Bunker Hill, Valley Forge, Bull Run, and Gettysburg, and in a high state of patriotic fervor we all set to work to win the war by nighfall.

The result was a song by James O'Dea and Paul Cohn (though at least half a dozen other men contributed to it) entitled "The Heroes Who Sank with the *Maine*." It was composed in a single day and sung that very night in the Haymarket Theater. The audience stood on chairs and shouted madly, and the song was repeated over and over. Next morning the papers gave the event prominent space, and all through the day customers came in to buy the newest patriotic music. We were ready for them, too, for the song had been set during the night, and it was in print by the time we opened for business.

The profits from this song (half of which I turned over to the fund that was established for families of the dead heroes) were very large for a few weeks. But other songs soon followed mine, and I am sure no other war in history ever brought forth half so many. "The Mother of a Soldier True," "Every American Is a Volunteer," "Hang Out the Flag That Mother Made," and " 'Twas in Manila Harbor," are a few titles that come to mind. There was also a great rash of Dewey marches, Sampson marches, and the like.

During the next couple of years I had a number of outstanding hits. In 1899, or thereabout, following the great stage success of Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac,* I published two Cyrano pieces, a waltz and a march-and-two-step. Almost any composition in any way relating to the romantic poet-swordsman with the mighty nose would have sold well at this time. My pieces sold tremendously, for on the covers I reproduced

not only the photograph of the great Coquelin, who had created the part of Cyrano in Paris, but the pictures of Henry Irving and Richard Mansfield, who were respectively the London and New York leads. I even had the good luck to be accused of using the three portraits illegally, and that provided the opportunity for me to reply in print. The letters of permission, which I published, had the effect of further boosting sales.

About the same time I put out a march-and-two-step entitled "The King's Musketeer," with an autographed cover photograph of E. H. Sothern in the costume of D'Artagnan. This was no less popular than the Cyrano numbers. The formula of a catchy tune and a distinguished actor or singer on the cover was hard to beat.

Jessie Bartlett Davis was at the peak of her renown as the new century dawned, and she was not only a professional associate but a personal friend. She and her husband, Will, a theatrical manager, lived on Grand Boulevard (now South Park Way) not far from the new apartment on the same street to which Evelyn and I had moved from Prairie Avenue, and when Jessie was home between concert tours the Blooms and the Davises often dined together. Jessie was one of the warmest-hearted persons I have ever known—this quality of warmth and sympathy for all was quite as important as her fine voice in making her one of the favorite singers of the day—and everybody was eager to do things for her. When she agreed to let me use her signed portrait on the cover of "The Way to a Woman's Heart," which my ad described as "the prettiest and most effective song she has had since 'Oh, Promise Me'," I impulsively promised to have a bottle of champagne sent to her dressing room after every performance for the next year. This was a fairly expensive gesture, and I wondered what Evelyn would have to say. She said nothing at all, but a few days later she told me that she had picked out a gift for Jessie, too. Her choice was a baby grand piano. This time I said nothing.

Anna Held introduced "My Honolulu Queen" for me while she was in Chicago playing the Columbia Theater in *The French Maid.* The popularity of this little French lady, who had only recently married Florenz Ziegfeld (a Chicago boy, incidentally), was tremendous, and I took full advantage of

the big start she gave this song. I rustled up some palm trees and coconuts and put them in one of Rothschild's State Street windows. I added a singer in Hawaiian costume. I blew up the words of "My Honolulu Queen" and painted an oversize musical staff on a backdrop. In place of notes there were holes in the curtain, and through each of these a dusky face protruded. The show literally stopped traffic. For two days thousands of people crowded about the window. It might have gone on for weeks if the Humane Society hadn't got after me. Somebody discovered that my "Hawaiians" were really little colored boys and girls under the legal working age. It was very upsetting, especially to the "Hawaiians"—they had never had such a wonderful time and been paid for making faces to boot.

It was just at the turn of the century, too, that I put on what I feel justified in calling the first musical broadcast in history; the fact that I used telephone wires instead of waves in the ether does not upset the principle. I gave a Sunday concert in my offices, to which I invited several hundred critics and professional and amateur musicians to "listen in." When they rang my number the telephone company plugged them all in together, the mouthpiece in my studio served as a microphone, and a good time was enjoyed by all. Though the novelty began to wear off after the first few weeks, the quality of the performances was so high that interest never flagged. The prestige I gained through these "Sunday afternoons" more than justified the money they cost me. How else at that time could one without stirring from his own home hear the magnificent baritone of Pol Plançon in French, German, and Spanish songs?

By now I was occupying the entire second floor of the building that still stands at the southwest corner of Dearborn and Randolph Streets. Here, in addition to a large display-and-sales room, executive offices, and half a dozen small rooms containing pianos for the use of composers, I had a tiny theater with perhaps seventy-five seats. This theater, an innovation of my own, was very important. I would let no new song of mine be sung in public until it had been rehearsed here to perfection by the professional plugger who had been hired to introduce it. Every intonation and every gesture had to be practiced under the same conditions that prevailed in full-sized theaters and music

halls before I let my publications go out into the world. If a mediocre song were well introduced, it had a much better chance of winning popularity than a first-rate song poorly sung in public. Except in the case of an absolute "natural"—for example, Carrie Jacobs Bond's "The End of a Perfect Day," which no singer could completely ruin, though millions tried to—everything depended upon the way a new piece of music was introduced. That was why, as soon as I could afford expensive promotion, I engaged such headliners as Anna Held, Nora Bayes, Trixie Friganza, and Blanche Ring to sing my songs for the first time.

Although publishing and selling popular music was my chief business, I dealt also in musical instruments—everything from mouth organs to grand pianos. Not satisfied to wait for customers to come in, I started looking for a way to build up this end of my business, and one day, after talking with a piano tuner in my employ, I got an idea. Up to that time the standard fee for tuning had been $1.50, half of it going to the tuner and half to the employer. I now offered to raise the tuner's share to a dollar, and in return for the increase the tuners agreed to get certain information for me. At the house of Mrs. Bummelzug, for example, a casual conversation might bring forth the fact that daughter Matilda, aged twelve, had been taking piano lessons for two years, that Freddy, aged nine, was probably going to start on the violin before long, that Mr. Bummelzug was a wholesale plumber, and that the whole family was going to Grandmother's house in Wisconsin for Thanksgiving. These data, together with a notation on the age and condition of the piano, would be turned over to one of my salesmen, and a week or so later Mrs. Bummelzug would answer the doorbell and find a pleasant young man who greeted her by name. "I just thought I'd drop in for a moment," he would say after introducing himself, "to see whether you wouldn't like to come down to the store to look at our new stock of inexpensive violins for beginners. If Freddy is going to start taking lessons soon, you couldn't find a better bargain—and think how pleased his grandmother will be on the next visit, when both he and Matilda play for her." By this time the enterprising young man

would probably have been asked into the parlor, and there he would switch over to the subject of pianos and our advantageous trade-in terms. Then, after a knowing inquiry about Mr. Bummelzug and the state of the plumbing business, he would take his leave. Sooner or later, perhaps after another call from my salesman, Mrs. Bummelzug's name would be on my books, and before many months I found that the by-product of tuning Mrs. Bummelzug's, Mrs. Olsen's, and Mrs. Sullivan's pianos was a very substantial volume of new business.

My biggest trade in musical instruments (especially after I became, some years later in New York, national distributor for Victor talking machines) came from mail orders. Most of my customers lived in small towns and villages and on farms. They were, for the most part, stable citizens in the middle and lower income groups, the kind of people who have always formed our largest market. I built up my large trade by selling on the installment plan—I was the first "dollar down, dollar a week" merchant in the country—and I built it with the simplest kind of credit investigation. I required only a single reference from a prospective customer. That was the name of his doctor. I figured that while people change their grocers, their tailors, their insurance agents, and their banks, they rarely give up their doctors. Thus, if the family practitioner OK'd a man, it usually meant a relationship of long standing. And when dealing with slow payers, I found that a note to the debtor's doctor almost always turned the trick. My aggregate loss from bad debts over a period of perhaps ten years was less than 3 per cent of gross sales.

Not long after I moved to Dearborn Street I decided to open an office in New York. The essential reason was that I had been cutting into the Eastern market to such an extent that I needed a permanent representative on the spot. A secondary purpose was to enhance my position in the eyes of Middle Westerners. All sorts of people had branch offices in Chicago, but relatively few Chicago houses had branches in New York. Sectional pride was a far more potent element than it is today, and the great market that centered in Chicago found satisfaction in any prod-

uct which implied on its cover, however vaguely, that New York was "provincial."

Success breeds success, and within another year I had independent stores or department-store music sections in a dozen cities between Baltimore and Denver. And before I moved from Chicago to New York, in 1903, I was able to advertize that my stores extended from coast to coast. A little later I reached my peak of eighty stores, and thereafter I maintained never less than seventy until I retired from the music field in 1910.

It is dangerously easy to exaggerate the importance of any single event that has brought both satisfaction and profit, but I still think, almost half a century afterward, that the best single promotion idea I have ever had was the one I worked up in December, 1899. About the twenty-eighth of that month a man appeared at the main entrance of the copyright office in Washington, D.C., and stood there through the day. In the late afternoon another man relieved him and spent the night outside the door. Next day two men kept their vigil together, and the day after that there were four or five on the spot. Considerable curiosity was aroused, especially after people began to ask questions. The invariable answer was, "Sol Bloom, the Music Man, will tell you."

The Music Man told all on January 2, 1900, with a big advertisement:

MORE THAN THIRTY MILLIONS

of copyrights will be issued during the century which commenced with the present year. . . .

In line with our usual policy of being *first,* we have secured

Copyright NUMBER ONE

"I wish I was in Dixie Land Tonight!"
by Raymond A. Browne

SOL BLOOM The Progressive Publisher

This ad and many variations of it ran all over the country for months. By modern standards, it may have been a little crude. But it brought results. And I still find pleasure in the fact that I took out the first copyright of the present century.

XV

BUSY AS I WAS during these years of music publishing, I still found time for two other interests. One of these was politics. The other was the theater.

Before my marriage I missed hardly a play in Chicago. Later, with Evelyn sharing my enthusiasm for the theater, the two of us made a perfect first-night team. We both loved the opera, too—I the avid amateur, Evelyn the trained musician—and together we heard nearly everything that was presented in Chicago. I still have some of those old opera programs; they go back as far as 1894, when Emma Calvé made her first Chicago appearance in *Carmen.* During that same season Abbey and Grau presented Nellie Melba in *Lucia;* others in the company they brought from the Metropolitan in New York were Lillian Nordica, Emma Eames, Pol Plançon, and the De Reszke brothers. What a galaxy! In 1895 I heard for the first time the great tenors Francesco Tamagno, Giuseppe Campanari, and Victor Maurel, who sang the title role in the Chicago premiere of Verdi's *Falstaff.* The following year Walter Damrosch gave us a week of Wagner—*Tristan und Isolde, Lohengrin, Die Walküre, Tannhäuser,* and *Die Meistersinger*—with Johanna Gadski, Rosa Sucher, and Conrad Behrens. A year or two later I heard Madame Schumann-Heink in a recital, and about the same time we were treated to the novelty of French opera, by a New Orleans company that gave, among other things, *La Fille du Régiment.* In 1901 Maurice Grau presented Melba again, also the young and beautiful Louise Homer and the delightful

Fritzi Scheff, who at nineteen already possessed a mature voice. In 1902 Pietro Mascagni directed his own *Cavalleria Rusticana,* and in the spring of 1903, at what I think was our last attendance as residents of Chicago, Evelyn and I heard Fritzi Scheff sing Nedda to Antonio Scotti's Canio in *I Pagliacci.* There were giants in the earth in those days.

As I have previously mentioned, the Schiller Theater was the center of light opera in Chicago. One of its managers and its most active spirit was Gustav Luders, the musical director. He was a prolific composer, and I came to know him well. One day in 1898 or 1899—it was a year or more before he was to produce his first big hit—Luders arranged to have me come down to the Schiller to listen to the orchestra run through a lot of his unpublished music. He expressed the modest hope that I would find some of it good enough to bring out.

All afternoon I listened, entranced by the music. I wanted all of it. At the same time, it was clear that I couldn't undertake to publish everything at once—it would have been too much Luders. I told Gustav that if he would rely on my judgment I would gradually publish his music and make a lot of money for both of us. He believed me, and we signed an agreement whereby I was given first option on his future compositions as well as exclusive rights to the pieces I had just heard. It turned out to be one of the best deals I ever made. In 1900 Luders and Frank Pixley, who wrote the words, brought out *The Burgomaster;* in 1902 these two wrote not only *The Prince of Pilsen,* a tremendous success, but *King Dodo* (in which Raymond Hitchcock starred for many weeks at Daly's Theater, New York); in 1904 Luders and Pixley produced *Woodland,* while Luders, with George Ade as librettist, composed *The Sho-Gun* (in which Trixie Friganza won the hearts of all as Omee-Omi). These were big successes. There were, in addition, a dozen small ones.

It was in 1900 that music and politics embraced each other. The ineffable Bathhouse John Coughlin, now in his fifth term as alderman from the First Ward, shyly confessed that he had written a song and wondered whether I would like to publish it. If he had informed me that he was going to pose for a statue of Civic Virtue, I could not have been more startled. But I did

not hesitate. I said that I would love to publish his song. A piece of music by this versatile fellow promised to rival the legendary verses of the Emperor Nero, and just as the Romans of the first century had packed the amphitheater to applaud the Divine Poet, so could the faithful of the First Ward be counted on to honor the Nightingale of the Bathhouse. I guessed that I might sell as many as 5,000 copies of the song with the provocative title "Dear Midnight of Love."

My estimate was far too conservative, for I had failed to consider the factor of promotion. John had not. He even tried to get Madame Calvé to introduce his song. Failing to persuade the diva that "Dear Midnight of Love" would enhance her reputation, he fell back on a pretty child named May de Sousa, daughter of a First Ward detective. Early in October, about a month before the Presidential election, with only Joseph Jefferson in *Rip Van Winkle* at the Powers Theater to offer serious competition, Miss de Sousa and a chorus of fifty sang the masterpiece. The Chicago Opera House, a ten-twenty-thirty variety theater, was crowded. Everybody of importance had turned out, including the Cook County Chowder and Marching Club and the mayor of Chicago, Carter Harrison the Younger.

With such a spectacular start, "Dear Midnight of Love" was bound to be a money-maker. It was front-page news, and I sold at least as many copies to the curious and scandalized residents of Lake Shore Drive and Astor Street as I did to Bathhouse John's proud cohorts in the First Ward. The song itself possessed what I can only describe as superlative charm. Here are the words of the refrain:

Dear Midnight of Love,
  Why did we meet?
Dear Midnight of Love,
  Your face is so sweet.
Pure as the Angels above,
  Surely again we shall speak,
Loving only as doves,
  Dear Midnight of Love.

I took no active part in politics between Carter Harrison's successful campaign for mayor in the spring of 1893 and the

Democratic national convention of 1896. But that does not mean that I had lost interest. Far from it. Those were tumultuous years in Chicago.

Late in October of 1893, just a few days before the fair closed, Mayor Harrison was murdered; a disgruntled office seeker shot him on the doorstep of his own home. Internal squabbles split the Democratic majority on the Board of Aldermen (whose duty it was to select a mayor pro tem), and George Swift, Republican alderman from the Eleventh Ward, was chosen to preside in City Hall until a successor to Harrison could be named in the special election set for December. By election time the Democrats had composed their differences sufficiently to agree on a candidate, and John P. Hopkins, a successful young lawyer, was nominated. He beat Swift by a slim margin.

The year 1894 was not only the year in which I lost my shirt in consequence of the Pullman strike. It was the year of a great scandal in the granting of a gas franchise and of unusual "boodling" by the aldermen (who almost literally owned the streets of Chicago) in the traction field. It was also the year in which William T. Stead, a crusading English editor, visited Chicago and wrote a series of articles exposing the vice of the city and denouncing the grafting aldermen. The Democratic party had never been in worse odor in Cook County.

Mayor Hopkins decided not to be a candidate to succeed himself, and in the spring of 1895 the Democrats nominated Frank Wenter, a faithful party wheel horse, whose chief asset consisted in obscurity. But obscurity was not enough. "Throw the rascals out!" expressed the sentiment of the majority, and George Swift, the Republican who had served as mayor pro tem after Harrison's assassination, was elected by a comfortable vote. He served from 1895 to 1897. During his single term the Democratic forces cleaned house and sought a candidate untainted by the scandals of previous administrations. They found him in the person of Carter Henry Harrison the Younger.

He was a man whom all admired. Young, handsome, energetic, and courageous, he had an appeal not only for all elements within the party but for Republicans as well. An aristocrat, he was at the same time a "First Ward boy." A man of true culture, he knew how to talk without condescension to

labor groups (including the large German population, whom he could address in their mother tongue). As publisher of the *Times,* he had been an outspoken foe of greed and privilege. Best of all (from the party point of view, at least), having sold the newspaper in 1895, Harrison had been absent from Chicago on a world tour for more than a year, and when the campaign of 1897 came around he could be presented to the voters as a champion unsoiled by any of the dirt of recent years.

I worked for Carter Harrison as I had worked for his father, and I continued to support him through eight solid years in office. (He, like his father, served five two-year terms. In 1905, he retired, and when he ran, successfully, for a fifth term—in 1911, if I remember correctly—I was no longer a resident of Chicago.)

I also worked in two national campaigns during my years in Chicago. In 1896 the Democratic nominating convention was held in the same Wigwam where Grover Cleveland had been chosen in 1892, and it was here that William Jennings Bryan, at the age of thirty-six, made the speech that stampeded the delegates and won him the nomination. I was far from the platform that night, but I heard clearly every word—and at the moment I was almost persuaded to obey his command, "You shall not press down upon the brow of labor this crown of thorns. You shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold." Years later in a conversation with Bryan, when bimetallism had long been a dead issue, I told him that I had never forgotten his impact on his hearers farthest from the rostrum. Bryan smiled. "No matter how large or how small my audience," he said, "I always address the people in the last row. If they can hear me, everybody can hear me. After I know that I am being heard, I can afford to look for some particular person *to talk to.* As soon as I spot a man who nods emphatic agreement with me, I focus on him. Others in my audience begin looking in the same direction, and pretty soon I have a lot of people nodding and beaming with him. This is very infectious, and in this way I have won many audiences that were initially hostile. But first of all, I have to make sure that everybody can hear me."

Though I greatly admired Bryan's vigor and honesty through his whole career, his political and economic theories ran somewhat counter to my own ideas, and I was never a "Bryan man"

at convention time. In 1896, in fact, I was a minor member of one of the groups that was hoping to block Bryan's nomination. (I first met Bourke Cockran, who spoke for one wing of the Tammany Hall opposition—that stimulating Irishman of the silver tongue who intermittently for nearly forty years represented his New York district in Congress—on the convention platform just before he was scheduled to make a speech. There had been a heavy rain, and as Cockran began his address the roof started to leak directly over the speaker's table. Having an umbrella with me, I raised it and held it over Cockran's head throughout his speech. After all these years, I find this trifling incident, rather than Bryan's oration, my most vivid recollection of the 1896 convention. As for Cockran, I haven't the faintest remembrance of anything he said.)

If I was never a Bryan supporter at nominating conventions, I always voted for him after he became the party's candidate. And my support was not based merely upon loyalty to my party. In 1896, while I objected to the free-silver plank, I nevertheless preferred Bryan to William McKinley, the stooge of Mark Hanna, the Republican boss from Ohio. In 1900, although I had hoped for a Democratic nominee better armed that the "radical" Bryan to cut into the Republican ranks, I once again preferred him to President McKinley, who this time had Governor Theodore Roosevelt of New York as his running mate. By 1908, when Bryan made his third try for the Presidency, the unpalatable silver issue had ceased to exist—new gold discoveries had driven it into limbo—but by this time Bryan represented the past rather than the future, and I felt that with him the Democrats would have small chance. Yet I voted for him in preference to William Howard Taft, that easygoing and charming gentleman whom President Roosevelt picked as his successor. In the past forty years I have often speculated on the things, bad and good alike, that the man who was known as the Great Commoner might have done for the United States had he ever been elected President. Certainly Bryan was the most interesting man who failed in the quest.

XVI

ALONG TOWARD THE END of 1900, with business booming, with Evelyn's happiness and my own on the highest plane as we looked forward to the birth of our first child, just when everything good in the world seemed to be coming my way, I suffered the first great blow of my life in the death of my mother. I was completely unprepared. I realized as I slowly readjusted myself that I could never have been prepared.

It was not very long, however, before I began to realize something else. As time went on, instead of receding, Mother still seemed near. It was as if she had only gone to another room. I could still talk to her, and she could still talk to me. It is only young children who lose their mothers through death. Mine has never left me.

There are schools, I understand, that have such long waiting lists that a child must be entered at birth to have even a chance of being admitted perhaps fourteen or fifteen years later. I never attempted to place my daughter in such a school, but Evelyn and I had decided that if our firstborn should be a girl, she must have the finest musical education that could be provided. When our daughter Vera was scarcely a week old it seemed to me that I had better get going, and since Madame Calvé was in town at the time, I called at her hotel to ask her advice.

I had known that great and gifted lady for several years, and

she listened with friendly interest to the plans my wife and I had worked out.

"I think, Mr. Bloom," she said, with just the suggestion of a twinkle, "that I could better advise you after hearing your daughter sing. Perhaps in a few years . . ."

"You mean you'll teach her yourself?" I exclaimed, jumping to a conclusion perhaps not wholly justified by Madame Calvé's words.

She laughed heartily. Then she said, "When the time comes, if your little girl has a voice, yes, I will take her as a pupil."

I thanked Madame Calvé profusely and hurried home to tell Evelyn the wonderful news. It was the first day she had been permitted to sit up after her confinement, and she laughed so hard that I was alarmed for her health. My feelings were a little wounded, too.

"All right, dear," I said. "Wait and see."

Together we waited, and to our great satisfaction Vera turned out to be not only devoted to the study of music but possessed of a charming voice as well. When she was in her early teens I reminded Madame Calvé of her promise, and she invited Vera to sing for her. A little later Vera became her pupil—and I still think it wasn't so stupid of me to have picked the best teacher in the world when my baby was only a week old.

Nothing was ever too good for Vera. Few things, indeed, seemed to me to be good enough. When I bought a toy, it always had to be the biggest and most expensive. If it was a doll, it had to have real hair, and eyes that opened and closed. If it was a piano, it was a genuine one, even if it had only three or four octaves. Vera had her own pony and cart before she was three. Unconsciously, I suppose I was making up to my little girl for my own toyless childhood. I have no doubt that a psychologist would tell me I really bought all those things for myself. I couldn't argue the point, for I certainly derived huge pleasure from Vera's playthings. She, I am sure, would have been just as happy with much simpler toys. I wouldn't have been.

I had the same attitude about clothes. Evelyn's taste was much too simple, I felt, and I just couldn't understand why she wouldn't let me dress Vera exclusively in laces and silks. When I tried to buy our child an ermine coat, my wife was so firmly

opposed that I became rather sulky. Suppose I *had* bought our two-year-old a sealskin coat just a month before, I argued—we could afford it, couldn't we? Evelyn just smiled and remained firm.

On my next trip to New York I bought Vera a beaver coat. Evelyn hadn't specifically forbidden beaver, so I got away with that one. On the same trip I went into Altman's, then at Sixth Avenue and Eighteenth Street, to find a skirt for my wife. I knew Evelyn wanted one, though she had refused to make the purchase in Chicago on the grounds that such a garment was a needless extravagance. Somewhat embarrassed, I described the kind of skirt I wanted, and with my eyes modestly downcast I sat off in a corner until samples should be brought to me. The only man in the place, I felt uncomfortable in the presence of so many smartly dressed women parading back and forth. A little later the saleswoman returned and asked me whether I had seen anything I wanted. "I haven't seen anything at all," I answered, "I am waiting to look at samples." The lady then explained that all the smartly dressed women were models displaying the different styles expressly for my benefit. "I must have been thinking about other things," I responded, unwilling to acknowledge that I was a complete hick. "I'll rely on your judgment. I know my wife will like anything you pick out." Evelyn was very much pleased with her new skirt and complimented me on my excellent taste. I never dared tell her that the saleswoman, who naturally had an eye on her commission, had instantly selected the most costly skirt in the store.

My trips to New York were becoming more and more frequent, and I began to think about taking a little apartment. At that time I usually stayed at the St. Cloud Hotel (later replaced by the Knickerbocker), on the southeast corner of Broadway and Forty-second; my office was then in the Bedouin Building at Broadway and Twenty-eighth, an unpretentious structure that was demolished years ago.

Across the street from my hotel was the Metropole, a hotel and restaurant much favored by actors, under the management of George Considine, and adjacent to the Metropole was the Rossmore, where Paddy Roche held forth. All three were comfortable, unpretentious places, with excellent food and wine,

and on a spring afternoon or evening nothing could have been pleasanter than sitting out on the sidewalk watching the world go by. It went by at such a leisurely pace in those days, before this corner had come to be known as the Crossroads of the World. Pedestrians sauntered and tarried in those days—the word *flâneur* was just as appropriate on Broadway as on the Rue de Rivoli or the Champs Elysées—the lazy passing of a hansom cab was something to be noted, and the rare advent of a motorcar at this quiet intersection gave one a sensation more terrifying than all the massed hell-on-wheels can inspire today.

In the evening I usually went to the theater or to one or another of the many music halls and variety gardens. As in San Francisco and Chicago, this activity was pleasure and business combined. I had to keep in close touch with the ever changing tastes in entertainment, and the only satisfactory way was to go from place to place myself, from the best to the worst, from the most expensive to the cheapest, with all intervening gradations. One type of song would appeal to one social level, another type to higher or lower strata. It was my business to know what was what and to try to pick from the great mass of new music offered for publication the selections with broadest potential appeal. That way lay the profits.

One song that I heard everywhere on one of my trips to New York, just as I had heard it in Chicago, just as millions heard it in every whistle-stop town in America, was entitled "The Dying Girl's Request." No song ever annoyed me more; in fact, I couldn't stand it. Just a few months before, the man who wrote it had offered it to me, and I had not only turned him down but sent him on his way rejoicing, with a note to Will Rossiter, a rival publisher, who made a small fortune out of the song I rejected. I was foolish enough to believe that a song about a jilted girl who pined away and died wouldn't go over. My trouble was lack of imagination—people simply had to find out what the dying girl's request was, to do so they bought thousands and thousands of copies, and, contrary to reasonable prediction, this horror became a music-hall favorite. I doubt whether copies of "The Dying Girl's Request" are readily obtainable today, and to avoid responsibility for a wave of suicides that might be induced through sheer frustration I will

here disclose the boon this tragic creature asked: " 'Just tell him that I loved him,' was the dying girl's request." This from memory, too—I have never been able to forget it.

The New York stage in the early years of the century provided a rich and varied entertainment. I can illustrate this—without implying, I trust, that I regard my own preferences as completely representative—from my little collection of playbills covering the majority of the things I saw between the years 1900 and 1905 or 1906. In 1900, I attended David Belasco's production of *Madame Butterfly* (the play, that is, for Puccini didn't write his opera until several years later); Valérie Bergère played Cho-Cho-San, with Rankin Duvall as Lieutenant Pinkerton. In the same year these two appeared in a Belasco farce called *Naughty Anthony;* Maude Adams in *Romeo and Juliet;* Ellen Terry in *Madame Sans-Gêne;* Maxine Elliott (whose signed portrait appeared a little later on my publication, "The Elliott Waltzes") in *When We Were Twenty-One;* and young Elsie Ferguson in *The Liberty Belles,* as one of the schoolgirls. In 1901, I saw Charles Frohman's productions of *Barbara Frietchie,* which starred Effie Ellsler; *Diplomacy,* with William Faversham, Margaret Anglin, and Guy Standing; and *Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines,* with Ethel Barrymore; also *The Merchant of Venice,* with Nat Goodwin as Shylock and Maxine Elliott as Portia, and that great moral drama *Ten Nights in a Barroom,* in which Joseph Wheelock appeared as Joe Morgan. The following year William Brady presented *Foxy Grandpa* and *Under Southern Skies,* the latter starring his wife, Grace George. I also saw *Soldiers of Fortune,* by Richard Harding Davis, in which Robert Edeson played; *Romeo and Juliet,* this time with Robert Mantell as the chief drawing card; and Denman Thompson's *Old Homestead,* which had been running steadily all over the country since 1886, with the author as the star. During the next three or four years I saw Richard Mansfield in *Julius Caesar* and Raymond Hitchcock in *The Yankee Consul;* George Ade's *The Sultan of Sulu;* Al Woods' presentation entitled *Queen of the White Slaves* (which was *not* a play about prostitution, a subject then strictly taboo on the American stage); Brady's production of *Girls Will Be Girls;* Julia Marlowe in the Frohman production of *When Knighthood Was*

in Flower; Joe Weber in *The Peddler.* I heard Victor Herbert's charming *Babes in Toyland* for the first time, and I heard Calvé, for perhaps the tenth time, sing *Carmen* as only she could sing it. Nor must I forget to mention *The Bowery After Dark,* "introducing Terry McGovern, the fistic marvel of the twentieth century, also Mrs. Terry McGovern, her first Appearance." That was *something,* or, as they said at the time, a lallapalooza.

New York restaurants were superb. My favorite happened to be the Arena, on West Thirty-first Street, which was run by Will and Fred Muschenheim, who in 1904 became proprietors of the newly built Hotel Astor on Times Square; Fred is still active in the management of the hotel. George Rector, of the Chicago restaurant family, opened his own place, also on Times Square, about this time. Louis Mouquin catered to an appreciative clientele, which included the musical crowd, on Sixth Avenue below Twenty-eighth Street. Jansen's Hofbrau was a few blocks farther up Broadway, and Dinty Moore was at the corner of Thirty-seventh, just across the street from my office. Martin's, which had started down on University Place, came up to Broadway just above Madison Square. Billy the Oysterman was down somewhere below Washington Square when I first visited his seafood emporium; later he moved to Sixth Avenue near Eighteenth, and considerably later to his present site on Twentieth Street just off Fifth Avenue; in addition, I understand, there is now a "branch office" on West Forty-seventh Street. The Hoffman House, the Holland House, and the Fifth Avenue Hotel still flourished. And for a really fancy dinner there was George Boldt's Waldorf-Astoria, where the famous Oscar, the best-known maître d'hôtel in the world, could be seen hovering over the table of "Bet a Million" Gates; or Delmonico's dazzling new restaurant at Fifth Avenue and Forty-fourth, where, like as not, "Diamond Jim" Brady could be found washing down his fourth dozen oysters with a quart of orange juice in preparation for the substantial food to come.

All this was very pleasant indeed, except for one thing: My wife and baby were in Chicago. And so I took a modest apartment in the Hotel Ansonia, on Broadway a few blocks north of Columbus Circle. Thereafter I made fewer and longer trips

and had my family with me whether I was in New York or Chicago.

This commuting life continued for several years. But New York was becoming more and more my real center of operations, and when things reached the point where I could take care of the Chicago end by spending four or five weeks a year there, we decided that it would be wise to give up our Grand Boulevard apartment and really settle down in the city we had already come to regard as home. It took about two years to complete the transition, and it was not until about 1905 that New York became my voting residence. There was only one serious wrench. That was breaking away from my father's household. I was thirty-five years old and I had been married for about eight years; yet I was still one of the "children" in a Jewish family, and, though traveling had often kept me away, I had at all other times joined with the other members of the family for Sabbath prayers. From now on I would only be an occasional visitor. It was hard for my sisters to face this. It was very hard for Father. He had aged quickly after Mother died, and I knew he could not live many years more. Until his death, in 1908, I never failed to telephone him in the hour before it was time to light the Sabbath candles.

These were exceedingly busy years for me. I had, first of all, a music-publishing firm to manage; next, I had a very large mail-order business; after that, I had between seventy and eighty music departments in stores throughout the country to think about. I also operated a very large store, at 366 Fifth Avenue, where I sold nothing but Victor talking machines. (I now find it pretty hard to realize that the Victor company's president had come to me some years earlier in Chicago to plead with me to take $2,500 worth of his talking machines on consignment, for distribution over the entire United States. I said I was willing to gamble with him on those terms—and it was a gamble, for though people had come to accept the miracle of recording sound on wax cylinders, which Thomas Edison had invented, they refused to believe that flat disks could produce the same effect. Even when they listened they were skeptical, so I set up a booth and did a little missionary work that pro-

vided excellent results. I would take a piano or vocal recording before a group and then ask one of the spectators to tell me his name and address and the time of day. A moment later I would play the record, and even the most suspicious man was bound to be convinced when he heard his own voice repeating the data he had given me only a moment before.)

