Between Two Worlds

The Memoirs of a Physician

Benjamin L. Gordon

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THE MEMOIRS OF A PHYSICIAN

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BETWEEN TWO WORLDS



This book is dedicated to the memory of the men, women and children of Neustadt (Sugind) who died martyrs at the hands of the infamous Nazis

Contents

		PAGE
I	My Early Reminiscences	11
II	My Homelife	27
III	The Story of a Name	42
IV	Worno	63
V	The Dawn of a New World	76
VI	Kovno	86
VII	Zhagory	109
VIII	To America	130
IX	New York	139
X	My College Days in Philadelphia	154
XI	Starting on a Medical Career	175
XII	The Return of the Old Dreams	184
XIII	My First Opportunity	194
XIV	The New Century	212
XV	Toward the Land of Israel	232
XVI	Jerusalem	258
XVII	A Visit to My Native Town	284
XVIII	Back Home	303
XIX	Atlantic City	316
XX	In Retrospect	336
	Index	347

BETWEEN TWO WORLDS

CHAPTER I

My Early Reminiscences

To what may he be likened,
who learneth when a boy?
To writing in ink upon a virgin sheet.
And whereto may he be likened
who learneth when an old man?
To writing in ink upon blotted paper.
—Dicta of the Fathers, 4:25

OFTEN as I lie awake in the still hours of the night, I fancy that I am in Lithuania, and with my eyes closed I perceive my native town, Neustadt, as it looked during the final quarter of the last century. I view once again in my mind's eye its wooden houses, its unpaved streets, the shallow river that ran in front of our house, the older inhabitants of the town, and particularly the lads with whom I passed the early days of my life.

The people of Neustadt, where I first saw the light of day, were, as in most of the other Jewish communities of Lithuania, a homogeneous lot. Their customs, manners, habits, traits, and speech had a uniform character.

This homogeneity can be ascribed to one external and at least two internal forces. The primary internal force was the deeply rooted attachment of the Lithuanian Jews to their religion; its numerous laws and traditions controlled and colored their everyday life to the greatest extent. Another internal factor was the fact that many of my Jewish townsmen were related to each other by blood; a large number married close or distant relatives within their own town. The external factor was the oppression which compelled the Jews to live as on an island, in isolation, surrounded by unfriendly neighbors.

A great number of my townsmen had never been anywhere else. To them Neustadt was the universe itself, where, for a period of about three hundred and fifty years, they and their ancestors had enjoyed a certain measure of autonomy, had developed their own institutions, and had kept their life, their traditions, their culture, their racial consciousness, and the genius of their people intact.

The entire community participated in the joys and sorrows of every one of its citizens. Birthday parties, wedding celebrations, and funerals were the affairs of the entire community. Leaving town was like departing for a new planet. People with tears pouring from their eyes came to bid their fellow citizen farewell. Girls seldom left the town of their birth.

Two Hebrew weeklies reached the town: one came to the Rabbi, and the other to the scholarly son-in-law of a rich citizen. These papers were circulated among the small literary element and handled carefully as precious gems. It took several weeks for the papers to find their way back to their original owners. Most of my fellow townsmen knew of the world around them through the stories brought to them by traveling preachers and emissaries who came to town to collect funds for talmudic academies. In later years news of distant lands reached the town through letters received from relatives in America, Africa, and occasionally, Australia.

My father's house was situated in a valley close to a running stream called the Suste. It consisted of a one-story timber structure. The walls were whitewashed on the inside. The house consisted of three rooms: the larger one served as living room, study, and kitchen; the smaller ones were sleeping chambers. There were a few pieces of furniture, painted brown, which had seen better days. The walls of the living room were decorated with a drawing of the Second Temple of Jerusalem, a picture of the Tomb of Rachel, and a *yahrzeit* tablet on which the deaths of close relatives were recorded. There were also pictures of the intellectual prodigy, Rabbi Elijah of Vilna, the talmudic authority, Isaac Elhanan Spector, and the great philanthropist, Sir Moses Montefiore. Near the doorpost, where the *mezuzah* was attached, was the charity box of Rabbi Meir Baal-Nes ("the miracle worker") in whose memory I dropped a kopek (about half a cent) every Friday afternoon. On the other side of the door, near the stove, a number of copper pots and pans were hung—heirlooms of bygone generations.

Among the ritual relics (some of which had been in the family for many generations) which adorned the *kamod* (chest of drawers) were two glistening brass candlesticks to welcome the Sabbath, an artistically wrought spice box, a plaited taper used during the prayer to usher out the Sabbath, a wine beaker used for benediction, an eight-branched candlestick which was employed during the week of *Hanukkah* (Feast of Dedication), a silver-plated ornamental box which was used to hold the *etrog* (citron) during the Feast of Taber-

nacles, and the special snuff box which my father used on the Sabbath and on holidays.

The Suste divided the town into two parts. On the northern side, where our house stood, was located the old synagogue which was the pride of the district. It was the only masonry structure in the town and perhaps as old as the town itself. Facing the synagogue was the House of Study (*bet hamidrash*), which was also the House of Prayer for the young Talmudic students and the learned laity. West of this structure was the *klaus*, the house of prayer of the working and illiterate classes. The three structures formed a triangle. North of the House of Study, on a hill, stood the house of the Rabbi, a middle-aged scholar with a long flowing beard of golden hue. As a child I looked upon this man with awe and admiration, and I was convinced that he was truly superhuman.

West of the *klaus* was the public bathhouse which was open on Thursdays and Fridays. The evenings were reserved for women and the days for men who came to be washed and cleansed in honor of the Sabbath day. There was also the traditional *mikveh* or ritual bath.

Adjoining the public bathhouse was the *hekdesh*, which served as an almshouse and hospital for the indigent and sick of the community, as well as for traveling beggars who visited the town frequently. The *hekdesh* was an old wooden structure consisting of two large rooms: one for the healthy poor and the other for the sick. It was provided with beds, a few tables, and benches. Separating the two rooms was a large brick furnace on which a number of persons could rest comfortably during the cold winter nights. Zvulun, the bathhouse man, also took care of the *hekdesh*.

Unlike the private homes, the grounds surrounding these public institutions were landscaped with rows of oak, pine, and fir trees, under the leafy shade of which my townsmen and the worshippers, during the intermissions between services, enjoyed fresh air during the summer months.

Back of our house was the shop of the village blacksmith, Abba, who customarily forged away from four o'clock in the morning until late in the evening. He was a kindly man, and in my leisure hours, when there was no school, I was in the habit of watching him shoeing horses. Often he let me manipulate the handle of the bellows while he and his apprentice were shaping a bar of red molten iron into a horseshoe. The rhythmic clang of the hammers of Abba and his apprentice on the old anvil still echo in my ears to this day.

Back of the blacksmith shop was located the old cemetery, which we boys dreaded and seldom dared to approach lest ghosts and evil spirits overtake us. During the evening hours particularly, the cemetery inspired terror in our young hearts, and we often conjured up apparitions of the dead dressed in white garb. Against my better judgment, I was frequently unwilling to pass through the environs of the cemetery while doing errands for my beloved mother, and, when such errands were urgent, I pursued a circuitous course, judiciously avoiding the very sight of the cemetery.

