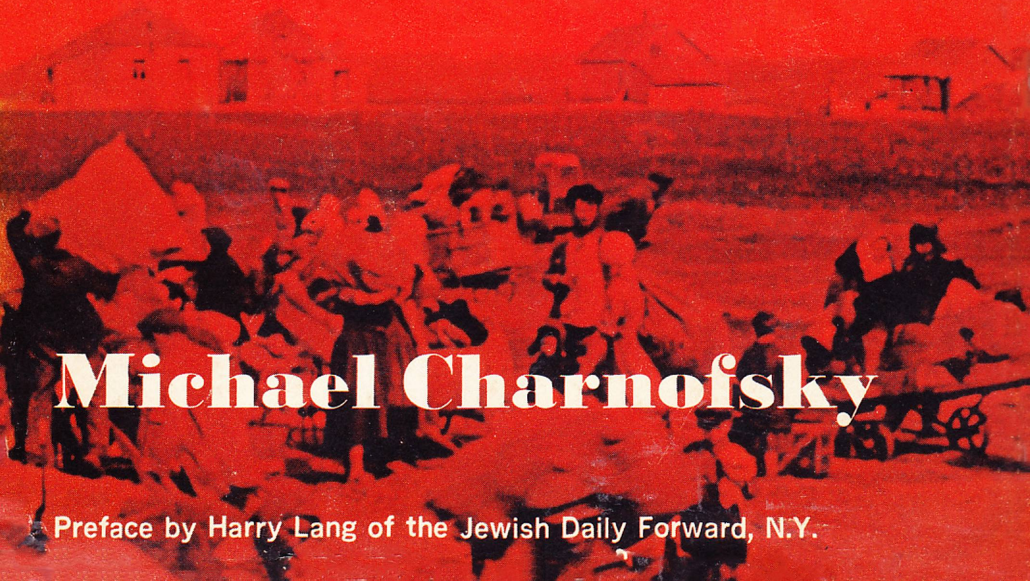
JEWISH LIFE IN THE UKRAINE

A FAMILY SAGA



Michael Charnofsky

Preface by Harry Lang of the Jewish Daily Forward, N.Y.

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Jewish Life in the Ukraine

by

MICHAEL CHARNOFSKY

IN THIS BOOK, the literary equivalent of a family album, the author, with much warmth, drama and humor and with charming simplicity, captures the atmosphere of life in the Ukraine of long ago. Mr. Charnofsky records the colorful events of his own life and retells the stories told to him by his elders when he was a boy. He describes the Ukrainian villages and countryside, then under the rule of the Russian czar. He tells of life there—work, hunger, poverty, weddings, births, feasts and festivities. But most of all, his stories, each chapter re-creating a separate episode, are about real people, people who laugh and love, who make mistakes, who suffer, learn and survive. Although the era is past, and this mode of life no longer exists, there is much about it that should not be forgotten. The author gives it reality once again in these pages.

Harry Lang, of the Editorial Department of the *Jewish Daily Forward* (New York), says in his Preface: "Many a chapter of Michael Charnofsky's *Jewish Life in the Ukraine* will, I am sure, capture the imagination of the American reader, whether of Anglo-Saxon or of any other ethnic origin. The author has, it seems, the God-given gifts of inborn power of observation, insight, and the art of telling a story.

"Mr. Charnofsky's detailing, through pen portraits, of the way of life of the Jew amidst the peasants in the villages and hamlets of the Ukraine has historic value. Backstage are the two cultures, far apart in language, song, prayers, folklore, religious vision, spiritual heritage, traditional customs, mode of living, even eating habits and behavior. There are bitter clashes, and the Jew is forever the victim of pogroms,

(continued on back flap)

Jewish Life in The Ukraine

A FAMILY SAGA

BY

Michael Charnofsky

With a Word in Preface by

HARRY LANG



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JEWISH LIFE IN THE UKRAINE



SIMCHE (SAMUEL) AND MOLKE (MOLLY)
THE PARENTS OF MICHAEL CHARNOFSKY

To my wife

SOPHIA

who shared the hard years and the fair . . .

and

to the memory of my parents

MOLKE *and* SIMCHE:
(Molly) *(Samuel)*

theirs was a struggling life

M. C.

A WORD IN PREFACE

Many a chapter of Michael Charnofsky's *Jewish Life in the Ukraine* will, I am sure, capture the imagination of the American reader, whether of Anglo-Saxon or of any other ethnic origin. The author has, it seems, the God-given gifts of inborn power of observation, insight, and the art of telling a story.

Mr. Charnofsky's detailing, through pen portraits, of the way of life of the Jew amidst the peasants in the villages and hamlets of the Ukraine has historic value. Backstage are the two cultures, far apart in language, song, prayer, folklore, religious vision, spiritual heritage, traditional customs, mode of living, even eating habits and behavior. There are bitter clashes, and the Jew is forever the victim of pogroms, yet during intervals a sort of friendship exists. There is enormous material here for social and personal drama, calling upon the modern mind for study and evaluation. As to the Jewish part, Mr. Charnofsky may, of course, be well accepted as one who knows. It is his life story. He lived it, and he tells it and interprets it with grace and a smile.

American kids will have a good laugh and a tear of sympathy while reading or hearing the stories about the travails of the Ukrainian Jewish boy who might have been a contemporary cousin of Mark Twain's Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn.

The account of the "exodus" from the Ukraine to America, and the descriptions of the Lower East Side of New York, are rich in charm and folk history.

There is the breath of poetry throughout the pages of *Jewish Life in the Ukraine.*

HARRY LANG, *Editorial Associate*
Jewish Daily Forward, New York

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INTRODUCTION

When Michael Charnofsky began to write the history of our family, we, his children, considered it to be a good thing. Not only would it serve as a new challenge for a man recently retired from some fifty years in the furniture business, but it would offer his children and grandchildren and all succeeding generations rich family lore upon which to build loyalties and ties.

Certainly we had no idea that our father possessed any literary talent, nor did we imagine that his stories would hold interest for a significant audience, if indeed for any audience outside the family. One thing, however, seems clear. The stories included here, which represent but a portion of the family album—much of which is still to be written—have turned out to be filled with humor, pathos, and a realism born of experience which was often tragic and bitter, often warm and tender. The style is not that of traditional writing, but rather resembles patterns of speech . . . the speech of our family.

If there are inconsistencies in the mood of the stories, it is probably because each of the children shared in editing the original handwritten copies. These our father worked on laboriously, late at night, groping for English words to express his memories. And he distributed these, one story at a time, to whichever one of his children happened to have some free time in which to make necessary corrections and do the typing.

The stories appear in a semblance of chronological order, although often a single story will forge ahead in time, and a subsequent tale will fall back again into sequence.

If it is difficult to assess the literary worth of this writing, for us to do so seems irrelevant anyway. If it is also difficult to estimate the appeal that these stories might have to anyone not acquainted with the names, the places, and the people who appear in them, that

too seems irrelevant as far as we, the sons and daughters, are concerned. It is enough that we are able to enjoy reading about the history of our family, its joys and heartbreaks, its fun and foibles. If no one else ever gazes upon these pages, we as well as our father will be satisfied; he wrote them for us.

But we are more than satisfied. We are also proud. Each story shines unmistakably with that sympathy and understanding for fellow human beings which we have come to recognize as being an immutable and everlasting gift in the character and personality of our father.

His Children:
BEATRICE
CHARLOTTE
LEONORE
HAROLD
STANLEY

January 15, 1964

JEWISH LIFE IN THE UKRAINE

FAMILY BEGINNINGS

The history of the Charnofsky family, as it has been told by my father, actually goes back five hundred years. It was a family of rabbis: a father and three sons, all rabbis, in Madrid, Spain. It was the house of Nucham Avrum Gershen—all three first names, as people were called only by their first names. So there were Nucham Avrum, his father, and Gershen, his grandfather. Thus, Nucham Avrum Gershen was the patriarch of the rabbis. He was the oldest and best-learned, and was very respectable-looking. As his sons grew up and became rabbis, he made them rabbis in his clan, a clan that was built up for years and that was called the Avrum Gershen clan.

It was typical in Spain that as there was a clergy in the church, so it became in other religions. And clergymen were the leaders of the country, along with the existing political party. So Rabbi Nucham Avrum Gershen was closely tied to the country's politics. He flourished with the country and the people, which included the Jewish people, and for generations, yes, centuries, this family grew in fame and prosperity.

Then heavy clouds started to spread over Spain against the Jews. The Inquisition came, and people were burned in bonfires. So violent was the persecution that Jews were no longer safe walking the streets of Madrid, nor even safe in their own houses. And the Jews started the exodus.

The Avrum Gershen clan was in even greater danger, for it was being demanded by the clergymen that they adopt Christianity, along with their synagogue and all its members. Nucham couldn't do that, and he put up resistance, but to no avail. Exodus was the only escape.

Through very careful planning, and at high cost in money, Nucham and all the family, with most of the members of his synagogue, packed into a boat and left Spain, with the consent of high

officers who had been well paid. Under the shadow of darkness, they sailed for Italy.

Their stay in Italy was not permanent. In the sixteenth century, the rabbis found them a home in Vienna, Austria, where they lived for about two hundred years. From Vienna they were again uprooted. They ran to Poland, and finally into the Ukraine.

In the early nineteenth century, a son was born to the family and he was named Avrum Gershen. He was later to be my grandfather. His parents wanted to rear him to be a rabbi. To do this, they got the best teachers for Avrum Gershen, and he was a brilliant student. His parents were happy with his learning and had great hopes for their son. They dreamed of sending him to the great Rabbinical Yeshiva (College).

But in 1835 his father passed away and life took a turn for the worse. Avrum Gershen decided to give up his studies and get into some business. This he did, and as he progressed in his business he got married and his wife gave birth to a boy. The parents were very happy. But when his wife gave birth to their second child, a girl, she died and the child lived. This became a great problem for Avrum Gershen: a boy two years old and a newborn infant to raise, with a business to attend to. He hired help for the house and for the children, but they were inefficient and he was very dissatisfied.

So when the *shadchen* (matchmaker) came to him and told him about Rivke, a fine woman who was a widow and who was willing for the *shidach* (marriage), Avrum Gershen decided to marry her. But he also decided to give up his business and move away from this place that he couldn't stand any more.

After a search for a new place to move to, he found a village inhabited only by Ukrainian peasants. The village had no businesses at all. Its name was Askovitz. He decided to make a home right there for his wife, Rivke, and the two children from his first wife. He opened a general store, also selling vodka and wine. His business was very good and he and Rivke were happy.

The peasants became attached to them and liked them very much, for he brought to the village good luck, so they said. They had a

place to trade; Avrum Gershen gave them credit from harvest to harvest; and they also found in Avrum Gershen a friend to whom they could come for advice and consultation.

Then Rivke gave birth to a baby boy who was named Simche. That made them both happy. But in a short time they lost their little girl. She took seriously ill and didn't last long. They felt very bad, and expressed it in their grief for the child. The boy left alone from the first wife didn't want to stay in the village any more. He wanted to go back to Brielow, a Jewish town where his mother's sister lived, and live with her. Not that he didn't have it good here; Rivke tried her best and took good care of him just as if he were her own son, but he was not happy. So Avrum Gershen took him to his aunt in Brielow and left him there.

Avrum Gershen was heartbroken, but he still had his and Rivke's son, Simche, and he did everything to educate him. He paid for the best teachers; they told Avrum Gershen that Simche was the best student, and that he could become a rabbi. Avrum Gershen went to great rabbis *(goote eddin)* to consult with them, and after talking with Avrum Gershen the great rabbis told him that he himself was well learned in the Talmud and in the Torah and he could be a rabbi. Also, they started to call him "Erib" Avrum Gershen. (Adding "Erib" to his name was just like adding "Sir.") They said that his son Simche, if he took after his father, could become a great rabbi too. Happy with the answers from the rabbis, he came home and gave even more attention to Simche's learning.

When Simche was ready for *bar mitzvah* (confirmation), at the age of thirteen, Erib Avrum Gershen moved the *bar mitzvah* to the city and made the biggest party ever made for a *bar mitzvah*. He invited rabbis and learned men to this great event, and there Simche really proved his knowledge, his wisdom, and his great scholarship in the prophets. His name was carried far between the towns, and men and women wished that their sons would grow up to be as bright as Erib Avrum Gershen's Simche.

Simche was sincere and devoted. He helped his father in the business, and became known and loved by the peasants, his customers.

And in his spare time he sat over the Talmud and the Tillim (Psalms). He learned more every day and his father, Erib Avrum Gershen, and his mother, Rivke, were overjoyed and saw a great future for their son. And as time went on, Erib Avrum Gershen and his wife Rivke decided that their son would have to take over the business some day, and so they started to talk to him. They said that they were getting older and would not be able to run the business much longer, and that he had to prepare to become the main one to take over and run it. They also said that it was time for him to get married, that they wanted to see him happy while they lived and they wanted to have some grandchildren. But Simche smiled and told them that he was already looking around and some day he would surprise them.

Simche did a lot of traveling to bigger cities, and also went to the *yarids* (market days) in the small towns where he believed that the better girls were living. He did see some nice girls in the big cities, but he thought they were more like showgirls. But in the small towns he saw the real girls, natural and sincere. Although he was still young and had plenty of time, he knew the feelings of his parents and felt he should make them happy. He also knew that he had something to offer a girl: a wonderful home and a lot of happiness. And so he traveled to the small-town *yarids* hoping to meet the kind of girl that he had in mind.

He didn't get tired traveling and looking through the *yarids* in the small towns. And finally one time, not too far from his own village, he found just the girl. He and she were married and he brought her with him to his and his parents' home in the village Askovitz.

NACHES FUN KINDER

Erib Gimpel Dries and his wife Lhaye, my grandparents, were natives of the town of Warshilovka. This is where they lived all their lives. Here they went to *cheder* (school) as young children, and here they later got married and reared their family. It was a fine family of three sons and three daughters, all married but the youngest daughter, Molke. She was fifteen years old and still single. That worried them a bit. But with the sons and other two daughters Erib Gimpel and Lhaye had a lot of *naches* (pleasure). I will list them for you one by one.

Nessie and her husband Shloime were the oldest. They had been married for many years, had a nice family of their own, and lived with Father and Mother. Shloime was in the business with Erib Gimpel. Shloime was very good in the business. They supplied harnesses for horses to the big cities in the Ukraine. The harnesses were spun and woven in the town; Shloime had to give the work to the spinners and to the weavers, and when they were ready he packed them in bales and shipped them to the customers. This was no small job, and not easy for him, but he liked it.

Shloime was a very likable person. He was pleasant to deal with. He loved people and they loved him. Shloime was short, only five feet, four inches. He was thin but active, with brown hair, a wide brown beard, bushy eyebrows, big shining blue eyes, and a big nose that looked out of proportion for his face. He was always wearing a cap *(cashkat)* covering his head to his ears, and he always wore a long *capota,* a coat reaching the ankles.

Nessie, his wife, was two inches taller than he. She was plump, with a nice round face, but she was unpleasant. She was always complaining of being sick. The doctor in town told her there was nothing wrong with her and told her to forget about being sick

and to go home and become active there, cooking, cleaning and being a wife to her husband and a mother to her children. But she did not believe him, and told everybody that he was only a small-town doctor and knew nothing about sickness. She started to travel to Odessa and Kiev, the big cities, to see big doctors and professors. Doctor Luria, the town doctor, refused to see her any more, even though she paid him every time she came.

He deliberately told her that she was wasting her husband's money, that there was nothing wrong with her. So she started to hate this Doctor Luria, although he had a big reputation and even big-city doctors consulted him on surgery and medicine in general. Doctor Luria didn't like the big cities. He had no children, just himself and his wife. So he picked the town of Warshilovka and settled there. He had regular office hours, and after his office hours he used to love to ride his bicycle. He made all his calls on his bicycle, and then he might meet his wife riding her bicycle. They would both ride around for hours. When other doctors came to him from big cities for consultation they had to wait until he had had his bicycle exercise.

He had a beautiful home surrounded with flowers. He and his wife both loved flowers and spent many hours raising them.

But Nessie didn't like him because he told her there was nothing wrong with her. So Nessie kept on going to Kiev and Odessa. She looked up big doctors and professors, and they too told her that she was well and that she was wasting her money. But she couldn't see it that way. Shloime, her husband, worked harder and harder, but everything he made went for doctors and transportation.

Nessie was angry with her sisters, her brothers, and her own children because they didn't believe that she was a sick woman. "You are all like the doctors," she said. "You don't believe me, but I feel it, and I know I am sick," she told everybody. One time her sister Yenta volunteered to go with her to Kiev to see the biggest professor and hear what he had to say. They decided to take all the medicines she had got over the years, show them to this doctor, and let him decide what was the matter with her.

In Kiev they had to wait three days for an appointment. When

they finally got there, first a clerk took down all Nessie's past history, and wanted to know about her parents and family. After this was over, a nurse took her over to prepare her for the examination. It took a long time and Nessie complained to the nurse that she was weak and hungry, that she hadn't eaten since the night before. The nurse was nice to her and told her it wouldn't be too long. Next they had to take some pictures, and finally she reached the professor. First he read her history; then he examined her. Then he started to talk to her, and in the talk she told him about all the other doctors and about Doctor Luria.

When he heard Doctor Luria's name he became very interested, for they had studied together in college and he remembered that Luria was an outstanding student. After they became doctors they separated and had never heard from each other. Now he found out about Doctor Luria, and from the discussion and description he was sure it was the same person.

The specialist examined Nessie and found out that she didn't even have money to pay for the visit. He told her and her sister Yenta that he would have to come down to Warshilovka for a consultation with Doctor Luria and that he would be there the next Thursday. He asked her to see the doctor and make the appointment. Nessie arranged the appointment with Doctor Luria.

Thursday the professor arrived in Warshilovka and stopped at Doctor Luria's house. He rang the doorbell, and when the door was opened you could hear a loud surprised voice: "Sergay!" The professor cried: "Luria!" They hugged and kissed each other. Doctor Luria held Sergay close to himself and kept asking questions of his life and his practice. For ten minutes they stayed at the open door until the doctor's wife finally got them inside. The joy of meeting again was so great that for hours they kept on telling each other of their lives, their successes, and their families.

It was not until late at night that Sergay told the story of Nessie. They both laughed at that mixed-up woman. They decided to call on her the next day and tell her their decision: that she was sick and needed medical care, that they would give her medicine to

take, and that she would be well in less than a year. But she must go to Odessa and bathe in the Black Sea for at least six weeks or two months. Also, she must not eat bread or potatoes while she took the baths.

The first six weeks Nessie took those baths in Odessa she lost nearly twenty pounds and got weak. So she came home. When Doctor Luria saw her she told him that she did feel much better but that taking those baths and not eating bread or potatoes was killing her. He promptly told her that she would have to go for ten weeks instead of six weeks. She immediately quit going to see Doctor Luria and quit going to Odessa to bathe in the Black Sea. She settled at home and felt much better.

One year later, however, she started looking for good doctors again. But she never saw Doctor Luria again, or the professor from Kiev. For she was convinced that they were fakers and that she was a terribly sick woman. She lived to a good old age and raised a nice family. When she died, hundreds of bottles of medicine were thrown out.

Yenta, the second daughter, was a pretty woman. She was five feet six inches tall, weighed about one hundred seventy pounds, and was much neater in dressing than her older sister Nessie. Yenta always wore a neat silk kerchief on her head. It was folded like a triangle, and was centered on her forehead with both ends turned behind her ears, showing the shining earrings. She wore a neat blouse and skirt. She was attractive, round full-faced, fair, with two bright blue eyes and a full head of silken brown hair. She was liked by people for her beauty. But she had one bad fault. She always cursed. She cursed her children; she cursed her husband, her sisters, her brothers. She cursed the neighbors; she cursed any and everybody. She couldn't talk ten words without cursing. The children pleaded with her, her husband pleaded with her, the whole family pleaded with her. But she answered with cursing words. It was no use, her husband, Moishe, said sadly.

Moishe was the mailman in town. Every day he had to travel to Gnevan, the railroad station seven *viorsts* (miles) away from

Warshilovka. He picked up the mail from the arriving trains and sent away the town's mail. When he came back to town everybody was waiting to collect their newspapers and mail. He made a nice living from this profession.

Yenta and Moishe had five sons and one adopted daughter. The girl was a wonderful housekeeper. She did all the work of the house, including cooking and sewing.

Yankel, their oldest son, lived in Schmerinka, a big city. He was a merchant, and he and his family lived well.

Chaim was a soldier in the Russian army.

Zalmen was a student in a higher school. He wanted to become a doctor.

Gitman was a plain man. He was a hard worker. He was big and strong and went for hard work. Wherever he could make a ruble, he was there.

Mendel, still in school, was delicate, and was more one of the intelligentsia.

The sons were very seldom seen at home. They disliked their mother's cursing. They pleaded and begged her to forget the cursing words, but it did not help.

One morning when Moishe was getting ready to leave for the railroad station he spoke to Yenta about certain work that had to be done while he was away. She got very excited and started on her line of cursing. She wished that when he was at the railroad station he would be killed by a train and they would bring him home dead, cut in small pieces. *That afternoon Moishe was killed by a fast-running passenger train.* Pieces of his body were gathered from the tracks, laid into a case, and brought home to Yenta and the family.

Yenta wanted to kill herself. The sons had to watch her closely. Her crying, her screaming, were heard all over town. The businessmen of the town closed their stores; the synagogues were all open, with candles lighted. Jews were praying for Moishe's soul and overwhelming grief was hanging over the town. Everybody was depressed and tears were running from the eyes of men, women, and even children. The funeral was one mass of people, for they

came from miles away. Jews from towns around Warshilovka came, together with peasants from their farms. Warshilovka was never so full of people, and never was a funeral so big, so impressive.

Zalmen took over the running of the business and Yenta remained in grief the rest of her life. She died with the words on her lips, "I didn't mean it."

Erib Gimpel's third child was a son, Shloimka. He was married and lived in the town of Tomoshpil. He ran a successful yard-goods business. He lived in a big house with all conveniences and abundance, the best of foods and luxuries. He raised his family in the best Jewish tradition, and educated them in both Jewish and Russian. His oldest daughter, Shaindel, was not a mixer with the people; she was a snob. She didn't like poor people, although her brothers and sister were very democratic and went to Jewish *cheder* and Russian school with all the other children in town. Shaindel, when she was a child, refused to join them and Shloimka had to have a private teacher for her. Shaindel was gorgeous-looking. She was five feet ten inches tall and had a slender figure, a round face, dark brown hair, shining brown eyes. She was always neatly dressed and was naturally beautiful.

Shaindel met Burach. He too was handsome, and after they became engaged Shaindel started to plan her wedding. First, she told her father that she wanted no poor people or relatives invited to her wedding, for she couldn't stand those poor *schnorers* (beggars) and the way they dressed. She alone would pick the people whom she wanted to invite. Second, she told her father she would travel to Ludzh, the capital of the weaving industry for silks and satins, to pick the best goods for her wardrobe. Then she would bring to the town from the big city the best dressmaker to make up her wedding dresses. Her bedroom furniture would be made to order in Bardichow, where the best furniture was made by hand. Third and foremost, she said, the catering and all arrangements for the wedding must be done by professionals brought in from Odessa. These were orders that her father and mother could do nothing about. Shloimka could not even invite his own sisters or his brothers.

The dresses Shaindel had made were fit for a queen. Her wedding gown had a long train that little girls carried to the *chuppa* (wedding canopy). Her black velvet dress was one in a million. Everything was made just as Shaindel wanted.

The event, the wedding itself, was a spectacle that people came from other towns and cities to watch. Burach the groom was taken into the house for two or three years of *kest*—board with the best of foods and wines.

Shaindel had three children with Burach—in an unhappy atmosphere, for there was strife between husband and wife. Burach could not stand Shaindel's snobbish ways. Finally Burach took sick, and after suffering from an ailment that was never diagnosed, he died. Shaindel became melancholy, couldn't eat, and couldn't sleep nights. She would go out of the house and wander away. They found her on roads, they found her around the lake, and many times they found her in the cemetery. They watched her day and night. The doctors claimed she had lost her mind. When she got better, years later, she went to the United States, made her home in Vermont, and later died.

Erib Gimpel's fourth child was another son, Mayer. He also had a nice family but he himself was sick for many years, and was very poor. He died of tuberculosis and left his wife, three daughters, and one son poor and struggling for a living. The widow had two trades from which she tried to feed her family. First, she bought a sewing machine and became a dressmaker, making dresses and blouses for peasants. Second, she became a fortuneteller. She was good at telling the fortunes of peasant men and women, and they believed in her. Many times she guessed their troubles and their fortunes. The peasants brought all kinds of fruit, vegetables, chickens, wheat and corn, and eggs to her for one reading of the cards.

One time she hit the jackpot when she told a peasant who came to her that a horse had been stolen from his barn and it was the only horse he had. She told him—"and the cards showed it so plain"—that he should take the justice of the peace, go to the end of the village, and look in the last three barns; that his horse was there. When

the peasant did just that, and he did find his horse in one of those barns, the village peasants went wild about her fortunetelling. Then she really started to make a nice living.

Her dressmaking she turned over to her two oldest daughters and the sewing machine she promised to each one's prospective groom as a dowry for the bride. After each of the first two daughters was married, Blume the widow remained with the sewing machine. That is how she married off the first two daughters.

When Lhaye, the youngest daughter, became engaged she told her mother that she was entitled to the sewing machine, for there were no more daughters to save it for. So Blume remained with the fortunetelling, and every time she had to read the cards she called me, Mailech, to sit with her. She never allowed anybody else in when she was reading the cards, but said she found that I was very lucky to her. And so Mailech too became inspired and learned to read the cards. When she was sick and couldn't take some peasants she called me and I helped her narrate to the peasants from their past and their future. Blume was pleased and predicted that Mailech would one day be a fortuneteller.

Shmilech was another son who had no luck and was sickly. He too had three sons and two daughters and lived a poor life until his death. There were days when this family hardly had bread to eat.

The oldest son started to earn some money by traveling to the *yarids* on market days. The next son was talented and learned the art of preaching. He became a *baldorsher,* a preacher-interpreter of our philosophers and our Torah, going around from town to town. On Saturdays after services in the synagogue the rabbi would announce that there was in town a young child who was traveling from town to town as a *baldorsher.* Laizer would come to the platform *(balemer)* and in his soft, childish voice would start to quote from our great philosophers, from our great wise men, and from the depths of the Torah. He was so brilliant in his preaching that people sat and wondered how such a small child could have the knowledge and wit of the wise men with the knowledge of the philosophers. How deeply he went into the Torah and analyzed its morals, its humani-

tarianism, and its laws for worldly life! When he was through with his talk, all the people wanted to shake his hand. They all wanted him to come to their houses and he was immediately engaged for another preaching. When he left the town he was given ten to twenty rubles for his services. This he promptly sent to his mother.

One time when he came to a bigger city, Tulchine, and delivered some of his sermons the richest Jew in town gave him money and offered to adopt him. He saw in this child Laizer a great star, and believed that God alone had created him to keep up the morals of the Jews. But Laizer, only eight years old, refused to be away completely from his mother, sisters, and brothers. He returned to his town, Tomoshpil, and he remained the source of livelihood for the family for a long time.

One day when he was fourteen years old Laizer decided to go to America, with great hopes of bringing all the family over to a place where everyone could become useful and make a living. When he came to Philadelphia he found no market for his preaching and became a peddler from door to door. Then he brought the family over and they all got jobs and started to make a living.

The sixth child and youngest daughter was Molke. She was still unmarried. She was, as her father Erib Gimpel said, his *mazinkele* and a *tzatske* (the youngest and a beauty).

Erib Gimpel and his Lhaye had lots of *naches* in their children and grandchildren. They were all good children. But Molke was completely an individualist, altogether different from any of the others. At the age of fifteen she was still unmarried, and they worried about her.

MOLKE AND HER DREAMS

Molke was one of six children. She was the youngest, and one of twins, a boy and a girl. Her father, Erib Gimpel, was a well-known businessman who played a big part in shipping harnesses and other equipment for horses, all of it spun from flax in Warshilovka. In fact, he was responsible for the spinning industry in the town, and from it many people made their living. They used to say that if not for Erib Gimpel the town of Warshilovka wouldn't be what it is. Erib Gimpel was not a rich man, but he was a personality liked and respected in town by everyone, not only because he handled a big business, and not only because he gave a living to a lot of people in the town, and not only because he was recognized as the person to whom people would entrust their arbitration in time of strife or in family troubles, but because he was a *Talmud chochem* (wise man), a clear-thinking man, a man who took no sides, who would always make clear and just decisions. He was well learned in the Talmud and in the Torah. He was a traveled man and was liberal and progressive. He was worldly, and that is why anyone who had any difficulty, strife, or misunderstanding in the community, and had to have a *dintoirah* (trial or arbitration), always wanted Erib Gimpel to be one of the arbitrators. He was often a visitor to the rabbi's house, because the rabbi used to consult him on matters of civic and religious duties. They would sit and talk for hours with a glass of tea and a chess game, and in that chess game Erib Gimpel would show the world's troubles to the rabbi—the wars, the strife, and the remedies. His predictions were usually right, and the rabbi was always seeing in this man Erib Gimpel a great Moses. In fact, he used to call him "The Great Moses."

Erib Gimpel was never above the people; he was just one of them. Lhaye (Lillian), his wife, was just an ordinary housewife,

but she was clever and intelligent, and she used her ability to rear her family well.

Molke was not like her sisters or the other girls in Warshilovka. She was different. She did not permit her mother or her father to pick a husband for her as they had for the other children. She wore modern dresses, as those the girls in the big cities wore. She took the privilege of raising her skirts above her ankles and wore shoes with high heels, which the townspeople criticized, and which in fact they called to the attention of her mother and father, asking them why they allowed such a disgrace. Erib Gimpel told them that the world was changing and a dress above the ankles was old in the big cities. They were much higher in Petersburg and other cities.

But her mother suffered from that and would, from time to time, talk to Molke and ask why she aggravated her parents. Didn't she see that people in town didn't like her actions, and wasn't it time for her to get married? Couldn't she take an example from her sisters and brothers? They were all married, had families of their own, and were happy. Her father picked their husbands and wives for them through a matchmaker. Her sisters didn't even know their husbands until after their weddings, and weren't they good matches her father had made? She must not forget that her father looked into the other families to make sure they would be suitable and comparable to her family, and who could make a better decision than her own father, through a matchmaker?

Molke didn't get excited. Smiling, her wide-open, clear blue eyes shining with love and affection, she would take her mother around, hold her close, and say, "Mother, dear, you want me to be happy, I know you do. And I know Father is also interested in my happiness, so please don't worry about my age. Fifteen is not an old girl nowadays, and wearing a dress above the ankles or high heels is in style. In fact the girls in town will all soon be wearing the same kind of dresses. They consulted me and they are all going for it. And please, please, above all, let me pick my own husband. I too will see that his will be a nice family. Mainly he has to be someone I like. Some day I will make you and Father proud of me." Her

mother would agree at the time and hug and kiss her, only to repeat the same thing in a couple of weeks or months.

Erib Gimpel and his wife and daughter lived comfortably. He owned his house, and it was a big house, divided into three apartments. In one lived their oldest daughter, Nessie, with her husband and children. The other side was occupied by Erib Gimpel. In the back of the house (the entrance was through an alley) lived one son, with his wife and their family.

The house was well built and well laid out, with big rooms. It had big kitchens with brick-built stoves. The roof was modern and covered with flat tile, and the basement had ample room for each family's storage, or for the making of wine or dill pickles for winter use.

The front of the house had a long porch with a *prisba* (bench) to sit on, built solidly against the wall. It was made of red clay.

The house was located right in the center of the town opposite a square of stores where most of the business was done and where the *yarids* were held. Erib Gimpel always had money in his pocket and always was liberal with Molke. He bought yard goods for her dresses (she made them herself), bought her shoes that were always made to order by the best shoemaker in town, and when he traveled to the big cities he would bring things for her that you couldn't buy in their small town. She was particular about her dress. She was neat and attractive, and the girls of the town looked to her as the leader in style.

Molke, like other girls, had her dream that some day she would meet the boy she would like, and he would be the one she would marry. She couldn't stand matchmakers and didn't want someone to pick a husband for her. She knew that some day the right one would come along and make her happy. She dreamed about a big wedding so that all the town could rejoice. She dreamed about having a big family. She dreamed about the house she would have and how she would fix and furnish it. With these dreams she went on living and hoping.

She remembered when she was six years old (it was the year

1868) her mother and father used to tell her that she was the prettiest of all the girls and when she grew up the *shadchen* would bring her a *chusan* (bridegroom). He would, first of all, be from a very good family. He would be a *Talmud chochem,* and he would be tall and handsome. Ever since that time their words remained with her. She could see that man, and she was sure he would come.

When Molke was sixteen the desire to meet that person was stronger than ever before.

How surprised she was when one day she went to visit her girl friend and there she met the man about whom she had dreamed all her life. Her girl friend's mother and father ran a guest house for travelers. When strangers came to town or traveled through, the guest house was the only place where they could spend the night and get their meals. When Molke came to see Shandel, her friend, a young man sat at the table eating his dinner. Shandel was waiting on him, and when she introduced Molke to the young man he stood up, held her hand, and said that he was Simche Avrum Gershen's from Askovitz. Not letting go of her hand, he asked for her full name.

She blushingly replied, "Molke Erib Gimpel's."

Forgetting completely about his food on the table, and still holding her hand, he started a conversation that lasted some time. He told her that he knew of her family and that both her father and his father knew each other, and when Shandel left the room he became more personal and asked when he could see her again.

She saw in him just the one her father and mother had told her about when she was six years old, and the one she had always dreamed about. Her heart was beating fast. Her eyes were wide open and she felt her face flushing. At the same time Simche was pulled to her as by a magnet. He felt that his search was over; he finally had found the one he wanted.

Simche lost no time. He went to the town *shadchen,* Erib Zelig, a man only five feet tall with a wild red beard that covered most of his face. He wore a long coat that covered him from head to toe. Erib Zelig was a successful matchmaker. He had full lists of

girls and boys and he knew their families, their circumstances, and how much each girl had for her dowry, and he had a history of each of their parents.

But when Simche told him to go to Erib Gimpel about his daughter Molke, Erib Zelig lifted his hands. "That Molke will never get married," he said. "I have plenty of boys for her, but she refuses a *shadchen*."

Simche stopped him and told him to try once more. Erib Zelig took the job and promised that in a few days he would attend to it and would bring an answer to his father in Askovitz. Simche told Erib Zelig that his father was not to know that he, Simche, had come to see him, and that when his father insisted on a big *nodan* (dowry) Erib Zelig should not argue.

Simche was not at all surprised when two days later Erib Zelig showed up in Askovitz right in the house of Erib Avrum Gershen.

First, what a wonderful son Simche is, what a *Talmud chochem* he is and how well known he is, and that mothers and fathers wish their sons would grow up to be like Simche. When Erib Zelig saw Erib Avrum Gershen happy with his talk, he then started on his mission.

"I come," he said, "especially to see you. I have the kind of *shidach* for your son, and not only will he be the happiest man in the whole world but you too will be happy when you hear about it. First of all, the girl is sixteen years old, and those are her right years, because I know her and her parents since she was born. Her beauty compares only to Esther Amolke [Queen Esther]. In smartness she compares only to Dovid Amailich [King David]. And in goodness she compares only to our mothers Surha, Rivke, Ruchal, and Lhaye [Biblical names]. And now I know you will ask about the *nodan*—how much money. So I hurry to tell you there is *nodan* too. And it is the promise of a man, her father, that you will be glad to trust. Wait until you hear about it.

"Her father is a man you well know. He is a man that is known all over the state of Kominetz Podolsk. What am I saying? Better he is known all over Russia, and if that isn't enough I would say

all over the world. He is a learned man in our Torah and in Tanach. He knows our philosophers and all about our wise men. His wife raised a family of six and this daughter is the youngest. She, Lhaye, is a God-loving housewife and lives and believes in all Jewish traditions, in the Ten Commandments, and in the Torah that was given to us from Mount Sinai by God and brought down by Moses."

While Erib Zelig was talking to Avrum Gershen, Simche listened in from the next room with his eyes and ears open.

"And now, this is no other than Erib Gimpel Dries from Warshilovka and his clever daughter, Molke."

Erib Avrum Gershen took a deep breath, looked straight into the eyes of Erib Zelig, and with great contentment replied, "You had me guessing for a while. I am happy to hear that Erib Gimpel wants my son for his son-in-law. I know Erib Gimpel well. I even know his daughter, Molke, as well as his wife, Lhaye. And I must agree with you that they are all just as you described them. In fact, not so long ago I sat on an arbitration board with Erib Gimpel in Warshilovka. That's when his daughter Molke brought in *kibid* [a snack] that her mother had prepared. If I remember well there was some criticism about her short dress above her ankles and her high-heeled shoes. I told the men that was worldly and I admired her, and you know, Erib Zelig, I thought then that she would make a good *kalle* [bride] for my son Simche. Now that you come to the same decision I am satisfied. Let us call in Simche and talk to him.

"But before we do that let us settle some incidentals. First of all, I want to know how much *nodan* does Erib Gimpel promise, and when will he pay it off? Second, what kind of wedding will he make? To my son's wedding I want to invite all the rabbinical and learned people from here and from far away. Third, right after the wedding Molke will have to move out here to Askovitz to live. Fourth, I will go to Warshilovka to see Erib Gimpel and talk over arrangements with him. And last, I want the engagement made shortly and the wedding not later than three months after the engagement."

Erib Zelig was happy and like a great victor stood up and said, "You can have everything your own way but the *nodan*. For that

Erib Gimpel told me you would have to wait, as he is at present tied up and short of money. A wedding he will make that Warshilovka never had such a wedding. This is his *mazinkele,* the last to be married off."

The door opened and Simche walked in. Erib Zelig stopped talking. Erib Avrum Gershen quickly said, "Simche my son, I am glad you came in. I was going to send for you. This is Erib Zelig from Warshilovka. He is a *shadchen* and he came to tell us about a wonderful *kalle* he has for you. You know Erib Gimpel? He has a daughter. She is his youngest and the last unmarried child. Erib Zelig tells me that there is a *nodan,* that Erib Gimpel wants to make a big wedding, and all other demands can be met. Now what do you think?"

Simche hesitated, thought a while longer, and walked closer to the table where his father and Erib Zelig were sitting. He pulled up a chair, sat down, took out a little blank tablet and a pencil, and started to talk.

"First of all I want to know her name, how old she is, her parents' names and where they live, how much *nodan* and when can we get the money, where the wedding will be held, how big, and how many people he will invite. But I think, Father, you should get dressed and drive into Warshilovka, go to Erib Gimpel, and talk it over with him. If you want me to I will go along, and while you talk and make all the arrangements I will talk to the girl and see if I really want her."

As he finished these words, Rivke walked in. Not waiting for an introduction or any words from her husband or son she started, "I heard everything sitting in the next room and everything is satisfactory. We can make the engagement even tonight. That is, we can break plates tonight" (a Jewish custom on such occasions) "and make a definite date for the engagement."

Everybody got busy getting ready for the trip. Vassil was told to hitch up the horses to the wagon, spread blankets on the seats, and drive them to Warshilovka.

Erib Gimpel's house was filled with life. Erib Avrum Gershen, Rivke, Erib Gimpel, Lhaye, Erib Zelig the *shadchen,* and everyone

else had his say, and they talked first about the *nodan*—how much and when it would be paid. Erib Avrum Gershen wanted it before the official engagement; Erib Gimpel said that he would have the money before the wedding; Erib Avrum Gershen wanted to know what guarantees he would be given. Erib Gimpel smilingly replied, "My daughter I will give you! Isn't that the best guarantee? Can you ask for anything better?"

And it was settled that before the wedding or on the day of the wedding the money would be paid. As to the wedding, Erib Gimpel wanted it left to him. He himself wanted a big wedding. For his *mazinka* there was nothing too good, he would plan a wedding that would be talked about for years, and that young and old would enjoy. The wedding was to last one full week.

He assured Erib Avrum Gershen and Rivke that they would be happy with his arrangements. All that he wanted them to do was make a list of the people they wanted to invite. He would get special invitations from Odessa, the printed kind that were used in big cities. He would see to it personally that those invitations were delivered to everyone no matter where they lived.

Every face was radiant and shining, and everyone was happy with the great and far-reaching results of their talks.

Erib Gimpel suggested that he would now have his wife Lhaye set the table with eat and drink, and bring plates to announce the engagement for one week later and the wedding in three months.

Soon the table was set with whisky, wine, cookies, herring, rye bread, onions cut up, homemade jams. Everyone went to the table and then remembered that they had heard nothing from Simche and Molke. Lhaye called them from the next room and as they walked in, their faces shining with happiness, Erib Avrum Gershen lost no time in telling them that everything was satisfactory, that both families had come to an understanding, and that they were ready to break plates to announce the engagement.

Simche and Molke expressed their gratitude and said they too were ready. Everybody kissed. Erib Avrum Gershen kissed the bride, Rivke kissed Lhaye, Erib Gimpel shook hands with Simche, wel-

comed him as his son-in-law. Glasses were filled and the feast began. With the *mazeltov* (congratulations) four plates were broken, one each for the bride and groom, and one for each family.

Erib Zelig, the *shadchen,* happy with his accomplishment, started singing a hymn. Everybody helped, and for hours they sang and had a wonderful time. It was late at night when Erib Avrum Gershen, Rivke, and Simche returned to Askovitz.

PREPARING FOR A WEDDING

Molke's engagement, one week after both families agreed on the date, was a big event. There was music and there was Jewish folk dancing. There was a cooked meal for one hundred guests. There was vodka and there was wine. There was a special table for the rabbis and learned men, and there was a special table for poor people. The groom, his parents, and their guests were very happy with the way everything was arranged, and Erib Avrum Gershen told Erib Gimpel that if this engagement was a sample of his arrangements then he could trust him with the wedding too, as they were happy and satisfied.

Erib Gimpel didn't lose any time. The day after the engagement, he started to plan for the wedding. There were only three months left—hardly time to do all he wanted. So the first thing he did was go to Odessa. He had some business to attend to, but his mind was mainly on buying the things for the bride. And so he bought yard goods for several dresses; and for the wedding dress he bought white satin, lace and trimming, buttons, needles, and cotton to match the colors of the goods. Erib Gimpel knew that he was going 'way above in expense what he could afford, but he also knew that Molke was his *mazinka* and there would be no more daughters to marry after this.

He knew he still had to buy a piece of nontransparent goods for a veil, but he remembered that Molke told him that she wanted transparent goods for her veil, and that she wouldn't wear the other. And Erib Gimpel didn't know what to do, as all his other daughters and all the girls getting married wore nontransparent veils. That was the custom, because the bride is not allowed to see the groom until after the wedding. He was at a loss, but he knew Molke wanted a transparent veil and that's what it would be, regardless of the crit-

icism of the townspeople, and particularly the rabbis. And when he asked for the veil goods, the clerk brought transparent goods and told Erib Gimpel that nobody in Odessa wore the nontransparent goods any more. So he bought that beautiful piece of lace for the bride's veil. And he bought printed invitations that were printed in both languages, Jewish and Russian. They were neat and attractive. They had tissue paper in between, and two white envelopes, one inside of the other. The new style, he thought, but why the two envelopes? He bought two beautiful nightgowns for the bride. They were hand-embroidered and expensive. He bought a beautiful, all-wool shawl, and when he figured up his bill it was much more than he had expected to spend, and much more than he had in cash. But he had good credit in the store and knew they would wait for the money.

When Erib Gimpel brought all those things home, Molke was overjoyed. She loved everything her father had bought. She kissed her father and told him how wonderful he was. Molke made an arrangement with the town dressmaker to make her wedding dress for her. The other dresses she would make herself. She knew how to make dresses, but wouldn't take a chance with her wedding dress. The dressmaker promised Molke that she would make her a dress that a queen could wear. Molke was overjoyed. Everything went so well for her.

Molke started on the other dresses. Her sisters Nessie and Yenta and her sister-in-law Blume helped her. The house was turned into a dressmaking shop. They all had dresses to make for themselves, too, and a fine velvet dress was to be made for the bride's mother, Lhaye.

Erib Gimpel sent for the shoemaker to take the measure for the bride's button-top shoes, and there was some consultation as to how high the heels should be. And Molke won again, and got them made her way.

Erib Gimpel ordered lumber to build a *shalash* (tabernacle)—just walls, no roof. And he hired two carpenters to start working. The *shalash* would be big enough to accommodate three to four hundred people. It would be connected to the house by building three

walls, taking in the house for the fourth with a big door on the side of the house. Tables would be built alongside of the three solid walls with benches on each side of the tables to seat about three hundred people. The center would be for dancing. Part of the porch of the house would be used as a platform for the musicians. By this platform another platform would be built, draped in colors for the bride and groom. Twelve kerosene lamps, four on each side of the walls, and candles on the tables, would be lit to brighten up the *shalash.*

The town of Warshilovka became lively. Everybody was talking about Molke's wedding. People came to see how the *shalash* was being built and to pass their opinion. Some even suggested some improvements. Girls and boys were wondering whom Molke would invite. They all hoped to be invited. Nobody wanted to miss Molke's wedding.

Erib Gimpel went to Vinitza, a big city, the capital of the county of Vinitza, to engage the musicians. Itzikel's orchestra was famous in the state. He was known for his Chassidic melodies. Itzikel played the violin. They said his wonderful tunes reached the people's hearts and brought tears to men and women. His trumpet cried out like a wolf from the woods. The flute and drums, the cymbal and balalaika, were like a great symphony. Itzikel was a master at Jewish weddings and Erib Gimpel wanted to engage Itzikel's orchestra for his daughter's wedding. He also wanted to get Zalmen, the chatterbox (that's what they called him), for the master of ceremonies, for he knew how to make everyone happy. When he announced the presents for the bride and groom, he influenced people to give more than they expected. He was a master in rhymes, and when they held the ceremonies before the wedding (they called it *badect die kalle*) he would start out, *"Kalle laiban, kalle laiban, vain. De beste yoren westo mer nit zain."* ("Bride dear, bride dear, weep. The best years of your youth are gone by.")

And Itzikel on his violin would keep up with him, and he would go on so that at times he would sound happy and at times sad. When the sad part would come, everybody would cry with him. Erib Gimpel was successful in engaging both Itzikel's orchestra and

Zalmen, the chatterbox. Erib Gimpel was happy. He knew now that the wedding would be a great event. People would talk about it for years.

When Simche came to Warshilovka on Sunday to the *yarid,* saw his bride Molke and her family, and heard that Itzikel and Zalmen were engaged to play at the wedding, he was very happy.

He told Erib Gimpel he shouldn't worry about vodka, wine, chickens, meat, vegetables, or fruit; that he would supply those abundantly. Erib Gimpel, surprised by Simche's promise, and realizing how much easier it would be for him, walked right over and kissed Simche, and so did Lhaye, his wife, and they expressed their gratitude to him. Molke sat blushing; she didn't dare to kiss him too, although she felt like doing it.

As both families were feverishly preparing for the wedding, Simche came more often to Warshilovka, bringing with him load after load of the things he had promised. And Erib Gimpel made his last arrangements of final details.

The day finally came. It was Monday morning when the sun started to rise with its usual warmth and brightness over the town of Warshilovka. Everyone was happy to see the start of such a beautiful day for the wedding.

The cooks, busy in the kitchens, had all their baking done, and now worked on cooking the dinner. They told Erib Gimpel how everything came out good and tasty; the cookies, the cakes, the *challas* (twisted white bread) and everything would be the best. Itzikel and his musicians and Zalmen arrived and were getting ready for the big day and all night.

The town took on a new look. The streets were cleaned, the synagogue where the *chuppa* would be placed for the wedding ceremony was all dusted and cleaned. People were busy with getting ready, going from one to the other to find out about their dresses and how they would dress.

Noah, the tall, thin water-carrier, came over all dressed up, riding his white horse, ready any time to ride out to meet *chusan's tzad* (the groom and his family) when they arrived. It was a Jewish

custom to escort them in. The bride and her parents send out a rider on a white horse to welcome them and bring them in to the town.

Family, friends, rabbis and other invited guests were arriving in wagonloads. The *shalash* and everything was ready for the pre-wedding dance that was to start at twelve noon, and all the young ladies and young men were invited. They would dance until five o'clock and then the wedding march to the synagogue would start. The *chusan* and his family and guests were to arrive at eleven o'clock, and after they were welcomed, the dance would start.

Molke, the bride, was getting dressed. Her sisters were helping her. Everybody else was in his best clothes ready for the start. At ten-thirty, Erib Gimpel handed to Noah a written welcome and sent him out to meet *chusan's tzad.* And Noah on his white horse was on his way. At just eleven o'clock he returned by himself, going straight to Erib Gimpel and notifying him that they wanted the *nodan* before they came in.

Erib Gimpel sent Noah again to tell them that right after the wedding he would pay the promised sum of money, that right now he didn't have it. Noah soon returned again, saying that Erib Avrum Gershen wouldn't hear of any excuse, that if he didn't get the *nodan* they would turn their wagons around and go back to Askovitz.

The family was thunderstruck. Molke and Lhaye started crying. Erib Gimpel didn't know what to do. He sent Noah for the rabbi. When the rabbi heard what was going on, he offered to go out to see Erib Avrum Gershen and talk to him.

And the rabbi talked to Erib Avrum Gershen and tried to tell him that Erib Gimpel was a trustworthy man, that he could depend on every ruble he promised. Erib Avrum Gershen wouldn't listen to him, demanding that the *nodan* must be paid now, before they entered the town. And it looked as if everything might have to be called off. But Simche himself lost his patience, got up and said to his father, "Let's go into town and go through with everything that was planned."

Rivke held that Simche was right, and told her husband he

shouldn't destroy all the happiness of the children, that the *nodan* could be collected later. The rabbi agreed to help them, too. And finally Erib Avrum Gershen agreed, and gave the order to the peasants driving the wagons to proceed to Warshilovka.

Noah was immediately on his horse and started to lead, and as they approached the town and were only a couple of blocks from the *shalash,* the musicians were there waiting to bring them in with music.

After the cymbal thundered three times in the air, Itzikel and the rest started on a march that was heard all over the town. And since it was already one o'clock, one hour late for the dance, boys and girls came out of their homes and fell right in line and marched straight into the *shalash* and the dance started.

It was no wonder that Itzikel had such a good name playing at weddings, for his trumpeter and drummer were heard all over town. He played polkas, mazurkas, quadrilles, Russian Scherrs, and all other dances. The boys and girls were having a good time. Refreshments were served. The girls kissed the bride and shook hands with the groom. The boys shook hands with both bride and groom, wishing them luck and happiness. And for four hours the *shalash* blazed away with dance music.

When the dance was over, everybody was getting ready for the march to the synagogue to the ceremonies. All the townspeople gathered to see the march and watch the ceremonies. Two lines were formed to the synagogue from the *shalash,* and the procession started.

At the head were the musicians playing the lovely wedding march. Then walked the groom with his father and mother. After them came the bride and her father and mother. After them, Zalmen, the master of ceremonies. Then the guests, the rabbis, the families, and last the other invited guests.