One of the things I stressed in my advertising of the Fifth Avenue store was free delivery service. It didn't matter whether a customer lived on Madison Avenue or in Madison, Wisconsin —if he wanted his purchase delivered, it was all the same. The average delivery cost was very low, and in a day before free delivery had become standard it more than paid for itself in good will. It even paid off when Mr. Mergenthaler bought a Victor Auxitophone.

This gentleman, whom I had never seen before he walked into the store one day, was head of the Mergenthaler Linotype Company. The Auxitophone was the finest and most elaborate talking machine on the market. In the pre-electronic age it amplified sound by compressed air. It was a magnificent instrument. And the least expensive model cost, as I remember, about $500.

Mr. Mergenthaler knew exactly what he wanted when he came in. He didn't even bother about a demonstration. He just told me that my store had been recommended and gave me an order. Then a sign that read "We Deliver Free Anywhere" caught his eye.

"Does this sign mean what it says?" he asked.

"Exactly what it says, sir," I answered. "In addition, it means free installation for the machine you have just bought. The Auxitophone is such a sensitive instrument that I wouldn't sell it to you if I wasn't sure it would be properly set up."

"I want it for my Paris house," said Mr. Mergenthaler. "I am sailing day after tomorrow."

"Your Auxitophone will be on board your ship," I told him. "So will Mr. Schwartz, who is our chief mechanic. And thank you for your order."

Then Mr. Mergenthaler started selecting records, and for the first time in my experience I found myself urging a customer to go easy on his purchases. But he clearly felt that he must try

to make up for the free service I was giving him, and he bought more than $1,000 worth of recorded music before he left. I suggested that Schwartz could set up the Auxitophone in his cabin, so that he could give concerts during the crossing, and he liked the idea. I didn't lose any money on Mr. Mergenthaler, either. During the next year or so I sold at least twenty Auxitophones to friends whom he sent to me—and all of them lived in New York City.

I continued in the music business until 1910. By that time I was so closely identified with Victor talking machines that there was a real question in the public mind whether Sol Bloom owned Victor or Victor owned Sol Bloom. The company disliked that situation and offered to buy back the contract under which I was their principal distributor. I accepted, and about the same time I disposed of my publishing business to Witmark, the firm with which I had begun my music career more than fifteen years earlier. My reason for wanting to get out of the music field completely was that by this time I had heavy investments in real estate and felt it would be more profitable to devote all of my attention to them. During the next ten years, in real estate and building construction, I achieved a new measure of material success. It was even remarked in some quarters that Sol Bloom was a "rich man." That was an exaggeration. Even so, the boy who once had earned $1.25 a week didn't make out too badly.

XVII

I CAN'T REMEMBER the time when, in my own mind, at least, I wasn't a real-estate operator. As a kid in San Francisco I had a sharp eye for property values, and as soon as I had accumulated a little capital I began to test my judgment. My association with Boss Buckley and his friends in City Hall did me no harm, either, and I got in on the ground floor on a number of profitable little trades. In Chicago I was also close enough to some of the big operators to know what was going on and cash in on my knowledge, and by the time my music business was taking me regularly to New York I considered myself a pretty shrewd fellow in the field of real estate. My conceit turned out to be rather expensive at one point a little later, but before going into that affair I want to tell about the first transaction in which I played a part in New York. The elements were really all tied together.

About 1900, or a little earlier, the Chicago department store of Siegel-Cooper opened a branch in New York, at Sixth Avenue and Eighteenth Street. Frank Cooper, a charming and able man, had been my friend from way back, having known my family in Peoria before we went to California. Henry Siegel, the senior partner, was a man of driving ambition who fancied himself as a "merchant prince," in the manner of A. T. Stewart, John Wanamaker, and Marshall Field. He got wind of R. H. Macy & Company's plan to move their store from Fourteenth Street and Sixth Avenue to the site they now occupy at Broadway and Thirty-fourth. That gave Siegel two ideas. One of

them was to buy the old Macy property and start a store of his own as soon as they moved out; he employed me, among other persons not primarily known as real-estate dealers, to work on the early negotiations. Eventually he bought the property, and he did his best to capitalize on Macy's prestige by giving his establishment the vague name of Fourteenth Street Store. But Macy's customers weren't fooled by the name. It must have enraged Henry Siegel to see them, for months after he had taken over, getting into the horse-drawn busses Macy's hired to convey shoppers free of charge from the old site to the new store uptown.

Siegel's other idea in connection with Macy's had been to buy the corner property at Broadway and Thirty-fourth and then hold out for an exorbitant price. Over a period of several years Macy's succeeded in buying almost the entire block bounded by Broadway, Thirty-fourth Street, Seventh Avenue, and Thirty-fifth Street. Only Henry Siegel, holding the valuable key corner, stood in their way. They talked, they argued, they cajoled, all to no purpose. Siegel's price was out of sight. Suddenly Macy's made up their minds that the corner wasn't a key corner at all. They started building. Siegel decided he had better compromise. Macy's refused to have anything further to do with him and went ahead with their plans. Today the corner of Broadway and Thirty-fourth is occupied by a Nedick fruit-juice stand.

It was my advance knowledge of Macy's plans to move uptown, coupled a little later with well-founded rumors that Altman's were planning to build a new store only a block away, at Thirty-fourth and Fifth Avenue, that persuaded me to make my first investment in New York real estate. It seemed to me that the block between these stores offered a very choice speculation, so I bought one property on Thirty-fourth Street outright and took options on several others. I didn't see how I could miss, for I chose them all carefully on the south side of the street. Most shoppers instinctively pick the shady side to walk on.

My only error was to ignore a more important factor than shade. When Altman's opened (in 1905, I believe) shoppers hurrying between there and Macy's took the slightly shorter

and easier route, which was the north side of Thirty-fourth. My attractive frontages in the shade turned out to be worth just about half as much as the ones I had so shrewdly avoided across the way. I decided not to put off my licking, so I let my options go and sold the property I owned. I had too many other things on my mind to carry the additional load of worry about one poor investment.

For the next few years I continued to trade in real estate on the side. With my temperament it would have been almost impossible not to. I always looked at a property as something to be improved, and whenever I found one that seemed to lend itself to fuller development I wanted to take a hand. Working cautiously, so as not to become involved to the point of neglecting my music business, I not only acquired a varied experience but made money. By 1910, when I made my decision to give up the Victor agency, I felt I had enough of both to justify my becoming a full-scale real-estate man.

By combining a knowledge of property values, an ability to foresee trends, a broad acquaintance, and a sure sense of publicity I quickly became prominent in my new field. At the outset I made a decision that was considered very radical. I held a press conference and announced my intention of keeping the papers fully informed about my operations. My position was that important real-estate transactions were news. I stated that I considered myself more than a trader, that I regarded myself as one of the developers of New York City and hoped to become known as a civic improver. I was quite sincere about all this, and though in some quarters my motives were questioned, I gradually established a solid reputation as a man who really did buy properties with the idea of improving them. One man who recognized this was William Randolph Hearst, who frequently referred to me as "the doctor of real estate."

In any case, I was soon primarily known as a builder, rather than as a mere speculator. By 1913, when I announced the purchase of the property at the southwest corner of Fifty-ninth Street and Seventh Avenue, to be improved by the construction of a club-and-apartment building, one newspaper remarked, "Sol Bloom is evidently a candidate for the mixed-building championship," and then went on to say that I constructed

theaters, office buildings, loft buildings, amusement palaces, and apartments "while you wait." The reference to amusement palaces was based on an earlier announcement that I intended to put up a building containing a number of restaurants and cabarets—French, Italian, Spanish, German, English, Swiss, Chinese, Japanese—on the site of the Tichenor-Grand Building at the north end of Columbus Circle. This plan never materialized. I was, however, extremely active in the other fields of construction, especially the theater field.

Over a period of years I either built or renovated more than a dozen theaters. Among them were the Harris (originally called the Candler, for Asa Candler, founder of the Coca-Cola Company), the Cort, the Selwyn, the Apollo, the Times Square, the Klaw, the Music Box, the Strand, the Longacre, the Manhattan, the Republic, and the Lexington. The Candler was the first without a gallery, and it revolutionized theater construction. Mr. Candler had let me go ahead with my radical proposal to omit the "peanut gallery" when I proved to him that by deepening the balcony and sloping it more steeply to the rear his theater would actually have more seats than the conventional structure with both balcony and gallery. Another advantage of eliminating the gallery was that all patrons now entered the theater through the main lobby. Before that, there had been a stairway outside around the corner, and young men without much money to spend on entertainment resented having to take their girls around that corner. I knew. I had not forgotten my early days in San Francisco.

I built a couple of theaters for Arch and Edgar Selwyn, who were then in partnership with Ed Bowes, a San Franciscan, who later, through his unique amateur hour, became famous in radio as Major Bowes. One of these theaters was to be called the Illington, for the actress Margaret Illington, who had married Bowes after her divorce from Daniel Frohman, the producer; the other was to be the Mayo, for Edgar Selwyn's playwright wife, Margaret Mayo. The signs had already been ordered when Miss Mayo divorced Selwyn, and it was decided that since there could be no Mayo Theater, it would be better also to eliminate the name Illington. That is why these theaters are known today as the Times Square and Apollo.

With Dan Frohman I had many years of happy association, both in and out of the theater. This quiet elder brother of Charles Frohman, who died when the *Lusitania* was torpedoed in 1915, was an enchanting personality. And he had a superb sense of humor; in his memoirs, for example, he speaks of Shakespeare as "the Dion Boucicault of his day." Admired by all, loved by his friends, he was for more than twenty years truly the dean of the American theater. When he died in 1940 he was almost ninety.

I had learned one lesson in San Francisco that I never forgot: The alert theater manager always makes money. If a play flops, he gets rid of it quickly and puts on something else. The producer, on the other hand, can lose his shirt on one expensive production. Yet it would have been almost impossible for me not to get into the production end occasionally. I heard about so many brilliant plays that sounded like certain hits that from time to time, although I never staged a production entirely on my own, I would put up part of the money required. It is pleasant to look back on a few of those plays in which I had a hand. There was *On Trial,* with which the Candler opened in 1914, by a twenty-two-year-old unknown named Elmer Reizenstein; it was the first of many successes for the playwright known today as Elmer Rice. There was Bayard Veiller's *Within the Law,* which opened in 1918, with Jane Cowl. Around the same time there was John Galsworthy's *Justice.* I clearly remember the opening night, with Dan Frohman as my guest. After the first-act curtain Mr. Frohman turned to my wife. "Where is Sol going to put this on next week?" he inquired. Even the great Frohman, happily for me, could be wrong. *Justice* ran for many months.

Undoubtedly the biggest job of assembling property for a single buyer in the history of New York was the one undertaken by the Pennsylvania Railroad after the decision had been made to bore the Hudson River tunnel and carry passengers into the heart of the city instead of ferrying them over from New Jersey. I was one of the people engaged to acquire the area between Thirty-first and Thirty-third Streets west of Seventh Avenue, where the station now stands; in addition, the railroad bought

the land where the Pennsylvania Hotel was built and several blocks more to the west. For several years this group of real-estate specialists worked quietly and effectively, and in the end the Pennsylvania held title to the entire property without having to resort to condemnation proceedings. At times the going was hard. I remember trying for months to buy a fairly big piece of land that was occupied by a machine shop. The owner must have known that there was something in the air, for I wasn't able to close a deal with him until I hired a machinist who pretended to be looking for a business of his own; then, by paying for both the property and the business, we got what we were after. In the same way we bought a couple of little restaurants, hardware shops, second-hand-clothing stores, and the like. It was a notable achievement to assemble this vast property under a single owner without delaying the building schedule for as much as a day.

My most complicated undertaking as an individual operator began with a proposal I made to James Gordon Bennett, the spectacular publisher of the *New York Herald,* who as a young man had sent Henry M. Stanley to Africa to find the lost explorer, David Livingstone. It was about the end of 1915 or the beginning of 1916 when I suggested to Mr. Bennett's publisher, Frank Flaherty, that Herald Square, where the newspaper was published, had become a very expensive part of town in which to run a printing plant. Taxes were high, the building was old and poorly arranged, and, for what they were getting, the rent was tremendous. Flaherty was fully aware of all this, and when I said I thought I might be able to break the *Herald's* long-term lease he cabled his boss, who spent most of his time in Paris. Bennett's instructions were to go ahead, and he agreed to pay me a fee of $50,000 for terminating the lease. In addition, I was required to find a suitable new site for the newspaper.

I next made a call at the offices of the Manice Estate (I am not quite sure about the spelling), which owned the *Herald* building. Knowing that they would like to get rid of their tenant, so that they could improve the property and charge a higher rental, I asked them whether they would authorize me to get Bennett's assent. They at once agreed, and I told them I would get to work. Then I went downtown to talk with Frank

Waterman, taking with me a sketch of a new building at Herald Square which bore the sign "Waterman's Ideal Fountain Pen." I told him I would put up the building and rent it to his company on a long-term lease. He liked the idea.

My next step was to find a new site for Bennett's *Herald.* The Pennsylvania Railroad owned a large property west of Seventh Avenue, between Thirty-third and Thirty-fourth Streets, and I made preliminary arrangements to take over the site. Everything so far had been agreed to on a contingent basis, of course, but by this time the deal appeared to be pretty well sewed up. I began estimating my profits. In addition to the fifty thousand from Bennett for breaking his lease, there were fees in sight for arranging the loans to put up two new buildings, one for the *Herald,* the other for Waterman Fountain Pens, and my brokerage commissions as renting agent. Roughly, it looked as if I might make as much as a quarter of a million. It was an agreeable contemplation.

These key negotiations took more than two years, but by the early part of 1918 the various papers had been drawn up and I was ready to make the most important announcement of my real-estate career. Then James Gordon Bennett died, and the whole thing fell apart. Next to the time when I found the trap door nailed down in the Grand Opera House and I lost my chance to buy tickets for Patti's first San Francisco appearance, this was the hardest blow of my whole career. And as before, it wasn't so much the money. It was the wound to my self-esteem.

I didn't quite get over this blow until a year or two later—and then, by a crazy piece of luck, I put over a deal that made up for the failure of my careful plans that had centered upon James Gordon Bennett.

When it was decided to build the Palace Theater on the east side of Broadway between Forty-sixth and Forty-seventh, I tried to buy the Peter de Lacey property, at the corner of Forty-seventh, for inclusion in the structure we had in mind. I offered $700,000. Mr. de Lacey, knowing that the corner was wanted for the theater, asked $1,000,000. I answered that in my judgment the property was worth no more than half that amount, but that we were willing to pay $700,000 if we could get it before construction started. Everybody in the real-estate business knew

that I was a one-price man; I never haggled, never increased my carefully calculated original offer. De Lacey again declined my bid. A little later work on the Palace began, and the De Lacey property was not included.

Some time later Peter de Lacey died, and his estate turned the corner over to Joseph P. Day, the leading real-estate auctioneer, for sale; I went downtown to attend the auction. I figured that the property might bring half a million or a little more, and there was the off chance that it could be picked up for less. I put in a bid of $400,000. This was jumped to $425,000, then to $445,000. Joe Day looked at me, and I made an appropriate twitch to indicate that I would pay $450,000. That was my limit, and I put on my hat and walked out. As I went through the door I heard Day say, "Sold to . . ." The door closed, and I walked over to Hahn's Restaurant, on Park Row, where I regularly ate lunch when I was downtown. I didn't care who had bought the De Lacey property, or how much more than $450,000 it had brought.

Just as a handsome slice of rare beef was placed before me, the proprietor announced that I was wanted on the telephone. It was Martin Beck, the theatrical manager. "I'll give you $25,000 for your contract, Sol," he stated without any preliminaries. Not being able to find anything better to say, I told Mr. Beck that I'd think it over. "Well, don't sell that corner before seeing me," he continued. "I'm leaving for Florida this afternoon, and I'll talk to you when I get back." I told Beck I could make no promises. Then I went back to eat my beef and get my wits together.

I had hardly sat down before there was another telephone call. This time Ed Wise, of United Cigar Stores, was on the line. "What'll you take for your De Lacey contract?" he asked. I suggested that since he wanted it enough to interrupt my lunch he might mention a figure. He said $25,000. I said No. He said $50,000. I said Yes. Then, still without having touched my beef, I went uptown to my bank to find out how big my balance was. After that I went downtown again to see Joe Day.

"I suppose you want some money," I began cautiously. I still wasn't absolutely sure I had bought anything.

"I'll take $45,000, if you have it handy," said Joe. The usual

requirement was 10 per cent in cash, within twenty-four hours, on the total purchase price. I slowly wrote out a check.

"How did I come to get the property for $450,000?" I inquired after putting the contract into my wallet.

"That was the knockdown price, Sol," said Mr. Day. "As soon as I got your bid I stopped the auction. I wasn't going to waste any more time on a dinky little corner."

"Well, thanks, Joe," I said. "Hope I can do you the same kind of favor some day." I didn't tell him at the time how many dollars' worth that would be. I wanted to collect my $50,000 from Ed Wise first, plus the $45,000 down payment I had just made. There was, of course, no difficulty about that, for his agreement over the telephone was as good as a sealed contract. But I remembered how another deal had fallen through because one of the principals had been thoughtless enough to die.

Wise was in his office when I arrived, and I had a check for $95,000 in my pocket when I left. By that time it was nearly four o'clock, and I still hadn't eaten lunch.

"Roast beef, rare," I announced to the waiter a few minutes later. "And a bottle of beer," I added. The extravagance was justifiable, I felt.

XVIII

DURING THESE BUSY YEARS in New York, though I continued to be a stanch Democrat and had become a member of Tammany Hall, I found little time for active politics. But I had many friends and business associates who were active, some as officeholders, and I was honored, about the end of World War I, by being named to the mayor's committee for welcoming distinguished guests to the city. Perhaps that was because I was a good Democrat. Perhaps it was because I knew so many influential people. It might even have been partly in recognition of my activity during the war, when I made many speeches in Liberty Bond campaigns and, with the help of my wife, set up a number of canteens for the entertainment of soldiers and sailors.

It may have been one of those trips down the harbor to meet some incoming dignitaries that reminded me of a lack in my life. I hadn't taken a vacation in five or six years, not even a day, I realized, as I took a deep breath of salt air one morning. Before 1914 we had gone abroad almost every summer. I felt a strong urge to visit France and Switzerland and Italy again, and, as usual, I wanted to get started immediately.

"We can't possibly get ready in less than a month," my wife stated when I broached the matter that evening. "Vera's school won't be over until then, and, besides, neither of us has a thing to wear." Evelyn was much too tactful a woman to tell me at the time that she and Vera had for months been planning a trip and had only been waiting for a suitable moment to break the news.

While I made the various arrangements about passage and took care of the more important things that might arise during my absence, my wife and daughter made their arrangements with dressmakers, milliners, and other caterers to feminine needs and whims. In addition, Vera made some arrangements all her own. With that magnificent assurance of the very young, she proposed to write a number of articles for *The New York Telegram* and the McClure Newspaper Syndicate and to get some material for Harper & Brothers. To the fascinated editors she outlined a plan to interview Queen Mary of England, Prime Minister Lloyd George, Premier Clemenceau, the Empress Eugénie, Pope Benedict XV, and Ignace Jan Paderewski, the virtuoso who had become premier of reconstituted Poland. There were a few others on her list whom she classified as "uncertain." Among these was Gabriele d'Annunzio, the fighter-pilot who, in defiance of the governments of Europe and exceeding even the probabilities of *opéra bouffe,* had recently seized the Croatian port of Fiume. But Vera got the assignment. I could see that we were going to have a busy summer.

Vera had her successes and her failures. In London, in the absence of Queen Mary, who was in Sandringham with the rest of the royal family, Sir Harry Verney, the Queen's private secretary, provided the material for an interesting article. (A summer or two later Sir Harry presented Vera to the Queen at a garden party, and at that time my daughter was able to get her subject material direct. She tells about this meeting, as well as about her subsequent presentation at court, in her own book, *There's No Place Like Washington.*)

In Paris, arrangements were made for Vera to meet the ninety-three-year-old lady who, almost exactly half a century earlier, had ceased to be empress of the French. We were to accompany her to mass!

When our party of six—the Empress Eugénie, a lady-in-waiting, a secretary, my wife, Vera, and I—entered the Church of St. Paul–St. Pierre, not a seat remained. No one recognized the little old lady wearing a heavy black veil. Without revealing her identity, I managed to get cane-bottomed chairs for her and her companion. I watched intently as the service proceeded. The former empress was too old to kneel; instead, she inclined her

fragile shoulders and bowed her head. This was her last mass in Paris. A few days later she left for Spain, the land of her birth. There, less than a year afterward, died the last empress of the French.

Most distressing among the failures was the breakdown of negotiations with Paderewski. We had the great good luck to find him in Paris when we got there, and through our embassy I was able to arrange an interview. Vera talked with the premier and secured his agreement to let Harper's publish his memoirs. She sent off a jubilant cable to New York. In the following weeks disputes arose, and in the end Harper's did not get the Paderewski story. But Vera didn't hear the bad news until after our Italian adventure, and we all left Paris for the south in the liveliest good humor. The idea of a young girl storming the Adriatic fortress of D'Annunzio to get a magazine story appealed to my imagination. I never for an instant let Vera suspect that I regarded her project as fantastic. At her age, after all, I had rented an Algerian village and brought it to Chicago.

We had no definite plans. When we reached the Swiss-Italian border our train was delayed for some minutes while customs inspectors performed their duty, and as we waited several young Italian soldiers edged toward us. American cigarettes were just as good currency in Europe then as they are today, and I gave them a couple of packages. After they had expressed their appreciation, Vera was emboldened to try out her school Italian on them. She asked for suggestions about the best means of getting through to Fiume and D'Annunzio.

They seemed to have no ideas to offer toward the solution of our unusual problem, and it was not until we returned to our compartment and the train had begun to move that one of the soldiers called after us, *"Provate il Popolo d'Italia."*

"He says to try the people of Italy," Vera interpreted.

"Well, he's a big help," I answered.

"Perhaps *Popolo d'Italia* is the name of a hotel or something," responded Vera.

"Education is certainly a wonderful thing," I remarked. "I wish I had one."

When we reached our hotel in Milan they told us that *Popolo*

d'Italia was the name of a newspaper. We followed their directions, and a little later Vera, her mother, and I were climbing a dark stairway that led to a ratty little office. A young man told Vera that the editor was expected shortly after midnight—it happened to be election day, and he was out getting a story. I wasn't very much impressed either by what we had seen of the newspaper plant or by the editor who was obviously his own legman. Nor could I work out any reasonable tie-up between this place and Fiume. But I told Vera that if she really wanted to return to see the man after midnight, I would go with her.

We came back at midnight and found the editor seated behind his desk. Stocky, completely bald, with a large mouth and heavy under jaw, he looked at us with the most impelling eyes I had ever seen. His name was Mussolini.

In her rather limited Italian, Vera explained to this man whose name was yet unknown to the outside world why she had come to him. When she finished, Mussolini fired question after question at her. Then abruptly he rose from his chair and said that he would get in touch with her the following day.

Next morning Mussolini sent for Vera to come again to his office, and when we started off I noticed that a small crowd had gathered in the hotel lobby to get a look at the Americans who were going to see the editor of *Popolo d'Italia.* I tried without success to comprehend the importance of this obviously important man. Later, of course, we found out that Mussolini was the force behind D'Annunzio, that without him and the supplies and money gathered through the agency of *Popolo d'Italia* the *coup de théâtre* at Fiume would not have been supportable.

Mussolini greeted us with cordiality—presumably he had checked up on us—and told Vera that he would give her a letter to D'Annunzio. He wrote one in longhand and signed it simply with his surname. Then he scribbled notes for presentation to his agents in Venice, Trieste, and Abbazia, the last town before Fiume. Wishing us good luck, he invited us to come back to see him upon our return. It was quite clear that his invitation was also a command.

We left Milan the following day. Venice, to which we had looked forward so eagerly when we were in Paris, now seemed like a waste of time. We went straight through to Trieste and

there hired a car for the last leg of our journey. Aided by Mussolini's letters, we got through to the heavily guarded city of Fiume without serious discomfort or delay.

Vera immediately dispatched her letter to D'Annunzio, and half an hour later the *Comandante's* aide arrived to pay his respects. Then invitations to dinners, receptions, and teas began to be delivered, and for the next few days we were entertained to the point of exhaustion. We did not see D'Annunzio himself until he sent for us on the third or fourth day of our stay.

From his writings and from his reputation as the irresistible lover of countless infatuated ladies, as well as from his recent exploits, I almost expected to be greeted by a cavalier wearing a cloak and a velvet hat with a plume. Instead, we met a solemn soldier—hairless, incredibly thin, who had lost an eye during the war, and who appeared to be somewhat older than his sixty-two or sixty-three years. To him the seizure of Fiume had not been an unlikely chapter in a Graustarkian romance but the climax of a noble crusade. He was the savior of the oppressed. His was the sacred duty to stamp out tyranny. D'Annunzio's single eye burned as he spoke.

We remained in Fiume for about ten days and had four or five conversations with D'Annunzio during that time. Vera got a story that exceeded not only her own but her editor's highest hopes. When we left, D'Annunzio asked us to carry certain messages, which we dispatched by cable from Venice on our way back to Milan. One of them was addressed to the Senate of the United States, another to Samuel Gompers, founder and president of the American Federation of Labor, to whom, of course, as an old friend, I added a personal message. D'Annunzio had been especially anxious to present his side of the seizure of Fiume to the American people.

Back in Milan, Mussolini greeted us with warmth and great interest. He offered Vera his own column on the front page of *Popolo d'Italia* to tell her story, and the following day it appeared with an introduction signed by the editor. After that we left for Rome. Next time I encountered Mussolini he was first minister of state, acclaimed publicly as Il Duce, dictator of Italy. I hold no brief for this man. He was a despicable tyrant and a destroyer. Yet it would be stupid to deny his earlier abili-

ties, just as it would be dishonest not to acknowledge that his co-operation nearly thirty years ago gave a young American girl one of the great thrills of her life—and that her father shared it.

Something happened to me during the course of this trip. When I returned to the routine of New York life, I found that it was no longer so satisfactory as it had been. I felt, as I had never felt before, that I was in a rut. I became moody and introspective. What was I really trying to accomplish? I asked myself for the first time in my life.

I certainly had nothing to complain about. Looking back over the preceding ten years or so, I found the record quite satisfactory. Why was I so dissatisfied now? I wondered.

Slowly an idea began to develop. I looked at the record again, this time to see whether I could pick out any activity that gave me not only satisfaction but a feeling of pride as well. Somewhat to my surprise, I realized that it was a little job I had done during the building of the Panama Canal. Samuel Gompers, whom I had come to know at the outset of my career in the construction business, sent for me one day to ask whether I would undertake a mission for him. He wanted an impartial person to go to Panama in an unofficial capacity to look into the labor situation. I agreed to go, and on my return several months later I gave Gompers a report that helped him to demand and obtain not only a higher general level of wages for thousands of Americans employed in the Canal Zone, but an improvement in living conditions as well. I was given no public credit for what I did. I made no money—I was, in fact, out of pocket. Yet this contribution of time and money gave me a feeling of achievement that surpassed anything I now felt about my business successes in every field.

The trouble with me, I understood now, was that my vacation had provided me with the time and the mood for reflection. Not until I returned to my routine business affairs did I discover the conflict between the mood of those months and the one of "real life." What I needed was a new stimulus, something more impelling than the urge to work only for money. Like the newest college graduate, I wanted to do something noble.

I was a lucky man on two counts. First, I found out in time. Second, I could afford to give up business. At the age of fifty I had financial independence, and I decided at once to put myself in a position to enjoy it. Gradually I shed my obligations and withdrew from active management of the enterprises with which I had been associated. This took several years. More and more I found myself thinking of the freedom ahead. Evelyn and I wondered what it would be like when I no longer had an office to go to; I thought it would be perfect, but she was not so sure. In any case, we would travel a great deal. And I would start catching up with my wife and daughter on the matter of schooling; I had always envied them their formal education. I could almost picture myself leading a life of scholarly ease. It was a pretty picture.

But the picture got out of focus.

In November, 1922, Samuel Marx had been elected to the House of Representatives from the normally Republican Nineteenth Congressional District * where I lived. Two weeks later he died suddenly, and a special election was scheduled for January. Considering his death strictly on the basis of political significance, it was a great break for the Republicans. Not only would they have a second try after defeat, but they had in Walter M. Chandler a seasoned candidate with a known following; after seven terms in Congress he had lost to Marx by a narrow margin, and it seemed very probable that he would win the special election against any candidate the Democrats could persuade on short notice to run.

About Christmas time I had a telephone call from my friend Charlie Murphy, leader of Tammany Hall.

"You're a good Democrat, aren't you, Sol?" he inquired jovially. I told him I hadn't had any complaints recently.

"Well, I've got a tough job for you," he continued. I asked how long the job would take, explaining that I intended to go abroad with my family early in spring, to be gone for perhaps a year.

"It's pretty hard to answer that right now," said Murphy. "We want to run you for Congress against Chandler."

* In consequence of reapportionment, I now represent the Twentieth District.

"Are you joking?" I demanded.

"I'm dead serious, Sol," answered Murphy. "You're the only man who might conceivably win, and we need you."

"But I've had no experience. . . ."

"You'll get plenty in the next couple of weeks."

"But I don't know how . . ."

"We'll show you how."

"Well . . . what do you think my chances are?"

"Pretty poor, frankly."

"All right, Charlie, I'll do it," I told him. Obviously somebody had to be the sacrificial goat. Why not me? I could afford both the time and the money. I called up Evelyn and gave her the comic news.

"How wonderful, darling!" she exclaimed. "It will be such fun to live in Washington." Getting elected to Congress was just as simple as that to my wife. She never allowed even for the possibility of failure in any undertaking she considered worth the effort of beginning. Her attitude gave my candidacy a new aspect right there. If Evelyn thought it would be "fun" to go to Washington, there was nothing else to do. The details were up to me.

Once in the campaign, of course, I ceased thinking about myself as the sacrificial goat. I wanted to win my seat more than I had ever wanted to win anything except the girl who married me—I still feel that way when election time rolls around, let me add—and I gave the contest everything I had.

At the start it was precious little. I knew a lot of people, and I had no serious known enemies. That was one of the reasons for picking me. Another reason for picking me was that Samuel Marx, like myself a Jew, had been able to beat Chandler, and Tammany decided that another Jew might be able to repeat the victory in a district having a substantial Jewish population. I was also comfortably situated financially and could afford the expense of the campaign.

Briefly, I had been chosen to run because I was an amiable and solvent Jew. The fact that I was an amiable Jew with fancy tastes was hardly a political asset. I found that out at the first conference to map my campaign.

"Say, Mr. Bloom," broke in one of my managers after a few

minutes of conversation, "have you got any suits with pants and coat that match?" I got his point. Striped trousers and a black jacket were hardly the best working clothes for an office seeker.

"And maybe you ought to put away your cane until after election," someone else suggested. I agreed, without bothering to explain that I was farsighted and found it hard to focus on near objects, like steps, and used my cane as a "feeler." I also agreed to take the black ribbon off my pince-nez. I was a mush of concession, in fact, and perhaps they were right. But in following elections I decided at all times to be myself. I liked good clothes, and I saw no reason to pretend otherwise. My constituents could take me as I was, cane and black ribbon included. The ribbon, as a matter of fact, has turned out to be my best trade-mark.

But this first time I did everything I was told. As I got up to leave the long preliminary session one of the men held my overcoat and another handed me my hat. Before I could take the hat a third member of the group pounced on it. His hand trembled as he pointed to the manufacturer's label: *Borsalino,* it read.

"Mr. Bloom, will you *please* buy yourself a new hat?" he pleaded. "I don't know where Borsalino is, but it's not in the U.S.A., and you've got to think about the labor vote. This label might ruin you. You have to think of *everything.*"

There was less than a month between the formal announcement of my candidacy and election day, January 30, 1923, and in that time I made well over a hundred scheduled speeches and as many more impromptu talks in places like restaurants and cigar stores, or on street corners. I practically lived in my automobile, with its big sign, VOTE FOR SOL BLOOM, and there were very few blocks through which I was not driven in the old Nineteenth District, which was bounded on the south by Eighty-sixth Street, on the west by the Hudson River, on the north by 125th Street, and on the east by a waggly line that went over as far as Madison Avenue.

I thoroughly enjoyed the exhausting campaign. I liked to talk with people and answer their questions. The issues were

very simple in this special election in which only one office was at stake. They really boiled down to personalities. Did the voter want Chandler, the seasoned Republican? Or did he prefer Bloom, a fresh Democrat, who obviously wanted very much to go to Congress and just as obviously was willing to work his head off to get there?