I vividly recall one particular night during the *Hanukkah* festival. The little candles twinkling from the windows of every cottage seemed to fill me with courage, and I undertook an important errand to a neighbor who lived close to the graveyard. I ventured a glance toward the cemetery, and what was my dismay when, aghast, I saw a number of objects moving about among the tombstones. Terrified and bewildered, I cried out, *"shema yisrael, adonai elohenu adonai ehad"* (Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One), a passage which my mother had warned me to recite in time of danger. I ran breathlessly back home, and for a time was terror-stricken and speechless.

As soon as my father, who was in the midst of the customary *Hanukkah* games with neighbors, learned what had happened, he formed a posse, the members of which, armed with prayerbooks, set out for the graveyard. Sure enough, they also perceived the figures moving about in various directions. I am certain that their hearts were in their mouths as they approached the cemetery fence and began to fire their spiritual weapons against the alleged gentry of the netherworld. Upon observing that spiritual warfare was to no avail, they retreated temporarily and came back with reinforcements in the persons of blacksmith Abba and his apprentice. The blacksmiths had chosen their own arms: One wielded a huge crowbar and the other a massive hammer. They valiantly jumped over the cemetery fence ready for battle, but soon discovered to their dismay that it was not ghosts they were confronting, for the spirits proved to be secret police who were seeking out smugglers who habitually crossed the Prussian frontier under the protection of the shrubs and tombstones of the cemetery.

At least once a year we boys were allowed to accompany the elders to the graveyard. This was on the ninth day of the Hebrew month of Ab—the day of the Black Fast, when Israel mourns the destruction of both temples. For us children the date of this pilgrimage could hardly be called a day of mourning. In a sense it was even a

joyous occasion, for we had no school on that day and, for several evenings previously, we had been occupied with the construction of wooden swords which we painted in assorted colors. Thus, on the ninth day of Ab, in commemoration of the Jews who died by the sword at the hands of the Babylonian and Roman conquerors, we youths marched to the cemetery in military formation.

These yearly visits I later anticipated with great curiosity, for I formed the habit of reading the inscriptions on the old tombstones, and I was able to ascertain the names and dates of death of some of the original inhabitants of my town. I came across an old, almost illegible inscription on a stone which read: "Here is buried Hannah, daughter of Rabbi Eliezer, who departed this life in the year 5292 (i.e., 1531 A. D.) and the first to be buried in this cemetery."

Among the old monuments was one marking the grave of the famous Rabbi, Abraham the Pious (a brother of the famous scholar, the *Gaon*, Rabbi Elijah of Vilna), who was rabbi of my town at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

The "Main Street" of Neustadt was situated south of the Suste—and it was in this district that the wealthier citizens and better shops were located.

The Suste was crossed by two bridges. One was near the synagogue and was known as "The Good Bridge." It was built on a stone foundation. The other, near my home, was known as "The Bad Bridge," and this structure rested on wooden piles. The latter span was only three or four feet wide and served as a passage for pedestrians only. Usually, twice a year the melting of the ice and snow carried away "The Bad Bridge" and necessitated its replacement by another structure.

The *Mark Platz*, as the main square was called, was rectangular in shape, being about one-half mile long and a quarter mile wide. This quadrangular space was lined by one-story wooden structures, the walls of which were composed of planks which were placed horizontally. Between the planks a layer of moss was stuffed to act as insulation in keeping the cold and rain out of the house. The house was covered by a straw roof; whole sheaves were brought directly from the field for this purpose.

From my early childhood, I loved to watch builders as they piled up the timbers one upon another, and their method of fastening the planks at the corners particularly fascinated me. I figuratively and literally looked up to the roofers with bewilderment and envy. I

always experienced much delight when my father lifted me up so that I could see their handiwork.

One day Yankel, the roofer, a kindly old man, took me up on the roof, propped me up between sheaves of straw and let me watch him work. The smell of the new straw and the fresh air on top of the roof soon put me to sleep. Yankel, in the meantime, went over to the other side of the roof. When the time came for him to end his labors and go to the *klaus* for the evening prayer, he forgot all about me and left me sleeping on the roof.

One can readily imagine the commotion that my absence evoked when evening came. The whole town was in an uproar. Men, women, and children went out in search for me. My poor mother was prostrate with grief. Sender, the evil-eye specialist of the town, blew the *shofar* (ram's horn) to scare away the evil spirits which were believed to snatch little children away from their loved ones. Throughout this tumult, Yankel, the roofer, oblivious of all trouble, remained in the *klaus*.

After the evening services, he proceeded to study the Rabbinical work, *Menorat Hamoar*. When he finished his studies, he became aware of the great mishap and catastrophe that had befallen the house of Bear, the grain dealer. He ran as fast as he could to the house and climbed up on the roof; there he found me still asleep. When he brought me back home my mother could not believe that he was Yankel the roofer; she was certain that it was Elijah the Prophet, disguised as Yankel, who had restored her son to her. I mention this episode because it stuck to me throughout my boyhood. My playmates nicknamed me "Benjamin, the strawman."

Straw roofs, of course, are highly inflammable, and they were the cause of many fires in Neustadt. At one time the town was practically wiped out by fire. A mere spark on the hot straw during the summer months could set a house on fire and threaten the entire town. There was no water on hand to extinguish a blaze. Water had to be carried in wooden buckets from the river, and before the buckets reached the scene of the fire there was little left in them.

If I were asked what was the first thing I could recollect from my early childhood, my answer would be the fire in which my life was endangered. According to my mother, I was only about two years of age when a fire broke out in our house. It was on the afternoon of the first day of Pentecost. My father was in the House of Study, and my mother had put me to sleep and gone to see a sick friend, leaving me in the care of a next-door neighbor.

During her absence a fire broke out in our house. For some reason, the neighbor had left me alone. As though it were a dream I remember the fire as it spread throughout the room. I recall myself crying and choking from the smoke. Then I recollect the feeling of relief as my mother ran in breathlessly and snatched me up—almost choked to death as I was. When I saw my mother for the last time, her hands still showed the scars she had sustained from that fire; for the rest of her days she always thanked the Lord that she had been able to rescue me.

Most of the buildings surrounding the public market place housed shops, and most of these had dwelling quarters in the rear. There were a number of bakeries, butcher shops, fish markets, and groceries. There were cabinet makers, tinsmiths, coppersmiths, and a goldsmith. The last was my grand-uncle, Rab Yisrael, who was considered at one time to be the richest man in town. He was the father-in-law of Rabbi Eliezer Selig of my town.

In addition to these shops there were two breweries; the larger one was that of Hirsh Colonist. His brewery was connected with a tavern and a guest house consisting of five rooms known as "Numbers." The rooms opened into a large barn, and they were often occupied by travelling merchants and government officials.

In charge of these rooms was his daughter, Esther, a plump, elderly woman who was not blessed with bodily charm but was gifted with a ready wit. She spoke a number of languages and was a great favorite with the patrons. The story is told that on one Friday morning a travelling *hazan* (cantor) came to town with his choir and repaired to the guest house of Hirsh Colonist. Perhaps there was not sufficient room in the "Numbers" to accommodate the cantor and the choir, or, more likely, the cantor was not financially in a position to pay for the reserved rooms. Be this as it may, the cantor and his choir were put up in the barn.