MOLKE'S WEDDING

Never was Warshilovka in such gay colors and never was there such a magnificent procession. And never did a bride glitter as did Molke. Her white gown shone, her transparent veil harmonized, and her face was happy. Her proud marching added pride and dignity that caused her to be admired by everyone.

First the groom and his parents arrived at the synagogue, followed soon after by the bride and her parents. The *chuppa* was raised over their heads, with the bride and groom in the center, the rabbi facing them, and the parents around them forming a circle around the *chuppa.*

The groom circled the bride seven times; then in a soft religious tone the rabbi read for them their future; about rich and poor, about being loyal to each other, about keeping the Sabbath, about family life, about having and raising children, and many more things a bride should know and should abide by. Then the groom, Simche, put the ring on the bride's finger and said the prayer. Their hands were trembling. The rabbi filled a glass with wine, said the blessings and gave the groom and bride each a sip of the wine that was made holy by the ceremony. Then the groom broke the glass with his foot (a Jewish custom), and they were pronounced man and wife.

A roar of *mazeltov* broke out from the families and all the other people. Everybody kissed while Itzikel and his musicians started out in a blaze of Chassidic melodies. The family and friends formed circles and started to dance. The musicians started the procession back to the *shalash.* The tables were set with vodka, wine, cakes, and cookies. The bride and groom were led to the head table, with their families on each side of them, and the rabbis and guests were all seated too. The poor and crippled people were at an extra table, and when the glasses were all filled there was another roar of *mazel-*

tov wishing the bride and groom long life, happiness, prosperity, and good health.

Dinner was started. The gefilte fish was delicious; it was served with red horseradish and white *challa.* The golden *youch* (soup) with *lugshen* (noodles) and *mondlech* (croutons) was shining from the plates like the stars from heaven. Then came the *gebrutens* (browned roast meats) and full quarters of rich yellow roast chicken with side dishes. Then the brown *kugel* (pudding), which was baked in chicken fat. Then *tzimmes* (pudding) made of carrots and sweetened with sugar. There was prune *tzimmes* and *nahit* (lentil) *tzimmes,* there was *laikech* and *turth* (honey cake and sponge cake) and tea.

All during the meal Itzikel and his musicians were playing dinner music. Here Itzikel really showed his talent. It wasn't that loud bombastic music that could be heard all over town. It wasn't even that Chassidic music. It was soft, mellow string melodies with his violin . . . magic charm that caught your mind and your heart—and Itzikel knew how. He would go into a long-drawn-out melody that would lift everyone from his seat. Then he would change into a *voolechel* (a shepherd's song) that made you dream of *Gon Aden* (paradise). And when he started a sad melody all were tearful. Everybody was moved by his playing and applauded him thunderously and proclaimed him the very best.

Next Zalmen the chatterbox announced that he was taking over to call out the *drushe geshong* (presents). In a drawn-out, loud voice he started: "The bride's o-l-d-e-s-t s-i-s-t-e-r and her husband [Nessie and Shloime] give a pair of silver *lechter* [candlesticks] to brighten their lives *drushe geshong!* The bride's oldest brother and his wife give ten rubles *drushe geshong!*

"Erib Yankel Be'Erib Chaim from Vinitza [a personal friend of Erib Gimpel] and his wife Raisel are giving a samovar *drushe geshong."*

His voice got louder and more drawn-out. "Erib Laib Be'Erib Avrum Gershen, the groom's stepbrother and his wife Rachel are giving a *menorah* [candelabrum to hold seven candles and to be used for

Chanukah] made of solid brass and imported from Germany *drushe geshong!*

"The bride's sister Yenta and her husband Moishe are giving a bedspread Yenta crocheted herself *drushe geshong!* The twin brother of the bride and his wife are giving a silk quilt to keep them warm all their lives.

"Give, give faster so we can start the dancing that everyone is waiting for."

And for another hour Zalmen went on announcing the names, the gifts, and their descriptions for the *drushe geshong.* Pots, pans, wooden pails, tin pans, potholders, glasses, pitchers, sugar bowls, china dishes, silverware, curtains, handmade throw rugs, fancy kerosene lamps with big flowered globes, and lots more articles filled the tables, requiring an army to move them into the house.

Now Itzikel took over and started out for the night dancing. Tables were moved out to make more room and he began in full harmony with his able musicians. First was the Froelichs. Everybody can take part in this happy dance, forming big circles, holding hands, turning left, kicking the feet up every three steps, and then turning to the right and kicking the feet. As the dance goes on it becomes faster. The Volochel is another popular dance. Two can dance it, holding hands and hopping three steps right, three steps left. Then the Bolgar, which mostly the young dance. It's a fast dance. Two people put their hands in each other's, both facing the same direction, then artfully move sideways a full round left and return right, changing right and left hands to left and right hands. The Kazatska is a fascinating dance. Strong feet and a strong body are needed to hop up and down, kicking one foot after another, resting the body on the kneebone, while holding hands on hips. Old folks dance it by stamping their feet and revolving around each other or following each other making motions with the hand as if it were a ballad and stamping the feet to the sound of the music. This dance comes from the Russian Cossack.

The Russian Scherr is the most popular dance. It is in the form of a square dance. Four couples make a unit and you can form as

many units as you want. Each unit has a leader, who starts by calling the first dancer to his left. They meet in the center, embracing for several rounds. Then they go back to their own partners. The leader continues till he has called all seven to meet with him. Then they all form a circle for a short round and when they dance back to their places one of the others becomes the leader, and so on until everyone has been leader. The dance starts in medium tempo but gains time as it progresses. At the end it is so fast that it is hard to follow.

There were many more dances, as the music went on right through the night. Moon and stars looked down from a clear sky into the *shalash* on the happy people celebrating the marriage of that lovely couple, Molke and Simche.

When the sun began to show itself on the horizon, lighting up Warshilovka, the musicians marched through the streets playing good-night songs, taking home the guests. The groom's family and some top guests remained for the rest of the week. Itzikel sent his musicians home but he and his fiddle remained. Also Zalmen the chatterbox. They would amuse the remaining guests on this joyful festival until Saturday when it was scheduled to end.

Every day big meals were served. Itzikel played his violin and Zalmen amused them with his wit.

Saturday was the biggest day. For this day the groom was taken to the synagogue for honors given him by the community. All the men got ready to walk the groom to the synagogue. Two by two in a long line they walked, while the women formed a similar line with the bride. In the synagogue everybody was getting ready for the services and the part when Simche would be given the honors. When the Torah was carried by the rabbi from the ark to the platform for reading everyone was anxious. And then the rabbi announced that *mofter,* the greatest honor, was given to Simche Avrum Gershen's. Simche walked to the platform and with great ease he started to read from the Torah. Everybody opened his ears in eagerness at the splendid performance. Such wonderful reading! Everyone, man and

woman, was inspired, and when it was over each wished his sons were as talented as Simche.

All returned home from the synagogue and were seated at the tables where a *tchulant* banquet was served. (*Tchulant* is a meal cooked the day before and kept in the oven overnight, so that it may be served hot without making a fire on the Sabbath.)

This *tchulant* meal was outstanding in its religious form as they performed all the ceremonies. First they made *kiddish,* first prayer before eating. Then they sang *zmires* in the middle of the meal, and last they *bentched* (prayed) *mizimin,* the last prayer to thank God that you are not hungry any more.

Now Zalmen took over and narrated some great happenings in Jewish life. He talked about great Jewish philosophers, their interpretation of married life, the need for big families, how a wife must keep kosher, how to follow the Ten Commandments, how to rear children in the Jewish tradition, and for an hour he kept giving instructions to the new married couple. When he got through there was again the *mazeltov* from everybody present.

This ended a wedding that lasted a week. Everybody had a good time and would be talking about it for years.

On Sunday morning there were five horse-drawn wagons waiting, to be loaded with all the gifts and Molke's belongings for the move to Askovitz. While the wagons were being loaded and the time drew nearer for the departure, the family gathered to send off Molke with her husband to her new home to start their new life.

Molke was happy and showed no signs of regret at leaving her birthplace, Warshilovka, or her parents. Smilingly, she told everybody to come visit with her.

Simche directed the loading of the wagons and packed everything carefully. One wagon was left for Avrum Gershen, Rivke, Simche, and Molke. Simche made the seats soft and comfortable. And in the midst of kissing and good wishes and some crying, the wagons started out for Askovitz.

Warshilovka remained quiet. The noise of the music was gone. The out-of-town guests and the rabbis, the horses and wagons, all

disappeared. Only the townspeople gathered, discussing the wonderful wedding, the bride and groom, Erib Avrum Gershen and his wife and how nice they were, and also Molke's successful marriage.

Left also to Erib Gimpel was the cleaning-up of the house and the returning of all the borrowed articles: pots, pans, dishes, silverware, chairs, tables, and many, many more things needed for such a big wedding. Also the dismantling of the *shalash,* returning the lumber, and—most of all—bills, bills, and again bills. Erib Gimpel sat figuring and wondering where he was going to get so much money to pay everybody. But he was not worried. He said, "We have a big, kind God and He will help me."

Erib Gimpel and his wife, Lhaye, were proud of the great wedding they gave their *mazinka* and the many people that had come from far away.

And when Avrum Gershen, Rivke, and the bride and groom arrived home in Askovitz they found around their house almost all the peasants and their wives and children, all dressed in their native costumes, with their harmonicas and other instruments, playing and dancing. (They had found out when the family would arrive from the drivers of the other wagons, who had left with the presents before the family.) Erib Avrum Gershen was moved by the friendship and loyalty of these people. He served them vodka and wine and good things to eat. The spectacle looked like a second wedding; playing, dancing, and singing deep into the night, with heartiest wishes for the bride and groom for a happy, healthy, and prosperous life.

THE BIRTH CELEBRATION

Molke and Simche settled down in Askovitz, the village of Simche's birth and the place where his parents, Avrum Gershen and Rivke, had reared him and had had great hopes for his future. Their greatest wish was that Simche would marry and bring into their house a good wife, one whom they would like and who would make their son happy. That is what happened. Avrum Gershen and his Rivke just loved Molke. They said that when Molke came into their house it became a *Gon Aden.* She brightened their lives and made them the happiest of parents.

Simche loved her dearly and there was nothing in the world he wouldn't have given her. Then Molke became pregnant with her first child and the doctor said it was pregnancy and not sickness, and they all were overjoyed and even more happiness came into their hearts.

Rivke the mother-in-law took immediate control to safeguard every step Molke took. The servants were given strict orders to care for all of Molke's needs and to wait on her. Milk she must drink fresh and right from the cow. Meals she was served without her lifting a plate. Rivke personally cooked a *yachale* (chicken and broth) for her every day. Rivke warned her not to make any attempt to do any work. She must eat and drink well so she could give birth to a strong, healthy child. All Molke did was to knit and embroider things for the baby, and Molke loved that.

Erib Avrum Gershen, her father-in-law, decided to go on the Sabbath to the high rabbi (*goote eddin*), first to tell him about Molke's pregnancy and ask him to wish her a safe carrying and a healthy birth, and second to invite him to the *bris* (circumcision) if the baby were a boy. Maybe the rabbi could help pray for a boy.

So Erib Avrum Gershen ordered Vassil to get horse and wagon ready and drive him to the high rabbi.

When Avrum Gershen arrived it was late Thursday afternoon. The rabbi was pleased to receive such a good guest. He knew him well for his sharp knowledge of the Tanach and the Torah. And the rabbi asked Erib Avrum Gershen how long he would stay, for the rabbi knew it would be too late to return before the Sabbath. When he knew that the guest would stay over Saturday the rabbi ordered his *chasidim* (disciples) to arrange a big *yom tov* because of the worthy and well-learned guest who had come.

Long tables were set up in the big dining room for the Friday night *seeda* (banquet). The servants prepared a first-class meal that was fit for the rabbi and his best guest. Wine and glass were set to the table.

The rabbi and his guest and his *chasidim* walked to the *kloise* (house of worship), and in the prayers the rabbi asked for Molke's health and that she should give birth to a boy at the right time.

After *davenen* (saying all prayers), while they walked back from the *kloise,* the rabbi told Erib Avrum Gershen the good news, that he was sure Molke would give birth to a boy and that she would be all right.

At dinner the rabbi, his *chasidim,* and Erib Avrum Gershen sang *zmires* and went through all the rabbi's *nissim* (miracles). They repeated this at Saturday's dinner too. And on Sunday morning before Erib Avrum Gershen left for home he gave the rabbi some money. The rabbi again blessed Molke and the new baby to come.

Erib Avrum Gershen came home very pleased and happy. He was now very sure that Molke would give birth to a boy. Then his wife Rivke told him that she could see by the way Molke was developing in her pregnancy that she was carrying a boy.

Simche was pleased with his father's report and also his mother's prediction. He got Vassil to hitch a pair of horses to his best wagon, padded the seats so that they were soft and comfortable, and took Molke to Vinitza, the big city with all kinds of big shops. There they bought everything for the baby and Molke got busy embroidering and sewing for the coming son.

Simche ordered a special cradle from the furniture center, the city of Bardichow, where hand-carved furniture was made.

And as the time came closer to the big event Erib Avrum Gershen and Simche sat down to start planning the *bris*. First the name. Erib Avrum Gershen suggested the name Chaim, after his father, and told Simche what a wonderful man his grandfather had been and how popular he was. Simche agreed. Next the rabbi who would perform the operation. He must be one who was well known in that kind of work. Erib Avrum Gershen suggested Rabbi Laizer Ben Rubin from Vinitza, and Simche agreed, for he had heard that Rabbi Laizer Ben Rubin's operations were painless. Then the midwife. The one in Warshilovka was about the best, and they agreed to engage her, but she must come a month before to take personal charge of Molke and be on hand all the time. And the *shalash,* to be built to house at least two hundred people seated comfortably around tables, and still leave enough room for dancing.

Now came the list of people to invite. First the rabbis from many towns that Erib Avrum Gershen knew. Then the poor and the crippled. Then the immediate family and the general public. It took days to complete the list—and, sure enough, it showed about two hundred names.

The musicians from Warshilovka would be all right to play at the *bris*. The two best cooks would be brought in to do all the baking and cooking. They were specialists for this kind of occasion. Everything was getting under way and all preparations were made for a boy. If, God forbid, a girl was born, half of the arrangements would be a total waste, for you don't need nearly all those things for a girl. But after all, Rivke said a boy and the rabbi said a boy. So everybody was sure it would be a boy. The peasants in the village prayed for Molke's health and for the health of the baby to come.

The right time finally came. It was a Monday morning when Molke started with pain, and as the pain got more severe and Molke screamed the family got worried and talked about going for the doctor. It was not necessary, however, for Molke's screams receded and everything became quiet. Then the midwife came out of the room

smiling. "It's a boy! It's a boy!" she repeated. Everybody's face lighted up, and with smiles and happiness they all wished each other *mazeltov.* Losing no time they started to work for the *bris.*

First Simche hung white sheets around the bed, printed by hand on paper the words *sheer hamales,* and put them on the four sides of the bed. This meant Psalms, to guard the infant from evil. Then he sent to Warshilovka for the cooks to start baking. The honey cookies were most needed, for Simche sent for all the Jewish schoolchildren with their teachers. When they arrived a couple of days later they sang songs to the mother and child, a sort of good-health prayer. They were given honey cookies, the teachers were given vodka and cake, and then they were all served a good meal. Before they left they sang again.

The cooks started their work. They had gefilte fish to make, chickens and meat to roast. They had *challa* to bake. The *shalash,* the tables, benches, the kerosene lamps, all were being prepared.

Family started to arrive on Thursday to stay for the *bris,* which was held on Monday. Big meals were prepared for the weekend, for some rabbis arrived so they could all *daven* (worship) on Friday night and Saturday, the Sabbath. Vodka and wine were plentiful at the tables. Laibele the *chazen* (cantor) was there to lead them in prayers, and a wonderful job he did. His singing was heard for a distance, and everybody commented on his ability to lead the people in prayers. After *davenen,* the wonderful meal was served: fish, soup, chicken, meat, *mairin tzimmes* (carrot *tzimmes*), then dry *nahit.* The same was repeated on Saturday.

When Monday came wagons by the dozens started to arrive, bringing people from all over. They came from Warshilovka, from Chrosna, from Brielow, from Tivriv; and from many more towns. By noon there was a mass of people that filled the *shalash.*

At one table sat all the cripples: Yoshka who limped on one foot, Buroch the blind man, Zalig the hunchback, Moisha-No-Nose with two holes in the place where the nose should be, Yankel who was deaf, dumb, and blind, and others who made up a full table. There were the rabbis including the special rabbi, the *moil,* who would perform

the operation. And there was *meshpuche* (family) and all other guests.

Molke sat in a big comfortable chair, holding the child wrapped in a beautiful blanket that Molke had embroidered herself. Shloime the brother-in-law was made the *quater*. He was to carry the baby to the rabbi. And Moishe, another brother-in-law, was made *sondick*. He was to suck the blood after the circumcision.

Laibele the *chazen* started to sing the prayers for this occasion. Then the name was announced: Chaim Ben Simche Be' Erib Avrum Gershen. This meant Chaim son of Simche son of Erib Avrum Gershen. The child cried for a while and there was an outburst of *mazeltov* from everybody wishing that Chaim would grow up to be a *Talmud chochem,* and would grow up to be big and healthy, strong and wealthy.

And so the music started to play, and some danced a Froelichs. Dinner was served, and for hours the *shalash* blazed away with music, song, laughter, and the sound of glasses and dishes.

In the morning when everybody had left and the noise had left too, everybody was tired, including Molke. It took days to set things to right again.

When Fishel, the second son, was born and Mailech, the third son, there were the same celebration arrangements, the same party, the same people, music, dinners, vodka and wine, happy faces, the same *mazeltov,* the same wishes.

And when the fourth child was born—a girl—Simche made a party for the family only—no music, no rabbis, no *shalash,* nor anything else outside of a family gathering with a family dinner. It wasn't because there was no money to spend and it wasn't because they didn't love the girl. It was just that you don't do that for a girl. It is not required.

While Simche and his family lived in Askovitz they had a very good life. But when Tsar Nicholas ordered all Jews out of the villages, it hurt Simche badly, for he could not turn his business into money, nor could he move his merchandise, for it was mostly vodka and wine, which he was no longer allowed to sell. So what he did salvage wasn't much, and when he moved to Warshilovka he struggled

for a living. Chaim noticed the change and felt bad about it. As soon as he was big enough, not even thirteen, before he was confirmed, he went to Vinitza and got into a glass and crockery store. His pay was thirty-five rubles a year with board and room; and he sent his pay to his mother every year. His work was hard and unbearable. The hours were long and the food was bad and not enough. Carrying heavy piles of dishes and handling heavy boxes and crates stopped him from growing. He lost weight and was very unhappy.

One day a woman customer from Tulcheen, a widow who was running a similar business, offered Chaim a job in her store with better pay. He gladly accepted the job and made the change. It was better, for in this new job he was also the salesman. He had another boy under him and had more responsibilities. But he also had a much better home and good food. He gained some weight and strength and was very happy there.

The widow's daughter fell in love with him and her mother objected to the love affair. She didn't want her daughter to go with a plain clerk. Since they were deeply in love they couldn't stay away from each other and had to see each other in secret. The girl became pregnant and when the mother found out Chaim had to leave.

The only way was to go to America, and so in the early part of 1904 he arrived in the U.S. to join his father Simche. It wasn't hard for him to get a job in the same line. He started out with small wages and everything he made outside of his expenses he turned over to Simche, so they could save to bring over the rest of the family.

In late 1904 Mailech came over, and in 1905 the rest of the family came over. Chaim worked hard and made pretty good wages. He helped with the family's expenses but saved some for himself too, and in 1908 when he felt he had enough saved he started in business for himself. He was doing very well but took sick with pneumonia, and on March 10, 1908, he died. His death left a terrible wound in the hearts of the family, and to this date—fifty-one years later—we still mourn and are still in grief over his early death.

RAISING GEESE FOR PASSOVER

After Molke was married and moved to Askovitz, the peasant village, she made it a tradition to raise twelve geese every winter and to supply all the family in Warshilovka with goose fat for Passover. In the fall of the year she started raising the geese, and she continued every day through the long, cold winter. She fed them, saw to their drinking water, watched them grow bigger and fatter. She felt with her hands the accumulation of fat on them and would say to herself, "This year they are bigger and better. There will be plenty of fat for everybody."

The goose shed was about one hundred feet from the house, and on the coldest days, no matter how deep the snow was, Molke would carry the food and water to the geese. She wanted to raise them herself. And before Passover she would send the geese to the town, to the rabbi for slaughter. Then she would take off the fat, cut up the birds into quarters, divide them up—so much for each family—and the fat she would cook and dissolve into liquid. She would fill up jars and similarly divide the fat for her sisters, brothers, and the rest of the family.

Molke knew the value of fats for Passover. You could hardly have a Passover without fats. No matter what you cooked for such a big holiday you needed fat. For instance, you take a big black radish, rub it on the grater, put it in the plate, put some goose fat on it and put it all on the table. Is there a better dish to start the feast with?

To eat a *kugel* made with goose fat is like eating a God-given food on Passover. And what is the matter with fried matzo? And even on plain matzo the children loved the fat. And when you mashed hard-boiled eggs and put goose fat on them, the taste was heavenly.

Molke also knew that the family was looking forward to her delivery of the goose fat and the meat for the Passover holiday. The

delivery usually came about two days before the holiday. Even though in the summertime Molke used to send to her family from her own orchard all kinds of fruit—pears, apples, cherries, plums—as well as vegetables of all kinds from the garden, nothing was so appreciated as the goose fat for Passover.

The snow was still lying heavy on the roads and in the village, although the days were getting longer and the sun warmer. The winter was at its end, the holiday of Purim had already passed, and only two weeks were left until Passover. Then the time came to get the geese on their journey to the *shoichet* (slaughterer) in Warshilovka and get the goose fat ready. So Molke talked to Simche, her husband, and asked when he could attend to it, and it was decided. That Saturday night, after sunset and after Avdula prayers, he would go to Warshilovka with the geese, have them slaughtered, and be home before midnight.

When Simche was ready he put his heavy fur-lined coat on. The sleigh, already packed with twelve big, beautiful geese, was pulled by two of his best horses, with small, silvery bells shining from their necks. Vassil handed the whip and the lines to Simche and wished him a pleasant journey.

This was not the first time Simche had driven at night, particularly to Warshilovka. There was such a nice full moon shining on the white snowy road. In the frosty air blowing in his face, he felt warm and happy, sang, *"Dem rebbens, naigin a hymn,"* and felt that he was making good time. And there he was, out of the woods, getting closer and closer to town. When he arrived, his bells attracted the people, wondering who it was.

Simche stopped at the rabbi's house, got his geese slaughtered one by one, packed them back in the sleigh, and made only one stop—at the house of his father-in-law, Erib Gimpel. There he had some tea and some home-baked cookies that his mother-in-law made him eat, and he took some for Molke and the children.

When Simche started for home, it was almost midnight; later than he had expected. But his two wonderful horses would make it faster, and he wouldn't be much later than he had told Molke.

The horses did go like a train. The ride was wonderfully smooth

on the snowy road. The moon and stars looked down on him and on the widespread, white-covered land, with the one sleigh and horses cutting through the center at high speed. When the tall trees of the thick woods darkened the road, then Simche realized he was halfway home.

To his great astonishment, the horses slowed down almost to a standstill. Then he saw the glittering eyes of a pack of wolves straight ahead, by the road. Simche realized the dangerous situation and, without losing a minute of time, took the whip in his hand and let it fall on the horses. He knew his life was at stake, but there was only one way to get through: fast—faster than the wolves could run.

And calling the horses by their names, Speeder and Save, he continued whipping them, jerking the lines and calling for more speed. The horses, too, realized the danger and started in a lightning gallop. But on came the rush of the wolves. Simche picked up a goose and tossed it to the wolves, then a second, a third, a fourth, until there were no more geese left. But one wolf still came after the sleigh. With one big jump, the wolf was on the sleigh with rage and a wide-open mouth. He came right at Simche!

Without thought or time loss, Simche rammed his heavy glove-covered hand into the mouth of the wolf and pushed it down deep, deep into the throat. He held the head tight with the other hand, and when he felt the wolf was dead, he pulled his hand out, full of blood. Then Simche fell into his seat, unconscious.

When the horses arrived at the house, they made known their arrival. Vassil and Molke were up waiting, and they rushed out with lamp and lantern. They called for help and Simche was carried into the house and laid on his bed. The horses were soaking wet. Vassil took care of them.

When Simche came to and opened his eyes, he sat up and told the story while Molke, his father, and his mother were weeping.

The next day, when the story was told to the peasants, they all went to church, rang the bells and held mass to thank God that He spared them their only Jew, Simche. Then they started to bring geese and ducks to Molke for Passover.

EVAN'S DAUGHTER

Evan Krasnoy was the richest peasant in Askovitz. He had lost his wife years ago when she gave birth to a girl. Evan undertook to raise that child by himself. He wouldn't trust the raising of his daughter to any strange woman. Evan's mother promised to help him and she gave some time every day to the child, especially when Evan had to go to work in the fields.

Evan was rich. He had hundreds of acres of land on which he raised wheat, corn, and oats. He always had other peasants working for him, for outside of the grain he raised he also had cows, horses, pigs, sheep, and chickens. The peasants and their wives that he employed attended to all the stock feeding, milking, cleaning. The milk was delivered every day to a dealer who sold it to the people in the big cities. There was business to attend to every day managing the big farm and telling the peasants what to do and when to do it, for they were lost without a manager. Then there was the buying of all the necessary things for the farm and the selling of grain and livestock to different merchants who came to Evan almost daily.

Evan was a very busy man and yet he managed to be home every so often to look after his child. When he looked at her he saw his wife, for she was the image of her mother. He had loved his wife dearly and theirs was a real love story.

Before they married, her mother objected to the match. She said that her daughter could marry a richer boy, for Evan was poor then. But the interference of her mother kindled their love to an extreme, and they eloped and got married. When they came home the mother accepted them and helped make their marriage a happy one.

Evan was capable, and with his wife's help he became successful and prospered. In ten years of married life they had no children, and finally when she did give birth to a daughter Evan's wife passed away.

What a beautiful woman she was, and how talented, too! Her dancing and singing in Ukrainian attire were admired by all in the village. At church parties she was the star entertainer. Evan loved her more and more, and now she was dead. In the last minutes before she stopped breathing and her heart stopped beating Evan promised her that he would raise their daughter in her spirit, in her image. And that promise Evan kept. He spared no money to educate the child and to give her singing and dancing lessons. When she was five years old she became the darling of the peasants in the village. She performed just as her mother used to perform, and the people turned out en masse to hear her sing and dance the Ukrainian way.

Then one day Evan realized she was a grown woman, beautiful and talented, and he saw in her his wife, his beautiful wife. And his love for his daughter became stronger. He wanted to see her married happily, and he started to look for a boy to be her partner in life. Evan did not like the rich aristocrat boys. They were spoiled. They knew nothing of good honest work. They lived on their fathers' wealth. None of them would make her a good husband. He wanted a self-made man, one that could run his business and one that was raised by a poor, honest, working family.

Evan was very happy when one day his daughter told him that Sergay Dubrowsky was after her to marry him. Sergay was one of eight children, and all of them went to school and were good children. Sergay was the oldest and worked for his father. Although his father didn't pay him much, Sergay had managed to save some money. He told Evan's daughter that he had over three hundred rubles of his own.

Evan looked at his daughter's face and saw her beautiful eyes shining with joy. He was very happy, for he knew Sergay and all his family and many times he had wished for a boy like Sergay for his daughter's husband. He embraced his daughter and kissed her and told her that it was all right with him to bring Sergay to the house. He would like to talk to the boy.

After Sergay's visit, and his parents' visit later and Evan's visit to their house, the engagement was announced. Evan got busy planning for the wedding. He remembered that when my mother got

married he came to the wedding and he had never seen another wedding like that in all his life. So he decided to talk to my father and mother. When he told them he would like them to help him arrange for his daughter's wedding an affair similar to their own, that he didn't care what it cost, at first they laughed and told him that that was a Jewish wedding! That their weddings were different!

"I know," Evan said. "But I want that kind of a wedding. I want the same musicians. I will have a big dinner served with vodka and wine. I will build a big tabernacle like you had, but much bigger, for I want all the people from the village to my daughter's wedding.

"You will be my honored guests. I will arrange for a Jewish cook to prepare at your house the best kosher meal for all of your family, and you will be served by a special Jewish waiter."

After hours of talk my father and mother agreed to help him arrange the wedding.

The next day the work started. Evan ordered lumber and engaged several carpenters from the city to start building the tabernacle. He was very happy to find that his daughter approved of his arrangements.

My father and mother went to Vinitza to see about the music and to buy certain things for the decorations, to invite certain guests, and to buy certain things for the bride.

When the people of Askovitz found out Evan's plans the town buzzed with talk. Everyone was pleased: First, because they would see a wedding such as they had never seen before; second, because they would all be guests at this wonderful wedding; third, they were pleased just for the sake of Evan and his talented daughter—everybody liked them so much. And they were sure that she would sing and dance their Ukrainian melodies and dances, and that alone would be a great treat. They knew that they would all have to be dressed in their best, and they also knew they couldn't get drunk at such an affair. So they decided to go to Sergay Dubrowsky, the groom, for his advice. Sergay told them to wear white embroidered shirts, black bloomer-styled pants, and black polished boots. For the girls he advised the regular Ukrainian outfits that they always wore: a kerchief

on the head, the loose embroidered blouse, and a pleated dark skirt and boots.

On Sunday, *yarid* day in Warshilovka, the stores were overrun by boys and girls buying all the things they needed, and because the storekeepers did not expect such a rush on these items they sold out completely and promised that for the next *yarid* they would have more of these goods.

Mother and Father accomplished a lot in Vinitza. First they engaged the musicians and instructed them to play a lot of Ukrainian dances including a Scherrele, a Kazatzka, and others. They bought everything they needed for decorations, and things for the bride and groom. They hired a photographer to take pictures of the bride and groom and their families. They went to the only newspaper in Vinitza and arranged for a reporter to write about the wedding. They went to the police department and asked for two policemen to keep order, and paid for them. And they invited the mayor and his wife to come to the wedding. The invitation was accepted.

They spent three days in Vinitza and were glad they could accomplish everything. When they returned to Askovitz and told Evan all they had done Evan got so excited that he hugged and kissed them both and didn't know what he could do for them. He thanked them profusely and promised some day to reciprocate.

The wedding day arrived with a beautiful rising sun spreading its warmth over the village. People arose very early to get their domestic and farm work done so they could get ready for that great event. This was the wedding day.

My parents kept their store closed so nobody could buy vodka or wine. Evan prepared all the drinks himself. The tabernacle was big and decorated, the long tables were covered, and a special stand was waiting for the musicians. Everything was ready.

The two policemen were at the entrance and the reporter was going around checking on everything. The mayor from Vinitza arrived with his well-dressed wife. Evan was there to receive all the arriving guests. Sergay's parents were there helping Evan to greet everybody. That was all prearranged by my parents.

When the place started to fill up the musicians began to play and the dance started. The scene was just indescribable: a splendid blend of color and motion, of boys and girls dancing in colorful costumes. The girls' white embroidered blouses, black pleated skirts, kerchiefs on their heads, shining black boots, and the boys' wide bloomer pants and white shirts, formed an ever-changing design. The photographer was busy shooting pictures and the reporter was writing his story. The mayor of Vinitza, talking to my mother, wondered how a plain peasant could arrange such a wonderful affair. He was even more enthralled when the talented bride was invited to sing and dance. She sang songs of the poor Ukrainian beggar, how he sits on the ground, holds a plate for coin-droppers, and sings religious songs, that God should give to the people that they should be able to give to him. She sang of a working girl coming from the *zavod* (factory) with her girl friends and on the way home linking arms and singing Ukrainian melodies.

She sang about the old *babushka* (grandmother) praying in church to God and the spirits to help her and all the other old people to be well so they could come before Him and pray again. And then she danced. First real classic dancing, then folk dances. She kept the crowd breathless. The mayor and his wife didn't take their eyes off her for a minute, and when she was finished the people cheered and applauded her wildly.

The dinner was nicely handled. Two men carried in, on big wooden planks, whole pigs that were roasted and kept together as though they were alive. Those men cut these pigs at each table and served the guests. Vodka and other drinks were on the tables. There were huge loads of potatoes and big rye breads cut into large slices. The feast was on. After the meal there was more dancing. And Evan's daughter's wedding came to an end, to be talked about for years.

The account of this wedding appeared in the Vinitza *Gazette*. Two copies were sent to Askovitz, and the pictures of the wedding were made into an album and sold at the market.

Evan and the newly married couple remained close friends of my

parents for a long time. The Askovitz wedding went down into history in the Ukraine.

When the governor of the state of Kominetz Podolsk came through Askovitz he stopped and wanted to meet Evan Krasnoy, the peasant who had made such a wonderful wedding. Evan did not take the credit for himself. He told the governor that the only Jewish family living in Askovitz had helped arrange it. The governor sent for my mother and father. He shook their hands and told them that they were the "better kind of Jews."

BENEVOLENCE

Avrum Gershen and his family were the only Jews living in Askovitz. They ran the only business in the village for many years. The peasants and their families loved them for the kind things Avrum Gershen did for them. So Avrum Gershen was always remembered by the peasants and their families, even at Sunday Mass. They seldom forgot to pray for their Jewish family, asking God to keep them well so they could continue to help the village people.

Askovitz was not the only village where the people loved Avrum Gershen. All through the towns and villages he was loved, admired, and respected. In the towns where Jews lived he was a steady donor to the synagogues, to the bath house, and to poor and sick people. The rabbis from other towns used to come to see him for all kinds of donations.

When a rabbi came he was received with great honor and never went away empty-handed. First he was made to feel at home; he was served eat and drink. Then Avrum Gershen never failed to read some Kipitlech Tillem (Book of Psalms) with his guest and discuss world problems—and particularly Jewish life and Jewish problems. At the very last he would ask the rabbi how much he needed, and without question he would give him the sum asked for. From far cities, towns, and villages they came to him representing *Yeshivas* (Talmudic academies of higher learning), synagogues, *schullen, kloisen,* not to mention the poor and crippled. The most expensive requests came from the *Yeshivas.* Avrum Gershen knew that in the *Yeshivas* studied our future rabbis and our great *Talmud chochems.* He had great respect for those higher-learning academies, and gave generously for their upkeep. Whenever and wherever his help was needed, he helped.

Rivke, Avrum Gershen's wife, never objected to her husband's

philanthropies. Only she kept reminding him that he was giving away too much. She said he didn't realize the big sums he was giving away, and didn't he know that their son Simche was getting big and soon they would have to spend a lot for his education and for his future security? She went on to say that even their business was not secure, that there were rumors around that Jews might not be allowed to live in peasants' villages. She wanted him to look into his own future security, too. He was getting older and soon wouldn't be able to work so hard.

But Avrum Gershen would explain to her in kind words that what he did was God's command. God gave him enough so that he could help others. And he would be rewarded for his deeds by going to *Gon Aden* (Garden of Paradise). Rivke would go along with him when her time came because she allowed him to do these things. Rivke liked that idea very much and said no more about his being too benevolent.

Avrum Gershen also traveled very often to the *goote eddin* (superior rabbi). He was not a *chasid* (a disciple) of any one particular rabbi. He had great respect for all of the high rabbis—for their education, for their learning, for their wisdom, for their way of organizing life for all the *chasidim,* and for their faith in him. So from time to time Avrum Gershen would go to stay with a rabbinical clan for a weekend, for there he found the atmosphere he dreamed about, if he himself had become a rabbi. His teachers always told his father that he had the capacity, the knowledge, the education, and especially the good head to absorb the wisdom of a rabbi. If his father hadn't died at the height of Avrum Gershen's education he would have become a rabbi. That had been his father's dream.

Now when he went for a weekend to the high rabbi he was accepted not as just one more *chasid* but as a learned man, as an equal. On Friday night they would walk to the synagogue side by side and at the synagogue he would sit next to the rabbi. He prayed as loud as the rabbi. He read the Torah when the rabbi honored him as the guest of the week and bestowed on him the honor of *mofter.* All the people were moved by his elegant reading.

Avrum Gershen was pleased that the rabbi gave him so much attention and so much of his time. They discussed world, personal, and community problems, and he felt very proud. Before he left for home he always gave the rabbi a nice donation.

When he got home he felt more benevolent than ever. He was filled with the spirit of God and was convinced that the good business he did and all the money he made was given to him to be benevolent and to turn over to the needy, to the poor, to the crippled, and to God's institutions of learning and synagogues of prayer. Every time he returned from a weekend trip to the rabbi he would sit for hours telling Rivke and Simche about the wonders of the rabbi *goote eddin,* about his wisdom, about his shrewdness; that Jews came to him from all walks of life for advice, for consultation. The sick came for blessings to get well, the poor to get advice on how to support their families. The childless women came for a blessing so they might bear children, and many others came with both bigger and smaller problems. The rabbi answered everyone to his satisfaction, and all the comers could see that the splendor of God rested on him. Avrum Gershen explained that he too was filled with the spirit of his greatness and felt his mission in life was for goodness, for kindness, for brotherhood. He felt his life was temporary, that eventually he would go to *Gon Aden* and they, Rivke and Simche, would meet him there. Together they would live a most perfect life, for there you find only the best people. There is no evil, no worry, no disagreement. There all are equal. Rivke and Simche's faces were lighted up with great satisfaction and happiness. They could have sat for hours listening to Avrum Gershen telling of the *Gon Aden.*

Outside it might be thundering and lightning; with rain coming down with terrific force and interrupting their conversation.

"Forgive me, God, for telling them your secrets," Avrum Gershen would say, and they went to sleep.

ROPCHIC THE DOG

Ropchic was our watchdog. He was a sort of aristocrat in the dog family, although he was one of thousands of dogs. He was big, with four long legs, could run fast, and could smell anyone who didn't belong in the store or the house—even on the outside. For on the outside we had merchandise easy to get to: kerosene in big kegs; tar for axles to lubricate the wheels (everyone who had a wagon used it); two and sometimes three cows in the pasture; and our two good horses, which we kept loose at night in the pasture. Ropchic stayed out at night to watch these, and many times he woke us up in the middle of the night and we found some trouble. Sometimes it was an intruder. Sometimes the cows or the horses would go from the pasture to someone else's garden or orchard.

Ropchic watched everything. Even during the day when we children would play outside he would keep his eyes on us. And he was so smart. He would play with us and he wouldn't let us fight. If we attempted to fight he was right between us and would pull one away from the other.

Ropchic liked the family. Father, Mother, or the children were his masters and he knew it. Everybody liked Ropchic, and many a peasant would compliment him to my father and ask if he would like to sell him.

Ropchic was white with black dots all over his body. Even his feet had small black dots, and on his head, between his eyes, he had stamped a black V. Ropchic always wagged his tail and came close to you in a very friendly way. If you turned down to him he would lick you and pick up his paw to hold you down. . . .

One very dark morning, about two o'clock, we could hear Ropchic barking fiercely. When we came out we found a big, tall man cornered by the dog. He saw us and at once gave up, asking us for help. He

was a thief, and had come to try to steal a horse. He was a stranger, not belonging to our village. We kept him till daylight and then turned him over to the village authorities without pressing charges. He was warned never to come back again and was released.

One week later, Ropchic disappeared. We started a search all over the village but could not find him. We did not believe that anyone could steal our dog.

We, the children, missed him terribly and often cried that we wanted Ropchic back. My father tried everything to find him. He traveled to other villages to look for him. He even offered a reward for finding him. But it was no use. No one returned him. We were all heartbroken, but we quieted down and began to forget him—to forget that we ever had a dog named Ropchic.

Days passed, weeks passed, and we started to kid each other. One would say, "Here comes Ropchic!" and everyone would look. But there was no Ropchic coming.

Then one morning very early, the snow lay deep in the village and a new cold wind was blowing white flakes, piling a new coat of fresh snow on the already stiff, settled old snow. No one was to be seen walking on the street, and it seemed that the village was still in its slumber, no one disturbing the quietness of the early hour.

Suddenly, my father heard a gentle scratching at the door. He quickly got out of his bed, put on some clothes and went to see who could be there. He opened the door, and saw Ropchic standing there, shivering. Father took him into the house and covered him with a warm fur coat. Ropchic was frozen to his bones—if he had been outside another hour, he would have frozen to death. He lay like a baby. His eyes held an expression of pitiful gratitude.

Everybody got up and ran in to see Ropchic and talk to him, but he couldn't do anything. Usually when we talked to him, he would jump up to us, lick us, and answer with a loving expression. But now he was frozen and hungry and couldn't move. Only his eyes expressed it. . . .

Ropchic was back, but was far from being the same dog. He stopped barking at anybody strange. He stopped playing with us. He

was always tired and lying down. At night he was afraid to stay out, so we had to keep him in the house. He never ran to the pasture where the cows and horses were. He couldn't eat fish or meat, only light stuff and very little of that. He drank a lot of water, and during the winter he only went out once a day and wouldn't stay long. He would come right back and scratch at the door. He stopped licking us no matter how close we came to him.

When the spring came and the sun was warm and the snow disappeared, the trees began to change their colors to a white and pink bloom. We started to go out more to play—but Ropchic would just lie and watch us.

And on one such nice day, Ropchic again disappeared. My father started to search for him, but one of the peasants who worked for us told my father that the dog must have gone out somewhere to die, and that he should look for him in the woods.

They found Ropchic dead under a tree in the thick part of the woods. . . .

(We later found out that when Ropchic was stolen, he was given a certain poisonous drug and was taken thirty miles away from home, where he was held a prisoner. He escaped and ran away to go home, and it took him two weeks to find his way back. But the poison that had been given him had made him very sick—and finally he could hold out no longer.)

LIFE AND DEATH IN PEASANT VILLAGES

Askovitz was a small village inhabited mostly by Ukrainian peasants and their families. A dirt road divided the village in half, with houses on each side and barns 'way back of the houses, A wide driveway led past the houses to the barns. These were built of heavy logs, and had straw-covered roofs and doors made of boards. Inside, each barn was divided for cows, horses, hay, and oats. Outside was a well, and wooden containers for water for the livestock to drink. In back were several acres for gardening, pasture, and crop-raising.

Sleds, wagons, plows, and other implements were scattered around the barn. In front, closer to the road and to the right of the driveway, were the houses. These were also built of logs cut from the peasants' own woods. But the walls were plastered with red clay excavated from the pit outside of the village, where all the peasants helped themselves. The roof was covered with a heavy layer of straw, door and windows were made of heavy lumber bought in the city, and benches by the front and back walls were made of clay. Inside was one big room the size of the building.

In one corner was a giant stove built of brick and clay. The top was flat for sleeping purposes, the underneath was open to keep kindling wood, and the oven was big enough to bake ten to fifteen loaves of big Russian rye bread. In the front was a place for cooking; the brick chimney ran high above the roof. Shelves were built near the stove for all the earthenware, pots, and dishes. The top shelf was for bread, as bread was baked once a week. In another corner was a long table with benches built along the walls and around the table. In the third corner straw was spread on the floor for sleeping. The dirt floor was smeared with red clay. The walls were covered with re-

ligious pictures, and the tsar's picture was right in the center. A kerosene lamp in a tin container was nailed to the wall. The toilet was in the open back of the barn and washing was done at the well in the morning and after the peasants came in from the fields. Drinking water was in the house in a pail, with a single tin cup out of which everybody drank.

Chickens and pigs were raised around the house. They would constantly invade the inside. Often the pigs would give birth to little pigs and stay inside with them for days. Chickens would lay their eggs all over the house. A vicious dog was chained to the fence near the entrance and one or two other tame dogs ran loose around the house.

On the outskirts of the village lived some richer peasants with much better homes and barns. Owners of many acres of land, they raised cattle, horses, and pigs, also big fields of rye, corn, wheat, and oats. They employed some of the poorer peasants and their wives.

The church was right at the entrance to the village; it was a building made of finer lumber, with a high steeple open on all four sides and a huge bell in the center to call the village people to church on Sunday or holidays. The bell was also used for weddings and funerals or in case of fire or other emergencies.

In the center of the village was a tavern built about one hundred feet off the road. The front door was at the top of two steps. A bell would ring when the door was opened. A window about six feet wide alongside the door gave the room the appearance of a store. A basement door was pitched high at the top and the bottom reached the ground. There was a straw-covered roof, with two long chimneys of brick towering above it. On the right side were a long stall for wagons and a long rod to tie up horses. On the left side a tin-roofed shed with heavy doors contained wood and metal kegs filled with kerosene, tar for the wood axles and wheels of the wagons, and other materials used on farms. The store was filled with certain groceries but mainly displayed on the shelves were bottles of vodka, of all sizes. Vodka was also sold by the pint or quart from wooden kegs.

The owner of this tavern was the only Jew in the village, Avrum Gershen Charnochofsky, a man in his early sixties, six feet tall, with

a round, fair face, big gleaming brown eyes, a thick head of gray hair neatly combed and parted on the side, black eyebrows, and a wide white beard, combed apart, that covered all of his chest. He was good-natured and always had a smile on his face. His wife, Rivke, was a lovely housewife, short and plump, who always wore a kerchief on her head. Her dress touched the floor and an apron covered the entire front of her waist and dress. With them lived their son Simche.

Simche, the only son of this marriage (it was Avrum Gershen's second), was their pride and joy. As a young boy he showed great talent for the Talmud, and his father and mother were always complimented. It was predicted that he would grow up to be a great rabbi. But his father had different plans. He knew he was getting old and wouldn't be able to carry on with his business much longer, and that Simche would eventually have to take over. That's why he tried to keep Simche informed and trained. In fact, Simche was already so good in the business that peasants were always asking that he should wait on them. He was very good at bookkeeping, too, for most of the business was done without money and each account had to be kept. At harvest time the peasants would come, pay their bills, and start anew for another season.

The business was prospering. Avrum Gershen did a tremendous business with the peasants. Also, when people traveled through the village they would stop in for a drink or something to eat. Some would stop for just a glass of tea. Then city people always came to see Avrum Gershen (they called him the Patriarch, for his appearance and his actions befitted that name) for communal and cultural advice. Also agents from charitable and learning institutions would come for financial help. He always took them up with friendship and hospitality and gave liberally to the support of their organizations. Avrum Gershen always consulted with Simche on money matters. He wanted his son to become benevolent, too, and know the necessity of helping others.

The peasants of the village loved this only Jewish family. They came to Avrum Gershen for advice; they consulted him on all their problems. When a family was poor he saw to it that they had food.

When someone got sick he would take him to the city doctor. He was their judge in strife with each other, and his decision was always final. They had great respect for Avrum Gershen and for his wife and son. Avrum Gershen always employed several peasant men and women around the house and business; they became real friends of the family. And when Simche got married, although the wedding was in Warshilovka, a town far away from Askovitz, at his return home with his bride the whole village turned out to greet them. People dressed in their native costume. They played music and young and old danced and sang. Avrum Gershen served vodka and good things to eat and for hours the air around the tavern was filled with music, song, laughter, and wishes for a happy life to the young couple.

A new life started for Simche, Molke, and his parents. The house was big and roomy, with servants to do the work. Molke was always knitting, crocheting, and sewing for her offspring. To the year after her wedding she gave birth to a son, Chaim. And then almost every year she had another baby. A warm atmosphere existed in the house after Molke came. Avrum Gershen and Rivke were the happiest grandparents. Nothing in the world was too good for Molke and her children. All she had to do was mention what she wanted or needed and it was instantly bought for her.

Simche ran the business very successfully. He was happy with his environment and the joy and admiration he felt for his wife and their lovely children made his life in the house pleasant and cheerful. He felt proud of his accomplishments and felt that his efforts were worth while. His hard work was no burden on him. He did it with pleasure. The first three children were boys: Chaim, Fishel, and Mailech. Simche made a *bris* for each of them just like a wedding. He brought cooks from Warshilovka, the nearest town, a week before the *bris*. They baked enough of the best cakes and cookies and *challa* for a hundred people. They prepared ducks, chickens, and meat. They made gefilte fish and grated horseradish mixed with red beets. There were fruit and vegetables, vodka and wine, more than enough.

The day of the *bris* he sent horses and wagons to bring the people that wanted to come from Warshilovka and other towns. He had

music from the town. A special tabernacle was built out of long boards six feet high with tables and benches all around the walls with lots of room in the center for dancing. The rabbis and people arriving were dressed in their best clothes. The women wore their best dresses and all day till late at night there was eating, drinking, and dancing. When the fourth child came, and was a girl, though Simche wanted a girl they made a party only for the immediate family, for a girl didn't call for such a big celebration.

Avrum Gershen and Rivke, his wife, were the happiest of grandparents. They loved their grandchildren as dearly as they loved Molke, their daughter-in-law, and Simche, their son. Their love for them could only be compared to "the love of God," Avrum Gershen and Rivke always said, and they showed it every minute of the day. Their lives became "brighter and much more meaningful," since they had "something to live for," they would keep on saying. They were never so happy. Their business was at a peak. The peasants bought everything from their store, the only one in Askowitz, owned by the only Jewish family.

There were the friendliest of feelings between the peasants and Avrum Gershen and his family. Whenever there was a wedding or birthday celebration, the Jewish family was invited, and had to attend, for this was the greatest honor for them. And the peasants showed their appreciation by making them the honored guests, by having them dance with the bride or the groom, by asking them to speak to all the guests about this great event. Avrum Gershen and his son, Simche, always had something good to tell them, some bit of advice, and for weeks, months, and years the peasants would remember what had been said at their wedding and would always repeat the words. In fact, they were sure that whatever Avrum Gershen or Simche said would come true, and it often did.

When Avrum Gershen got older and more tired, and could not attend the weddings and parties, Simche and his wife Molke had to do the honors. Simche also went to the funerals and spoke about the dead. This was a special privilege, for the peasants did not allow anybody outside of a priest to perform the religious ceremonies. But

it became a regular procedure for Simche to speak, and he did it for a long while before the priest took over.

Year in and year out life went on in a normal way in Askovitz between the peasants and the only Jewish family. But Avrum Gershen and Rivke his wife were beginning to feel their age. Molke took over the complete running of the house while Simche ran the business, for Avrum Gershen couldn't help any more.

A cloudburst of unhappiness befell the Charnochofskys in their home environment. First Rivke took seriously sick and was bedridden for a long time. Doctors from the big cities came daily. They tried their best but gave no hope for her recovery. The son and the father spared no money. They got the best doctors, the best medicines, even brought in a nurse from a hospital of Vinitza, a very big city. Everything was tried, but Rivke kept on losing her fight for life. One morning she called her son, Simche, and in a low voice, in trembling words, asked him to take care of his father. And he should say *kaddish* for her. After that she passed away.

Her death brought great grief and sadness to the family. Everyone felt the loss and mourned for her, Simche and Molke especially. But they also felt a great responsibility toward the father. They saw how hard he took it, and began to worry that nothing should happen to him. They made the house a little more cheerful for him; they brought the grandchildren to him more often. He would take them in his arms, would press them to his heart without saying a word, and silent tears would run down his cheeks. Simche and Molke would talk to him, beg him, but had to cry with him. He would only talk about his wife, Rivke, and why she left him.