I kept on with my campaign right up to the moment when the polls closed, and then, with my wife, who had worked almost as hard as I during those grinding weeks, and my daughter, I wound up the night at Pomerantz's, at Broadway and Ninety-fifth Street. This family-style restaurant, known to all simply as "Pommy's," was the unofficial headquarters for politicians of all persuasions, and on election nights everybody crowded in there to get the returns. We were still in the "crystal set" era of radio in 1923, remember.

It was a long pull. The election had been very close, and it was not until many hours later that I appeared to be "in," with a margin of no more than a couple of hundred votes. Jubilant and weary, I took my family home.

On the following morning the newspapers announced that I had won. During the course of the next few days various "official" margins were published, and it was generally understood that I had come through by the scant majority of 145 votes. My hard work had paid off, my last-minute activity on election day had not been wasted. If I had failed to persuade just seventy-three voters that I was the man for the job, I would have lost their votes to my opponent—and he, not I, would have gone to Congress. I have carried my district in subsequent elections by majorities as high as 50,000, but I have never taken anything for granted. No one seeking office can rest on his oars. I am working right now as if my next election might be decided by a difference of seventy-three votes.

If the newspapers conceded my election, the Republican party and Walter Chandler did not. A notice of contest was filed, and it became clear that another fight lay ahead. The Republicans held 225 seats in the Sixty-eighth Congress that would convene in the following December,* the Democrats only 206.

* Article I of the Constitution provided, among other things, that representatives be chosen "every second year" and that "the Congress shall assemble at

In an atmosphere of uncertainty I automatically became congressman-elect on March 4, 1923. I was now entitled, in addition to my salary and allowances, to all the rights, privileges, and immunities of a United States representative.

Later they might throw Sol Bloom out. But first Mrs. Sol Bloom, bless her, was going to find out whether it was really "fun" to live in Washington.

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least once in every year, and such meeting shall be on the first Monday in December, unless they shall by Law appoint a different day." Article II provided that the President "shall hold his Office during the Term of four Years."

On September 13, 1788, the new Constitution having already been ratified, the Continental Congress prepared for its own demise by establishing the first Wednesday of March 1789, (which happened to be March 4) as the date on which the new government under the Constitution should begin its operations. Thus, the terms of representatives (two years), senators (six years), and the President (four years) all began simultaneously; and thereafter, although varying in length, they ended at midnight of March 3 (later, noon of March 4) in odd-numbered years.

Amendment XX, ratified February 6, 1933, and effective one year later, changed the beginning of the President's term from March 4 to January 20, and the beginning of senators' and representatives' terms from March 4 to January 3; this amendment also provided that Congress should assemble on January 3, instead of on the first Monday in December. Accordingly, members of Congress now begin to function approximately two, instead of thirteen, months after election (first Tuesday in November in even-numbered years); and "lame ducks" (members defeated for re-election) no longer exercise the power of legislators from the first Monday in December until the following March 4.

Part III: Washington

XIX

IN THE MONTHS FOLLOWING my election I occupied myself with finding out as much as I could about my new job. There was so much to learn.

My ignorance seemed to spread over two notably broad areas at the start. The first had to do with my position as representative of several hundred thousand people. What did they expect of me? I made a survey of my constituents, their status as individuals in a community, their status in the local economic structure, and their status in the national scheme. I wrote many letters during this period. I set up an office and invited people to come in to exchange ideas. In this way I gathered a great deal of helpful information.

I also tried to prepare myself for the responsibility that awaited me on the floor of Congress. I was determined that I was going to fit into the bewildering mechanism on Capitol Hill, and I read dozens of books on government and legislation. My bible was Robert's *Rules of Order,* the standard authority on parliamentary procedure. (In my first year I took lessons in procedure from Lehr Fess, son of Senator Simeon D. Fess of Ohio, who was the House parliamentarian. Nearly every day I would spend a little time with him, and from this man who sat so unobtrusively beside the Speaker during the daily sessions I learned the significance of the accepted rules of procedure without which chaos would ensue. I never spent time to better advantage. Even after twenty-five years I find it helpful occasionally to brush up with Lewis Deschler, present House parlia-

mentarian, who, incidentally, is writing a book that bids fair to supersede the Robert tome.)

In addition I made frequent trips to Washington, just to learn its geography better and to get something of the feel of the city. Sometimes Evelyn accompanied me. One of the things we had to think about was a place to live. A few weeks before moving to the capital we settled on the Hamilton Hotel and engaged an apartment.

The great day came at last. At noon on December 3, 1923, with my wife and daughter in the gallery, I took my oath of office and then assisted, as was my right and duty, in the organization of the Sixty-eighth Congress which had come into being nine months before. It had been predicted that the "Showman from the Nineteenth New York District" would usher in his congressional career with an "act" of some sort, and there were people who felt that I deliberately stood in the limelight at the very moment when I was sworn in. Certain persons carped because I chose to dress with the same punctilio—morning coat and striped trousers—that I would have observed for a wedding or a diplomatic reception. My only comment is that I continue to regard formal dress as appropriate for the day on which the Congress of the United States convenes.

The first days of the Sixty-eighth Congress were largely given to routine affairs. I was assigned to three committees, Patents, Expenditures in the Department of the Interior, and Industrial Arts and Expositions. My work allowed little time for worrying about the coming fight over my seat. Besides, I had powerful forces on my side. My case was a much bigger thing than a dispute between two individuals over a single seat. It was really a struggle over forty-three seats. Battle lines were drawn in the early weeks of 1924.

Here is a partial sketch of the background:

President Harding had died in August, 1923, leaving a legacy of corruption and scandal of unprecedented magnitude, the focal point of which was Teapot Dome, a vast oil reservoir in Wyoming that had been fraudulently leased by Harding's Secretary of the Interior to several big oil interests. Though still in control of a majority in both the Senate and the House, the Republican administration was in such bad odor that it faced

not only the normal danger of losing the next election to the Democrats, but, what was feared even more, an insurgent movement within its own ranks. Chief insurgent was Senator Robert M. ("Old Bob") La Follette, of Wisconsin, an avowed candidate for President. In the event of a three-cornered contest for the Presidency there was the very real possibility that none of the candidates would have a majority of the electoral votes.

The Constitution provides that in such a situation the President shall be chosen by the House of Representatives, and there is the further significant provision that the vote shall be by states, with each state entitled to a single vote. Thus, in a decision that would almost surely be made strictly along party lines, a simple majority of representatives in any state would determine the vote of that state.

This was why my disputed seat was so important: If a Democrat held it, New York would have twenty-two Democratic representatives and twenty-one Republican representatives; if the House should be called upon to choose the next President, the vote of that state would be for the Democratic candidate. In other words, the difference in New York between twenty-two Democratic votes and twenty-one *might* be the difference between a Democratic and a Republican President.

The Republicans wanted to occupy that twenty-second seat, and, with a majority in the House, steam-roller tactics would give it to them. I was to be the victim, not because of personal animosity toward me, nor, indeed, because of any irregularity in connection with my election. I am quite sure that there would have been no contest if my seat had not been the weight that could change the balance. The closeness of the election had merely provided the pretext for attempting to unseat me.

I was very quiet and industrious during those uncertain early months in Washington. I avoided any activity that might make enemies on Capitol Hill, and at the same time I was careful about doing anything that could be construed as too obvious a play for sympathy. The net result was a gradual establishment of good will, even among the most partisan element on the Republican side. It was perhaps a dubious consolation to know that many Republicans would vote against me reluctantly, but it was a consolation nevertheless.

It had been a foregone conclusion that the Committee on Elections would report in favor of unseating me and seating Walter Chandler in my place. That was almost an automatic, even a perfunctory, procedure. But the long delay—the committee's report was deliberately delayed until spring, when the approaching conventions to name Presidential candidates were expected to heighten the zeal of the Republicans to unseat me—worked for me instead of against me. By April, when the question was about to be brought to a vote, I had not only sympathy in the Republican camp but positive support. One Republican member of the House made a speech on my behalf. This man was John M. Nelson, of Wisconsin.

I want to quote briefly from his remarks as they were reproduced in the *Congressional Record,* not so much because they were made in support of me, but because of the principles that determined his stand. Mr. Nelson said:

> . . . Who are the real parties on trial in this supreme court for House election cases? . . . [Messrs. Chandler and Bloom] are but servants. As representatives of their home people they have their rights, but the voters of the nineteenth congressional district in New York have superior rights, which we are duty bound to defend. Particularly the 750 voters * in these three election precincts have sovereign rights. . . . Let us forget the Representative and keep our minds on this American electorate and their constitutional right to a representative of their choice and not of our arbitrary determination. . . .
>
> The question presents itself to every Republican, Can we afford as a party to do the thing proposed in this case? . . . To unseat a duly elected Member of Congress for the purpose of getting control of a State delegation so as to elect

* Nelson was referring to the invalidation of approximately this number of ballots on technical grounds. They had been marked by Jewish supporters of mine, who had received instructions to place an X *in front of* the name of the candidate they favored. First-generation citizens who were accustomed to reading Yiddish, which runs from right to left, they had placed their X's *to the right* of my name instead of to the left. Their intent was unmistakable, and had these ballots not been invalidated my majority would have been close to a thousand.

a President would be bold and hazardous to the *n*th degree. . . .

Mr. Speaker, I protest against the idea that we are free to vote for whom we please. . . .

I conclude as I began. Walter M. Chandler was not elected a Member of this House, and is not entitled to a seat therein, but that Sol Bloom was elected and is entitled to a seat.

I can hardly overestimate the value of John Nelson's help to me on that day. Nor can I omit a word of gratitude to the ponies at Pimlico. Had they not been running, it is quite possible that the twenty-odd Republican representatives who attended the races at this famous Baltimore track might have been present on the floor to vote against me. One can never know about a thing like that. The only thing I am sure about is the majority in my favor.

All this furor, of course, turned out to have been needless as well as misbegotten. La Follette won only thirteen electoral votes, and Calvin Coolidge was returned to the office to which he had succeeded as Vice President upon Harding's death by 382 to 136 for his Democratic opponent, John W. Davis.

I too was returned to office in the elections of November, 1924, and by a majority that allowed for no possibility of another contest. That contest and my final triumph had enhanced my popularity in the Nineteenth District, and I had only one bad moment during the campaign. That came on election eve, when my friend Senator Royal S. Copeland spoke for me at a big rally of orthodox Jews. It was a wonderful little speech, right up to the end. Then he wound up, "And with your loyal support, I confidently predict that by this time tomorrow your good friend and mine, Sol Bloom, will have *brought home the bacon!*"

There are some things that even a United States senator should be careful about when praising an orthodox Jew before an audience consisting almost entirely of other orthodox Jews.

On the fourth of March, 1925, Calvin Coolidge and I began

our first full terms together. That was our only visible similarity. He was a Republican, I was a Democrat. He was the cartoonist's dream of the conservative New Englander, taciturn, solemn, and stiff; I was an expansive Westerner transformed into New Yorker, talkative, gay, and emotional. Coolidge came from generations of Puritan farmers, I was the city-bred son of Polish immigrants. Yet we were not really so far removed from each other. We respected and trusted each other. The President sent me to Rome in 1928 as a delegate to the convention of the International Copyright Union because he knew I would represent there the interests of all Americans and not merely those of the Democratic party. When Speaker Longworth mildly remonstrated about the selection of a non-Republican to go on this mission Coolidge answered, "Sol is the best informed man we could send, and he won't play politics."

Calvin Coolidge's reputation as a humorless man had slight foundation in fact. True, he almost never laughed in public, and his smiles, even in his office during informal conferences with the men he knew best, were rare. Yet he had a keen sense of enjoyment and his own characteristic way of manifesting it. One day when several members of the Committee on Industrial Arts and Expositions were meeting with the President in connection with the approaching Washington bicentennial, one of them protested against Rupert Hughes' "defamation" of the first President in a speech at the Mayflower Hotel. Coolidge listened patiently for a few minutes. Then he walked to one of the south windows and looked out.

"Well, I see the monument's still standing there," he said, solemnly surveying the gleaming obelisk which is a Washington landmark as well as a Washington memorial. Mr. Coolidge then returned to his desk, and no more time was wasted deploring the candid revelations of Mr. Hughes.

With my wife and daughter I once had the pleasure of taking David Belasco to the White House to meet the President. The great producer, then past seventy, was as shy and nervous as a schoolboy, and when I presented him he almost whispered as he said, "Mr. President, I am deeply honored . . ."

"No, Mr. Belasco," interrupted Calvin Coolidge. "*I* am

deeply honored. There have been many Presidents of the United States, but there is only one David Belasco."

It was during this call that my daughter Vera established herself as "The Girl Who Made Coolidge Laugh." Belasco, delighted by the warmth of the President's greeting, had instantly retrieved his composure and was complimenting his host upon his message to Congress several days earlier. Coolidge was clearly pleased, and then Vera, who had also been enthusiastic about his message, chimed in, "It was not only one of your best, Mr. President, but the simplest of all. Even *I* knew what you were talking about."

First the little crow's-feet at the corners of Mr. Coolidge's eyes deepened. Next the downturned corners of his mouth straightened out. Then a grin appeared. Finally a great gust of laughter rocked his spare frame, and the President leaned back in his chair convulsed. Seldom has an inadvertent remark pleased so many people. Mr. Coolidge enjoyed a hilarious moment, Mr. Belasco witnessed the fantastic, reporters in the background found their headlines for the evening editions, and millions of people throughout the United States discovered that the dried string bean from Vermont was a human being as well as their Chief Magistrate. Even Vera had a good time after the first terrifying seconds had passed.

There are all sorts of tests for humor, but I have always felt that the man who could keep other people guessing probably had the most fun of all. Calvin Coolidge has kept me guessing for almost twenty years about a letter he wrote me several months after he retired from the Presidency. Here it is:

December 9, 1929

Honorable Sol Bloom
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.
Dear Mr. Bloom:

The Congressional Record comes to my office and I wish to thank you for your kindness in sending it to me. I had done nothing about getting it because since I have left Washington I have not cared to know about what

was going on in the Congress, but your kindness is none the less greatly appreciated.

With the compliments of the season, I am

Very truly yours,

Calvin Coolidge

As I say, Calvin Coolidge has kept me guessing for nearly twenty years, but more and more when I think about this letter I seem to hear a dry, faint, distant chuckle. If there is a Valhalla of Presidents, I believe the chuckle comes from there.

XX

IT WAS ANOTHER Republican President, Herbert Hoover, who placed me in charge of the most extensive undertaking it has ever been my good fortune to direct. This was the George Washington Bicentennial Celebration of 1932.

As a member of the Committee on Industrial Arts and Expositions, I had been obliged to take an interest in this exposition from its germination in 1924 when Representative R. Walton Moore, of Virginia, and Senator Fess jointly introduced the resolution that the two-hundredth anniversary of the birth of Washington be appropriately observed. But the obligation was secondary to the desire born of admiration for the character and acomplishments of the Father of His Country. I set about informing myself more fully on his life and works, and within a few months I was devoting all my spare time to the absorbing task; this included several summers in England, where I visited the ancestral home of the Washington family and studied source material in the British Museum and in university libraries. And as I accumulated information I began to think about ways of using it. I hoped that I would be given an active part in organizing the celebration, and I took no pains to conceal my desire. On the contrary, I did everything within the bounds of propriety to tell people that I had basic qualifications to do the work.

In 1930, President Hoover appointed Colonel U. S. Grant III and me as codirectors. It was a sign of the times—we were in the early phase of an unexampled economic depression—that

Colonel Grant and I had been recommended partly because we were "already in receipt of compensation from the United States Government, [and] would not therefore expect additional remuneration."

Not a very great deal had been done prior to our appointment, and it was up to us to set up an elaborate piece of machinery, get it turning, and make it productive. We had less than two years in which to prepare for the biggest birthday celebration in history.

In January, 1931, with the resignation of Colonel Grant, who was compelled by the pressure of his military duties to retire as associate director, I found myself in complete charge of the work. Though much had been done in preparation, notably the massive historical research that Albert Bushnell Hart of Harvard University had guided since 1925, I still had before me most of the problems of planning the celebration, of providing the necessary material stimuli, and, above all, of creating the proper emotional response. For without an atmosphere of popular enthusiasm the whole program would be a washout.

Originally it had been the intention to hold appropriate ceremonies all over the United States on the two-hundredth anniversary of George Washington's birth—February 22, 1932. But long before I came actively into the picture I persuaded the members of the commission that a one-day birthday party would fail completely to do the thing we really wanted to accomplish. We wanted something more than a fancy platform for orators. We wanted, through the living spirit of George Washington, to make the American people more fully aware of the rich and beautiful land they lived in, more conscious of their heritage of individual freedom, more thankful for their opportunity to live a productive life, and more thoughtful of the duty that rested with them to retain their position as the most favored nation on the face of the earth.

The winter of 1930–1931 was not a happy one, and the following year was destined to be worse. The depression which had been heralded by the stock-market crash of October, 1929, was deepening. I fully appreciated that this was no time for frivolous expenditures, for my own income had been drastically cut; I had, in fact, voluntarily placed every piece of real estate

I owned in the hands of trustees, and every penny of rent was put into a pool for the benefit of the mortgage holders, who in turn had agreed to a temporary reduction of interest that took into consideration the many defaulted rent payments on my business properties. I determined to be as frugal with the taxpayers' money as I had to be with my own. If it were humanly possible, I wanted the celebration to pay for itself.

It did pay for itself. It continued over a period of nine months, during which more than four million separate ceremonies were held, by national, state, and municipal organizations; by learned societies and fraternal orders; in the churches, colleges, and schools. More than 750,000 life-size color reproductions of Gilbert Stuart's "Athenaeum" portrait of Washington were distributed gratis, one for every public-school *room* in the United States. Millions of copies of monographs, speeches, and memorials were given out for use in connection with the various exercises. Commemorative publications covering the several aspects of George Washington—soldier, explorer, businessman, patriot, statesman, and human being—were issued. A great scholarly work, *Definitive Writings of George Washington,* in thirty-nine volumes, was prepared under the guidance of John C. Fitzpatrick of the Library of Congress. And still the celebration paid for itself.

There was even a profit. After all the bills had been totted up, there was a surplus of about half a million dollars. Commemorative postage stamps did it.

The books couldn't be closed, however, until some time after the end of the period of celebration, and during 1932 I developed permanent callouses on my chin as colleague after colleague in the House sailed into me with cries of "waste," "extravagance," "mad squandering of the public funds," and others of a more personal character. At the time I couldn't prove my opponents wrong. I couldn't blame most of them, either, for though certain attacks were purely partisan, it was no time to be throwing away money. This was the time when men were selling apples on street corners. Millions were jobless.

As time went on I found it possible to answer the attacks with figures, and finally I proved beyond question that the celebration had paid for itself and produced a profit besides. Whatever

abuse I might have suffered was more than paid for by the splendid retraction made by James M. Beck, a Republican representative from Pennsylvania and former Solicitor General of the United States, who had denounced the commission's expenditures from the floor of the House and supplemented his remarks in a book.

Since Mr. Beck's speech of June 11, 1934, was not merely an exoneration but an example of fine behavior on the part of an honorable gentleman, I wish to quote from it:

> I want to say something of a very personal character.
>
> When the debates were on with respect to additional appropriations for the George Washington Bicentennial Commission I said some things that were unfair and invidious. . . . I was losing sight of what was really a very notable celebration. . . . Later when I came to write an additional chapter to a book that I had written, called *Our Wonderland of Bureaucracy,* in an unfortunate moment, when I may not have been in a good humor, I did make some caustic observations. . . . This narrow criticism would have justified my generous colleague, Mr. Bloom, in answering me in the same vein, because my references were partial, superficial, and misleading. However, he did not do it. His friendship stood the test. . . .
>
> All this made me ashamed of what I had said, in good faith, but nevertheless upon insufficient information and possibly with a desire to be clever and witty. While it was many months ago that my colleague from New York called attention to my unfair estimate that I had given of his long and uncompensated labor, I made up my mind that the first time I could address the House when the subject was opportune I was going to publicly express my regret to the gentleman from New York for having superficially judged one of the most valuable educational works that this Congress ever entered upon. . . .

Representative John J. O'Connor, of New York, securing Mr. Beck's consent to yield, informed him that the celebration had made a profit of a million dollars.

"I did not know it," answered Beck, "but it is enough to say

that if it had cost the American people a million dollars it would have been money well spent. . . .

"Having thus said 'peccavi'—I have sinned—in the words of Hamlet to Laertes, I simply want to say to my good friend from New York:

> 'Let my disclaiming from a purposed evil
> Free me so far in your most generous thoughts,
> That I have shot my arrow o'er the house,
> And hurt my brother.' "

Many persons were kind enough to write laudatory letters, of which three in particular were gratifying. In December, 1932, shortly before retiring as President, Mr. Hoover sent me, with characteristic thoughtfulness, the following message: "While I think of it, and while still in public office, I just want to record for your own satisfaction and that of your family, my high appreciation of the way you have conducted the George Washington Bicentennial celebration. You have made a great contribution to public education, information and inspiration in the matter."

A year later President Roosevelt wrote me, "The complete report of the United States George Washington Bicentennial Commission submitted, brings to a close an activity of the Federal Government unique in history and, in my opinion, of incalculable value to the American people. . . . I am impressed by the fact that the Celebration was much more than a demonstration of memorial fervor. . . . Future historians and scholars may rely upon this record which you have so carefully and authoritatively preserved. . . . Please accept my congratulations for the Commission and for yourself at this consummation of your work."

And from his home in Beverly Hills, California, Will Rogers, whose humor and good sense delighted millions daily until his untimely death in an airplane accident in 1935, sent this note of appreciation, typed by himself on the machine he used when preparing his telegraphic dispatches for the press:

> MY DEAR FRIEND SOL. I DON'T KNOW IF I EVER DID WRITE YOU WHAT A FINE WORK YOU DID ON THE WASHINGTON

BICENTENNIAL. I KNOW I MENTIONED IT IN MY ARTICLES, BUT A CONGRESSMAN NEVER READS THE PAPERS SO I WILL HAVE TO WRITE YOU THIS LETTER. . . . YOU HAD TO BE A HISTORIAN, A SALESMAN, A DIPLOMAT, AND A BANDIT (TO GET THE MONEY OUT OF CONGRESS TO DO IT ON) BUT YOU DID IT. YOU ARE THE ONLY GUY EVER MADE A PARTY RUN NINE MONTHS, AND YOU DID IT IN DRY TIMES TOO. SOL YOU MADE THIS WHOLE COUNTRY WASHINGTON CONSCIOUS. . . . WE HAD JUST PICTURED HIM AS A MAN STANDING UP IN A BOAT WHEN HE OUGHT TO BE SITTING DOWN. . . . WELL YOU ARE ALL SET NOW FOR AWHILE, FOR WE WONT DO ANYTHING FOR THE FATHER OF OUR COUNTRY FOR ANOTHER 100 YEARS, BUT WE WANT YOU FOR THAT ONE SOL, SO DON'T GO AND DIE ON US, IF YOU DO YOU WILL BE SHIRKING YOUR RESPONSIBILITY, AND WE WONT HAVE ANY MAN LIVING THAT CAN DO IT AS GOOD AS YOU SOL. YOUR FRIEND. WILL ROGERS.

Letters like these were more than an ample reward for my part in making "the whole country Washington conscious," for in the work itself I had already found all the payment any man could ask. More than that, I had become Washington conscious myself. I had scraped away the varnish of Emmanuel Leutze's painting and found out for myself that George Washington was not "a man standing up in a boat when he ought to be sitting down."

During the period of the celebration, it is only fair to add, I had my unhappy moments. My old reputation as a showman dogged me all the way through, and my efforts were constantly being misinterpreted. Time after time I was accused of promoting my own interests—there was, for example, the widely published cartoon of me wearing a Continental uniform resembling Washington's, with the caption, "First in War, First in Peace, First in Bicentennial Publicity"—and certain political opponents attacked me unremittingly in this vein. Then there was the sarcastic gentleman at a reception who remarked that I was getting to look more and more like George Washington. To which that grand lady from California, Florence Kahn, then a Republican representative, gently replied, "I wouldn't worry about that. I don't think any of us will have real cause for alarm

unless George Washington starts to look like Sol Bloom." I have always felt a warm gratitude to Mrs. Kahn, not only for her wit on this occasion, but for her underlying wisdom. All I ever wanted to do was to make Washington look like himself, and if the bicentennial celebration, and the writings and speeches that went with it, helped to uncover the man behind the cold portraits and Parson Weem's fairy-tale history, then it accomplished its intended purpose. I believe it did so, and I am not the only man who does.

I have always been particularly gratified by one of the things we were able to accomplish in connection with the celebration, and it may surprise some of the people who know me very well to learn that my chief pleasure did not come from making speeches or even from bossing the job. By far my greatest lasting satisfaction is the knowledge that we were able to tell the story of Washington and the making of the Union to millions of people who had, at best, very limited sources of information—the people in the country and in small towns and villages with inadequate libraries, or no libraries at all. Half of the schoolhouses of the United States contain only a single room, in which pupils of all the primary grades are taught. These country schools have, for the most part, very poor facilities. It was primarily for these little schools, not the big ones of the cities, that I had the books and pamphlets about George Washington printed and reproductions of the Washington portrait lithographed. It was to the children in the rural sections of the country, and through them their parents, that I wanted to tell the story. Those people are the ones who really remember the celebration. When someone occasionally remarks that he can't seem to recall the big birthday party of 1932, I always ask him where he was living at the time. So far, the name of some sizable city has always been given. The real impact was made in and through the country's little red schoolhouses.

It was the hearty response of the American people to the Washington bicentennial that persuaded Congress to authorize another great celebration almost in its wake. In 1935, a commission was created to arrange for the observance, two years

later, of the 150th anniversary of the birth of the Constitution. I was appointed director general by President Roosevelt.

I now had a different sort of problem on my hands. First, I had a document to work with instead of a man. Second, I had not a single anniversary to commemorate, but a number, stretching over almost two years, from May, 1787, when delegates from the states met to revise the Articles of Confederation, to April 30, 1789, when Washington took his oath as President of the United States.* In between these dates were others no less important, such as the June day in 1787 when Edmund Randolph, Governor of Virginia, boldly advocated that the Articles be discarded and a new constitution written, the September day of the same year when the delegates signed the document, and the other days when, one by one, the states ratified the Constitution of the United States, until, with its acceptance by the ninth state, New Hampshire, June 21, 1788, it became the supreme law of the land.

It seemed to us that the most satisfactory celebration would be one that treated each significant event separately and, as much as possible, in terms of the personalities of the principal actors. We planned to vitalize the historical records through pageants and radio dramatizations. There would be speeches too, but we wanted a minimum of oratory and a maximum of participation.

President Roosevelt issued his formal proclamation on July 4, 1937, and on September 17 following it became my privilege to open the celebration. Standing before the shrine of the Constitution in the Library of Congress, I spoke at the same hour at which the document had been signed 150 years before, and

* Although the term of the first President of the United States was supposed to begin on March 4, 1789 (Cf. footnote, page 203), the new Congress did not obtain a quorum until April 6. On this day, after organizing, its first act was to count the votes that had been cast in February by the presidential electors and to declare George Washington duly elected. Formally notified at his home in Virginia on April 14, Washington began his triumphal progress to New York. Arriving on April 23, he was inaugurated one week later. His second term began on March 4, 1793. All succeeding Presidents through Herbert Hoover were inaugurated on March 4. Franklin D. Roosevelt, inaugurated March 4, 1933, completed his first term, by virtue of Amendment XX, at noon on January 20, 1937; he was reinaugurated on the same day, and twice thereafter, on January 20, 1941, and January 20, 1945, respectively.

in line with the commission's plan to tell the story in terms of the men who had done the work, I described a few of them as they had come forward to affix their signatures. "Their figures seem to stand before me," I said. It was the simple truth, for I had spent so much time learning about these individuals that I could feel their presence as I looked upon the parchment on which they had written their names. "I see Benjamin Franklin, somewhat bowed with age, his keen eyes twinkling behind enormous spectacles. He is chatting with a younger man of fresh complexion and handsome features—Alexander Hamilton, of New York. There, nearby, is a rather tall figure, and I notice that he walks with halting gait as he advances to sign the Constitution. I see now the reason—he has lost one leg, and walks upon a wooden stump. It is Gouverneur Morris, of Pennsylvania. It was he who collected the various resolutions passed at the convention and arranged them in the symmetrical form we know as the Constitution. . . . A small, shy gentleman in black advances. He and General Washington exchange nods of friendly courtesy, and I see this gentleman sign his name—James Madison, Jr. Madison, the most industrious and resourceful deputy of all, the genius of statecraft and persuasiveness who wove into one fabric so many conflicting opinions. So they come forward—informally, chatting, smiling, with the air of men who are relieved of a tremendous burden of labor and responsibility. . . . In due time Washington brings the gavel down and dissolves the convention. With a wave of the hand he gives the Constitution into the keeping of the secretary, Colonel William Jackson, and steps down to join his fellow deputies as they leave the hall. . . . His life work is crowned with triumph. . . ."

As we proceeded with the series of commemorative events that would culminate on April 30, 1939, the anniversary of Washington's inauguration, I began to feel that the celebration might be serving as something more than a valuable lesson in history, more even than a vigorous demonstration of free government that had flourished increasingly for 150 years. In a world again on the edge of war, it seemed to me that our celebration was very timely. It emphasized the contrast between our own kind of free government and the despotism that threatened

to envelop all Europe. It was a reminder that democracy was not an antiquated philosophy but a living force.

Perhaps I found a greater significance than was really there. If so, it was not because I sought, by exaggerating the influence of the celebration, to escape the realities of the period. I knew most of those realities very sharply. I had been a member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs in the House of Representatives since 1928. In 1938, when the committee's chairman, Representative Sam McReynolds of Tennessee, was taken seriously ill, I became acting chairman. The following year, upon the death of Sam McReynolds, I succeeded to the chair. I *had* to know what was going on in the world. The drug of wishful thinking was not for me.

XXI

THERE WERE A COUPLE of stories that made the rounds when I was put on the Committee on Foreign Affairs in the last year of Calvin Coolidge's administration. One was that I had aggressively sought membership in that committee in order to advance the social position of myself and my family, the implication being, I suppose, that the Blooms wanted to go to more parties at foreign embassies, where, presumably, the cultural opportunities exceeded those in the native quarter of the national capital.

The other, which had a faintly malicious tone, was that "a certain distinguished person" had exclaimed when informed of my appointment, "It's shocking—why, he might become *chairman* some day!" I am not quite sure what the implication was in this story, unless there was the lurking fear that I was still essentially a song-and-dance man and was merely postponing a scandalous performance until I had achieved a more exalted position.

It just happened that I was made a member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs without being consulted, that until Representative Bill Oldfield of Arkansas told me about it during the course of a reception at the Canadian Legation I had never known I was under consideration, and that my immediate reaction was one of deep dissatisfaction. Up to this time I had been a member of the same three committees—Expenditures in the Interior, Arts and Expositions, Patents and Copyrights—on which I had served since my first term. Though classified as

"minor" committees, they had provided me with a most satisfactory area of activity, especially in the field of copyrights, where my many years in publishing formed a reservoir of practical experience. Now, under the rule that a representative serving on a "major" committee may not serve on any other, my appointment to Foreign Affairs automatically removed me from membership in the other three committees. I didn't like it a bit.

My displeasure soon evaporated in the fresh atmosphere of my new assignment. Instead of concentrating on one section, or on several separate sections, of the domestic structure, I now had to consider all the elements and their possible significance beyond our own shores. Conversely, every development abroad was now of professional interest to me. A revolution in South America, a flood in Asia, an assassination in Europe were no longer just newspaper items to be noted casually. They were all items to be thought about, to be remembered, perhaps to be fitted together months or years later. I couldn't wait until somebody brought history closer to date in a new book. By that time it might be too late to be useful to me. And so I appraised world events as they occurred and and kept notes on what the world was doing from day to day.

History has been defined in many ways. To Thucydides it was philosophy learned from examples. To Voltaire it was a record of crimes and misfortunes. Another writer, whose name I cannot recall, has called it a record of what we *think* has happened, and even this cynical definition is a good one to keep in mind. I can, in any case, apply it to my own experience. For example, I believed firmly when President Hoover proclaimed the Kellogg-Briand Pact to be in effect that the leading nations of the world had sincerely disavowed war as an instrument of policy. A year later I believed that the newly signed London naval-reduction treaty meant that all the signatory nations had determined to reduce their fleets. And when, about the same time, the last French troops left the Rhineland, I felt certain that the final obstacle to permanent peace in Europe had been removed.