Late Friday evening, after services, when everything was quiet, the cantor and most of the choir, fatigued from the journey and the performance in the synagogue, soon fell fast asleep. One of the older singers (let us refer to him as the tenor) conceived the idea that he would try to improve his comfort by sliping into one of the reserved chambers. Perhaps he felt humiliated that one of his dignity was housed in such inferior quarters.

He quietly left his cot and opened the door of one of the rooms, which had evidently been left unlocked. No sooner did the daring tenor pass through the threshhold of the dark room, however, than

he was jarred by two blows which descended upon his face like thunderbolts. Without further to-do, a strong woman's hand shoved him rudely out of the room and back into the barn.

The tenor quickly realized that he was in a great predicament, for if it became known in town that he had forced his way into a woman's room, he would not only lose his job but would create a public scandal. A plan was quickly formulated in his mind: he tiptoed quietly over to the place where the cantor was sleeping and rudely delivered two slaps on his face. Then he quickly retreated to his cot. The cantor, disturbed and frightened, could not sleep anymore. He feared that the barn was haunted by demons.

On Sunday morning he went to examine the *mezuzot* (written prayers against evil spirits which are kept on door posts) to ascertain if they were correctly composed. While engaged in looking over the holy parchments, Esther passed by and asked him the reason for his action. He immediately told her the story of the blows the evil spirits had dealt him on their nocturnal visit. The naïve cantor was more than shocked when Esther remarked: "If you had not forced yourself into my room, the demons would not have pursued you."

Among the other streets in Neustadt, the most important was the "Deutsche Gass" (the German street). It was the only paved thoroughfare and the longest continuous street in town. It extended from the Prussian frontier down to the end of the city. On this avenue was located the customs house and the town hall, where the *stanovoi* (combined office of the city mayor and magistrate) and his two subordinates were located. This official exercised dictatorial powers over the entire population, and Jew and Gentile trembled in his presence. The Deutsche Gass also housed the post office and the office of the staff physician (an army surgeon who was paid to attend to several companies of infantry and a company of mounted hussars, but who was permitted to attend to civilians for fees).

The Jews depended mostly upon Jonah, the *feldsher* (practical healer), as the guardian of their health. In severe illnesses they consulted the staff doctor.

Jonah the *feldsher* knew everyone in town. He kept a list of all who suffered from chronic illnesses and he knew the various idiosyncrasies of each individual. He was liked and respected by all—even by those who sought the medical advice of the staff doctor. He was particularly liked by the elderly people of the town who felt close to him because of his personal touch. He never turned down a patient because he was unable to pay the twenty five kopeks (twelve

cents) for professional treatment, and he never refused to tackle a case because it was hopeless. In this latter respect, his position was in marked contrast to that of the staff doctor, who frequently told incurable patients that there was no use coming to him for advice since he could do nothing more. Jonah offered his medical knowledge even to these cases that he knew were incurable; he never gave up hope. If the patient died in spite of his remedies, he sadly remarked that such was the will of Providence and that he was only a messenger of God, and could only carry out His will. That ended the episode, and the family of the sick person had no complaint against him.

A story was told that, once, an elderly woman who had been on a starvation diet for many years and who was apparently in the last stage of diabetes mellitus, went to consult the staff doctor. The latter, after a prolonged examination, pronounced her case too far gone to attempt to help her. He advised her to return home, and prepare to meet her maker. The poor woman, hearing this grave prognosis, naturally became very frightened, and instead of going home, immediately sought Jonah the *feldsher*. She ran so fast that when she reached his office she was breathless and was not able to walk up the wooden steps that led to the office. Reuben, the undertaker's apprentice, who happened to pass by at that moment, noticed the sick woman struggling to climb up the steps and tried to help her by taking hold of her hand and reassuring her with the words, "Don't worry, Madam, I'll take care of you." The poor woman, it appears, interpreted her intended benefactor's words too literally and promptly fainted. It took Jonah quite a time to revive her, in spite of the fact that he doused her liberally with cold water and administered restoratives repeatedly. Death intervened shortly thereafter. In pre-insulin days, death in diabetic coma was not a rare sequel to diabetes, but Jonah ascribed this woman's death to the effect of meeting the undertaker's apprentice, who, according to Jonah, was really the Angel of Death in disguise.

Jonah was frequently consulted when domestic animals became sick. One day a neighbor whose cow appeared ill asked the *feldsher* to examine the cow. Jonah obligingly looked at the animal, and, discovering that she did not ruminate, decided that the animal was sick from indigestion. As a remedy he suggested shoving a salted herring down the cow's throat. The herbivorous animal almost choked trying to swallow the fish, but sure enough, on the following day the cow

began to ruminate and promptly recovered. This episode established Jonah's reputation as a veterinarian.

Jonah's office, which consisted of one large room, looked more like a House of Study than a medical office. There were no surgical instruments in view and no drugs or apothecary's equipment. The walls were concealed by several large bookcases in which, in addition to Hebrew books, a large collection of old Hebrew newspapers were stored. Jonah could always be found studying the Talmud. He was greatly interested in Talmudic medicine, and strived at times to follow Talmudic medical practice. He occasionally resorted to spiritual healing. Thus, when applying a mustard plaster, he saw to it that the paper on which the mustard was spread was on a page from the Holy Scriptures or the Prayer Book. As such holy pages were not always available (for it was considered a sin to throw them away), he at times stealthily entered the anteroom of the synagogue (where the decayed Holy Books were deposited in large containers to be eventually taken with solemn ceremonies to the cemetery for burial) to renew his supply.

The *feldsher* (or *rofe*) was considered an expert phlebotomist. He was skilled in applying leeches on inflamed parts of the body. As a prophylactic measure, he applied dry cups to the elders of the community on one Friday in each month.

The place that I most admired on the Deutsche Gass was the apothecary's shop. I was eager to run errands there when my mother sent me for castor oil or wormseed (*worm kraut*). The last was administered to children on the first day of every month. The apothecary's shop was kept scrupulously clean, and its medicinal scent pervaded the atmosphere even before the door of the shop was opened. How favorably, from a professional point of view, did this shop compare with our modern combination drug-department stores and sandwich shops!

At the center of the market place, two rows of shops faced each other, separated only by a narrow alley. These were the general stores where one could purchase dry goods, notions, dress goods, stationery, leather goods—in fact everything from a needle to a can of paint.

The Jewish houses of Neustadt were as a rule better built and handsomer than those of the Gentiles. I remember, though, that the courtyards of the Christians were heavily planted with fruit-bearing and other trees, whereas, among the Jews, love of nature was seldom

carried beyond the care of a vegetable garden, which task was relegated to the women.

There were no really rich Jews in Neustadt. The entire community depended upon the weekly fair which took place every Wednesday. On that day, peasants from nearby villages and farmers from the vicinity came to town with their agricultural products, livestock, skins, etc. About one-third of the Jewish population of Neustadt were traders (*luftmenshen*), and these individuals eagerly waited for Wednesday to purchase products, some of which they sold locally and the rest in nearby towns of Prussia. If, after purchasing such items as fuel oil, dress goods, sugar, rice, and tea in the Jewish stores, the peasants had any money left, they celebrated the occasion by patronizing the taverns.