He told Simche what to do for his business, how to live on good terms with the peasants, what to do for the grandchildren, and particularly how he should keep up donations to the institutions that needed help. He wanted Simche to be sure that when Erib Ichatskal came from the *Yeshiva* on his annual trip, he should give him enough money to pay for the upkeep of three students at the Talmudic Academy. He always did that himself, and wanted it continued as long as Simche was able. Also, in the *kloise* in Warshilovka there was

an old rabbi, Erib David Ben Abraham, who prayed every day and night to the Lord God of the Universe for all the Jews. Simche should support him as long as he lived, or as long as Simche was able to. It wouldn't cost much . . . he sleeps in the *kloise* and eats two meager meals a day, and the wife of the *shames* (sexton) from the *kloise* attends to him.

For days and weeks Erib Avrum Gershen kept telling Simche what to do and how he should do it. Simche felt that his father was getting weaker and weaker, and pleaded with him to eat and drink more, but Erib Avrum Gershen tried hard to avoid doing this. He had lost his appetite and got very weak. Although the peasants of Askovitz went daily to church to pray for his recovery, and the townspeople in Warshilovka went to the synagogue daily and prayed to God to spare him and give him back his health, and although people from cities and towns, miles and miles away traveled days, and brought rabbis with them to see Avrum Gershen, talk to him, and pray for him, still nothing helped. Doctor after doctor proclaimed that he alone could help himself, that he should start eating and stop grieving, but Avrum Gershen told the rabbis and his son that his place was with his wife Rivke, and he died from weakness.

His funeral was a demonstration of love, respect, and devotion. For all the village men, women, and children walked after the black-draped wagon to the town of Warshilovka, only to meet all the people of that town gathered to join the procession to the synagogue. There his body was taken inside. Rabbis from many towns and cities were there to pay their last respects. The closed arks of the Torahs were all opened. The lights were all on and in a deep quietness the son walked to the *balemer* (pulpit). In a deep voice filled with grief, tears running from his eyes, he said a *kaddish,* and with him big and small, Jew and Gentile, wept.

Avrum Gershen was carried by men to the cemetery and he was buried. Simche and Molke returned home. They found their house empty, cold, dreary, and almost lifeless. They took their shoes off and sat on the floor (the custom of *shiva*) for a whole week. And Jews came with them, ten of them, to hold *minyan* prayers three

times a day so that Simche could say *kaddish* all week. Caravans of Jews came from towns and cities to give Simche and his family inspiration, to tell him what a wonderful father he had, and to express their grief at the great loss. Everybody in Askovitz for weeks and months felt the loss, for people would gather and talk about Avrum Gershen and what he meant to them, and his great deeds. Peasants and farmers daily brought to Simche and his family chickens, eggs, vegetables, and all sorts of products, as an expression of devotion and good will.

Little by little Simche began to realize his responsibility to his family and to the people of Askovitz. He finally opened the door to his business, and while he still couldn't attend to it himself, he had his employees take care of everything else and he would work only on the books.

As the wound of the great loss of his mother and father in such a short time began to heal, and as things began to settle back to normality, another great shock came to this unhappy family. The tsar of all the Russias proclaimed that Jews living in peasant villages must within thirty days move out and that they could no longer engage in selling vodka, beer, or wine. That came like a thunderbolt to Simche. In two days he received an order delivered by an officer of the police department of Vinitza, the county capital. It read, "You are herewith given thirty days to wind up your business and vacate, move out of Askovitz."

There was nothing left to do but wind up his business. But there was no one in Askovitz that could buy or even consider buying his business. Nor could he move his merchandise, which consisted mostly of vodka, beer, and wine. He could have moved what groceries he had, but that would have entailed much work and a lot of legal procedure. He would have to go to Vinitza to start a legal fight, and there was no time left. So finally Simche and Molke decided to turn the business over to the three men working for them, for the very little money they could pay.

Twenty-five days after he had received the notice, three wagons were loaded with all their personal belongings, and in a fourth wagon Simche, Molke, and their children left Askovitz in the midst of the

peasants and their families weeping, kissing, and hugging everyone in their beloved family.

When Simche left Askovitz he left the best part of his life there: his birth, his youth, his dreams and happiness, and the birth of his four children. He left his mother, his father, their wonderful business, and a village of people that he loved and knew that they loved him and his family even more.

When Simche and his family arrived in Warshilovka Molke's father and her sisters were waiting for them with open arms; the table was set and the apartment was ready for them to move right in.

Warshilovka was a much bigger town than Askovitz, and was an all-Jewish town, with some peasants living on the outskirts. Three roads led to Warshilovka; one from Askovitz, Brielow, Mogilow and other towns; the second leading to Tivriv, Krasnie, and other towns; and the third leading to the railroad station Gnevin, which was seven miles away. This road was divided by the river Bug, and the only way to cross was a pontoon boat connected to a large heavy rope that spanned the river. The boat was large enough to take on four wagons and some people. You would pull on the rope and the boat would glide from one side of the river directly across to the platform on the other side. It was tied there and discharged or took on passengers. The cost was one cent.

The center of the town had one square block of stores built of brick, about ten stores on each side. The four corners had the biggest stores and the others were smaller sizes for shoemakers, for capmakers or tailors, or novelties and other small businesses. But the corner stores were the big businesses. One was a big hardware store, the second a big grocery, the third sold yard goods, and the fourth farm implements.

From the stores stretched about two hundred feet of parking facilities. Then came houses, facing the stores on three sides. The fourth side had a high brick fence stretching almost across the town, with a church inside of the fence. There was a wide entrance in the middle, with a giant iron gate. Every other Sunday was *yarid* day

at Warshilovka, and hundreds of peasants would come from all villages, counties, and farms to trade.

They would first go to church, and that part would be jammed with people. The main attraction was the numerous beggars. Two lines formed. Between the lines walking to the gate the beggars would sing religious songs and the people would give them money.

The opposite street led to two synagogues, the *shule* for the common people and the *bas omedrish* (house of learning) for the richer and more learned people. The *shule,* where most of the workers and common people went, was built of fine lumber and had a wooden fence and gate. The front of the building was painted and decorated with lions, lambs, Biblical figures, and the Ten Commandments. This painting was done by a Jewish artist, who worked about five years on it. The colors were striking and the animals looked alive. This was the nicest attraction in the town. The *bas omedrish* was a plain building, old and unattractive, but with lots of windows on all four sides.

There was no industry in town, just shoemakers who would measure for shoes and make them all by hand; and there were also the tailors. There were several large spinning wheels as well. One person would turn the wheel and another person, carrying a big bundle of flax, would release the flax and make rope, which was later used in knitting harnesses for horses. Warshilovka actually had four streets outside of the center where the stores were, and on the *yarid* day these streets would all be filled with different articles and livestock. On one street there would be wagons all laden with oats, hay, wheat, corn, and buckwheat; another street would be all cows, sheep, goats, pigs, and horses. The other streets had amusements in tents. The main business was done around the stores.

This town, Warshilovka, welcomed another resident, Simche and his family. Simche didn't know what he would do for a living. He didn't think about it. He only repeated what other people told him—that we had a big merciful God and He would help him. After all, he always was a good, obedient, religious man. He served God and religion all his life, and now God would not forsake him.

And so he started to unload his belongings into the apartment his father-in-law had made available to him. It consisted of a big living room divided from the bedroom by a *riba,* a stove about three feet wide and extending up to the ceiling. It was built of brick and stones, for heating the house with either wood or straw. After the bedroom came another small bedroom and a door leading to a long hallway with two kitchens. The first one belonged to the apartment on the other side, where Nessie lived, and the second one belonged to this apartment. Another door led to an unfinished part of the building having stalls for cows and horses, and also rooms to keep kindling wood and other personal belongings.

It took some time to fix the apartment, to display all the things. The desk in the living room was the finest piece of furniture. All mahogany, highly polished, well constructed, with drawers on each side and a flat top, it brightened the spot it was standing on. Simche and Molke were proud of it, and why not? Simche had bought it right after he was married, bought it in Bardichow, the furniture capital, when he was there on a business trip. He bought it mainly as a present for his young wife Molke. She cherished it, and now she wiped it to a shine like a mirror. The chair was also a priceless piece of furniture. There were other pieces of furniture in the room, including some upholstered chairs.

In the bedroom was a big wooden bed with a very high headboard that was hand-carved. It had deep sides to fill with straw for a mattress, and when it was all fixed with the hand-crocheted bedspread it looked like a rich man's bedroom. The next bedroom had a plain bed for the children and a couple of chairs. The kitchen had a built-in stove of brick, a large oven, and a cooking place with a flat top so that three or four people could sleep on it. There was a built-in worktable and a wooden keg for water. A water man would fill the keg every day with water either from the river Bug or from the well. He would be paid a cent for each pail it took to fill it.

The house was a triplex. In the other side, parallel with Simche's apartment, lived Molke's sister Nessie and her husband, Shloime, with their family. In the back, through an alleyway, lived Molke's

brother and his wife and family. The father, Gimpel, a very old man and sickly, was to live one month with each of the children, in rotation.

It was a big house, plastered red. That was the color of the dirt—a sort of clay—they used for plastering. The roof was covered with a flat tile made of the same clay, but baked to harden it. On one end the tile had a loop that would hang onto the slats on the joists of the roof. It formed a solid watertight roof. In front of the house was a *pidoshek,* a sort of porch with a built-in *prisba* (bench) of clay to sit on. All the gatherings and visits took place there in the summer.

After Simche and Molke got all settled in the house, with some groceries laid in and bread baked for the week, Simche got together with his brothers-in-law to talk about how he could make a living. There were more than enough stores in town, and even their owners couldn't all make a living. A trade he didn't have. To learn one now would be too late and it wouldn't even look good. So after hours of discussion it was decided that since Simche was a country man, and knew the life and doings of the farmer and peasant, he should become a *soicher* (a buyer, a businessman). He should take a trip to Odessa and Kiev, two big cities in the Ukraine. He should contact there other *soichers* who would buy from him all the fruit, vegetables, and other things he could buy and ship to them for those two big markets.

Early the next morning Simche was on his way to the Gnevin railroad station to take the next train to Odessa and Kiev. When he returned from his trip after two weeks he was very happy, and full of hope that he had made the right connections. Now he had to start going from district to district, farm to farm, buying from the peasants their products and shipping them to the markets. He was sure he would make a living "with God's help."

Simche had some money, so he bought a horse and wagon and started out to seek his luck in his new venture. All kinds of thoughts came to him as he drove the fifteen miles to the district he had selected, Magilov. He thought of his early life as a boy, the best teachers his father had hired for him, the wonderful life he had, the re-

spect he had wherever he had traveled. His name was known for miles around. The people used to say to each other, "This is Simche Avrum Gershen's," and that was enough for them to take him up with respect and dignity.

He never forgot the time when he was stranded on the way home and it got too late, on a Friday approaching the Sabbath, and he had to stay over in Brielow, a small Jewish town. When the townspeople found out who he was, the best families wanted him to stay with them, and what a warm welcome they gave him. When he came with Erib David to the synagogue to the prayers all the people shook his hand and made it so warm for him. All he could hear was, "He is Avrum Gershen's son." When they came to read the Torah carried by the rabbi from the ark to the pulpit, and when the rabbi was reading the Torah, and all the people were in deep silence listening to every word, and when it came to the part where it said that for high honors—*mofter*—you should call the learned, the best, good, obedient person, he heard the rabbi say, "Our guest Simche Avrum Gershen's is honored today." He was called to the pulpit and he read in the Torah. How the people congratulated him afterward! And how every man wished his son would grow up to be so talented, so learned. On Sunday morning when he started out for home, people gathered to wish him well and to send their best wishes to his father and mother.

He also remembered his *bar mitzvah* and the feast his father gave when he was thirteen years old. Hundreds of people from all the towns got together in Warshilovka. Great rabbis and learned Talmud specialists all came to hear his speech of *bar mitzvah* and his reading of the Torah, and for years the people talked about that *bar mitzvah* and the feast Avrum Gershen gave. The poor people remembered and always talked about it, for the poor and rich had plenty to eat and drink.

As he approached Magilov new thoughts came to him. How would he now act as a businessman, and would he make a living? For his loving wife, and with tears in his eyes, he prayed to God to help him in this great new life he was entering.

As he came to Magilov and saw the usual peasants' homes and barns, which were so familiar to him, he began to feel at home. With new vigor he started to canvass the houses, battling with the dogs at each farmhouse. Finally a peasant he had met several times on *yarids,* and from whom he had bought horses twice, came out. He was a short, plump man with a big beard that was completely white, just as his head of hair was. He had a kind face. He greeted Simche and remembered too that he had sold him horses. He asked Simche what he was after this time, and as Simche explained everything they walked to the orchard where one hundred and twenty-five ripe cherry trees were ready for picking. Simche bought the cherries on the trees and the next day he hired boys and girls to pick them. He brought baskets to pack the cherries, and in three days he delivered the load to the railroad station and made his first shipment to Kiev and Odessa. One week later, when he received the checks for those cherries, he was happy, for there was a substantial profit.

So Simche was in business, and for weeks he bought pears, apples, plums, watermelons, and canteloupes, made his shipments regularly, and received his checks. Sometimes his profit was a little more and sometimes it was a little less, but he became better known and saw in his venture a success.

When the summer was over and all the fruit was off the trees he started to think again, "What now?" He decided to start buying potatoes. He bought big sacks and hired Chaim Laizer, a poor Jew in Warshilovka who never made a living and from his constant hunger and want had dried out until he looked like a ghost. He was six feet three inches tall, and it was a wonder that his bones stuck together. With the wagon loaded with sacks, Simche and Chaim Laizer were off from home for a full week. From one of the peasant women Simche rented a place for him and his man to sleep on top of a stove. They brought bread with them for the week. Two little pots that Simche had brought with him came in very handy, for he bought eggs and cooked them in one pot, and used the other for milk. They would go out at milking time and the woman would

milk directly into the pot. Then the milk was boiled and they would have their meal: bread, eggs, and milk. Then they would wash their pots and glasses and put them away till the next meal. They couldn't mix their utensils with the peasants' things or use anything of the peasants', for it wasn't kosher.

The handling of potatoes was hard work, as each sack weighed about two hundred pounds. The sacks had to be filled properly and the top sewed. Then they were piled five or six high. They had to be kept in a warm place. So week after week they spent in the country buying and shipping potatoes to Kiev and Odessa. The profits were small, freight and handling were expensive. Also, the markets were not too good.

One time in the middle of the winter Simche and his man worked hard for two weeks. It took them that long to get enough sacks for a full carload. In shipping a full car he could save quite a lot on the freight, and that was what he had to do in order to stay in this business. When the day came to ship his potatoes he hired ten horses and wagons to cart them to the railroad station. When all was loaded and the door closed and sealed Simche stood for a long time looking at the car that carried his labor, his fortune, and his hopes to Odessa. In his quiet way he prayed for success.

Ten days later Simche received a special notice from his agent to come at once to Odessa and bring some money with him. He had no money left so he borrowed it and was on the next train. The day and night of traveling stretched out and seemed years long to him as he wondered what could have happened. When the train pulled into the station he was the first one off. In a few hours he was sitting in the office of his agent listening to the grim story of what had happened to his shipment of potatoes. Although they had been shipped in a straw-padded car that was well closed up, the train ran into a terrific frost that froze the complete shipment. There was no salvage at all, and according to the railroad rules he had to pay the freight and remove his shipment to a dumping ground.

For two weeks Simche struggled with the problem, worried and heartbroken. All the money he had and all he had borrowed was gone.

Lost. When he got home the news spread quickly all over town. People he had borrowed from came promptly to his house to find out what he intended to do and when he would be able to pay them back. Simche assured them that in a short time he would repay them.

In his house everything was quiet. Molke didn't talk, the children were quiet, no one had a word to say. Everyone realized what it meant to lose everything and to have to start all over again. The next Sunday at the *yarid* Simche sold his horse and wagon and sold one of his two suits of clothes. He had a customer for his beautiful desk and almost sold it, but when Molke cried bitterly, he decided to keep it. But he sold everything that had any value at all, and got just enough money together to pay off the loans he had made.

A new struggle started for Simche and his family. The winter was a cold one. The deep snow got deeper with every new snowfall —and that was almost every other day. The kindling wood and straw piles got low. He started to cut down on heating the house. Just mornings and afternoons. The house felt cold. Everyone wore his heavy coat. The children started to get colds. Simche went to the country every day, going either on foot or by picking up a ride. He bought chickens, eggs, and other articles that he could sell in town, and began to earn something to keep the wolf from the door. Gradually the winter passed. The sun started to melt the snow, which began to look like dirty mud. Finally the sun did turn it into a deep dirty mud, hard to walk in, hard to travel in. The peasants stopped coming to Warshilovka, but Simche went to the country. He had to go, and whatever he earned was about enough for the mere necessities.

Things brightened with the coming of the fruit season. But Molke, feeling the burden and knowing that more was needed for the house and for the children, decided to help out. She started a business of her own.

She learned how to make *kwass,* a punch made of water, iced to cool it, sweetened with saccharine, and colored with bright red coloring. It made a delicious drink in the hot summer days. Since there was a *yarid* every two weeks in Warshilovka, she explained to the

bigger children that they must help earn some money, that Father couldn't do it alone. "The family is big," she told them, "and the needs for food and shelter are almost too much for just one man to provide." She wanted the children, each one separately, to sell the *kwass* to the peasants. She would get a big tub, put water and ice in, mix it with the saccharine, and make a clear red color. Then she would cover the tub with a white sheet, leaving an opening to fill the glasses and put a flat board across the tub for display of beer glasses with handles. All the children had to do was call out, *"Kwass, kwass!"* holding a full glass in one hand, and the peasants would drink and pay one groshin (half a cent). "In the evening," she said, "we will see who is the best businessman." The children liked the idea and promised to try their best.

When Sunday *yarid* day came along Molke had three such stands ready for a big day of business, and it proved a great success. Not that too much money was taken in. Each child brought home sixty to seventy cents. But after figuring the small expenses—about fifty cents for all three stands—there was enough left to buy a *pood* (sixty pounds) of flour. This was enough to bake bread for the whole week, and as long as there was bread in the house nobody went hungry.

So every other Sunday when the *yarid* came to Warshilovka the three boys, Chaim, Fishel, and Mailech, nine, eight, and seven years old, were at their posts selling *kwass*. They learned to call out loudly, *"Kwass, kwass!* Drink *kwass!"* And their business went better every time. Once when Molke's brother was in town and heard the boys sell their *kwass* he thought of a new way, even more appealing, to call out. *"Kwass frontzsky he govoreet po Russkie kwass kwasok Kwasachock chto kwass piea tho shinke ne biea."* This meant: "French *kwass* that speaks Russian. He who drinks this *kwass* doesn't beat his wife." The peasants loved this song and at times they gathered around the place listening to the calling out about the *kwass*. This really worked up the business, until the boys brought home close to two dollars each and Molke could afford to buy meat twice a week and cook a wonderful dinner for all. She would make soup with

beans, *taiglech* (short noodles), put some carrots and parsley in with the meat, and serve it with a big round Russian rye bread. Like hungry wolves the children would gobble down every bit of it, to their mother's great satisfaction and happiness. Molke learned too that summertime was the best season, and she learned to put away a few cents and lay in some two hundred pounds of flour. She filled up the room in the back of the house with kindling wood and put a couple of loads of straw in the attic. Simche also brought home apples, pears, cabbages, potatoes, and other vegetables that Molke carefully wrapped and packed away for the frostbitten winter when *kwass* was not a going article and Simche's business dropped 'way down.

Simche could no longer ship his potatoes to the market in big quantities. He was sending ten, fifteen, or twenty sacks at a time, and what he made every week was enough to buy food for the Sabbath day. For this holy day Molke would buy thirty pounds of flour to bake *challa.* She would have enough to take off to make noodles for soup and a *kugel,* to make *popolickes* (pancakes) for the children and enough twisted *challas* to last through the Sabbath. Then she would get some fish and horseradish, for without fish the Sabbath would lose one custom. Then of course there was meat or, if there was enough money, chicken. She would also have a *tzimmes* of carrots, and when Simche came home, usually Friday about noon, if he had had a good week and could afford it, he would go out and buy a bottle of wine. That really completed the feast for the Sabbath. Molke at sunset would light four candles stuck in candelabra, put on a clean, ironed dress and a silk kerchief on her head, turned in back of her ears. With satisfaction, a sense of accomplishment and devotion, she would put her hands over the lighted candles, close her eyes and *bentch licht* (say her prayers to open the Sabbath). The children would stay near her, and it seemed as if a divine spirit filled the room. When she ended she said, "Good *Shabbes*" (Sabbath), and the children answered, *"Humain"* (so it should be).

When Simche returned from the synagogue he would repeat "Good *Shabbes*" and everybody would say, *"Humain."* The table was set; the candles threw a dim light over the room. The white

tablecloth glimmered and the light showed two *challas* covered with a hand-embroidered cloth, the bottle of wine and glasses around it—knives, forks, spoons, all were on the table. Simche washed his hands, opened the bottle, filled the bigger glass, put it in the palm of his hand, and said *kiddish,* the blessing to God for the Sabbath. He then took a drink and handed the glass to Molke. She took a sip and gave each child a sip, beginning with the oldest. Then Simche uncovered the *challa* and cut a piece, made a *moitza,* and sat down.

Everybody started with the fish, then soup, meat, or chicken, with *kugel* made of the noodles, and last the *tzimmes,* made of carrots sweetened with sugar. Between the courses Simche and the children would sing *zmeres,* a sort of thankgiving prayer in song. Every one of the boys tried to be louder than the others and Molke would sit, her face shining brightly, and help in the harmonizing. From time to time she would say *humain,* and the children would follow suit. As the candles got low and began to go out only the kerosene lamp was left burning, until Vassil's son, the peasant friend of the family, would come to turn it out. Molke would hand him a big piece of *challa.* No Jew was allowed to turn out fire on the Sabbath.

In total darkness Simche and Molke would sit, after all the children were in bed, and talk about the next world and how a Jew has to prepare for it, how much good he had to do to his neighbors, to his friends, and even to his enemies to gain enough *mitzvahs* (prestige) to go right to heaven. The talk would go on about *Gon Aden* and *Gahanam. Gon Aden* is where the good people go and *Gahanam* is where all the bad people go. They spoke of how wonderful *Gon Aden* is, what great privileges one has there; one mingles with all the great rabbis and learns the Torah and Talmud. There is no worry there.

They sat talking until they tired and went to sleep. And when the Sabbath was gone and the grim week started, it was again the start of a struggle to make enough to live on to make ends meet. Week after week, month after month, it got to be harder and harder to make a living. Sabbaths were coming and going, some with chicken, some even without fish or meat. And when there was

no wine Simche would make *kiddish* over the two twisted *challas,* and with tears in his eyes he would cut the *challas* in slices and give them to the children for their supper.

At the end of one Sabbath, when the sun went down and a bright full moon showed up, Simche took his *sidar* (holy prayer book) and went outside. Staying under the moon he started to pray *(mechodishthe lavona)* to the moon, to its brightness, to its wonder, and asked that God look down upon him and his family. Satisfied with his prayers, he came into the house, lighted the kerosene lamp, and said, *"A goote woch"* ("a good week"). Everyone said, *"Humain."* Then he called Molke and all the children together, told everyone to sit down, and told them of the new plan he had that he hoped would give him a living. A new business that everyone could help with. Since the children were already selling *kwass* and had the experience of business, he would fix the living room with a seltzer fountain. Here at last was a ray of hope.

UP WITH A SELTZER FOUNTAIN

Simche would go to Vinitza, the big city, would buy all kinds of candies, and start selling seltzer water and candies to the townspeople of Warshilovka. He hoped this would be a business to make a living. Everybody agreed and encouraged him.

The next morning, Simche bought some lumber, took saw and hammer, and built a beautiful counter. It was long and narrow, with the back built up into a wall three feet high, and painted all white. A shining nickle-plate faucet was placed in the middle, with shelves on both sides of the faucet on which to place bottles of syrup of all colors. He made a glass-covered flat box for the candies, with lock and key to keep it safe from the children. Candy is always an attraction to make children overambitious. Everything was ready. All he needed was the merchandise.

So the next morning Simche went to Vinitza, the big city; there he selected attractive candies. He bought half-moons, sweet and sour candies, some candies wrapped in paper which were filled with preserves, some poppy-seed squares, some long *mondlech,* bonbons, and others that were eye-catching. Then he bought the seltzer water in twenty-gallon metal kegs. He got two of these kegs, which he thought would be enough for the start.

When he arrived home with the stock and displayed all of it, everybody was excited. He connected the seltzer to the faucet and, sure enough, you could draw seltzer water! With everything set up perfectly, Simche announced that he was open for business! All the people of Warshilovka knew that Simche was starting a new venture, and it was something different, because the town had never had a business of that sort.

Wednesday morning the business was opened, and all that day

and on Thursday and Friday there wasn't one customer to come to buy the first piece of candy or to drink the first glass of seltzer. Simche started to think that it was a failure, and was terribly worried. But with the coming of the Sabbath, everything changed entirely. Right after supper Friday night, the townspeople started to fill up Simche's house, to drink seltzer and eat a piece of candy. Simche and the family got busy serving the people and the rush went on until he was completely sold out. But . . . Simche didn't take in one cent in cash, not even one cent! Who doesn't know that Jews don't carry money on the Sabbath? And even if he was offered money, would Simche take it? Of course not! But he knew that the people of Warshilovka were God-loving, honest folk, and would pay every cent they owed.

Saturday night, after he got through with Avdula (end of Saturday prayer), Simche sat down to the table with paper and pencil and started to write the names of the people who owed money. The children and Molke helped to remember who owed, and how much. On Sunday morning the boys started out to collect, and just as Simche said, everybody they came to had money ready to pay the bill; some bills were as low as one cent, and some were as high as ten cents, but everyone paid. When all the collection came in, Simche not only had his investment but also a substantial profit. He counted his money over and over; there were his twelve rubles that he spent in Vinitza for candies and soda, and there were six rubles clear profit! Everybody was happy, and Monday morning Simche started out for Vinitza again to buy another stock of candy and soda water.

So this became a Sabbath business, for during the week there was no business at all. Between this business and the selling of *kwass* on *yarid,* Simche and Molke were kept with enough to do. Also, Simche shipped fruit to the big cities, Odessa and Kiev, and Molke started to cook *rossel flaisch,* a big goulash, to sell to the peasants on *yarid* day. They also sold some vodka by the glass, which was illegal, since only the state had the right to sell vodka, by the bottle, stamped with a government seal. But Molke bought a big quart bottle and sold it by the drink. All together, the family started to live better,

eat better, and there was even enough to buy shoes and clothes for the children.

Then the excise officer *(actziznik)* planted a couple of peasants to buy vodka from Molke and he caught her in the act of selling it. There was a trial, and Simche took the guilt upon himself, for Molke was pregnant. Simche had to go to jail for four months, which almost disrupted the business. Thanks to the children and Molke, however, they kept the business going as much as they could. For four months Molke sent food to the jail, for Simche wouldn't eat the food there; it wasn't kosher.

After Simche was released and he arrived home, there was a reunion that was marked with joy and tears. The people of the town came to greet him and wish him better luck. Simche looked bad, he had lost some weight and his face was drawn and marked with a melancholy expression that was frightful. It took a long time until he got back to normal. Molke had to think fast and get things under way. She knew Simche's condition, and also knew well that autumn was near and the grim weather with its white blanket of snow and freezing cold would soon be coming. It would set in for at least six or seven months, and there was no kindling wood or straw laid away. Also, the best season for shipment of fruit was over and lost, and everything would soon slow down. What would happen? How could she manage through, and how would she make ends meet? A new child was coming, and nothing was prepared for that time, nothing for the child, not a diaper, not a shirt, not even the price she had to pay to the midwife.

Molke was worried, and sat for hours thinking what to do. Finally she decided. Since there was going to be a semi-annual *yarid* in Tivriv, she must make some money from this big *yarid*. She made up her mind to talk to Mailech about it.

SOME FAMILIES IN WARSHILOVKA

Warshilovka: a small town in the state *(gorod)* of Kominetz Podolsk near the big city of Vinitza, seven miles from Gneven, a railroad station in the Ukraine. Warshilovka is situated in the midst of the breadbasket of Russia, where the orchards grow the best fruits in all of the country, and yet there is misery and poverty in every town and village.

Warshilovka, with only three streets. There was the main street, built like a square with three sides of houses and on the fourth side a great big church with a high brick fence in front and a wide iron gate for the entrance. In the center of this square was built a square of stores that had four sides, eight stores on each side. Between the stores and houses was empty space for parking wagons on the *yarid*. There was such a *yarid* on the second and fourth Sunday of every month. To these *yarids* the peasants came from all the villages miles and miles away, to trade their farm products and to buy necessities for their homes, farms and themselves.

This main street would accommodate all the horses and wagons to show their products. The street connected with roads from all the villages around Warshilovka. Another narrow street was private, with houses on each side. It led at one end to the synagogues and at the other end to the orthodox church. This was called Hinder Street (Hintershte Gasse). The third street was about one block wide and five blocks long. This street was used mainly on *yarids* for livestock trading. Horses, cows, pigs, chickens, goats, and all other livestock were brought here by the peasants to sell, to trade, or to buy. It was called the Life Street (Lebediga Gasse).

In this town of Warshilovka lived about two hundred Jewish families and about two dozen Gentiles that worked for the Jews.

The two churches in Warshilovka were mainly used on *yarid* days. All the peasants would first go to church before trading.

There was no industry in town outside of spinning wheels that made rope from flax. The rope was woven into harnesses for horses. These were shipped to the big cities in the Ukraine.

It was hard to make a living in Warshilovka so people were struggling.

On Life Street lived the family of Chaim Laiser Rever: four children, Chaim Laiser himself, and his wife Sonia. Chaim Laiser was six feet two inches tall; he was thin, with no flesh on his body. His cheekbones stuck out like two horns, a long nose was between them, and his two eyes were sunken, leaving two big holes in the face. Bones, bones all over, pinched with hunger. His wife Sonia was short, only five feet five inches; she was thin and lightweight, but on the go all the time—cleaning, preparing, watching over her family. Moishe, the eldest son, and Berke, the second son, were just like the father. Even though they were yet very young their arms and feet were just like sticks, and their bodies—you could count every bone, and you wondered when they would break in half. The two daughters were not so bad. Their faces were filled out and on their bodies there was some flesh. The goat around the house was the only bright help, for twice every day Sonia would milk it and have a pot of milk from which to plan the meals for the family.

Chaim Laiser had a *sichke* business. He had a machine that cut straw into small, half-inch pieces. He would fill up big sacks and sell them to people to mix with the oats to feed their cows, goats, and horses. The machine was located in the center of the barn, with a long arm to harness the horse to. The horse would walk in a circle around the machine and turn the knives that cut the straw. In one day he could cut enough *sichke* to supply all his customers who couldn't afford pure oats and had to fool their cows, goats, and horses by mixing oats with *sichke*. With what he made out of his business he was able to buy one *pood* of flour, to bake bread for the family for the week.

Since Chaim Laiser had no pasture for the horse, and could not

afford to feed him all week for the one day's work, he made an arrangement with Noah (Noiech) the water-carrier. Noah was to use his horse all week—outside of one day, when Chaim Laiser would use it for his own business, providing Noah fed him well. Noah agreed, for he could afford to feed him pure oats.

Chaim Laiser had come by his horse years before, when a peasant gave it to him for work Chaim Laiser did for him. The peasant couldn't pay with cash so he paid him by giving him the horse. The peasant didn't need it and Chaim Laiser held on to it, for it was his bread every week in his *sichke* business.

Chaim Laiser also worked for some peasants at harvest time. There wasn't much in that in cash, but he did get potatoes, onions, eggs, and a chicken for the Sabbath, and that was why he called this the best time of the year. In the winter my father, Simche, would employ him a few times for a whole week and Chaim Laiser said it was a godsend, for all he made went into kindling wood. Without that wood they would freeze to death, for they lived in a big house and he had to heat it.

And around Passover time, because of his big house, his big kitchen with a very big built-in oven, and several tables covered with tin, people from the town came to bake their matzos with him. So he was the baker. With a long wooden shovel he managed the placing of the matzos in and out of the oven. Then they were piled into long baskets that were carried to the homes of the people. Several women would work rolling the dough into matzos. They would carry them to him and he would bake them. This only lasted three weeks. "But out of this work thank God I had matzos for Passover," he said. He made enough to bake matzos for his own family too.

In the season of fruit-picking Chaim Laiser almost lived in the orchards, picking fruit for my father. From early morning till evening he worked hard, but he could make only as much as the young boys or girls, one half a ruble a day. The young pickers had an advantage over him. They could climb the trees. He could only work from a stepladder—or from the ground, for he was tall enough to reach around the trees. The picking time was almost two months.

They started on cherries and went over to plums, pears, and apples. Chaim Laiser brought bread with him every day, and with the fruit it made good meals for him. He thanked God for the ripe fruit so he could work and make enough for a living, for these two months were his prosperous months. In the fall of the year he chopped wood for the people of Warshilovka. And as he used to say, *"A sach milluches and wainig bruches"* ("Many trades but not much luck").

Another family: Chaim David, the grocer-merchant in town.

Chaim David, his wife Raisel, and their three children, two girls and one son, Ben Yochid, were all working in the grocery store, particularly on *yarid*. It was a busy store, with lots of items to sell. They had *smalle* (asphalt tar) to grease the wagons. That almost every peasant needed. They had kerosene. These items were sold on the outside of the store and special people had to attend to them, not to bring the smell into the store. For inside there was herring, dried fish, flour, sugar, beans of all kinds, grits of all kinds, and hundreds of other items. The kerosene smell would spoil the sale of them, so everyone had his own items to attend to. This store was busy from morning till night on *yarid* days. Chaim David was a stocky, middle-aged man with a big wide black beard combed out over his chest, with curly side beards and wide straight mustache, with his teeth showing between his lips, and with two blue bright eyes and a small rounded nose on a round, full face. He looked like a painted portrait. He was the head salesman. He was fast in his figures and quick in his actions, and he made the most sales.

Raisel, his wife, was also stocky. She was shorter than he, but very fast. The townspeople held the conviction about her that she was the best-looking woman in town for her age, and she agreed with them. Most of the male peasants wanted her to wait on them. The two daughters took over the small sales and were good at it. The son, Ben Yochid, was watched by everyone so that he shouldn't do too much, not work too hard; so he mostly made small change and watched that the people didn't *lodchen* (steal).

This family of five worked hard one day every two weeks on the *yarid*. All other days Chaim David was able to take care of the

business himself with the two hired boys he had. This family led a fine life. First of all, they were considered among the rich ones in town; and second, they were among the educated ones. He himself, Chaim David, was well educated in the *klaina oisaliach* (small print). He could converse well on the Talmud, or on the Torah, and he knew Tillem by heart. He could lead in the services and even had a pleasant voice. And he came from a very good family. His wife Raisel went to services every Saturday and every holiday, and she was the leader of all the women. She showed them and told them in advance all the parts of the services. She was considered well learned, and to be compared only to the rabbi's wife and a few more women in town.

Their two daughters attended the best modern *cheder*. There they were taught, outside of Jewish, also Russian, arithmetic, geography, and world history, as well as great philosophers of the world. This was in a private school that was conducted by a rabbi and a college graduate from a Kiever university.

Their son attended a *cheder* with a *gemura molomod* (high teacher). There he was being prepared for Yeshiva, Talmudic college, high learning in Jewish.

They lived in a big house with many rooms. Two servants and one cook took care of all their needs. Raisel, outside of helping in the store and attending to her husband and their children, had many more responsibilities. They lived a good life, and were considered among the few able financially to live well.

Another family: Zalman Yankew David was a man in his early forties, but he had the appearance of a man in his seventies. Zalman never worked in his life. He was a Talmud student. He always prayed, he always learned, he was almost always at home or in the synagogue. He sat over a *mishnaes,* a *gemura,* a *tillum,* or other such books, reading and studying. He only took out time for eating two meals a day and sleeping and teaching his own three sons the great learning of God, the Talmud, the Torah, and everything that he knew a Jew should learn. Zalman was well educated. He knew most of the Tillim by heart. He could converse with rabbis about

the deep Jewish learning, and would show them many interpretations that contradicted the holy books. He could have been a rabbi but had no such desires.

When Zalman married, his wife knew and her father knew that he would never support a family. But his father-in-law wanted him in the family. He said that Zalman was gold and diamonds to a family, so he provided full support for him and his wife.

When the father-in-law died, Zalman's wife, Ruth, took over. They already had three children that were growing up, and the needs were big. So she decided to sell *crellin* (beads) to the peasant women at the local *yarids,* and to travel to the nearby *yarids.* She had three such *yarids* every month, and two extra ones in Warshilovka. Ruth worked hard. It was not an easy matter to travel on wagons that jarred the insides out of you, then all day to go around loaded with all kinds of stringed beads of all colors, to get the peasant women interested and sell to them, and then in the evening, when she got home, to start preparing a meal for the family. But Ruth was happy. She knew that her husband had to sit at his learning and at prayers and that he was shaping and building an afterlife for her and himself and the children. She thought of the *Gon Aden* and of how wonderful it would be there, with no worries, no conflicts, no disagreements, where only people with *treiag mitzvahs* (613 good deeds) would be admitted. Her husband would have all of those and would be accepted without a doubt. It was worth all her efforts, all her hard work. She knew that they couldn't live well on what she made, so she had to be economical every day. She learned to make inexpensive meals. Their favorite was *taiglech mit fasoilie* (beans with thick noodle soup). She made that in a big pot and could serve a big bowlful to each one with bread. They would fill up on it and they liked it. Other days she made it out of potatoes, or out of barley, and as long as she had bread in the house everyone was satisfied.

But when Friday night and Saturday came everything was different. Ruth knew that the Sabbath must be met with dignity and the best meals. So she baked *challa.* She made noodle *kugel.* She

cooked either chicken or meat. She made gefilte fish and a *tzimmes* from *mairen* (carrots). The house was made spick-and-span, the table covered with a white cloth. The brass candlesticks were shining and burning candles. When Zalman and the three sons came from the synagogue after Friday-night services and entered the house saying *"Goot Shabbes,"* Ruth answered, *"Goot yahr"* ("good year") and she felt as if the whole world belonged to her, so proud she was.

Another family: Zelda Ershel Baron's. Zelda was a widow left with eight children. The oldest was only twelve years old and the youngest only three years. Her husband died right after the youngest child was born. That is, he had been sick for many years, couldn't work, and was only a burden on poor Zelda. She had to make the living and had to attend to this huge family. Every morning before daybreak she was up to start her daily work. By the light of the kerosene lamp she had to wake one child after another, wash them, dress them, and serve them their first meal of the day. Zelda had a cow of her own, and every morning and evening she milked the cow and had milk for the children. She even had some milk left to cook a midday meal. That was the biggest thing: Zelda had milk and for that she thanked God every time she fed the children.

The day had set in, the sun was fairly well up, with its warm rays that started to bring people from their homes to their businesses, to the streets, and to all their activities. Zelda was also ready to assume her activities. She peddled apples and other fruits. She had a basement, rented from one of the stores on the square, where she kept her fruit, and when she opened up she would make a stand on the street. From this stand she would do her business. Lately she was taking along with her the two oldest boys to help her. They were a big help to her. First they would bring up the fruit while she displayed it, and later they helped to sell, and watched for stealing.

When *yarid* came, with so many more people in town and with some peasants bringing their fruit for sale, Zelda had a real problem. But she found a way to do even more business. Zelda would bring all eight children to the fruit stand and let them sit in the background, and she kept on talking to the people, appealing to them

to buy her fruit. "I must support my eight children; my husband is dead. Your buying my fruit will help me. The children must eat." She constantly repeated her appeal all day long, and it worked. She did more business.

After a *yarid's* work she would the next morning buy two *poods* of flour. Tuesday was her day off, and she would spend the day at home, baking her bread and cooking potatoes, beans, and other things that would keep for two or three days. On weeks when there was no *yarid* and she couldn't afford two *poods* of flour she would bake twice during the week. Although the children did not starve they were always hungry. The only time Zelda cooked a bigger meal was for the Sabbath Friday. She mostly had a lung and liver to cook. The butcher used to save a big lung and liver for her. He knew she couldn't afford choicer meat. He also cut up some marrow bones for her from which she cooked a soup with barley, beans, and some potatoes. So on Friday night and Saturday, Zelda said, they ate well.

Another family: Berl and Eta Gershens had two children, a boy ten and a girl eight years old. They lived in a two-room basement apartment. Water was brought from the river Bug and stored in a wine barrel. A kerosene lamp gave what light they had after dark, and the toilet was outside in the open. A big galvanized washtub was used as a bath. The four of them slept on the brick-built stove. It was also used for cooking their meals and baking bread. The windows in their two rooms were very small. Not much air or light came through them.

Berl was a sick man. He had a vicious cough. Some people said he had consumption, but he said it was just a neglected cough. His wife Eta was weak and sickly and stayed in bed most of the time. The eight-year-old did the cooking and the cleaning. She was the one who went to her uncle Herschel, her mother's brother, who gave them five rubles every week. With that they had to manage for their food for the week. Eta did her own baking with the help of her daughter. Berl did manage to go to the synagogue to prayers, but it seemed that he had to be by himself. No one would go near him, and he used to come home upset. The boy wanted to go away to look

for work but the mother cried and would not let him go. He was too young and she was afraid for him to leave. From time to time Eta's brother would come to talk to them; but there wasn't much he could do, for he worked hard for a living for his own family. He did manage to help them with five rubles a week—more than he could spare.

The rabbi and town leaders would talk about this unfortunate family. They would bring it up and discuss it, but what could they do? The town was full of such families, some even worse. They didn't have the funds to help so many people.

In fact, there were some poor beggars who went all over town to beg for their living. It was true that they were all cripples who couldn't work and even had families to support. The whole town helped them.

And so all the families had to live on and struggle. At death there was a society in town that took care of people, with a plot and a funeral without cost. The end was the relief.

The doctor of the town, Doctor Luria, reported to the rabbi that Berl and Eta with their children must move out of the basement into a light and sanitary place, and Berl must not live with them. He was consumptive, and it was dangerous not only for the family but for the whole town.

Then the town provided a house near the bath house *(budd),* which had been vacant for a long time. They moved the family in; Berl had a separate room and separate dishes, and lived a lonely two years until he passed away.

Another family: Yankel the Iswaschick. Yankel had a pair of good horses and a carriage. He drove every day to Gneven the railroad station, seven miles from the town. Moishe the postman went with him to pick up the mail and Yankel took all the passengers that went to Gneven or came back.

Yankel had a big family: his wife Ruchal and six children. They lived very well. In fact, Ruchal cooked big meals. Every day she cooked meat, duck, or chicken. Yankel said he worked hard and must eat well. Yankel was not a lazy man. He would if necessary drive

his team anywhere, even sometimes hiring out for a trip that would take two, three, or four days, as long as there was money to be made.

Yankel sent all his children to *cheder,* and although they were not good students (not too bright) he hoped they would know more than he knew, for he didn't have a good education. His father could not afford to send him to *cheder.* But he and his wife were determined to give their children a good education. His oldest son was soon to have a *bar mitzvah.* He was studying the *bar mitzvah* speech and the passages that he would have to read in the Torah. Yankel with his wife Ruchal were proud and were waiting for the day of the *bar mitzvah* when they would have a big celebration. So he worked harder to accumulate some more money.

When the happy day arrived Yankel got dressed in his best clothes. The boy had a special new suit, made by the tailor, and new shoes with high tops and buttons on the sides. And Ruchal baked white *challa* and honey cake. She cleaned and cut up full platters of herring, with onions sliced on the side and a bottle of vinegar. She made special noodle *kugel,* baked with butter and cheese, and Yankel bought two bottles of vodka, clear as crystal and eighty proof. All was loaded in his carriage and brought down to the synagogue. And after the services and after the *bar mitzvah* there was a feast that the town talked about for a long time.

Another family: Moisha Zadels. Moisha was the usurer in town. He lent money to Jew or Gentile. He was shrewd and a good businessman. His loans were made only on articles the borrower brought to him: copper pots, brass articles, clothes, watches, gold rings, pillows, feather beds, quilts, blankets, and all other articles of value. He would put a price on the articles himself and that was it. If he loaned ten rubles he would take two rubles off for the interest and give you only eight rubles to pay back in ten months, one ruble every month. On the last payment he would return the article.

Almost all of the townspeople owed him money and many of the peasants were indebted to him. He was very strict. If you failed in your payment he would sock on double interest. If you still didn't pay, your article was lost. He would not return it. About every

six months he would load up a wagonful of articles, take them to Vinitza, and sell them.

Moisha was a tight man. He would never give to charity and wouldn't give much to the synagogue. His donations measured up to those of the poorest man in town. No one liked him, no one had any use for him. The children in town used to call him the *chalfen,* the usurer. The men and women in town used to avoid him. If he walked on one side of the street people would walk on the other side so as not to meet him face to face. In the synagogue no one would sit next to him. He was never called to the Torah. He never was given an *alea* (honor). But he didn't care. He went on his way.

One full moon night in the middle of a cold winter his house caught fire. No one would come to help put the fire out. His house burned to the ground with all the articles he had from the people who had borrowed from him. He also lost all of his own belongings, plus all the cash he had in the house. His wife and children came out naked and he was burned badly on his body when he tried to save his money but couldn't. For weeks he lay in bed and the doctor attended to him. Moisha became poor. The borrowers stopped payment, for he couldn't return their belongings, and many people threatened him because they wanted their belongings and were claiming a high value on them. Moisha and his family were reduced to the level of all the poor families in town, but without a friend and without any sympathy, for no one liked them and no one would help them. So they too struggled along.

THE DAWN OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

In our village the dawn of the twentieth century was talked about by young and old. The old people predicted that in this century the Messiah would come and liberate the whole world. Wolf and sheep would live together. The Jews, God's children, would be back in their homeland and would again become the leaders of the world. The orthodox quoted from the great Jewish philosophers in an authoritative manner. They demanded that the people start getting ready by praying three times a day, by wearing *tallas skutan* with *kosher tzitzes* (a type of religious attire), by increasing the frequency of the women's *mikvas* (baths), and by upholding the Ten Commandments. Their demands were strong and sermonized, and were especially pointed at the younger generation, for the young ones were to blame that the Messiah had not already come.

The youth of the village were amused by the great demands of the orthodox, and some of the young intellectuals had their own predictions to make. They talked about social and economic changes in the twentieth century, great scientific advances, and a free society. They half foresaw, half urged a fairer distribution of the riches of the world. A lot of the people believed the prophesies of these young men, and even the children talked about the time when they would have more food to eat and more clothes to wear.

In our family this was the year my oldest brother, Chaim, began to *laig twillen* for his confirmation. He was thirteen years old. Chaim's confirmation went unnoticed by the people of the town. But upon us children it made a deep impression, for it meant that the oldest brother had become a man, that now he could do the things men do. It also meant that now he would go to Vinitza, the big city, and work as a man. This he did, and the job he found was in a crockery

and glass store as a *pricashtiak* (clerk). His leaving home meant one less to feed, and his wages helped to support the rest of the family.

The summer after Chaim left home was unbearably hot. The children in our town spent most of the days in the swimming hole, trying to keep cool. The older folks sought relief in shady places, behind buildings or under trees. They took buckets of water with them for drinking and carried homemade fans.

One day in the middle of the summer my mother fell ill, and it was soon apparent that she had contracted the dreaded typhoid fever. The whole village became disturbed and frightened. We children were sent to live with two of our aunts. Only my father was permitted to visit Mother. The *roife* (half-doctor) came to see her every day and left instructions for her care. Every half hour she was to be wrapped in sheets which had first been dipped in ice-cold water. This was supposed to reduce the fever. But her progress was slow and the townspeople became more worried. They decided to call in Doctor Luria, who had a wide reputation for being a fine doctor of vast experience. He prescribed medicines for her. The people went to the synagogue every day and prayed for her health and for her life. The crisis passed. She began to recover. The doctor gave credit to his medicines, and the rabbis gave the credit to God.

After Mother started to walk again we children were brought home. But, alas, too soon! Mother cooked a big dinner for the family and partook of it herself, eating with good appetite. That evening she suffered a relapse of the disease. Doctor Luria was called again. He was furious with her. How could she have eaten such a heavy meal! How could she have eaten meat and potatoes! Why hadn't she followed his instructions! With tears in his eyes he told us that Mother was sicker than ever and that this time he held out little chance for her recovery.

The treatment was started again: medicines, ice-cold compresses, cold sheets to wrap her in. Mother became delirious. She recognized no one, not even her husband.

The people of the village were more frightened and worried

than before. What was to become of us poor little children? How would the doctor be paid? But Doctor Luria came three and four times a day to visit Mother, stayed for hours, and didn't even ask for any money.

The rabbi called the people to the synagogue for special prayers. Our Aunt Nessie took us children there with her. All the lights of the synagogue were on and the ark doors were open, exposing the Torahs. Our whole family was brought to the front of the Torahs to pray. This we did in loud tones, half crying, half begging God that he spare our mother and not take her from us, for we needed her here. Everyone in the synagogue cried with us. When we had finished our prayers the rabbi said a prayer, and then he ordered us all to go to the cemetery to the grave of Erib Gimpel, my mother's father. The long procession started out from the synagogue. It contained almost all of the townspeople, including us children. When we arrived at the side of Erib Gimpel's grave the crying became even louder and more beseeching, in the hope that it would thus reach the heavens and that God would then have mercy and spare her life.

When we got home Doctor Luria told us that he needed a certain medicine that was only available in Vinitza, the nearest big city; and he needed it as soon as possible. The Iswaschick offered to go with his good team of horses, which could make the trip in about sixteen hours. But those sixteen hours turned out to be for us like sixteen days or weeks. When he returned with the medicine all of the villagers gathered around our house, waiting to hear from Doctor Luria. The doctor announced that it would take six hours to learn the results of the medicine, and he told everyone to go home. They did, only to return again in six hours. This time they were not disappointed. The news was received that the medicine had worked! The fever was broken and Molke would be all right!

Within ten days Mother was out of bed, and with my help could walk to a chair or to the table. I served as her cane or crutches for four weeks, taking her from place to place in the house, helping her. Finally, she was fully recovered. But the experience of her illness, as well as the other events of the year 1900, have remained in my memory, and are as vivid today as when they occurred.

ABE IS BORN

The day was dreary. Dark clouds hung over the town of Warshilovka. A chilly drizzle, almost turning into rain, was falling. The street was muddy and it was unpleasant to be out.

Simche and the children were in the living room, the children playing and Simche looking into his personal finances. Suddenly he heard Molke groaning in the next room. Simche quickly ran in there. In a minute he was back with his coat on and ran out to the street. The children were bewildered and could only guess what was happening. Molke's groans were getting louder and louder, were turning into screams. The children were frightened and cried. Chaim, the oldest, walked to the door of the bedroom and looked in. He saw his mother lying in bed screaming with terrible pain.