My age of innocence did not long endure. In 1931, following what was called an "incident," Japanese troops moved into

Manchuria and began the establishment of the puppet state which existed until 1945 under the name of Manchukuo. When Henry L. Stimson, then Secretary of State, warned against the possible consequences of the seizure, I wholly agreed. But as a nation we were apathetic. Great Britain had problems that appeared more pressing. No strong position was assumed—and Japan was encouraged soon after to take the first step into China proper. I began to wonder how sincere the Japanese had been when they accepted the Kellogg-Briand Pact not so long before; I wondered, too, how far they could be trusted to fulfill their part in the naval-reduction agreement so recently signed.

Events in Germany were disquieting. I paid close attention to reports about a political leader named Hitler, for his rising strength was based in part upon organized hatred, in particular upon hatred of the Jews. But I could not believe that the warm-hearted German people I had known would ever accept such an obvious mountebank as head of their state. As late as 1932 I believed that Germany was truly emerging as a democracy. Even when Hitler became chancellor, on January 30, 1933, I did not comprehend that the republic was finished. That was partly due to incomplete information, largely to my preoccupation with events in the United States.

In the preceding November Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt of New York had been elected President. More than three years had passed since the stock-market crash, and the voters of the country had turned to this man to pull them out of the still deepening depression—at least a substantial majority of them had. But as Roosevelt's inauguration approached, many of his political opponents honestly believed that the new administration would be unequal to the task. During the final weeks of President Hoover's term, business throughout the country was in a condition of near-paralysis. In mid-February, 1933, the governor of Michigan closed the banks of that state. Sporadic closings followed elsewhere, and by March 4, Inauguration Day, we faced the possibility of complete financial collapse. But it never came. One man kept it from coming.

When the objective, dispassionate history of the era of Franklin D. Roosevelt is written, the various contributions of the man himself will be revealed in their true measure, and the

last thing I would attempt to predict is the verdict of future scholars. But I have no inhibitions about expressing my own verdict. Twice in my life the words and actions of other men in times of desperate crisis have inspired me to the belief that failure of their causes was impossible. One of the men who had this effect on me was Winston Churchill after the rescue at Dunkirk: "We shall go on to the end. . . . We shall never surrender, and even if, which I do not for a moment believe, this island or a large part of it were subjugated and starving, then our Empire beyond the seas, armed and guarded by the British Fleet, would carry on the struggle, until, in God's good time, the new world, with all its power and might, steps forth to the rescue and liberation of the old." After that I never doubted the outcome. Germany could not win. I knew it. One man convinced me, and because this same Churchill convinced millions of others, even against the strongest contrary evidence, the civilized world rose to destroy Germany.

The other time I was so inspired was at the outset of Roosevelt's career as President. In his inaugural address he told the American people that the only thing they had to fear was fear itself. Then he went into action. There was no financial panic because one man drove it from the minds of the people. One man gave them courage. One man showed them how to go ahead. Millions believed, as I did, that this man could lead them out of depression, and because so many conquered their despair we did come out of depression. Whatever else Franklin Roosevelt accomplished in his more than twelve years in office, he never did anything more important than to show his fellow citizens how to regain confidence in themselves.

One important domestic development in Roosevelt's first year was the calling in of gold coin in circulation, the imposition of an export embargo on gold, the outlawing of the gold-payment clause in public and private contracts, and, finally, the reduction of the gold content of the dollar. When Roosevelt was violently condemned in many quarters I was truly astonished, for the suspension of gold payments in international transactions and the devaluation of the dollar had appeared to me as inescapable from the moment it became clear that Great

Britain would be unable to resume the gold payments which had been "temporarily" suspended in September, 1931. I had carefully followed the action of Britain, which led a few months later to similar action by Japan, and to me it was clear that sooner or later the United States must protect itself by taking the same step—if we were to sell our goods abroad, we could do it only by making American dollars cheap enough for foreign merchants to buy. Once again I realized how important it was for me to study events in other lands. Everything that happened in the world concerned the United States. We could ignore nothing.

Certain events of 1934 were especially ominous. Some of them were closely tied together; others seemed to have no central relationship at the time. In June there was the Nazi purge, whereby Hitler eliminated a number of his real and potential enemies; it was now clear to all, without waiting for the death of President von Hindenburg a few weeks later and the consolidation of the offices of president and chancellor, that the republic had been wiped out and Hitler was the master not only of Germany but, through the murder of the Austrian chancellor, Engelbert Dollfuss, of central Europe. In October, following revolutionary outbreaks, all Spain was placed under martial law. In the same month King Alexander of Jugoslavia, on a state visit to France, was assassinated in Marseille, along with the French foreign minister, Barthou. And in December there was a skirmish between Italian and Ethiopian troops over the disputed frontier of Italian Somaliland. The only heartening events were the signing, in Buenos Aires, of the antiwar pact by the United States and the countries of South and Central America, and a more liberal treaty of relations between the United States and Cuba. On balance, the points of friction in the world had greatly increased.

It was the recognition that these more or less isolated sore spots were all symptoms of the disease of war that caused Congress to enact neutrality legislation in 1935. It was our fond hope that by placing an embargo on the shipment of arms to belligerents we might prevent conflicts beyond our shores, or, at least, remain aloof from any such conflict. We strove to tighten this prohibition by forbidding the transportation of

arms in American vessels and by requiring manufacturers of arms to register with the Secretary of State and to secure licenses before they could export their goods anywhere. And we threw in another safety element: We restricted the travel of American citizens in ships flying belligerent flags, hoping thus to eliminate the chance of becoming embroiled in case lives were lost through torpedoings.

I supported the neutrality resolution, but I did so with misgivings. I was far from sure that our refusal to supply arms would be enough to deter other nations from going to war. And I doubted whether tying our own hands in advance of a war between other nations would really serve our ends if war came. Was it wise, I asked myself, to prevent small nations from arming themselves against aggression? Were we not, I wondered, in danger of weakening ourselves by taking too rigid a position? It seemed to me that the announcement of our intention to deny arms to all might actually encourage certain nations with other sources of supply to attack nations not so favored. But I voted in favor of the neutrality resolution in spite of my doubts. Perhaps the experiment would be successful.

Meanwhile a plebiscite in the Saar returned that vital industrial district to Germany, and the spirit of nationalism rose to a height unknown since the days of 1914. Hitler took advantage of the moment and, in direct violation of the Treaty of Versailles, ordered conscription. In the late summer of 1935 he deprived the Jews of citizenship.

In October of the same year Italy, made bold by the failure of other nations to interfere with Japan's campaigns in Manchuria and China, invaded Ethiopia. Most of the member states of the League of Nations applied economic sanctions against Italy, but these were of little effect in stopping the assault against feeble Ethiopia, and early in the following May the war ended and Mussolini proclaimed King Victor Emmanuel emperor of the conquered country. In Spain a full-scale civil war was getting under way. And in Germany Hitler broke the Locarno Pact by ordering occupation of the demilitarized Rhineland. Before 1936 ended, the Rome-Berlin axis was announced, and in January, 1937, Hitler celebrated the fourth anniversary of his rise to power with a shrill denunciation of

the Versailles Treaty. The German people shouted with joy. I thought sadly about the 1935 neutrality resolution.

In Congress a new resolution was being prepared. While it continued the export embargo on arms, ammunition, and implements of war and the prohibition against the use of American ships, it contained the important new provision that raw materials and certain other goods might be purchased by belligerents and transported in their own vessels. This so-called "cash and carry" clause went into effect May 1, 1937, with a life of two years.

Only a few days before, General Franco, the Spanish insurgent leader whose model was Mussolini, had set up a one-party state; Italian and German troops were known to be fighting in his army. Two months later, after an uneasy lull of several years, fighting was resumed in China; American merchant ships in the Yangtze River were hit by stray Japanese and Chinese shells, and some time later the U.S.S. *Panay,* a river gunboat, was sunk by the Japanese, presumably by accident; British ships also were struck, and both Great Britain and the United States made strong protests to Tokyo. In Germany munitions factories worked night and day, and it was known that the *Luftwaffe* now surpassed the French air force and at least equaled that of Britain. At this time I had a very detailed discussion with one of our government experts who had been studying the European situation on the spot. From him I learned many things. What I learned confused me. In Paris all was gay; no one there thought of war, or, at any rate, was willing to talk about the possibility. In London all was calm; the new king and queen had recently been crowned, and the British people seemed to feel that all was right with the world. Neville Chamberlain, who had succeeded Stanley Baldwin as prime minister after the coronation, exuded confidence and optimism. At the same time, the newspapers were carrying the same kind of disquieting items we were reading at home. Winston Churchill continued to warn against the relative weakness of the air force and the complete inadequacy of the army. But the man in the street, though he loved "good old Winnie," took the attitude that it was the function of the opposition to oppose: England had her fleet—nothing could be allowed to interfere with the

strength of the Royal Navy—and with that there was really nothing much to worry about.

In December, Italy caused no great surprise by withdrawing from the League of Nations. The real spotlight was now on Austria, where Nazi activity indicated the likelihood of a Hitler coup. Chamberlain's Conservative government, already dedicated to a policy of appeasement toward the totalitarian powers, was shaken by the resignation, in February, 1938, of Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden, who thus voiced his protest against the do-nothing position of the Cabinet. In March, when German columns rolled across the Austrian frontier—less than two years earlier Hitler had signed a treaty promising not to violate it—Kurt Schuschnigg resigned as chancellor, and his successor, Seyss-Inquart (to be hanged by the Allies in 1946 for his later war crimes in the Netherlands) proclaimed the annexation of Austria to Germany; once again Jews were deprived of their citizenship. In near consternation Italy, no longer the senior partner of the Rome-Berlin axis, acquiesced in the move that suddenly placed German soldiers at the broad gateway of the Brenner Pass. At the same time the "oppressed minority" of Sudeten Germans were raising their well-schooled Nazi clamor, and only the politically blind were unable to see that Hitler's next squeeze would be on Czechoslovakia. If this country, born of the World War of 1914–1918, should fight, France would be obliged to keep her pledge and fight with her; and in that case Great Britain, a formal ally of France, though not of Czechoslovakia, would surely be drawn in. My fears of war were stronger than my hopes for continued peace.

Then came Neville Chamberlain's trip to Berchtesgaden to confer with Hitler. This was followed a few weeks later by the meeting in Munich of these two and Mussolini and Premier Daladier of France which resulted in the mutilation of Czechoslovakia. I prayed that Chamberlain's jubilant announcement that he had achieved "peace in our time" might be true, but when I read Mr. Churchill's speech delivered in Parliament a few days after German troops entered Czechoslovakia, October 1, 1938, I found it hard to cling to the hope, harder still to the belief. Halfway through his address Churchill said, "We are in the presence of a disaster of the first magnitude which has

befallen Great Britain and France. Do not let us blind ourselves to that. It must now be accepted that all the countries of Central and Eastern Europe will make the best terms they can with the triumphant Nazi power. The system of alliances in Central Europe upon which France has relied for her safety has been swept away. . . . In fact, if not in form, it seems to me that all those countries of Middle Europe, all those Danubian countries, will, one after another, be drawn into this vast system of power politics—not only power military politics but power economic politics—radiating from Berlin. . . ."

In these and following months, first as acting chairman, later as chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, I took every opportunity to talk with my colleagues in the Congress about the approaching war—there soon ceased to be doubt in my mind about anything except the time and place of the explosion—and of our duty to do everything we could, before war began, to make the United States strong. The best way, I felt certain, would be through assuming a position of true neutrality, the kind of neutrality described by Washington and maintained through subsequent administrations until 1935. Neutrality is a domestic policy followed for selfish reasons. A country that is neutral is not necessarily impartial—impartiality is, in fact, a philosophical abstraction in any consideration of national interest. A country decides to be neutral in order to protect itself, not because it wishes to be "fair." Our duty, as I saw it, was first of all to protect the United States. If in consequence of our domestic policy nations friendly to the United States, that is, nations whose community of interests largely coincided with our own, were to be hindered in a coming conflict with nations whose interests were in every way opposed to our own, then, for strictly selfish reasons, it was our duty to change that policy. But I recognized the extreme unlikelihood that we could hope to return to our classical position of neutrality. Too many members of both the Senate (following Borah, Nye, and Wheeler) and the House (following Hamilton Fish) believed that our safety lay the other way. The very best I could foresee was a continuation under the restrictive provisions of the 1937 resolution, relieved only by the cash-and-carry clause. It was far from certain that this clause, which was

due to expire May 1, 1939, could be saved against the tremendous opposition from men who believed that our only concern was to keep out of war at any cost and who were blind to the possibility that we could lose a war just as completely by failing to support our friends as if we were destroyed in battle.

Following the partial dismemberment of Czechoslovakia—not only Germany, but Poland and Hungary, as well, took large bites—and the disfranchisement of the Jews, an event was announced which is without parallel in history. A fine of one billion marks was assessed against the Jews of Germany. As victims of persecution, they were required to pay that sum to compensate for the damages caused by their persecutors. A few weeks later, just before Christmas, 1938, Germany bestowed the kiss of death on France by signing with her a treaty of "pacific and good neighborly relations." I almost expected a demand for Alsace-Lorraine to follow next day.

March, 1939, was a critical time. Less than six months after Munich and the solemn guarantee that Germany's territorial demands would be fully met by the annexation of the Sudetenland, Hitler announced the dissolution of the Czechoslovak republic and took over the rest of that country. Britain's Conservative government was at last aroused, and on March 31 Prime Minister Chamberlain—even he now comprehended the frightful cost of appeasing Hitler—stated that the sovereignty of Poland, the obvious next target of German aggression, was unconditionally guaranteed. (The Spanish civil war had just ended, and later it occurred to me that the timing of Hitler's death stroke in Czechoslovakia and the beginning of his drive on Poland at this precise time might have been something more than mere coincidence. His seasoned land and air troops were now free to teach the lessons learned in Spain to the rest of the German army.)

Early in April Mussolini made a gesture for attention by invading Albania; since his Ethiopian conquest he had become almost the forgotten man of Europe. Late in the month the British Parliament passed a conscription act—"an act of faith," Churchill called it, "and a symbol of Britain's resolve not to fail in her part of the conflict which is now opening for indi-

vidual liberty and public law." And on April 30, in the midst of all this, the New York World's Fair opened with ceremonies commemorating the first inaugural of George Washington. That, too, was an act of faith. No mere anniversary, it was an expression of confidence in the survival of free government and an implicit avowal of our readiness to defend it against all attacks.

As I had feared, Congress permitted the cash-and-carry clause to expire; we were back about where we had been in 1935, after the first neutrality resolution. Early in June, in the hope that the cash-and-carry provision might be restored and strengthened to include arms as well as raw materials, I introduced a resolution in the House which still further limited our commercial practices and the actions of American citizens in wartime. I was willing to sacrifice everything but the right of belligerents to send their own ships to this country to buy and carry away arms and materials. But the House, after days of heated debate, adopted the amendment offered by Representative John M. Vorys, of Ohio, and passed the bill minus cash-and-carry of any sort. It was a bitter defeat, hardly tempered by the failure of the Senate to act before Congress adjourned, for the net result was a position of static hindrance for the United States.

It was during this struggle in the House that the King and Queen of England, following their tour of Canada, arrived in Washington for a state visit. For two days bitterness was forgotten as all branches of our government did honor to the unassuming sovereign and his gracious lady. I hoped that perhaps their presence might swing sentiment in favor of the resolution, but though the King and Queen—especially the Queen—made a personal conquest, the legislators in opposition to cash-and-carry could not be won over to enact a law that would have helped England to help both herself and the United States.

In Europe the climax was approaching. Late in May Germany and Italy signed a ten-year military alliance. Earlier in the month, in Russia, an event of far greater immediate importance had occurred, though no one at the moment was able to guess the measure of its significance. Vyacheslav Molotov had taken the place of Maxim Litvinov as Commissar for Foreign

Affairs. Looking back a few months later, it was easy to see that the displacement of the moderate and friendly Litvinov, who had labored for greater co-operation between his country and France and Britain (only to have his ministers put off, sometimes rebuffed, through lack of a strong and definite policy in Whitehall and the Quai d'Orsay), could mean only one thing: an alignment in another direction. That this alignment was with Germany became sickeningly clear some three months later, when, a few days after a Soviet-German trade agreement had been announced, a mutual nonaggression treaty was concluded. Russia won the assurances of security she desired, and Hitler, who meanwhile had been demanding the Free City of Danzig and a strip of land across the Polish Corridor that would connect the Reich with East Prussia, was free from the menace of the Red Army. He wanted war without further delay, before England and France, now in feverish preparation, could offer effective opposition. A week later he began it. On September 1, 1939, the German horde rolled over the Polish border. Two days later, at eleven on a Sunday morning, Prime Minister Chamberlain announced that a state of war existed between Great Britain and Germany. A few hours later France declared war.

On September 6 President Roosevelt proclaimed the neutrality of the United States. A little later, and now in full confidence that the temper of Congress had changed, I again addressed my colleagues in the House on the subject of revising neutrality legislation to permit the export of arms and munitions on a cash-and-carry basis: ". . . So intent are we Americans upon preserving peace that several years ago the Congress enacted a set of laws designed to preserve our neutrality. . . . These laws were in the nature of an untried experiment and, as well-intentioned but untried theories sometimes do, they have failed to work. As a result, we now find ourselves today actually being unneutral. . . . Under our present so-called neutrality laws, we are actually aligned, in a discriminatory fashion, on the side of one of the belligerents in the present conflict. This is an intolerable situation. Under the arms embargo provision of the so-called neutrality law, we are denying arms to two classes of belligerents. We refuse to send them to those

powers which do not need them and we refuse also to send them to their opponents who do need and want them. . . . This program calls for the repeal of the discriminatory arms embargo, allowing any and all nations to come to our shores, pay cash for what they need and take it away only after assuming full title and responsibility. This is the common-sense program adopted by George Washington one hundred and fifty years ago and it is as sound and wise today as it was then. . . ."

I was right in believing that the temper of Congress had changed, but I had considerably overestimated the readiness of certain gentlemen—Fish, Borah, Wheeler, and Nye again formed the vanguard—to alter their views on how best they might manifest the new mood in the form of legislation. Many of them felt even more firmly that we must keep our hands tied, perhaps by a still tighter law. The debates continued. It was not until late October that the House was able to reconsider the bill, following its passage, with amendments, by the Senate, and bring it to a final vote. This time cash-and-carry passed, and on November 4, with President Roosevelt's signature, the joint resolution became law as the Neutrality Act of 1939.

As I think of that law today, and of how Britain could hardly have survived the early years of war without the goods made available by its provisions—in 1943, at Annapolis, Anthony Eden publicly said so—I find myself thinking in particular about one circumstance which I did not dare let myself consider at the time I was giving everything I had to bring about its enactment. That is the enormous difference between neutrality in the day of George Washington (whose precedent I so constantly recited) and neutrality a century and a half later. When he lived, the United States, separated from Europe by the Atlantic, could be honestly neutral. Today neither the oceans nor the Arctic wastes are barriers. Today, and it is truer now than it was ten years ago, a state cannot be neutral, either within the strict definition of the word or by any other standard. In the age of atomic fission there can be no aloofness. There remains only the choice of sides now. And the sides are clearly drawn. One of them is survival. The other is destruction for all. We cannot wait until tomorrow to decide. And it is growing late.

XXII

ENACTMENT IN NOVEMBER, 1939, of the neutrality law, with its cash-and-carry proviso, had a single practical effect that dwarfed all others close to the point of nonexistence. It provided Great Britain with arms, materials, and foodstuffs.

The young war, following the blitzkrieg on Poland, had settled into the stage that was already being described as "phony war." French and German troops eyed each other across the Rhine, a British expeditionary force of several hundred thousand stood ready in Normandy, occasional German planes flew over England at high altitude, German submarines were active in the Atlantic—but there was no real combat. Even the victory of three light British warships over the pocket battleship *Graf Spee*—a hollow victory because she escaped only to be scuttled by her own crew in the River Plate—didn't seem quite like war.

In Britain the leaders were not deceived. To them the delay was a precious opportunity to get on with preparations for the terrible battles they knew lay ahead. Their ships crowded our ports, and every cubic foot of space was loaded with munitions. And every time a ship was loaded cash had to be laid on the counter. By the spring of 1940 English dollar reserves in the United States were alarmingly depleted.

Then in April came the strokes against Denmark and Norway. A month later German armored divisions swept over the Netherlands and into Belgium. Within a few weeks the King of the Belgians had surrendered. The British forces were cut

off and forced toward the Channel. Their annihilation or surrender appeared inevitable. But at Dunkirk, by what the new prime minister, Churchill, called "a miracle of deliverance," 335,000 British and French were rescued by the Royal Navy under cover of the Air Force. (This fierce battle, far from having been a humiliating defeat, was and continues to be in my mind one of the decisive victories of the war. I measure its importance by what was not lost: the fighting spirit of the British and proof to the world that they would defend their island, "whatever the cost might be.")

It was clear, in Washington as well as in London and elsewhere, that the cost would be greater than the British alone could bear. Thousands of Americans understood that. Millions realized it after President Roosevelt, early in June, made his great "stab-in-the-back" speech upon the occasion of Italy's entry into the war. And when, a few days later, France capitulated, even some of our isolationists began to consider the implications of all Europe under Nazi domination. Only Great Britain remained free, and under the growing pressure of air attack there could be no certainty that the landing of a German army across the Channel could be resisted.

In this atmosphere the leaders of Congress were brought into consultation with the President, with Cabinet members, and with the Chief of Staff and the Chief of Naval Operations to consider legislation that would best provide for the defense of the United States.

The first piece of major legislation to be enacted was a draft of men between the ages of twenty-one and thirty-five for military service. Passed over a considerable opposition, in spite of its limitation to one year and the proviso that draftees would not be sent overseas, the law was enacted on September 16, 1940. President Roosevelt proclaimed October 16 as registration day, and our first peacetime conscripted army came into being.

Far more important than the draft at this time was the legislation that made it possible for us not only to provide Britain with all the implements of war in a measure limited only by our ability to manufacture, but also to get ourselves ready to fight the war which was to come suddenly upon us less than a year later.

It was entitled An Act to Promote the Defense of the United States. It empowered the President to authorize the Secretary of War, the Secretary of the Navy, or the head of any other department or agency of the government "to manufacture in arsenals, factories, and shipyards under their jurisdiction, or otherwise procure . . . any defense article for the government of any country whose defense the President deems vital to the defense of the United States [and] to sell, transfer title to, exchange, lease, lend or otherwise dispose of, to any such government any defense article. . . ."

That was the core of the tremendous instrument that almost at once became universally known as the Lend-Lease Law. Its enactment, March 11, 1941, meant that thereafter Great Britain could fight her war—and our own war, as I cannot emphasize too strongly—without being hampered by inability to lay cash on the line. It meant, too, that President Roosevelt's call of the preceding June for fifty thousand airplanes would not only be met but that the number would be more than doubled. It meant that when our four-billion-dollar Navy was completed, there would be subsidiary arms and equipment to make it fully effective. It meant that tanks and guns would be available for our growing Army. It meant, in short, that "the arsenal of Democracy" was not merely a resounding slogan but a fact.

Guiding the lend-lease bill through committee and through final passage by the House of Representatives was the greatest battle of my whole career. My task was the normally unenviable one of being the party wheel horse. But I would not have yielded that work for any reward the republic could have given me. Having a leading part in that most vital piece of all wartime legislation was the greatest gift of all.

For months before its passage this bill was studied and criticized. The isolationist group (containing Democrats as well as Republicans) was as determined to defeat it as its proponents were to make it law. Public hearings were held before the appropriate committees in the Senate and the House, and every responsible person with information either for or against the bill was called upon to testify. One of the things I insisted upon was that the committee of which I was chairman should never have to meet the accusation that any pertinent argument had

not been presented. I wanted the full truth to be known to all. I was sure that the truth would win in the end.

One of the star witnesses for the isolationists was Charles A. Lindbergh, who believed with great sincerity that Germany was unbeatable and that it might be suicidal for the United States to antagonize the Nazis. He believed also, as late as January, 1941, when he testified before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, that all we had to do to maintain our own security was to avoid making commitments that would aid the enemies of Germany. With typical courage, he stated his views. He did so in full expectation that during the cross-examination he would be subjected to harsh, perhaps abusive, treatment. Instead, he was given precisely the same consideration that had been accorded Secretary of State Cordell Hull when he appeared as principal witness in favor of the bill. A few days after testifying, Colonel Lindbergh wrote me a letter of appreciation. "I only wish," he concluded, "that all hearings and investigations in Washington were conducted with as much tact and consideration. The manner in which you presided made it relatively easy to concentrate upon the questions asked and to answer directly." I am glad that Lindbergh was gratified, but the important thing was not that he and other witnesses should be safeguarded by the rules of common courtesy. What mattered was that information and opinions of every complexion should be presented in an atmosphere of tolerance, fairness, and good will. And when at last the bill became law, no one denied that such an atmosphere had existed or that the all-important act represented the will of a true majority of the American people.

In the months preceding Pearl Harbor, the Congress was called upon to consider two other pieces of legislation of paramount importance. One of our jobs was to lengthen the life of an expiring law, the other was to write a new law. Both were strongly opposed by the Borah-Wheeler-Fish isolationist axis.

Germany, anticipating the time when she would be at open war with the United States, had extended her submarine campaign to include attacks on neutral, especially American, shipping. From the practical point of view that had been adopted by the German admiralty, every ship that did not fly an Axis flag was an enemy ship. Even our coastwise commerce was under

attack. Demand for arming American vessels was insistent. In the fall of 1941 a bill was introduced to provide the necessary authority, and again it was my willing duty to be the House wheel horse. What it meant was to line up the necessary votes to revoke, in effect, the prohibition against armed merchant vessels in the 1939 neutrality law. It was necessary, of course, to phrase the desired changes in a new law, which we passed over the strenuous objections of the opposition.

The law we were called upon to extend was the draft, which had been given an original duration of only one year. The danger that the extension might be defeated was very great indeed. No man likes to take the responsibility for ordering another man to train for war and perhaps to lose his life. Some of the members of Congress who had voted for lend-lease shrank from the more direct responsibility of continuing the draft. There was also the factor of political jeopardy for the individual member. The man who might not hesitate to assume, in part, the risk of war for his country would be more reluctant to hazard his seat in Congress on the matter of putting the sons of his constituents into military uniform. He could bear to face the accusation, "You ruined my business. You are a robber." He was, and rightly, far more sensitive to the cry, "You forced my son to be a soldier. If he dies, you will be a murderer."

This was a most critical time. We had barely reached the point at which the young men who had already been drafted were beginning to emerge as soldiers when we faced the prospect that within a few months all of them would be discharged. (This was also the most agonizing period of my life. I was the special target of all the emotional outbursts. I was assailed by enemies, both in and out of Congress, as the "Jewish warmonger." I was the ogre who wanted to prepare young men to die in battle. My house was picketed for days, at the very time when Vera and I were mourning my dear wife, her beloved mother, by a group of women in black dresses who called themselves The Mothers of America. Threatening telephone calls came by the hundreds, day and night.)

We could foresee that the vote was going to be close, and as the roll was being called in the House tension increased. After recording my own vote in favor of draft extension I went to the

cloakroom, hoping that a cigar would quiet my nerves. There was nothing to be done—or so I thought. In the cloakroom I joined a little knot of representatives who, like myself, had already voted. One of them—no purpose could be served by identifying him—was in a state of great agitation. He had voted Aye, and now he announced his intention of changing his vote to No.*

"Over my dead body," I said.

"Sol, I won't have this on my conscience. You can't stop me."

"Maybe not—but I'm going to try."

"Sol, I'm going to change my vote. It might make all the difference."

"That's why you'll have to knock me through the doorway if you want to return to the floor. I'm going to stand right here." And I stood in the doorway until Speaker Rayburn announced the vote of the House. The draft had been extended by the margin of just one vote.

I trust no one will infer that I wish to be credited, in consequence of my somewhat melodramatic gesture, with having saved the republic. Had draft extension been beaten at that time, it is certain that another conscription act would have been introduced without delay. Even had there been a gap of months, between expiration of the original law, in September, and the Pearl Harbor catastrophe, on December 7, 1941, we would not have lost the war. But we might have been seriously delayed, valuable momentum would certainly have been lost, the war could have lasted longer than it did, and, most important, more American soldiers would probably have lost their lives, all in consequence of a misguided attempt to escape the dreadful realities of the moment.

These great legislative struggles—neutrality revision, lend-lease, the arming of merchant ships, and the draft—all took place before the United States entered the war. Once we were in it, the battle of Capitol Hill was largely over. The adminis-

* At any time during roll call prior to announcement by the Speaker of the complete vote, a member is permitted to go to the Clerk of the House and ask how his individual vote has been recorded, and, upon receipt of the information, he may, if he desires, request of the Speaker that his vote be changed. The Speaker is obliged to grant the request.

tration, with all the important Republican leaders now in true coalition with the Democrats on every measure to prosecute and win the war, with the old isolationists in line (or discredited and ineffectual), no longer faced the need of fighting desperately for every new law required for the defense of the United States. At last we were truly united for salvation and ultimate victory.

I want to talk now about that controversial figure, Franklin D. Roosevelt. And I want to make it clear that I am neither chauvinist nor apologist in my attitude. The reputation of this President could not be enhanced by my praise nor diminished by my censure. I want only to present certain facts and circumstances, or what I believe to be facts and circumstances, and my opinions on them. It was my privilege to have the confidence of this man and to be consulted frequently by him. I knew him well, I had some understanding of what he was trying to do, and I believe I am justified in saying that I comprehended his impelling purpose during the years that preceded Pearl Harbor.

That purpose was to prepare the American people for war.

Roosevelt was not the only man in the middle and late 1930's who foresaw war between England and Germany, first as a likely possibility, later as inevitable. Nor was he the only man who believed and gradually grew certain that the United States would be forced to enter the war. But he was the one man with the enormous responsibility of determining what must be done and how it could best be accomplished in advance.

It would have been mortal folly to announce in so many words that this country was certain to be drawn into the war. In the first place, however probable the event, it was never absolutely certain until the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. In the second place, such an announcement might have provoked an attack, either by Japan or Germany, at an earlier date, when we were considerably less prepared than we were in December, 1941. In the third place, it would have been politically fatal on the domestic front—the open admission that the administration was dedicated to war would have been a guarantee of defeat for President Roosevelt and the Democratic party in the 1940 elections. I am not interested in debating here whether Roosevelt wanted a third term in office at any cost. Other men are

entitled to whatever opinions they may hold, just as I am entitled to my belief that Franklin Roosevelt was above all a patriot. Whether Roosevelt was inspired by personal ambition or a conviction that it was his duty to run a third time is beside the point of the immediate discussion. The thing beyond rational dispute is that with Roosevelt out of the picture, Wendell Willkie might well have beaten an alternate Democratic candidate, and had Willkie been elected President—and I intend no disparagement of his abilities—substantial changes would have followed to the detriment of the Roosevelt program.

What was this Roosevelt program?

It was, in my most carefully considered opinion, the instillation of an attitude in the American people that would cause them to accept the possibility and, gradually, the likelihood, of their direct participation in the war. It was not a question of overcoming a normal human antipathy toward war. It was a problem of education, of how to make the Montana wheat farmer, the Texas cattleman, the Detroit automobile builder, the Pittsburgh steel puddler, and the Manhattan garment worker understand that invisible forces beyond the seas were of vital concern to him; of how to prepare millions for the possibility that the European or Asiatic cauldrons could spill over suddenly on us—precisely as one of them did eventually; of how to get all of us ready in mind and spirit.

All this had to be done before legislation could be written or introduced to effect any substantial physical preparation. It had to be accomplished step by step, and, as our people grew more and more accustomed to preparing, at an increasing pace. The technique of preparation resembled somewhat the "technique" of an individual in increasing his tolerance for strong drink. Just as an inexperienced drinker literally cannot stomach a substantial dose, so the American people could not have stomached strong legislation before they had learned to accustom their system to it. A draft bill would have been unacceptable in the summer of 1939, yet we wrote and passed a draft law just one year later. As a people we would have gagged on lend-lease before the fall of France and the isolation of Britain, yet we digested it less than a year later.

The success of this heroic treatment is the monument of

many men, a good number of whom literally worked themselves to death administering it. It is, first of all, a monument to Franklin Roosevelt. He was always the responsible head, the chief protagonist, and the driving force. He was the man who made the enemies and faced the accusations. He was the man who had both the strength to take what he saw as the only possible course and the greater strength to follow that course without regard to any other consideration.