We children also looked forward to the Wednesday fair. On this day we often were surprised when we came home from *heder* (Hebrew School) to find a pet lamb, a goose, or a duck running about our house.

Generally speaking, the Jews and Gentiles of Lithuania lived on terms of intimacy. The relationship between them was essentially cordial and friendly. True, we Jewish children lived in a different world, but it never occurred to us that the Gentile world was a happier or more secure one, and that ours was a shaky one. On the contrary, we considered our world happier, finer, and more intellectual.

I can only recall one incident which disturbed our childish equanimity. This event took place when I was about six years old and it occurred after the coronation of Alexander III as Czar of Russia. I remember it well for many reasons, not the least of which was that my Uncle Simeon was implicated in this episode. It occurred on a Thursday, a day after the weekly fair and three days before the feast of Passover. It occurred immediately after we school children had been sent home for *onbeissen* (lunch).

We saw peasants rushing into the town from every direction—some on foot, some in vehicles. When I reached home I found my mother crying. My father was not there. Through the window I saw Jews running helter skelter up and down the street. My first thought was that a fire had broken out in the town, but looking out of the window I failed to see any of the usual signs of conflagration. My mother, instead of serving me with the customary lunch, scooped up my younger brother and me and carried us through the back door to our Christian neighbor, Rotkish, the woodchopper and water

carrier, where we remained cooped up in a dark room for two horrible days. I knew something terrible had happened, but my mother would not answer my pointed questions.

I later found out that one of the peasants who had come to the fair on the previous day had left his five-year-old son at my uncle's tavern. When he returned late in the afternoon, the boy was not there, and as this happened shortly before Passover, the old superstition that Jews use Christian blood in their *matzot* (unleavened bread) spread like wildfire among the Christian population of the town and the peasants of the vicinity.

Before any investigation was made as to the cause of the boy's absence, enraged mobs broke the windows of Jewish homes and stores, attacked the occupants, wrecked Jewish buildings, and plundered Jewish shops. They broke into my uncle's tavern and emptied the barrels of vodka and beer. Many of them got so drunk that they remained sick and stupefied for several days. My uncle and his family escaped in the nick of time via the back door and fled to an out-of-town friend. My uncle sent a message to the *stanovoi*, who was a frequent visitor to his tavern, for he knew that this official would reach even the Czar himself for a bribe. The *stanovoi* promptly dispatched a company of hussars, who quickly scattered the drunken mob. Towards evening the town became quiet and peace was restored.

As to the lost child, it turned out that his drunken father had neglected to tell my uncle that he was leaving him in his care. The boy, who was about five years old, became restless and went out to look for his father in the market place. There he observed a wagon which looked like his father's. He climbed into the rear of it, and as it was cold, he covered himself with bags and old blankets and fell fast asleep. When the owner of the wagon returned, he drove off without noticing the child. When he reached his farm, which was about ten miles away, he discovered the boy in the back of his wagon. Before he was able to notify the police of our town, the aforementioned incident had already transpired. Thus the mystery was solved after the town and its Jewish citizens had suffered irrevocably.

Unfortunately, ritual murder charges such as these became deadly weapons in the hands of the anti-Semites of all Eastern countries. Such rumors still spring up almost without fail on the eve of every Passover in spite of vehement denials made by eminent statesmen, theologians, scientists, and authors of all faiths from almost all countries, including England, France, Germany, and Russia. Most

notable were the denials made by Prof. H. L. Strack and the condemnation of such charges as being baseless which was expressed in several papal bulls. The last Vatican denial was issued by Cardinal Merry del Val, Papal Secretary of State, in a letter dated October 18, 1913, to Lord Rothschild.

The ritual murder case in my town, however, was soon forgotten. Life went on as usual. Passover was celebrated with the usual splendor. By ten o'clock, on the morning prior to the eve of this holiday, the houses of even the most humble Jews had been renovated and cleansed of the dust that had gathered throughout the year, and household furniture had been taken to the river and scrubbed. There was no school on that day, and we boys were happy, and kept busy running errands and carrying household furniture to and from the banks of the river.

When I was about five years of age, my playmates and I tested the nautical capacities of a large box at the edge of the river. After our coffer underwent its initial baptism in the water, I climbed aboard. The coffer promptly floated out to deep water in the center of the stream. Pedestrians walking over The Good Bridge undoubtedly noticed the coffer floating but none surmised that a little boy was secreted therein. Fortunately, our Christian neighbor, Rotkish, the water carrier, (always the Good Samaritan), happened to be standing on the bridge, drawing up buckets of water. He saw me, noted my plight and rescued me. This was the second time I miraculously escaped a violent death.

My rescue from the box, however, was not followed by such happy circumstances as attended the rescue of Moses by the daughter of Pharaoh. When I was taken home, my father put me across a bench and administered a few mild lashes with a leather strap. This was the first corporal punishment I had ever received, and I have never forgotten it. My mother's intervention in my behalf prevented more violent paternal retribution, but even at that age I knew full well that I had gotten what I deserved.

I can well remember our home on the great eve of Passover. Like every other Jewish home in town it appeared mighty cheerful. Large candles in brass and silver candelabra spread their warm glow and illuminated our main room. A cloth as white as virgin snow decorated our table. Each member of the family was dressed in new clothes. Even the floor, which was usually stained with the dirt of the street, was on this occasion spotlessly clean and covered with golden yellow sand which our neighbor Rotkish had carried from a nearby

mountain cave. Everybody was in a particularly festive mood, for seldom during the year was the Jew of Neustadt provided with enough food for eight days.

Beakers of red wine embellished the table. A large decanter of raisin wine which my mother had specially prepared stood at the center of the table. (My mother, by the way, was also an expert at brewing mead.) Near my father on the table was a large plateful of *matzot* baked from pure white flour (a rarity!), and numerous goodies, which were seldom available through the year, were in evidence. In addition to these a large beaker of wine was reserved for the Prophet, Elijah.

The task fell to me of asking the traditional four questions which I had been taught in the *heder*. According to the expression on my mother's face, I performed this act with great credit. The "stealing" of the *afikomen* (the customary practice of secretly retrieving *matzot* hidden under a cushion on which the head of the house is leaning) was a more difficult procedure. I accomplished this sleight-of-hand trick with the aid of my good mother, who with much ado passed around to the diners a basin of water and towels for hand washing. With all eyes directed toward my mother I surreptitiously picked up the *afikomen* from under my father's cushion.

Having performed these two important duties, I fixed my eyes on the large beaker of wine which was set aside for the Prophet Elijah. Of course I had been told that Elijah was invisible, but I felt certain that even if an invisible prophet had imbibed from the cup there would be a dimunition of its brimming contents. When my father asked me to open the door for Elijah while reciting the prayer: "Pour Thy wrath on the nations that know not Thee," my heart sank. I did not believe that Elijah would enter in the flesh, but my childish imagination overflowed with fantastic possibilities.