Simche arrived with the midwife and she got busy. Simche came out to quiet the children. He told them that soon they would have another brother or sister. The children's faces lighted up happily but Simche's face was pale, frightened, and anxious. It wasn't much later that the midwife opened the door, walked straight to Simche and announced to him, "It's a boy." She repeated it once more so the children could hear. "It's a boy."

The children danced for joy, but Simche's face was still worried and pale. Where would he get the money to cover all this? What would he do? The midwife to pay, a *bris* to make, things to buy for the baby. Where would he get it? Not a ruble in the house. His thoughts didn't leave him for a minute. He wished it had been a girl—much less expensive.

In no time at all family started to come. First came Molke's sisters and sister-in-law, to express their *mazeltov* to Simche and see how Molke and the child were doing. Simche's thoughts were momentarily changed. He was a great believer in God and knew that God would help him.

Shloime, his brother-in-law, came in, shook his hand with a big *mazeltov* on his lips, and started to talk about the *bris* and how big he would make it. Then he took out twenty-five rubles and lent them to Simche, whose eyes joyfully opened wide. He gave heartfelt thanks to Shloime. He made some tea and drank with Shloime, talking with him while Molke's sisters were busy arranging Molke and the child.

"And the name?" Shloime asked. "Avrum Gershen, after my father," Simche replied, and added: "He is a lucky child to be honored to carry my father's name." Shloime agreed.

But it seemed that the newborn child wasn't too happy in this cold, unhappy world. For he kept on crying, his voice getting stronger and more heartbreaking. He cried without a stop. The midwife did everything. Molke's sisters tried everything and couldn't stop Avrum Gershen from crying. And so did all the other children. They just couldn't stand his bitter crying and they cried with him. Simche tried to quiet down his four children, told them that their brother would soon stop crying, and gave them each a slice of bread. They became quiet, and so did Avrum Gershen quiet down after Molke took him and made him comfortable.

The midwife and Nessie, the oldest sister, got busy making plans for the *bris*. First they baked honey cookies in the shape of a diamond. The children from the *cheder* would come to sing *crishma (mazeltov),* and it was the custom to give them cookies. The rabbi would have some vodka and cookies. Before the children from *cheder* came Simche hung several sheets from the ceiling around the bed, hiding the bed completely—mother and child should not be seen before the *bris*. And Simche lettered by hand four signs; on them was *Shadi* (Devil keep out). He hung them on the four sides of the bed, pinning them on the sheets to keep mother and child safe from the devil.

They baked sponge and honey cakes and *challa,* made marinated herring, and Simche got the vodka. When the day of the *bris* came everything was ready. Tables were set; the rabbi and guests were on time. Molke was all dressed up and the child was wrapped in a small quilt. A *quater* and *sondick* were named. The *quater* brings the child to the rabbi for circumcision and the *sondick* sucks the blood after

the operation. Everything was ready. But not the child. He cried with the same bitter, heartbreaking cry and the little children cried with him. He wasn't quiet until Molke took him again in her arms.

But after the operation he cried again. Molke prepared some sugar, with a drop of vodka in it, for him on a rag, and he was given it to suck on. The guests were happy around the tables. Vodka brightened their faces. They ate and drank and wished for the mother and father that Avrum Gershen should grow up to be a good Jew, a cultured person, smart in the Talmud, and good to God and men. Everybody said *mazeltov*. Simche and Molke answered, *"Mit mazel zolt ir laiben"* ("Luck be with you"). Thus the traditional *bris* ended and everybody left.

Early next morning Simche in his *tallis* (prayer shawl) and *tvillen* (phylacteries) said his morning prayers with a hearty, earnest, sincere feeling. He prayed to God for his bigger family, for their health, for Molke's health, and for a chance to make an honest living for them. And after he said *shiminnesere* (in silent prayer) he removed his *tallis* and *tvillen* and put them in the sacks. Knowing well his great responsibilities, he kissed Molke and the children and started out for the country, saying that he would be back for the Sabbath day. It was a five-mile walk for him, and on his way his deep thoughts were on his increased responsibility. He must increase his earnings. He started to lay plans, first to go to Odessa and Kiev to see the merchants that were buying his merchandise, and make some arrangements to increase his income.

After a good week of business Simche returned Friday, about noon, for the Sabbath day. He knew there was no money at home to buy the necessary food for the Sabbath, and stores closed early. When he got home he found Molke and the children warm and fed. For Molke had managed to buy one *pood* of flour on a promise to pay as soon as Simche came home. Molke had baked *challa, popolickes* (pancakes), and some cookies, and had made *lugshen*. She had fed the children the *popolickes* with milk she got from her sister Nessie. Avrum Gershen was sleeping contentedly.

Simche's heart was glad and a big happy smile was on his face

when he heard what Molke had done. He went closer to her and told her that Avrum Gershen brought him luck, that he had had a good week and had made some money. Before it was too late he would go to buy the necessary things. First he paid for the flour. Then he bought the meat, some fish, and horseradish and other things Molke had told him to buy. At the very last he counted the money and still could afford some wine, which completed his list. Molke got busy in the kitchen while Simche talked to the children. He told them that their little brother, Avrum Gershen, brought him good luck.

And in the evening when Simche returned from the synagogue and said, "Good *Shabbes,*" Molke and the children answered, "Good *yahr.*" And Simche got ready and washed his hands before eating. All the children and Molke were seated at the table. Simche poured his shining red wine into the glass and made *kiddish.* When he got through they all said, *"Humain."* He gave Molke a sip of wine from his glass. Then he made a *moitza* over the two *challas.* He cut the first slice, put some salt on it, ate it; then he cut the whole loaf and the children each got slices.

Molke brought the gefilte fish, the horseradish, then soup with noodles, then the big platter of meat and *tzimmes* of carrots. Simche brought Avrum Gershen to the table, held him up to the family, and told them that Avrum Gershen, because he was named after his (Simche's) father, brought them good luck. "From now on," he said, "with the help of God everything will be good with us."

And Simche sang *zmires,* the children and Molke helped, and to the last of the meal he *bentched mizimin.* And before they left the table Simche thanked God for sending him Avrum Gershen, with the *mazel* (luck) he brought them.

THE COLDEST WINTER

Nineteen hundred and one was the coldest winter in fifty years in the Ukraine. It was so cold that water froze in seconds outside, and the windows were solidly iced.

Mother kept two fires going all the time, and the house was not warm. We dressed in our coats in the house, and for the night Mother covered us with everything she had to keep us warm. In fact, many nights we were all on the brick-built stove. As the top was flat, you could sleep on it while the fire went on in the stove all the time.

Father couldn't leave the house for almost four weeks, and he started to worry about the wood and straw supply for burning. Also, food had dwindled. The street was free of people. It seemed that no one walked out. The snow was deep and more snow was piling up. The Sunday *yarid* was not held. No one came. Stores were closed. The town was cut off from everything.

One day toward the end of January, it was a nice day. The sun was out in its full warmth shining on the white-covered town of Warshilovka, and around noon we heard the church bells ringing, and soon after saw people starting to come out to the street. There was a big sleigh drawn by four horses *naspitz*—two horses in front of the first two—with a big picture of the Tsar hung on the sleigh and two men dressed in very heavy fur coats and big fur hats over the ears, fur gloves and big *pushten* (boots) made out of heavy, warm material. They were calling the people to the center of town to read a proclamation to them. All the people could not come out, for they had no such warm clothes to wear, but a good many came out to find out what was happening. The proclamation was read that Russia was facing war with Japan; that every town, village, and city must be ready for that time.

The demand was first that all people of military age should join

the army. All citizen-subjects should start now to economize, and all workers should make more shoes, hats, and coats. He kept on reading, and toward the end he said, ". . . and a commission will be here in a few days to place orders for such items as I read before." And they left.

That was the best word heard—"a commission will be here to place orders"! The townspeople forgot all about the cold weather, about the snow and the frost, and decided to order everybody to get together in the synagogue in the evening.

The synagogue was filled with discussion about the commission, how they should handle them and who should be authorized to do the business with them. For hours the debate went on.

On one side, Laibel the *kirshner* (capmaker), Chaim the *schneider* (tailor), and Zion the *schuster* (shoemaker) said they and only they should have the authority, for they were the workers and knew all about prices.

Chaim David the grocery businessman, Esoscher the hardware businessman, and Zalman the farm-implement businessman, they wanted to have the authority.

The rabbi appealed to them, wanting both groups to have authority, and saying that he, too, should be with them. But nothing helped. Finally a vote was taken and the trade workers won by a great majority. Laibel the *kirshner* was to be the head of the committee, and Chaim and Zion made up the rest of the committee. Everybody went home and the committee remained to discuss the plans. In just three days the commission arrived, met with the local committee, and promised them that shortly the real commission would come with full authority to place orders. They should hold out and wait.

The frost and cold did not recede. It got even colder. The food supply was less and less. The kindling wood and straw dwindled in every house. But when the businessmen of Warshilovka knew that a new commission would come with full authority to place orders, they decided to give the people credit, anticipating a big boom in Warshilovka. This was a miracle for the people of the town.

Every day the stores opened up, inviting the people to come and

buy what they needed on credit. Kindling wood and straw were brought on sleighs every day and delivered to the people. The town assumed an air of prosperity, with business going on full swing, and the people were happy.

The cold weather subsided, snow began to melt, and people were again able to work, making shoes, hats, and all other articles. They were still waiting for the commission with full power to place orders. And everybody owed bills to the storekeepers and the kindling-wood owner.

The commission never came. But the year was a good, prosperous year. Somehow, people started buying. *Yarids* started regularly and they were big *yarids*. More peasants came than ever before. They brought their things to sell or trade—their livestock, their wheat, their corn, their fruit and vegetables. The market was full with them. And they bought for themselves much more than usual at stores where busy tradesmen sold their made-up shoes and boots, coats, hats, and caps to the peasants on market days and *yarids*.

The town felt prosperity, and with my father it was the best year for a long time. When the fruit began to ripen in the orchards, Father started picking cherries—black and red cherries. They were as big as plums, juicy, and very tasty. He employed Chaim Laiser and about five or six more boys and girls. Father made a shipment every day either to Odessa or Kiev, and received demands for more. He got his money regularly, with praise for the good cherries he was sending. Father increased his shipments and was very happy.

Mother got some extra money and started to buy things for the children, which were needed very badly. Father started to lay in kindling wood and straw, and then some food that could be stored for the winter, for everybody in town felt the hardship from the recent severe weather and felt they had to lay away at least enough food and wood not to be caught without it again.

Meanwhile, the townspeople were paying their winter bills to the storekeepers and wood-handlers who had trusted them in such distressed times. They knew they had done it because they had expected a commission from the government that would have made

prosperity in the town—but now the businessmen did not regret their deed. They felt triumphant, for the good times came just the same, and the bills people owed them had been getting paid up.

My father's business increased tremendously—the fruit this year grew big and tasty. The cherries, plums, apples, and pears all came extraordinarily big and tasty, and the men they were shipped to knew that. For this fruit brought the best prices in the market. So they demanded more and bigger shipments. But Father was satisfied. He was doing pretty well and couldn't do much better.

This was the first year that my father ordered a suit and shoes for himself, and a couple of dresses and some shoes for Mother. And Mother ordered and bought all the necessary things for the children, and everything was paid for. Father was happy because his kindling wood and straw were laid in for the winter. And when the High Holidays came and the first snow fell and covered everything white, neither Mother nor Father worried about it. They thanked God and felt secure.

The people of Warshilovka all felt good because of the good times that came to the town. The synagogues were more brightly lit up. The *budd* (bathhouse) and *mikva* (women's bathhouse) were heated better and more people attended. The women flocked to the *mikva,* especially for the Sabbath, to be kosher "immersed."

That year our family increased. Our brother Velvel (William) was born. He was the fifth brother. He came in somewhat better times, and everybody loved him for the name that he assumed—that of a great uncle who had just died. Father could pay the midwife and could afford to buy the necessary things for the baby and the house.

Just as the coldest winter brought so much suffering to the people of Warshilovka, people lived just that much easier the next year because of the prosperity that accidentally came to town. Everybody was able to prepare better for the winter. And when the holidays came, and a snow fell for three days and three nights and left deep drifts and made walking or traveling hard, nevertheless everyone was secure, and it was reflected in the people's dressing and eating.

And when Sukkoth (Feast of the Tabernacle) came, and everyone built their own *sukkah* to eat in for the duration of the holiday, it was a feast that lasted a week. Every day the meals were bigger and better.

Simchas Torah came, the day when everybody drinks and becomes merry, and in the synagogue they dance and sing, parading around carrying the Torah, with everybody kissing it and the atmosphere reaching the highest pitch of dance and happiness.

My father took his sons to the synagogue, where we had the best time ever. Father carried the Torah and was the life of the party parading through the aisles. He was heard all over the synagogue. His voice spelled great happiness and everybody was happy with him. The next day he was so hoarse from the night before that he couldn't talk.

The holidays were ended. A long winter set in, although not so severe as the last one. But winter in the Ukraine is nothing to push away with one hand. It is winter for six months or more, and it is snow on the ground and frozen windows and a frozen Bug River. It is sleigh riding and it is winter.

OGRAD TO BORSCOV

From the town of Warshilovka on the abandoned road, left of the flour mill, over the swift-running *tach,* across the old wooden bridge, ran a zigzag road. Narrow and rough, it was lined with very old trees that formed an umbrella over it.

About two and a half miles from Warshilovka on this road lay a small village, an unusual village. Its name and its people were much different from those of any other village I have ever seen. The name was Ograd, meaning "orchard." And that is what the village was. The best fruit in all the Ukraine grew there. But for two reasons the fruit remained unsold. First, the town was isolated from any good road, so that it was hard to reach. The second reason was the people who lived there.

These people were called *Katzopes.* They were not like the peasants of the other villages, nor were they like the people in the towns. *Katzopes* was a nickname from the Russian, meaning "hobo type." The men were all over six feet tall, clean-shaven, stout, and impudent. They wore few clothes: a red blouse over their trousers, a colored rope with the tasseled ends knotted around the waist, no underwear whatever, and long black boots with the trouser ends tucked inside. Peasants and Jews alike were afraid of them. By trade they were excavators, bridge and road builders, and fruit merchants. They lived only with their own kind in the tiny village. They were excitable and self-educated, and were considered good Russians.

The women wore only a *pidnitsa,* a long dress like a kimona. The children, male and female, dressed like their parents.

The *Katzopes* were very seldom drunk, although they were heavy drinkers. They built their own homes and made their own furniture. They had around the house a horse, a cow, or goat, some chickens, and a big dog. They gardened just enough for their own use, but

their fruit was wasting away, for they had so much of it and so many trees that they could never pick the full crop.

One day Simche, my father, had the use of a horse and wagon. Laib, his nephew, was sick and couldn't go out buying eggs, so he gave Simche the use of his horse and wagon for just feeding the horse.

Father decided to drive to Ograd to see if he could do some business with the *Katzopes.* He was a little scared to make the trip. Nobody ever went to that village for business. But he thought it over and decided those people were no murderers. Nobody ever heard of anyone being killed in Ograd. Besides he believed that God would protect him wherever he went.

So to Ograd he went, and from this first visit he developed a good business with the *Katzopes.* He bought the fruit on the trees. He had to pick it, pack it, and take it away with his own help. Simche became friendly with some of the *Katzopes,* and he said they were wonderful people. They would give you the shirt off their backs, but the trouble was they never wore a shirt.

When Father had to pick fruit he used to round up about ten of the bigger children in Warshilovka and take them out to Ograd in a big wagon. They picked until the job was done. Pickers got fifty cents a day and could eat all the fruit they wanted.

One day when we picked *rinneten* (a rusty-colored apple) I ate so many that to this day I can't eat apples. But we loved to go to work in Ograd, for everything there seemed to be so peaceful. The *Katzopes* and their wives and children were very accommodating. We used to love to watch the men work. They always sang at their work. They handled big heavy logs to build houses. Their song went like this: *"Hai dobinitchka uochny hai zilunna ya sama. Poidut! Poidut! Poidut!"*

Ograd became the best village for my father's business. It was near enough to our town for a quick run there and back, in time for other things or in time for the Sabbath. And Father always did some business with the *Katzopes.*

At the beginning of the twentieth century the *Katzopes* decided to sell out and move to a new place. They started to sell their farms,

orchards, houses, and livestock to peasants. In a short time all was sold and Ograd became another peasant village.

The first thing they did was change the name to Borscov. A new road was opened to the main road that led to Tivriv, a big town. The peasants harvested all the fruit themselves and sold it at the *yarids*.

Thus my father lost a lot of business there.

THE SMALL PROVIDER

The sun had just begun to rise on Warshilovka. It threw its first rays on the trees and the buildings, stretching out long shadows on the wide, dry dirt streets.

The town was still in its slumber, coming out of the dark night. Trees and buildings were covered with a crystal-clear dew, dripping down to the dirt streets and changing their sandy color to brown. The sound of roosters filled the air, waking the people and proclaiming the start of a new day.

I quietly opened the door of my house and ran out into the street. I stopped for a minute, looked around to make sure of myself, and started straight in the direction of Reb Shloime's egg-business warehouse, where his office was located.

Reb Shloime supplied eggs to the big cities of the Ukraine: Kiev, Odessa, Vinitza, and other such cities. He employed men from the town to travel in the farm villages and buy the eggs from the farmers. The peasants brought them to his warehouse, where they were candled and packed for shipment.

When I opened the door to Reb Shloime's office there were several men inside. They were figuring, counting money, and getting ready for their day's business. One by one they disappeared.

I waited for my chance, and as Reb Shloime got up from the chair at his desk after the last man left, I moved in close to him. In a low voice, with respect and obedience, I said, "Reb Shloime, Reb Shloime" (repeating his name twice to make sure he would hear me), "I want to go to the village Sitisk to buy some eggs. I must earn some money to buy food for the family. My mother is sick and my father is away looking for work."

"But, Mailech, my dear child," Reb Shloime interrupted, "you

are too small. You are only eight years old. There are big dogs on the farms, and little boys are afraid of big dogs."

"I am not afraid of big dogs," I replied. "And I must earn some money. My brothers and sisters are hungry. There is no food in the house. I must earn some money."

Reb Shloime looked down at me with eyes of great sympathy and, softening his voice, put his hand on my shoulder and said, "Good. Here is some money. Go into the warehouse and tell Reevan to give you a basket. But be sure to go home and tell your mother before you leave for Sitisk."

As fast as my feet could carry me I ran, got the basket, and was on my way home. I told my mother of my venture and that Reb Shloime had given me three rubles and the big, open hand-woven basket with a big handle, and that I was ready to go to the country to the peasants to buy their eggs.

Mother's eyes filled with big tears. Choking within in order not to cry out loud, without saying a word, she cut two slices of bread, salted them, gave them to me, took me around, hugged me, and kissed me.

Soon I was on my way to Sitisk, a small country village where about one hundred peasant families lived.

The road had wagon-wheel tracks left from the peasants' travel to and from their fields, hauling their products to their barns. At both sides of the road were deep ditches to take off the rainwater, running parallel and stretching for miles and miles as far as the eye could see.

A mild morning wind blew up some dust that was carried to the corn, rye, and wheat fields. It blew the grain-laden tops, and they bowed and raised their heads again and again, in a sort of play between wind and fields.

As I proudly walked on the side of the road, a naive, childish thought came to me. "Why does Nucham Chaim David's, a boy the same age as I, always have shoes on his feet? And why does he always wear a nice suit with a hat? And why does he say he is never hungry, and why does he always carry money with him? What

does it mean when he says his father is rich? On the Sabbath day he gets dressed up in a beautiful black suit and goes with his father to the synagogue. He sits there with all the big people through the services. Why don't they let me in the synagogue? Is it because I am barefooted? Why can't I too have those nice things to wear, plenty to eat, and some of my own money? I would give some to that blind beggar who goes from house to house and tells how his children are hungry."

But I knew I had a job to do and couldn't just dream. I lifted my eyes toward my destination and saw the dark, thick woods ahead of me. Walking with more energy I entered the frightening woods—tall, thick, silent trees divided only by the road that turned and twisted like a running snake. My heart began to beat faster, harder, with a frightened beat. For a moment I could have cried. But not Mailech. I knew I had to earn some money to buy food for the family. As I walked, dim light started to show through the trees, and when I left the last tree, I heard the barking of dogs and saw little shack houses stretched out on both sides of the road.

Now was my chance, and in a loud voice that carried for blocks I shouted out, *"Yaitze, yaitze! Coopovy yaitze!"*

This meant, "Eggs, eggs! I buy eggs!"

An old peasant woman called me. "Boy, come here." As I approached the farmhouse, three big dogs started after me. I was terribly frightened, but the old woman drove them off, took me into the house, and Mailech made his first deal. My basket was almost filled. The old woman took me to the next house and I made my second deal. Now the basket was full and quite heavy.

Happy with the accomplishment, I started home, walking slowly and proudly, carrying the heavily laden basket.

As I walked I sang some of my mother's lullabies and figured my profit. That would be two gilden (thirty cents)—and how much food my mother could buy for the family! I had to rest from time to time, for the load was heavy. When I was about halfway home, clouds started to gather, covering the sky.

There was the first lightning and thunder. Drops of rain started

to fall. I walked under a big tree and sat down to protect myself from the rain, which began to come down very hard. As I sat and thought of my mother, brothers, and sisters, my heart grew heavy with a great urge to be home with them. There was a pause, and I broke into loud, heartbreaking crying.

A farmer going into town heard the crying, stopped, and picked me up. The farmer took me home and told my mother how I sat under a tree crying.

But now I was happy. I had earned two gilden with which my mother could go out and buy food for the children.

THE SEMI-ANNUAL YARID

The semi-annual *yarid,* or market day, was a great event in the Ukraine. There were semimonthly and weekly *yarids* held throughout the year, but the semiyearly one was the biggest of them all. It was talked about everywhere.

Peasants, farmers, country and city people, shoemakers, tailors, capmakers, blacksmiths, and business people, were all looking forward to this great day, for this *yarid* provided the best trading. People came from miles and miles to the town of Tivriv, where the *yarid* was held. Tivriv, a town of about five hundred families, was centrally located in an area of rich Ukrainian farmland used for crops and cattle-raising. The town had a big business-center to accommodate the hundreds of farmers who would come with their horses and wagons to sell their livestock and produce, and to buy the many articles they needed.

At this *yarid* you could find horses, cows, goats, pigs, chickens, eggs, wheat, corn, oats, potatoes, cabbages, onions, carrots, cucumbers, apples, pears, watermelons, and in fact everything that was grown and raised on the farms. And, for the farmers to buy, there would be shoes, boots, coats, pants, hats, dresses, yardage, groceries, candles, kerosene, grease, oil, soap, wool, cotton, needles, matches, and many more articles they would need for their homes and farms. The farmers would also patronize the taverns, where they drank vodka and ate good meals that the townspeople would prepare for the occasion. The storekeepers would stock up with merchandise they had brought from the big cities. The day usually turned into a great carnival of trading and amusements. Tents were pitched for side shows of animals of all sorts, big fat men, tall skinny men, a half-man and half-horse, flying fishes, and other spectacles. A man accompanied by several girls, dressed in costumes and holding whips in their hands,

would call the people to come in and see the wonders. Stands were set up to sell *kwass,* a sweet red punch, and all kinds of candies.

Beggars dressed in rags would sit on the ground in long rows, playing harmonicas and singing religious songs of mercy. Occasionally someone would drop a coin into the plates they provided.

The young boys and girls would walk around the town, holding hands, embracing, singing Ukrainian melodies, stopping for some candy, some *kwass,* and to watch the side shows. The girls were dressed in white embroidered blouses and full-gathered skirts flowered in striking colors, and they wore kerchiefs on their heads. The boys wore red blouses and bloomer-like trousers. Most of them would be barefooted.

The noises of the animals mixed with voices of the people calling out their wares for sale would echo through the town from sunrise to dusk. This was a *yarid* in the full sense of the word.

In the morning four days before the *yarid,* my mother called me to her, took me around with both arms, and drew me close to her. On her face was a look of despair. In a low voice she said, "My dear son, you are my second-oldest child. You are nine. Your older brother is working in the city for just his room and board. Your father has had a streak of hard luck and hasn't earned anything for a long time. To you I can talk like to a grown-up person. You are smart. You will understand me. Only on you and God I can depend.

"In four days there will be the semi-annual *yarid* in Tivriv. There will be a lot of people there and a lot of business. This *yarid* could solve my problem. You see, in about two months I am going to have another brother or sister for you, and up to this day I haven't a thing prepared for that little child. I haven't even the fee for the midwife to bring it into this world. I haven't a shirt, a diaper, or even a cradle. If you, my dear son, would go to this *yarid* and sell our *kwass,* and our *kwass* is very good; the peasants like it, I am sure you could make some money that I could use for the baby's arrival."

I listened to my mother intently, and a great urge to help her came over me. Very excitedly I replied, "Yes, Mother dear, I will go, and I will sell our *kwass.* I will make some money! I do know

how to sell it, too! In a loud voice I will holler out, *'Kwass frontzsky he govoreet po Russkie kwass kwasok Kwasachock chto kwass piea tho shinke ne biea!'* " ("French *kwass* that speaks Russian. He who drinks this *kwass* doesn't beat his wife.") "The peasants will buy and drink our *kwass,* and I will make some money for my little brother or sister."

My mother looked at me with a happy smile and said, "Good. I will make all the arrangements."

She got the big washtub ready, prepared the red coloring that went into the *kwass,* and got the saccharine. She washed the big beer mugs, took a large white tablecloth to cover up the washtub, and got a low stool to put the washtub on and a board to stand the glasses on. She engaged Vassil, the peasant who was our good friend, to take me with him to the *yarid.*

Thursday morning, long before sunrise, Mother came to my bed with a kerosene lamp in her hand and awakened me. This was the day of the *yarid.* With the speed of lightning I jumped out of bed and got washed and dressed. Breakfast was waiting for me, and as I finished eating, Vassil arrived with his straw-laden wagon. We packed in all the things I needed. We covered the ice with potato sacks, and we put the glasses in the straw. Mother kissed me and wished me luck. In her eyes there was a look of love, devotion, and remorse.

Vassil pulled away. He had a good team of horses and drove fast. He said that he wanted to arrive in Tivriv early, so we could get a good place and do the best possible business. As we were driving along, I started to feel a little chilly. Vassil covered me with an extra coat. I felt warmer, but one of my teeth started to ache. It was not too severe, but it did hurt.

We were among the first ones to arrive in the town. Vassil picked the best place available in the middle of the square right opposite the stores. We lost no time taking everything off the wagon. First we got the bench and put the washtub on it. Then the water. We washed the ice and put it in the water, sweetened the water with saccharine, and colored it a bright red. We covered the washtub with the white tablecloth, and put the glasses on the board. We

dipped one of the glasses into the tub and filled it with the nice red *kwass*. It was beautiful and tasted good. But while I was preparing all of these things, my tooth started aching badly. I had never felt such pain.

The peasant farmers with their families were gradually arriving in their heavily laden wagons. They were coming from all directions. They stationed their wagons in rows, one next to the other, and each displayed his own products. A blistering hot sun was shining down on the town, on the wagons, on the people. Everything was set for a big day.

As I stood by my stand, the pain in my tooth was frightful. My cheeks were swelling up, my head was swimming, and I felt as if a hammer were pounding in my mouth. I kept all this to myself until I could no longer stand it, and then I broke into loud crying. A number of people came over to see what was the matter. They gave me whisky, pepper, garlic, and other remedies to hold in my mouth. But nothing helped. Finally Vassil came over and told me to get into the wagon and to go to sleep on the straw. Exhausted from crying and from the terrible pain, I fell asleep immediately and slept through the day.

When the sun began to set, the wagons and people started to go home. Vassil woke me up gently. I was frightened. What would I do? What would I say? How could I face my mother? Big new tears started to roll down my swollen cheeks. When we arrived home, Mother took one look at my red eyes and misshapen jaw and grabbed me in her arms and kissed me. Then she started to cry bitterly. Her last hope had vanished.

ANOTHER SELTZER VENTURE

The next day the swelling had disappeared and my teeth didn't hurt any more. I got up from bed in good spirits. I first looked for Mother to see how she felt. She said good morning and took me in her arms with the love only a mother can have for her child.

"My son, don't worry," she said. "We will find a way to make some money. We can't give up, can we?"

I answered, "Mother dear, I will do anything I can to help you!"

As she served me breakfast she started to lay a new plan. "This Sunday, my son, there is a very big wedding in Sitisk, a small peasant village with only two Jewish families living there. So Erib David Zilberstein, the richer of the two Jews, is marrying off his oldest and his first daughter. He is arranging a very big wedding. He is bringing music from Vinitza, the best musicians in the state. He must be paying them very big money, for they don't play at all weddings, only at rich people's weddings. And he also is bringing from Vinitza the best cooks. They say it's going to be a dinner *keiad ameilech* [fit for a king]. Now at such a dinner people like to drink seltzer and syrup in attractive colors. I am sure we could sell two or three *saphones* of seltzer." (A *saphone* was a metal keg holding about ten gallons.) My mother went on: "And we can make some money. Now the only thing is, do you feel you can attend to a big job like that? If you think the job is too big for you, maybe I can get your cousin Laib to go with you to help. I already talked to Vassil, and he is willing to take you and stay till the next morning to bring you back home."

I replied as I had before, "Yes, Mother dear, I will go, and I'll try my best to sell our seltzer, and I will make some money. I don't need Laib to help me. I am sure I can do it myself."

Sunday after church services Vassil arrived with his horses and

his wagon—full of straw, so we could pack all the things and not break the bottles of syrup.

When I saw Vassil I got scared. It reminded me of my last venture at the semi-annual *yarid*. That didn't work out very well. But I quickly decided that was an accident and couldn't happen again. So we loaded the wagon with three *saphones* of seltzer and plenty of bottles of syrup. With a smiling face I said good-bye.

When we arrived in Sitisk and came to the place of the wedding we found they had built a tremendous *shalash* that would hold three to four hundred people. The musicians were already there and the guests *(machetonem)* started to arrive for the *forshpiel* dance (prelude to the wedding). They were mostly boys and girls, for this was for the young folks.

I quickly set up my washtub that held the seltzer and covered it with a white sheet. I set up my bottles of colored syrup and all was ready for business. In minutes I had small and big drinking my seltzer. The thought went through my mind, "I hope I am not interrupted. This will be good business."

Not long after this the *michutan,* Erib David Zilberstein, came over and he looked very mad.

"Who are you? And what are you doing here?" he asked in a loud voice.

"I am Molke Gimpel's son and I came to sell seltzer to your *machetonem*. We do that at a lot of weddings," I answered.

Then I noticed he got more angry and in the same loud voice he said, "Yes, but I brought a man from Vinitza to serve seltzer to my guests free, not to sell it to them. Here is the man bringing his outfit in."

A middle-aged man, clean-shaven, tall, and well-dressed, walked in and right after him two men pulled in on wheels a beautiful stand with a shining silver faucet in the middle of the stand and full jars of different kinds of fresh-fruit jelly with silver dippers in each jar. Just looking at it created the desire to drink.

"You see," he kept on saying in the same voice, "you must pack up and go home. I will get you something to eat before you leave." And he walked away.

The scene of Tivriv came back to me. Now here was a second disappointment. What should I do? How could I face my mother again? With these terrible thoughts and with tears running from my eyes, my heart broken and my spirit disillusioned, I started to fold up my business. Vassil helped. He didn't like what had happened and he cursed. When Zilberstein came with food we refused it and left for home.

When Father came home from Gneven and saw Mother's eyes red from crying he got scared and wanted to know what had happened. As Mother finished telling him the story of my disappointment he dug into his pocket and pulled out a roll of money.

"Don't worry," he said. "Everything is not as dark as it appears. I had a very good day. You see, for the last two weeks we have been harvesting apples, and I had one hundred eighty baskets already packed and ready to ship to Odessa. But I got word from my buyer that the market was low and I should hold back the shipment. It was too late, for I already had the apples on wagons at the railroad. I stopped, not knowing what to do. A well-dressed man with a full round face and a large beard spread all over his chest approached me. We shook hands and he asked me whether I was Simche Avrum Gershen's. 'Yes, that is right, I am Simche Avrum Gershen's,' I said. 'Well,' he said, 'I am very happy that I found you without delay. My name is Gershen Ben Zarchaia. I am a *pervia gildia kupetz,* a first-class businessman. I am doing business in Petersburg and I am looking for fruit from the Ukraine to have steady shipments. I am prepared to pay a good price for the right fruit. I was recommended to you by Zelig Partnoy from Kiev. And here I am. What can you do for me?'

"So I told him that I was obligated to my Kiev buyers and to my Odessa buyers. But I have here one hundred eighty baskets of the best apples, which I could let him have. He was very happy. We sat down, figured up the worth of my apples. He paid me in cash, yes, cash money, and made his own shipment, and he begged me to ship some more fruit from time to time. Only I should telegraph him collect whenever I can make a shipment.

"I now have his address and I will try to make shipments about

every two weeks to him between my shipments to Kiev and Odessa. In this cash deal I cleared almost one hundred rubles."

He handed to Mother twenty-five rubles to buy what she needed for the coming baby and to put some money away for the midwife's fee.

I saw a great big smile on Mother's face, such as was not too often seen. It made me feel very good, even though I had failed in my two attempts to help.

It seems Erib David Zilberstein felt guilty that he had sent me home without doing any business at his wedding. So Sunday on *yarid* day he came to Warshilovka, direct to our house. He apologized to Mother and handed her five rubles for the expense and trouble. But Mother refused the money. She did accept his apology, saying we should have seen him first to get permission to come to the wedding, and that it was her fault.

As Erib David Zilberstein walked out of the house he met Vassil, the peasant who was with me at the wedding. He stopped Vassil and asked him where he could find me. Vassil took him to the place where I was selling *kwass* to the peasants and singing my song, *"Kwass frontzsky he govoreet po Russkie."* I had quite a few peasants around me buying and drinking.

Erib David Zilberstein stopped, very much surprised at the way I conducted my business. Then he came over.

"Mailech," he said, loud and fast, "I owe you an apology about my wedding. I acted wrong and want to make it good. How much would you have made if you had sold all your seltzer water that day?"

For a minute I was shocked and didn't know what to say. Vassil, standing right near me, understood what Erib David Zilberstein asked, and he noticed my embarrassment. He came very close, turned to my ear and said, *"Deset rubblie"* ("Ten rubles").

Without even realizing what I was saying I repeated, "Ten rubles." Zilberstein, without losing one second, took from his pocket ten rubles, handed me the money, and wished me well. He left.

THE BUSINESSMEN

My cousin Laib was one year older than I. He also claimed to be bigger, stronger, and even smarter. I had to go along with his claims or else he would threaten to beat me up. Laib was a half-orphan, his father, my mother's brother, having died. Laib lived with his mother, Mima (Aunt) Blume, and his three sisters. They made their living all right. They owned the only Singer sewing machine in Warshilovka. So with Mima Blume making patterns and doing the cutting, and the three girls doing the sewing, they got lots of business making clothes for the peasants' wives and daughters. But the peasants mostly paid with chickens, eggs, fruits, vegetables, and other farm products. So the family always had what to eat, but seldom any real money.

When Laib was eleven years old and claiming to be much more experienced in business than I, he decided to try to make some money by buying eggs from the farmers and selling them to Reb Shloime, the egg merchant. This he did and made out pretty well. Then one day he proposed to me that he and I should become partners in the business. If we went together to the farmers to buy their eggs, he reasoned, we could become a bigger business and Reb Shloime might give us a better price for the eggs. In addition, it wouldn't be so lonesome walking to the villages if we were together, and so forth and so on. Laib was full of reasons why we should form this partnership.

I listened to all his reasons, thought about them, and came up with the answer, "No." I remembered my father always said, *"Alain ist die nashume rain"* ("Alone is the soul clean"). And, besides, I was afraid Laib would take advantage of me, since he was bigger, stronger, smarter, and a better businessman. Unfortunately, just because of these very factors, Laib was able to force me to merge

our businesses. In fact, just as I said, "No," I got my first smack in the face. And before I could say another word he had me on the floor, daring me to say it again.

Well, I didn't say it again, but I warned him that I would tell his mother if he didn't leave me alone. And I reminded him that my father once told him never to beat me up, but to bring any complaints about me to him. So Laib backed off and let me sit up. But he kept on trying to persuade me to become his partner. Finally, he made me a proposition that I couldn't turn down. He suggested that we try the partnership for one day, and if I didn't like it, we could then split up and forget about it.

The next morning, Thursday, Laib and I started off very early. We walked first to Reb Shloime's warehouse and into the office, where we got three rubles and two baskets. Then we started on our way to Magilow, a village about six miles from our town. We chatted about our future and about how much we could make that day if we filled our baskets with eggs. The most we could figure on was two gilden, thirty kopekas each, which would not be a bad day's profit. We even discussed what our mothers could buy with so much money, and how happy the children would be sitting at the table with such a good meal.

Time went fast, and we were more than halfway to the village when we noticed a man walking toward us carrying something on his back in a sack. As he got closer we could tell he was a peasant.

"Good morning," we said approaching him. He stopped and answered us, throwing the sack on the ground.

"Where are you going?" he asked.

"We are going to Magilow to buy eggs."

"You don't have to go any farther," he said. "I have here something better than eggs that you can make more money with." And he pulled out of the sack two big pieces of metal that shone like silver.

"Here," he said. "You can buy this for almost nothing. And I know you can return to Warshilovka and sell it for a good profit. All I want for this metal is five rubles."

We looked at each other, and Laib said to me in Yiddish: "Let's offer him the three rubles we have."

So we did. At first he refused to take the three rubles, claiming the metal was worth much more, but after talking to him for an hour, we got him to accept the offer, and he turned over the bag of shining metal to us. Then he turned back home to Magilow, and we back home to Warshilovka.

Carrying the heavy metal, Laib told me how foolish I was not to want to be partner with him.

"You see," he said, "the first day out together, and already we're going to get rich. And you know, with the money we should get for this metal we'll be able to buy a horse and wagon and ride to the villages. No more walking for us and carrying heavy loads."

Laib talked about how we might be able to find the same peasant again and buy some more metal from him. And with all the money we would make we could buy ourselves some good clothes and shoes, and even have enough to give our mothers money to buy clothes and shoes for themselves and the rest of the families. Laib envisaged everyone in town envying us and talking about what good businessmen we were. He also assured me he would take very good care of our horse and brush him and clean him every day. The horse would be our pride! And the wagon! He would grease the wheels twice a week. He would paint the sides green and the wheels bright red. The harness he would order from Schmiel, the harnessmaker, and it would be made of genuine leather. Oh, yes, and we would have him make a leather saddle, too, with brass trimmings so we could ride horseback. And we would feed the horse pure oats.

"Don't talk so much," I said. "You might be disappointed." And we sat down for a rest.

The journey home was slow because of the heavy load. We had to rest often. Laib continued to make plans.

"When we get into town we will go directly to Esoscher, the hardware man who buys and sells metal. And when we get our money we will go home and lay it on the table and call our mothers to

see it. You can imagine how surprised they will be! They'll kiss us and proclaim us to be the best businessmen in town!"

As we approached the town our hearts were beating fast. We entered Reb Esoscher's store pulling out of the sack the metal which shone like silver. Reb Esoscher looked at it and smiled. He put it on the scale and said: "Boys, it weighs two hundred pounds and it is worth one kopeka a pound. So you have two rubles coming to you."

Laib grew pale and weak in the knees. Reb Esoscher noticed this and pulled up a chair for him to sit on, asking him what the matter was. Laib was too shocked to speak, so I explained about our deal with the peasant, and how we had paid him three rubles for the metal. Reb Esoscher told us that the peasant usually brought his metal to him and that he always received one kopeka a pound.

Laib finally recovered enough to speak up. "We thought it was silver and that we had bought a bargain and could make a lot of money with it."

"No, dear boys," Reb Esoscher said, "this is only lead, plain lead. But since you paid three rubles for it, I will pay you that much, too."

And he did. We accepted the three rubles and went home, not mentioning a word to our mothers. This was our first day of partnership, and our last day, too.

ABE GETS LOST ON MARKET DAY

Saturday at sundown, when the shadows were cast on the walls of the rooms, Mother would call the children together and would say the prayer of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob *(Got fun Avrum, fun Itzchock und fun Yancow).*

As she was ushering out the holy Sabbath and bidding welcome to the week of toil and uncertainty, she asked of God to protect her, her husband, and her children and to give them a week of good business so that they would have enough to live on and be able to meet with dignity the holy Sabbath again.

And when the stars began to show up in their brightness, she would light the kerosene lamp and say, *"Goot woch"* ("Good week"), and we would all say, *"Humain"* ("So it should be").

Mother continued. "Tomorrow is *yarid.* We must all get busy to sell our *kwass,* and if we have a good *yarid* business I will buy first of all a *pood* of flour and bake bread for the week. I will bake a *popolicke* [large pancake] for each of you, and I will buy some milk, boil it, and give everyone a full glass."

The children's faces were lighted up with happiness—a *popolicke* with a glass of hot milk!

Early in the next morning we were up and ready. We set up three places with large washtubs, and brought out the glasses and white tablecloths to cover up the tubs. We brought the water and the ice, and put in the red coloring and the saccharine. The *kwass* was cold, sweet, and a beautiful red color, just ready to start the business.

But Brother Abe wasn't there, so I started to look for him. I sent out other children to look for him too, but no one could find Abe. I notified Mother that Abe had disappeared. So she started to look

for him, but all in vain. Mother went around crying. The family was crying. There was no other way—he must have gone swimming and drowned!

Young boys got into the water, swam across the lake and looked. But no Abe! People tried the Bug, another body of water, but there was no Abe anywhere.

The *yarid* was going on, but no one was at our *kwass* stand. Everyone in the family was looking for Abe, going around crying, expecting any minute that he would be recovered dead. Men organized to start a search on the lake and on the Bug. The *starista* (officer of the law) took charge and called in more men and young boys to drag both bodies of water, the lake and the Bug.

The *yarid* was disrupted, for lots of people ran to the lake and to the Bug. Hours passed. Everybody was on edge. Neither the lake nor the Bug ever went through such a thorough investigation as at this time, but nothing happened. People started to go back to the *yarid,* although the *yarid* was almost over.

Mother and the rest of the family went home, their eyes red and still crying, when all of a sudden the back door opened and Abe, rubbing his eyes, yawning, and covered with straw, walked in.

Mother jumped up, picked him up in her arms, and started to kiss him, crying now for joy. "Where were you?" she asked.

"I fell asleep in the *boidem* [garret] and just got up," he answered.

Later it was discovered that Abe went with a cousin for a ride to Sitisk, another village, but knew he had done something wrong. When he returned he decided to cover himself with straw and make himself seem sleepy so he could say he fell asleep in the *boidem.*

There were no *popolickes* and hot milk the next day.

THE BUG RIVER

The River Bug, or, as we called it, "Beag," was the river that ran in from Poland, through Proskorov, through the Ukraine, and by our little town of Warshilovka. It went through Vinitza, the big city nearest to Warshilovka, and went all the way through Odessa to empty into the Black Sea. The Bug stretched from about three hundred feet wide in places to about five or six hundred feet in other places in the town. Warshilovka found many uses for the Bug.

Noah the watercarrier supplied all of Warshilovka with drinking and cooking water from the river. Noah had a special wagon with a large tank which held several hundred gallons of water. He had a fairly good horse and he would drive to the Bug, fill his keg, and deliver the drinking and cooking water to all the families for ten kopekas (ten cents). Noah would fill up their tanks, which held from thirty to fifty gallons. He had a monopoly on the water, although some poor people would carry their own so that they wouldn't have to pay anything.

At one point on the Bug a heavy rope was strung across the water, and attached to it was a *parron* (a flat boat) that would take four horses and wagons and a few people across the river. A person would pay a groshen (half a cent) and a horse and wagon three groshen. The side of the *parron* had a wheel that the rope ran on, and by pulling the rope the *parron* could be steered clear across the river to a platform on the other side. One had to patronize the *parron* in order to go to Gneven, a railroad station, or to the other villages.

The Bug was also the place where all the people would go to swim. The young men would swim all the way across the river to watch the girls bathing. Everyone swam in the nude, and the men had a place for bathing and the women another place. These places were

far away from each other, but a good swimmer could swim across to the other side and get directly across from the women's swimming place. No matter how much the women complained to the boys' parents, it did no good. As the rabbi told some of the fathers, if he could swim across he would do it too.

For washing clothes, there was a special place at one edge of the Bug. There were big stones spread in a row, and each woman would use one for her washing. For a distance one could see a long line of soapy water in the Bug, like a stream of suds.

There were all kinds of fish in the Bug, and many of the young peasants caught fish and sold them to the Jewish people in town. The carp and whitefish were the best sellers. The Jewish families would buy them on Thursday or Friday to cook for the Sabbath. So the Bug was full of fishermen on Wednesday and Thursday of every week. The young peasants liked this deal, because they made some money for themselves and it cost them nothing.

One always saw boats or canoes on the Bug. No Jewish child ever dared to ride one—that was strictly forbidden by the parents—so we used to just watch the peasant children with envy. Some kids that had a kopeka (one cent) would pay for a ride a couple of miles up and back on the Bug, providing their parents didn't find out about it. If they did, the kid would pay dearly for that little pleasure.

The most fun on the Bug came during winter, when the river would freeze solid. The *parron* couldn't travel, and horse and sleigh would drive across the Bug without fear of breaking the ice. People would walk across freely, and Noah the watercarrier had to cut a hole in the ice to be able to fill his tank with water to deliver to the people of the town. For Noah this was his hardest time of the year, and it lasted about six or seven months. Noah had to hire help in those winter months to make all the deliveries. He had to dress up warmly, for at times the water would freeze while he was filling his tank, and many long icicles would be hanging all around the sleigh and the tank. It looked like an antique. The icicles would also form on Noah's beard and mustache.

For young Jews and Gentiles this meant skating and sleigh-

riding. Most of the time we all made our own skates. We took a piece of wood as long as the shoe, put a couple of holes across the width with two strings in to tie to the shoe, and a wire across the length. This made a very good skate, and all we had to do was break it in. When the wire got shiny, the skates were perfect for skating. Our sleds were also homemade. That was easy—even mothers could make sleds for their children. No one ever knew that there were so many children in town until the sleigh-riding came along. Of course the rich children also came out with a servant and a brand-new sled, bought ready-made, or with ready-made skates. We admitted that they had the nicest sleds and skates, but no one was jealous, for we were all out for a good time. The younger children would roam around the marketplace with their sleds, but not for long, because they would get too cold. The bigger children with their skates would go to the Bug. The skating was real exercise, and everyone was warmed up. Everybody was trying his best to outdo the other one. They skated in rings, and they skated holding hands. Then there was a great straight race that went for miles up and back. There were winners of those races. It was at this time that the Gentile and Jewish children would mix, and there were no objections from anyone. In fact, one couldn't tell the difference. They all had red cheeks, sparkling eyes, smiling faces, and sportsmanlike feelings—all alike, only some better skaters than others.

This picture was repeated every time the frost was not too severe, and of course not on Saturdays, when the Jewish children would not dare go skating. It was strictly forbidden on the Sabbath. When the full moon was out and reflected on the white snow and ice, and the frost was mild, our fathers would go out with us, and they too had a good time. The rabbi from the *cheder* would complain that many children were absent. He thought they were sick, or maybe it was too cold for them to come out. But when he found out they were skating he complained to their parents, and it was hard to explain.

At Christmas and New Year's time the young boys and girls from the small villages around Warshilovka would come to town

and decorate the Bug at its widest point. They decorated it like a carnival and it attracted a lot of people. They constructed a regular pulpit, and they conducted services on the holidays and Sundays. There were hundreds of people attending, and after the services they turned the whole thing into a carnival. The young and old were dressed in their native costumes, and a lot of them had skates on. They would dance all kinds of dances on the skates, holding hands, and we would all stand around and watch.

Around Easter, when the ice would begin to melt, the owner of the *parron* would chop out a channel. He was then able to start running the *parron* and get back in business. Now the ice was too thin to travel on with horse and wagon, but the people would still walk across without fear of falling in. As time went on the Bug River became clear of ice. Then the river started to rise and practically came into the middle of town. It started to threaten the houses that were built in a lower area, and some people had to move out and double up with others until the Bug started to subside. Then, and only then, the people of Warshilovka disliked the Bug and wished that it weren't so close to town.

As soon as the river had subsided the activities started again. Fishing was the first thing that one would notice as the fresh fish began appearing on the market. Boats and canoes could be seen coming on the Bug through the town, and the women were once again seen at their stones doing their wash. The Bug was full of life again. And at night, when the peasant boys and girls were paddling their boats and canoes on the Bug, "spooning" in the silvery light of the moon, you could hear the singing of the Dnieper song: *"Ya hochny, ya hochny, yascho raso yascho rassom."* And this, along with other songs, went on far into the night.

SHOEMAKERS, VODKA AND JAIL

Lishnitsky and Grobowsky were very popular with our family. They were two shoemakers that came to the *yarids* in Warshilovka every other Sunday. They made fancy boots that the young, rich peasants bought from them—those that could afford it.

Lishnitsky was much older than Grobowsky, and was the leader of the two. He almost dictated their everyday life, and Grobowsky never questioned his decisions.

For many years they came to the *yarids* without fail. They would drive their team of horses and turn them around, head to the wagon. That's how they fed them and brought water to them for drinking. Then they pulled out a long wooden pole and two wooden sawhorses that they carried with them. They spread their pole across the sawhorses to support the middle of the pole, for the ends were hung on the wagons. They were then halfway ready to display their boots. Next they would come into the house and, friendly, greet Mother: *"Kack nasha zshidovka Molke?"* ("How is our Jewish Molly?"). Mother would smile and say, *"Charasho"* ("Good"), and shake hands with them. The table was already set, and they would sit down to have tea and her own cookies. They never failed to compliment her on the cookies.

This started the day for them and also for Mother, for she kept account of all they ate and drank during the day, and in the evening before leaving they settled up with her. Mother used to say, "Thank God for their coming. They are our bread and butter."

Lishnitsky and Grobowsky unpacked their boots and hung them on the pole. Every pair was tied to the pole so that no one else could take them off. These boots were not ordinary boots. These boots first of all were made from shining patent leather and were made in

the shape of a concertina. The center of the boot folded in square or octagon folds. The shoe top had an eight-inch band across it, with two leather ears on the sides to pull the boots on your feet. When you pulled your boots onto your feet the folds opened up and when you had them on the folds went back in position, forming that beautiful octagon fold, like a concertina. Ordinary boots also made a fold when you had them on. But the fold would be disarranged. They would fall any old way. *Their* fold was uniform, octagon or square, fourfold or eightfold. The top eight inches of smooth, round, shining leather finished it up beautifully.

Lishnitsky and Grobowsky did the best business at the *yarid.* Their customers were of the richer class of peasants and even some rich landowners and nobility, and their sons, bought from them. These boots were much more expensive too, and Lishnitsky and Grobowsky were the only ones who could make those folds, and the only ones selling them. They had no competition at all.