It takes a courageous leader to court opprobrium. Roosevelt courted it. He was ready to face recrimination. He got it. To him it was of slight consequence that his opponents were able to quote chapter and verse to prove their many cases against him. It mattered little to him that time after time it was possible to prove he had shifted. He shifted always with purpose, as the captain of a sailing ship changes his tack to take advantage of the wind. He never altered his main course. He headed always for the harbor. And he brought the ship in.

XXIII

ALMOST EVERYBODY CAME to Washington during the war—the great, the near great, the merely notorious; prime ministers and kings; chiefs of staff, field marshals, and admirals with gold lace to their elbows; experts in death and inventors of new methods for saving lives at sea and in the skies; industrial geniuses, bankers, artists, actors, salesmen; specialists in farming and mining, professors of mathematics and Oriental languages; graphologists, geologists, and astronomers; fortune tellers, phrenologists, and doctors of magic; charlatans, confidence men, scalawags of every description, and the plain curious. Many were invited, a far larger number came on their own initiative. Each one of them had some urgent reason for visiting the capital, if only to stare and rub elbows. Practically the only persons of importance in the world who did not come to Washington at one time or another during the war were those already there. The city on the Potomac was the hub of the universe.

For most practical purposes, war came to Washington in March, 1941, when lend-lease went into effect. The first objective of that law, of course, was to provide Great Britain with fighting equipment of every kind. The long-range purpose was to convert our peacetime factories into arsenals. But the immediate result was the opening of a tremendous market for domestic merchants and manufacturers. Representatives of thousands of firms, large and small, formed a tidal wave that was to flood the capital and not recede until more than four years later.

And at least half of these men wanted to talk in person with Ed Stettinius, lend-lease administrator, or at least with Oscar Cox or another among his top assistants. (And what a grand job those lend-lease fellows did! Within days they had the project humming and within weeks they were delivering the goods. They were able to do it because there was magnificent teamwork in Washington, because an organizing genius like Donald M. Nelson, of Sears Roebuck, was running the Office of Production Management—he was to be chairman of the War Production Board after Pearl Harbor; because such a manufacturing genius as William S. Knudsen, of General Motors, a little later to be made a lieutenant general and placed in charge of all production for the War Department, was Nelson's right-hand man; and because, right down the line, men and women were doing their work as they had never done it before.)

To most people Washington in these years was a place that combined the worst features of a railway station during rush hour, an insane asylum, and a zoo. I used to hear stories about the discomforts and inconveniences of the transient population, and I always nodded sympathetically, as one does. But other people's headaches, backaches, and footaches are seldom so interesting as one's own, and I never could listen very attentively to stories of nights spent in hotel lobbies, and days passed in torrid busses or on street corners as cab after cab swept by filled to the roof. I just never experienced any of these trials. I lived in Washington. I had a big house and the best and most loyal servants any man could hope for. I had a big office, right in the Capitol, that was just as comfortable as my house, and an executive secretary named Boyd Crawford, who was so competent that I made him clerk of the Committee on Foreign Affairs. And I never traveled anywhere except in my own car or in a government automobile. I had things pretty soft—in a way.

As I think about those days, I realize that I could hardly have carried my share of the heavy load if my physical life had not been made so easy for me. At the office, in addition to Crawford, I had a girl named Louise Dreisonstok to take care of things for me; she could do everything, including the signing as well as the writing of most of my letters. In New York there was Bess Flegelman, who went to work for me in 1922. How completely

I relied on her can be shown by her remark when I walked unexpectedly into my office at 1451 Broadway a few months ago: "My goodness, Congressman! This is the first time you've been in since just before the neutrality revision." That was in 1939, and all through the war Miss Flegelman took care of the heavy flow up there by herself, consulting me by telephone on only the most difficult matters.

In my home there was always comfort, quiet, and serenity. But the cheer went out when my dear wife died, in June, 1941, almost exactly forty-four years after our marriage. The hardest thing of all for a while was to come home. Evelyn had made a point of always being there to greet me, and when I came in, rarely before seven during the last three years of her life, and more often not until ten, eleven, or midnight, I knew I would find her waiting, perhaps reading or listening to the radio, often working on the exquisite figurines she had begun making after learning the secret from a Florentine craftsman she had discovered on one of our early trips to Europe. If I had come from my office, she would ask me to tell her anything I thought she could understand—that was her gentle way of saying she didn't expect me even to mention any topic in the secret category. If I had come from a conference at the White House, she would merely say, "I'm sure it must have been a dull evening." And then she would smile and kiss me, never giving me a chance even to hint at what might have taken place in the President's second-floor study. She knew many times that I had desperate need to relieve my mind by telling her what I knew. She knew I couldn't, and she eliminated the possibility that I would speak a single word by leading me at once to another subject.

One of the times I wished most that I could talk to Evelyn extended over a period of several days early in July of 1941, just after her death. President Roosevelt had summoned the House and Senate leaders, and when we arrived we found also the Cabinet and the top Army and Navy men present. To those of us not already informed through direct activity in the operation the President gave the news that the British garrison in Iceland —the island had been seized in May, 1940, to prevent possible occupation by German forces after Denmark was overrun—was about to be relieved by American troops. The force had already

sailed secretly under naval convoy and was expected to disembark within the next twenty-four hours. The President said he would advise us immediately upon their landing.

At the very same time Senator Burton K. Wheeler, one of the more passionate isolationists, was announcing in a widely published newspaper interview that American soldiers were being sent to Iceland! He didn't know what he was talking about—he had worked up the idea following a conversation with a young soldier who, having been issued fleece-lined underwear, "guessed" he might be going to Iceland—but that didn't prevent him (for the first time in years) from being right. All that those of us in possession of the facts could do was to keep poker faces, cross our fingers, and wait. What the German intelligence section would do on the strength of Wheeler's story was anybody's guess.

Next day the President called us in again. He had no news for us, and he was plainly worried. He believed that adverse weather had delayed the Iceland landing. Absence of news by radio was not in itself cause for alarm, for the convoy had been instructed not to risk detection by sending wireless messages. But nothing was certain.

On July 7 Roosevelt was his usual confident self when we came in. A safe landing had been made, and the full, true story would soon be headline news. I have often thought what a fortunate thing it was that Senator Wheeler was so far removed from the councils of the President that the master psychologists in Berlin had ignored him completely the one time they might have profited. For all I know, they may have decided that the story was a smoke screen to cover some intended operation in the Tropics.

Meanwhile the eyes of official Washington had been focused upon other happenings that I, dazed by the final illness and then the loss of my wife, found myself hardly able at the time to appraise.

Late in May, 1941, President Roosevelt proclaimed a state of unlimited national emergency: "What started as a European war has developed, as the Nazis always intended it should develop, into a world war for world domination. . . . It is

unmistakably apparent to all of us that, unless the advance of Hitlerism is forcibly checked now, the Western Hemisphere will be within range of the Nazi weapons of destruction. . . . The war is approaching the brink of the Western Hemisphere itself. It is coming very close to home." A week later Secretary of State Hull issued a statement condemning French collaboration with the Nazis and warned against the possible consequence of its continuation. At the same time the United States authorized the acquisition of idle foreign merchant ships tied up in our ports. In mid-June, in view of the unlimited national emergency, the President ordered the freezing of all Axis funds in the United States. He followed this order by announcing the closing of German and Italian consulates in the United States. "Agencies of the German Reich in this country," it was stated, "have been engaged in activities wholly outside the scope of their legitimate duties. These activities have been of an improper and unwarranted character. They render the continued presence in the United States of those agencies and consular establishments inimical to the welfare of this country." Three days afterward, in retaliation, Germany demanded the withdrawal of American consular staffs from territories under its control.

On June 20, President Roosevelt denounced the recent sinking of an American ship: "The total disregard for the most elementary principles of international law and of humanity brands the sinking of the *Robin Moore* as the act of an international outlaw." Sinkings such as this one led, in the fall of 1941, to the arming of merchant ships, which was authorized by legislation I was called upon to steer through the House.

On June 22 came the sensational news that Germany had invaded Russia. For this possibility I had for some time been prepared, for the State Department had kept us closely informed on German movements in the East. As far back as March, Sumner Welles, Under Secretary of State, had transmitted to the Soviet ambassador in Washington evidence that Germany was planning to violate the nonaggression treaty signed in August, 1939. Upon receipt of this communication, Ambassador Oumansky had expressed utter incredulity.

Prime Minister Churchill immediately pledged British

assistance: "Any man or state who fights against Nazism will have our aid. Any man or state who marches with Hitler is our foe." President Roosevelt released funds belonging to Russia that had been frozen after her attack on Finland in 1939 and declared Russia eligible for lend-lease arms and materials.

War between Germany and Russia automatically presented a new problem in the international complex. What would the third member of the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo Axis do? If Japan should decide to fight Russia, what would be the effect on her relations, already strained, with the United States?

On the day after our occupation of Iceland, a Japanese note stated that "they do not at present feel compelled to modify their policy toward the U.S.S.R. except to the extent of their natural desire not to give rise to misunderstandings to their allies." Thus for this moment a crisis was averted. But only for the moment.

For ten years, in varying tensions, Japanese-American relations had been taut. The trouble went all the way back to the Manchuria incident, when Secretary of State Stimson, now Secretary of War, had denounced Japanese aggression. Again in 1937, when the *Panay* was sunk by Japanese planes, there was a period of considerable danger. And as Japan increased operations until she was waging full-scale (though undeclared) war against China, the United States adopted a stronger and stronger attitude of censure. In the summer of 1939 our government denounced the commercial treaty which had been in effect since 1911, stating that it contained "certain provisions which need new consideration," and the pact was terminated six months later. Speaking in Tokyo in October, 1939, Ambassador Joseph C. Grew informed the Japanese people that American public opinion strongly resented the aggression against China. He pleaded for corrective action.

Relations between the two countries became more difficult as Japan continued to pursue an expansionist policy. On July 31, 1940, the United States placed an embargo on aviation gasoline beyond the Western Hemisphere, and on the same day Secretary Stimson testified before my committee in favor of compulsory military service. On the following day the Japanese foreign minister announced a new policy for "Greater East

Asia," in which the mission of Japan was declared to be the establishment of "a great East Asian chain of common prosperity with the Japan-Manchukuo-China group as one of the links." On August 3 a formal protest against the gasoline embargo was received in Washington.

In September, just as I was completing the work that would bring the first draft bill before the House, Ambassador Grew warned Secretary Hull that Japan might interpret the gasoline embargo as a "sanction" (as indeed it was) and retaliate. Before the end of the month Under Secretary Welles stated the primary requirements of this country in the Far East. They were "complete respect by all powers for the legitimate rights of the United States and its nationals . . .; equality of opportunity for the trade of all nations; and, finally, respect for those international agreements or treaties concerning the Far East to which the United States is a party. . . ."

One week later the Japanese premier, Prince Konoye, expressed his fear of war, "if the United States refuses to understand the real intention of Japan, Germany, and Italy . . . in creating a new world order and persists in challenging those powers. . . ." Immediately after this, Ambassador Horinouchi protested in Washington our refusal of export licenses for gasoline and machine tools and our impending prohibition of export of steel scrap (of which Japan had been for some years the principal buyer in this country). He concluded his address by remarking that our restriction of such goods "has created the widespread impression in Japan that it was motivated by a desire to bring pressure on her."

On October 13, 1940, Foreign Minister Matsuoka had the impudence to invite the United States to join the Axis alliance: "We three nations, Japan, Germany, and Italy, will be very glad to welcome other powers into our alliance, whether it be the United States or any other nation, should they desire to join in the spirit of the new order."

Our only answer to this insulting gesture was silence—and continued activity. The lend-lease bill was being framed, and before the year ended I was fully occupied with plans for its introduction and passage in the House. Lend-lease, with a seven-billion-dollar appropriation, became law in March, 1941, and in

April the United States announced four principles as the basis of international relations. Three of them were general: respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all nations; noninterference in the internal affairs of other countries; recognition of equality, including equality of commercial opportunity. The fourth was much more specific and was concerned directly with Japan: nondisturbance of the *status quo* in the Pacific, except as it might be altered by peaceful means. It referred in particular to the situation developing in Indo-China.

France—Vichy France, that is—was under pressure to accept Japanese military control in that territory. In July, 1941, scarcely two weeks after Japan had relieved tension by declaring that she had so far not considered the possibility of joining Germany in the war that had just begun against Russia, announcement was made that France had accepted Japanese demands. Two days days later, July 23, Sumner Welles informed Admiral Nomura, who had succeeded Mr. Horinouchi as ambassador, that there was no basis for further conversations between the United States and Japan. It could only be assumed, stated Mr. Welles, "that the occupation of Indo-China by Japan constituted notice to the United States that the Japanese government intended to pursue a policy of force and conquest. . . ." On July 25 the United States froze Japanese assets "to prevent the use of the financial facilities of the United States . . . in ways harmful to national defense and American interests. . . ." Great Britain took similar action.

On August 8, 1941, a week after an embargo had been placed on aviation oil, Ambassador Nomura asked Secretary Hull whether a meeting could be arranged between "the responsible heads" of the two governments, preferably in Honolulu. But another meeting of far greater immediate importance was to divert attention from this proposal a few days later. On August 14, President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill, after a conference at sea, issued the statement that was to become known as the Atlantic Charter. It was a declaration of principles, in many respects paralleling Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points, covering the rights of nations and individuals in a world brought to a just peace following the extirpation of Nazi tyranny.

Upon his return, President Roosevelt agreed to renew informal discussions with Japan, and on August 27 he was invited by Prince Konoye to meet for a conference on "all important problems between Japan and America covering the entire Pacific area, and to explore the possibility of saving the situation." Several days later Ambassador Nomura was informed that "the President could not overlook the attendant circumstances and developments . . . [and that] the President and his consultants felt that, to ensure any hope of the success of a meeting between the President and the Prime Minister, the achievement of a prior meeting of minds on basic principles was a necessary condition precedent. . . ."

As this polite parrying proceeded, another matter of great importance temporarily submerged the Japanese problem. On September 11 the President announced his order to the Navy to shoot on sight at any German submarine or surface warship found in American defense waters. This drastic order was given in consequence of attacks on four American ships in the course of the preceding three or four weeks.

Japan once again urged a meeting between Roosevelt and Konoye, and we replied, in effect, by asking for a clear statement of Japan's previously expressed intention of withdrawing troops from China and French Indo-China. Two weeks passed, and on October 16 Prince Konoye's government resigned. General Hideki Tojo became premier—it was stated that no civilian was willing to accept the office—and the new cabinet was composed largely of military men. The significance of this was not lost on official Washington.

Meanwhile the President had asked Congress to authorize the arming of merchant ships, and for a number of weeks I was almost completely occupied in piloting the bill through the House. It was not until November 17, not quite three weeks before Pearl Harbor, that the new law was enacted.

Early in November Ambassador Grew transmitted the information that Japan might "resort with dangerous and dramatic suddenness to measures which might make inevitable war with the United States." He expressed the opinion that it would be shortsighted to base policy upon the belief that Japanese preparations were "no more than saber rattling, merely intended to

give more support to the high-pressure diplomacy of Japan." Several days later Winston Churchill renewed the pledge he had made in August that Britain would declare war "within the hour" if the United States should become involved with Japan.

On the same day that the bill to arm merchant ships became law, Foreign Minister Shigenori Togo stated that his government believed that a satisfactory settlement of differences could be made "if the government of the United States are, on the one hand, as genuinely solicitous for world peace as are the Imperial Government, and on the other understand Japan's natural requirements and her position in East Asia and consider the situation as it exists there in the light of realities." Meanwhile Saburo Kurusu had arrived in Washington as a special emissary, and he had a number of conversations with Secretary Hull and President Roosevelt. Proposals were made by Japan in response to our request of early October for clarification of Japan's stated intention of withdrawing troops from China and Indo-China. These were not acceptable, and we offered a counterplan, which, Mr. Kurusu feared, would cause his government "to throw up its hands."

On November 29 Premier Tojo uttered a blanket denunciation of British and American "exploitation of the Asiatic peoples." The United States informed Great Britain that the diplomatic phase of our relations with Japan had come virtually to an end and warned of impending attack. On December 2 our government asked Japan to explain why forces in Indo-China were being increased instead of diminished, and on the same day the Japanese cabinet was reorganized in response to "the deteriorating situation." Three days later Japan answered our inquiry with the statement that troop movements in Indo-China were "a precautionary measure."

President Roosevelt addressed a message to the Emperor on December 6: "Developments are occurring in the Pacific area which threaten to deprive each of our nations and all humanity of the beneficial influence of the long peace between our two countries. . . . Japanese military, naval, and air forces have been sent to Southern Indo-China in such large numbers as to create a reasonable doubt on the part of other nations that this continuing concentration in Indo-China is not defensive in char-

acter. . . . It is clear that a continuance of such a situation is unthinkable."

On December 7, 1941, shortly after seven in the morning, Japanese airplanes attacked Pearl Harbor. Hawaiian time was six hours earlier than Washington time, and in consequence of that factor and inevitable delay in sending the information, the news did not reach the White House until after 2 P.M. Secretary Hull was at that time dismissing the two Japanese ambassadors, who had come to his office to present a note which charged the United States with conspiring "to obstruct Japan's efforts toward the establishment of peace through the creation of a new order in East Asia" and concluded with the statement that thus "the earnest hope" of Japan to adjust relations had "finally been lost."

I was at home with my daughter on that Sunday afternoon when war began. A telephone message brought the first news, and then I was besieged by the newspapers for a statement—which I was unprepared to make. Later I was summoned to the White House and was immediately taken to the large study where President Roosevelt held his most intimate meetings. It was not long before everyone summoned had arrived—Vice President Wallace, Secretaries Hull and Stimson, Frank Knox of the Navy, and other Cabinet members; General Marshall, Chief of Staff of the Army, Admiral Stark, Chief of Naval Operations, and General Arnold, Chief of Army Air Forces; Senators Barkley, George, Connally, and Vandenberg, Speaker Rayburn, Majority Leader McCormack, and other key members of both houses of Congress; Harry Hopkins, several of the President's secretaries, and a few other men whom I cannot now recall. Then the door closed, and the President gave us the news.

He didn't have very much to tell us. The first bulletins were brief and general. They had to be, for the people on the spot were just beginning to get details of the damage to ships and shore installations. All we knew was that there had been considerable destruction and loss of life. As other bulletins came in, it became apparent that Pearl Harbor was the victim of a surprise attack against which there had been no adequate prepa-

ration. Around six o'clock we adjourned, but at eight we were back for additional information and a discussion of immediate plans. A joint session of the House and Senate was called for noon of the following day to hear the President's war message. The meeting did not break up until an hour after midnight.

I had a lot to think about after that. Just before leaving, the President had asked me how early the following morning I could have the House war resolution ready, and I had told him that I would need a copy of his war message first, in order that the resolution might conform. He told me that a copy would be delivered well before noon. As I rode home, and for hours after arriving there, I thought about the resolution I would be expected to introduce as soon as the House convened as a legislative organ after hearing the President address the joint session. I was troubled. The honor of introducing the war resolution carried with it a responsibility of a peculiar sort. I shrank from exposing the Jews of a future generation to the possible charge that this war had been set in motion by a Jew. People who hate are never rational, and I thought about the followers of some unborn Hitler killing and torturing because the name of a Jew had been found on the declaration of a war that had been fought five hundred years before.

A few hours later I conferred with Lew Deschler, the House parliamentarian, and we worked out a plan that would not only relieve me of the obligation of introducing the resolution but simplify and expedite the procedure that would result in a declaration of war against Japan.

Shortly after noon on Monday, December 8, President Roosevelt made his war address before the joint session, and immediately thereafter the Senate and the House convened separately to enact the legislation he had called for. In the House, Speaker Rayburn at once recognized John McCormack, the Majority Leader, who asked consent to authorize the Speaker during the day's session to recognize any member's request to suspend the rules for consideration of any resolution presented. Consent was given. McCormack at once moved to suspend the rules and pass the war resolution, which was read by the clerk. A brief debate followed. My remarks consisted of thirteen words: "Mr. Speaker, speedy action, not words, should

be the order of the day." The vote was then taken and the resolution passed, with only Jeanette Rankin, representative from Montana, dissenting. Meanwhile the Senate was considering its own resolution, and I discovered that its phraseology differed slightly from ours. I rushed over to the Senate chamber to see what could be done to avoid delay. Senator Connally was making a speech, and I walked out on the floor to call his attention to the discrepancy—it was a breach of etiquette on my part, a breach perhaps without precedent, but under the circumstances no one was concerned with trivia—and the Senate stood in suspense while we conferred. A few minutes later I returned to the House with a copy of the Senate version and requested the House to substitute it for our own. This time the vote was unanimous,* and at 4:10 P.M. the President signed the resolution. Great Britain declared war the same day, as did other members of the British commonwealth and many of our neighbor republics in this hemisphere.

Germany and Italy, as expected, declared war against us three days later, and the United States passed war resolutions against these two countries a few hours afterward.

At last the lines were clearly drawn. Our friends were now our allies, and together we could fight the enemy in the open.

Our most powerful individual ally among all the persons on our side was Winston Churchill, and as soon as the United States became an active belligerent a conference was secretly arranged between him and President Roosevelt. Shortly before Christmas, 1941, he came to Washington, and I shall never forget how startled and delighted I was when, in response to a telephone call, I entered the President's study and found Churchill there. During the following days I participated in a number of conversations among these two leaders and their advisors, and one of the results of these talks (and other talks, of

* Miss Rankin, a sincere pacifist, who had also voted against war in 1917, accused me of "tricking" her into recording a favorable vote the second time round. But the dear lady was mistaken. McCormack asked unanimous consent of the House to substitute the Senate version for the resolution on which she had voted No. Surely Miss Rankin was a good enough parliamentarian to understand that if no member objected, the vote would be recorded as unanimous. She did not object, and the vote was in consequence recorded as unanimous.

course, among representatives of the other twenty-four nations originally included) was the declaration of the United Nations, which was made public January 1, 1942.

Churchill flew to Washington again six months later, and I came to know him as a personal friend on this visit and the two he made in 1943. His two speeches before the Senate and the House in May, 1943, were perhaps the best I have ever heard—and I have listened to some fine ones in my time. By that time, both in Europe and in the Pacific, the enemy had been stopped, and though the war was far from won, our side had begun the advance toward victory. Churchill could speak with confidence of the future, and it was a treat to hear this eloquent man. Afterward he was the guest of Senator Connally and myself at a luncheon in the Capitol, and in a relatively informal atmosphere, with perhaps two dozen representatives and senators at the table, Churchill was thoroughly relaxed and ready to answer questions without reservation. (An amusing contretemps occurred at the beginning of luncheon. No place had been set for Mackenzie King, the Canadian premier, who was a member of Mr. Churchill's party—and a most welcome though unexpected guest—and so I seated him in the chair intended for me and made him cohost. It was a small room, and I was forced to squeeze myself in as best I could. If newspaper reporters had been present, the afternoon editions might well have carried the headline: Chairman Bloom Crashes Own Luncheon Party.)

Scores of important officials and dignitaries came to Washington during these years. Among them were Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands; Peter, the young king of Jugoslavia, and King George of Greece; Anthony Eden, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs; Vyacheslav Molotov, Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the U.S.S.R.; and Mme. Chiang Kai-shek, wife of the Chinese generalissimo who later became president. I had the pleasure, in consequence of my own official position in the realm of international affairs, of greeting all of them and of acting as host to many.

The Queen of the Netherlands made an impression of womanly sweetness and dignity such as I had seldom known, and I said to her during the course of the dinner she gave,

"Your Majesty, you remind me of my sainted mother, who died many years ago." She looked at me for a moment, and then she answered, "Thank you for your sincere tribute to another mother. I am deeply grateful." The Queen also addressed the Senate and the House, and later conversed informally with various members of the Congress.

Mme. Chiang Kai-shek came to Washington early in 1943 and became, I believe, the first private citizen of any country to speak before the Senate and the House.* Although Mme. Chiang was in poor health—she spent many months in a sanitarium before returning to China—she delivered two magnificent and inspiring addresses. Senator Connally and I were her hosts at luncheon that day, and on another day there was a reception in her honor at the Shoreham Hotel. It would have been a severe tax on Mme. Chiang's strength to greet several thousand guests while standing, so I made arrangements for her to receive them seated in a comfortable, upholstered chair. (There was an excellent precedent; Martha Washington, the first First Lady, always received her guests seated.) Then I had another idea. I suggested that if Mme. Chiang kept her hands in a muff she would thus be able to avoid the arduous convention of shaking hands with everybody in the line. "But be sure *never* to remove your right hand," I warned. "If you do, somebody will be sure to grasp it. And then you will be lost—if you shake hands with a single person, you will have to give your hand to everybody." Mme. Chiang followed my instruction and had a moderately agreeable afternoon.

From time to time there would be undercurrents of criticism about the visits of reigning monarchs, prime ministers, and heads of missions to the capital. This was not unnatural, for the only visible activities in connection with the presence of one or another of these personages were the sort that usually accompany the run-of-the-mine junket or good-will tour. Well enough for peacetime, said these critics, but bad taste and a complete

* The privilege of addressing the Congress of the United States is a rare one. It is accorded to heads of states. prime ministers, and special emissaries, and such persons speak before each house separately. The House and the Senate convene in *joint session* only to hear a message from the President of the United States.

waste of time in the present circumstances. And then someone would be sure to mutter the phrase that was heard everywhere during the first year or two after Pearl Harbor: "Some of these people don't seem to know there's a war on."

The truth, of course, is that the public receptions and minor manifestations of ritual masked the real activity underneath, and, in addition, provided a framework that was essential even in wartime. Protocol is not an empty formality, however much it may appear at times to be nothing more. It is as important to statecraft as parliamentary procedure is to debate and the legislative processes. Protocol is a body of practical rules drawn from long practice, and adherence to protocol not only does not waste time but actually saves time. A great deal of very important work was accomplished at the private meetings that were never mentioned in the papers. In addition, the receptions, luncheons, and other gatherings noted by the public were of the greatest practical utility. When a Molotov, an Eden, or a Churchill came to Washington, it was desirable that many persons in our government should have the opportunity of seeing him at close range, of talking with him, and of forming impressions of a favorable character. The best way, in fact, the only way, for such persons and our own legislative and administrative functionaries to meet each other was through the medium of semi-public receptions. Mr. Eden, for example, gave expression to his feeling along these lines after his return to London in 1943: "There was one particular opportunity I had of which I must give a special account to this House [of Commons] because it was of a parliamentary character. Thanks to the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Mr. Connally, and the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives, Mr. Sol Bloom, I was able to have informal discussions with members of the two committees drawn from both parties in the two houses of Congress. The House is well aware of the important part these committees play in the national life and politics of the United States. That for me was a most valuable experience. We exchanged views very freely, off the record. It was to me a very great advantage and, I hope, it was perhaps just a little bit to theirs, too. The exchanges were frank and ranged over every topic and every view."

I have, too, a letter that was written to me from the White House by Mr. Churchill in May, 1943, during the course of his third wartime visit to this country. "I was deeply touched by the cordiality and friendship shown to me yesterday at your luncheon," wrote the Prime Minister, "and I send to you and to the members of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House my warm thanks. I greatly enjoyed the talk which we had together afterwards. The questions which I was asked showed a deep understanding of the problems of war and peace, and I hope what I said will prove helpful and useful to those who were there." This was considerably more than a polite expression of friendship. We had discussed at great length the "problems of war and peace," and a few weeks later a resolution which in part reflected that conversation was introduced in the House by a member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Representative J. William Fulbright of Arkansas: "Resolved by the House of Representatives that the Congress hereby expresses itself as favoring the creation of appropriate international machinery with power adequate to establish and to maintain a just and lasting peace, among the nations of the world, and as favoring participation of the United States therein."

Congress recessed in July, 1943, while the resolution was pending, and during the summer it was widely discussed throughout the country. By the time Congress reconvened in September it had become unmistakably clear that sentiment was heavily in favor of our taking a part in an international authority to establish and maintain peace. The House, in a vote uninfluenced by party differences, passed the resolution 360 to 29. It was then transmitted to the Senate. After some delay, that body decided to adopt a resolution of its own composition instead—the so-called Connally Resolution. Thus, two separate but substantially like declarations expressed the plain desire of the American people for permanent co-operation with the other peoples of the world.

An organization to which I cannot give too much praise is the Federal Bureau of Investigation, headed by J. Edgar Hoover, and, in particular, the service it rendered in Washington during the war and the years immediately preceding; the

same thing is true of the White House Secret Service, with Edmund W. Starling in charge, though naturally its area of action is much smaller. It was the responsibility of the F.B.I. to protect many hundreds of persons, from visiting ministers and kings right down the line to members of Congress. They did it so thoroughly that they never came even close to losing a client, and so unobtrusively that most of the people under their protection were unaware of their presence. It took me weeks to realize, during the 1939 debates on neutrality revision, that somebody was keeping his protective eyes on me, and at first it seemed rather silly. But when I thought it over, I decided that it was a very comfortable feeling. At times of emotional tension there are always isolated crackpots to be guarded against. In addition—and for a man in my position at the time it was a much more important consideration—there was always the possibility that an attempt might be made to place me in a situation that could cause embarrassment not only to me but to the administration. As somebody pointed out one day, it would have been perfectly simple for a man like Fritz Kuhn, or another member of the Bund or similar subversive group, to have stopped me momentarily in one of the Capitol corridors where a photographer had been planted—and next day a photograph showing both of us in apparently amiable conversation would probably have been spread over the front pages of all the isolationist newspapers.

My house on Columbia Road was always under surveillance, and during the more critical periods, such as the time in 1941 when The Mothers of America were picketing me, I was requested to assist the F.B.I. operatives by keeping the house and garden lighted through the night. And I give my assurance that I co-operated in every way. Any other course would have been foolish bravado, as well as a stupid hindrance to men who knew their business thoroughly.

There was never a time in Washington, not excepting the dark winter of 1941–1942, when the general atmosphere was not one of full confidence. Even so, there was a new buoyancy in town when American troops crossed the Strait of Messina and set foot for the first time on the soil of Europe. Italy sur-

rendered the same day—General Eisenhower announced that country's acceptance of terms five days later, September 8, 1943—and after that there was always the feeling that we were now concerned not only with winning the war but with building a world of peace. The Fulbright and Connally Resolutions were adopted in the weeks that followed, and two other significant steps were taken in the direction of closer understanding among nations. One affected our relations with China: Congress passed a bill repealing the Chinese Exclusion Act that had been a source of irritation for many years. The other brought together, first, in North Africa, President Roosevelt, Prime Minister Churchill, and Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek; second, in Teheran, Roosevelt, Churchill, and Premier Josef Stalin; third, in Cairo, Roosevelt, Churchill, and President Inönü of Turkey.

It was in this same fall of 1943 that the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration was established by an agreement signed at the White House by forty-four nations, and on November 15 I had the privilege and great honor of introducing in the House a resolution to provide for the participation of the United States.

During the weeks that followed, the Committee on Foreign Affairs held a number of hearings. From such witnesses as Assistant Secretary of State Dean Acheson, Leo T. Crowley, head of the Foreign Economic Administration, and former Governor Herbert H. Lehman of New York, director general of UNRRA, members of the committee gained a clear idea of the broad plan to relieve populations of enemy-occupied territories as soon as they were liberated. They cleared their minds of misconceptions regarding UNRRA's intended methods. Perhaps the most universally held popular error had been that the United States was about to make a commitment for vast and undefined expenditures abroad. Governor Lehman dispelled this error by setting forth the guiding principles of the organization: "The first is that UNRRA must at all times help others to help themselves. Without exception, the nations which have suffered the direct devastation of war do not want charity. . . . The second guiding principle is that UNRRA's resources, greatly limited as they will be in relation to the ravages wrought

by years of modern war, must be used to meet only the most pressing needs. They must not be dissipated by financing long-range reconstruction projects, however sound and praiseworthy these may be. The third guiding principle is that the success of UNRRA must be measured by the speed with which it is able to liquidate itself. . . . The two principal types of activity in which UNRRA will engage are, one, obtaining or assisting in the obtaining of relief and rehabilitation supplies, and, two, furnishing or assisting in the furnishing of technical and expert services. . . ." Mr. Lehman also explained in detail the scope of operation, as laid down by the representatives of the forty-four signatory nations in their Atlantic City conference (which I attended) after the White House agreement.

In January, 1944, the Committee on Foreign Affairs reported favorably, and debate in the House began. At the outset, the opposition appeared very strong, and I thought there might be a battle comparable to the one over lend-lease in 1941. But, one by one, we beat the crippling amendments that were proposed, and on January 25 the resolution passed the House by the overwhelming vote of 338 to 54. Two months later President Roosevelt signed the bill which authorized an appropriation of $1,350,000,000 to be expended on relief and rehabilitation. Thus the United States, in co-operation with forty-three other nations, prepared to aid the peoples of Europe, whose liberation on a broad scale was to begin the following June 6 with the Allied invasion of Normandy.