My mother had told me only lately of a case in which Elijah, disguised as an old beggar, had visited a poor famiy and left them a great fortune. Occasionally, she said, the prophet disguised himself as a kosher animal. My father had informed me that when the Jews were in Jerusalem, Elijah came in person to everybody's *seder*, but that in exile he refused to show himself in the flesh. My father's dictum, "When the Messiah will come he will again be present in every Jewish house at the *seder*," rang in my ears. But I could not conceive of one being visiting the *sederim* of all Jews on the same evening; and even if by some miracle he were able to accomplish this, how could he drink so much wine? I observed that my father

tackled only four cups, and this with great difficulty. Half of the beakers he left unconsumed, and even so he acted so peculiarly as to kiss me many times—something he ordinarily was not accustomed to do—and on one occasion he actually kissed my mother publicly! What dire fate would befall the poor prophet after downing the multitudinous cups of wine left for him at all *sederim*?

After I had stood for a few minutes at the open door awaiting Elijah, my father ordered me to close the door. When I was about to carry out this order, I thought I heard faint steps in the dark vestibule. Before I had a chance to close the door I perceived a snow-white animal in front of me. The story my mother had so lately told me, that Elijah often disguises himself as a kosher animal, rushed into my brain. I ran back to the table crying breathlessly: "Elijah! Elijah!" Everyone at the table got up and stood before his place as if glued to the floor.

My father was plainly startled, and indecision was reflected in his eyes. My mother, seeing the panic and terror in my countenance, instinctively grasped and embraced me and pulled me to her seat. Before further action ensued, Peiye Beile's billy-goat pranced into the room. Evidently the bright illumination and the scene at the table were too much for the poor animal. He appeared nearly as startled as we were, and as my brother Gershon began to dash away from the table, the goat put his front legs up on it. I do not recall whether he imbibed from the beaker of wine set aside for Elijah or not, but he certainly had his whiskers in it and in the food that was on the table. His whiskers definitely demonstrated that he was not a total abstainer.

In order to understand how Peiye Beile's goat happened to be an uninvited guest at the *seder*, one must recall the Old Testament law pertaining to a *bchor* (firstborn). This law is to the effect that the firstborn male of any kosher animal is holy and belongs to the *Cohen* (priest). It cannot be used for food unless it is redeemed within thirty days by the local *Cohen* for a stipulated coin. Unless permanently injured by accident (permanent disability had to be established by vote of three judges), such an animal was not permitted to be slaughtered. If death ensued, the animal had to be wrapped in a sheet or shrouds and buried.

For some reason Peiye Beile had neglected to redeem her first-born goat within the thirty-day limit, and, since she could not afford to pay for the constant feeding of this animal, she had permitted it to run about in the street. The animal soon learned to jump from

one produce wagon to another. His great day was Wednesday, when the farmers gathered in town with their agricultural products. His lust for fresh vegetables was unbridled. The farmers' whips did not deter him—many a battle he successfully waged with his horns. During the week he supported himself by going from house to house, rummaging for food. We boys had much fun with him. The very sight of him caused an uproar, and shouts of "Here comes Peiye Beile's billy-goat!" filled the air. In spite of repeated warnings not to hurt him, the boys were wont to pull his tail until he assured his own release by butting with his horns.

Peiye Beile's goat waged a resourceful and successful campaign for survival. Housewives had to keep their windows and doors closed. Should they leave the house without securing all possible avenues of ingress, like as not, on their return, they would find the animal helping himself to the dinner which they had prepared for their families.

While most people considered the Passover antics of the goat merely a humorous coincidence, there were others who, like the Greek philosopher Pythagoras, believed in *gilgul hanefesh* (transmigration of the soul) and who were certain that Elijah the Prophet had entered into the animal. How, they reasoned, could a dumb animal know the exact time that the door was to be opened for Elijah?

One day, after the Passover in question, the animal mysteriously disappeared. Rumors were circulated that he had been seen on the cemetery, grazing among the tombstones. He became almost a legendary figure, and children and timid adults feared to go out by themselves at night lest they meet up with this billy-goat, which mayhap was possessed by a spirit.

C H A P T E R II

My Homelife

The whitewashed wall, the nicely sanded floor,
The varnished clock that clicked behind the door,
The chest contrived a double debt to pay:
A bed at night, a chest of drawers by day.
—Goldsmith

AFTER Passover the Jews of Neustadt were in a sad emotional state. It was difficult to face the grim realities of life after eight wonderful days of festivity. They recalled that in the exodus from Egypt in the days of the Pharaohs, the Israelites had been provided with manna. But where would provisions be obtained for the Jews of Neustadt? The holiday *matzot, gefilte*-fish, poultry, and wine lasted for only eight days at the most. In many instances even a bare sufficiency of Passover supplies was procured only through the benevolent gifts of the wealthier townsmen in the form of *maot hittim* (wheat money). As the eighth day of the holiday became a reality, the very thought of the morrow was, to say the least, disheartening. To the young children particularly, the "holiday of freedom" came to an especially bitter end, for we were again driven into bondage under someone who appeared to us worse than wicked Pharaoh himself—none other than "Shlomele the Kitten," our teacher.

My father, like many of the Jews of the town, was a grain merchant. Occasionally, he also bought and sold livestock. As previously intimated, the entire community, directly or indirectly, derived a livelihood from the weekly Wednesday *mark* (fair), at which grain and livestock were purchased to be sold during the week to local dealers. The bakers took their wheat to David, the miller, whose watermill was located about two miles up the Susta. After local needs were fulfilled, the remainder of the grain was disposed of among the Prussian merchants. The livestock was sold to the local butchers, who supplied the town with kosher meat. This stock had to be sold before the next *mark*; otherwise there was no money with which to buy new products at the next market day.

Most of the merchants had capital enough to eke out a livelihood only if their money was kept working and if conditions were normal; but if for some reason or other one had to use up his capital to purchase food or medicine there was not enough money left to do business.

Prior to the Passover just under scrutiny, my father had invested in grain and livestock all of his own money and some which he had borrowed on interest. The grain was locked up during the holidays in an adjoining room which was known as the *sukkah* because this room was transformed into a ceremonial *sukkah* during the Feast of Tabernacles.

According to the customary practice, the *sukkah* and all the leaven in it had been conditionally sold for the holiday period of eight days to our Christian neighbor, Rotkish, the water carrier. The Rabbi of the town had drawn up the contract with the water carrier in order to circumvent the injunction in Exodus 12:19: "Seven days shalt there be no leaven found in your houses." This customary procedure was rather an unusual transaction as fiscal affairs go. Instead of the purchaser paying the seller for his merchandise, he received money from the seller when the transaction was concluded. During the Passover holidays, Rotkish was the richest man in town—on paper. He owned all property containing grain and leaven, and he proudly exhibited his affluence. He wore a new suit of clothes, all his friends envied him, and his Jewish neighbors treated him with the best of food and drink all through the holiday week. He was not able to keep watch over his new possessions, however, because the wine he continuously imbibed in the houses of his business associates for the duration of the holiday week almost paralyzed him. During this period of his incapacitation, his wife, Rotkisha, performed a great service to the community by supplying the townsmen with water.

During the holiday, the livestock was housed in our stable with Nana, our cow. There was no *mark* during Passover. The peasants, knowing of the holiday, did not take the trouble to come to town. I recall with amusement the symphony evoked during Passover week by the heterogeneous conglomeration of sounds produced by the goats, lambs, hens, roosters, and the cow.