My mother took advantage. She would come out in the middle of the day and ask Lishnitsky to lend her two rubles until evening when he settled with her. He gladly gave her two rubles, but he never deducted when he settled with her. He would forget all about it. This was repeated every *yarid.* Also, every time Lishnitsky settled with Mother he gave each of us a gilden, fifteen kopekas (about seven and a half cents). He never failed us, but we had to be there. If one of us was missing he wouldn't get his share.

We liked those two shoemakers. In fact, when they came in to eat they always wanted us kids at the table with them and we were served the same meal they had. If one child got a smaller portion they would give it back to Mother, saying, "I am paying you for a full portion. Why do you cut it?" Mother would excuse herself and fill up the plate.

When we were through eating Lishnitsky would say, "Now, Molke, how much do you want?"

She would answer, "How much? It's almost always the same. I figure seven or eight rubles."

He would take his money out of his pocket (and he had a big

roll of it), count out the seven or eight rubles, and hand it to her. Next he took out his silver money and gave us each a gilden. Then they said good-night and left. After they left, Mother sat down and counted all the money, figuring over and over what she would be able to do with it. When she was satisfied that she had enough to bake bread for the week and to buy meat for at least one meal and buy the other necessities she relaxed in the chair and said, "Thanks to God what He does for me. And I ask you, God, to keep Lishnitsky and Grobowsky well, they should always come to the *yarids* and be as liberal as tonight."

Yarids were every two weeks, so the week of the *yarid* was always the best week. We always had more to eat then. The next week was not so good. So we knew that we had to work harder in our seltzer-water business, or maybe Father would have some luck and do some good business and bring enough to prepare for the Sabbath.

Father almost always came home Thursday night if he had a good week. If the week was not so good he would return Friday about noon. In that case Mother had to buy a *pood* of flour on credit to bake white bread for the Sabbath. All other things she could buy after Father came home.

Yarid after *yarid,* for years, Lishnitsky and Grobowsky came and went home almost all sold out. Each time they took home with them a big roll of money. The many other shoemakers, although they had good boots to sell and had a bigger clientele of the poorer peasants, always had plenty of boots left over. Many times they cursed at Lishnitsky and Grobowsky. They were always angry at them and at times threatened to run them out of the *yarid.*

One winter Sunday the snow lay deep on the ground and walking was crispy underfoot. The temperature was well below zero. In the early afternoon Lishnitsky and Grobowsky were completely sold out and were getting ready to leave for home when some other shoemakers came over and got into an argument with them. They told our friends to stay away from Warshilovka's *yarid,* they didn't belong, they should stay in Vinitza. A fight started. Lishnitsky and Grobowsky were beaten up so badly that you couldn't recognize them.

Their faces were full of blood, their clothes torn, teeth missing, their eyes black as charcoal. They couldn't walk or even stand up. We took them into the house after Mother screamed so loudly and bitterly that some peasants came to help carry them in.

Mother washed them up a bit. We all helped. Then she ordered me to run for Doctor Luria and tell him to come at once. When I got to the doctor's house he was out but a woman told me where to find him. I told him about the fight and how Lishnitsky and Grobowsky were beaten up. He didn't lose any time, and he rushed to our house on his bicycle. When I came he was already working hard on those two beaten-up men. He sent me to the drugstore. I fetched the necessary medicine. He kept Mother and the bigger children working on them, applying compresses and washing up parts of their bodies.

Grobowsky recovered enough in one day to drive his team of horses home and bring Lishnitsky's wife. On Wednesday morning they arrived. Grobowsky brought Lishnitsky's wife, a daughter, and his oldest son. When they saw him still in bed, his face a sight, they cried like babies. Mother made a big meal for them and they finally got Lishnitsky out of bed and brought him to the table to eat with all of them. Late in the afternoon they lay him in his wagon on straw they got from the pile that we stored for burning. They covered him up and they left. We never saw Lishnitsky or Grobowsky again. We found out that Lishnitsky died four weeks after he was beaten up, and Grobowsky would never come to Warshilovka's *yarid* again.

So Mother lost her two best customers and we children lost a gilden every two weeks.

Now, with most of her income from the *yarids* gone, there were left only a few dinners or lunches that she served to some older rich peasants who came to all the *yarids* and liked her cooking. She made a big *rossel flaisch,* a sort of goulash or stew. She served it in soup plates and had much gravy. They dunked the bread in the gravy and enjoyed every bit of it. Then she served a glass of tea with her

own baked cookies. For this she received fifty kopekas and made a good profit. But she didn't sell enough of it.

After many *yarids* that were poor for her she decided to sell with the dinners a drink of vodka. It was illegal to sell vodka privately. The state alone sold it in bottles, and not by the glass. But Mother saw no harm in selling a drink to those peasants she knew so well. They could afford to pay for a drink and they had asked for it for a long time. But she had always been afraid to start in that business. Now, however, the income was so small she had to do something to increase it. So she decided to sell a drink of vodka for ten kopekas. She went to the government store and bought a quart bottle at a time. She kept it under cover and when she had to serve it she kept it in a bag. She poured it into the glass so that no one could see the bottle. She went on doing this for many *yarids,* and every *yarid* she did more of this business. The peasants brought their friends and each one bought several drinks and ate some of her *rossel flaisch.*

She really worked up a pretty good business and sold as many as eight or ten bottles on *yarid* day. Father warned her and struggled with her to give up the *traifene* (illegal) business. "Some day we will pay dear for what you are doing," he pleaded with her. But she saw no harm in it.

One *yarid* when the *actziznik* (excise officer) made a raid on our house he found several bottles of vodka hidden and found several men in the house who admitted that Molke had sold them drinks at ten kopekas each. After the *actziznik* had questioned Mother for an hour he advised her to confess her guilt and he would recommend a mild sentence. This my mother did. Crying, she told him how her husband tried to make a living and had no success, and how she must help to raise her family. All this time the *actziznik* wrote up the case, and when he was done he told her that he would not arrest her. However, she was to appear in court in Vinitza on Wednesday of the next week, and was to bring her husband along.

In court the judge heard Molke's plea and found out that she was pregnant in the sixth month. He asked my father, "Would you accept the responsibility and have the charges transferred to your

name?" The answer was yes. The judge announced that he was sentencing Simche Avrum Gershen Charnochofsky to serve four months in the Vinitza prison. His term should start one week from that day and he should report without further notice.

Broken in spirit and feeling miserable, they left the courthouse and decided to go see a cousin that lived in Vinitza not far from the prison. They told Pearl, the cousin, what had happened and that four months in prison might kill Simche because he couldn't eat their food, it was *traif*. They didn't serve kosher food.

Simche was also worried about how his family would get along, with Molke being pregnant. When Pearl heard all of their story she tried to make them feel better. She told them not to worry, it would pass over, for time goes fast. She also sent for Avrum, her oldest son.

Pearl was a widow. Her husband had died two years before, and since that time she depended on her oldest son. When Avrum came she told him all about Simche's going to prison and what was facing him eating *traif* food, and Molke's pregnancy, and what would she do with the children, how would she be able to provide completely for the house?

Avrum got up, called his mother, and walked out to the next room. They returned and Pearl said that as for Simche, she promised to bring food to him every day for the full four months. She or the two full-grown girls would fetch it to him, and he was not to worry about it. As to Mother, they would try to help as much as possible. Mother and Father left for home with much less worry than they had had before.

The four months were long. They seemed to stretch out for years. Every day at the table we would figure how long Father would still be away, and we wondered how he was getting along and how he was taking it. One thing we knew—our cousin Pearl was taking care of the food for him, so that he was not starving and was eating kosher food. We prayed for the time to go faster.

Finally four months were over and we expected Father to arrive that evening. We were all dressed up and sitting on the *pidasheck*

(porch), impatiently waiting. It was a midsummer night, with a full moon and millions of bright stars looking down on our town of Warshilovka. The birds in the trees were making their usual night calls, and the crickets' chirping sound, heard all over town, predicted another warm day for tomorrow. The frogs were jumping around the *pidasheck* and disappearing under the floor, and the leaves on the trees stood still, with not a bit of breeze to move them. In the stillness of that night we heard Father's voice ringing out loud, "Children, Molke, here I am!" He had arrived from Vinitza!

The happiness, the joy that came to us upon hearing him again brought us to the height of our voices. We screamed and hollered. It seemed that all of the town came suddenly to life. People began to show up in the streets. Many came over to greet Simche but had no chance to get near him for we were all around him hugging and kissing him. While the little infant innocently slept in the basket the house was turned into a glorious reception-place for Father. Mother stood in the midst of it all crying and murmuring, "What did they do to him? What did they do to him?" His cheeks were drawn, his eyes stretched and bulged. All of his head seemed to have shrunk. His hands and fingers were bones, nothing but bones on his body. What had they done to him?

After everything quieted down and everybody left, we children were sent to bed and Mother and Father sat down to a glass of tea and cookies. Father then narrated his four months' experience in *turma* (prison). From time to time I heard Mother's sobbing. I couldn't fall asleep and heard the story word for word. It was very late at night when they decided to go to sleep, and I fell asleep too.

Here is Father's prison story, as told by himself:

"When I arrived in Vinitza Tuesday about sunset I went straight to Cousin Pearl's house. There I found all Pearl's children, including sons-in-law and daughters-in-law, also their children. The house was full. They welcomed me with mournful affection. Pearl fetched the samovar and set it on the table. There were already glasses and sugar on the table and all the adults sat down for a glass of tea. The discussion was all about my going to report the next morning to

turma for my four-month sentence. They all expressed themselves about how sorry they were, but gave me good hope that the four months would pass fast and I would be free again. The main thing, they said, was not to worry. The evening passed without one bright moment.

"Early next morning Pearl had breakfast on the table but all I could take was a glass of the chicory that she served instead of coffee. When I was ready to leave Pearl decided to take me down to the prison. She knew the officers there and wanted to talk to them.

"The office was small and terribly dirty. An officer sat at the desk. Pearl greeted him and called him by his first name. He showed surprise at her coming. She explained to him all about me and he promised her to do his best to make it easy for me. Pearl left.

"I was taken to a cell in the main building. Later a man came and brought me regular prison clothes with a number, 4223. I changed into the clothes, with my new number showing front and back, and the man took my clothes, put them into a sack, and gave me a card to fill out. It asked for my name, address, wife's name, how many children and their names, my father's name, how long I served and for what, and many more questions.

"I filled in the answers and at last he told me that this was for my protection so the clothes wouldn't get lost, for I would need them when I was released.

"At noon they brought me my meal. At the same time the officer from the office brought me some food that Pearl had left for me and told the crew that they didn't need to leave any food here. I took the food but could hardly eat. I had to, though, because after meals we all had to go out in the yard. So I ate what I could.

"In the yard a lot of the prisoners shook hands and welcomed me and most all of them wanted to know for how long and what for.

"For three days I was confined to my cell with only the interruption of going out in the yard. On the fourth day the officer from the office (I already knew his name; it was Vacil Vacilovich Krosnow, but everyone called him Vacil) took me to a big room with long

tables filled with straight long straw. He turned me over to a foreman and he left.

"The foreman showed me where to sit and said it was my permanent place. He showed me what my work was. You take four to eight straws about fifteen inches long. Take one wire much longer, put it with the straws in the center, tie them all together on the bottom. So you have eight straws and one wire loose from the bottom up. You take the first straw and turn it over the second straw to the right. Then the second over the third, and so on, until you have turned every one over the next one to the right. You keep on doing it until it forms a half- to an inch-round ferrule, sort of a chain. It looks pretty if you do it right and I did. For the foreman called a high official and showed him my work. He told him that from the first day he showed me how to do it I did it perfectly. I was complimented by him.

"So day after day I went to that work. It was the best thing that could have happened, because the hours sitting in the cell were dreadful. The nights were long, dark, and miserable. My sleeping amounted to almost nothing, not one good night's sleep for all the four months.

"Our poor Cousin Pearl, I don't know how I will ever repay her for her kindness and promptness. She or her daughter Rotzel never failed once in the four months to bring my meals three times a day.

"Now we are tired; let's go to sleep."

The lamp went out and I fell asleep too.

THE ROOSTER DIDN'T EVEN CROW

When the rest of the children were born in Warshilovka there were different circumstances. For the boys, Avrum (Abe) and Velvel (William), Father was in no position to make big parties. So he was glad just to have the family over to the *bris,* serving some vodka and honey cake.

And when Lhaye (Lillian) and Rivkele were born, there was a saying that the rooster didn't even crow, meaning there was very little attention given these births. Rivkele (Rebecca) was born before Lhaye, but she didn't live long. She died when she was three years old. She burned up with fever. She lay in her handmade crib, her face round with two shining brown eyes, her hair curly and light blond. Her tiny two hands were out on the cover, her cheeks rosier red from hour to hour. It was a fire no one of us could extinguish. It was the high fever burning in her.

When Zalmen, Aunt Yenta's son, our cousin, came over to her crib, his heart was touched and he couldn't control himself and started to cry. Rivkele raised her hands and pushed him away, murmuring, "Go away, go away," and showed to me that she didn't want him to cry. And when Mother came back from a search for the doctor (in vain, as he couldn't be found), Rivkele's pulse had stopped and she didn't mind Mother's crying.

Lillian was Father's and Mother's inspiration, the only girl in the family. Father used to pick her up, keep her on his knees, and she would pull his white hair from his beard and mustache. He would promise to pay her one groshen (half a cent) for every gray hair she would pull, and at times he owed her a big sum of money, and she would figure the dresses she could buy for all that money.

When William was born, he was the fifth son to arrive, and

because of his name, everybody loved him. The entire family, and even strangers who had known Uncle Velvel, loved him because Uncle Velvel was a legendary person. For many years he had collected and written folklore, and he was known for his legends. As Uncle Velvel had just died when Mother gave birth to a boy, everyone wanted Mother and Father to name him Velvel. They didn't regret it, for people from all over came to see the baby that was named after Velvel and brought presents for him. William was to be the last one.

So when Ruchele (Rose) came, it was a surprise, for Father was already six months in America.

Ruchele came unexpectedly and pretty late—it was in 1903 that Father left for America and left Mother pregnant. And both Mother and Father worried about the new baby that would come. The circumstances, the financial ability to meet that baby, were not good. But worry did not solve the problem. Father left for America and Mother was left to struggle.

But as soon as Father started to work and made the first dollar in New York, he sent it home to Mother and the children. He sent a dollar a week, and even though it was only one dollar, it changed Mother's life considerably. First, it became a steady income. Then she could buy one *pood* of flour and bake bread for the week, and have money left to buy some meat. And when Father started to send two dollars a week, the house was full of foodstuffs and Mother could get a few yards of goods and sew a little dress for Lillian. She could afford to lay money away for diapers and other things she needed for the expected baby.

Ruchele was born six months after Father left. Alone, with no one else at the bed, the midwife delivered the baby. There was no one to report to as she always did, going to Simche and announcing, "It's a boy!" or "It's a girl!" And Simche used to get excited and run in to see his wife and the new baby and say, *"Mazeltov!"*

But not this time. The midwife stayed with Mother and the baby. Ruchele cried. She didn't altogether appreciate her reception. If a princess was born in one of the countries, they would have shot so many cannon shots to announce the birth of the princess. The sub-

jects would gather around the palace and greet the mother and princess. And here our princess was born and there was no excitement, no one near—Father in America, Chaim on the way to America, Mailech in Vinitza, the other children too young.

But I must admit, when I got the news that I had gained a little sister, that Ruchele had been born, it seemed to me that I saw Mother and my sister in a palace, heard twenty cannon shots, and saw lots of people gather by the palace shouting, *"Mazeltov! Mazeltov!* Our princess is born!"

And I replied several times, "Ruchele, Ruchele," and my eyes were losing some hot tears. And when the High Holidays came, I asked my boss to let me go home and see my little sister, the princess. I brought with me some presents for her, and my visit was pleasant and enjoyable. I was happy to see the family in so much better a condition than ever before. But how Mother was managing on the weekly two dollars that Father sent her, I'll never know.

THE CHEDER

Fall weather came with its gloomy days, with the rains and winds, with the leaves turning brown and gold and the branches of the trees becoming bare and exposed in their nakedness to the dreary cold and damp. The birds hid under the rooftops of the dreaming houses in their prepared nests. These were the first signs of the approach of a long icy, snowy, cold winter, with its long, stretched-out, dark, cold nights.

We were starting to go to *cheder* all day and till eight at night. The *melamed* made it known that Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Sukkoth (New Year, the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles) were over and now we were to settle down to winter schooling. The only schoolroom of the *cheder* was still clean after the holidays. The long table with benches around it that seated over twenty children still had the end covered with a tablecloth. A pair of candlesticks still stood on the table and an empty wine bottle and some glasses too. The *rebitzen,* the teacher's wife, knew that the children would clean everything up when school started. The students had daily jobs to perform for the *rebitzen,* like bringing water into the house, pouring out the dirty water from the washtub, sweeping the *cheder* and the kitchen floors, washing left-over dishes, and lots more jobs. These had to be done before classes started in the morning.

At last all was ready to start. The children were seated. Echeal, the *melamed,* was at the head of the table with his *kancheck* (leather whip) near him. He had the First Book of Moses (Genesis), also those *Chamishes* books (Book of Moses) for the children. He promptly said, "We are starting with Braishes the first week. Braishes is the first lesson for this first week of learning of the new year. But before we start with our new lessons we will review the past holidays to see how many of you know what those holiest of all our holidays

are. First, Rosh Hashanah. Yankele [Jake], you tell me what is this holiday."

Yankele was a good student, and the teacher liked him, for his answers were always correct and brief. So Yankele started out, "Rosh Hashanah is our new year. On this holiday we must pray to square ourselves with God, to confess all our sins, make up with our enemies——"

"Stop! And you, Shloimele, can you add to Yankele's explanation?" the teacher asked.

Shloimele (Sam) started: "Every Jew must take account of his own life, and see that he keeps in line with our God to be able to start anew the first of the year."

"That's good," the teacher said, and called on Zolman to add to it.

Zolman started: "God is good. He will fix me up for a good year."

All the children laughed. The teacher remarked. "Why only you? Don't you want everybody to have a good year, Zolman? Now who knows what Yom Kippur stands for?"

Yosele (Joseph) raised his hand and said, "I can tell you all about Yom Kippur. Yom Kippur is the Day of Atonement. It is a fast day. It falls every year on the tenth day of Tishri [in late September or in October]. Every Jew must fast for twenty-four hours from sunset to sunset. He cannot eat or drink. Every Jew must go to synagogue to confess all his sins, and must with his own hand tap his heart and say *Chutuey* ["I have sinned"], and tell how he sinned. He must beg forgiveness, for this is the judgment day. On this day his fate, his destiny, is decided."

"Very good," the teacher said. "How about you, Avrumele [Abe]? Can you add to this?"

"Yes, Rabbi. On this day we read the *insene toikiff,* the judgments. Who should die by fire, who should die by water, who should die by natural death, who should be killed by train, or by horse and wagon, who should hang himself, and who should be hung by others, who should freeze to death, who should die by heat, who should die by childbirth, who should die choking—"

"That is enough of dying," said the teacher. "Can you give us something of living?"

"Yes, teacher," Abe was quick to answer. "Who should go to *Gon Aden.* These are all the best people, the rabbis, all the God-fearing people, those that reach *treiag mitzvahs* in their life. That is six hundred thirteen *mitzvahs,* their life will be very good for them. There in *Gon Aden* there is no worry, no fear, no hunger, everybody prays day and night. There you are close to God. And who should go to *Gahanam* [hell]. These are all the bad people: the *reshuam,* the cheaters, the connivers, the nonbelievers. They will have to work hard to get food. They will be slaves, will be burned on bonfires."

"Very good, Avrumele. Now who will tell us what Sukkoth is?"

"The Feast of the Tabernacles," said Raisele, the rabbi's granddaughter. She was the oldest of the girls in *cheder,* and was very bright. "It is our Thanksgiving Day. We rejoice for all the crops brought in from the fields. We rejoice on Simchas Torah. This is the day that all the people drink vodka. It is a *mitzvah* to be happy. The *chasen,* reader of the Torah, carries it around in the synagogue. Everybody kisses the Torah and follows the *chasen.* He carries a *funn* [a flag] mounted on a thin stick. On top, over the *funn,* is a red apple with a lighted candle stuck in it. They sing *'Schusan Vasimcha, Vasimchas Torah'* while marching around. They build a *sukkah* to eat in for the whole week. The roof of the *sukkah* is covered with *srach* [a wild growth like straw]. This is the happiest of all the holidays."

Rabbi Erib Echeal stood up, looking very proud. "My children," he said, "you are smart and well learned, and I am really proud of you. We will close our first session. You may go home. Tomorrow night we will take up the First Book of Moses—Genesis."

The children started to light their lanterns, which were small, homemade, and of different colors. Some were made of parchment with a candle inside. Some were made of glass with a tin bottom and a tin top with a long handle. All the lanterns lighted up made a panorama, and the children looked like Christmas carolers.

When all the children walked out of the *cheder* and started singing their night songs the people of the town knew winter was

approaching and night *cheder* started. For five months the children, mostly the bigger boys and girls, went to night-learning, and promptly at eight they went home carrying their lanterns and singing special songs.

The night-learning was Rabbi Erib Echeal's own idea, and it worked very well. His scholars were better learned than other children in town because of the extra three hours every day. The parents were pleased. They saw quite an advance in their children's education and the children were happy. They loved the night-learning and mostly they liked the lanterns with their colors and the singing on the way home. The townspeople liked it too. They claimed that the town seemed wide awake and that the children's voices sounded like a clear bell-symphony out of the night. And most of all the townspeople knew that it was exactly eight o'clock when they heard the children singing.

THE PURETZ

Imenia Richnes consisted of thousands of acres of land and woods, stretching for miles. There were streams, lakes, private roads, and castles that the *puretz* (nobleman landowner) lived in. They were massive, had many, many rooms, and needed many servants, both men and women. The *puretz,* Ivan Ivanovitch, had the finest horses and dogs for hunting, all kinds of carriages, wagons and sleds, herds of cattle and sheep, and orchards. All this was called Imenia Richnes.

He had favorite people that he trusted, and so he had a favorite Jew he called in for consultation now and then. This *puretz* was considered the richest man in the Vinitza Hoyezed (County of Vinitza). He was a young man and good-looking, and most of the men and women liked him. When they talked about Ivan Ivanovitch they had good words for him. First he was kind. He liked people; he liked children and paid much attention to old people. He was lenient with the taxpayers and he paid his employees good wages. To prove that he liked children, it was pointed out that at harvest time when he hired many more peasants to work he also employed children from seven years old. They could carry drinking water to the workers or do some errand for them so that they should not lose any time. It was said that he served milk to the children he employed. Also that he picked them up in wagons to work, and sent them home after work in wagons, that he paid them all fifty kopekas a day. It was also said he liked old people but wouldn't hire them to work. He said, "Poor old people, the work is too hard for them."

One summer just at harvest time, when my father had no fruit to pick, I went for a job to the *puretz.* I was hired and worked a whole month. I was nine years old, so they gave me a responsible job. As the grain was brought in from the fields it was piled very high for long stretches. My job was to drive a horse attached to a long rope,

over the top of the pile to its end with the load of grain. There another boy with another horse from the opposite direction would pull the rope and hooks back after the load was released by the man on that pile. Then my horse and I would go back until another load was attached and again my horse would pull it up. This I did about fourteen hours a day and received fifty kopekas, about fifty cents in our money. It was considered good pay, and Mother could do much with fifty kopekas. She bought meat, beans, and *kasha* grits, and made delicious dinners for all the family.

The entrance to the castle was in Warshilovka. There was a beautiful fence parallel to the church's fence. The road from the gates led to the first big house, where the *puretz* had offices for his bookkeepers and other employees. Here he always had his conferences with people he liked, or with business people, transacted all his business, and made all his decisions. To get to this office you had to get special permission and a guard had to escort you. This was because there were so many dogs around the building you wouldn't dare to walk by yourself. Besides, there was a guard at the front gates. He sat in a small house built right near the gates. After this house you reached a castle that had two round steeples at each end and lots of windows. It was two stories high, built of brick. This was where Ivan Ivanovitch, his wife, their two children, and his old mother lived.

The house had about twenty rooms, and one big crystal room where they had affairs: banquets, dances, or socials. When one of these affairs took place you could see from Warshilovka the glimmering lights that lit up both floors and the steeples. We could often hear the happy voices echoing all the way to the village. All day long you could see beautiful horses pulling beautiful carriages. In these were the guests arriving for the party.

The town benefited from those parties. A couple of days before such a party took place there was an order given to clean up the town and everybody got busy around his own house. The *uratnik* (constable) sent out peasants to clean the streets and around the square of stores and particularly the banks of the Bug River. Then on the day of the party the *uratnik* had two of his deputies dressed in

uniform parade around the town. The Russian flag flew from several places in town.

Ivan Ivanovitch would personally come down to town on horseback followed by a couple of horse-drawn wagons. He would stop at several stores to buy things he needed, pay cash for them, and load them on the wagons. When this happened he nearly always bought the meat from the Jewish butcher. He liked this kind of meat. He bought *grupen* grits in the grocery store, *nahit,* beans, and a lot of other things, as well as a couple of gallons of home-brewed wine from the rabbi. This was a standing order with the rabbi, although he was not allowed to sell wine. But when the *puretz* bought, it was all right. When he finally left, the Jews used to say, "Why doesn't he make these parties more often?"

Another time the town was in its glory was when Ivan Ivanovitch went hunting. Some of his best friends arrived to join him. There were usually six to ten of his comrades, all on their beautiful horses with dogs following them. They almost always came into town to buy tobacco and cigarettes from Shloime the tobacco man. He had a license to cut tobacco and make cigarettes.

The Jewish children wouldn't dare to come out in the street because of all the dogs. The dogs were all big ones, white with brown or black spots, very fast runners and jumpers. They couldn't stand still a minute and when they got out to hunt they showed their skill by catching the birds or the animals that were shot before they could get away.

One day my father was picking apples in the orchard at the estate of Ivan Ivanovitch. We were about eight children, my father, and Chaim Laizer. All the children were in the trees; Chaim Laizer was under a tree and my father was busy taking the baskets from us and packing the apples. Suddenly dogs, dogs, dogs, so many you couldn't count them, appeared near our place. Everybody screamed loudly. The dogs jumped on the trees as though to catch and pull the children down. One dog got to Chaim Laizer and threw him to the ground. My father stood confused, and didn't for the moment

know what was happening. Then quickly he regained his confidence and started to talk to the dogs as though they could understand him.

At this minute Ivan Ivanovitch appeared on his horse and shouted to the dogs. They all stopped still. He scolded them and told them, "These are our people, you shouldn't touch them." He jumped from his horse, ran over to Chaim Laizer, and stood him up. He was not hurt, only scared. Ivan Ivanovitch walked over to my father and apologized, saying that he hadn't known we were working. He took out five rubles and gave them to my father. Then he asked all the children to come down from the trees and play with the dogs, they would be very gentle with us. Some were afraid, but the rest came down and patted the dogs and got very friendly with them.

The *puretz* then left, and sent up two men and a wagon with a big pot of milk for the children and a full gallon of apple cider for my father and Chaim Laizer. We took time out and drank the milk and the cider, and when we quit for the day my father gave every one fifty kopekas from the five rubles the *puretz* had given him. After that I was never scared of a dog. I learned to talk to them kindly, and they were also kind.

The *puretz,* Ivan Ivanovitch, was a good man. He did many favors for people if they had the right approach. In collecting taxes he worked with *Natchalstvo,* officers of the government. He knew the people very well. He never overburdened them, and there was never a misunderstanding or an arrest for not paying or for negligence in paying. He always worked things out to suit the people. Everybody liked him for that.

One fall day he was traveling to Vinitza in one of his fancy carriages drawn by four horses and it started to rain hard. His horses got scared and went into a wild gallop. The driver couldn't control them and they fell into a ditch. The carriage was destroyed and the *puretz* and two drivers were killed.

The town of Warshilovka was draped in black and all the Jews, men, women, and children, wept for a long time. We couldn't forget the goodness of Ivan Ivanovitch.

The Imenia was all left for the widow and children and with the

help of the advisers of Ivan Ivanovitch everything was well taken care of. The advisers met with the widow often and laid out the work for Imenia. The bookkeepers helped and the work went on.

But not so in the political field. It seemed that government authorities from the city *uratnik* and the state high officials combined to run the tax collection and all political affairs themselves, cutting the widow off from contact with this work. Yekatarina Ivanovitch Ivanovka, the widow, on the advice of the wise men, went to Vinitza to high authorities. She got no results. She was turned down in all her demands. She went to Kominetz, the capital of the state, demanding her rights to remain the political boss. She was turned down there, too. When she came back to her Imenia, her home, she was disgusted and defeated and almost decided to give up the fight. Then she decided, before she gave up, to call the Jewish adviser Erib Avrom Gordon for consultation.

Meanwhile the town and surrounding villages began to feel the pressure of higher taxes and other changes from the *Natchalstvo*.

When Erib Avrom Gordon got the call from Yekatarina Ivanovitch to come for consultation he first went to Vinitza to see there a well-known Jewish lawyer, Mr. Brodsky. This lawyer was a personality known all over Kominetz Podolsk for his thorough knowledge of Russian law and for winning many cases in court.

Avrom Gordon met with Mr. Brodsky and told him the complete story of the *puretz,* how good he was with the people and how the widow was set aside and *Natchalstvo* took over and the people already felt the hard pressure of the *Natchalstvo* in tax collecting and changes that would make life pretty hard for Jew and Gentile alike. Mr. Brodsky sat and listened to the story. Finally he told Avrom Gordon to give him four hours to think it over and then to come back for advice.

When Avrom Gordon came back Mr. Brodsky was in a very good humor and told him to have the widow go to Moscow. He would be there too and he would tell her what to do. He thought she would gain back all the rights of her husband Ivan Ivanovitch, and as his wife she would become the leader of the same territory.

Avrom Gordon came back to Warshilovka fully convinced, but now he had to convince Yekatarina Ivanovitch. It wasn't hard to convince her, for she was determined to go through with it. She asked Avrom Gordon to go with her to Moscow. But they knew that Avrom couldn't go, for he was not allowed in that city. To go to Moscow one had to be a *pervia gilden kupetz,* a first-class businessman with permission to travel all over Russia, or one had to be a professional man—doctor, lawyer, or professor.

Yekatarina came up with the idea that he go along as a servant. Then he wouldn't have to register, since she was allowed to bring servants with her. She was taking several servants and he would be one of them. She got him a uniform, the same as all the others, and they left for Moscow. There Brodsky and Yekatarina met and talked for hours, laying plans.

The first plan was to see a high official who would give her permission to go to Petersburg to see the Tsar. If she couldn't see the Tsar they planned to get her message to him through someone else. This worked wonders. The high official in Moscow listened to her story and was convinced that she had a good case. He told her that he had to be in Petersburg in a couple of days, and that he would take it up himself. It might not even have to go to the Tsar. He told her she could go home, and he would stay in touch with Brodsky and within a week or ten days she would have an answer.

It was just a week to the day that Brodsky came to Warshilovka to bring the wonderful news to Yekatarina that the Tsar himself had signed a proclamation restoring all her husband's former rights and privileges to her. This proclamation was being sent to all *Natchalstvo* in the Gorod Kominetz Podolsk.

Yekatarina was moved by this good news. She ordered a dinner prepared, and invited Avrom Gordon and asked Mr. Brodsky to stay. After they had finished eating they laid out all her plans.

Before she could carry out any of these plans big state officials arrived, begged her pardon, turned over to her even more rights and privileges, and assured her that they would do anything and everything she ordered them to do.

Three weeks later she received by messenger an invitation to come to Petersburg to see the Tsar. When she returned from Petersburg she was the happiest woman in the state. The Jews in the town and the peasants in the villages enjoyed great reforms. She proved to be more liberal than her husband was.

The Imenia went on in the usual way.

A SUCCESSFUL SEASON, AND FISHEL'S DEATH

When we were small boys—my two older brothers, Fishel and Chaim, and I—my father called us the *troika* (meaning three together). In Russia they used to harness three horses side by side, with the center horse wearing a half-hoop over its neck. This was attached on each side to the thongs the horse was harnessed to. That was a *troika.* It was mostly used for joy riding, especially in winter when the snow was deep and hard and the sleigh glided easily on the road. This kind of joy riding was the best sport. And my father compared us to the *troika.*

One day in the fall of the year he called us to him and said to Mother, "I am taking them to the tailor and to the shoemaker. They will get fitted out." Mother was very happy about this and told him to be sure to watch over us. Out we went, Father and his *troika* sons.

Our walk to the tailor was different. We walked as if we wanted everybody to know where we were going and that the trip was not just a visit but for real business, to be measured for suits and shoes.

We walked to Erib Schaia, the tailor. He had a big living room with large windows and two oversize doors, one the entrance from the street and one the outlet to other rooms. There was a long table in the center of the room, with two big kerosene lamps on it. Several chairs stood around the table, with pieces of cloth at every chair. On each chair sat a boy who was being trained in the art of sewing; basting, cutting, making buttonholes, sewing buttons and everything that goes with preparing and making a garment. One boy seemed to be a very good mechanic, and he showed and taught the others the trade.

Erib Schaia greeted my father warmly.

"I come, Erib Schaia, with my *troika* and I want you to measure

them for suits. And don't leave me out. That will be four suits. I want a good piece of cloth, too."

"But Erib Simche, this will cost you a fortune!"

"What is a fortune in your opinion?"

Erib Schaia figured and figured and came up with a price. "It will cost you thirty rubles for the four suits. Of course I figure a good cloth." He stepped aside and pulled out a fine piece of cloth. "This is imported from England. Of course I buy it in Ludz. I can give you for your suit a different color if you want."

Simche my father smiled. He took thirty rubles out of his pocket and gave them to Erib Schaia. "Go on and measure them," he said, "and I want the same goods for my suit too. When Simche will walk out with his *troika* the town will really look.

"You see, Erib Schaia, I had a wonderful season in my fruit business. All this summer I shipped my fruit, starting with the real red cherries. I followed with plums, apples, pears, and at the very last the real *rinneten,* the winter apples. And as much as I shipped to Odessa and to Kiev, they kept on asking for more. My fruit made a hit on the market. I increased my pickers and increased the supply, with the result that I made extra money this season and I decided to shoe and clothe my family first and then lay in a supply of wood and straw for winter heating, and some food to last over the cold winter months. So I came to you first, and right from here we go to Burrich the shoemaker."

Erib Schaia got busy and measured everyone, marking the names and the sizes. When he had finished measuring he told my father that he never had a customer before who paid him in advance, and he wished that God would help my father to have even a better season next year.

With Erib Burrich the shoemaker we made it very fast. My father told him to measure his *troika* for shoes and he did. He showed us the style: high top, side buttons, black leather, and the price for all four pairs twelve rubles. Father paid him and was ready to leave, but Erib Burrich was so surprised at getting that much money at one time that he stopped us and had to tell my Dad some of his troubles.

He was an old man. He was in his fifties and looked at least seventy-five. He had worked at the bench as shoemaker for forty-five years, and had learned the trade from his father. His father had been the only shoemaker in town. Now there were several and none of them made a living. They all struggled. There were weeks that he didn't take in one ruble. His wife was old and sick. She couldn't even bake *challa* for the Sabbath any more. She managed to cook a meal but he must help her. That's why the twelve rubles made him so happy and that's why he thanked my father so much. He started on a new story but Father cut him off, saying that he had lots of work to do and he had to go. So away we went.

Father had another place to go. Our caps were old and torn and it wouldn't look good at all to dress up in new suits and new shoes and wear those torn caps. So we walked straight to Erib Laib the capmaker. As we walked in, Father greeted Erib Laib and said in a little, fast, excited voice, "We want caps for all of us. I have the cash to pay for them, but I am very short of time and must be fitted quick."

In twenty minutes we all had caps. Father paid three rubles and we were on our way again.

Father didn't notice that our Aunt Blume was near us until she made motions for us to stop. We waited until she came over. She greeted him and turned to us, asking how we were. She then asked if Father could lend her a ruble. He gladly took out a ruble, handed it to her, and said he must go. The children hadn't eaten since morning and must be starved. He told her we had done very much till now. We all got measured for suits by Erib Schaia and shoes by Erib Burrich, and caps we had with us. We were now running home. Molke would not know what had happened to us.

We hadn't taken twenty steps when Erib Chaim David, the richest man in town and a neighbor of ours, approached and said, "Simche, where are you running? I have something very important to ask you."

"Erib Chaim David, I will see you a little later. Molke expects us." And we kept on going.

Doctor Luria on his bicycle stopped right in front of my Dad. He handed him a bill and told him that he had made it very cheap and would like to be paid soon. Father looked at the bill. It was for six rubles. Father paid it to him saying, "I thank you very much, Doctor. You have done a wonderful job on the boy. There he is, Fishel." (He was the middle brother, between Chaim and me.) Fishel laughed and showed the doctor his new cap and Doctor Luria drove off.

"Let's go, *troika;* it's getting terribly late. Mother won't know what happened to us."

As we approached the house, we saw Uncle Shloime waiting for Father. Without greeting him he said, "Simche, you must come to help me pack some of my orders. I am overloaded with orders but can't catch up with the packing."

Simche smiled and answered in a high, annoyed voice, "All right, but will you give us a chance to eat something? My boys and I are starved."

"You can come later," Uncle Shloime said.

As we entered the house we saw two men waiting for Father with some important business to discuss. Father stood still and on his face I saw a grim look that could break out in fury. Mother noticed what was happening and walked over to him.

"Where have you been so long? You and the children must be starved."

His face changed to a grin and he answered, "You are right. We are starved."

Mother turned to the men and said, "You must forgive me. Please come back in an hour. They didn't eat all day."

The men agreed and left.

At the table we all talked, telling Mother about all the things Father had bought for us, and himself, too. Here Father took out of his pocket some paper money and counted out twenty-five rubles. He handed them to Mother and told her to go buy a couple of dresses and stop at the shoemaker and get measured for a nice pair of shoes and to buy other things she needed. A big broad smile spread over

her face. We were all happy and laughed and talked about how we would look when we walked out in the street.

Father told us that he had accumulated this money all through the season, and that it was the best season he had ever had.

The happiest of all of us when we got dressed up for the High Holidays was our brother Fishel. He went out of the house very proudly. He had pockets in his pants. He had a vest with pockets and his coat had pockets. When he met his friends and showed them his suit and all the pockets in the suit they envied him and wished their fathers would have good seasons too. Fishel had always wished for such a suit; he never liked the clothes Mother used to make for him. He used to cry for a suit with pockets. We were all very happy looking at his bright face and seeing how satisfied he was. He sat at the table with a great smile and told Father that he wished business would always be good enough to buy him such suits.

But Fishel was a sick child. We always had to take him to Doctor Luria. His medicine helped Fishel to be active again but the doctor always said that he was afraid of Fishel's sickness.

After all the holidays passed and the weather got damp and cold and the streets were covered with a white sheet of snow Fishel got sick again. Doctor Luria prescribed his medicine. It didn't help him. The doctor ordered a special medicine that had to be made in Vinitza, the big city. In two days we got the medicine and Fishel started to feel better, but he was still very sick. Every ruble Father had was used up and the doctor still had to come every day.

One day Doctor Luria saw no improvement and suggested bringing Doctor Cohen from Vinitza for consultation. Doctor Luria promised that it wouldn't cost too much. He knew Doctor Cohen personally and would see that the charges were less than twenty-five rubles. The trip to Warshilovka and back to Vinitza would take a full day for the doctor. He also suggested that he himself go to bring Doctor Cohen, for he was afraid that he might not want to come.

Without any delay we got Yankel the cab driver and the doctor and Yankel left for Vinitza, driving all night. At noon the next day they returned.

Doctor Cohen at once examined Fishel and both doctors consulted, looking at the medicine and making tests. Doctor Cohen called Mother and Father and told them that Doctor Luria had done everything possible, that his medicines were best for this sickness, and that in his opinion the biggest doctor couldn't do any more for Fishel. But he was afraid for the child's life. Doctor Cohen refused to take any money for his visit. He did that for Doctor Luria, and also promised to send back with Yankel a medicine that both he and Doctor Luria had decided on.

The next day Yankel returned, bringing the medicine with him. Doctor Luria came at once and gave Fishel a dose. For a full two months Fishel struggled, and some days when he felt better he wanted to see his suit. He put his hands in the pockets, grinning.

Fishel passed away and left the family in great grief.

BAKING FOR PURIM

Purim is a Jewish holiday that comes once a year, about one month before Passover. It is the celebration of the Biblical story of Esther Amolke (Queen Esther).

On this holiday the women baked their best cakes, *strudel* and *fluden,* to exchange with each other. This was called *shalachmunas*, an exchange gift. The baking was just out of this world. The *fluden* were triangular in shape. The top and bottom dough was baked crispy, and in baking turned white. It was made of the whites of eggs only, and the filling had many ingredients that made the eating of it heavenly. So was the *strudel* delicious, and the cakes filled with mashed prunes. In fact, they used to say that if you ate them for one hundred years you would live to be an old man.

Baile Yankels was ready to send her *shalachmunas* to her family and friends. She set plates on the table and started to fill them up. This one was for her sister, this one for her sister-in-law, this one for the rebitzen, the rabbi's wife. Baile kept filling the plates and deciding who they were for, and she didn't forget Rivke Itzicks. "She is such a nice person. Whenever she meets me she is so friendly. She always wants to know how Yankel my husband is and how all the children are, and she goes into detail about how I, Baile, feel and how we live together. Sometimes she even asks embarrassing questions. But she means good, poor soul, very friendly."

Now all the plates were filled. Next Baile covered each plate with a linen napkin and then she went to call Ruchel the carrier, who would take each plate to the proper person. Ruchel would make some money because she got tips from both sides. The sender paid her and so did the receiver. On Purim there was a big demand for carriers, both girls and boys. They would wash up and dress up and go out

to be carriers. Baile liked girl carriers. She said girls could be trusted better than boys.

So Baile went out to call Ruchel. She had talked to Ruchel before and had engaged her. All she had to do now was call her. Ruchel was ready and waiting. Baile showed her the *shalachmunas,* with instructions as to whom each plate was for. Those clean plates covered with those clean, shimmering-white napkins were her pride, for she knew that she had spared nothing and had baked the best.

"And this one"—she pointed to a little larger plate—"is for my best friend, Rivke Itzicks."

Ruchel rushed out with the first load. She was fast and brought back from every one a satisfied return. Baile was happy. She left Rivke's to the last, and when she returned with the *shalachmunas* Rivke had sent, Baile was dumbstruck. She took the napkin off the plate and saw that there were only four measly pieces of *fluden.* She knew that she had sent eight pieces.

"What does Rivke think, she is making a fool out of me?" She asked Ruchel why it took her so long and why Rivke kept her. "Why did she send only four pieces when I sent her eight beautiful pieces?" And the longer she talked the more angry she got. She just couldn't understand her dear friend Rivke.

But what she didn't know was that Ruchel the carrier had eaten two pieces on the way to deliver the plate to Rivke. So she had brought there only six pieces. Rivke returned six even bigger pieces but Ruchel again decided to taste a couple of pieces, which left only four.

Baile raged with anger. She must go over there and ask her why she did such a thing and what did she think she was. She quickly got the winter shawl on her, took the plate with the measly four pieces of *fluden,* and as fast as her feet could carry her she ran to her good friend Rivke. But this was not a social visit. First there were harsh words. Baile removed the napkin from the plate, threw the four pieces of *fluden* on Rivke's table, and told her to choke on them. Not calling Rivke's name she told her she was no longer her friend, that she didn't care for such friends.

Her friend Rivke became good and angry, and she answered with no complimentary words, and then a little cursing too.

The sender: "I hope next year you won't have to send even this much!"

Answer from the receiver: "And you shouldn't have any to send, and besides, I don't want you to ever send me *shalachmunas,* for you are a *sedecha* [fighting woman] and you can go to ——"

Answer: "Oh, you miserable person! I was so good to you and sent you such a nice full plate with the best *fluden* and *strudel* and you can see what you sent back. Keep it and choke with it. And instead of me, you and your family can go to ——"

And the sender left for home holding just the plate and linen napkin and talking to herself. "I always thought she was a friend of mine. It's good this happened to find out the kind of a person she is."

When Baile got home her husband was there. "Where were you?" he asked her. "And what happened? You are as white as a ghost."

Baile cried and told Yankel the story of sending the *shalachmunas* to Rivke and what a dirty trick she had played on her. Yankel laughed and told Baile that she should have stayed calm and not gotten so excited. He was sure something must have happened.

"I," he said, "will go over myself and talk to Rivke and particularly talk to Itzick, her husband. They are nice people and I cannot understand Rivke doing anything like that. I just talked to Itzick today at morning services. He happened to say what nice *strudel* and *fluden* Rivke baked for Purim." Yankel put his coat on and left.

When he came to Rivke and Itzick's house, Rivke was crying and Itzick had told her there must be some mistake, for Yankel and Baile are nice people. When Yankel came in they were glad to see him and they started to tell him that Rivke got the *shalachmunas* from Baile and she, Rivke, was very happy that Baile didn't forget her. When Rivke uncovered the plate there were six pieces of *fluden* and *strudel.* She took them from the plate and put back six pieces of her own *fluden* and *strudel.* She was happy because her *fluden* was much bigger than Baile's.

"Wait!" Yankel said. "Baile told me she sent eight pieces and that you returned only four pieces."

"Oh, my God!" Rivke shouted. "I bet Ruchel the carrier ate them."

It turned out that Ruchel had eaten two pieces going and two pieces coming.

The next morning Baile went to Rivke to apologize. Both women hugged each other, cried, and apologized, and they became best friends again. They swore never to get excited as they had done this time, and never to accuse each other again without finding out who was at fault.

Yankel and Itzick were happy when they heard about their wives' reunion, and they offered to make a party in celebration of the great friendship of the two families.

PASSOVER IS COMING

The weather was getting milder. The snow and ice were melting in the hot sun that came out every day and brought cheer into all the houses, where families had been cooped up during a long, gloomy winter. The streets of Warshilovka were getting muddier every day.

With the holiday of Purim over there was now less than a month to Passover. This holiday was not just an ordinary holiday. It was different from any other. Mother started to get ready for Passover early, for it took much time and work to get the job done.

First you are forbidden to use the same dishes, pots, pans, silverware, and all other articles in the kitchen that were used the rest of the year, eleven months and three weeks. All that must be packed away and replaced by other brand-new ones or ones stored from Passover to Passover. You are forbidden to eat bread for a full week. You must eat matzo only. That makes Passover a most difficult holiday.

My younger brother Abe was very good at this work. Mother would instruct him what to do every day. First he had to remove the double windows that were on for winter. He took off one at a time and took them down to the *tach* (lake). He washed them well and stored them in the garret for next winter. The next job was the copper and brass pots and pans, some with long handles, some with two rings for lifting. All had covers that fitted perfectly. Cooking in those pots brought out the taste of fish, meat, soup, or whatever was in them. These, Mother instructed Abe, must shine like a mirror outside and be as clean as glass inside. And little Abe knew how to do it, for he was experienced at the age of seven years. When our Uncle Shloime saw him work on the silver knives, forks, and spoons, shining them like mirrors, he asked him, "Tell me, Avrumele, do you know that you shine those things for the holidays or for the Sabbath day?"

Avrumele stood up and said, stretching out his words, "Uncle Shloime, I rub and rub and rub and say it's in honor of the holidays or the Sabbath." Uncle Shloime patted him on the back and answered, "Avrumele, you are a credit to the Jews and when you grow up you will be a rabbi." Abe liked that.

As we got closer to Passover doors and windows were washed. *Milter* and *lockshen brait* (dough mixer and large board) were also taken to the *tach* for a perfect scrubbing. Then the floors were smeared with a dissolved clay that made them look new. The pictures on the walls shone like crystal; and as for food, Father started early enough to get some extra money because there is so much you need.

First there must be matzos baked for a whole week. Then there are fish, meat, chickens, and eggs. You have to have many eggs, for you use eggs for both baking and cooking. And wine was very important. For the first *seder* alone you had to drink several times in the course of the prayers from the Haggadah. In fact, you had to fill an extra glass of wine for Elijah Hanovie at a certain part of the ritual. You open the door to let him in and he is to drink that glass of wine that was filled for him. I must admit I always watched for him to enter but never saw him. My father never wanted to tell me why we opened the door and no one came in and the glass of wine remained full. Father said you were not supposed to ask such questions.

Then of course there was the dressing up of the children. The boys got new suits, the girls got new dresses, and the shoemaker measured each child for brand-new shoes. We loved this holiday, for the morning of the first day of Passover you could see the youngsters walk out in their new attire. How proud they were! No one could equal them. I remember very well how I loved to keep my hands in my pockets and tell the kids that Yankel the *schneider* had made my suit—"You see, with two pockets in the pants."

"And Moishe the *schneider* made mine," said another proud boy. "But he forgot to make me pockets. I will go to him after Passover for the pockets."

I remember my father told us that we walked around as if *shtut balabutem,* as if we owned the town, and truly we felt like that.

And the girls with their *tzitzine* (gingham) dresses, all fancy, all colors and nice prints, were very excited showing each other their dresses and those black button-shoes that Icheal the shoemaker had made for them. Their faces were full of smiles and full of joy—and why not? Brand-new dress, brand-new shoes, hair washed and plaits made with colored ribbon at the ends. Who was their equal now?

The *seder* was in itself a spectacle. Imagine our table set with a gleaming white cloth and all new silver shining like a mirror. At the head of the table was a fancy embroidered matzos-holder that held three matzos. Wine glasses stood around the fancy bottle of red wine through which shone the lighted candles. The chair at the head of the table was bedecked and draped for Father, who was called the king for tonight. Next was another chair which was not as nice as the king's. That was for Mother, called the queen for tonight. The children's shining faces and bright, open eyes were alert for the event. Father, wearing a white *kittel* (overgown), poured wine into the glasses and was first to make *kiddish,* the benediction of the cup. He drank some of the wine and gave a sip to the queen (Mother). Then the oldest son made *kiddish* and the younger sons followed, and everyone would have a drink or a sip of the wine. Then Father would start narration of the Haggadah, the miracle that freed the Jews from slavery. It starts: *"Avudem hoenee laparo bemitzraemo."*

The youngest son got up and asked four questions:

1. Why can we eat bread or matzos all year round and tonight we eat only matzos?
2. Why can we sit at the table straight or reclined all year and this night only reclined?
3. Why can we eat all kinds of herbs and vegetables all year and tonight only bitter herbs?
4. Why don't we dip an egg in salt water all year and tonight we dip twice?

Then came the answers to these questions. And we heard again how Moses went to Pharaoh and asked him to free the Jews from slavery and how the Jews made their exodus from Mitzraim and how

Pharaoh sent his army after them and when they reached the sea Moses with his cane split the sea. The Jews passed across and the Egyptians drowned for the sea closed on them. It was a miracle performed by God. The Jews spent forty years wandering in the desert.