XXIV

ONE OF THE VERY great satisfactions of my years in Congress has been the privilege of representing the United States at a number of international conferences. To some of these I was sent primarily by virtue of my position as chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs; to others because of my known great interest and presumed qualifications; and to one because I was the member of Congress who perhaps knew more than anyone else about the subject to be considered. This last was the convention on international copyrights, held in Rome in 1928, and in one respect it gave me more pleasure to be a delegate on this occasion than on any of the others. As I have already noted, President Coolidge disregarded party lines and picked me because I had been recommended as best qualified.

Strictly speaking, I was not a delegate but an observer. Although the Bern Convention—which provided, among other things, that the citizens of all signatory nations should be accorded the same rights within any country as that country's own citizens enjoyed—had been ratified in Switzerland by the principal states of Europe as long ago as 1887, the United States was not a party to the agreement. We had refrained from joining for a number of reasons, of which the most important was a lack of uniformity in copyright laws of the member countries. The big trouble was that the Bern Convention did not provide truly reciprocal agreements, and it had seemed unwise to place ourselves in the position of granting greater rights to foreign

authors than their own countries gave them and, in particular, than their countries gave to our own authors.

My assignment was to attend the meeting as a nonparticipating guest, then to report my findings to Washington with such recommendations, pro or con, as appeared suitable. The convention was scheduled for May, and since the Italian spring was an experience my family had never known, I wanted to sail from New York early enough to allow us a week in Sicily and another to motor up the coast from Reggio to Rome. But a combination of last-minute delays in the capital held us up, and the ship we finally caught reached Naples so late that, in order to make the last train that would get me to Rome in time for the opening session, I couldn't even wait until we docked. Instead, dressed in topper and morning coat, I went over the side on the Jacob's ladder and was taken ashore by a waiting tender. Only slightly wrinkled, I arrived in Rome in time for the opening meeting at four o'clock that same afternoon.

The International Copyright Union changed some of its rules during the course of the conference, and a revised "Bern Convention" was signed early in June. But its essential character remained unaltered. In consequence, the United States has never joined, preferring to make copyright agreements individually with other nations. There has been no international meeting of the Union since 1928.

One of the minor impressions left on me by these conferences in which I took no active part was the behavior of certain delegates. Germany, less than ten years after defeat, was represented by one of the most obnoxious characters I have ever known. He would have been bad enough at any time, but I was astounded that a country still under the burden of re-establishing itself in the fellowship of nations should have suffered this man to speak for his people. He was loud and insistent. He demanded when he should have requested. Altogether, he made the worst possible impression on his colleagues, and I had the unpleasant feeling that this man might be representative of the new Germany. By what appears to me now as a curious coincidence, the only other delegate I disliked was the Japanese. Superficially polite, he nevertheless had the same approach as the German to controversial matters. Where other

delegates were willing to discuss points of disagreement with an eye toward greater understanding and possible compromise, the Japanese was at all times unconciliatory. The slightest deviation from anything he proposed caused him to sulk professionally and to threaten to withdraw from the conference. It is possible, of course, in the light of subsequent events, that I may now be exaggerating the effect that the representatives of Japan and Germany had on me; however that may be, I wish to set it down.

In 1940 I was a member of the delegation of the United States to the inauguration of General Manuel Avila Camacho as president of Mexico. Although hardly to be classified as an international conference, it was considerably more than a casual good-will tour. Both Germany and Italy, with whom our relations were by now greatly strained, had been trying to ingratiate themselves with Mexico, and those of us who attended the inaugural ceremonies were sensitive of our responsibility to make a favorable impression on our hosts. A genuine friendliness existed between the United States and Mexico, but those of us who remembered our history knew that there had been times, some of them quite recent, when a thoughtless remark or a careless reference had been enough to upset the applecart.

As the representative of the House of Representatives, I was invited to make an informal address before the Chamber of Deputies. I spoke for not more than five minutes, and, except for remarking on my first visit to Mexico fifty-two years before (when I signed up the Mexican Typical Orchestra for a tour of the United States), I talked only about the program of unity and co-operation that their new president had outlined in his inaugural speech several days before. I ended by quoting, in English translation, a significant paragraph of President Avila Camacho's address, and I was applauded with a vigor that astonished me. As I sat down I understood for the first time the tremendous popularity of the new chief executive—the delegates were applauding him through their applause of my remarks about him. I also realized that because they liked what one American had said about their president, the chances were

that in the future they would like all Americans a little more than they had before. I had had the good fortune to strike the right emotional note.

Not very long after President Avila Camacho's inauguration, a conference was arranged to consider claims, some of which were a century old. For the first time in the history of the two countries they were given objective consideration, and a full and equitable settlement of our claims against Mexico and Mexican claims against the United States was effected. Where gunmen, lawyers, and professional chiselers of all varieties had lamentably failed, a group of men working in an atmosphere of friendship and mutual confidence succeeded. The "good neighbor" policy is not cant. It is real.

In 1943 President Roosevelt appointed me a delegate to a conference on a subject very close to my heart. That was the Bermuda Conference on the Refugee Problem, which was held at Hamilton in April. The other two American delegates were Harold W. Dodds, president of Princeton University, who served as chairman, and Senator Scott W. Lucas of Illinois.

Even before the war had begun in Europe the United States had shown deep concern for political and other victims of organized Nazi oppression, and President Roosevelt brought about meetings in England at which representatives of that country and the United States discussed the problem and took steps to provide asylum for many persons who had escaped from Germany. After the war began there were to be considered not only the victims of persecution in Germany but Poles, driven one way by the German armies, the other way by the Russian forces, and Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians, whose little countries had been quickly swallowed up by the Soviet Union. As the war continued and spread, first into the Low Countries and France, later into Jugoslavia and the Balkans, the suffering of displaced persons in all Europe multiplied in quantity and complexity. Most numerous among the sufferers of all nations were Jews.

Out of the first conferences in London grew the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, which by 1943 was being supported by twenty-nine nations, both neutral and belligerent,

and an additional twenty governments had been invited to join the movement. For various reasons, foremost among which was the shipping situation, Great Britain and the United States had been compelled to carry the chief burden and responsibility, and thus it was agreed that a special meeting should be held by representatives of these two countries to grapple with the growing problem and try to evolve a plan for more effective international action.

The three British delegates, Richard K. Law, son of the late Prime Minister Bonar Law, Osbert Peake, and George Hall, all members of Parliament, all holding important subcabinet posts, and we three Americans confronted a situation that was urgent, complex, and delicate. The humanitarian motive to aid individuals, we had at all times to keep in mind, had to be subordinated to the greater humanitarian motive of rescuing whole peoples. Any plan that might interfere with winning the war had to be rejected. We could divert no force, not a single ship, in direct use against the enemy to succor any of his victims. At this time—not until a month later did the German forces in Africa surrender; not for another five months were Allied soldiers to set foot on southern Italy; not for more than a year would General Eisenhower's forces land in France—no one could guess how long the war might last, and every effort must be spent that could shorten it by even as little as a day.

We also faced the necessity of keeping most of our specific findings and recommendations secret, and that opened the conference to attacks from various quarters. Many persons of intelligence, who fully comprehended the need for secrecy in war plans, seemed not to realize that a knowledge of detailed intentions concerning refugees would certainly be useful to the enemy. As an example, the announcement that we were going to aid a particular group might lead to intensified persecutions, perhaps to demonstrate that meddling from the outside could only intensify its wretchedness, perhaps to induce the payment of a huge ransom; or, quite possibly, the enemy would take unusual pains to sink a ship filled with helpless men, women, and children, thus hoping to discourage further attempts at rescue.

As an individual, I came under special criticism. One group

would attack me, as a Jew, for a fancied discrimination in favor of my people. And at the very same time certain Jews were upbraiding me for my failure to assert myself more vigorously in behalf of my brethren. I had cause for frequent anger, but I was not angry. I grieved, not because I was accused, but because it was possible to do relatively so little. And I grieved that anyone believed I would do more for any one group than I would for any other group of sufferers. A letter from Dr. Dodds, written shortly after our return from Bermuda, gave me much comfort. "You were," he stated, "in a more difficult position than any other member of the conference. Knowing as I do how keenly you feel for the persecuted peoples of Europe, it is with great satisfaction that I express to you my admiration for the reasonable and straightforward course you pursued throughout the deliberations of the conference. I know that your position will be attacked by many whose emotions are now controlling their intellects, but I want to say to you how thoroughly I respected the position you maintained throughout."

Gratifying, too, was the impersonal statement issued by the Department of State a few weeks after the conclusion of the Bermuda conference: "All suggestions were measured by two distinct criteria. In the first place, nothing could be recommended that would interfere with or delay the war effort of the United Nations, and, secondly, any recommendation submitted must be capable of accomplishment under war conditions. The shipping problem was recognized to be of the utmost urgency and it was agreed that any plan looking to the diverting of allied shipping from the war effort to remove or care for refugees would present considerations of a military character which would disclose almost insuperable difficulties. It was also agreed that no negotiations with Hitler could be undertaken since his entire record has left no doubt that he would only agree to such solutions as would be of direct benefit to the Axis war aims. The conference was, however, able to recommend measures both for removing refugees from neutral countries and, in those cases where such removal was not possible, for giving assurances of international co-operation in the future of the refugee problem so far as it affected them. It also recommended a number of temporary refugee havens to which refu-

gees could be transported and maintained if and when shipping should become available. At least one such movement has been effected. Certain measures of a financial nature to cover necessary expenses and a declaration of intention to provide for repatriation upon the termination of hostilities were also recommended. The conference also submitted a plan for an expanded and more efficient intergovernmental organization with increased authority to meet the problems created or likely to arise under war conditions."

Most gratifying of all was the action of following months. In the fall of 1943 Breckinridge Long, Assistant Secretary of State, who was in charge of matters affecting refugee relief, testifying before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, reported that the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees had been empowered "to take such steps as may be necessary to preserve, maintain and transport those persons displaced from their homes by their efforts to escape from areas where their lives and liberty are in danger on account of their race, religion, or political beliefs." The following January, President Roosevelt established the War Refugee Board, consisting of the Secretaries of State, War, and the Treasury, to take effective measures without limitation "for the rescue, transportation, maintenance and relief of the victims of enemy oppression, and the establishment of havens of temporary refuge for such victims." Co-operation was immediately established among this board and the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, and other agencies.

I wish only that the vigorous beginning made in time of war might have been followed by an even more vigorous extension of aid after the war ended. There are still millions of displaced persons to be helped. We in the United States in particular could be doing far more than we have so far undertaken to do.

On January 1, 1942, twenty-six nations made a joint declaration in Washington of their pledge to fight the Axis powers until complete victory should be achieved. Thus the United Nations came into being.

As the war proceeded, plans were developed to make the

United Nations an enduring organization, one that should take the place of the old League of Nations and be far superior to it in influence, one that might eventually achieve a moral authority great enough to outlaw war. At Dumbarton Oaks, outside of Washington, representatives of the United Nations gathered in 1944 to chart a course, and on April 25, 1945, delegates from fifty-one member nations assembled in San Francisco to write the charter that would be a basis for international co-operation in the future.

There were eight American delegates—Edward R. Stettinius, Secretary of State, chairman; Cordell Hull, former Secretary of State; Tom Connally, senator from Texas, chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations; Arthur H. Vandenberg, senator from Michigan, ranking minority member of the Committee on Foreign Relations; Virginia C. Gildersleeve, dean of Barnard College; Harold E. Stassen, former governor of Minnesota; Charles A. Eaton, representative from New Jersey, ranking minority member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs; and I, chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs. Among the advisors to the delegation were John Foster Dulles, lawyer and specialist on international affairs; James C. Dunn, Assistant Secretary of State (now ambassador to Italy); Nelson Rockefeller, Assistant Secretary of State; Alger Hiss, State Department; Isaiah Bowman, president of Johns Hopkins University; and Leo Pasvolsky, economist and monetary expert. Although Cordell Hull, who had retired as Secretary of State a few months before, did not attend the conference, we had to help us his accumulated experience of eleven years in the State Department, and his wisdom.

This was a great team to be a part of. The strong, confident leadership of young Ed Stettinius; the quick, incisive mind of Harold Stassen; the bigness of Arthur Vandenberg and Tom Connally, working in perfect harmony, without the faintest trace of partisan conflict; the intellectual power, the objectivity, and the sincerity of Foster Dulles; the tremendous organizing genius of Leo Pasvolsky—these qualities and many others made it possible for the American delegation to assume, as was its obligation, the guiding position in the conference. Most of the other nations looked to us. They found us prepared.

We were prepared, in the first place, because months of careful study had preceded the conference in San Francisco. And we were prepared from day to day because all of us worked through the nights that followed the daily sessions. Ed Stettinius was a marvel of stamina. Working regularly from early morning until midnight or later, he never lost his quickness, his poise, or his good humor. A dozen times during the two-month conference he rang me up at one, two, or three in the morning to ask me to join him in the penthouse of the Fairmont Hotel to discuss a new problem that had to be solved before the next session, and always I found him as vigorous as if he had just slept for twelve hours. After that he might have two or three hours in bed, and then he would be off on another day like the one just ended.

I have frequently been asked what I thought was the biggest job at the outset of this conference. I can answer the question very simply: to establish confidence. Without confidence on the part of the small nations that the big nations wished them to have true and full participation, nothing of great value could have been accomplished. That this kind of confidence should have been established is a tribute to the men who represented the United States and the British commonwealth of nations. And it is a tribute to the men from the smaller and weaker countries, who were able to discern the intentions of the leading Western powers. It is a sad necessity to say "Western powers," but I have no choice. Russia, even before the war quite ended in Germany, had become a question mark. No one could be sure of her intentions. Even before the charter was signed, Russia began to obstruct. "I have not heard from my government," said Ambassador Gromyko, senior delegate from the Soviet Union after Foreign Commissar Molotov returned to Moscow. He said the same thing the next day, and the next, when all others had agreed on a date for signing. It was not until Stettinius informed Gromyko directly that the charter would be signed on the designated day, with or without the participation of the Russian delegates, that action by all members could be reasonably predicted. Presumably Gromyko heard from his government, for the Russian delegates signed with the rest of us.

My own particular concern with the charter was whose charter it was to be. In my mind there was no question at all: It must be a charter for all people of all countries. The fact that in many countries of the world the people were not (and still are not) sovereign could not be permitted to disturb the American principle that all authority derives from the people. I insisted that we were preparing a document that was to be a bill of rights, not for states, not for rulers, but for human beings—and so, at the very outset, I found myself engaged in a struggle. Among my leading opponents, curiously enough, were men distinguished as liberals in countries noted for their democratic institutions. Both Jan Christaan Smuts of the Union of South Africa and Alexander Loudon of the Netherlands, for example, strongly disagreed with my argument that the delegates were the servants of their respective peoples; these two, along with a number of other men, regarded themselves strictly as agents of their governments and responsible only to the ministers who had sent them to San Francisco. My position, on the other hand, was that all of us represented our peoples. We must write the charter for them. Even more, it must be their instrument. If it were not, then any future cabinet in any country of the world could reject the charter on the grounds that a predecessor cabinet had been incompetent to subscribe to it. I wanted the United Nations to be for the *people* of the world. I wanted the charter not only to be for the people but to come from the people. That was why I fought to have it begin, as it does, "We the Peoples of the United Nations . . ." Even the men in the Kremlin, however cynically they may regard the rights of their own and other peoples, cannot wholly ignore this fact of the charter. And if a handful of commissars should ever act formally, as they have already acted very largely in fact, to withdraw the Soviet Union from the United Nations, the way would still be open for the Russian people themselves to regain admittance in the future.

As I write this, in the late summer of 1948, and consider the evidence of the three years that have passed since the conference in San Francisco, I am greatly disturbed. But I am not disheartened. I believe that the people of the world want the United Nations as much as they need it. I believe, in spite of

the terrible dangers of the hour, that the United Nations not only will survive but will grow to be the great moral force it was intended to be.

Six months after the San Francisco conference I was sent to London to the second meeting of United Nations delegates. Both Germany and Japan had surrendered, and our purpose was to organize for peacetime activity. Officers were to be selected and committees chosen. Decision was to be made on the site of permanent headquarters. Many details of organization were to be worked out.

It was here in London, in January, 1946, that I had the supreme moment of my life.

The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, which had functioned so magnificently in the latter years of the war and was still doing such splendid work under the guidance of Herbert H. Lehman,* was scheduled to have its work taken over by the United Nations as soon as it was properly organized to handle the task. Philip Noel Baker, representing the United Kingdom, drafted the resolution, and when modifications appeared necessary James F. Byrnes, who had succeeded Stettinius as Secretary of State, entrusted me with the duty of collaborating on the changes. Baker and I worked closely together, became firm friends, and jointly offered the amended resolution.

But in the few short months that had passed since the end of the war, the attitude of many countries toward UNRRA had changed. It was one thing to pour out money for relief under the stress of war, another entirely for countries themselves not buried under rubble to help their less fortunate neighbors. When the resolution was brought to vote, one delegate after another reported that he had been instructed by his government to oppose the assumption of UNNRA's work by the United Nations.

With defeat before us, Baker turned to me. "You've got to

* Upon Mr. Lehman's retirement in March, 1946, Fiorello H. La Guardia, former mayor of New York City, succeeded him and continued the work with admirable effectiveness.

talk to them, Sol," he said. "You're the only man on our side who's got a chance of persuading them."

"What could I possibly say?" I asked. I felt crushed, and I was nearly in tears. These delegates were following instructions, and I knew of no way to appeal to men committed in advance by rigid orders. But I got up.

I didn't make a speech. This was no time for arguments, no time to address the intellect. I reminded the delegates only of our promises. I reminded them of the leaflets our flyers had dropped in France and Italy and Greece and Jugoslavia, how we had urged the men and women in those and other countries to burn their fields, destroy their bridges, and blow up their railroads. I asked them to think again of our promises to these peoples who had risked and often lost their lives to hinder the enemy, to think again of our promises to help them rebuild and restore, to consider once more our duty to feed the millions who were still starving and to save the lives of their children. "Open up your hearts!" I ended.

I sat down trembling and exhausted. Baker sent for my overcoat, for he saw that I was wet with sweat. During the moments that followed I hardly knew what was happening. I was utterly depressed by physical fatigue and the certainty that I had failed.

Then people began to press about me, shaking my hand and gripping my shoulders. A miracle had happened. A second vote had been taken, and one by one the delegates had stated, "Notwithstanding the instructions of my government, I vote Aye." The resolution was unanimously adopted, and a little later, as chairman of the special committee on relief, I was able to announce a pledge of relief funds from every member nation, a total subscription of nearly $600,000,000. About the same time, Congress voted a second appropriation of $1,350,000,000 to match the original fund allotted in 1944.

No other happiness of my life ever fully matched the joy that came to me when I realized that the relief proposal had been accepted. It was not the vain happiness that comes from a sense of personal accomplishment. It was the true and enduring happiness that comes with the realization that decent men have responded triumphantly to challenge. They responded. I was only the catalyst.

Only a few weeks before the United Nations conference in San Francisco, representatives of the twenty-one American republics had met in Mexico City to develop a security program for the peoples of this hemisphere. At this meeting a broad agreement was reached, and the principle of continental solidarity was enunciated in the Act of Chapultepec, which was signed in March, 1945. At the same time it was resolved that another conference should be held as soon as feasible after the war ended, for the purpose of writing a treaty of reciprocal assistance that would specify the rights and obligations that had been expressed only in general terms in the Act of Chapultepec.

After a number of postponements, Brazil renewed her invitation to the other republics of North, Central, and South America, and the Inter-American Conference for the Maintenance of Continental Peace and Security was scheduled to open August 15, 1947, in Rio de Janeiro. Our delegation, led by the Secretary of State, General George C. Marshall, included Senators Vandenberg and Connally; Warren R. Austin, former senator from Vermont and permanent delegate to the United Nations; William D. Pawley, ambassador to Brazil; and myself. Chief political advisor was Assistant Secretary of State Norman Armour, former Ambassador to Argentina and Spain, and a man with profound knowledge of all Latin America.

As in San Francisco, the United States delegation was looked to for leadership. Everyone present at the Rio conference knew that any future attack by a European or Asiatic power at any point in the Americas would be directed fundamentally against the United States. Everyone knew that the power of the United States was the best assurance that his own country would remain free from attack. And everyone knew that if his own country should ever be the primary target of outside aggression, he would find his surest aid in and from the United States.

The meat of the treaty that was signed at the Itamaraty Palace after less than three weeks of deliberation was contained in the phrase, "an armed attack by any state against an American state shall be considered an attack against all the American states." Also of great importance was the recognition that Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, which covers the rights and duties of states under attack, should govern in case of

aggression against any American state. It was accepted, and so written, that everything in this hemisphere treaty must conform with the regulations and spirit of the United Nations, whose charter specifically provides for regional agreements of this kind.

I have never returned from an international conference without having somebody say to me, "Of course, I know an agreement was reached, and then there was a big banquet, toasts were drunk, and everything was hotsy-totsy—but does it really mean anything?" Or: "What about this new treaty? It looks like a lot of eyewash to me. Treaties were meant to be broken. Do you think we're any better off than we were before the new one was signed?"

To questions like these, and to all similar questions asked in good faith, I answer: Yes, I think the treaty does mean something. Yes, I think all of us are better off for having signed it.

In terms of geologic time, the human race is very young. And in terms of the age of the race, our capacity to destroy ourselves is little more than born. The present generation of political leaders has a responsibility never before known, hardly even imagined before the war that ended only a little more than three years ago. I know most of the men who today hold our fate in their hands. I have thought a great deal about these men—and about the men, unknown to me, who will succeed them. I believe that these men, with few exceptions, not only recognize (and will continue to recognize) the need but have the will and the strength to understand one another and to act in accordance with their understanding. Every time any of these men come together a new opportunity for common understanding presents itself. When these men write charters and make treaties they mean to keep them. I know that many of them believe, as William Lloyd Garrison wrote over a hundred years ago, "Our country is the world—our countrymen are all mankind."

XXV

NOW THAT I have told something about the purposes and accomplishments of the various conferences that I have attended as a delegate of the United States, I want to balance the serious side of the work with a sketch of the lighter phases—for every world conference has at least a touch of an Elks, Shriners, Rotary Club, or American Legion convention. Sometimes this touch is like the bubbles in champagne. Very often it more closely resembles a fly in the ointment. But whatever its character, it is an integral part of every conference, foreordained, inescapable, and (in retrospect at least) far more likely to add to one's pleasure than to detract from it.

Partly because the Rio conference is the most recent and its details so sharp, partly because the confusions, discomforts, and petty irritations were present in such a liberal dose, I will describe some of the happenings that were not included in the agenda of the meetings that led up to the signing of the hemisphere mutual-assistance treaty, in September, 1947, in the Brazilian capital.

First of all, the Rio conference wasn't held in Rio. It was held in a vast country boardinghouse called Hotel Quitandinha. (This word, meaning "little market place," I am told, is pronounced "Kit-an-deeng-ya." But I was so busy learning to say *segundo,* the number of my floor, that I simplified the word to "Gardenia," and this designation was quickly adopted by most of the United States delegation, as well as by many of my old friends from the other American republics.)

Gardenia (or Quitandinha, as some people still call it) was begun around 1940. The hotel is on the outskirts of the cheerful little town of Petrópolis, forty-odd miles upland from Rio. It is to Petrópolis that the president of Brazil and his ministers move the seat of government during the stifling months of December, January, and February. There, also, go the rich Cariocas, not only to escape the heat of the great city, but to help maintain the old ritual of lavish entertainment that prevailed during the days of Dom Pedro II, when Petrópolis was the Versailles of the New World.

They say it is very pleasant up there in the mountains during the Brazilian summer. But it just happened that the "Rio" conference opened on the fifteenth of August, and winter was still going strong when nearly a thousand delegates, advisors, consultants, secretaries, and flunkeys moved in.

Architecturally, Gardenia is a noble pile of Hollywood Swiss. And like any other Hollywood structure—whether Alpine chalet, Tudor castle, or Park Avenue penthouse—it was built for display, to impress the city yokels. It made a permanent impression on this city yokel. My feet still hurt whenever I think of those icy floors and deep-freeze beds. All I had to fight with in that cave-of-the-winds was a couple of bottles of King's Ransom and a hot-water bag.

The nearest thing to an official explanation for holding the conference in an isolated summer hotel was that Gardenia was the one place in all Brazil large enough not only to house all of the staffs but also to provide adequate assembly halls, committee rooms, and offices. Probably that was quite true. It was also a well-known secret that certain persons in high places wanted to help get the owners out of the red. When Gardenia opened, in 1943, gambling was legal, and the hotel began its career as a very profitable roulette palace. But misfortune struck quickly. One presidential candidate came out against gambling—except, of course, the lotteries, which are a state monopoly and the most dependable source of revenue—and his opponent immediately adopted the same reform position. After less than a year Gardenia, reputed to have cost nine million dollars to build, had become a white elephant.

I don't know how far Gardenia made it along the comeback

trail during the eighteen days of the conference, but my estimate of the gross take, counting rental charges, restaurant, night club, and bar, is between two and three million dollars. If the management was able to control the leaks, they should have netted not less than a million.

I have two little stories to tell about the prices at Gardenia. At luncheon I like to have coffee with hot milk during the meal, and on the first day I ordered it as usual. An hour and a quarter later I gave up and decided to take it, Latin fashion, in the lounge, where it was served gratis—though not exactly free, since we were charged a minimum of three dollars for lunch, whether or not we were present to eat it. Two of my associates took demitasses. I rather daringly asked for hot milk, and, to my amazement, got it without delay, argument, or expostulation. While my friends were drinking four or five small cups apiece I drank a single cup. Then the waiter brought me a bill for eight cruzeiros, which is about forty cents. More curious than surprised, I called for the captain, a young Polish refugee, who spoke fluent English.

"Captain," I said, "I was just wondering how you could get along charging so little for hot milk."

"Oh, there is no charge for milk, sir," he protested, examining the bill.

"Well, in that case, would you humor me by explaining why you want me to pay you eight cruzeiros?"

"That, sir," he answered with a pleasant smile, "is for serving your coffee *in a large cup.*"

That same night, while I was passing through the bar on my way to dinner, a group of newspaper correspondents asked me to join them. My stomach was a little shaky, so I decided to play safe and drink my own Scotch. I sent up to my rooms for a bottle that was about three-fourths full. When we left to go in to dinner the waiter said he would bring my bar bill to the table.

He was standing by my chair when I got there. The amount approximated fifty-seven dollars. Seventeen of it was for soda and potato chips. The other forty was for my own whisky. We settled on the basis of soda, potato chips, and a three-dollar tip. I think it was my old friend Diamond Jim Brady who once

remarked that it was fun to be a sucker if you could afford it. But that was before the day of surtaxes, or even the income tax.

Every conference, like every convention, is an opportunity for the merchants. Indeed, in Atlantic City, New York, Chicago, San Francisco, and numerous other places, the various retail associations employ public-relations experts and professional lobbyists to "sell" their respective cities.

Gardenia had its own Boardwalk, Broadway, Market Street, Piccadilly, Rue de Rivoli, and Via Condotti all rolled into one. As the delegates and their aides proceeded from the main lobby to the assembly hall or to one or another of the conference rooms, suave salesmen bowed and smiled from their places in front of the little shops and show windows that lined both sides of the corridor that was as long as two city blocks. The briefest pause to glance at wares was sufficient opportunity for a proprietor to suggest that if the *Senhor Delegado* were too occupied now, he might like to examine some exquisite aquamarines in his suite—or perhaps the *Ilustríssimo Ministro* would prefer to make an appointment to return after the meeting to decide how many cigarette boxes made of wood from the famous *jacarandá* tree he wished to order. The slightest encouragement resulted in the delivery of samples. They weren't worried about them. They knew us all—and they knew they'd hook us before the conference closed.

In fairness I must say that I was well satisfied with the things I bought, both at Gardenia and in Rio. Some of them, including the stones I took home for my daughter, were real bargains. The others, even though the prices were high in terms of dollar value in the United States, were of the quality described. My complaint against those Brazilian retailers with whom I dealt is that they are still in the trading stage of their economic development. If they wish to become true merchants, they will have to learn to establish prices on the foundation of fair, dependable value, to take a fair, consistent profit, and, above all, to build the reputation of treating all customers alike. If a shopkeeper knocks off 10 per cent (as a certain one did for me), he is cheating the man whom he charged the full price; if he knocks off 20 per cent (as I am confident this shopkeeper would

do under pressure) for the next customer, he is cheating *me*. In our own country no one any longer pays attention to such signs as FORCED TO VACATE and FIRE SALE. But in the best business section of Rio, a city of nearly two million, I counted three stores in one block all bearing the announcement BIG LIQUIDAÇÃO. That, among other things, is my favorite phrase in the fascinating Portuguese language.

Perhaps most consistent of all conference phenomena is the presence of the crusader and the messiah. These self-appointed saviors of mankind emerge from the crowd as you enter a palace or a hotel and present their cards. They buttonhole you in chancelleries and railway stations. They follow you into elevators, and they slide into your rooms when you open the door to accept a telegram. Quite uninvited they join you at the bar or in the dining room. They lurk in the corridors. They come from behind trees while you are having a cigar in the garden. They are everywhere.

Each of them has his own plan for assuring the survival of civilization—and each of these plans, of course, is infallible. One man will offer a world monetary system (based upon the kazatsky, a unit determined by combining such factors as man-hours-of-work, bushels of wheat, annual mean rainfall, and the harmonic scale); another will propose a new international language, or, perhaps, the compulsory use of English (or, depending upon his nationality, of Russian, Gaelic, or Hindustani); a third will recommend as his panacea universal employment of the metric system, and someone else will advocate a ten-day week, a thirteen-month year, cold-water baths, or the abolition of the color red. In Rio one man kept after me on the telephone, trying to describe a flag he had designed to take the place of the twenty-one separate flags of the American republics. He was sure that the new standard would fuse the countries of this hemisphere as nothing else could—and soon world peace would follow with the creation of a global flag. He begged for an appointment with me, and finally, in desperation, he sent me his design, framed and glassed, about four feet square, with the modest request that I carry it back to Washington and present it to President Truman. (I arranged for its

return to the owner, not troubling to suggest that the President, with the battleship *Missouri* then at his disposal in Rio harbor, was perhaps in a more advantageous position than I was for carrying outsize souvenirs to the United States.)

Many of these people are intelligent, and some of them have excellent ideas. Nearly all of these ideas, however, are not practicable, if only for the reason that putting them to work would be likely to cause far greater disruptions than do the existing conditions they have been designed to correct. I remember a guaranteed cure for snoring that used to be advertised years ago. A week or so after you had sent in your dime or quarter, or whatever it cost, you would receive a little card which said: To Cure Snoring, Don't Go to Sleep.

Another trouble—and sometimes a very awkward and embarrassing trouble—is the attempt to introduce irrelevant proposals. There were several of these during the Rio conference. This meeting, remember, was called after an interval of nearly two and a half years to give substance to the principles of hemisphere solidarity which had been voiced in Mexico City in the Act of Chapultepec. We had come together to write a treaty of reciprocal assistance. If we had let ourselves be sidetracked by discussions of detailed obligations, or by questions of cost and payment, or by the peculiar problems of individual nations, we might still be wrangling away. That is why Secretary Marshall had to take such a strong position against any consideration of the economic difficulties that all our neighbor nations were experiencing in one degree or another. This was not the time. How could we hope to build a solid structure until we had assurance that the ground itself was firm?

There was another topic which various well-meaning persons tried to obtrude upon the conference. This was the important and delicate matter of displaced persons. I fervently wish that a more liberal policy could be assumed by all nations in a position to absorb refugees, but I am the last person who would have supported any formal motion to consider this matter. Only strain and antagonism could have resulted if we had allowed the subject of immigration to come before the delegates. I, so far as I know, the only Jew who was a delegate, was constantly being interviewed by journalists and others: what was my posi-

tion on refugees in general and on Jewish refugees in particular? My answer was and always has been that immigration is a domestic problem, to be decided by each individual nation according to its own lights. However deeply I feel for the tragic victims, however I may deplore one restrictive policy or another, I believe that far more harm than good would follow attempts to exert pressure of this sort on sovereign governments.

One other matter comes to mind as I recall the conferences I have attended. That is the business of arranging for a conference, its planning and execution, the detailed labors of setting up a mechanism that will function, as did the one in Gardenia and Rio, five thousand miles from home. There were six delegates from the United States, but for each one of us who flew in the hazardous stratosphere of international relations there was a "ground crew" of ten. This staff of sixty were the people who got the plane ready and who kept it serviced day and night.