On the Monday following Passover, a certain Mr. Cox, a Prussian merchant, visited us as usual. He was my father's steady customer and a kindly man. I myself eagerly awaited his visits because he never forgot to bring a bag of candy along for me. Herr Cox examined the merchandise, and paid the stipulated price in German silver dollars and marks. After enjoying a glass of tea from the samovar, he parted

with his customary *"auf wiedersehen."* My father took the silver coins and put them in a bag together with other money he had, and locked it in the family coffer. As it was rather late when Mr. Cox departed, father went to bed.

The coffer was located in an adjoining room which was reserved for traveling scholars who were visiting our town. Early in the morning, father was awakened by a knock at the front door. He lit his lantern and opened the door. There were two men at the door who addressed him in the German language and told him that they had been referred to him by Mr. Cox and that they were in urgent need of grain which they had promised to deliver to a certain wholesale dealer the next day. They asked him if he had any grain available, and if not could he recommend them to someone who had.

They engaged my father in a lengthy conversation and then left. When my mother, anxious for my father's return, got out of bed, she thought that she overheard some noise in the reserved room, but she dismissed this as groundless imaginings. Just to check, however, both of my parents entered the room, and to their dismay they found the coffer opened and the bag, in which my father had placed about eight hundred German dollars, gone.

I cannot recall any incident in my early life that remained so deeply engraved on my memory as what transpired that night. The sobs of my mother still ring in my ear. My father was speechless, walking to and fro about the room. The few remaining hours of the night seemed like an eternity to me.

"Sorrow," said Bailey, "is a stone that crushes a single bearer to the ground while two are able to carry it with ease." My mother's tears appeared to have a soothing effect on my father, for he soon went over to her and comforted her: *"Gott wird uns nicht verlosen"* (God will not forsake us). When the rays of the bright spring sun shone through the windows, I saw my father take his *tallit* (praying shawl) and *tefilin* (phylacteries) and prepare to go to the synagogue. I accompanied him. At the house of worship, when he covered his head and face with the praying shawl, I overheard him uttering the following prayer: "O, Merciful and Gracious Being, I have sinned before Thee. O, Eternal! Thou who art full of compassion, have pity on me and accept my supplication." He did not mention a word about *parnasah* (sustenance) in his prayer.

When he returned home, he found a group of friendly neighbors who had heard of his misfortune. Knowing that he could not continue as a merchant any longer, they advised him to open a Hebrew

school for advanced Talmudic students. He had always been averse to the profession of *melammed* (teacher), but this time he had no choice; there was no time for further deliberation, for it was the beginning of the summer term, and he had to make up his mind quickly. That very day he enrolled a class of students, and the next day he was already engaged in the practice of his new profession.

To my great sorrow, I did not fit into his class. I had to continue at the *heder* of Shlomele the Kitten, who conducted a school for beginners. At the end of this chapter I shall have occasion to speak at some length of my first teacher.

The extent of Jewish poverty in Russia, and especially in the province of Lithuania, at the end of the nineteenth century was studied in the year 1888 by the Jewish Colonization Association. The Association ascertained how many Jews received charity in order to be enabled to observe the Passover holiday, which is the most costly of all the religious festivals in the calendar. The amount of assistance given to each family was usually small, ranging from 75 kopeks (about 35 cents) to 3 roubles (about $1.50). The investigation showed that 132,855 or 19 percent of the population received some assistance. In Neustadt those who received *maot hittim* for Passover included 10 percent of the population.

In those days food was not calculated to provide a certain number of calories, a certain percentage of carbohydrates, protein, and fat, or certain amounts of vitamins and minerals. We merely ate the best that was available. There were no canned or frozen foods, of course, and no one had ice to keep food from spoiling. Meals had to be freshly prepared. During the summer season, we had a variety of vegetables, but we did not eat them because of their nutritional value; we ate them solely because we relished them. Our mothers did not watch the morning papers in order to plan the day's menu, nor did they consult cookbooks prior to preparing a dinner. They did not possess modern cooking utensils and had no idea that the nutritional goodness of food could be impaired by long hours of overcooking. Potatoes, carrots, onions, and (when we could afford it) meat, came out from the pot well done. The quantities of the ingredients were never scientifically determined by the spoonful or ounce. Our mothers knew the exact amount of each ingredient with their eyes shut.

Yet our mothers were good cooks who took their job very seriously. Indeed, with the limited assortment of foods that were available, they performed their culinary tasks with skill and dexterity. A

dish cooked in a modern pot or pressure cooker may be chockfull of high-quality vitamins, but its flavor is nothing to make one love his mother the way we loved ours. In those days, our alimentary canals were completely untrained for the reception of concentrated food supplements, and our digestive systems still had an important function to perform. Totally ignorant of food chemistry, we ate what we could get and were mighty glad to get it.

It is truly remarkable how many dishes my mother prepared from the limited supply of raw food. Week after week she fed the family a wide variety of dairy dishes, for meats were not usually available during the weekdays. All of us were always perfectly contented with the meals served. I recall with particular relish the loaves of bread and the butter cakes she baked for the Sabbath. Each child received a special loaf for himself, the size of it being directly proportional to the age of the child. We ate whole-grain bread that needed no vitamin enrichment.

The Sabbath was ushered in on Friday morning, when we found warm rolls filled with chopped meats or liver waiting for us on the table. These delicacies were a sure sign of the impending Sabbath and informed us that we had only a half day of school that day. Friday afternoon during the summer months was spent playing in the hills and woods that surrounded our village. Often we picked a variety of wild berries, including such favorites as strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, cranberries, and gooseberries. When we reached home towards evening, our mothers greeted us affectionately, and the berries which we picked were used to round out the Sabbath meals.

On the Sabbath we found the table set and the dining room illuminated with the Sabbath candles. It can be said without exaggeration that we waited all week for the first Sabbath meal. This meal usually included *gefilte* fish, chicken *lockshen* (noodle) soup, stewed meat with carrots, and stuffed chicken neck. It was a happy occasion for the entire family. Even our mother, who was tired out from preparing the meals for the Sabbath, joined the family in singing the Sabbath hymns. Saturday, incidentally, was the only day mother rested, for then there was no cooking to be done. The food was prepared on Friday and placed in the oven or stove where it remained overnight. The chief Sabbath dish was known as *shalet* or *tcholent* and consisted of meat stewed with potatoes, peas, or beans. When it came out of the steaming pot, the potatoes were like candied sweet potatoes and the beans like "Boston baked beans." The virtue of this dish has

been sung in a panegyric by the poet Heinrich Heine in his "Prinzessin Sabbath."

My mother was not much of a pie chef but she made a marvelous array of delicious puddings (*kugel*).

The third Sabbath meal was served late in the afternoon. It consisted mainly of the leftovers from the first two meals. Occasionally it consisted of dairy food, or of a variety of sour soups called *borsht*. The most popular *borsht* was made from beets mixed with the yolk of eggs and sour cream.

The extraordinary Sabbath and holiday cuisine developed out of the fact that special baked breads and cooked dishes had been adopted long ago and were considered sacred to certain festivals or seasons of the year. The special dishes of each nation are largely determined by the natural products of the country and by the tastes developed out of the climatic conditions of the country. Dishes in the Jewish cuisine have been only partly determined by these circumstances. They have been evolved mainly as a result of religious injunctions which prescribe what foods are permitted or prohibited at certain times.