Then came that wonderful supper that Mother had prepared. The well-seasoned gefilte fish, the carrot *tzimmes,* the chicken, the matzo-ball soup, the *kugel.* At the end everyone was all tired out and couldn't stay up any more. The children fell asleep but Mother and Father sat up for a long time talking about their nice family, how to raise them, and how it was getting harder to live in Russia and they should start to look for a way out. Nothing was decided except to wait and plan to make a break possible.

THE OLD MAID MARRIES

My mother had a very good friend named Frodel; Frodel Avrum Zelig's, called after her father. That was how they called people: their own names plus their father's or mother's; and sometimes they would have a grandfather's name too, like Frodel Avrum Zelig's. Zelig was the grandfather, Avrum the father, and Frodel the daughter.

Frodel was a fine girl but an old maid. She had never married. She said she had had a love affair with a very nice boy in town, but the boy seemed to know nothing about it. She said he did know; she used to tell him but he never paid any attention. One day he was called to the army, and he disappeared and was never heard from. So Frodel remained a very lonesome girl. No other boy wanted her and even her girl friends left her. My mother was the only one who had great sympathy for her and Frodel came to my mother with all her problems. And of problems she had many.

Soon after her grandfather died of old age, she lost her father and mother too. Left an orphan, she actually had no family at all. Her father and mother's house was left to her. The back of our house was near the front of her house, and since she couldn't eat the house and had to eat every day, my mother used to see that she didn't starve. But her problems were hard and heavy. She didn't like to take charity and some of the people in town had their eyes on her house, thinking they would get it for practically nothing. One offered to keep her in food. Another offered to give her a permanent room. And with all the offers, she didn't know what to do.

She began to bring these problems to Mother, whom she made her best friend. She listened to Mother and believed her. Frodel knew

that my mother gave her the best advice and she also knew that Mother always consulted my father and then they would decide together on the best course.

First of all they advised her not to sell the house but to rent it to a poor family for whatever they could pay her and to keep one room for herself. Next, Mother talked to the rich woman in town to give Frodel a job. She was a good clean worker and she got the job. Food and a place to stay the rich lady agreed to give her, but she held my mother responsible for Frodel's behavior.

Frodel was happy and content with her job and came to our house whenever she had time off. From time to time she told Mother stories of people around town, how certain people were fighting (that is, man and wife). Just plain gossip. Mother warned her that it was a bad habit to talk about other people and especially to gossip. Frodel promised to stop and kept her promise.

Every other week Frodel was discharged by her mistress for butting into their lives and Mother had a job to make peace and get her job back. Mother got tired of this and almost gave up bothering with her. Then one night Schmeal (Samuel) the tinsmith came with another man to see my father for advice. As they sat down, Schmeal started telling my father this story:

"We come to you, Erib Simche, for advice. We know that you can advise us right. In fact, we know you can even help us. You are a traveling man and go to big cities like Odessa and Kiev. I am a tinsmith. There isn't much work in Warshilovka for me and I can hardly make a living. Herschel, my cousin, is from Trostintz, another small town, and he also is a tinsmith and is struggling for a living. His wife recently died and left him with two wonderful little children. He has no one to take care of them and cannot afford to hire somebody for the house. So we decided that he would sell his house (he has a customer for it) and move here to Warshilovka. My wife could take care of his children and we could become partners in business, since he will have some money from the sale of his house. We can start making some tin articles.

"Now, that is where you come in, Erib Simche. That is where

you can help us. When you go to the big city, will you find out whether there is a market for tin articles and what they would be? For instance pails, teakettles, cups with handles, and many more such items. What will people pay for them? We can make a lot of them. We are both fast and good workers. We wouldn't want you to do this for nothing. We would be glad to pay you for your work.

"There are really two things you must do for us. First, tell us your opinion about the whole thing; do you think our partnership will work? Second, do you think there is a market for tinware in the big cities?"

My father thought for a minute or two and then began to talk. "My answer will be short and clear. First the partnership is a must and should work out very well. As to the selling of tinware in Odessa or Kiev, there is no question in my mind that they use these things in big cities. You are very lucky. I plan to go to Odessa in about one week. I will investigate everything and bring you a full report.

"Now, there is another thing that I want to advise you about. Schmeal, you tell me that your house is small and you don't know how you will be able to put up Herschel and his two children, but that you will have to manage somehow. This is very nice of you. But look, I have a *shidich* [match] for Herschel, a very fine girl. She has a house of her own, and the people who lived in it just moved out and it is vacant now. You know the girl. She is an older girl, Frodel Avrum Zelig's. If you, Herschel, would marry her you would have your own house in Warshilovka and would have a mother for your children. Frodel is a very good *balabusta* [fine housekeeper] and a good girl—only, lonesome and alone. Her father and mother are both dead and I think she would agree to the marriage. As for you, Herschel, you should grab her as soon as you can."

"Erib Simche, please tell me. My wife is dead only nine months. Is it right to marry that soon? And is she a good dependable girl, to trust her with the raising of my children? And has she got any money besides the house?"

Father told him that God would forgive him, and his wife, if she were here and knew that her children would have a good bringing

up, she too would forgive him. Herschel was very interested and the date to meet Frodel was set for the next night in our house.

When Schmeal and Herschel left, my mother kissed Father and told him that he was very smart and that he would have a big *mitzvah* if Frodel got married.

The meeting was a great success. Herschel and Frodel were pulled together as by a magnet. That very first evening they began to plan their wedding, and it was set for one month from that date.

When the news came out the town went wild. Everybody wanted a big wedding with music and dancing with a great big spread of food and drink. Frodel, the town's old maid, was getting married! Everybody expressed great satisfaction and everybody was willing to contribute to the wedding. Some promised vodka, some promised food. The butcher promised meat; Chaim David promised all kinds of groceries from his store. Everybody talked about the wedding.

One woman was unhappy. That was the rich woman Frodel worked for. She was losing her maid.

When Herschel heard what the townspeople were planning, he immediately called off the music. He did not want music or dancing, because his first wife had been dead only nine months. He also let it be known that no great supper was to be served. He did not want charity. And he wanted only the *meshpuche* (family) to come to the wedding. He himself would have vodka and cake.

And that's how the wedding was held.

The old maid in Warshilovka got married.

Mazeltov.

TRUE LOVE

Anna (Channa), my Aunt Nessa's daughter and my first cousin, was sixteen years old and a beautiful girl. She was five feet six inches tall. She had a head of long thick brown hair made into two attractive plaits. When loose her hair reached to her waist. Her bright, dark eyes, covered by long lashes, with half-round eyebrows, looked like twinkling stars. Her ears were small and showed through her thick hair, and her lips were as red as a pair of cherries. In the center of her face the nose fitted in as if made by an artist.

Anna fell in love with Eleazer, a boy two years older than she. He was one of the few handsome boys in Warshilovka. Their love, people said, was matched by God himself. And it was a love that had no comparison in our town.

This love for a long time was kept secret. They met often in secret places and planned their future. This went on until Aunt Nessa began to wonder why Anna so often disappeared at night for hours and when she returned her face was flushed, her eyes shiny, and she wouldn't tell where she had been or with whom.

Aunt Nessa was one that always controlled her children; they were always open with her and told her the truth. But Anna would not tell, and no matter how much she talked and how much she threatened, Anna remained silent. So her mother decided on a new scheme.

Her son, Reven, was younger than Anna and he used to fight with her and come to his mother to tell on Anna. This of course had never been too serious. But now Aunt Nessa decided to talk to Reven. He was to follow Anna and find out where she went.

Reven started on his job. It didn't take long and he reported to his mother that Channa was meeting Eleazer in a friend's house.

They stayed for several hours; then she went her way home and he went his way home.

Channa and Eleazer knew that their families were constantly fighting and that Nessa would never consent to her daughter's marriage to the son of her greatest enemy. That was why they had kept it a secret. But now it was out in the open. Reven, her own brother, had betrayed them.

Aunt Nessa didn't waste any time. The very next day the house was turned into a battlefield. She shouted and cried that she would never let her daughter marry Eleazer; his family was no good and she would never make friends with them, and her daughter was too good for Eleazer and she would have a miserable life with him. The tones were raised higher and higher and the words became stronger and stronger. Soon neighbors started to come in to find out what was going on. They found Channa crying and Nessa at the top of her voice swearing to God her daughter would not marry Eleazer, that she would die before she would go to any wedding between them.

Finally Aunt Nessa fell on the floor from exhaustion. The neighbors picked her up and put her on the bed. One neighbor ran to call her husband.

My Uncle Shloime was not the fighting kind and was usually very easy to get along with. When he reached the battlefield he found his wife in bed, the neighbors doctoring her, rubbing her hands and her feet, and bathing her face with cold water. In one corner sat Channa with her hands over her face, crying loudly. Uncle Shloime stood still awhile, all mixed up, until one of the neighbors started to tell him that Channa wanted to marry Eleazer.

After thinking awhile, Shloime went over to Nessa and told her to be sensible and strong and not to lose control. Somehow they would both look into the matter much deeper. Nessa sat up and the neighbors gradually left, some saying good-by and some giving their personal opinions about Eleazer and Channa's marriage.

One said, "Eleazer is a wonderful boy. She'll never get a better *chusan*." One said, "I would, if she was mine, beat her up so bad that she would never want to marry that boy Eleazer." Another one

said, "I don't know how she could make the decision. It's not up to her. What do you think, Erib Shloime?"

When they had all left, Uncle Shloime walked straight to Channa, raised his hand, and let her have two smacks on the cheeks that rang like the sound of a bell. Channa fell to the floor and started crying more bitterly than before. She couldn't imagine her father hitting her. He had never laid a hand on any of the children. He was the quiet kind, always using gentle words to settle things, and here he was using force. And she saw in his face anger such as she had never seen before. She was frightened, and yet her love for Eleazer burned in her heart even more strongly. She felt like running to him to let his strong arms protect her from all this.

Libba, her older sister, came in. She already knew what was happening; one of the neighbors had told her. Libba was on Channa's side. She didn't like her parents' attitude. Libba was her mother's daughter; she too was good with her tongue, and when she saw her father and mother unmoved by Channa's tears, she began to raise her voice to them. Why did they make it so miserable for Channa? She was a wonderful girl and there was nothing wrong with Eleazer. He was one of the finest boys in Warshilovka and his parents were also nice people and there was no reason to be ashamed of his family and Channa could never marry a better fellow. They should consider her feelings, too.

Her mother told her in a very few words to keep out of this. Channa was not her responsibility. She was Nessa's daughter, and Nessa would never allow her daughter to marry her biggest enemy's son.

Uncle Shloime and Aunt Nessa had another talk between themselves and Shloime walked out of the house and went straight to the rabbi. He told the rabbi about the terrible thing that was happening to them, and he asked the rabbi to call Eleazer and his father for a *dintoirah,* a trial. He wanted the father held directly responsible for what his son Eleazer was doing to him, his wife, and family. The rabbi promised to call such a *dintoirah* for seven o'clock that eve-

ning. He invited two prominent men to sit in on this hearing. He sent the *shames* to Eleazer and his father to tell them that they must come to answer charges against them made by Shloime Baron and his wife Nessa.

Promptly at seven o'clock everyone was in the rabbi's house. Eleazer brought his mother, too. The air seemed charged with explosives ready to be touched off. The rabbi realized what could happen and he wanted to avoid a scene and a scandal. So, the first thing, he warned them that he wouldn't stand for any quarrel or for any loud voices or bad language, and that his decision must be accepted. Both sides had to sign a paper to that effect.

The *dintoirah* started. Shloime Baron and his wife had their indictment speeches. First, Eleazer was not their choice for their daughter Channa. Second, they would never make peace with his parents. They were bad people. They were not worth the mention of their names. Furthermore, Channa could not pick her own husband; her parents would do it for her. Nessa said she would be dead and laid out on the floor with lighted candles around her before she would allow her daughter to marry Eleazer. (It was a Jewish custom to lay a corpse on the floor with lighted candles.) Nessa kept on talking. Shloime stopped, he was all tired out. And the rabbi stopped Nessa. He told her that it was enough.

Then he asked Eleazer and his parents what they had to say. Eleazer replied that he was deeply in love with Channa and they had promised each other to live together or die together. Eleazer's father and mother stood, scared and mixed up, and had nothing to say.

The rabbi and the two men walked into another room to confer and then returned with their decision. The rabbi spoke.

"In our great Torah, the holy Bible, there is a saying that love is 'Godhead deity,' and who can or is able to reverse our Torah? Therefore we dismiss the case."

The great victor was Eleazer, but that didn't mean that he and Channa could marry. The fight went on for two more years, although Shloime dropped out before that. He was a God-loving person and when the rabbi compared love to God he accepted it as such. As for

Nessa, she refused to let them get married, and kept on with her opposition for two more years.

Finally Eleazer and Channa were married. It was a very simple and small wedding, and her mother was not there to give them her blessing.

MOTHER'S STORY

It was one of those freezing Russian winters in the early twentieth century. The snow kept piling up in mountainous drifts. The roads were not visible. Not only was the town of Warshilovka snowed under, but the biting frost added to its misery.

The double windows in the house were completely frozen inside and out. Mother, Father, and we children were dressed in the warmest clothes we had, including overcoats, and still it was not comfortable in the house. Mother did not heat the house during the day. She saved the wood for late in the afternoon when it could serve also for the evening.

But she found a remedy for the cold. We would all pile into her bed and she covered us with all the quilts, coats, and everything else she could find that would help keep us warm. She too would get into the bed and tell us stories. For more than four months none of us left the house but my father, and every day we stayed in bed and heard Mother's stories.

She started, and I will write it as best as I can remember it.

"This world we live in is a very big world. It is divided into many countries, big countries and small ones. There are oceans that cover more than half of the earth. These oceans are so deep that no one can ever reach the bottom. These oceans are filled with all kinds of fish that people catch and sell in towns and in cities for other people to eat. But there are some very big fish, as big as our house, that no one can catch. There are also rivers and lakes in those countries, where people bathe and swim. The rivers and lakes too have fish, and even small children go to catch them, like in our Bug River. They bring them to their mothers to cook for dinner."

"Mother, we are hungry!" we all with one voice shouted.

Mother then realized she shouldn't have mentioned dinner. "All

right, children, you sit here. I will get you some bread with *schmaltz*." *Schmaltz* (fat) was used instead of butter.

"Some more story, Mother!"

"Oh, yes. Where did I stop?"

"Children's dinner, Mother."

"Oh, yes, dinner!" And Mother continued. "And on the land in every country there are trees that grow fruit: pears, apples, plums, cherries, and many other fruits. When they get ripe the farmers pick them and consume them."

"What does that mean?"

"Eat them. I was afraid to say eat. You might get hungry again. Also on the land the farmers grow wheat and corn. The wheat and corn is ground into flour and people bake bread. They grow potatoes, onions, and all kinds of vegetables. People buy them."

"How do you know all this?" asked Chaim, the oldest boy.

"My dear children, you will know all this and more when you get big. My father told us about these things. He was a traveling man and he read newspapers. He traveled as far as Odessa and he saw the Black Sea there with his own eyes. He saw big boats sailing on the Black Sea to other lands. Children, I will stop here and get busy heating the house. I have the wood right near the *riba* [brick stove] and will make *taiglech* and *fasoilie* [bean soup and thick noodles]. You can stay in bed until Father will come. He might bring herring, so we will have a good dinner."

"Mother, when will you tell us some more of the story?"

"Tomorrow again, children."

Tomorrow as well as every day for four months of cold and dreary days Mother kept up stories.

She pointed to herself and said, "I can keep on telling you about other lands and how they live. But I am going to tell you about your mother, myself."

"Good, Mother, good!"

"You see, my father was a traveling man. He traveled to sell harnesses for horses that he made in Warshilovka. He got men to spin flax into rope and other men to weave the rope into harnesses.

Then he sold them in the big cities. He was well known and he made a nice living. As I got bigger he used to tell me that I was a very pretty girl, and when he traveled he never failed to bring me nice things: dresses, shoes, ribbons, and a lot of other things. I was his *mazinka,* the youngest daughter, and I remember all the stories he told me.

"My mother looked out for my health. She made special food for me and gave me milk to drink. I considered myself very lucky. And other people, even my sisters and brothers, used to envy me and say that I was treated like a princess. My father also gave me a pretty good education in the Jewish *cheder,* and I must say all of the family liked me. Even the townspeople, and particularly the girls and boys, liked me. They all thought that I was smart, that I was always dressed neatly, that I had style, and they looked up to me.

"Then I met your father in a guest house when he checked in to stay overnight. When I was introduced to him I saw the man I had always dreamed about. He was slim, tall, dark-complexioned, and handsome. I fell in love with him, and after we were married I was brought into his parents' home.

"My mother-in-law and father-in-law were wonderful to me. I was their *bassechida* too. They loved me and I loved them, and your father was just like an angel to me. There was nothing in this world that I couldn't have. All I had to do was mention it. So again people envied me, and said how wonderfully I had married.

"My happiness for all those years I could not even describe in words. It was a dream that only angels who reach heaven with its thousands of beautiful colors could appreciate. Until one day a dark cloud came and swept all my golden dreams into a dreary insecure tomorrow. We were told to leave the village Askovitz. We lost our business. We had to leave everything behind, for we were Jewish. We were no longer permitted to sell vodka or wine. We were no longer permitted to live in a peasant village.

"Your father had no trade other than his father's business in Askovitz, and he couldn't make a living. So we struggled and struggled until we lost everything. The struggle became harder and

harder. Your father has tried his very best, but we have reached a time when we have to struggle to get bread for the family, just plain dry bread.

"You should know this is very hard on your father and me, for we would love to be able to give you everything in life and, what's most important, plenty of good food to eat.

"Tomorrow I will tell you about a big country that people talk about.

"They call that country America. People go there and claim that they can make a living. There is all kinds of work to be done, and they pay very well for the work. Then they say you can also go in business for yourself, too. You can peddle all kinds of food and other articles. In fact, one man from Warshilovka is there already. He peddles apples and makes out very well. He sends to his wife every week two dollars, which makes four rubles, and you know what you can do with four rubles? You can feed a big family well and still have some left.

"They call America the golden land, full of opportunities for everybody. They say that all through the week you eat white bread there. Meat, potatoes, and vegetables you buy for very little. And most of all, it is a free country. There is no tsar. The people choose a new president every four years and all the poor people can vote too as long as they become citizens. They say everybody is equal there. One is not better than another. They say they play music in the streets and children dance. They say that all the children must go to school to get educated. They say that people from many countries with different religions live together like in a melting pot. They say there are enough hospitals for all the sick, and doctors and medicine galore.

"To this country, America, your father and I hope to go some day because of you children. There you will live a perfectly free life. There you will go to school for learning and we will be able to afford for you better food and enough of it, and better shoes, suits, and dresses.

"What have we got here? First, you can say slavery. We are not

allowed a free word. I would be sent to Siberia if they knew what I am telling you now. Then, to make a living is impossible. There is nothing to do here. Father struggles, works hard, and he cannot even supply bread for the family. If it wasn't for the *kwass* and the seltzer we sell we would starve.

"Worst of all, they hate us here. Anti-Semitism rages high. Don't live here, you can't live there, don't do this, don't do that. You can't travel here and you can't travel there. Schools are for peasant children only. And the poor one-room school with the one teacher and eleven children opens only once or twice a week.

"You see, children, here in the country of our birth where we have lived all our lives we have no place and no chance. The only thing left for us to do is to take you to America, the land of the free."

The children were all interested. They sat quiet and listened to every word. The bigger children understood what Mother told them. The small ones were interested because they heard Mother talk day after day, week after week, month after month, until the frost receded and the snow and ice began to melt. Father helped at times with the stories and narrated to us stories of life and of other countries.

They told us about England. What a wonderful country that was. It was the biggest empire in the world. They said that the sun never sets on English territory. Even America once belonged to England. Mother told us about Palestine. That was once the land of the Jews and they lived there two thousand years ago. "Now it belongs to Turkey. The Turks have it for their land and some old Jews go there to live the last years of their lives. They want to be buried there in the holy land."

She told us about the country of Spain. Our great-great-great-grandfathers had lived there, and they were rabbis. When the Inquisition came they all left Spain and wandered over five hundred years until they settled in the Russian Ukraine. There they lived a happy life in Askovitz until the Tsar's government had us evicted. Now we are in Warshilovka and are still persecuted by the Tsar's government.

Mother concluded her stories with the arrival of milder weather and the signs of a near spring. As time went on we children demanded more stories, and she promised to tell us more about America.

In 1903 Mother and Father decided that first Father would go to America, then he would bring the family over.

And that is what they did.

THE TACH

The flour mill was situated right on the Tach, a fast-running water that zigzagged for miles. It seemed to have no start and actually had no finish. Crystal-clear, cold spring water filled it on its journey, and as it went on it got deeper and wider and swifter. And where it crossed the town, people made much use of it.

First the flour mill with a big round wheel. The water turned the wheel and the wheel was connected by an axle to the big grinding machinery. It turned out the best flour. Peasants from all the farms and villages in the area brought their grain to this mill to be ground into flour. The mill was a big business in town, but only one man made a living from it. Oh yes, Yosel (Joseph), the owner, did employ one man to help him. Yosel and his hired man worked fifteen hours a day and then they unlocked the wheel from the shaft so it would stop turning. The next morning they started it again.

Hundreds of bags of flour were ground and turned back to their owners for a fee. Yosel had a good system. If the farmer had no money to pay he would work on a fifty-fifty basis. In other words the farmer would get back half of what he brought to be ground and Yosel the other half. If he had money to pay it was so much a bag.

The majority of the farmers worked on the fifty-fifty system and Yosel had wholesale flour buyers who came at least once every week, picked up the flour and paid cash for it.

Yosel worked up a tremendous business and was busy almost six months a year. In the winter, when the water was frozen, it was impossible to run the mill.

The second good use the town made of the waters of the Tach was swimming. Children big and small went swimming every day. In some places the water was deep, so the bigger children could swim across the stream. On the other side there were orchards with

fine fruit, and there were no watchmen to drive the children off. In fact the owner of the orchard didn't care if they helped themselves for he never bothered to pick the fruit. He only warned the children not to break the limbs of the trees. So the children had a wonderful time. The smaller ones swam in the shallow water and even some women would come to bathe near the edge.

The Tach, before it became narrow at the mill, was quite wide, and at one place there was a flat beach with light sand for about two hundred yards. There were always people on this beach, especially women and children. They brought silver spoons, forks, and knives, brass candlesticks, chandeliers, copper pots, and other utensils to the beach to be scoured and cleaned. The brass and copper were rubbed with that fine sand until they shone. Then they were washed clean in the water and taken home beautifully shining.

The women would bring their *milter* and *lugshen brait. Milter* were long, deep bowls for making bread. The dough was left in them to rise, then was made into twisted bread or the big round breads. *Lugshen brait* was a big board, about eighteen inches by forty inches, used to make noodles. These things had to be cleaned, and the sand and water did a good job.

The people also took doors and windows off their hinges and carried them down to the beach to be washed. Even chairs and tables were dragged to the beach for cleaning. This was a steady drag to and from the Tach. House-cleaning was done that way.

My little brother Abe was a wizard at that work, and he loved to do it. Only the doors were too heavy for him, and we had to help him carry them to and from the stream. This was done every week. The women were proud that everything was made shining clean and the house took on a new look for the Sabbath.

Then the clothes. Every woman took her bundle of sheets, pillow cases, towels, and underwear, and came to the beach. In the water were big stones that they used for washing. They rubbed the soap in and rubbed the clothes on the stone like on a washboard until they were clean. Then they rinsed them in the fast-running water.

There was also the Bug River for washing clothes, but that was

deep water and not so swift. Some people were afraid to go to the Bug River. They liked the Tach better.

Down the length of the Tach were many pastures for cattle and horses. They found it very convenient to walk down for their drinking water. Goats, dogs, and other animals also drank from the Tach.

And if a building or a barn caught fire the Tach was the nearest stream for water. Everybody in town would grab a pail and run to the Tach. They would fill up and with so many pails of water they would put the fire out. There was no fire department in Warshilovka. The town depended on the inhabitants to carry water in an emergency. Many times a big fire could not be contained and the building that caught fire would burn to the ground. But even at these times they could at least keep the fire from spreading.

The Tach became such an important part of the town that people talked about it as though God himself stretched the cold, clear, running water through Warshilovka.

In winter, when the Tach froze and stayed frozen for about six months, children and grown-ups went skating on the ice. It was safer to skate on the Tach than on the Bug River, and less crowded, too.

Also, when the water froze the ice was cut in squares to fill the ice-houses for the summer. No one was allowed where the ice had been cut, for it created a danger spot. So a sign was placed there and the children kept away.

One more function the Tach had. On the High Holidays there is a time when all the Jews direct from the synagogue go to *tashlech*. That is, they went to the Tach. On the edge of the water they prayed and emptied their pockets to get rid of all their sins and all the bad things they had done during the year. It was quite a scene to see the long line of Jews on the edge of the Tach praying aloud and turning their pockets inside out. Of course they all made sure ahead of time that they had nothing valuable in their pockets.

And so the Tach was truly a godsend to Warshilovka and the Jews that lived there.

FATHER BUYS A COW

Mother was always saying to Father, "If only we had our own cow. The children would never be hungry. A glass of milk and a slice of bread makes a good meal!"

Father listened to her and agreed with her, but a cow, a good cow, would cost about fifteen to twenty rubles. And you had to lay in some food for her. It would be pretty hard for him to raise that much money. At first he thought that maybe it would be much less trouble and much less expensive to buy a goat. But he himself didn't like goats' milk as much as cows' milk, so he waited. But now that Molke talked about it he must give it more consideration.

Finally he decided to go to Askovitz, the village where he was born and lived the best part of his life, where he brought his wife after they were married, and where four of his children were born. The peasants of the village loved them all. There in Askovitz he would be able to buy a good cow and maybe he could even pay later and in small payments.

The next week Father went to Askovitz. He expected to do some business there, and when he arrived he found the people of Askovitz still sorry he had had to move. They wanted to know how he and the family were getting along. He told them that his circumstances were not too good, that he worked very hard and at times he couldn't make a living. He also told them that he needed a cow to have milk for the children but had no money to pay for it right then.

When Evan Krasnoy heard that from my father he immediately offered to let him come and pick the best cow. Evan would send it to him and he wouldn't have to worry about the money. Any time he was able to pay for it would be all right.

"Don't you remember," Evan said, "I owe you a big favor for all you and Molke did to help arrange my daughter's wedding? It

was such a great success I can never forget it. Having the chance to do something for you, that makes me happy."

Father didn't choose the cow himself. He told Evan that he knew best about cows and Father left it all to him.

The next day we were enriched with a cow, a load of hay and straw and other food enough to last a couple of months.

The town of Warshilovka started to gossip. They knew my father had no money to buy such a good cow. How did he get it? What did he do to get it, and how did he pay for it? Rumors got stronger and people talked.

When Saturday came and all the townspeople were in the synagogue to the Saturday prayers my father walked up on the *balemer* and said, "People of Warshilovka, please listen to me. I hear there are rumors going around in town that people don't know how I bought the cow I now possess. So I want to make it clear to you in this holy place that I was in Askovitz, my birthplace, and I told Evan Krasnoy, a peasant I have known all my life, that I need a cow for my family. I told him I had no money now to pay for it but that I would pay as soon as I get the money. Evan reminded me that Molke and I did him once a great favor when we lived in Askovitz and he can never forget it. And now that he can do me a favor he is very happy to do it. So he sent me the cow and food enough for about two months, without one ruble down payment. I can pay him any time, and this is the God's honest truth." And he walked off the *balemer*.

There was still a lot of talk going on. Some people didn't believe that a peasant could do such a thing and continued their gossiping. But my father didn't care how people talked. He had made his explanation.

The cow was the best thing that ever happened to us. Mother had enough milk to do a lot of things in cooking. This cow gave a bucket of milk twice a day and there was enough milk for all the children and for Mother and Father, too. Then every day Mother would cook soup from milk with *taiglech* or with *kasha*. Those soups hit the spot, for they were delicious and nourishing. Mother was

happy and the children had no complaints, for they got portions big enough to fill their stomachs.

But this didn't last long. There was a man in town who was the worst gossip of all. He kept saying my father must have stolen the cow, and since the cow was in town everything went bad for him and he believed that cow was going to ruin everybody in town. So he picked a dark night and poisoned the cow.

In the morning Mother went out to milk the cow and found her stretched out on the ground. She started to scream and people gathered to see what the trouble was. They sent for the *roifa* (half-doctor). When he came he said the cow was dead of poison. Someone had poisoned her.

People couldn't understand who would do anything like that. And they began to investigate. None other than the rabbi came to the conclusion that it must have been the fanatic. For he had been heard to say that the cow brought hard luck to him and to Warshilovka. The rabbi took two more men with him and they went to the fanatic—that was what they called him—and before long he confessed. The druggist said that he had sold him the poison. The fanatic had told him a story of rats that he wanted to exterminate.

There was a burial for the cow, and Evan Krasnoy came down and told the townspeople that he had sold the cow to my father and that he wasn't even paid yet, that he trusted my father.

No more cow, no more milk, back to the old way of the half-empty stomach.

SIMON GETS WHIPPED

Early one Monday morning the sun started to creep above the horizon and formed long stretched-out shadows from the houses and trees. Church bells started ringing, calling the people of Warshilovka to the marketplace. Only in an emergency were those bells rung.

So the people of the town awoke and dressed as fast as they could and started to the marketplace. There the *uratnik* was standing on a carriage hitched to two horses. The carriage and horses were too good for this town, and you could see that some important news must have come from the big city. It proved to be just so.

When all the people had gathered the *uratnik* started to read a long paper. It said that on Thursday of this week the Tsar and Tsarina would pass through Warshilovka. Therefore, first the people must clean up the town in every nook and corner. Second, every house must fly the Russian flag with the picture of the Tsar and Tsarina. Tomorrow a wagon would bring those decorative articles and they would be free. Third, no one should walk around the streets. Instead, every family should get dressed up in their best clothes and stay on their porches. Fourth, everyone must remove his hat or cap during the procession. Anyone not living up to this proclamation would be punished by whipping: fifteen lashes on the bare body. The *uratnik* repeated: "Everyone, man, woman, and child, must stay on the porch of the house he lives in, all washed and dressed in his best clothes, hats or caps removed. For you are honored by our great Tsar and Tsarina passing through Warshilovka."

The *uratnik* folded his paper and drove away direct to the *actziznik* (excise officer). There they called the *gardavoi* (helping officers) and they decided to give the Jews three hours to start on the cleaning of the town. The *gardavoi* were made responsible, and they lost no time. Even before everybody had a chance to get home, for they did stay around the marketplace to discuss the situation, the

uratnik and *gardavoi* reappeared. They went from house to house notifying the people to be out in three hours and start the cleaning of the town. They must wash all the front windows, clean the porches, clean the streets. Not a paper or other dirt was to be left all through the town or there would be a fine or whipping as punishment. The *gardavoi* would be around to check on the work.

In just three hours, as directed, men, women, and children were busy cleaning every house in town; using brooms, rags, dusters, pails full of soapy water, chairs, stepladders. Everyone was busy for two days washing, dusting, and sweeping, until the town took on a new look. It was a great improvement, for the windows shone like mirrors. The house-fronts from roof to porch were spotless. Not a speck of dust, not a paper was to be seen anywhere.

When the *gardavoi* came to inspect they were very much pleased, and complimented the people for such a good job done. But they reminded them again that Thursday everyone should be clean and dressed in his best, with bare head. And everyone must stay on his own porch until the procession was over.

Everything was satisfactory except to stay with a naked head, no hat or cap, not even a little *yarmilka.* That was the worst thing that could happen. That was against the Jewish religion. Jews were not allowed to go bareheaded. But there was no one to appeal to; orders are orders, and who wants to be whipped? So every Jew made up his mind and knew that he would have to remove his hat and be bareheaded until the Tsar and Tsarina had passed through the town.

Every Jew, that is, but Simon. He made a different decision, and it was as plain as day and in bold words, too. He refused to remove his hat even though the rabbi told him that God would forgive him, as He would all the other Jews under orders from the Tsar to remove their hats, including the rabbi himself.

But Simon said no, no, no. To him the Tsar and Tsarina were tyrants. They gave nothing to the people, only slavery, and he could not see why everybody should pay so much attention to them. If all the Russian people would be like himself there would be no Tsar. The rabbi warned Simon that he could be shot or sent to Siberia for such talk.

Simon was not just anybody at all. Simon was an orphan from the time he was two years old. He didn't remember his parents. They died of tuberculosis within one year of each other. They left nothing for their son, and there was no one to raise him.

If it hadn't been for Szaia and Chacia, the bathhouse man and his wife, Simon would have had to live in the streets with the dogs and cats, for no family wanted to take him and raise him.

There were two reasons for this. First, the disease his parents had died of; and second, the child Simon looked like a monkey. They said that he had hair all over his body. Even his face had hair on it. So there was no one to raise him. After the rabbi collected a fund to pay for his board, Szaia and Chacia were the only ones who consented to take him in and care for him. The home they gave him was equal to a dog's home. He slept on the floor wherever he found a place to lay his head. He ate whatever they had left over. Very often it was nothing but a hunk of rye bread. He chewed and chewed until he got tired and fell asleep. Szaia and Chacia broke him in to do work. From his early days he knew nothing but to work and to live on scraps from the table.

But now Simon was a man. He worked for several families. They gave him the hardest work to do and paid him almost nothing. Whatever he made he brought to Szaia and Chacia, and it was a big help to them. Simon was now an independent man. He made his own decisions on everything. And now he made his own decision on keeping his hat on during the Tsar and Tsarina's ride through Warshilovka.

On Thursday morning the church bells rang loud and long, notifying the people that this was the day. Everybody started on the routine of getting cleaned up and dressed in the best they had, ready to greet the Tsar and Tsarina. The streets were clean, the houses decorated with flags and pictures, the sun was out in its full brightness, and a cool, gentle wind was blowing as though to make this a very special day.

Officers in full uniform appeared, some on horseback, some on foot. No stores were open and no one was in the marketplace. Cossacks on galloping horses arrived and stationed themselves at strategic places. They were followed by officers in *troika* (three horses abreast),

in shining vehicles painted several colors, and driving slowly, leading the parade.

Faintly the sound of music was heard. It became louder as the parade approached the center of the town. There were about one hundred musicians dressed in white blouses with black bloomer pants, the bottoms tucked into shiny black boots. Red-tasseled cords were tied around the musicians' waists, and they wore white, stiff, round caps with an insignia on the front. They were playing a Russian military march.

Two rows of the finest white horses, with Cossacks in full uniform on their backs, came next. The tapping of the horses' feet harmonized with the march rhythm played by the musicians. Next, four rows of soldiers marched under command. Then came carriages carrying the *puretz* and his wife from this town. Then still more carriages with officers in them, and finally a beautiful all-black carriage drawn by four horses *nashpitz* (two in front of the regular two). Two drivers holding the reins drove slowly, so the Tsar and Tsarina could look at the brightly decorated town with all its people standing on their porches, hats off. The Tsar was impressed, for he smiled.

But now he called to the drivers to stop. He called the officers and asked them, "Why is there standing a man with his hat on? Why doesn't he remove his hat like the rest of the people?"

"What shall we do with him, Your Highness?"

"Arrest him and turn him over to the *uratnik* for whipping."

This was done immediately. When Simon resisted arrest he was hit by a Cossack and dragged away to the *uratnik*.

After the procession was over the *uratnik* ordered everybody to the marketplace. Simon was stripped and two *gardavoi* lashed him fifteen times on his bare body.

He fell unconscious as the *gardavoi* drove away. The other Jews picked him up and brought him into a house to wash the blood off his body.

For two weeks he couldn't move or turn around, but he was proud that he had not removed his hat for the Tsar and Tsarina. They were tyrants!

SONIA AND VOVA

Sonia was a first cousin of mine. Her father was my mother's brother. They lived in a small town called Tomoshpil. Her father was a successful businessman in Tomoshpil. He was the leading yard-goods merchant there, and everybody knew that he was rich.

Everybody also knew that he gave his children a good education. He believed very strongly in education, and not only in Jewish but also in Russian. So his children, both boys and girls, spoke fluently in Yiddish and Russian. Shloime started them young. He said the age of four was the best time to start them, and so at four he sent them to Jewish *cheder* and also to the Russian school. And when he wasn't satisfied with the Russian school, because the children were not learning enough, he hired a private teacher who came to the house to teach them Russian.

Sonia was the teacher's best scholar. He told her father, "She takes to learning like a fish takes to water." Sonia blushed but was pleased and Shloime, her father, was very proud. Sonia was different from the other children. He had always felt that about her. Her kindness was displayed in her face. Her eyes were mild, soft, and magnetic, and her speech was sparkling. She was thin and tall, and very sympathetic by nature. She was young and looked forward to the next year, when she would be fifteen years old.

Her father had promised her a trip to Warshilovka to see her uncles, aunts, and many cousins. That was where most of the family lived. Sonia loved the family and couldn't wait for the day when she could take the trip to Warshilovka.

She had heard her father say that the Bug River runs through the town and that people went swimming in the clear water. Bathing suits in those days hid every part of the body of women and girls and they didn't like that. So they went bathing in the nude or in a

shirt. Of course they were very careful dressing and undressing. There wasn't a man's eye anywhere near by. Men were not allowed to come near.

It was announced in the town that the place designated for the women to swim should be for them only, and another place was designated for the men some distance away. The rabbi forbade any man to approach the women's bathing place. He said it would be a great *avira* (sin) to do so. Some of the men thought that the rabbi did not understand human nature. In fact some men started to swim across the river and on the other side they were directly in view of the feminine bathing place.

When Sonia came to visit the family, she had on her program swimming every day in the Bug River during the hot summer. It was natural to go swimming in the Bug. It was running water and clear as the sky. You could really relax and cool off.

Sonia had girl friends in Warshilovka. They were very happy that she came to visit, and they arranged the first day for all of them to go swimming. There were six of them, all about the same age and all of them good-looking. And when they walked down to the river they were singing a Russian song that Sonia knew. The others knew the melody and so Sonia led the words and the rest hummed the melody. Some people stopped to listen, for it sounded beautiful.

They went into the water. Only two of the girls could swim, Sonia and Esther. They raced across the river and made it several times. When they came out and got dressed they felt cool and fresh and started for home again, singing the same Russian song.

They did not notice some boys following them listening to their singing. Vova Ovcherov, the Russian student, was one of the boys that was most interested. He too knew that song and loved it. It was about a girl's love for a boy who left her and she wanted to know why. Vova also liked the face of that singer. He knew about Sonia's coming to visit in Warshilovka. He knew her family and he knew about her getting a Russian education.

He was most interested in that, for he himself was a student in a Russian high school, preparing to enter college. Vova was a brilliant

student. He had won the recognition of the faculty and they recommended him highly to the college. He wore a high-school uniform like a military suit. He was tall and of medium weight, and had a round, full face with dark, dreamy eyes. He too was young and sympathetic. He was manly, attractive, and easy to fall in love with. He was well aware of that and had in mind an attractive girl who would be to his taste. Sonia Dries looked to him like that kind of girl.

He felt he had to meet her, talk to her, make her know how he felt about her. She would understand. They were both young and had time to consider marriage. She would understand he wanted to go to college. He had to make something of himself. A teacher, that's what he wanted to be. He would love to teach high school or college. He knew he could make it. His teachers told him so, his marks showed it. He had confidence in himself.

Now if he could only meet Sonia and have a talk with her. He didn't know that she was looking for a chance to meet him. She fell in love with Vova when she first saw him in the drugstore. She was buying something there and Vova was talking to the owner, a very intelligent, cultured man and a fine talker. All the intelligentsia flocked to the drugstore to talk. Sonia and Vova didn't speak that first time, but she felt a magnetic pull to him. She liked his face. She liked his height, his weight, his eyes—which were not the kind of eyes that were bold and flashing. They were dreamy eyes, still, dreamy, magic. She felt this was the boy she could love and live for. She knew where Vova lived and it wasn't far from her uncle's house, where she stayed while in Warshilovka.

How could she meet him? She thought of a plan. He lived in a beautiful home; it was called *haifil,* sort of next to a palace. This *haifil* was big and attractive. It had about ten rooms. The lot was big and there was a nice wooden fence around the house with gates on all four sides. The gates opened on a road that led to the house. The house was located in the center of the lot and there were three steps to walk up to it. It was built of fine lumber and painted white, with brown sashes and shutters. And it was the only house that had a tin roof with side spouts to take the rain off.

When people took a walk they would walk by this *haifil* just to see it. It was by far the nicest house in Warshilovka. The house was originally built by a very rich Jewish family that later moved to Odessa and rented the house to another family. The second family went broke while living in this ten-room house, and after that Vova's parents moved in and still lived there. They fixed the house. They painted the windows and the shutters and everyone in Warshilovka was proud of the *haifil*. If you went for a walk you never failed to walk by this nice house.

Sonia's thoughts went in this direction. She would take a walk around the house, stop, and look it over. Maybe Vova would notice her. He might even stop her and invite her in for an inspection. She was not disappointed. As soon as she came close to the house and slowed down to look at it she heard a quiet voice calling to her to wait, and there he was, Vova. He introduced himself as Vova Ovcherov, and she said her name, Sonia Dries.

"So you have family here," he said.

"Yes, cousins, uncles, aunts, grandfather, and grandmother."

"Isn't that wonderful, and I know them all. Wouldn't you like to inspect the inside of the house? It is very nice and has ten rooms."

Sonia thought awhile, and although she had expected the invitation she said no, she couldn't do that now.

"Then let us sit down on the bench near the house."

They walked over. Vova took his handkerchief out of his pocket and brushed off the bench. Then pointing his hand to the bench he said, *"Poszhalowsta"* ("Please").

As they sat talking the sun slowly moved in its usual course and began to lose its round shape and finally bowed its head behind the horizon. Darkness started to enter the village of Warshilovka, and the *haifil,* and the bench where two hearts were beating in the same direction.

It was Sonia who finally got up and said, "My, my, it's getting dark and it's 'way past my suppertime. I'd better be going. My aunt won't know what happened to me."

She put out her hand and Vova squeezed it and said, "When can

I see you again? I am leaving Sunday for Vinitza to school. My vacation has ended."

"And I will stay here another two weeks," she said.

"How about tomorrow—the same time, the same place?"

"All right," she said and left.

She almost danced home, couldn't keep her feet walking calmly. She was in a daze. "Vova," she whispered to herself, and her eyes seemed to be looking at him. There he was, right in front of her, talking that so beautiful Russian to her, and she had a chance to talk in Russian, too.

When she entered the house her aunt was startled, for Sonia looked different. Her eyes were twinkling; her cheeks were blushed with pink. Her aunt at first thought that Sonia was sick and she had a fever. That would account for her red face and her unnatural walk. Even her good-evening sounded different. But Sonia noticed her aunt's anxiety, so she quickly said, "I am all right, Aunt. There is nothing wrong with me. Only I have some great news. You know Vova Ovcherov? I met him this afternoon. He's such a wonderful boy. He talks so nice. He talks Russian. He wants to see me again tomorrow. Aunt Nessa, he is very handsome. He is leaving Sunday for school in Vinitza."

Aunt Nessa's expression changed and a broad smile appeared. She walked over to Sonia, hugged her with both arms, and kissed her, saying, "You would be a very lucky girl if you could get Vova for a husband. He is regarded as the finest boy in town. He has a wonderful family, tops in Warshilovka. And I am sure your father and mother know them and would be happy with such a *schidach*. But, Sonia darling, he has four or five years of college ahead of him, and I know that he has resolved to finish college. Are you willing to wait that long and give the best years of your life for a dream that may never happen? As your aunt I wouldn't advise you."

Sonia bowed her head and sat down. She put her face in her hands and big tears started to fall. She didn't eat supper and all night she was sleepless, thinking about her aunt's words. "Will you give the best years of your life for a dream that might never happen?" The

night was endless. All kinds of thoughts came and went. Many times she cried, and many times she thought that her aunt might be right and her father and mother might feel the same way. Sonia came to one conclusion. She must keep her promise to see Vova again.

This time Sonia didn't stay late. She went home before nightfall and on Saturday she saw him again. At that time they sealed their love for ever and ever, and promised to write to each other. On Sunday morning Vova left, dreaming about his love left behind.

Sonia didn't stay two weeks more, as she had originally planned. She left for home in three days, leaving behind her a deep mystery. Her friends were surprised and couldn't think of a reason why Sonia should leave so suddenly. First they thought they might have mistreated her and they wanted to apologize, but Sonia assured them that everything was fine and that she would miss them all. The family couldn't understand her haste to leave for home. Only Aunt Nessa knew the reason, and she decided not to talk.

When Sonia reached home she surprised her parents. They wanted to know what had happened. Sonia assured them the family was all right and nothing had happened. She had just decided to come home.

As everything returned to normal Sonia was already getting letters from Vova, and she wrote to him. Their love developed into a more fervent stage. With Vova it worked wonders. He had a strong desire to study more, to become a better student, to be worthy of her love. He sent his good marks to her to prove himself.

With Sonia it worked the opposite way. She was dazed. The image of Vova was always with her. Her thoughts were always wrapped around that image. She didn't hear when someone talked to her. She paid no attention to things she had to do; even her Russian lessons were neglected. Her father noticed all this, and was afraid that she might be sick. He talked to her, offered to take her to a doctor or do what he could to help her. But Sonia kept on saying that she was all right, nothing was the matter with her.

One day Aunt Nessa from Warshilovka came to visit her brother Shloime in Tomoshpil. She had kept Sonia's secret, but now she came out with the truth, told her brother and sister-in-law that their

daughter was in love with that wonderful boy, Vova Ovcherov. Everybody was very happy about it, and that helped Sonia too. She no longer felt she had to hide her feelings. She started to write more freely and to get her mail at home and told Vova that her family knew all about them and that everyone was happy about it.

This love went on for several years, and every year it got stronger. Finally the time came when Vova was graduated and got a top teaching job in a government high school.

Vova and Sonia married and lived an ideal life. They had two sons. Later, for political reasons, they came to the United States; they lived here for many years.

Vova eventually died and Sonia lives with one of her sons. Their love and ideal life was a great example for everybody.

POGROM!

The air in the Ukraine was full of talk about pogroms. It happened in many towns that the bad peasants organized pogroms, and robbed and killed Jews. In the villages, in the countryside where the peasants lived, on the fields, and in the factory the people talked about the pogroms against the Jews.

Truthfully, most peasants, farmers, and factory workers were outspoken against pogroms, and particularly against one in Warshilovka. They couldn't condone the devastation, the destruction, the death a pogrom leaves in its wake. They couldn't see what good it did, and besides, they liked the Jews. They often got favors from them. Also, the Jews were good shoemakers. They made new shoes and repaired old ones. They were fine capmakers, they made good blouses and pants, women's dresses and skirts. And they, the peasants, sold to the Jews their eggs, chickens, fruit, and vegetables on the *yarid* days.

Why then be against them, why? This talk must be from the bad men that always look for trouble. The fact of the matter was that those who spread this kind of word were the idlers, the lazy, the jealous, the thieves, and the good-for-nothings. So the good peasants and workers would have nothing to do with it.

In fact they heard that the *Katzopes* came out against pogroms. *Katzopes* was a nickname for Russians that lived in the village of Borscov. They were known to be great fighters, for they were physically the giants of the Russian people. They were never known to lose a fight. If they got into one they must win. So the *Katzopes* came out against pogroms, and particularly in Warshilovka. They let it be known that if a pogrom broke out there they would fight on the Jewish side. They also wanted it known that they would train young Jews to fight viciously.

"Take notice," they said, "and don't start anything in Warshilovka."

There was a *yarid* in Warshilovka on the second and fourth Sunday of every month. Good *yarids* they were, for the peasants brought all their products and animals and sold or traded them for merchandise they needed. The peasants looked forward to those *yarids,* and so did the townfolk. It wasn't business alone, it was like a holiday.

Everybody got dressed up in their best clothes and walked around. Boys and girls holding hands sang and visited the sideshows to see the fat woman who weighed five hundred pounds; to see the half-girl and half-fish; to see the performing dogs that jumped over boxes and tables and walked on their hind legs. These acts and more were shown in tents. There was always the gypsy fortuneteller who would predict your future and guess all about your past. Then you could drink that red *kwass* that was sold for a groshen a glass. It was a tasty drink, sweet and bright red in color.

For this *kwass*-selling Mother got us children ready every *yarid.* We were the only ones selling it, and we were trained to shout to attract the attention of the passersby. We called it French *kwass* that speaks Russian, *"Kwass frontzky he govoreet po Russkie."* People stood around listening to us and bought a glass of *kwass.*

This *yarid* was expected to be a big one, because last *yarid* was rained out. It had rained so hard that no one came. So everybody expected a big turnout this Sunday.

Early in the morning Mother walked out to see the rising sun. She was not too happy, for thick clouds were hovering in the sky and she worried that it might rain again. It didn't take long, however, before Father came in announcing that the sun was out in all its brightness and warmth. In fact, peasants had already started to arrive, their wagons loaded with all their products. The marketplace got filled up and the day's business started in full force.

But the townspeople noticed many strange faces that had nothing to sell and were not buying either. They bunched together, furtively talking and looking around to be sure nobody heard them. They walked around the town examining the stores, looking at the displays of merchandise in tents. They stopped for a longer time around a big display of yard goods owned by two Gentiles who came from Vinitza and hoped to do a big business.

The *actziznik* was the first one to notice these strangers. The young Jews that were organized also noticed them, and one young man took off for Borscov on horseback to notify the *Katzopes.*

At the same time the *actziznik* went to the *uratnik* and told him of the strangers in town. They walked out together and approached the strangers, about twenty of them, strong-looking fellows. The *uratnik* asked one if he could do something for him. He answered no, they were just looking around. By this time some of the businesspeople became frightened. They felt something strange and menacing in the air.

In Borscov the *Katzopes* gave the alarm and a couple dozen of them swarmed into Warshilovka, meeting with the young Jews they had trained. They were just in time, for the strangers started a fight in one of the bigger stores with a savage call, *"Bay Szshide"* (Hit the Jews).

The pogrom was begun. The officers disappeared, but the trained fighters and the *Katzopes* were together on the scene. The fight became wilder and more vicious. Robbing and stealing started. Even the good peasants started to rob the Jewish stores, carrying goods to their wagons. They didn't fight, they robbed. The strangers did the fighting, still shouting, *"Bay Szshide."*

The young Jews and the *Katzopes* got after the strangers with everything they could put their hands on. The fight became bloody and the strangers started to fall. Finally they were beaten, subdued, lying on the ground covered with blood from head to foot, begging for mercy.

Now everybody turned to the peasants' wagons to regain the stolen goods. They did recover everything that had been taken. Many of the peasants felt the anger of the *Katzopes,* for they were not satisfied with just taking back the goods, but they beat up the peasants who had stolen, too, telling them they had been warned not to start a pogrom in Warshilovka.