If this task had been no more complex than that of setting up offices and making housekeeping arrangements, it would still merit high praise for Dr. Warren Kelchner, chief of the State Department's division of international conferences, and for his secretaries, those quiet and competent young ladies who were still so amiable at the end of a long day—when other persons had sometimes given way. But the job was not as simple as that. I will mention the work of three branches that operated twenty-four hours a day, the failure of any of which for just a few hours might have seriously disrupted our activity.

Perhaps most important of these three was the communications setup, which provided the contact with Washington. In a little room on the third floor "scrambled" radio messages were constantly being sent and received. Within a few minutes after any event of importance had taken place it was known to President Truman, and his instructions would be in the hands of the Secretary of State or one of the other delegates in time for immediate use.

The conference was conducted in four languages. All of the nations but three used Spanish. The Brazilians employed Portuguese, the Haitians French, and we English. All formal speeches were simultaneously translated from the original tongue into

the other three languages, and the listeners could take their pick via headphones. But in committee—where the real work of the conference was accomplished—each delegate had a personal "whisperer," who translated the remarks phrase by phrase. This was both troublesome and dangerous. Although my knowledge of French is not great, and my familiarity with Spanish and Portuguese very slight indeed, I could still follow after a fashion. But when somebody was whispering English in one ear while my other ear was trying to get the gist of a speaker's remarks in Portuguese, French, or Spanish, I found myself not only confused but apprehensive. How could I make a sensible judgment if I were not sure of the point I was trying to evaluate? If it was important for Secretary Marshall to have his speech read from a carefully prepared translation by one of his aides, Major Walters, I felt that it was also important that every little discussion be exactly translated. To do this, more than a knowledge of words and idioms is necessary. The mind and the spirit must be translated as well. (I shall never forget the secret visit of Mr. Molotov to Washington in the early days of the war. During one of the meetings in the White House, President Roosevelt made one of his characteristic little jests, which was first translated into Russian by the official American interpreter, then by the official Soviet interpreter. Mr. Molotov remained expressionless. He was not being professionaly impassive in those days, remember. He just didn't understand; he had got only the words. The sense of the President's pleasantry was then given to him by Maxim Litvinov. Litvinov had lived in the United States long enough to learn English as it is spoken and understood by the American people. Only he from among that little group was sufficiently versed both in Slavic syntax and Yankee wit to make the grim Foreign Commissar laugh.)

It was the written translations that really made it possible to keep up with all events, not only in your own committee but in two others, all three of which were meeting simultaneously. Much of this work had to be done during the night, so that copies would be available early the following morning, in time to be read and their contents digested before the meetings of the new day began.

The third branch I want to mention is the relatively humble

one that took care of the typing, cut the stencils, and produced the mimeographed copies, not only of the translations but of all the orders of the day. This work also had to be done very largely during the night. Without prompt distribution of copies to all delegates and advisors, confusion would have been inevitable and much valuable time lost.

Finally, I must say a word about the staff of the American Embassy in Rio. Without the perfect co-operation of Ambassador Bill Pawley (since resigned) and his assistants, the work of the American delegation would have been infinitely more difficult. Personally, I am grateful for many favors and considerations to a number of individuals, but to none more so than Glenn Wolfe, the Administrative Attaché. The foreign service of the United States would do well to enlist more men of his capacity. I also remember with pleasure a young Jewish boy named Cohen, who was assigned to help me with several matters. Maxie, now in his early twenties, moved to Brazil with his family when he was eight or nine. Apart from his diligence in my behalf, he endeared himself to me with his accent—half Portuguese and half East Side New York.

XXVI

In 1845 a German-born rabbi named Max Lilienthal emigrated to the United States and in due course became a citizen. For thirty-seven years, until his death in 1882, he worked as an educator and as a minister of God, and no person has ever done more to promote good relations between Jews and Christians. By the example of his own life, he demonstrated to the satisfaction of all except the militantly prejudiced that the Jew wants above all things, wherever he may be upon this earth, the right to make a home for himself and the chance to become a part of the community he inhabits. As for the Jew who possesses the precious boon of United States citizenship, Max Lilienthal briefly and eloquently described him as "a monotheist in creed, a Hebrew, Israelite, or Jew in descent, and in all other private or public relations an American citizen."

So far I have written my story simply as such an American, just as another writer might be an American of Italian descent and a Catholic, an American of Scottish ancestry and a Presbyterian, or an American with German forebears and a Lutheran. But now, in this chapter, I am going to write about some things that have a special concern for me as a Jew.

Ten years ago, in 1938, the estimated Jewish population of the world was in the neighborhood of 16,000,000, of whom nearly one third were residents of the United States. During the course of the war all but a handful of the more than 3,000,000 Jews of Poland, the 550,000 German Jews, the 180,000 Austrian

Jews, and the 350,000 Czechoslovak Jews were murdered by the Nazis or died of starvation and disease. An additional 1,500,000 came to tragic ends in Russia, Rumania, the Ukraine, and other parts of Europe that suffered under the yoke of Hitler. Altogether, between five and six million Jews lost their lives through violence, and today, in spite of accretion, the world Jewish population is only 11,300,000.

The Jewish population of the United States is still, as it was before the war, over 5,000,000, and between 600,000 and 700,000 additional Jews inhabit the other countries of North and South America. In this hemisphere, in Great Britain and other nations of the British commonwealth, and in certain parts of Europe the Jews have made permanent homes for themselves and become substantial members of their respective communities. In Palestine, close to 700,000 Jews have established themselves as the still-precarious nation of Israel. But of the less than 4,000,000 European Jews (2,500,000 in Russia) who survived the war, of the 900,000 Jews in Asia, and of the 650,000 Jews in Africa a majority are literally homeless or unwelcome or both.

I cite these grim statistics not to produce an emotional impact, but to show the size of the job to be done. It is a task not for Jews alone, but for mankind at large—just as the finding of homes for displaced persons who are not Jews is a task for all. There are millions of displaced or homeless persons, of many creeds and origins, and I do not distinguish among them. I ask no special treatment for the Jews. What I ask for the Jews is equal treatment. The displaced-persons bill signed by President Truman late in June of 1948—he signed it only because it was better than no bill at all—calling for the admission in the next two years of 205,000 displaced persons * into the United States has grave faults. It will, in practice if not in intent, discriminate against both Catholics and Jews. More important, the total number is much too small.

Realism is essential in any consideration of the problem of displaced persons. Great as is the need from the humanitarian standpoint, it is no greater than the need, to approach the matter squarely, for removing these people. Not only are they

* Not in addition to, but inclusive of, the regular quotas under existing immigration laws.

homeless paupers in Europe but they are dangerous as well. A floating population of several millions is a real threat to peace. These people must be distributed and absorbed, and it is up to the United States to take the lead. I certainly do not recommend uncontrolled immigration into this country, but I do maintain that we must admit many more displaced persons than we have so far agreed to take. If we do our share—and our share is considerably more than 100,000 a year—we will be in a strong position to urge other countries to do their share. Surely the United States, Canada, the sparsely populated countries of South America, Australia and South Africa can find room to relieve a little of the pressure on crowded Europe.

"Well, why can't the homeless Jews find homes in Palestine?" is a question I have heard asked so many times that I am now convinced a very great many Americans believe this little country, just slightly larger than Vermont, could accommodate all the homeless Jews in the world. Some Americans acknowledge tolerantly that there are temporary difficulties—lack of transportation, disagreements with the Arabs, and the like—but it's just a question of time, they say, and not very much time at that. These people are pathetically uninformed. But before elaborating I want to tell something about Palestine and my position on the important matters relating to the establishment of a national home for Jews in the land of their ancestors. Then perhaps the whole picture will be clearer.

For many years I have been an ardent Zionist. I cannot remember the time when I did not repeat the prayer that ends *L'Shono Habo B'Yerusholayim*—Next Year in Jerusalem. I cannot remember the time when some portion of the contents of the Charity Box which hung in the kitchen of our house on Brannan Street in San Francisco did not go to the support of one or another of our religious and eleemosynary institutions in the Holy City—and I have never ceased to contribute toward their work. From the time of the Balfour Declaration, in November, 1917, which promised a home for the Jewish people in Palestine, I have been an earnest and public advocate of that promise's fulfillment. I rejoiced when the Allied Conference of San Remo in 1920 granted to Great Britain the mandate over that territory. I applauded the action of Congress two years later

when a resolution favoring the establishment of a Jewish home in Palestine was approved, and in 1924, now as a member of Congress, I worked for the treaty—the so-called Convention of 1924, ratified by the Senate in 1925—in which Great Britain and the United States agreed upon details concerning the rights of the two governments and their nationals with respect to Palestine. In 1939 I protested with all my power the illegal action of Britain in modifying the treaty without the assent of the United States and limiting Jewish immigration into Palestine to 75,000 over the five-year period ending March 31, 1944; nor was my objection either personal or secular, for the Committee on Foreign Affairs formally protested the White Paper as "a clear repudiation of the convention between the United States and Great Britain with respect to Palestine, dated December 2, 1924." I protested again in 1943 when it appeared that the restrictions and confusions of war would limit the five-year immigration to an even smaller number than the allowed 75,000, and I was instrumental, through my representations to Messrs. Law, Peake, and Hall (now Lord Hall), during the course of the Bermuda conference on refugees, and through their subsequent introduction of a bill in Parliament, in having the time extended to permit the entry of more than 30,000 Jews who would otherwise have been barred.

In January, 1944, I strongly supported the resolution that the United States take appropriate measures to the end that a Jewish commonwealth be set up in Palestine; in the spring of 1945, at San Francisco, I was a member of the United Nations committee on trusteeships which inserted Article 80 into the charter, thus (though without specification) safeguarding the rights of the Jewish community in Palestine; and in December, 1945, I steered the so-called Palestine Resolution through the House and had the satisfaction of seeing it approved by both the House and the Senate. Then in the early fall of 1947 I urged the administration to approve the partition of Palestine between the Jews and the Arabs, and on October 11 Herschel Johnson, American delegate to the United Nations General Assembly, announced our support of the recommendation. Next I conferred with delegates from a number of other countries and helped to win over enough votes to provide the required two-

thirds majority necessary for United Nations approval of the partition. Finally, in May of 1948, two days before the birth of the independent state of Israel, I conferred with President Truman about official recognition of the new nation, and within a few minutes after the proclamation of its political existence recognition was granted by the United States, which thus became the first government to extend it.

Returning now to the general misapprehension concerning Palestine as the asylum for all homeless Jews—even, as some people assume, as the cherished home of all Jews—I can give a categorical answer to all questions why Palestine cannot alone solve the problem. It simply isn't big enough. Even if there were no resistance on the part of the million Arabs who now inhabit the land, Palestine wouldn't be big enough. Even if no other impediment existed, it is doubtful whether Palestine ever could be big enough to support an additional three or four million inhabitants—and as for a population of eleven or twelve million, the idea is nothing less than fantastic.

Fortunately, little serious thought has ever been given to the notion that Palestine should eventually become the home for all the Jews of the world. The reason for that, apart from Palestine's inadequacy, is not hard to find: Nothing short of physical force could induce a solid majority of the world's Jews to migrate. The Wandering Jew of history and legend has not been a wanderer by choice. He has wandered only from necessity, because he has been the victim of pogroms and discriminatory laws, because he has been driven from country to country, because he has been refused one of the basic needs and desires of all men, the opportunity to make a home for himself and his children.

I am not theorizing. In England, France, the United States, and other countries where the Jew has encountered no discriminatory laws he has settled permanently—and he has always, with a minimum of individual exceptions, made a good citizen. That the Jew owes a great debt to the United States is beyond question. That he has paid full interest on his debt is also beyond question, and it is my belief that the principal, though it can never be returned in kind, has been pretty well balanced by contributions of various sorts.

I have often told the story of the twenty-three Jews who arrived in New Amsterdam in 1654, and I am going to tell it again. Refugees from Portuguese Brazil, they asked admittance to the Dutch colony which a few years later became the English colony of New York. When Governor Peter Stuyvesant refused their request, they appealed to the home office of the Dutch West India Company, some of whose stockholders were Jews, and they were permitted to enter and establish homes, "provided the poor amongst them shall not become a burden to the company or the community, but be supported by their own nation." This was the real beginning of Jewish settlement in North America. Those first Jews kept the faith. None of them became a public charge. Their descendants kept the faith. They took care of their unfortunate brothers. They did more than that. They founded a system of charity that has become the model for all sectarian charity in the United States, if not the whole world.

More important than the written contract entered into by those first Jews nearly three centuries ago was their acknowledgment of the undefined obligation that the new land placed —and continues to place—upon all strangers coming to its shores. It takes the form of a tacit pledge that every man who is given the opportunity of establishing a permanent home here, a home free of religious persecution, free of political, commercial, and cultural inequality, will do everything in his power to carry on the traditions of his new country and give of his very best so that his new country, as well as himself, may profit by his presence here. In America the Jews have prospered as they have in no other part of the world. And America has prospered for their being here. None can deny that this segment, which comprises a little more than 3 per cent of the population of the United States, has contributed its full share toward the development of commerce and industry, of the arts and sciences, of politics and government, and of patriotism and social responsibility.

When I think of the opportunities and satisfactions enjoyed by the Jew in this country, I think automatically of his misery and despair in so many other parts of the world. I think, too, of the parts of the world in which there are no Jews. For a Jew, at

least, it is a strange experience to be in such a part of the world.

Early in 1928, several years after Spain had invited the United States to take part in the 1929 Seville Exposition, I was called upon, as a member of the Committee on Industrial Arts and Expositions, for a report. When the Spanish ambassador learned that I would be in a position to influence the decision he threw up his hands, for surely no Jew could be expected to recommend anything that might be helpful to Spain, the country from which Jews had been expelled more than four hundred years earlier. I nevertheless heartily supported American participation. Even if I had been personally bitter about Spain's ancient action, I should have made a favorable report, for I believed it would be to the advantage of the United States to have an exhibit in Seville. And certainly I should have been quite without justification had I opposed the thoughtful recommendations made in 1925 by President Coolidge and Charles Evans Hughes, who was then Secretary of State.

American participation was duly approved, and I had the good fortune to be sent to Seville as special representative of the United States. It was a wonderful trip for me and my family, but, as I have said, it is a curious experience for a Jew to be in a country where, officially, at least, no Jews live. Knowing well that there was no synagogue in all Spain, I still asked my hosts in Seville whether there was a place of worship for Jews. They answered, of course, and in some embarrassment, that no synagogue existed. It was a Friday afternoon, and I started back to my hotel, intending to have Sabbath prayers with my family. I noticed that one of the servants was following me, and after I had walked a short distance he came up beside me and said, in English, "I am a Jew. I can take you to a house of worship." On Saturday I went with him. He led me to one of the poorer quarters of the city, and finally to a small house, where he knocked on the door. A little slot, precisely like the kind one used to find in speakeasies during the prohibition era, opened and a pair of dark eyes scrutinized us. Then a bolt was shot, the door was opened just wide enough to admit us, and I found myself in a dimly lighted room containing perhaps twenty persons. A little later the same prayer was offered in Hebrew that I had learned in infancy from my mother, and after the simple, fa-

miliar service, I talked, through my new friend as interpreter, with my coreligionists. There were a few thousand Jews in Spain, they explained, but they were not so known in public. They avoided possible trouble by practicing their religion in strict secrecy. The attitude of the authorities seemed to be that Judaism was a harmless bootleg product, so long as the bootleggers were its only consumers and made no public display.

In Madrid a little later, as an official guest at a luncheon, I was called upon to make a speech. I told my hosts that I had enjoyed my stay in their beautiful country, that I hoped to come again to visit the warmhearted Spanish people, and that I was grateful for their hospitality. Then I said I wanted to take a liberty and tell them about one of the things they lacked. "I find competition missing in Spain," I said, "and the kind of competition I find most notably lacking is religious. Even in Rome, the heart of the Catholic world, I found a synagogue. I believe it would be a good thing for Spain if its people had something of the competitive spirit which has helped to make my own country great—and the United States, you know, has more varieties of religion than any other place in the world."

I hardly expected my audience to be pleased, but everyone applauded politely—after all, the majority didn't understand English. A few days later I left Spain. When I arrived in Paris, I found a note from the Spanish ambassador asking whether I would call on him. I did so, and when he informed me that his government would like me to go back to Spain to make some more speeches I was startled, to say the least. I answered that my schedule was too crowded. That was true. It was also true, though I did not say so, that I wasn't at all sure I wanted to go back to Spain. Perhaps I wouldn't be so lucky after a second speech as I had been after the first one.

Not so very long after my return to the United States, the news was published that King Alfonso had invited the Jews to return to Spain. For all I know, it was just a coincidence that this decision was announced only a short while after I had so frankly expressed myself on Spain's lack of religious freedom. But it is pleasant—and surely it is a harmless vanity—to allow for the possibility that my remarks might have had some influence on speeding up the decision.

Excepting the negligible Spanish successes in Florida and the Southwest, civilization in what is now the United States began only a little more than three centuries ago; in 1607 and 1620 English colonies were planted in Virginia and Massachusetts, respectively, and in 1621 the Dutch West India Company, raising its flag in the Hudson and Delaware valleys, proclaimed the founding of New Netherlands. Most vigorous in what was to become "the American tradition" was the settlement that began in Plymouth in 1620. Its founders sought one thing above all others: Separatists from the Church of England—radicals—these Pilgrims sought freedom to worship God as they pleased. It was this same search for religious freedom which moved the Puritans, less radical in their objections to the established church, to come to Massachusetts less than a decade later.

In 1631 a scholar from Cambridge University named Roger Williams came to the new colony in hope of finding refuge from the autocracy of Archbishop Laud. But his theory of life and conduct was no more palatable in New England than it had been in the land of his birth—the separatist Pilgrims and the reforming Puritans, having established their own forms of worship, were rigidly intolerant of variations other than their own —and Williams was soon regarded as a dangerous revolutionary.

Roger Williams was, in my own analysis, the first civilized American. His creed consisted of four main points: that persecution "for cause of conscience is most evidently and lamentably contrary to the doctrine of Jesus Christ"; that no one should "be bound to worship or to maintain a worship against his own consent"; that church and state should be separated and that civil magistrates should not be chosen on the basis of church membership; and that magistrates should have no jurisdiction in matters of conscience. For defending the doctrine which a century and a half later was to be substantially incorporated into the Constitution of the United States, Roger Williams was banished from Massachusetts; in 1636, the year in which Harvard University was founded, he and five companions established a new settlement named Providence Plantations at the head of Narragansett Bay.

Thus, almost as old as permanent settlement itself is the history of intolerance and the persecution of minorities in the land of freedom. Americans have never, thank God, had a Buchenwald, a St. Bartholomew's Day, or a Spanish Inquisition. And so perhaps I should say that persecution in the "classic" sense is all but unknown here. Let me substitute, rather, the word *penalization* to describe the behavior of Americans toward racial and religious minorities. Certainly as a people we are guilty, and have for centuries been guilty, of imposing penalties—because a man's skin is black or his nose is hooked or his eyes are slanting; because a man eats fish on Fridays or refuses pork seven days a week; because he prays to God kneeling on a mat toward the East, or by counting beads, or wearing a hat; because he lives on the other side of the tracks or runs an elevator or speaks with a foreign accent; because his name is Mulligan, Cohen, Kowalski, Won-fong, Aschebach, Svensen, Squarcione; because we say he is a Wop, a Mick, a Hunky, a Nigger, or a Kike.

Americans cannot afford to penalize Americans. We cannot afford to place Negroes in ghettos for their blackness, or Chinese for their yellowness, or Jews for their "Jewishness." And we cannot afford it for purely practical reasons. We have work to do, as a whole people. Our work is to maintain our place as the leading nation on earth—we cannot escape the work, we have only the decision between success and failure—and if we fail, civilization as we know it now will disappear.

And so I plead, not for Jews, not for Negroes, not for Greeks or Arabs, not for Catholics, Hindus, or Moslems, but for Americans. I think that one requisite for a solution of our various "problems" concerned with racial and religious minorities is clearer thinking—especially about where responsibility lies.

A number of years ago a group of Protestant and Catholic clergymen came to my office in Washington to consult with me, as a prominent and presumably objective Jewish layman, about a practical means for "solving the Jewish problem."

"Gentlemen, I know of no Jewish problem," I responded. "I must ask you to elaborate."

They elaborated.

"What you refer to is not the Jewish problem," I told them, "but the *non-Jewish problem.*"

The clergymen now asked me to explain.

"I mean that the problem we are discussing was created by people who are not Jews. Thus, it is a non-Jewish problem. We Jews do not discriminate against the Catholics and the various Protestant denominations; we Jews do not teach our children to be intolerant of your children; we Jews do not build ghettos. And so it seems to me that those who have made the 'problem' are the only ones who can solve it. If the non-Jews have a plan of solution, I can promise you that the Jews will co-operate. But we cannot initiate. We are a minority. The majority must show the way."

I speak only for myself. But I believe that all of the minority groups in this country would co-operate in a sincere, rational program initiated by the majority. There is only one prerequisite—an honest determination that the ghettos, physical and spiritual, must be destroyed.

XXVII

SOME YEARS AGO one of my opponents for the seat in Congress that I have held since 1923, appealing to an audience consisting largely of students and faculty members of Columbia University, remarked that I was hardly a suitable representative for learned men because I was a man without education. I replied that the gentleman was careless with his words—that he would have been correct had he said I lacked *schooling,* but was much in error if he believed I had no education. I took pleasure in reminding him that neither Washington nor Lincoln had spent much time in school either.

And yet in a way he was right in saying that I was uneducated. The man who gets his education as I got mine is bound to be very conscious of both its defects and its deficiencies. He is going to be very sensitive of the impression his lack of certain kinds of knowledge makes on other men, particularly on those with formal educations. He is sure to have quirks. All this is brought about because he hasn't got the sense of authority (which may or may not be warranted) that a university education can give him. For to have an answer without knowing why it is the answer is to have no more than half an education.

I realize, too, that, deprived as I am of the delights that come in consequence of instruction in the classics, I lack the reflective pleasures open to the scholar, and many of my own satisfactions must seem naïve to other persons. Few of my satisfactions have come to me through the medium of learning and wisdom stored in books. They have come, instead, from relations with

people and have depended almost entirely upon my success in helping people. I would rather make another person happy than do anything else. The knowledge that I have been able to do something for somebody else is all that I need to bring me contentment at the end of a day's work.

I have already mentioned, in Chapter XI, the kind of service that I have made available to anyone with a problem. For more than twenty-five years, aided by my secretaries, Bess Flegelman, and later Louise Dreisonstok and Mary Chace, I have been handling cases of all descriptions at an average rate of fifty a day. That adds up to some 350,000, and assuming that there are two other persons in the family of each petitioner, I can say that I have been able to contribute some measure of happiness directly to a million people. Often I am asked to do no more than write a letter of introduction or put in a telephone call to make an appointment with some official. Frequently I am asked to provide information or to give an opinion. Sometimes, as in the case of a manufacturer who faced complete shutdown during the war because he lacked a small quantity of materials on the strategic list, I am called upon to save a man's business. On several occasions, as with the man who had been convicted of a crime through perjured testimony, I have been brought in to save a man's freedom and reputation. Quite a number of times I have had on my hands the responsibility of saving a man's life.

Perhaps my satisfaction in having brought happiness to many people is childish and vain. If so, I seek no justification for my vanity. But I would not for anything exchange the satisfaction that came when I was able to inform a father that a telephone call I made to President Machado of Cuba had won a pardon for the son condemned to die before a firing squad next day. I would not exchange the satisfaction that came through passage of a special law I sponsored to admit as an immigrant Dr. Gisella Perl, whose heroic surgery in performing abortions on hundreds of Jewish women in the German concentration camp at Auschwitz saved them from the gas chamber. And I would not exchange the satisfaction that came when at last I succeeded in getting the entry visas that permitted eighteen displaced persons to go to Brazil.

There is quite a story in connection with those refugees. During the war they had made their way eastward from various points in Europe to Shanghai. There they had pooled their resources and begun inquiries in search of a home. In time they found that the Brazilian consul in Los Angeles would give them visas if they presented themselves at his office, and in the early part of 1946 they reached California. Meanwhile the government of Brazil had cut down its immigration quotas, the consul was unable to support his promise, and the refugees found themselves with no place to go. They could not return to China; having transit visas only, they could not remain in the United States; they could not go to Brazil. After a number of months, since I was known to be actively concerned with the problem of displaced persons, I was asked to help. I studied all documents relating to the case, including the correspondence between the Brazilian consul and the refugees, and it was quite clear that they had been, to say the least, shabbily treated. I then presented my analysis to my old and dear friend, Ambassador Carlos Martins, dean of the Washington diplomatic corps. Ambassador Martins assured me that he would consult with his chief in Rio de Janeiro and do everything in his power to procure authorization for the visas that had been promised the refugees before they left China more than a year before. But nothing had been accomplished when I started for the Inter-American Conference in Rio early in August, 1947. On the afternoon of the day I arrived by sea in the Brazilian capital I went to the airport to help greet Secretary of State Marshall and his party. Just before the plane appeared, a man came up from behind and gave me a great bear hug—it was Oswaldo Aranha, former foreign minister, who a few weeks later was to be elected president of the United Nations.

"You're just the fellow I want to see," I said after I had recovered my breath. "I need some advice about presenting a delicate matter to Mr. Fernandez."

"I will introduce you at once," said Aranha, turning to the lean, white-haired gentleman at his elbow. "This is the Foreign Minister!"

Secretary Marshall's plane had just been sighted, but in the two or three minutes before it landed, we three, Raúl Fernan-

dez, Oswaldo Aranha, and I, settled a matter that had been dragging along for eighteen months. The Foreign Minister immediately agreed to redeem the pledge made by his consul in Los Angeles, and a short while later the journey begun in Europe three or four years earlier ended happily in Brazil.

As I review my seventy-eight years, I am pleased to find that I have almost always been on the side of people with new ideas. But novelty is not necessarily progress, and on several occasions I have lined up with the "reactionaries." One time, in fact, after having gone through a period of great enthusiasm for an innovation, I became chief advocate for the *status quo*.

About twenty years ago, my friend George Eastman, the man who made Kodak an international word, became deeply interested in reforming the calendar. He and his colleagues, as with most others who have seriously considered the disadvantages of the calendar that was brought to its present state in 1752, had an excellent case. It contained only one flaw: The proposed alteration would have brought about immeasurably greater disturbances than the ones we have to put up with now.

Our common unit of time measurement is, and from prehistoric eras has been, the interval between a transit of the sun at any given point on the earth and the next transit on the same meridian—that is to say, the solar day. For convenience—it was long before the decimal system had been devised—the day was divided into twenty-four equal parts, or hours. As instruments for measuring and recording became more accurate, the hours were split into sixty equal parts, and these minutes were further split into sixty seconds (and these into fractions, for the use of scientists and others requiring absolute precision in their work).

Besides the solar day, the other universal unit of time measurement is the solar year, the period required by the earth to revolve in its orbit about the sun. There are aberrations in both the rotation of the earth and its journey about the sun, which result in slight time differences from day to day and from year to year, but the *mean solar day* is precisely twenty-four hours long and the *mean solar year* contains 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes, 45.51 seconds.

All of these calculations came slowly. In Italy of the eighth

century B.C. the year was believed to have only 304 days, an error of more than sixty days; later in the century the error was reduced to about eleven days. The year was constituted of twelve lunar months, and as the ability to measure the length of the year improved, an extra month was thrown in every two or three years to keep things in balance. Even so, by the time of Julius Caesar the seasons were so badly out of joint that spring came about January 1. In 46 B.C., Caesar decreed that the current year should have 445 days and that the following year should commence on the first day of the new moon following the winter solstice, which day should be January 1. The length of the year was established at 365¼ days, and the practice of adding one day to the year every fourth year was introduced.

This was very close indeed—but still not precise. The difference between the Julian year of 365 days, 6 hours, and the mean solar year of 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes, 45.51 seconds, or 11 minutes, 14.49 seconds, was enough to add a whole day in 129 years. By the sixteenth century, when it had become possible to calculate the length of the year almost to the second, it was noted that the civil calendar was, from various causes, about ten days behind the solar calendar. Pope Gregory XIII undertook to rectify the error by decreeing that ten days should be omitted, and in Roman Catholic countries the day after October 4, 1582, became October 15. Protestant countries scorned at the time to follow, and it was not until 170 years later that England and her colonies accepted the Gregorian calendar. By that time there was a difference of some eleven days, and the correction was made by causing the day after September 2, 1752, to become September 14 (thus incidentally inciting serious riots in London on the part of day laborers who believed that they were being swindled out of eleven days' pay).*

* Another change in the calendar was made in 1752. Before this year, New Year's Day had for centuries been March 25, Annunciation Day, but it was decided that the year 1751, instead of ending on March 24, should end on December 31. Thus, the year 1751 contained only 282 days. One of the effects was that no children were born in January and February and in the first twenty-four days of March in the year 1751, for the obvious reason that those eighty-three days had been eliminated from the calendar. Further, persons born prior to the two great calendar changes of 1751 and 1752 and within the

The chief point I have to make from this background information is that none of the changes I have mentioned *ever altered the order of the days of the week.* To illustrate: September 2, 1752, was a Wednesday; the next day, although the *date* jumped to September 14, was Thursday. And so on, back through all other date changes in history, the continuity of the days of the week has never been broken.

Now I will return to the late Mr. Eastman and his well-intentioned movement to reform the calendar. He and his associates proposed the substitution of a calendar having thirteen months of twenty-eight days each for our calendar of twelve variable months. Under the proposed plan the year would have had 364 days, with the 365th as a nameless day at the end; in leap years there would have been two nameless days, one at the end, one in the middle.

By 1929 the Eastman plan had attracted so much favorable attention that a resolution was offered in the House of Representatives requesting the President to "propose the calling of an international conference for the simplification of the calendar or to answer on behalf of the United States an invitation to participate in such conference." This resolution, involving considerations of an international character, was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, of which I had become a member in 1928. I was much interested in the project, and my early study of it developed my interest into enthusiasm. One day, however, in conversation with George Eastman and his colleagues, I asked a question to which my independent researches had not brought forth an answer.

"What happens to that blank day?" I inquired.

I was told that Professor So-and-so would explain the extra day. But the professor said he regarded Doctor This-and-that as the expert. Bowing to each other, the two gentlemen explained.

"If I understand correctly," I said, "the insertion of a name-

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period January 1 through March 24 had to make *two* changes when adjusting their birthday anniversaries to conform with the Gregorian calendar: they had to drop not only eleven days but one year. George Washington, for example, was born, according to the Julian calendar, on February 11, 1731. Yet his birthday is properly observed as having occurred February 22, 1732, for we are now operating under the Gregorian calendar, with January 1 as the arbitrary but accepted date for beginning each new year.

less day at the end of the year would cause the following Sunday to fall eight days, instead of seven days, after the preceding Sunday. Wouldn't that create all sorts of disturbances? On the religious side alone I can name, in addition to the Christian Sunday, the Jewish Saturday, the Moslem Friday, and the other four days of the week, each one of which is holy to at least one other sect—would any one of these religious groups accept a day of worship which actually changed, though its name did not, from year to year? I can think of many other possible difficulties, now that you have explained 'blank' day to me, and I hope that my colleagues on this committee will agree with me that a complete analysis should be made before any report is made to the House."

The committee concurred with my suggestion, and I volunteered to make the study myself. For weeks I ran the research staff of the Library of Congress ragged, and then I presented a report of about twenty-five thousand words, plus an exhibit, to show how the proposed changes would affect religious and other anniversaries. The committee decided unanimously against reporting the resolution. Ordinarily I would have been completely satisfied with the quiet demise of a bill I had opposed, but in this case I wanted a state funeral—so that a permanent monument would be erected to warn future calendar reformers. Accordingly, on June 11, 1929, I addressed the House.

Acknowledging the validity of many of the arguments that it would be a convenience for businessmen in general to operate with a calendar containing thirteen months of twenty-eight days, with every week and every month beginning on a Sunday, I also pointed out that the blessing would not be unmixed. I quoted from a minority report of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States:

> The infliction of a new calendar having radical departures from the present, or attempting to improve it, would mean annoyance to millions of people. . . . [The proposal] comes to this chamber with the studied support of but few people. A large group has been circularized, and, as often happens with catchy ideas, a great many people, many of them of

> business prominence, are giving this proposal their indorsement, without deep thought. . . . However enthusiastic the proponents of the proposed change may seem to be, general business has little interest. Those who wish to use a system of accounting other than that based upon the present months are now doing so. Business, as such, should be careful not to intrude upon matters peculiarly of private concern unless a change is of transcending importance to business itself.