In our house plain food was the order of the day on weekdays and fancy foods were only served on the Sabbath and on holidays. Fruits were available only in season. An orange was a rare luxury, and when one had been obtained, it was divided in the peel among the members of the family. I am sure that the orange served more as a globe to demonstrate the principles of longitude and latitude to the older children than as a food.

The dietary routine of life changed when I came to America. The dinner which at home had been served at noon and was the main meal of the day, changed into lunch and consisted, like as not, of two slices of bread amply concealing a scanty piece of cheese, meat, or canned fish—the kind of food we boys used to take along in our pockets to hold us over from breakfast to dinner. It took me quite a while to become accustomed to the midday lunch. I recall one occasion shortly after my arrival in New York when my landlady at the place where I boarded set the table with enough dishes for an elaborate banquet. I was very hungry, and my mouth watered in anticipation of a big dinner. To my surprise, she brought me a fish sandwich, but, after due deliberation, I decided that this was merely an entree and a harbinger of the good things to come. After eating the sandwich, I remained at the table for about half an hour vainly awaiting the second course. When the landlady came in to

clear the table the horrible truth dawned upon me that the meal had been completed.

Notwithstanding the great poverty caused by the "May Laws" and by other discriminatory legislation and edicts in Czarist Russia, I look back on my young days with gratified contemplation. The Jews of my town lived a corporate life, a life founded upon a strong communal basis which succeeded in preserving most of the distinctive traits of the race. Above all a strong love for learning and for cultural values, not only in religion but in many other spheres of human endeavor as well, pervaded all of us. Our neighbors had nothing to compare with this.

My townsmen kept the traditional culture of their people alive. At the same time they did not keep themselves isolated from their fellow Jews in their own land and neighboring countries. They frequently united with their brethren in Russia on a national scale for self-defense. I recall at least one instance when emissaries from St. Petersburg visited our town on a secret mission to gather funds for the political safety of the entire Jewish population which was threatened by severe edicts; rich and poor contributed voluntarily and liberally to the fund.

In the smaller towns of the vast Russian Empire, the Jews enjoyed a measure of political autonomy. The *Parnes* was the mayor of the town. The *Shivah Tuvei Ha'ir* (the seven chosen men elected by the citizens of the town) served as his council and had supervision over all the communal institutions, such as the House of Study, the Synagogue, the Hebrew School, the bathhouse, the cemetery, and the hospice for the poor. This council also took charge of collections to support these institutions and to provide salaries for the rabbi, the cantor, the *shohet* and the *shames*. They hired teachers, engaged the cantor and his choir, and were in control of all social and philanthropic activities in the town.

The rabbi was the judge. Seldom did a Jew resort to the district government court in civil cases; the rabbi's decision was final. In complicated litigations he had an assistant, the *dayan* (in Neustadt, this was Rabbi Raphael, a venerable scholar), who was learned in Talmudic jurisprudence. The *Baalei din* or litigants had the privilege of engaging the services of an *orech din*—a layman learned in the Biblical and Talmudic legal codes. Anyone who submitted his case to *din Torah* (Jewish law) obeyed the decision of the rabbi. Refusal to obey was considered a grave violation even though there were no prisons and no legal way to force a litigant to obey the rabbinical verdict. The

greatest punishment for a nonconformist was exclusion from the *minyan* (i.e., he was not counted in among the traditional ten men necessary for religious services). Excommunication or *heirem* was a punishment rarely resorted to. It was reserved for only the most extreme cases.

I can recall only one case of excommunication: that of an alleged thief who robbed a tinsmith of all his savings. The robbery took place early one Sabbath morning while the tinsmith and his wife were away at the synagogue. As it was a snowy morning, the telltale footprints were readily traced to the thief's house. Other circumstantial evidence also led to his identification, and, although he steadfastly maintained his innocence, he was excommunicated and found it impossible to live with his family in town, for every townsman shunned them like lepers. Even poor shopkeepers who needed business refused to deal with him. He finally confessed his guilt and returned the stolen money to the tinsmith.

The cultural and educational center of the community was the House of Study. There the cantor with his choir inspired the public with the traditional ritual music. My memory takes me back to the days when I used to steal into the cantor's house up on the hill and listen spellbound while he rehearsed the ritual prayers with his choir for the high holidays. When I returned home from such a rehearsal my mother would always remark: "Benjamin, you have been crying." The cantor, David Feinsinger, possessed a strong, thrilling, baritone voice which readily evoked tears from his listeners. Feinsinger was short of stature, and had a large head, large, prominent eyes, and a beard well trimmed on the sides. He evidently suffered from some disability, for he always walked with a cane which he held in his left hand. Even in the hottest days of the summer he was seen wearing a woolen scarf around his neck, evidently as a prophylactic measure against catching cold. In addition to his musical talent he was a talmudic scholar, which was a rare attribute for a cantor in those days when scholarship and music were considered practically incompatible. His performances were not always of a religious nature. Occasionally during the year Cantor Feinsinger and his choir rendered concerts of a secular nature, including various classical numbers.

Frequently orators visited our town. Not all of them were traveling preachers. There were some whose lectures attracted the entire community. I recall the famous orator, Maccabee, known as the *Kamenitcher maggid*, who frequently tried to explain certain phenomena of nature by quoting passages of the Bible or the Talmud. On one

occasion he explained the physical basis of rain with the following passage of Genesis (2:6): "There went up a mist over all the earth and watered the whole earth." The orator commented on this passage by explaining that the vapor arising from the earth and sea formed a cloud which subsequently precipitated on the earth in the form of rain. This interpretation contradicted the doctrine of Shlomole, my teacher, who taught that rain came from heaven and had no physical basis.

The cantor and the traveling preacher were by no means the only channels through which the educational, cultural, and religious life of my townsfolk flowed. There were a number of study circles where men of varying cultural attainments gathered to discuss Jewish lore, tradition, and ethics. There was the Talmud circle in which the learned class took part, and where religio-legal problems were discussed. There was the *Mishnah* group, where the Code of Jewish Laws was studied. There were study groups for those who did not have a higher education in the lore. They gathered around a long table at the *klaus* and listened to one of the learned citizens expounding the works of various Rabbinic sages.

These study circles at the House of Study did not exempt one from the duty of reading at home. I recall with solemn pleasure the evenings after my father returned from the House of Study. We hardly finished the evening meal when he took down from the shelf a massive leather-bound volume of the Talmud. He then placed himself in front of a tiny oil lamp, and read aloud in a quaint traditional sing-song manner the words of the sages. The words were accompanied with nods of his head and downward scoops of his outstretched thumb. At such times, he was so wrapped up in the lore of his ancestors, that he was entirely oblivious of the outside world. Like as not, on the other side of the table, my mother would be darning a sock or mending a shirt, listening attentively to my father as he valiantly attempted to solve the sacred mysteries of the great book.

The life of my townsmen was not all study; it also included pleasure and play. There were joyous celebrations of various kinds such as birthday parties, *Bar Mitzvah* gatherings, betrothals, marriage ceremonies, and celebrations after completing the reading of a Talmudic tractate (*siyum*). These festivals were often accompanied by music, dancing, and the singing of folk melodies.