At this point the *uratnik* and his helper appeared. They too were beaten up. The display of yard goods owned by the two Gentiles disappeared. There wasn't a yard of material left. All the wagons were ransacked till nothing was left, everything gone. All the stores were

closed and the street was littered with beaten-up bodies that couldn't even move, and there was no one to give them any help.

The *uratnik* began to beg the *Katzopes* and the Jewish fighters to stop and go home. They finally did, and little by little wagons started to move for home, till only the injured were left.

Doctor Luria was called, but he wanted to be paid in advance for his work. Many of the peasants had money and paid the doctor. The *uratnik* helped, and one by one the doctor gave them first aid, bandaged them, and put them on their wagons for home. The Jewish people also gave some first aid to friendly peasants they knew, and sent them home. It was late at night before everybody was patched up and on his way.

The next morning the sun came out in its usual brightness. But it shone on a town littered with all kinds of merchandise: with coats, with fruit and vegetables, with hats and caps, with many papers. The local children went around picking up paper rubles and much silver money. For the kids it was a picnic, and for the town it was a victory. Everybody congratulated each other, and particularly the Jewish youths that put up such a wonderful defense. The young men drove to Borscov in two wagons to express their thanks to the *Katzopes* for their loyal help and brought them presents.

Several days later three officers arrived from Vinitza to investigate the pogrom of the previous Sunday. They called it a pogrom on poor innocent peasants and Gentile businessmen. First they went to the rabbi. He knew nothing about it. All he could tell them was that such a thing had happened, but he didn't know why, when, or how, and he knew no details. So they went to Chaim David, the main grocer in town, and in whose store the fighting and the robbing had started.

Chaim David told them the story about those strange people at the *yarid*. How they had come in, started a fight and shouted, *"Bay Szshide."* The fight was big and his store was robbed, and when the fight moved outside he had locked his store door. He didn't know who the fighters were. A lot more questions were asked but he didn't know any more.

The officers drove into Borscov to talk to the *Katzopes*. Here

they spent two days, but no one knew anything about the fight. They heard later about it, but they themselves had nothing to do with it.

When the officers returned to Warshilovka they were disappointed, for they had failed to get any information whatever, and they had to bring a report to Vinitza. So the *uratnik* brought them over to my father. Father and the officers talked in a very friendly way. They told him that they would appreciate it very much if he could give them some information because they must make a report.

Father gave them a report to take to Vinitza. "This," he said, "will be the best report. Spread it through the Ukraine. Let the people know that the Jews can and will fight back. Jews don't organize pogroms. But they will defend themselves and their homes when other people organize them and shout *'Bay Szshide!'* You see, they brought some strangers to the *yarid* purposely to kill Jews and rob us, to destroy our property, attack our women, burn our synagogues. So we just said, 'No, you can't do that!'

"We not only protected ourselves, we beat them back so bad that they will never try it again. So take this as your report to the *natchalsvo*. Yes, and tell them also that not one person was killed. There were no deaths, but Warshilovka had a pogrom in reverse."

The next *yarid* was very poorly attended; not even half the usual amount of people came. The businessmen complained that their stores didn't take in enough to pay expenses. So they decided to pack their wares—shoes, caps, warm jackets, pants, women's wear—and go to Chrosna on Thursday's *yarid*. That was all right for the small merchants, who made all that merchandise themselves. But what about the storekeepers?

Sunday night all the business people and the tradesmen got together in the synagogue to discuss the situation created by the pogrom. It was decided to send one or two men to the nearby villages to talk to the peasants and assure them that the Jews of Warshilovka were taking strict precautions that this thing would never happen again.

This was done, with great results. The next *yarid* was much better attended, and good business was done by nearly everybody.

THE UKRAINE, BREADBASKET OF EUROPE

Russia is an enormous country. It has all kinds of life, all kinds of weather, all kinds of people. In parts it is always winter, in other parts always summer. It has palm trees, it has coconut trees, it has fruit trees. It has the Black Sea and sandy beaches, it has the Black Sea and mud beaches. It has great lakes and big rivers. It has thousands of miles of sandy land and thousands of miles of productive land.

In the Ukraine the land is perhaps the richest in the world. On this rich, dark earth grew the best, the sweetest fruit. Its cherries, pears, and apples were known all over Europe. Its vegetables, its canteloupes, its watermelons were in demand in the great markets of the big cities. Wheat, corn, oats, buckwheat—all were grown in the millions of bushels, and the Ukraine was known as the agricultural garden of Europe.

The greatest percentage of the people were farmers or worked on the farms. There was the *puretz,* the nobleman, the landowner. He had thousands of acres and hired hundreds of poor peasants to work his land. He paid them next to nothing but they had to work to be able to live.

Then there was the rich peasant who had enough land so that he could farm for himself. He hired other peasants to work for him. They were peasants who owned some land too, but not enough to make a living. So they had time to take a job with the richer peasant.

But the great majority of the peasants were poor, although they owned acreage enough to raise their own vegetables and have some pasture for their cows and horses to feed on. Almost all peasants had fruit orchards, some big, some small. Of course the *puretz* had orchards with thousands of trees.

My father played a small part in the business of the orchards. He bought the fruit even before it was ripe. He paid so much a tree, and he had to pick the fruit himself and ship it himself to the markets. Very seldom did he buy much from the *puretz,* for the *puretz* shipped fruit himself in very big quantities. Sometimes he would let my father bid for his cherries and plums and pears, and most of those times my father bought from him. Father always did well and made some money on those buys.

For the wheat, corn, and other grains there were big businessmen, for that line ran into the thousands of rubles. In fact, they used to load ten or fifteen cars at a time for shipment to other countries, where there was always a demand for Ukrainian farm products.

In 1898, because of an abundant crop, my father went broke. He bought, as usual, a lot of orchard fruit belonging to the peasants. As the time came near for the fruit to ripen, the trees were overloaded. It looked like a terrific crop. The branches on the trees had to be braced or they would break from the weight of the fruit. The peasants worked hard to tie and brace the heavily laden branches, and when picking time came Father hired half of the usual help, for it was easy to pick. From each branch you could pick three or four times the normal amount of fruit. The shipments were much bigger and the market prices were much smaller.

One day the big-city markets found they couldn't consume all the fruit they had ordered. They had to cancel some shipments and cut all other shipments in half. So Father was hit pretty hard. The fruit was ripe and had to be picked. Shipments were cut in half and there was no place to unload the rest of the fruit.

He first started to rent cellars in Warshilovka and fill them up, hoping he would be able to ship later. But later was just as bad. The markets were still overloaded, and shipping didn't even pay, for it didn't bring in the cost of the freight. So he kept on loading up every cellar in Warshilovka, and when they were overloaded he was really stuck.

The peasants demanded payment for their fruit and Father had no more money to invest. He went to each and every peasant and

asked them to help him. First, he would pay them, as soon as possible, for every tree he had bought. Second, they must store the fruit for him. Most of the peasants got busy digging big holes in the ground, going down ten or twelve feet deep, and filling each hole with pears, apples, and plums, up to three or four feet from the top. The rest of the hole was filled with dirt. When frost came it wouldn't reach deep enough to freeze the fruit. The peasants were very nice about it.

Little by little Father got rid of some of the fruit, until by spring he was all paid up with the peasants. But he was cleaned out, didn't have a ruble for himself, nor could he pay up the loans he had made to survive. And he still had cellars full of fruit. This was the terrific crop in the Ukrainian orchards in 1898.

The grain crop didn't suffer so much, for the merchants that bought the grain had markets in other countries, and they shipped to those markets at an even better price. Germany was the biggest customer of the grain, for two reasons. First, they could never raise enough grain themselves for their population; and second, that year they had a very poor crop. No rain fell in the spring of the year or in the summer. After harvest time the rains came but didn't do any good. So the Ukraine fed Germany and other European countries that year.

The Ukraine was truly the breadbasket of Europe.

FATHER CAUGHT A THIEF

For months the town of Warshilovka had been plagued by thievery. The thefts were mostly small, and were accomplished by entering a house through a window. The window was generally open. The thief got in and took what he could put his hands on. Then he left, closing the window behind him, making the job neat and leaving no trace of his work.

People first thought this might be the work of women. No man would clean up after that kind of a job. But that was not so. The thief turned out to be a clean young man.

As the thief went on with his stealing the *uratnik* started to lay for him. He walked around nights watching houses, side windows, back doors, carrying a gun with him. He didn't catch the thief, and about twice every week there was more stealing going on. In fact the thief got more daring. He started to steal more expensive articles, and then he stole a horse! No one expected he would dare. Nevertheless it happened. He stole a horse!

The *uratnik* took all his help, the *gardavoi,* and started a big search in our town and in surrounding towns. They went into every barn and pasture where a horse could be hidden. But they had to give up, for they couldn't find a sign of either the horse or the thief.

The *uratnik* decided to go to Vinitza, the county seat, and ask for help from the regular police department there. This he did, and he was granted two detectives from the Secret Service Department.

The detectives went back with the *uratnik* to Warshilovka, and when they arrived they got set up for a long stay. They found a place to live for the first month, filled out a paper, and sent it to Vinitza for money for upkeep and expenses.

Finally they started their investigation among the ones that were robbed, especially the man who had lost the horse. They accused him

of selling the horse and claiming it was stolen. They wrote a charge against him while he denied selling it and showed proof that it was stolen.

Nobody could fool those Secret Service men. They had their own way of investigating, and they came to the logical conclusion that the horse could not have been stolen without leaving some clue. Since there was no clue then the owner had sold it and was covering up.

Therefore they decided to take him to Vinitza to appear before high *nachalstvo* or, if necessary, in court. There he would have to tell the truth—that he had sold his horse—and he would be convicted of false reporting. They decided that the next Monday they would arrest him and go with him to Vinitza.

That same night another horse was stolen, this time from a landowner. He had a pair of matched horses that were used only for his own travel with his favorite carriage. One of the pair was stolen and this event was reported to the *uratnik*. That gentleman and the Secret Service men were at a loss this time, for they had never expected another horse to be stolen. They had thought the mystery was solved, and now this!

The town really became jittery and demanded more action. More men were sent from Vinitza and more investigation started among the thief's victims.

My father had a good horse that he used in his business, and he started to worry. He figured that the thief was pretty smart. He had stolen two horses and Father's was the last horse in town, outside of the mate to the last one stolen. If the thief had wanted to he could have stolen the pair, for they were in the same stall. Yet he took only one. So, Father reasoned, the thief must expect to get his horse next.

So Father first began to tie the horse for the night with a chain instead of a rope. Then he bought a large trap such as was used to trap beaver, and he set it up for the night. To the trap he connected a long rope. When someone was caught in the trap he would pull away the rope, which would pull a bell attached to it. Then Father would run out and catch the thief.

Father was good at planning things and he made this scheme perfect. He slept near the barn to be able to respond fast. For eleven nights nothing happened. On the twelfth night the thief was caught in the trap and it hurt him so much that he screamed. The bell rang and my father was there in seconds with a kerosene lamp in his hand. One look at the thief's face and he called him by name.

"Evan, you are the thief!"

Evan was in such pain that he kept screaming, "Take it off! Please take it off!"

People woke up and ran to see what the screaming was about. Soon there were a lot of people there. While Father was working to open the trap some young boys punched the thief.

In a few minutes he was thrown to the floor and everybody was hitting him. Father was astonished at the wild behavior of the crowd and was afraid they would kill Evan. He started to plead with them to stop hitting him and to get the *uratnik*. Somebody had already gone to do this, but by the time the *uratnik* arrived and took over, Evan's face was bloody. He couldn't stand on his feet from the pain of the trap, and his clothes were torn. The *uratnik* sent for a wagon. They lifted Evan into the wagon and drove off.

The town was out in full force, even young children. People were talking loudly about what had happened and how smart my father was, and that all the police, including the Secret Service officers from Vinitza, couldn't catch the thief.

After his trial Evan was sent for three years to jail and Father got a reward for his bravery.

THE END OF THE WORLD, 1899-1900

Everybody talked about the end of the world. Nobody knew who started the story. Nobody knew where it came from. No one could say why and how—only that the end was coming. Men, women, and children alike were sure that on a certain date this world of ours would be totally destroyed. Nothing would be left.

Some people were sure that the date was in the Bible. Not only the date, but the description, even the hour when the world would disappear. Arguments were hot about the Bible. In fact, some saw with their own eyes a ball of fire with someone in it talking. And he very plainly said the date, the hour, the minute when the world would come to an end. And that corresponded with the Bible date! Others claimed they saw in the stars that the life of this world was coming to an end, and it called for more prayers.

These stories spread like wildfire. They traveled through towns, villages, and even big cities. Everybody talked about what to do and how to prepare to meet the end. There were some newspapers that came out strongly against the rumors, and called on the people to return to sanity and stop this nonsense about the end of the world. But the articles made no impression.

People started to go more to church and to synagogue. The streets were always full of people talking about what was going to happen, and many different decisions were reached.

It is true that many people didn't read the papers, only a few of the more educated and those that could afford a paper. They were three in our town of Warshilovka, and maybe that many in other towns, and none in the villages. So most of the people didn't know about the newspaper articles.

There were special prayers every day for hours. Business was not

attended to. The land was completely neglected. Some peasants started to sell their cattle, horses, and pigs at very low prices. The only ones interested in buying were those who speculated. They offered next to nothing for the stock, and got it. The peasants were saying that they couldn't take the stock with them, but the money they might.

The Jews were left with their merchandise. The shoemakers, capmakers, tailors, and other mechanics did no business at all. No one was buying. And as the supposed day came nearer this took on a most tragic form, and it seemed as if it really was the end of the world.

The day, the hour, the minute came, and nothing happened. The world went on its natural way with a big hot sun shining down on the earth. The trees were blown by a gentle breeze and the birds sang their usual songs. How beautiful everything looked!

People began to come out of their hiding places dressed in their best clothes, carrying their harmonicas and other musical instruments, singing Ukrainian songs. The streets were soon full and spirits were high as people prayed and thanked God for changing his mind about destroying the world. Everyone was sure that the prayers had done it.

And when life started back to normal again the only echoes were heard on *yarids,* when they told the story of how they had prayed and God had heard them and changed his mind and left everything as it was. And here they were all well and happy, and they looked to the shining sun and crossed themselves.

Those who had sold out their livestock had to start over again. They were almost disappointed; they had been so sure of the end.

Then the year 1899 passed on into eternity and along came a bright, promising new year, 1900.

EXODUS TO AMERICA

The struggle for a living was too great and hard. The danger of living in Russia, the anti-Semitism, the persecution of the Jews became unbearable. So Simche and Molke, as usual on Saturday night after Avdula, and while they were still under the influence of the Sabbath spirits, discussed their mere existence, their struggle to earn a piece of bread, and the difficulties of raising their children in such terrible poverty and under frightful anti-Semitism.

The boys were getting big. What could they expect in Russia? What opportunities were awaiting them in Russia? But if they were in America, in the golden land, everything would be open for them. Molke agreed, and encouraged Simche and told him that she would manage until he could establish himself in America and be able to take her and the children over there too. They made the decision that they must make a break.

But traveling cost money. Where could they get at least one hundred rubles? So Molke started to figure what she could get from her furniture.

For the hand-carved bed, Esoscher had once offered her twenty rubles, and she could still get it from him. For the desk and chair, both unusual pieces of furniture, the rabbi had told her any time she wanted to sell them he would be glad to give her twenty rubles. For the seat in the synagogue, which they paid for when they moved to Warshilovka (as every man had to have his own seat), they could get ten rubles. That would make fifty rubles.

Then her jewelry, her copper pots, her brass ornaments, the hand-embroidered tablecloths and some beautiful bedspreads—if she would take all those to Hershel, the moneylender, and give them to him for security, he might lend the fifty rubles that would make it just one hundred rubles, just enough for the travel expenses.

When Molke saw Hershel, he was willing to lend her sixty rubles, but she would have to pay back ten for the advance interest. Molke was happy to do that, and so in one day she raised the hundred rubles. So they called for the travel agent and all the arrangements were made to leave in ten days. It would take that long to get ready.

And in ten days, Simche was on his way to the golden land with high hopes for a great future.

On the way, Simche dreamed out his plans—laid them out beautifully. He had heard how easy it was to make money in New York. That was how people talked about it; actually, they said that there was money on the streets of New York. All you had to do was pick it up. But Simche knew differently. He didn't want to listen to what other people said. He knew you had to work and be honest, and God would help. He also knew that he was not an ignorant man. He knew the Torah, the Tanach, and in general knew all that God wanted from his people. He could also write and figure. He was sure that he would have no trouble in making a nice living and saving enough to bring Molke and the children over very soon. And the closer he got to the end of his journey, the more excited he got.

Here was the Statue of Liberty, and there was New York with its tall, heaven-high buildings. And here was the Island of Tears, Ellis Island. And as the boat docked, the word went around that you had to have ten dollars cash or someone to call for you. Simche had none. But he did make friends on the boat with a total stranger, an American who traveled often to Europe. His name was Herman. He decided to ask him, and how surprised he was that the man Herman, without another question, took out and handed him ten dollars. And how much more surprised he was, when he came to the immigration commissioner, to hear him call out, "Simche Charnochofsky, everything is all right, Mr. Averbach is waiting for you."

Mr. Averbach came right over and took Simche and walked away with him, and when they were ready to leave, Mr. Herman came over. Simche handed him back the ten dollars with many thanks.

Mr. Averbach was a *lantzman,* a fellow countryman. He and his wife were both from Warshilovka, the same town that Simche

came from. They had been in New York many years. They reared their family in New York, fine children, all professionals. The oldest was a doctor, and the youngest was a doctor, too; the one next to the oldest was a good lawyer.

The old folks had a wine cellar on Orchard Street, a very successful business. But they were lonesome. They wanted to see someone from Warshilovka. So they were watching reports on immigrants and where they were coming from. And all of a sudden they got a letter from the rabbi from Warshilovka, informing them that Simche Charnochofsky was on the way to New York on the boat *St. Louis,* and begging them to do what they could for him.

So the Averbachs decided first to meet him at the boat and take him off on their responsibility; second, to bring him right to their wine cellar for the first dinner; and third, to try to get some kind of a job for him—to establish him and help him as much as they could.

And now Mr. Averbach performed his first duty and had Simche on the way to his wine cellar. And what a reception he had when he arrived! Mrs. Averbach kissed him as if he were her own brother, and she had her three sons and their wives and children over. All of them greeted him in a very broken Yiddish.

A long table was set to accommodate all the family, and what a dinner was served! Chicken and all the trimmings and several kinds of wine; and everybody was concerned with Simche, asking questions about Warshilovka, about the people who lived there, about some of their relatives. They kept Simche busy talking all about everybody and about the town. And he told them that most of their relatives were not there any more, and that some of the children of their relatives were there, but they wouldn't know them. And this went on into the late hours, when finally all the children went home and Mr. Averbach showed Simche to his room next door, which they rented for him and had paid three dollars for room and board for the first week.

The next day when Simche came into the Averbachs', they discussed what he could do. He was not a tailor, not a capmaker, not a carpenter, not a painter, not a worker at all. Simche's family had no

worker in it. They were all merchants. And it was decided that Simche should become a pushcart peddler. They showed him where to get a pushcart, and where he could buy apples, pears, or other fruit. Simche became a businessman.

Every day he pushed his cart on Esther or Orchard Street, selling apples, pears, plums, and other fruit or vegetables. He loaded up at the wholesale place, and when he sold out he called it a day. At the end of his business hours, and sometimes they were long hours—ten, twelve, and fourteen, for he had to sell everything—he counted a dollar profit. Working five days a week, he had five dollars a week.

He decided to send home a dollar to Molke and the children—which he did from the first week he started to peddle. But that didn't leave him enough to get along. So he got himself a job as a night watchman in a clothing shop on Forsythe Street, on the fourth floor. There he would come in at seven o'clock, sweep up the shop and stuff the swatches, the small pieces, the waste, into sacks, and at the end of the week, a rag man would come and pick them up, weigh them, and pay him. Usually it would run from three to five dollars a week. That was his pay, for there was no salary to this job.

He also had a two-burner gas plate where he made his breakfast and night meal, and for sleeping he had quilts and pillows. The cutting table was his bed. He had to be up and out of the shop by six when the workers started to come to work.

The shop was long and narrow, and had two long lines of sewing machines, with gas jets over every machine. Windows were locked and unwashed, with iron grates on each one. At the entrance was a small office with the only door to come in or out of the building, with a timeclock on the office wall where sixty-five cards were lined up either on the "in" or "out" side of the clock. There was a big sign over the clock: "Hours from seven to seven—half hour for lunch." Wooden steps climbed all the way up to the fourth floor, and the outside of the building looked rather like a gray, dirty, neglected prison.

This was Simche's lodging place, and he was very happy with it, for it gave him enough to live on, to send some home to Molke, and

to save a couple of dollars a week, for he wanted to send a steamboat ticket to Chaim, his oldest son. The sooner he could bring Chaim over, the sooner he would have Molke with the other children over too.

And when the ship companies advertised their tickets at bargain prices, Simche bought the first ticket and sent it to Chaim and asked him to come at once. The Averbachs told Simche that when Chaim arrived, they wanted him to be their guest for the first dinner, and Simche promised.

As soon as Chaim received the ticket, he quit his job. He worked in Tulchine as clerk in a crockery and glass store. He went home to Warshilovka, and after a few days of getting ready he left for America, kissing his mother, his sisters, and his brothers.

In New York, Chaim had no trouble in getting a job. Almost all the crockery and glass businesses were in the downtown area on the Bowery, and many of those were in Jewish hands. A good packer of dishes and glassware was hard to get. So Chaim was put to work on a good salary of nine dollars a week for six days, ten hours a day. And in a couple of weeks, he was raised to ten dollars a week. Chaim had a room and board for which he paid three dollars a week, and the rest of his money, together with his father's, they saved to bring Mailech (Mike) over.

And by the end of 1904, a ticket for the boat and some cash were in Warshilovka, and Molke made a special trip to Vinitza, where Mailech worked as a clerk in a furniture store. She told his boss about Mailech's going to America, that she had already received the boat ticket and that Mailech had to leave in a week or two. The boss was very happy for Mailech, paid him the ten rubles he owed to that time, and gave Mailech three rubles extra for spending money. Mailech left his job.

When at home in Warshilovka, preparing for that far trip, Molke kept on talking to Mailech about the great danger in a trip like that. She realized that he was only fourteen years old, almost a child, and was worried whether or not she could trust him to make the trip by himself. And when she talked to the travel agent, she begged

him to take care of Mailech—which he promised—and Molke felt better.

And in a couple of weeks, when Molke and the children went to Gneven to the railroad station to see Mailech off to America, and when Mailech and the family were standing on the station expecting the arrival of the train, Mailech lifted his eyes to the rising sun, saw its brightness, its warm rays, and its route across the sky from the east to the west, and he knew that this was where he was going—thousands of miles west on the same route.

When the train arrived, he kissed his mother, his sisters, and his brothers, and tears were freely running down the cheeks of his mother's face. When she held him in her arms and reminded him again and again of the danger and to be very careful, he promised he would, and when the train pulled out of the station, in Mailech's ears were ringing the words, "Danger, danger, be careful."

It was two days' and two nights' travel to Kominetz, the capital city of the state with the same name, which was only a few miles from the border. But since I had no passport to cross the border by train, I had to steal across the border at night. I had to meet a man on the station in Kominetz. The man would wear a long black coat and a derby hat and would carry an umbrella. He would further arrange the travel that was very easy.

As I stepped off the train, the man was right in front of me. I called him by his name. It was he. He asked me to wait in the waiting room, and in less than ten minutes he had nine more passengers. He packed us into two wagons and we traveled for four hours to an out-of-town farmhouse. We went into the house, where we all got acquainted and the agent lectured to us. He told us that from here we would leave by foot, about midnight, following a leader to the border; and after we crossed the border, a very shallow water, we would be in Austria. There another man would wait for us and give us further instructions. But now we were to give him all the money we had, and the man who would meet us in Austria would return it to us.

We all believed him, and everybody emptied his pockets. Some had quite a bit of money, but I had three rubles and some small change.

Then they served a bite to eat. It was just that: one bite. In fact, there were some men who remained hungry and raised their voices for more food, and they had to be given more bread and milk.

Just at twelve midnight, a Russian Tsarist officer took us over. He walked first, and we followed him. He told us to walk quietly. We walked through a big field and some woods and finally up a hill. Up and down again, and there was the border, that narrow stream of water. The Tsarist stopped us and told us that he would leave and we should wait about ten minutes and then proceed over that water. We shouldn't stop for one second in the water and we shouldn't worry about getting wet. A man would meet us on the other side and take care of us.

And when we got into the water it was up to the waistline, but nobody stopped, and as we reached the Austrian side, two Austrian officers stopped us. They pulled their guns while everybody was terrified, and they shot three times into the air to let the Russian guard know that they had caught people crossing the border. Then they ordered us in a line, said that we were arrested, and started us to the police station.

When we got there, wet, tired, and cold, the police took us into a warm room. Another officer came in and started to question everybody, and as this went on a big, well-dressed man walked in. The officer greeted him and started to talk to him; then he started to talk to us in German Yiddish. He told us not to be afraid, that we would have to stay overnight in the station house and that tomorrow we would proceed on our journey. He ordered in hot coffee with rolls for us.

When he was asked for the money that we had given to the man in Russia before crossing the border, he said he knew nothing about it, and thought it was very foolish that we gave our money away. We should have known that we would be in a different country, and

that there was nothing we could do then and there. The next day when we left, no one had any money at all.

When we arrived in Vienna to stay one day, we were again met by a man who put us up in a cheap hotel with cheap meals. But he had two carriages driven by horses to show us Vienna.

The same thing happened in Berlin. We were met by a man who was wearing a stovepipe hat and a very nice suit. He had a table set at the railroad station with all kinds of kosher meats and white bread, and served beer. He took us out to show us Berlin. Both Berlin and Vienna were very impressive, and for me it was a great treat, for I never saw such beautiful cities and such impressive parks.

When we left Berlin, the company was disbanded and sent in different directions. The man told me that I had to go to England and I would take the boat at Liverpool and I was very happy. I asked him to send me through France to London and he told me that was how I would travel. He said I had lots of time because my boat had just left from Liverpool to New York and it would be a month before she returned to Liverpool. So if I wanted to go through Paris, I could go (but on my own expense while in Paris) and from there across the Channel to London.

In Paris I spent only one day and one night, and then I went on to London. When I arrived after a terribly stormy Channel crossing that made me sick, I took my first look at London lying in a dense fog. The fog was so thick that it was hard to see people in front of you, and traffic was stopped.

There I was, hungry and without one cent in my pocket, and at least a month to wait for the boat. Luckily, I had an address of a fellow from Warshilovka and I started to ask people where the street was. I was sent to Whitechapel, the Jewish neighborhood.

After a search for a long time in the darkness of that fog, I found myself standing by a window of a bakery. Rolls, bagels, bread, and cake were looking right at me. My eyes opened bigger than I ever had them open, and my mouth watered. (No, I didn't break the window.)

I walked into the store and told the man that if he would give

me some bread or rolls to eat, I would be glad to do some work for him. He looked at me for a minute and asked me how old I was, what was my name, where I came from, and why I couldn't buy some rolls or bread. After he heard my answers, he took me into the back room to a table, and brought in a basket full of rolls and a cup of tea. I started in on those rolls, and I didn't count how many rolls I ate, but the basket was empty when I got through.

Then the man informed me that I could work for him mornings and afternoons. I would deliver bread and rolls to grocery stores on a two-wheel pushcart, and for that I could get three meals a day and a place to sleep. That suited me perfectly, and I started right to work.

We loaded a pushcart for me and another pushcart for the man, and his wife came to stay in the store. We left to make our deliveries, and in three hours we were back. It was already dark. I got rolls and tea and some cake, and went to sleep in the back room.

After I had worked two days, he started to give me better meals—some meat for dinner and eggs for breakfast. And he also gave me a few pennies in my pocket.

Since I had only three hours of work from six in the morning, and three hours from three in the afternoon, I had plenty of time to look London over. I even traveled on double-decker buses into the finest streets of London, to the fine parks and some museums. I had a good time in London, and when my time came to leave, I was really sorry.

But it was almost my last day in London when I found the *lantzman* from Warshilovka. He was very happy to see me, and he decided that since he owed for board and lodging for a month and couldn't pay, and owed other bills that he couldn't pay, he might as well go along with me to America.

And early next morning, before sunrise, Burach was at the bakery waiting for me. From there we started for Liverpool by bus. I was very happy that Burach came along with me, as I was afraid of the boat and the big ocean I had to cross.

When the boat gave its signal for leaving, people waved their hands, hats, and handkerchiefs, and hollered good-by. Minute after

minute, the people on the platform began to be further and further away as the ship pleasantly glided from the quiet waters into the stormy sea.

Tables were set and people went to eat. Burach and I ate as if we hadn't eaten for days, and as the night came on and the ship was rocking, my stomach started to rock too, and at the railing I found dozens of others doing the same thing as I. Burach helped me down and I found my numbered cot or bunk bed. They were built three high and divided only by twelve inches from the next bunk bed. And in this bunk I lay through the whole trip, sick as a dog.

But as the boat came into still waters by New York, I was up, washed and dressed, and ready to leave. I wasn't surprised when I found my father, my brother, and Mr. Averbach at the boat waiting for me, and also for Burach, as I had written to them about taking Burach off the boat.

This was the second day of January, 1905, the start of a new year, and of course the first dinner was at the Averbachs'. And again they showed us wonderful hospitality. I was overjoyed at what I had seen of the great city of New York: those tall buildings, narrow streets, and such busy people on the packed sidewalks, and then such a wonderful dinner, served with such good wine. I thought, what could be better? This is life! And I was sort of dreaming about the new life when my father said, "And to go to sleep, you go with me."

We thanked the Averbachs for their friendship and wonderful dinner, and with my suitcase in hand I walked with my father to Forsythe Street. When we walked up the steps to the fourth floor of the building, I thought that my father had made some kind of a mistake going into such a prison building. When he opened the door of the shop, those long lines of sewing machines, those gas lights over each machine, the big dirty windows with the iron grates over them frightened me, and I was about to talk to my father when he started to tell me that he was the watchman on this floor.

He told me about his getting up early, his having breakfast here, and his sleeping on the cutting table. He took out the quilts and pillows and started to get ready to go to sleep. And when my father

was snoring in his sleep, I couldn't sleep and with open eyes looked into the deep of the night with its misty contrast. For the moment I couldn't believe it.

But at seven in the morning we had our quilts and pillows put away, had our breakfast of coffee and rolls with butter, washed the pots and dishes and were ready to leave. We went to get the push-cart and to buy some fruit for the day's business.

I read every street sign on the corners: Esther, Eldridge, Broome, Delancey, Rivington. And my father said to me, "You are no greenhorn. You can already read so well!"

Around ten o'clock my father gave me the address where Chaim worked on the Bowery, and said that his boss's wife thought she had a job for me. So with hopes that I would get the job, I went to look for Bergman's china and glass business on the Bowery.

Mrs. Bergman was very friendly and walked with me to Forsythe Street, right into a nice and very busy grocery store. I was introduced to Mr. and Mrs. Phillips. The first question was how old was I. I told them that in twelve days I would be fifteen years old.

After a long talk, Mr. Phillips told me that he would start me at seven dollars a month with room and board, and if I wanted I could start right away. I consented and Mr. Phillips called another clerk and turned me over to him. He asked my name. "My name is Mailech," I said.

"Oh, no," Mrs. Bergman intervened. "Let us see, Mailech would be Mike."

And Mike it was. Mrs. Bergman promised to tell Chaim, and he would let my father know about my job.

We were four clerks. Each one had his own trade, and he would take orders and deliver them to his customers' houses. I had fairly good customers, but one of them lived on Seventh Street near Second Avenue, a good ten long blocks from the store. There I had to deliver breakfast food—milk, rolls, lox, cereals, and other things—and I had to be there no later than seven o'clock. That was all right in nice clear weather, but in rain or snow it was very bad. Then it took twice as long to walk and carry a basket with food and a tin can

with milk. To protect the food I had to cover the basket, which made it pretty heavy.

But regardless of how hard the work was, and how long the hours were, we enjoyed it. There was the maid, Clara. She fed us with the best of everything three times a day. The bedroom was big, with two full-size beds, two in a bed, and good springs and mattresses. In the basement there were wine, dill pickles, dill tomatoes, and watermelon, to which we used to help ourselves between meals.

When I came to work for the Phillipses, I weighed one hundred and forty pounds, and four months later I weighed one hundred and seventy-five pounds, the heaviest I ever weighed. I worked there twelve months, and every month I had a dollar raise.

Saturday the store was closed, and Saturday my father didn't work, so I visited with my father and friends. And when Mother finally came, I was home every Saturday.

Now with Father, Chaim, and Mike working, and with so much more money coming in, we decided to buy tickets for Mother, the two boys and the two girls on easy payments. Some money we had, and some we borrowed, and sent for the family. This was our main ambition, to have the family united, and particularly to have a home for Father, for he had given up the job as night watchman and lived with a family on Henry Street, and was very much dissatisfied.

But now, with the family soon to be united, we started to prepare for that day. In fact, it wasn't long before we got a letter from the rabbi in Warshilovka telling my father that he was helping Mother to settle all her affairs, and that in a week or ten days she would leave with the children, with God's help and His protection.

He also informed him that the house Mother would turn back to the family as a shrine, for God had dwelled with this family in that house for many generations. He told him that Avrum, "Abe," was big and would take full care of his mother and the children through the travel, and that he should not worry.

The rabbi wished for him, Chaim, and Mailech that God should repay them for acting so nobly to the family. And at the end, he

begged that he and his family would not be forgotten, as it was hard to make a living in Warshilovka, and everybody went to America.

Mother's trip was smooth, outside of some incidents that would happen on such a big trip, especially with four children, the oldest twelve years old and the youngest two years old.

One such thing happened while crossing the English Channel. The boat struck a terrible storm and was rocking, throwing the passengers around from one end to the other. Some people cried, and some prayed, so Lhaye was crying too, and talking to God, saying that she would give all her good clothes to the poor for charity if God would only save them. But when the storm receded and everything got quiet on the boat, she told God again that she didn't have many clothes, and that she couldn't give any away.

And on the big boat from Liverpool to New York, Mother was sick and couldn't do anything for the children, so big brother Avrum took over and saw to it that the children had plenty to eat and drink, put them to sleep, dressed them, and, at the same time, didn't forget Mother, as he tried to help her as much as possible.

ORCHARD STREET, OUR NEW HOME

Father was now peddling crockery (dishes). It was before Passover and people were buying new dishes, and he did very well in this line. The work was much harder, but he didn't mind it as long as he made more money.

Just about two weeks before Molke's arrival Simche had an accident. An American Express wagon driving too close ran into Simche's pushcart, turned it over, smashed all the dishes, and threw him to the ground. People gathered and a policeman was also there. The record the policeman made was in favor of Simche. Simche went home, got to bed, and called a doctor. The doctor told him to stay in bed for a couple of days.

The next day an adjuster came to Simche, talked to him about the accident, and suggested a settlement of $50. Simche figured up that he had had about $12 worth of dishes and the pushcart wasn't damaged. So he would have $38 for himself. He figured this was a godsend, and agreed, but he told the adjuster that it must be in cash, as he would not take a check. Since Simche wasn't badly hurt, the next day he was out on the street with more plates and platters.

Chaim and I met with Father about an apartment and saw one on Orchard Street. It had two bedrooms, a living room, and a kitchen, and the rent was reasonable. We decided to rent it and to buy the furniture next Sunday. So we went into a nice secondhand furniture store and selected an icebox, three beds, springs and mattresses, a round table, eight chairs, and two dressers. The man gave us, free of charge, a bamboo bookcase. The bill amounted to $52, which we paid in cash.

The man loaded and delivered the furniture, and there was our apartment, ready to move in. Father and Chaim did move in. We

didn't furnish the living room, but left it for Mother to help select the furniture. A stove and window shades were already in the apartment.

The happy day came when Mother and the children arrived. All of us, Father, Chaim, I, and Mr. Averbach, went to Ellis Island to meet them and we brought them to their own apartment. This was the happiest day for everyone. The family finally was united. For the first dinner we had promised the Averbachs, and so all of us went there. I will never forget that night. We were more than twenty at dinner, for the Averbachs had their children and grandchildren. It was a big affair. Everybody felt that something long-expected had just happened. Father and Mr. Averbach danced while the rest clapped their hands, and then everybody joined in singing. It was midnight when we went home.

For Molke and Simche a new life started with all the family together, with being able to count their children near them. This Mother did Friday night, when the holy Sabbath started and everybody sat at the table to a supper fit for a king. She would take some wine in a glass after Father made *kiddish* and she would start by saying how happy she was here. Pointing with her finger to the children, she said: "Here sits my oldest son, Chaim [Hyman]; and here is my second son, Mailech [Mike]; and Avrum [Abe]; my daughter Lhaye [Lillian] and my Velvel [William]; and here is that Ruchele [Rose]. Six gold stars. Millions of dollars cannot make one as happy as those around the table. Simche! We are the richest people in the world. Let's drink and thank God for being together." *Lachaim.* And when she started serving the children she called each one by name, not just ordinary names, but like this: "This is for Chaimel, this is for Mailechel, this for Avrumele, this is for Lhayele, this is for Velvele and this for Ruchele." Everyone's name was trimmed up to add love to it, and the Friday night dinners became an institution like that in Warshilovka, only more abundant, richer and more complete with whisky, with wine, with gefilte fish, and chicken, and as much as anybody wanted. And Mother made an extra-large noodle *kugel* for friends. After supper *lanzleit* started to come up to

visit. Most of them, men and women that longed for their families still in Warshilovka, came up to talk about their home town, about their parents, sisters, brothers, sort of renewing and refreshing memories. It felt good to talk about them. Mother would put wine on the table and then give them some of the *kugel* she had made for this purpose. They would pay Mother compliments: what a wonderful *kugel* this is, how tasty it is. And week after week these guests came Friday night. We too enjoyed them. For all the news at home and everything that happened here was talked about Friday nights. And this united all the countrymen that were in New York.

Our lives became stabilized in this New York Lower East Side, where immigrants by the thousands arrived from day to day. Orchard Street, where we lived, was the center of many such streets around the neighborhood—Esther Street, Broome Street, Delancey Street, Eldridge Street, and many more. Both sides of these streets were lined with pushcarts, two-wheeled carts about three by ten feet, flat on top with wide rails to display the wares for sale. There were pushcarts with fruit of all kinds; there were pushcarts filled with all kinds of vegetables; some with all kinds of dried fish and herrings; some with cheeses. Then came pushcarts with yard goods, silks, curtains, sheets, towels, all kinds of dry goods and ready-to-wear for children, working pants for men, and hats and caps. In fact, anything in edibles or wares for the house that you can imagine was sold on pushcarts. Each peddler called for customers, announcing his wares. From seven in the morning till seven or eight in the evening the human noises mixed with those of trucks, wagons, factories, boat whistles, and phonograph stores playing favorite Jewish songs. Now and then you could hear a famous Italian singer singing a great opera.

All this was mixed with the voices of the pushcart peddlers, loud: "Schmaltz herrings, two for a nickel! Fresh carp still alive, seven cents a pound! Apples! Pears! Red and black cherries, come take them away! Aprons with two pockets, nineteen cents! Boys' and men's working pants, two pairs for two dollars! A big bargain in children's shoes, genuine leather, seventy-five cents a pair! Hot Bob!

Hot Bob! Buy and eat some hot Bob! Hot sweet corn on the cob, two cents! Dishes for Passover, new porcelain dishes for half price! Silks and satins by the yard for dresses, for skirts and blouses at low prices! Bibles, prayer books, Haggadahs, for Pesach! Hats and caps, reasonable, try them on! Get your window curtains here, sheets, pillow cases, and towels! Onions, potatoes, fresh from the farm, one cent a pound! Borscht by the quart! Sour pickles and tomatoes, nine cents a dozen! Fresh rolls and bagels, fifteen cents a dozen!"

From the record stores came Caruso singing opera. *Carmen* was heard a block away! A cantor was singing religious songs! And an entertainer was singing "*Freitag av der Nacht*," Friday Night, a popular song. All was mixed up with loud and louder shouting! Twelve long hours every day. But Friday afternoon, when the Sabbath began, the streets started to clear. The pushcarts and the shouting receded, stores closed their doors, people rushed home to prepare for the Sabbath. The synagogues lighted up briefly, the doors were wide open, and people began to show themselves in their best dress going to synagogue.

Simche, my father, was one who never failed to attend the Friday night and Saturday services. Friday night and Saturday were holy to him, and he brought his holiness into our home. When he came home from the synagogue he found candles lighted on the white-covered table, two twisted *challas* covered with a glimmering white, embroidered napkin, the bottle of red wine with the tall shining-stemmed glasses around it, Mother dressed in her best dress with a silk kerchief on her head, and the children all dressed for the Sabbath. He entered happy and smiling, said, "Good *shabbes*," and everyone answered, "Good *yahr*." Then the feast would start.

CHAIM'S DEATH

Chaim (Hyman) was well and healthy all his life, never seriously ill. He began to work when he was eleven years old, not because he wanted to leave *cheder* (school) or because he didn't like to play or have a good time like other children. No, he was forced by circumstances. Right on his eleventh birthday he told mother, "Mom, I want to go to the big city [Vinitza] and get a job as a *pricashtiak* [clerk]. I can now understand our miserable, poor life. No food for the children; Father can't find work and doesn't make a living. You can't even buy flour to bake bread for the family. If I get a job you will have one less to feed, and what I earn I will send to you to help the family. At least you might have enough for bread."

Mother cried and said, "You are yet a child. Where will you go and what can you do at this age? You know nothing of the big city. You were never out of Warshilovka."

"But, Mother, there is no other way. I promise I'll find my way and get used to work as long as I can make something to help you."

Mother finally agreed. So she got all his belongings together; she mended some of his clothes, patched the holes in his pants, pressed them, packed a bundle, and took him to Eliazer, who went to Vinitza twice a week; he carted merchandise for the merchants of Warshilovka.

"Erib Eliazer," Mother began, "my boy wants to go to Vinitza to look for a *pricashtiak* job. He is still a child. I am afraid to let him go. He has never been out of town and he might get lost in the big city. What do you think, Erib Eliazer?"

"Molke," Eliazer said to Mother, "don't be afraid. I know all the stores in Vinitza and will place him with a good family and in a good store where he will be happy. He looks like a bright boy and he will be all right there. I will see him twice every week and bring you a *griss* [regards] from him."

Mother kissed Chaim good-by, her face turned pale, and Chaim was on the way to Vinitza.

On arrival Eliazer stopped at Yankeff Mendal's glass and china store, walked in with Chaim, and began to tell Mr. and Mrs. Mendal about this poor boy, Chaim: What a fine boy he is and what wonderful parents he has but very poor. The boy must get a job to help the family. He is honest, obedient, and will be a big help in the store; also in the house.

Those days a new *pricashtiak* had to help also in the housework, shine the family shoes, brush the dresses and suits, scrub the kitchen floor, go shopping for the mistress, and attend to all errands. And when he was all done with the housework, he had to go to the store and sweep and dust and clean everything. After this was all done he helped in the store work.

Chaim agreed to everything, and he was hired, with board and lodging and twenty-five rubles (dollars) a year.

His life was not an easy one. The work in the house was very hard, the hours were unbearably long. The mistress, Mrs. Yankeff Mendal, was a slave driver without regard or mercy. She didn't even let him rest in the evening. She managed to keep him working, always found something for him to do. When he got to bed he was too tired to fall asleep and all kinds of thoughts came to him, particularly of Mother, Father, brothers, and sisters. Many a night his pillow was wet from the tears that came without his command. He felt bad about crying. It reminded him of Mother's words, "You are still a child. Where will you go and what can you do at this age?" So the next day he worked harder to prove to himself that he was grown up.

As a result of such hard work he stopped growing. He remained short, and that bothered him very much. He knew that Father was five feet eight inches tall and that Mother was five feet six inches tall. He knew that Mailech, his younger brother, was getting taller than himself and he knew the reason. Those piles of dishes were entirely too heavy for him to lift. But that was part of his job and he kept on.

When Passover (Easter) came he lived his best. He was given eight days off to go home—sort of a vacation for the holidays. He pre-

pared for this occasion all through the year. He saved small tips from customers, put a cent to a cent (*kopeka* to *kopeka*), and saved up enough to get the shoemaker to make a pair of high-top shoes with buttons on the side, in a high-gloss black shining leather. From the tailor he got a nice suit with long pants and a vest with four pockets in the front.

About a month before Passover, Yankeff Mendal, his boss, paid him his salary of twenty-five rubles. That, Chaim sent home to Mother to prepare for the holiday and he told Erib Eliazer that he would go home with him to be with the family for the full eight days.

When that happy day came and Chaim arrived in Warshilovka, the townspeople all talked about him; how nicely he was dressed, and how fine he looked, and that he helped the family too. The boys from town envied him.

Mother had dressed up all the children, bought *matzos* and other foods, and had also bought real wine for the *seder*. Father too had made some money, had had a very good deal on a shipment of potatoes. So Mother had this Passover arranged with everything, and Chaim really enjoyed his stay.

He returned to his job fresh and full of new ambition. This was repeated for four years.

In 1903 his father was already in America and managed to buy a ship ticket for Chaim. He sent it to him in Tulchen, asking him to leave his job and come to America—New York. Chaim left his job, went to Warshilovka, packed, and left for New York to join his father.

In New York he found it hard to get a job, for he was short. People were afraid he couldn't handle hard work. But Chaim used a scheme. He went into a store on the Bowery where all the china and glass stores were located and asked to see the boss. The boss asked him into the office and Chaim said he was willing to work for nothing. He wanted to show that he had experience and that he could do this work to the boss's satisfaction.

Mr. Bergman, the boss, was a young man and a worker himself. It was only by marrying the boss's daughter that he had become the

owner of the business. When his father-in-law had got old he turned the business over to his daughter and son-in-law.

Mr. Bergman looked at Chaim with sympathy and hired him at a salary of nine dollars a week.

Chaim was very happy. He got himself a room with board for three dollars a week and spent another dollar for lunches. He paid two dollars a week on the ticket Father had sent him, which was bought on the installment plan. And he still had two dollars every week for Father to send Mother and the children still in Warshilovka. Chaim also kept in mind the thought of sending another ticket for Mailech (Mike) to come over, and later the rest of the family.

Chaim found the job very hard, but he was happy because the hours were good; Saturday until one o'clock and Sunday closed. He had time to rest and go to night school to learn English. He had a great desire for a knowledge of English. He wanted more education. He realized that he did not know much of the world or of things in America. He wanted to be able to read books. He yearned to go to the theatre. He wanted to go to lectures. This was a new life, and as he used to say to Father, "A new life has opened for me and I love it. I know we have a great responsibility to bring the family over here. Nevertheless, I want to take all the opportunities this country is giving a newcomer, and my job gives me the time for it."

In less than one year the family was united in New York. Chaim was very happy. He was soon to be nineteen years old. The family and some friends talked to him about girls, about married life. But Chaim had his own ideas.

He had left a girl home whom he loved dearly and he knew she loved him just as much. He also knew that her mother wouldn't allow her daughter to marry him, that she wanted a rich boy for her daughter and looked down on him as a poor worker who had nothing to offer. She was rich and could buy happiness for her child. But this mother, like some other mothers, didn't always understand her children and didn't know that money doesn't always buy happiness. In fact, Chaim and the girl were so in love and had wanted each other so badly that they finally slept together and she became pregnant.

When her mother found out, Chaim was compelled to leave. That was when he left for America. But he felt that some day she and the child would come to him and he must be ready to give them a home and a good life. To that end he lived and hoped. He worked hard and saved every dollar he could, looking forward to that happy day when his sweetheart and his unknown child would come. Year after year he hoped. But it never happened.

Chaim decided to go into business for himself. Mr. Bergman encouraged him and promised to give him credit to supply all his needs in china and glassware. So Chaim started a business of his own in East New York, the eastern part of Brooklyn that was also called Brownsville.

Brownsville blossomed as a new Jewish community. Pitkin Avenue became its main street, with a lot of stores and big businesses. That's where Chaim rented his store. He built deep shelves, made a big counter for wrapping merchandise, put a desk and chair right near the window by the door, and one fine day when he got it stocked he opened for business. He didn't need police to hold crowds back; it was not that busy. But he was pleased with the business he did.

That evening at home he said, "I made no mistakes. I'll work this business up and it will be a good-paying business." And every month he did better. At the end of the year he showed a nice profit.

When Passover approached, the peddlers bought from him. He was so busy he had to hire a boy to help him.

On the sixth day of March, 1907, in the middle of the day, he got sick. His head seemed to be burning with fever and a cold chill was going through his body. He had to close the store and go home.

When Mother saw him walk in she got scared. He looked white as a ghost. She quickly put him to bed and covered him with all the quilts and blankets she had. Still he shivered. Mother lost no time. She ran down to the drugstore in the same building and with tears in her eyes she begged Mr. Schankman, the druggist, to call the doctor to come immediately, for her Chaim was very sick. Mr. Schankman told the doctor not to lose a minute, that it was an emergency.

In less than ten minutes the doctor was at Chaim's bedside. He

examined Chaim, shook his head and without a word ran down to the drugstore and brought back medicine. He told Mother to be prompt with the medicine every hour and that he would be back later. He told her that Chaim had double-pleurisy pneumonia and that he must have been walking around with it for several days. He was now in a dangerous condition.

When the doctor came back he found Chaim still in chills. He suggested calling in another doctor, a specialist in this line, and recommended a Doctor Cohen who lived in New York. It was two hours before Doctor Cohen arrived. During those two hours the doctor did not leave the room. The two hours stretched out like two long years. Finally when Doctor Cohen arrived the two doctors went into consultation.

They ordered nurses around the clock. In fact, Doctor Cohen called a nurse himself to come at once. The doctors waited until the nurse arrived. They had a short conference, and she got busy. She ordered everybody out of the room, opened the window for fresh air, gave Chaim a massage, put an ice bag on his forehead, and made a dim light. Then she came out to us and in a tone of great sympathy she said, "He is very sick. We will try our very best but you must all help us. First of all, you must all be quiet, not to disturb him. No jars or harsh closing of doors. He couldn't stand any disturbance. Doctor Cohen promised to come back by midnight to check again. I hope he will have a good report." She left us and walked back into the sickroom.

The midnight visit by Doctor Cohen was no better than his previous one. He said that Chaim was still dangerously ill and promised to be back at seven in the morning.

For three days more we kept calling other doctors for consultation. For three days we did everything possible. Doctors and nurses were constantly at his side.

On the ninth of March before I went to work I asked the nurse how Chaim was. She advised me to go to work, and if I was needed they would call me. I did go to work, but at ten o'clock they called me to come at once.

It took me an hour to get home. Every passenger on the elevated train wanted to know why such crying, and could they help me. A man did help me from the station to my home, as he was afraid I would never make it. As I approached our apartment, I heard Mother's bitter crying. Everybody could now walk into his room.

Chaim was dead.

THE FARM IN THE CATSKILLS

Chaim's death left a deep scar in our family life. It is hard to describe the sadness, the grief, the melancholy that struck the family. Their faces, their eyes, were witness to the great tragedy of his passing away.