I explained that if Congress should pass a law establishing the proposed calendar such law would, by changing the date of the Sabbath, in effect violate the prohibition in the Constitution against any establishment of religion. I also pointed out that Congress lacked power to compel the states, or any one of them, to adopt a new calendar, and I remarked upon the effects of a partial adoption of the new calendar upon holiday observances and upon interstate business contracts.

I cited the comments in 1924 of Curtis Wilbur, who was then Secretary of the Navy:

> Whatever changes might be made in the calendar should be delayed for several years after adoption in order that the labor of preparing data for the ephemeris and nautical almanac, which data fix predicted positions of heavenly bodies years in advance of their application, shall not be lost, and that the labor and expense of revision shall be avoided.

I called attention to many other practical disadvantages. Among them was the indivisibility of the number 13 and the attendant circumstance that most businesses issued quarterly and semiannual reports. I noted that not only would all anniversaries be jumbled but that the birthday anniversaries of some ten million Americans, those who had been born on the 29th, 30th, and 31st of any month, would disappear. And I explained how, for years to come, the courts would be swamped with cases based on disagreements arising from the many confusions.

I told the House that the League of Nations had some time before appointed a special committee to inquire into calendar

reform, and I quoted from the thoughtful report of that committee:

> No reform can be effected without the consent of all, or almost all, the important bodies interested, and these cover a wide range—religious, administrative, economic, and scientific, for example. It rests with public opinion to judge of the merits and the practicability of each of these groups of systems. The committee does not believe that it is as yet possible to obtain sufficiently definite statements of the final views of those interested.

Most compelling of all the objections, from the long-range point of view, was the violation of immemorial and sanctified custom that the proposed calendar would bring about for all, or nearly all, of the world's religious sects. Even if the administrative, economic, and scientific confusions should in time be eliminated, the religious objection could never be reconciled. Though months and years had frequently been changed, no alteration had ever been made, from the time of the early Egyptians to the present, in the order of the days of the week—and, let me add, the week of seven days is far older than the second chapter of Genesis, which serves both Christians and Jews as divine authority for a Sabbath day. And so I spoke at considerable length on the importance to nearly all members of most of the world's sects of retaining unbroken the seven-day cycle that permitted every man to worship always on the same day of the week, regardless of which day it might be, that had been originally ordained.

But why, someone might ask, do I spend as much time as I have here spent in flogging a dead horse? The answer is that the subject of calendar reform is not a dead horse. Every session of Congress finds the creature in attendance. Perhaps the next proposal will miraculously resolve all of the objections inherent in the Eastman plan and other plans that have from time to time been given serious consideration. If so, I shall be the first to applaud. My fight against the Eastman plan was not prompted by any antagonism toward innovation as such. It proceeded from a conviction that adoption of the Eastman calendar would have brought an intolerable state of affairs. And my satisfaction

in having won the fight is twofold: My arguments against the change *did* eliminate the possibility that we might go through a period of vast confusion, and they continue to be available in full detail in the national archives to assist any future opponents of similar tamperings with the calendar.

It was in the same year, 1929, that I became interested in the possibilities of another new project—and this time not only was I wholly on the side of the new idea but I was to have the satisfaction of contributing several ideas of my own and seeing them incorporated with the basic plan. This was Rockefeller Center, as it came to be called and which, in the few years of its existence, has become one of the best-known groups of buildings in the world.

When John D. Rockefeller, Jr., leased from Columbia University the property fronting on Fifth Avenue and extending from Forty-ninth Street to Fifty-first, I began to speculate on the sort of structure he might erect. For this, I knew, would be no ordinary undertaking. Mr. Rockefeller was not inspired by a desire to increase the great family fortune founded by his father. He had in mind the creation of a building that would add distinction to the city in which he lived, a building that would serve the people who lived and worked in his city and give pleasure to them and to visitors from other cities. He wanted the place he built to be self-sustaining, but he had no interest in making money out of it.

The more I thought about the Rockefeller project, the more sure I became that it offered the ideal opportunity for a development I had long had in mind. That was the construction of a great international center in the great cosmopolitan center of New York. As I saw it, in the course of time all the large nations and most of the small one would occupy space—a few of them, buildings of their own—and the net result would be a sort of permanent world's fair, where visitors could go to look at displays and make inquiries about commercial openings, travel, and like matters. The deeper effect would be to bring the various national groups in closer contact with one another and thus promote international good will.

This dream of mine had heretofore seemed beyond realiza-

tion, for the regular commercial builder, concerned almost exclusively with making a profit, necessarily looked upon an international center as a dangerous speculation. But now, with Mr. Rockefeller prepared to invest a hundred million dollars or more in what was planned first of all as a civic improvement, the possibility that he would give serious attention to my plan seemed very bright. Accordingly, in April, 1929, I wrote him a letter broadly outlining my thoughts, and a few days later Mr. Christy, secretary of the Metropolitan Square Corporation, invited me to discuss the matter in detail. Thereafter I was called in a dozen times or more, and my ideas were assimilated into the original plans.

My satisfaction is twofold. The greater part comes from the existence in Rockefeller Center of the various international buildings and suites of offices. The lesser comes from the pleasure it gave me to be able to contribute something to John D. Rockefeller, Jr., a man to whom it is very difficult indeed for mere mortals like myself to be of service. I am happy, too, in the realization that Nelson Rockefeller, admirable son of an admirable father, is now president of Rockefeller Center, Inc. When he was Assistant Secretary of State he was one of the most forward looking men in the government service, and no one could be more sympathetic than he toward the international character of the enterprise he now heads.

Partly in consequence of an action I took in December, 1926, a quite different kind of satisfaction came to me some months later. That was the retraction made by the late Henry Ford after a period of several years' attack against the Jews in his weekly publication, the *Dearborn Independent*. Before the end of 1926, the malicious editorial attacks had been of a nature so vague and general that corrective action could hardly be taken. But when the *Dearborn Independent* of December 11, 1926, stated that "the international Jew" was "in direct control of all financial centers of government, including the United States Federal Reserve System," Ford was guilty of attacking not only a group of people but the integrity of his country's government. As a Jew, I bitterly resented the accusation. As an American citizen, I assumed the responsibility of demanding that Mr. Ford sup-

port his charges that there was an "international" influence in the government. Accordingly, on December 14, 1926, I introduced a resolution in the House that a committee be appointed to inquire into the truth or falsity of Ford's statement and to subpoena witnesses.

Mr. Ford was never called to testify. Shortly after my resolution he became involved in a sensational lawsuit with an individual Jew. This suit resulted in a mistrial, and before a second trial could begin, Ford made a settlement. This was followed by a public apology, and soon after that the *Dearborn Independent* was discontinued. The apology and cessation of attacks made it, in my opinion, both unnecessary and undesirable to proceed with the investigation that my resolution had initiated. I am confident, however, that a very powerful influence behind Mr. Ford's decision was the knowledge that he could in no other way avoid testifying before the House of Representatives.

It is a great pity that a man with the industrial genius that Henry Ford possessed should frequently have displayed such bad judgment in fields outside the one in which he was able to contribute so much. He made a grotesque spectacle of himself in 1915 with his "Peace Ship," deluding himself that he could stop a terrible war by sailing to Europe and telling the belligerents how nice it would be if they would kiss and make up. Later, he became ludicrous by announcing publicly that history was "bunk." And then his attack against the Jews, the most ill-advised of all his follies, established him as a bigot of the worst kind. I am glad, whatever his motive may have been, that he was able to remove most of that stain from his reputation by making a public apology.

When I was a young man in New York, there was one citizen whom I admired above all others. That man was Andrew Carnegie. He had recently disposed of his great steel business and was devoting the proceeds to the establishment of various philanthropies. The one that interested me most was his endowment of public libraries throughout the United States. How great a work, it seemed to me—to me who had as a child been too poor to own a single book—was this undertaking to provide hundreds of towns with library buildings, with collections of

books, competent staffs, and perpetual incomes. I envied Andrew Carnegie and dreamed of the time when I might have enough money to emulate him. But lacking even a single steel mill, I grew older without any prospect of becoming a patron of learning. It was only a very short while ago, when I was invited to speak in New York on September 17, 1948, on the 161st anniversary of the signing of the Constitution, that the thought suddenly came to me that I didn't need a hundred million dollars to found a library. I didn't need any money at all for the one I contemplated. All I had to do was turn over my own collection of documents on George Washington and the Constitution to an already existing institution that would put them to good use. The fact that my contribution would be a very modest one was no deterrent. Correspondence with the institution I had in mind disclosed that my collection would be useful to research students, and with that knowledge I went ahead with enthusiasm.

There are now several thousand volumes, several hundred facsimiles of original papers, and a few dozen paintings and replicas of paintings and sculpture in a large room named for me in the old Sub-Treasury Building at the corner of Wall and Nassau Streets in New York City. This room is part of the national historic shrine designated by Congress as Federal Hall Memorial, which will in the course of a little time occupy the entire structure that was built in 1835 on the site of Federal Hall, where George Washington was inaugurated as President of the United States on April 30, 1789, a few weeks after the new government under the Constitution had been organized in the same building. As I write this, plans are going forward to celebrate the 161st anniversary of the signing of the Constitution and for the formal opening of the little library named in my honor. It is an honor which I had not contemplated when I offered the museum my private collection of books and papers on Washington and the Constitution. And it is an honor of which I am very proud indeed.

When I think of all the friends I have and of the many other friends now gone, I know that my life has been as rich as any man's could possibly be. I could hardly go to any city in the

United States or, for that matter, to any country in the world without finding somebody I know and regard as a friend. And I count as friends not merely those persons I have known in high stations. My friends are all the people with whom I can deal on a basis of mutual respect and sympathy. There are hundreds and hundreds of them.

Friendship, like charity, begins at home. My cook, whose name is Mrs. Granville Stewart, has been my employee for many years. She has been my friend for almost as long. The fact that Mandy is one of the world's great culinary experts and that I pay her well would not make us friends. We are friends because we respect each other and are interested in each other's welfare. The same relationship exists between Sarah Grayson, also an employee in my house, and Charles Cotton, who drives my car and performs innumerable other services at home and in my office.

My secretaries and office assistants are all my friends. So are the postmen and the Capitol guards and elevator operators. So is the newspaper vendor at the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and Eleventh Street, at whose stand I stop on my way home every evening I am in Washington. I couldn't bear to have daily relations with men and women without thinking of them as a good deal more than just the people who are doing this and that for a fee. To me each one of these people is an important individual and someone I regard as a friend.

No one ever bought friendship. Nor has anyone ever succeeded in repaying an act of friendship. Both are beyond price. When I started to work in Ben Figer's brush factory in San Francisco in 1877, I had almost no friends. I worked hard, and whatever I owed Mr. Figer for the start he gave me I was able in time to pay back. But the thing I can never repay is the friendship he gave me; though it cost him nothing, my obligation to that kind man is permanent. Mike de Young gave me my start in the theater. He lost nothing in consequence of hiring me. He made money through my efforts. But I am still in debt to him for the counsel and encouragement he gave me. He was my friend. I can never repay the debt. Phoebe Hearst, mother of William Randolph Hearst, was a very wonderful lady. But when I was a small boy, I knew nothing about her

except that she was kind to me and showed a genuinely friendly interest in me. I remember her for that.

The following years brought new friends, in Chicago and New York and other cities, and in Washington I have more, I suppose, than anywhere else except in my own New York district. (Certainly the people who keep sending me back to Congress are my friends, and I can say without exaggeration that I don't know where I would be without them.) When I try to add them all up, I find it beyond me. I am very grateful for my blessings, and I am very humble.

I want to mention at random a few of the people whom I have been able to count among my friends during the past thirty years or more. Some of them are or were holders of high office; others, though never officeholders, stand high in the esteem of their fellow citizens. All of them have had the quality of winning friends.

Nearly forty years ago, when I went to Panama to undertake a mission for Sam Gompers, the labor leader, I met the builder of the canal for the first time. Colonel (later Major General) George W. Goethals was a man of the utmost simplicity. His faith in his ability to build the canal was the kind that characterized Filippo Brunelleschi when, early in the fifteenth century, he set out to erect the great cathedral in Florence—both tasks were "impossible," both were accomplished because the men who undertook them had the knowledge, the strength, and the unswerving determination to go ahead. In later years Goethals and I did business together, and for the first time in his life this great engineer made money. But I remember calling on him when he and his wife came to New York after the canal had been finished; they were living in two little rooms in a modest West Side hotel, both of them quite unconscious of the General's fame. After leaving, I went immediately to the new Hotel Vanderbilt and asked Mr. Marshall, the manager, whether he would like to have the Goethals' as his guests. He at once offered to rent his finest suite at a nominal rate, and I informed the General that I had found a more comfortable place for him. When he and his wife looked at the handsome quarters at the Vanderbilt, they exclaimed that they could not afford the expense. After I assured them that the rental had been leveled to

their means, they moved in, though still with misgivings. It was worth thousands of dollars to the Hotel Vanderbilt to have General Goethals in residence—but I know the General never had the faintest realization that he, not the hotel manager, was conferring the favor. He knew his own worth as a builder, but he was incapable of comprehending how he could be interesting as the man who had accomplished the most stupendous engineering feat in history.

In the summer of 1908, which I was spending in Atlantic City with my family, I received a letter one day from a friend in the councils of the Republican party asking me whether I would arrange to make recordings of the voice of William Howard Taft, then Secretary of War, who had been nominated for President a few weeks before. Mr. Taft was vacationing at Hot Springs, Virginia, and a few days later I went down there with the portable equipment I had devised to record a half-dozen speeches intended for use in the Presidential campaign; the disks made from these master records were the first of their kind ever to be distributed. After I had finished the recordings—Mrs. Taft was also persuaded to make one, in conversation with her husband—I said, "Mr. Secretary, I suppose you don't know that you have just delivered yourself to the enemy. I have been a Bryan man since 1896, and I am now in a position to inform him about Republican strategy." Mr. Taft let out one of his rollicking, infectious laughs and said he wished I was right in thinking I knew what his party's strategy was going to be but that he feared I was mistaken, for his own managers, even though they might know, had not yet passed the information on to him.

I did not see Taft again until I came to Congress fifteen years later. By that time he was Chief Justice, and we met frequently. It was always a pleasure to be with him, and I cannot doubt that both he and his wife regarded me as a friend. Several years after the Chief Justice's death in 1930, Mrs. Taft consulted me about a personal problem. Many other members of Congress could have done her the service I was privileged to render, and I always took it as a mark of personal esteem that she saw fit to bring the matter to me.

Will Rogers used to be an expert with what he called a

"throwin' rope." But the thing that packed the theaters in which he appeared was not so much his lassoing tricks as his running comments during the act he put on—a phase of his career that had started after he brought down the house with wisecracks improvised to fill time when something delayed the beginning of the act that followed his own. Rogers soon graduated from stage entertainer to become the most popular columnist of all time. Will and I were friends from his early professional days, and after he became famous, the only difference was that he kidded me in public instead of in private. One evening at a party at my house Will announced that he was going to Europe and wanted to know whether I would try to fix up an audience with the Pope. Everybody laughed, but I said that I would do what I could. Will told about the circumstance in a book he published several years before his death in 1935. He said he had been amused by the notion of calling on a Jew to help in arranging a meeting between himself and the head of the Roman Catholic Church. "But the funniest part," he concluded, "was that it worked."

Charles Evans Hughes, whose recent death grieved me greatly, was a man beyond my praise, for I just don't know any adjective to describe him. I can say only that I had for him the deepest admiration and affection. One day, after a meeting we had both attended, he said to me, "You have something I wish I had." I asked him what it was. "Why, everybody calls you Sol," he answered. Then he fingered his white whiskers thoughtfully. "Maybe these things keep people from getting close enough to call me by my first name—you know, I'd be very happy if I knew how to get my friends to address me as Charlie." I felt sorry for Mr. Hughes, but I was unable to suggest anything. I loved Mr. Hughes, but though I knew him for many years I feel it is quite audacious of me even to think of him as Charlie.

I knew another New York governor very well, and it would have been as unnatural *not* to call Alfred E. Smith, Al, as it would have been to address Charles E. Hughes as Charlie. Al Smith was a great administrator and a great human being. People loved him, just as he genuinely loved them. I often speculate on how history might have been changed had he been elected President in 1928 instead of Herbert Hoover. No doubt the

economic breakdown of 1929 and the early 1930's would then have been described as the Smith Depression, for Al Smith could no more have stopped it than Herbert Hoover. No doubt the Republicans would have won the election of 1932—Franklin Roosevelt would never have been even a candidate—and we might well have gone into the war era under a Republican administration. It is idle to speculate on what the course of events might have been had someone other than Roosevelt been in the White House. The only thing I am sure about is that the American people would have worked together, forgetting party cleavages in all matters on an international level, and won the war—precisely as we did win the war.

In my years on Capitol Hill I have had so many friends that I would have to write a book larger than this one just to describe those associations. One of my most helpful friends in my early days in the House was John N. Garner, who later became Speaker and from 1933 to 1941 was Vice President of the United States. Always an able parliamentarian and debater, he was nevertheless of greatest use to his party off the floor rather than on it. His wisdom was intensely practical, and so was his advice. I have never forgotten his recommendations to me about speechmaking: "Take lots of time to prepare your speech. After you have studied it carefully, put it into a desk drawer for a few days. When you look at it again, you'll want to make some changes and probably cut it. Then put it into the drawer again for a week or so. Next time you look at it, you'll make some more changes. Put the speech away once more. The third or fourth time you take it out, read it carefully—then throw it into the waste basket. *You can always explain your vote. You can never explain your speech.*"

Garner, Speaker Nicholas Longworth, and Ogden Mills (later to be Secretary of the Treasury) formed a fascinating trio during their years together in the House. Longworth, from Ohio, and Mills, from New York, represented patrician conservatism; "Cactus Jack" Garner was the prototype of the homespun liberal from Texas and the great open spaces. A debate between Garner and Mills, with the witty, urbane Longworth presiding, was as fine a forensic show as Washington has afforded in modern times—the exaggerated courtesy, the brilliant repartee, the

withering sarcasm held members and gallery auditors enthralled during their frequent encounters. Actually, of course, Garner was at least as much of a conservative as the two Republicans, and off the floor the three were the closest companions. Their "feud" was strictly triangular, and any attempt at intrusion by an outsider of either party brought about a temporary truce. The private war was renewed only after the brash interloper had been utterly destroyed.

Another member of the House in my early days on the Hill was Cordell Hull, whose distinguished public service culminated with more than eleven years as Secretary of State. Always a courageous fighter, he had—and since his retirement he has continued to hold—not only the high respect but the true affection of members of all political persuasions in a degree that few men have ever enjoyed. Always considerate of other men's beliefs, always charitable toward other men's frailties, Cordell Hull was capable of almost Olympian anger when aroused, and his powers of expression under such circumstances were breathtaking. When he dismissed the Japanese ambassadors on December 7, 1941, he was reported officially as stating, "I must say that in all my conversations with you during the last nine months I have never uttered one word of untruth. This is borne out absolutely by the record. In all my fifty years of public service I have never seen a document that was more crowded with infamous falsehoods and distortions—infamous falsehoods and distortions on a scale so huge that I never imagined until today that any government on this planet was capable of uttering them." As dignified invective goes, that's not at all bad—but I wonder *what else* Cordell Hull said to the ambassadors. I feel confident that the more earthy vocabulary of this sturdy Tennessee mountaineer did not entirely desert him on that historic occasion.

No two men stand higher in my esteem than Generals Marshall and Eisenhower. They have both proved to be considerably more than great military leaders. In a most critical period in the world's history, General Marshall has shown himself to be a statesman of high order, and General Eisenhower, by his forthright behavior in connection with the frantic attempt to draft him as the Democratic candidate for President, has estab-

lished himself as a man of extraordinary integrity. Both of them are men governed by principles, men not dazzled by the glitter of temporary policies and easy expedients. Both are gentlemen of the rarest understanding and sympathy. I remember especially the service of Eisenhower—though Marshall in the same position would have rendered precisely the same service—when he was called upon to testify during the hearings on the second UNRRA bill, in the fall of 1945. The war had been over for some months, and there was considerable opposition to the granting of an additional $1,350,000,000 to carry on the work of aiding the victims of the war. Eisenhower was then Chief of Staff of the Army, and his favorable testimony, which we knew we could count upon, would be a vital influence. In November, just a few days before the General was scheduled to testify, he was ordered to the hospital for a check-up. I talked with him, and he said he would testify the very next day—provided the committee could be persuaded to meet on the morning of Thanksgiving. The members of course agreed, and Eisenhower spent all morning on the stand. By the time he had finished, there was small doubt in my mind that the committee would report favorably, and I felt certain of favorable action when the General said, just before leaving the room, "I think this is going to turn out to be the finest Thanksgiving all of us have ever known." The bill was favorably reported, and it became law a few weeks later. It makes me very happy to think that one of the men who helped us to help so many sufferers from the war is now in a position, as president of Columbia University, to exercise his sympathy and understanding in a great institution whose work is partly that of finding the way toward peace and universal brotherhood.

One of my very dear friends was Dwight Eisenhower's predecessor at Columbia, Nicholas Murray Butler. When I first went to Congress, this university was included in my district—only a part of the area it occupies is now included—and it was my privilege to consult with Dr. Butler many times. In later years, as Dr. Butler grew old and had to conserve his energies, I saw him less, but we continued to correspond frequently. I greatly prize a letter I received in November, 1947, just a few weeks before Dr. Butler died, in his eighty-sixth year:

November 3, 1947

My dear Congressman,

I greatly appreciate your letter of November first and thank you warmly for sending me the autographed copy of your book "One with God Is a Majority." You may not realize that I am now totally blind and cannot read it myself. However, I shall have it read to me, you may be sure. . . .

I very much regret that the last redistricting put me outside of your district, but I still regard you, as I have for so many years, not only as my personal friend but as my representative in Congress.

Congratulating you upon your excellent service and with warmest regard, I am

Sincerely yours,

[stamped] Nicholas Murray Butler

C

Dr. Butler regrets his inability to sign this letter.

Elsewhere in this book I have had occasion to speak about the four Presidents who held office during my career in Congress. With all of them—Coolidge, Hoover, Roosevelt, and Truman—I have had gratifying relations, and I have reason to believe that each one of them considered me as a friend. It happened, also, that I was to have differences of opinion with all of these Presidents and that (on at least one occasion in the administration of each) I was to succeed in persuading them to withhold vetoes on bills that the Congress had passed; each time I was able to demonstrate that, in spite of contrary advice by departmental experts, justice required enactment of the bill. I had only one serious disagreement with any President, and that came in 1937 when Franklin Roosevelt was for a time determined to increase the number of justices on the Supreme Court in order to obtain a dependable majority favorable to the more extreme social legislation enacted during his first term in office. One day President Roosevelt said to me in his office that he understood I questioned his right to pack the highest tribunal in the land. "No, Mr. President, I do not question *your* right to appoint additional justices," I answered, "but I do

question whether it *is* right." He abruptly changed the subject, and the matter was never again brought up in my presence; I was happy that enough of his advisors felt sufficiently positive about the project to persuade him to avoid what in my mind would have been the gravest impropriety.

I have been much pleased by the belated recognition of high service that has come to Herbert Hoover, our only living ex-President. Mr. Hoover had the misfortune to be in office when the most destructive economic depression in history began, and he was the obvious target for every attack. Mr. Hoover never had a chance to win, but he fought with great courage and intelligence to stem the overwhelming forces against him and most of his countrymen. Today he is beginning to be reappraised as an administrator, and his contributions as a humanitarian are recognized once more in their true measure. It was heartening to hear the applause after his fine speech at the Republican convention, in June, 1948, and I was delighted by the universal expressions of good will that were made a few months later upon the occasion of his seventy-fourth birthday.

And now I want to say that if, in citing certain persons, I have mentioned the names of so few, I have intended no invidious distinctions—even less in so far as the ladies are concerned than with the gentlemen. Two ladies I must, however, speak of here. One is Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt; the other is Mrs. Calvin Coolidge. Mrs. Coolidge was the first First Lady we knew, and no person in Washington did more to make those early years in the capital pleasant for my wife and daughter. She was graciousness personified. How fitting it is that her name should be Grace.

Eleanor Roosevelt is a unique and splendid person. My admiration for her, as her husband's wife, as a hostess in the White House and elsewhere, as a public person without official status, as an official delegate to international conferences after her husband's death, and finally just as herself, is unbounded. No person has ever given more unsparingly of herself. Few persons have ever had so much to give. I am her devoted servant.

I must tell of one more among the many joys and satisfactions of my life, and this one is peculiarly my own. In the photograph of me at the beginning of this book another photograph is

shown resting on the table at my right. The bearded man in the old-fashioned derby is my father; the woman in the old-fashioned bonnet is my mother. They never posed for any other photograph in their lives, and they consented to pose this one time only because it was necessary for their pictures to appear, as identification, on the passes I got them for the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893. Some years after Mother and Father had died, I came across the old passes one day and took them around to a photographer to see whether he could make enlargements from the tiny likenesses. Taking great pains, the photographer succeeded admirably.

Some men have portraits of all their ancestors hanging in their houses. My only ancestors of which I know very much are my mother and father, and their only portrait is this photograph, which I take with me wherever I go.

XXVIII

JUST ABOUT one hundred years ago, the United States commissioner of patents solemnly recommended the discontinuance of his office. Even more remarkable than the spectacle of a public official volunteering to terminate his activity was the reason for his recommendation. Continued maintenance of a patent office, said he, would be an unconscionable waste of the taxpayers' money, for everything conceivable to the human brain had already been invented! To prove it he pointed to the nearly seventeen thousand patents already on the books.

In spite of the existence of such obvious ultimates as the steam locomotive, the magnetic telegraph, the tin bathtub, and the kerosene lamp, it was decided to disregard the advice of the well-intentioned gentleman and to continue the Patent Office. Since that day more than 2,400,000 patents have been granted, and among the convenient gadgets that have been invented are the incandescent electric light, the telephone, the phonograph, the automobile, the airplane, wireless telegraphy, radio, television, electronic devices, and the atomic bomb. Even the cynics who point to death by motor on the superhighways and to creeping insanity from listening to soap operas on the radio as dubious signs of progress cannot fail to acknowledge that the inventions and discoveries of the past hundred years have immeasurably enriched human life.

And we are only at the beginning. To people who say that the age of great opportunity is in the past, I answer that the opportunities of today and tomorrow are immeasurably greater

than those of any other time in history. To people who state that there are no frontiers left unconquered, I answer that far more important frontiers are before us—and beyond them lie rich, almost unexplored territories in biology, medicine, agriculture, electronics, atomic physics, and innumerable other forms of human endeavor. And to people who point sadly to the lot of the youth of today and tomorrow, remarking that young men and women can expect little chance to get ahead in life, I answer that every force of education and discovery is on their side. The young people of today and tomorrow have before them a future that was beyond both realization and imagination when I was a boy. They have not been "born too late." Theirs is the earth to inherit.

I repeat, we are only at the beginning. Invention is no longer haphazard. We are accelerating in geometric ratio. All that man has really accomplished in the past hundred years has been to provide himself with the tools that, improved and wisely used, may free him from most of the ills and evils that have been his lot since he emerged from a state of brutishness. As I look forward into the next hundred years, I see only one obstacle in the way of almost unlimited material prosperity, intellectual satisfaction, and spiritual ease at the end of that century. The single obstacle is man himself.

"Human nature will not change."

Through the ages pundits have made this observation. With it has usually gone a shake of the head and the strong implication that the world would be a far better place if something could be done to change the very thing that makes us what we are.

I would not wish to change human nature. I would wish only to govern it more effectively.

That human nature can be more effectively governed I do not in the least doubt, for we behave as we do not only because we possess certain inherent qualities but also because we are influenced by various external circumstances. I will illustrate. There is no essential difference, even in superficial appearance, between a German baby born in Russian-policed Berlin and an American baby of German ancestry born in Milwaukee. Exchange them in infancy, and the child brought up in Milwaukee

will grow up strong, healthy, and with the point of view of an American; the other child will grow up undernourished, enduring physical privations of many sorts, and with a point of view I dare not venture to predict. The differences between the two when grown to manhood will be almost entirely the result of external circumstances.

Now imagine a world from which hunger had been eliminated. Hunger has been the fundamental cause of all the wars of history. Men do not hate one another merely for the reason that it is "human nature" to do so. They hate and quarrel and kill because an individual or a group lacks something basic that the other side possesses. Fill the lack, and the cause is gone. Give the peoples of the earth enough to eat, and wars will cease. No two men ever willingly fought after eating a hearty meal.

Today the earth is overpopulated in relation to its food supply, but I can, without straining my imagination, foresee a world producing ample food for all its inhabitants, and with it an adequate system of distribution. I can foresee a world in which everybody is decently clothed and housed, possessing the necessary tools and machinery to make a full, rich life. And after that I can foresee a world of fellowship, in which human nature in the form of esteem and love will be unopposed by most of the external circumstances that have so far caused those other human qualities of envy and hatred to prevail in the world.

Science will provide the materials. But only man can control them. Can man learn to control himself? Can he, in the dizzy years that lie immediately ahead, restrain himself in the use of his new and dangerous tools? Can he govern his natural inclination to employ the lethal weapons he will devise? Can he discipline himself to direct the fateful wonders of his hands to the service of all mankind?

I know he can. I am sure he wants to. With God's help he will.

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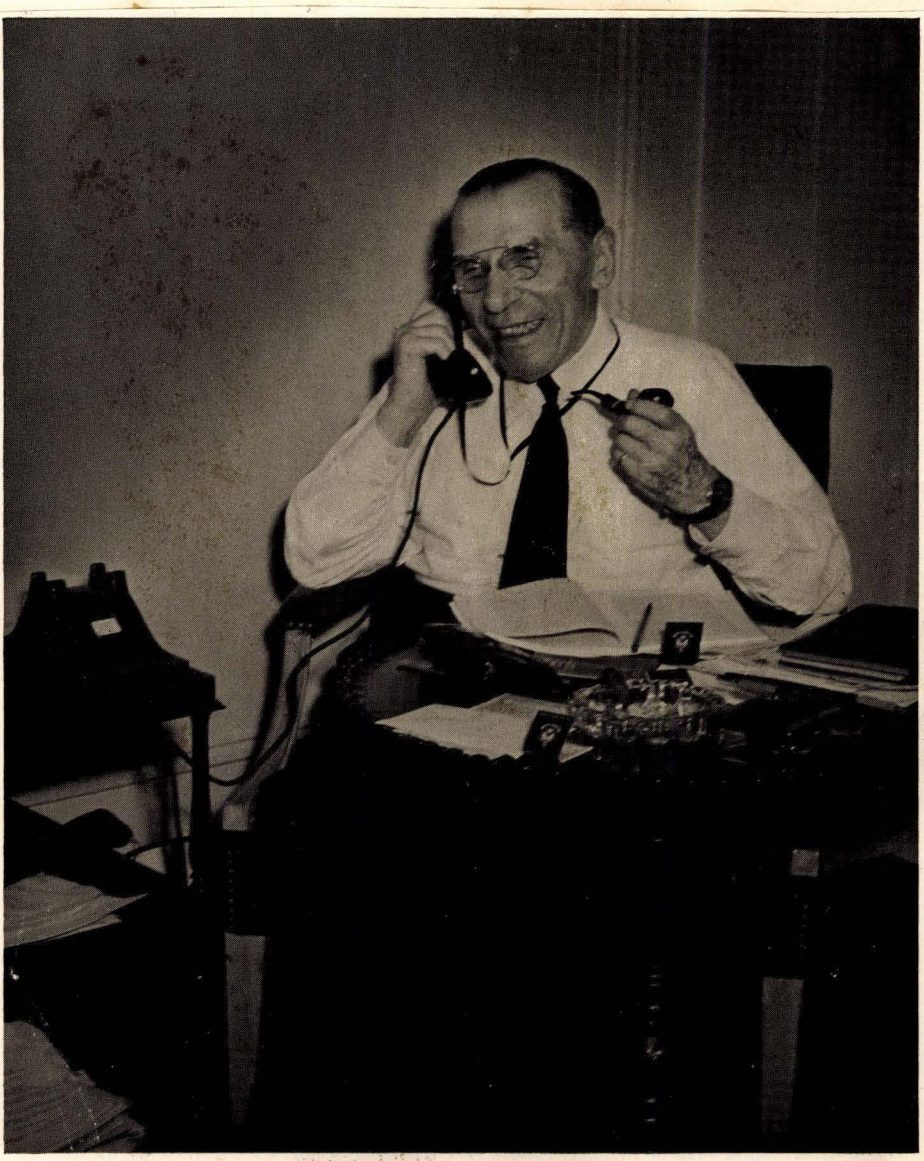
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