Mother had to be under a doctor's care all of the time. She couldn't eat. She talked to herself all day and all night asking, Why? Why was this done to her and why hadn't it happened to her instead of to her dear son?

Father followed her, only he was a little milder. He tried to control himself, and the children did the same. The good friends and the neighbors and the family didn't leave for one minute. Even at night different friends remained in the house.

For a week we all sat *shiva* (mourning). We sat in stocking feet on the floor, wrapped in grief, not a word from anyone. A dead silence prevailed throughout the day and night. Cold, glassy tears ran down everyone's face. Father said *kaddish* (prayer for the dead) twice every day. Meals were brought in and handed to us on plates, but no one could eat. Friends, relatives, came to comfort us, to talk to us, to make us understand that we had done everything possible and that there was nothing we could do about it now. They told us we were hurting our own health. But when they left, the same atmosphere came back.

After *shiva* time we went back to work, Abe and I. After my first day back at work Father told me, "Mike, you are our oldest son now. On you Mother and I will have to depend. There is no one else to do it; you must take time off from work and wind up Chaim's business. You must settle his bills and sell out his merchandise and collect some money he has outstanding."

I agreed with Father, and the next day I went to New York to

see Mr. Bergman about the stock left over. Mr. Bergman in his friendly manner told me not to worry about it, that he would send his trucks to bring back all the merchandise. He would check it out and pay us every dollar. And he did as he said. In the next few days he removed all the goods and told me to see him in about a week. When I came back he had a list of all the merchandise and a check for $471, for which I thanked him very much. I also asked him please to come see us.

"I intended to come," he said.

And for seven weeks he and his wife came to see us regularly, bringing candy, fruit, and other good items. Their visits were very welcome.

I also collected from the insurance company $500 on a policy Chaim carried. I paid out $60 he owed in bills, but I collected from peddlers and storekeepers close to $200 they owed him. I sold out everything of value and at last there was over eleven hundred dollars left.

Our greatest problem was Mother. She just couldn't recover. She was completely helpless and melancholic. The doctor kept coming but couldn't seem to help her. One day the doctor suggested a change from the city, to move to a quiet place somewhere, possibly in the country or on a farm. My father had always talked about a farm, and Mother too. She had always wanted her own cow, her own chickens and eggs, and some fresh vegetables straight from her own garden.

When the doctor mentioned farm it entered my mind that this might be the best thing for them. So for the next few weeks I talked with them about buying a farm in upstate New York, maybe in the Catskill Mountains. Mother and Father agreed and plans were made, first to correspond with a real-estate man in the Catskills, tell him our ideas, and hear what he had to say.

Mr. Barney Goldstein was recommended to us at Centerville, New York. I wrote to him and got a very nice letter in reply. He suggested that we come to Centerville and he was sure he would fix us up with a fine farm, just what we wanted.

So we arranged for someone to take care of the house and the

children while we were away and at the end of April, Mother, Dad, and I started by train for Centerville to meet with Barney Goldstein. We took a thousand dollars with us.

The trip was good for Mother. For the first time since Chaim's death she ate a good meal, food we had brought along with us.

When we arrived at Centerville Mr. Goldstein was there to meet us. He took us to his office and told us we were very lucky people, that we had come just in time.

"I just came from a farm I listed for sale," he said. "It's the best farm around here and the biggest bargain I've had in years. This farm is sixty acres and has a stream of water running right through the grounds. The farm is all cultivated, outside of ten acres of pasture and woods. It has a ten-room house. You can rent some of the rooms in the summer to boarders and make money. It has a well with the best drinking water and also several springs of crystal-clear water. It has a barn not in the best shape but it could be fixed up with little expense. Mainly it's a big barn with room enough for horses, cows, chickens, hay, oats, and other things. It has fifty apple and pear trees, two black-cherry trees, two horses, four cows, about one hundred chickens, wagons, carriages, and many other things. This can be bought for $5,000, $1,000 down. . . . You see, this man and wife are old. They have children living in Albany, all well fixed, and they want their parents to give up the farm and come out to live with them. But why talk about these things any more? My carriage and horse is ready. Let's go out there and you can see it for yourselves."

We took him up and in thirty minutes we were there. As we drove in, it took our breath away. The trees were in bloom and the flowers on them looked like fresh white snow. Chickens were strutting around in the orchard. The house was two floors, painted white, set right in the middle of all the trees. There was a nice well built up on the top like a little square house, with a wooden bucket hanging on the rope below a big iron wheel to operate it.

On the right side about a hundred yards away was a big old barn with a shingle roof. About one acre in back of the house was a garden fenced with flat boards painted white, and below was the land to

work. We walked to the edge of the land and saw a swift-running brook of clear drinking water.

The house had a porch the length of its front. Inside on the right was a dining room big enough to seat about fifty people. To the left was a good-sized kitchen with a big iron stove with two ovens, tables to work on, and pots and pans hung on the walls. There were closets full of all kinds of dishes and glassware. To the right of the dining room was a door to a big storage room with built-in shelves all around it. In the center were sacks of potatoes, apples, and several kegs of cider.

Upstairs there was a big living room about twenty by thirty feet furnished with several living-room sets and a lot of soft chairs, an upright piano of mahogany, and several filled bookcases. Mr. Brown, the owner, was quick to tell us that the books were his and he would take them with him. Also on this floor were six nice bedrooms furnished with beds and dressers.

Mrs. Brown had a bite and coffee at the table. We all sat down and since Mrs. Brown didn't know that we wouldn't eat ham, we just drank coffee.

Mr. Brown began to talk to us in this manner: "I have been here forty years. We raised our family here, two sons and two daughters. We love the place, but the time has come for us to sell out. We are not asking a fancy price, five thousand dollars, but we don't intend to bargain about it. We want one thousand dollars down. We want an income from the mortgage. We will give a first mortgage at three per cent interest and we want you to pay us two hundred dollars a year plus the interest. If this is satisfactory to you, we can sell it right now. Mr. Goldstein can draw up the papers."

We asked to be allowed to talk it over. He told us to use the living room for our consultation and he brought us some cider there.

Mother and Father were sold on this farm one hundred per cent. With their eyes wide open they said that it was the most wonderful thing they could ever dream of. I agreed with them and we decided I would make the deal.

We walked back to the other room, sat down, and I talked to

Mr. and Mrs. Brown. "There is no question about the price and the terms. What we do want is to see the cows and the horses and to know what you take with you and what belongs to the farm."

Mr. Goldstein intervened and suggested we take stock of every article and put it on paper so we would know what we were buying.

"No," I replied. "I can trust Mr. and Mrs. Brown. No stock-taking is needed."

Mr. Brown liked my answer very much. He stood up and said, "Come with me."

We all stood up and followed him. He led us from room to room saying in each room, "This is all yours." Only in his own bedroom he showed us personal things and his and his wife's clothing. "These things we take," he said. "We will also take about half the books. We will pick the ones we want. Everything else goes with the farm. Even Nelly the dog is yours too. And there"—looking out the window —"go the cows and the horses. It's their time to come home. Now we have to feed and milk the cows and you will have to excuse me. You may, however, stay for dinner if you want to."

We made arrangements to leave then and come back the next morning prepared to close the deal.

Mr. Goldstein got all the papers ready, and the next morning we came back. Mr. Brown looked the papers over, and found them in order. We took out one thousand dollars in cash, the papers were signed, and the deal was completed. We became farmers.

After a conference between Mother, Father, and myself we decided that Mother and Father would go back and get ready for moving and I would remain on the farm, for it was the right time for plowing and planting. Even Mr. Brown thought that was a right decision, for he offered to show me a great deal of the work.

So Mother and Father went back to Centerville with Mr. Goldstein and left for home, while a new life started for me. The Browns left in three days, and then I was alone with the cows, horses, chickens, and even a dog that was already attached to me, thanks to Mr. Brown's persuasion.

That first evening after all my work was done I walked up to

the next farm. Mr. Cambel was an old bachelor who had been on the farm fifty years. His house was small and neglected. No paint had been put on the boards since it was built, and it was black from the rain and snow. There were two small windows in the front of the house, with a door between. The glass in the windows and in the door was silvery-looking because it had never been cleaned. The roof was brand-new, covered with tar paper, and it gave some attraction to the house. Two steps went up to a small porch that was filled with old upholstered rocking chairs and a small table with several beer bottles on it. By the door an old black dog lay sleeping; not minding anyone coming or going, he just slept. Only a dim light showed through the glass.

I knocked on the door, and heard a voice tell me to come in. The inside was much brighter. The furniture was old-fashioned but in good condition; the living-room suite covered in red plush, a rocking chair with a high back for comfort, a long oak table with a big kerosene lamp standing on it, and a big, thick old Bible, opened, the light shining on it. There was a big brass cuspidor near the chair, and the floor was painted dark brown. Mr. Cambel sat smoking a corncob pipe.

"Good evening," I said. "I am your new neighbor. I bought Mr. Brown's farm." Before I had a chance to say any more he stood up and shook hands with me.

"Yes, I heard about it. I am glad to make your acquaintance. My name is Joe Cambel, C-a-m-b-e-l. No *p* in it. It's an old German name that my father brought over with him in 1855 when I was a small boy. We settled on this farm and I've been here ever since then. Sit down." He showed me to the big rocking chair. "If you have time we will chat a bit."

I sat down and began to make conversation about farm work, about plowing and planting.

"Here, my friend!" Joe said, "I see you are pretty young and inexperienced in farming. Let me suggest something to you. Your field has not been touched yet this year and you are running out of time. Tomorrow morning after you feed and milk your cows and

feed the horses and chickens, get your team of horses (and you have a good team), hook them up to the plow and come over here. I have about two or three days' work here. Then, when we are through plowing we will go to your fields and plow. We will do the same in planting. First we will plant my fields, then yours. You need to plant oats, potatoes, beets, corn, and a big garden of all kinds of vegetables. Your hay is in pretty good shape and will be good for another three or four years. But you must be ready for hard work. It's no cinch to plow all day long under a hot sun."

My face lit up at this suggestion from Mr. Cambel. How could I expect anything better than to work with such an experienced man as he?

Soon it was almost eight o'clock and Mr. Cambel again stood up. "And now," he said, "it is getting bedtime. I never go to sleep later than eight-thirty." I shook his hand, thanked him and prepared to leave. "Wait," he said, "before you leave let's have some cider." From the basement he brought up a full pitcher of cider and poured two glassfuls. He wished me luck, saying, "You bought a fine farm. It's as nice as any in the neighborhood, but don't neglect it. Keep it nice."

I thanked him again and left.

Three weeks later my fields were all plowed and planted, but my hands were covered with calluses and as rough as a grater. I could hardly milk the cows or attend to myself, and one day I went in to Centerville and saw the doctor. He gave me a salve and that helped me very much. My calluses got softer and I could use my hands again.

We had two different kinds of horses. Harry, a big fat gray-and-black-dotted horse, could pull a house. Hard work and heavy loads meant nothing to him But he was very slow and couldn't run fast. Then there was Quitty, a small, frail brown horse who in his younger days was on the race track. He had a big history behind him. He was still fast but couldn't pull a heavy load.

For instance: For plowing, Harry pulled the load and pulled Quitty along too. In the carriage as a team, Harry held back Quitty from going too fast. Harry had to have twice as much oats or hay

as did Quitty, but separately each had his place and both were useful. With Quitty in a single carriage we could go to Centerville and back in one hour. With Harry delivering cheese, cream, and butter, which we used to deliver once a week, it took a good two hours.

The dog, Nelly, wouldn't leave the farm. He stayed on and watched it, that no stranger should enter. He watched the cattle and the horses, didn't let them get off the pasture ground. If they got on a crop ground he drove them off, and if strange cattle came on our grounds he ran home barking and led us right to them. He was the friendliest dog to master and family.

The chickens would lay their eggs at the same place every day. All we had to do was take a basket and pick the eggs at the right places. We had one rooster, big and beautiful, with feathers of all colors, just like a peacock. Every morning at five o'clock he began crowing right near the house and didn't stop until we were up.

Mother, Father, Abe, Lillian, William, and Rose arrived just one month after we bought the farm. They came by train with lots of packages and some valises and two big trunks. I waited for them at the station in Centerville with the big carriage. I could take them all home but had to come back for the baggage.

The first night, we were happy all to be together. I showed them around the fields. The garden had some red radishes and other vegetables just sprouting. I showed them how to milk the cows, and how much feed to prepare for the stock. We had a good dinner that I prepared. We talked of the farm and of how I met Mr. Cambel and how we did all the work. Then we talked about Brooklyn and how they had sold everything and had some money left over; how relatives and friends had come to say good-by. We talked about how to put our lives in order on the farm by dividing up the work.

The boarder season would soon start, and we had to prepare for it. In fact, Father and Abe had hired a cook to come out in June. She was Mrs. Katz, a well-known cook for excellent meals. Abe was to take over the managing of that part of the business, see that all the rooms were rented, look after the meals and everything to do with the boarder business. I had to help in the kitchen and keep the

food stock adequate. William would take care of the mail, for we had to walk to a main road for our mail once a day; he wanted the dog to go with him, and that was all right. Lillian would help in the house, to keep things clean. Rose was too little to do much but would help Mother. Last, Father had to go to Centerville twice a day to meet the trains from New York bringing vacationers to the mountains. The price, we decided, would be nine dollars a week or thirty-six dollars for a full month, sleeping two in a room. Mother would see that the maid kept all the rooms clean.

That was our setup. But we forgot the work around the house and the farming. Well, everyone promised to pitch in whenever needed. So all our problems seemed solved.

When the season started we were afraid we wouldn't have enough guests. But we were quite wrong. They flocked to us by recommendation and when we were filled up they decided to stay three and four in a room. Some young boys decided to sleep on the hay in the barn and some hung sheets on the porch about ten feet apart and two or three slept there. We had forty people staying with us for the season in our six-bedroom house.

We hired more help for cleaning. We worked twenty hours every day. We completely neglected our crops; we just didn't find the time to cultivate the potatoes, the corn, the garden. And it was no wonder, with so many people at our house. We were advertised as the best place to stay. Our meals were tops in the mountains. Mrs. Katz was just out of this world and very particular how she served the meals. It was spring water at the tables (no well water). Her salads were superb. Whoever waited on the tables had to wear a white coat. The glasses and plates were sparkling clean, the meals were perfectly seasoned and delicious.

Mrs. Katz was an A-1 cook and worked for us only because she liked the family. She worked for less pay than she could get elsewhere. But she did have her caprices which we were willing to go along with. For instance, when she served, no one was permitted to come into the kitchen; only I must stay there with her. The piano or records had to be played with every meal. One extra person had to watch the

tables to fill the glasses with water or serve more bread or whatever else was needed. And the guests had to be properly dressed. Only white tablecloths were used; sparkling silver and flowers for decorations had to accompany every meal.

We loved that Mrs. Katz. She became one of the family. The guests loved her too, and she got very big tips, which she divided up with everyone who helped her.

Every Saturday night we had a dance or a concert. There were times when we had over one hundred people at our concerts. They came from other guest houses. At times we kept all doors open and set chairs outside the living room for the overflow crowd.

We became famous in the Catskills. Every Wednesday we had a straw ride. We charged one dollar a person. We hired three or four wagons from other farmers and went as far as Liberty, New York, a fine, good-sized city, and visited many scenic places.

Only, we ourselves were unhappy. Mother was worse than she had been in the city. She couldn't do a thing. We hung a hammock for her between two trees and there she lay all day. It was hard to get her in for a meal. Mrs. Katz was the only one who got her to eat. She kept crying and talking about her son Chaim who had passed away. Rose and Lillian stayed with her all through the day.

William did not attend to the mail. He left for the mail, but stopped on other farms to play. Someone had to go looking for him every day. Father kept on going to Centerville twice a day even though we were full up and couldn't take any more people. He just couldn't stay on the farm. He did do all the shopping, though.

All the work fell on Abe and Mike, and we had to get everything done. We spent hard, unbearably long days. Our only free time was five or six hours for sleeping.

We were glad when the season was over and everything became normal once more. We had one family, the Bercowitzes—a man, wife, and two children—who remained with us. She did her own cooking and cleaning and paid us rent only. They were very nice people. The woman took great interest in Mother, who began to show signs of improvement. The man helped with the farm work.

The hay crop was good and the oats was good. Our potatoes came the size of walnuts. It didn't pay to dig them. Our corn was about three feet high. We cut and hauled it in, for we needed it for the cows. Having made some money from the boarders, we decided to pay five hundred dollars plus interest on the mortgage. We also put in for the winter canned food and flour and bought some potatoes, about ten sacks, to lay away.

Since Joe Cambel was our best friend, we bought the potatoes and other farm articles from him. He told us that he was afraid we would neglect our farm work, for boarder business was more attractive and paid better. But, he warned us, next year we should attend to it better. The fruit was harvested by the boarders. Late apples we took to the mill and made into cider.

School time came along, and Lillian refused to go to that little one-room red schoolhouse. William attended about two days a week. Rose was too young. Lillian only wanted to go back to Brownsville. So we decided to let Mother take her back, place her with relatives, and let her go to school there. And Mother could stay as long as she wanted to.

In November, the first snow fell. It didn't last long, but it was notice of the arrival of winter. We prepared kindling wood, put in the double windows, fixed the doors to shut tight, and worked in the barn. We found enough to do every day even if Mr. Bercowitz helped —and he was a good worker.

Father and Mr. Bercowitz got along well and became very friendly. I suspected that Bercowitz had something up his sleeve. One night when we were all together in the living room (Mother was still in Brownsville) playing Jewish records, Mr. Bercowitz ("Ben") stood up and stopped the phonograph.

"I am glad you are all here," he said. "I want to talk to you and now is my best chance. You have a very good farm and business here. I've watched you working and running it and admired you. Simche, your father, and I have become very friendly. In fact, I have known your father for many years. To say I like him is not enough. I will say you kids should be proud of him. For he is the most honest man

I ever met; straight in his convictions and a God-fearing man; keeps his religion like a good rabbi. He wouldn't hurt a fly. But he went through a terrible tragedy when his oldest son died and he is still wrapped up in grief. It will take a long time till he will be himself again. Your mother is even worse than he is. And you children, I understand you very well and sympathize with you. You should be in New York where you can get jobs and go to work, where you can mix and see people. Here you are lost. You are not cut out for farm work.

"My proposition is this: I will pay in half of your investment and become a partner in the business. My wife will take over the running of the domestic work and I will help along with your father to run the farm. Of course, this will remain your home. You can come here any time you want, stay as long as you want. And in the summertime you can run the boarder business and get paid for your work. Your father and I, my wife and your mother, and the small children will stay here and take care of everything: work the farm, buy a couple more cows and some more chickens, and believe me, we will make a nice living out of the dairy and egg products."

Ben then looked at us and sat down.

Now Father talked. "Ben," he said. "You have something there. Your proposition sounds good. But we will have to have some time to talk it over, and that we can do as soon as Molke, my wife, comes back. I will write to her to come home and then look for an answer."

Mother was back in one week. She had actually wanted to come home, even if Father hadn't written. She was lonesome for the children. After her return we had several conferences. Father and Mother were sold on the proposition. They felt that we were working too hard and they didn't want us to go through another summer like the last one. With two more people, they felt, it would be easier, and all winter it would be more company with the Bercowitzes. We knew they were good workers and, most important, they were good honest people and could be trusted. Abe went along with Mother and Father. Only I couldn't see it. I told them that Ben and his wife would become more than just partners, for they knew the situation very

well, and I felt that they would eventually take the farm over and eliminate us completely.

Father thought I was wrong. Mother and Abe too. I had to give in and the deal was made. We received eight hundred dollars. Then each put two hundred dollars into the Centerville Bank for improving the farm: to buy the extra chickens and two more cows.

Abe and I went to New York. We had no trouble getting work and started our own life. Every day we had to write to Father and Mother. That was the condition Mother set with us; and we received mail from them. Everything was wonderful. Their letters were cheerful and we felt good.

When Christmas came Abe and I went to the farm for a vacation. We took with us Abe's girl friend, who later became his wife, and Hyman Tkatches' girl friend. Hyman was our first cousin and wanted Jenny, his girl friend, to have a good time. When the four of us arrived at Centerville, Father was waiting for us.

We all got into a sled. Harry, the big horse, looked good. He could carry the load, although the snow was deep and the air was bitter cold. We were dressed warm and Father had blankets to cover up. We had a welcome like for celebrities. Everybody was glad to see us. A good hot meal also was waiting for us. We spent the whole evening talking and it was pretty late when we went to sleep.

The next morning, almost noon, we had brunch. Then we went for a ride. Abe wanted to drive and I made him promise that the next time I could drive. He drove down to Ellenville, a small town about eleven miles from our farm.

The beauty of that town cannot be described. I had seen Ellenville in the summer and it was breath-taking; but this time it was just out of this world. Ellenville was inhabited by retired farmers. It lay in a valley surrounded by mountains. Some houses were built on top of the mountains. There the very rich lived. The town and the mountains were covered by a white blanket of snow. The houses and trees looked like black dots on a white sheet. From the chimneys rose thin gray smoke.

The town boasted a railroad station. One train came and left

every day. It consisted of one passenger car and one freight car. The station was built in the center of town with three streets running around it. The streets were three or four blocks long, and the homes were beautiful and not too alike. The streets were wide, with cobblestone sidewalks and lots of trees on each side. Near the station was the business section; a big general store that carried everything a farmer would need, including farm machinery, groceries, yard goods, hardware, house furnishings, and furniture. This was right opposite from the station. A drugstore was next to it, and the sign made it known that it was run by Doctor Grant. On the other side of the station was a café the width of two houses with a covered porch its full width. There were two doors; one had a big sign "Saloon," the second, "Café." Next stretched out a big lumber yard. That was loaded with high piles of boards that looked like a line of houses built of white marble.

We parked in front of the café and went in for coffee to get warmed up. As we entered, the owner greeted us warmly and showed us to a table. The room was set out with six tables and a long counter. Behind the counter were shelves filled with cups and dishes, a three-burner gas plate was on a table near the shelves, and a pot of coffee was on one gas jet. Two small pots were on the other jets. In the center of the room was a big potbellied stove with a nice coal fire shining through the isinglass door. A big pendulum clock on the wall opposite the door ticked its seconds out pretty loud.

We ordered coffee and apple pie. The pie was delicious. We got warmed up and all it cost us was sixty cents for the four of us.

We made for home and the train started at the same time. It pulled out with all the noises: the ringing of the bell, the puffing from the stack of the locomotive, and the whistling. At the end of town it went in one direction and we went in another. At home another good dinner was waiting for us.

For two weeks we had the best time we had ever dreamed of. Every day we went riding. We went to all interesting points and as far as Liberty. We talked about this vacation for years afterward.

We had to pay thirty-six dollars for the two girls, since Ben Bercowitz maintained that they were just boarders.

I noticed that both Father and Mother concealed something. It gradually came out in their letters later that the Bercowitzes made it pretty hard for them and that they quarreled often. Ben wanted Father to do all kinds of hard work, and Mother didn't have the rest she needed. Even William and little Rose had to work around the house. I began to see my opposition to the partnership becoming justified, but I still hoped that in the summer when we ran the boarder business everything would be straightened out.

We again engaged Mrs. Katz, the cook, for the season and in May, Abe and I left New York for the farm. We were prepared to work hard again. We were terribly disappointed when Ben Bercowitz and his wife made us understand that Mother and Father were useless for farm work and couldn't do much in the boarder department. Therefore, they said Abe and I should work the summer without pay. They also had different ideas about the business. First, they didn't want Mrs. Katz back; Mrs. Bercowitz was good enough with help in the kitchen, they said. She could manage; and she better get paid Mrs. Katz' wages. Mr. Bercowitz would go to Centerville every day to fetch the guests and Father should stay in the fields and attend to the crops. Mother should wash dishes and clean the rooms every day. William would have to make himself useful. Even little Rose could find something to do, they said.

Abe and I listened to the talk. How different it sounded from Ben's talk when he had proposed to become a partner. We will think about it, we said.

When we talked to Mother and Father, they cried and begged us to take them away from there because the Bercowitzes were running their lives. They didn't give them a day of peace.

We decided to go to Ben with a proposition: either we would buy him out or he would buy us out. And we would remain friends.

This time Bercowitz changed his mind. He had a different idea. First, he proposed everything should remain as planned. Mrs. Katz should come and Abe and I should run the business for a certain fee.

Father should still go to Centerville every day, and we should go through the season. Afterward we would take up the question of who should remain on the farm and who should leave. This was agreed to with one condition, that they should not interfere in the management and should not give any orders and everything was to remain as last year. They agreed to our plans, and we got busy, to meet the oncoming season.

That season was also good but not nearly as good as the past year. We paid out for the mortgage. We paid out salaries including our own and had some surplus at the end of the season.

We invited Barney Goldstein to sit in on our talk with the Bercowitzes. This took two hours and it was decided that Bercowitz was to pay us eight hundred dollars cash and we would leave and assign the farm to them. The balance of two hundred and ten dollars in the bank would be divided in half.

In two weeks we left the farm for New York. Mother and Father were very glad to come back to what they called their home.

A couple of weeks later we bought a delicatessen store in New York on Eighth Street and Avenue D, near the East River. Abe was experienced in that business. So Abe would run it, Father would help him, and I would help after work and William after school. The store was already established and did a good business.

We found an apartment on the fourth floor in the same building, with nice white marble steps to walk up. It had two bedrooms, a living room, a dining room, and a kitchen. The front windows faced Avenue D, and you could see the river with its moving boats and barges. You could hear the whistles, see the thick smoke pouring out of the stacks. You could also see Williamsburg Bridge, which connected New York and Brooklyn with its hundreds of cars, horses and wagons, trolleys, and many people walking across. At night everything was lighted up on the bridge and with the cars' headlights it created a panorama as beautiful as the star-studded sky.

From time to time you could see funeral processions, some with music. First the black hearse with four black horses pulling it, then the musicians walking behind, then the mourners walking, and finally carriages filled with people. Or you could see wedding processions:

horses and wagons, or cars, trimmed with colored streamers and the drivers tooting their horns—or, in the carriages, ringing bells. "Make room, here we come!"

If you closed the window it was quiet and you could relax.

The store was a beehive. Hours were from 6 A.M. to 11 P.M. and sometimes a couple of extra hours at night. But we all enjoyed the work. We were not all as good as Abe at it, but for relieving we were fine. Abe introduced a special: corned beef and eggs, the way he made it, for thirty-five cents, with potatoes, bread and butter, and coffee; and he did a tremendous business on his special. We all learned to make it and we served it all day long.

The store was on a corner, with just one step to walk in. There were six marble-top tables with four chairs at each, and a long counter with a glass case displaying the meat, a big cutting board with lots of knives and forks around it. The wall had shelves to take care of the plates, cups and glasses. This was the working center. The register was near the door. On the counter were pickles, tomatoes, peppers, and sauerkraut in a row. There was no slicing machine; everything was cut by hand. We made that a talking point to the customers, but deep in our hearts we felt that we would love to have a cutting machine. We didn't have the money to buy one, but we knew that one of these days we would buy it and pay cash for it, for it would become a necessity.

Mother had taken a turn for the better since we moved into this apartment on the fourth floor, though it is true she didn't come down much from the apartment. That gave her more time to do her own work. She began to cook meals every day for the family. She cleaned up every day and did some washing. The house took on new life, got almost back to normal. We were all pleased and helped her along as much as we could. We did all the shopping for food and other household items.

Friends took to visiting us again, and Mother made good noodle *kugel* as a treat, with a glass of wine they liked. They sat talking for hours about the old country, about Warshilovka, about the relatives there. Their cry was to bring them to America, for Warshilovka was drying up and the people with it. There was no way to earn a

living, and many plans to help were made at our house, especially on Friday night, when everyone felt the holiday spirit.

Father and Mother received a letter from a niece, Lillian, in Warshilovka that she must leave the town. She described how dull and poor life was there. She was a single girl and had a whole life to live, but there was nothing to live for.

We decided to send her a ticket for the passage and some cash for her to get to the ship. In six months she arrived in New York. We were delighted with her. Mother was most happy, for this was her brother's daughter, and since Lillian resembled her father Mother felt she was looking at her brother, though he had been dead for many years.

Lillian was very attractive, a brunette with black eyes and a head of black hair, a full round face with comely features, her nose just the right size to fit the round cheeks. Her ears were small, her lips red, with a white line of teeth dividing them. She was five feet six inches tall and utterly feminine. She was jolly and pleasant. We all liked her and did everything to make her comfortable.

But Lillian was unhappy and wept. She wanted to go back to Warshilovka. She did not like it here. For six months we struggled along, trying everything possible. Finally we bought a ticket for her and gave her cash for the rest of the voyage and she left. Later she wrote that she was sorry she hadn't stayed.

Mother developed a wonderful humanitarian approach to life. In our building lived fifteen other families. Most of the people were operators in shops. Their work was mostly for five or six months a year. When they worked they could just get along; pay their rent, buy groceries, and pay some debts they had piled up during the slack season. But they never could save to lay away for that rainy day they knew was coming. Mother saw how these people struggled and how at times they went hungry. So she cooked meals and brought them to these families. She baked *kugel* and cookies and often got an order from the grocer delivered to them. At least, they did not starve. And when they started working they insisted on paying the grocery bills that Mother had laid out for them. This became a yearly event.

HYMAN TKATCH

Hyman Tkatch was my first cousin, my mother's sister's son. He came to America in 1905 after serving four years in the Russian army.

He was released with honors and good references. But Hyman no longer liked Russia. He was disenchanted with Russian justice: its cruelty, its inequality, its persecution of Jews.

When he returned home from military service he couldn't seem to readjust to civilian life, and he told his mother and brothers that he must go to America. There he hoped to renew his civilian life to his own satisfaction.

Aunt Yenta, his mother, cried and asked him not to go away so far and alone. If he needed money she would give it to him, so that he could stay here with his brothers, with the family, with friends that had known him all his life. But her pleading did not help.

In a few days he told his mother that everything was arranged and he was leaving in two days for America, for New York. He had already written to Uncle Simche and Aunt Molke and his cousins that he was coming. Aunt Yenta had to agree, and he left at the scheduled time.

In New York Hyman's problem was that he had no trade. It was hard to find work. What he did know was to candle eggs, but he couldn't find a place where they did such work. So he experienced a hard time.

Hyman was the kind who couldn't stand anybody pitying him or offering help to him. He even stopped coming to our house often, although Mother told him that she was the only relative he had here and he should come for his meals. When he found work, she said, he could repay her. He listened to her, shook his head, and disappeared for an even longer time.

But he kept on looking, and finally he found a job candling eggs. He worked in a dark basement. The only light was a lamp with a hole the size of an egg cut in the tin chimney. He placed the egg to the hole, the egg would light up, and he could tell if it was good or not. For this he made fifteen dollars a week working six days, ten hours every day. At noon when he came out of the cellar his eyes watered from the shock of the daylight.

But Hyman was happy. He started to come to our house more often, and never failed to bring something for his dear Aunt Molke, as he used to say. Hyman was a well-dressed young man, and good-looking too. He always wore a dark suit, white shirt, deep blue or red tie, shining black shoes, and kid gloves. He had a black French mustache and a thick head of hair, combed with a part on the left side. His eyes were small and dreamy; his height was five feet seven inches. He was very nice and pleasant to talk to. So it was only natural that Jenny Wiener, the prettiest girl of all our *lantsleit,* should fall in love with him. She was much younger than he, but they nevertheless made a wonderful couple. Everybody admired them.

So Hyman and Jenny decided to get married, and in making their plans they came to our house to consult with Aunt Molke and Uncle Simche. Naturally my parents were very happy to hear the news. The wedding was to take place at the end of the year 1911, in Brownsville, East New York, as they called that part of Brooklyn. There would be music and a big dinner for more than a hundred people, and Hyman wanted to know if we could put up a couple of ladies who were coming to the wedding from out of town.

"And who are these two ladies?" Mother asked.

"Well, I think you know them," Hyman said. "They are 'Sarah the *Roite*' and her sister Simme [Sophia]."

Mother got terribly excited. "I know Sarah very well, not her sister so much. She was a small child when her mother visited Warshilovka. In fact we are related, not blood relatives, but her mother's brother married my sister," my mother explained. "So we are relatives by marriage. Yes, Hyman, I would love to have them stay with us."

Two days before the wedding Sarah and Sophia arrived in New York. It was a bitter-cold day. They walked up the four flights of stairs and came into the house. Sophia walked in like a cripple. She wore tight shoes and her feet were frozen. She could hardly walk and felt she couldn't remove her shoes. My mother noticed this and took her over to the iron cookstove. She opened the oven door, told Sophia to put her feet in the oven to thaw them out, and served hot coffee—which both sisters needed to warm up.

When I came home from work and met Sarah and her sister Sophia I knew then that something had changed in me. For I looked at Sophia all through dinner, and I admit now that I had met the woman I have been married to for fifty years. I must also confess that I had no intention of falling in love or getting married at that time.

But her being in our house several days changed my mind completely, and the next day at the wedding I danced with her only. My girl cousins noticed this and remarked that I must have fallen in love with Sophia. They were perfectly right, and I did not dispute it.

Sophia's reaction was very sympathetic, and in the hours we spent together talking we could almost have decided our own wedding day.

I took the two sisters to the railroad station to leave for Trenton, New Jersey, and we promised to write to each other. Our correspondence went on until I decided to move to Trenton. My parents had already moved there and had opened a delicatessen store.

After I found a job in a pottery, and was working steadily, we started planning our wedding. Our cousins Hyman and Jenny claimed the credit for our falling in love at their wedding. They came to our wedding and had a wonderful time.

LOOKING BACK ON FIFTY YEARS OF MARRIED LIFE

The year 1912. December 28. Saturday. It was a bitter-cold, frosty day, with ten inches of snow on the ground that was crispy and clear white. Some sleighs were seen on the streets. The bells their horses wore were ringing a winter song. There were some wagons and carriages too, the carriages making creaky noises while the horses' breath created a smoke in the air. It was generally quiet on the streets and in the stores.

A bright light was shining at 106 Perry Street, Trenton, capital city of New Jersey. This was the home of Michael Charnofsky, a young man who was dressing himself for a wedding. He was the groom.

A second bright light was shining at 14 Spring Street in the same city, where a bride was getting ready for her wedding. The bride for a few hours still to be was Sophia Mackler, eventually after the ceremony to become Sophia Charnofsky. She was young and beautiful. Her round face with a pretty head of curly blond hair gave her dignity and reserve. Her slim figure, her bust and waistline, were as if drawn by an artist. She wore a white satin dress with a long train, white shoes, white gloves, and a corsage, which were the finishing touches to a complete, artistic, and beautiful picture of a bride who is ready for her wedding.

The wedding was held in a hall on Lamberton near Market Street, part of which was used as the Socialist and Workmen's Circle library. The entrance was lined with shelves loaded with books, and in back of a partition was the large hall, with benches around the walls, a small stage facing the entrance, and a smooth polished floor inviting all to dance on it. The walls were decorated with pictures of Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Eugene V. Debs, Peter Kropotkin,

and other Socialist leaders. In addition, there were pictures of such great poets and writers as Peretz, Mendala, Sholom Aleichem, Sholem Asch, Morris Rosenfeld, and Avrum Raisen.

The lights were bright and the stage was filled with musicians brought from New York. These musicians were from Warshilovka in the Old Country. My mother insisted that to her son's wedding the *lantsleit,* or countrymen, should play. She also brought the rabbi, Erib Eidel Weiner, in from New York. He too came from Warshilovka. He was a middle-aged man with a big white beard and gleaming eyes. He sat in the corner of the hall with my father and other male guests and discussed the world's problems.

Meanwhile the other guests were ready to start the wedding as soon as the bride and groom arrived. When they finally led the bride and groom to the head of the hall, to chairs especially decorated for them, the music started and the *chasana,* or wedding, was under way. Young and old danced. This was the *forshpiel,* or advance dance, before supper, and everybody had a wonderful time.

Then the marriage ceremony took place. After the ring was placed on the bride's finger and the first married kiss was exchanged, and after the well-served supper, the real dancing started. First were the Froelichs, or happy dances; then came the Sherale, or square dance; next the Woolech, a six-beat dance with partners holding hands and turning clockwise; and then many other dances for all the guests. Hyman Tkatch, the groom's cousin, was the leader on the dance floor. There wasn't a dull moment. Another cousin, Laiser Dries, danced a Chussidal and a Yeshiva Bucher, both in costume, which brought down the house.

The bride's mother couldn't dance, but she talked with everyone, and would say loudly, "This is my *mazinkele* getting married." The bride's sister Sarah and brother Morris danced a Bolgar which everybody applauded. The groom's father and mother danced a Baroigis Tantz (angry dance), followed by a Russian Kazatska that topped them all. Then, back to the Froelichs, with everybody dancing. Rings within rings were formed, all feet swinging in and out, dancers moving right and turning left, holding hands, while the

bride and groom, with both mothers, stood in the center and moved with the music. This went on all night, at full speed, with all the guests participating. And as the hours moved on the crowd got thinner. First the young children disappeared from the floor . . . then the very old . . . then some pregnant young women . . . and before the end there were only a few still dancing, the bride and groom among them.

All the benches around the hall were filled with sleeping children, while the chairs were crowded with old men and women, also fast asleep. The street lights went off. The roosters started to crow their good morning. Daylight broke into the hall. The guests, half asleep and half awake, started to their homes through snow that was still white and crispy. The house of the groom's parents was filled with out-of-town guests from Philadelphia or New York. What a job preparing breakfast for them all!

The bride and groom were new owners of a candy and cigar store, and lived in rooms in back of it. They opened for business right after the wedding excitement had quieted down. How happy they were that customers started to come in and the register began to ring, because they were completely broke! Every dollar they had had gone into wedding expenses.

That was the start. . . . In 1962 we celebrated fifty years of married life. From that date, December 28, 1912, to December 28, 1962, fifty years, is a long time to look back. And it is even longer when we think that every day, every week, month and year, had a meaning, had a sense, had a value. With no time ever wasted, stubborn and determined, we carried on and on. The road was hard, with many obstacles, and often disappointments. But they never left us desperate, they never made a lasting blemish or dent in our lives. Our love and admiration for each other gave us strength and courage to overcome everything and go on our way.

We raised a wonderful family of three daughters and two sons, gaining three fine sons-in-law and a darling daughter-in-law. We have seven grandchildren, a grandson-in-law, and one great-grandchild. Our family is enriched, strengthened, beautified, peace-loving,

respected, and admired. We lived a planned, economical, socialist life, and have dreamed of the day when the rest of the world will do the same.

The Workmen's Circle and the idealistic political and social movements we supported have given us many devoted friends, whom we admire, cherish, and respect. Our social life has been abundant and full, and today we share a complete and good life.

We celebrated our Golden Wedding Anniversary at the same time that our oldest daughter and her husband celebrated their Silver Wedding Anniversary. *Mazeltov!* The bright, clear light we ignited in 1912 was still burning in its full capacity fifty years later. And my dear wife and I then set our new goal . . . the Diamond Anniversary, a short twenty-five years away.

Let's go holding hands, close to each other, with the same love and affection and determination. When we reach our goal, I will have attained ninety-seven years and Sophia a few less. If no one is looking, we might be able to go a few more to complete one hundred years. . . .

But that I am not guaranteeing.

GLOSSARY

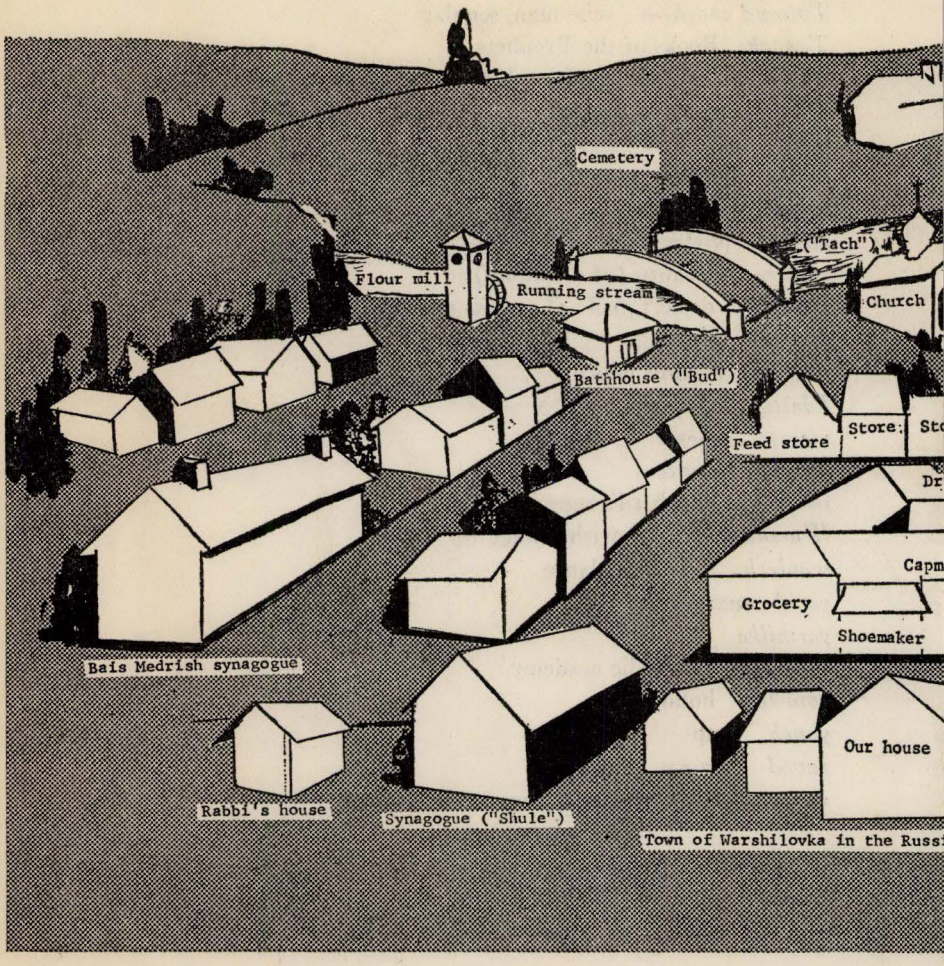
actziznik excise officer
alea honor in prayers
ameres song of thanks
Askovitz a peasant village
Avdula end of Saturday prayer
avira sin
babushka grandmother
balabusta (good) housekeeper, homemaker
baldorsher traveling preacher-interpreter
balemer pulpit
baroigis tantz angry dance
bar mitzvah confirmation
bassechida the only daughter
bentch licht candle-lighting prayer to open the Sabbath
boidem garret
Bolgar dance
bris circumcision ceremony
broches grace; prayer at mealtime
budd bathhouse
capota long coat
cashkat cap
chalfen usurer
challa twisted loaf of light bread
chasana wedding
chasid(im) disciple(s)
chazen cantor
cheder (religious) school
chuppa wedding canopy
chusan bridegroom

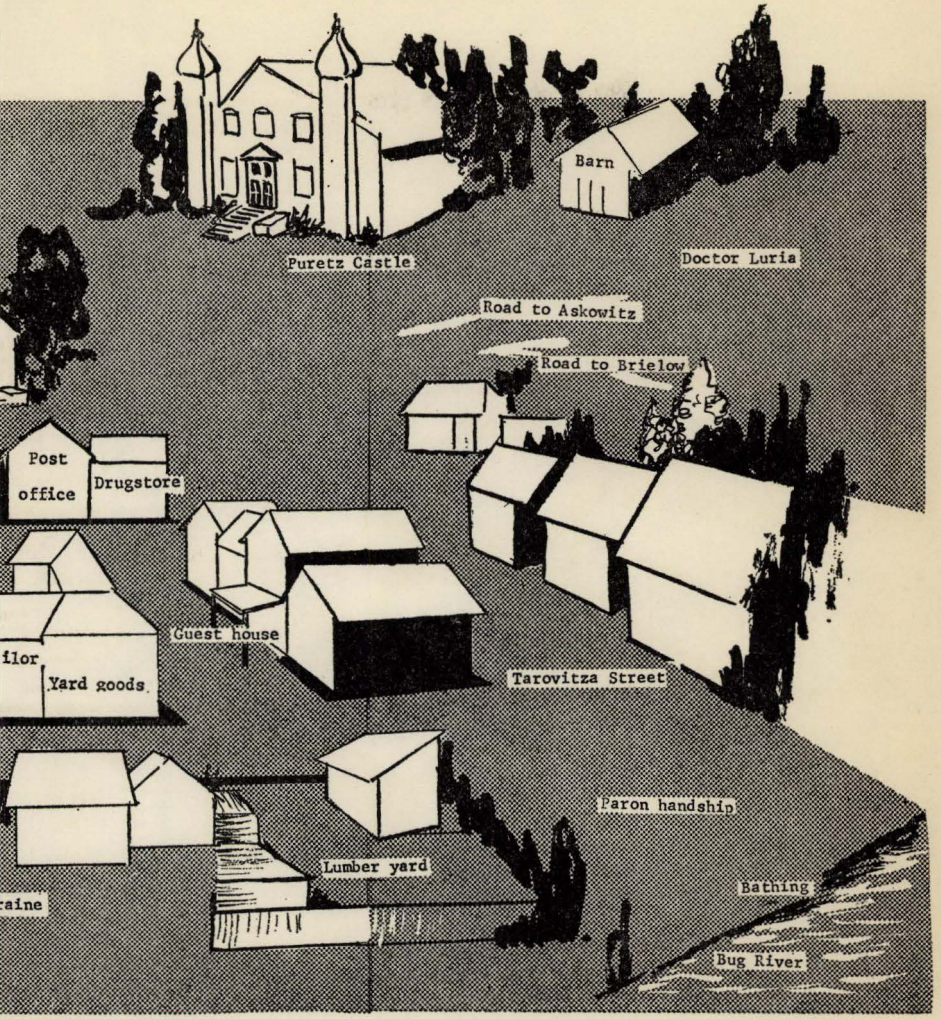
chusan's tzad bridegroom's family
dintoirah trial, arbitration
dovenen praying
drushe geshong wedding gifts
Erib Sir (term of respect)
Erib Avrum Gershen Simche's father
Erib Gimpel Molke's father
fluden holiday cake
froelich tantz happy dance
fun from
funn flag
Gahanam Hell
gardavoi policeman
gebrutens roast meats
gemura molomod higher teacher
Gon Aden Eden
griss regards
groshen half a cent
goote eddin great rabbis
haifil pretty house
humain amen
kaddish prayer for the dead
kalle bride
kancheck leather whip
Kazatska Cossack dance
kest free board
kibid snack
kiddish prayer over wine before a meal
kind(er) child(ren)
kirshner capmaker
kittel overgrown
kloise oratory house of worship
kopeka one cent
kugel pudding
kwass punch made of water, sugar and coloring

Lachaim! Good health! (before drinking)
laikech honey cake
lantzman fellow townsman, countryman
lechter candlesticks
Lhaye Molke's mother
lodchen to steal
lugshen noodles
machetonem in-laws, guests
matzo(s) unleavened Passover bread
mazel (good) luck
Mazeltov! Congratulations!
mazinka last daughter to marry; the youngest
menorah holy candelabra
meshpuche family, relatives
mikva women's bathhouse
mima aunt
mit with
mizimin grace after a meal by three persons
mofter high honors at the Torah
moil one who performs circumcisions
moitza prayer at cutting of bread
Molke the author's mother
mondlech croutons
naches pleasure, gratification (as in one's children)
nahit garbanzos
nissim miracles
nodan dowry
parron flat boat
pidoshek porch
pood equal to sixty pounds
popolickes pancakes
pricashtiak salesman, clerk
prisba clay bench along wall of house
puretz landowner
pushten boats

quater assistant at circumcision
rebitzen rabbi's wife
riba stone
rinneten winter apples
roife half-doctor
rossel flaisch goulash, stew
ruble dollar
Scherle square dance
schneider tailor
schnorer beggar
schuster shoemaker
sedecha shrew
Seder opening Passover service
seeda dinner party
Shabbes Sabbath
shadchen matchmaker, marriage broker
Shadi! Devil keep out!
shalash tabernacle
shames sexton
sher hamales Psalms
shidach marriage match
shiminnesere in silent prayer
shiva mourning period
shoichet qualified slaughterer
shule synagogue
sichke straw cutting
sidar prayerbook
Simche the author's father
smires a *mizimin* in song
soicher buyer, businessman
sondick assistant at circumcision
srach wild straw
starista chief
sukkah tabernacle booth
tach pond, lake

taiglech mit fasoilie bean soup with thick noodles
tallis prayer shawl
Talmud chochem wise man, scholar
Tanach Books of the Prophets
tchulant Sabbath meal, cooked on Friday before sundown
Tillum Book of Psalms
traif not kosher
turma prison
turth sponge cake
tvillen phylacteries
tzatske a beauty (of a woman)
tzimmes dessert made of carrots and sugar
tzitzine gingham
uratnik head of police
Vinitza a big city
viorsts miles
Voloche dance
vooleche shepherd's song
Warshilovka a Jewish village
woolech a six-beat dance
yarid market day
yarmilka skullcap
Yeshiva Talmudic academy
yom tov holiday
youch soup
zavod factory
zmires prayer of thanks sung at mealtime


Cemetery
("Tach")
Flour mill
Running stream
Church
Bathhouse ("Bud")
Feed store
Store
Grocery
Shoemaker
Bais Medrish synagogue
Our house
Rabbi's house
Synagogue ("Shule")
Town of Warshilovka in the Russ


Barn
Puretz Castle
Doctor Luria
Road to Askowitz
Road to Brielow
Post
office
Drugstore
Guest house
Yard goods
Tarovitza Street
Lumber yard
Bathing
Bug River



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With My best Wishes
Michael Chabrowski

(continued from front flap)

yet during intervals a sort of friendship exists. . . .

"American kids will have a good laugh and a tear of sympathy while reading or hearing the stories about the travails of the Ukrainian Jewish boy who might have been a contemporary cousin of Mark Twain's Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn.

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About the Author

OF HIMSELF the author says, "I was born in 1890 in the Ukraine, Russia. With little opportunity for formal schooling, my boyhood was filled with a variety of work and play experiences; with warm family ties on one hand and a bitter struggle for life on the other. When I was still a lad of thirteen, my father decided, like many other Jews in Russia, to seek a better life in America. I came to the United States in 1904, quickly learned English, and began a series of jobs, first in New York City and later in Trenton, N.J., which became the basis upon which I built a career in the furniture business. Now, at seventy-five, I am a retired businessman, living in Los Angeles, enjoying the quiet years along with my wife Sophia, and surrounded by three generations of offspring. My pleasure in these, the mellowing years, is to reflect upon the old-country life of my youth, jot down my thoughts, and share them with family and friends . . . and any strangers who would care to travel with us down the lane of memories."

Mr. and Mrs. Charnofsky have five children, Mrs. Beatrice Perlberg, Mrs. Charlotte Goldberg, Mrs. Leonore Arvidson, and twin sons Harold and Stanley. The author is writing a sequel to the present volume.

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Michael Charnofsky