On at least one day during the year great joy to the point of revelry was experienced beneath the roofs of the houses and even on the streets. This was on the Feast of Purim when drinking of alcoholic

beverages was sanctioned by tradition to such a point of indulgence that one could no longer distinguish between Haman and Mordecai. On that day groups of minstrels paraded through the town dancing and singing jovial songs to the tune of a rickety violin. They went from house to house calling for alms and singing the following tune:

Heint is Purim, morgen is aus.
Gib mir agroshen und varf mir araus.

In English this would be paraphrased:

Today is Purim, tomorrow it's out.
Give me a penny and throw me out.

In later years these minstrel groups united into an amateur theatrical troupe which played "The Triumph of the Jews in Persia over Haman the Wicked in the Days of King Ahasuerus." The play was usually performed with local talent. The local sponsor of the show in my town was Moshe Isers, who conducted a kosher meat market. He selected his actors in accordance with a practical merit system. He himself acted as King Ahasuerus. The garments of the King, which were trimmed with gold, and his lofty crown and sword, were kept from year to year. The rest of the cast and their paraphernalia were changed from year to year.

As Haman, Moshe Isers selected Nissen the smuggler. He proved to be a Haman who could not be surpassed. In his early days he had been an informer who reported to the government officials those whiskey smugglers who were his competitors. For Mordecai, the pious Jew, he picked out Israel the tailor, who possessed a long black beard and earlocks. He made a long satin *caftan* (coat) for himself, which was girdled by a band of white silk, fringed on the end. His *streimel* (cap) was made of fine beaver fur. Of course, when he became Prime Minister, his attire was changed into a diplomatic outfit.

Moshe Isers had great difficulty in securing someone to take the part of Vaizatha, the clown, because of fear that the name might stick to the actor all through the rest of his life; therefore he selected the village halfwit, Naphtali, for the part. He was dressed up in a coat of many colors, a dunce cap, and long boots with spurs. Naphtali acquitted himself creditably. He went from one place to another on the stage, glanced at the audience, looked up at the ceiling, and ogled Queen Esther. The antics of Naphtali, who was a familiar figure in town, caused much merriment among the spectators.

For the part of Esther, the promoter had to import a girl from a neighboring town. Local belles were averse to being nicknamed

"Queen." The part of Vashti was taken by Gabriel, the tailor's apprentice. No girl wanted to take her part, principally because, according to an old legend, Vashti had an ugly growth on her forehead. Young Gabriel, in the guise of Vashti, caused much applause and uproar.

The play was presented on Purim Eve in a large barn which was outfitted for the occasion. There was no room in town big enough to accommodate all those who desired to attend. On the next day of Purim, these minstrels performed the play in the houses of the wealthier Jews, where they received sufficient funds in tips to cover their expenses.

Purim was particularly a great day for the youngsters. We all went to the synagogue equipped with our *Haman dreiers* (wooden rattles) and each time the reader of the *Megillah* (The Biblical Book of Esther) mentioned the name "Haman," the noise of the rattles was deafening. Each year we renewed our satisfaction over our great victory over Haman. When I came home from the synagogue I found the *Hamantashen* (three-cornered cakes filled with poppyseeds, honey, and nuts) and others goodies. After breakfast I prepared the *shalah manot* (packages of gifts) which it was customary to send to friends. It was a great day for the carriers of the gifts, for they received tips both from the senders and the receivers. These youthful delivery boys were sorry that the Jews had only one Haman and one Purim. We boys carried our gifts to our own friends ourselves.

When I carried my father's gift to my teacher, Shlomele the Kitten, I met Yankel the Luksh ("noodle"—tall and thin) at the door. He also carried a present to the teacher from his parents. Yankel, although the tallest boy in the *heder*, was not cut out for study. In fact he had been held back in the first class for four years. The teacher tried to prepare him for *Bar Mitzvah*, but this task was most difficult. Luckily for the boy, he was taller and heavier than the teacher, who was afraid of his physical might. When the teacher upon occasion gathered enough courage to punish him, he could not chastize him in the recumbent position, for the whole class would have had to leave the benches. I recall that prior to this particular Purim, the teacher had given the boy a thrashing while he was standing up.

Yankel thus was eager to avenge himself for the ignominies inflicted upon him by his teacher, so while his mother was baking the *Hamantashen*, he seized his chance and filled up one of the cakes with red pepper and snuff tobacco. He included this cake in the package intended for his teacher. When I met Yankel the Luksh at

the door of the teacher's cottage, he asked me if I would not exchange my package with his, telling me that his package contained unusual delicacies brought from the capital. I was glad to make the change. An hour after we left our teacher, his wife, Reva, came dashing over to our house, proclaiming that we had poisoned her husband. This episode created a furor all over town, and Yankel the Luksh, under pressure, confessed his guilt.

A Hebrew school was known as a *heder*, which literally means a room. The *heder* of Shlomele the Kitten conformed entirely to the word's literal meaning. It consisted of one room about fifteen by twenty feet in size which was employed not only as a school but also as an abode for his wife, Reva, and their two children. Reva plied her domestic duties while her husband and the students went on with the customary lessons.

Toward the far wall opposite the door was a long table or rather two boards about ten feet long, resting on two carpenter's horses. At the center of the table, with his back towards the window, sat Shlomele. At the side of the window was the teacher's cat-o'-nine-tails; this implement of terror hung like a Damoclean sword in full sight of the children who momentarily expected to become its victims. All around the table on long wooden benches sat Shlomele's pupils—or rather, his prey. To the left of the door was a tub filled with dish water, potato peelings, and partially decayed vegetable matter intended as food for the goat who supplied the family with fresh milk. To the right of the door was a large baking oven which Reva used commercially, furnishing the neighborhood with fresh rye bread and *begel*.

Before Passover and for other special occasions, Reva raised geese, ducks, and hens in this very same room, where she fed them on a special diet in order to fatten them for the holidays.

The number of pupils was limited by the seating capacity of the benches, which was none too ample. Shlomele usually had two classes roughly graded according to age and capacity. When the members of one class were engaged in studying the holy works, the members of the other were either playing in front of the *heder* or trying to go over their own lessons on the other side of the table. Most of the time was spent in reading the Hebrew prayer book without translation. The higher class was taught the Pentateuch and its cantillation according to traditional custom. The translation was rendered primarily through the medium of Yiddish, and as Shlomele's Yiddish vocabu-

lary was not ample for certain passages, some Hebrew words remained untranslated.

As I mentioned earlier, there were no schools for training teachers. It appeared that anyone who was unfit for any other calling was automatically qualified as a teacher. Luckily, the child who spent the whole day and part of the night in school had to learn something. I found a similar condition prevailing when I landed in New York in 1890. Any Jewish immigrant who had no trade or was unwilling to learn the trade of tailoring, either became a peddler or a *melammed* (teacher). If the first course was pursued, charitable *landsleite* (countrymen) took up a collection to secure a basket and some merchandise for the immigrant. If the immigrant chose the profession of *melammed*, his friends from the old country tried to secure a number of children as pupils for him. The *melammed* went from house to house to spread the "word of the Lord" among the *tson kodashim* (holy flock).

The peddler of notions, after saving some money, usually purchased a stand and finally became a storekeeper or a manufacturer. The *melammed* remained a poor man even if he opened a *heder* for himself. In spite of the mandatory duty of Jewish fathers to have their children study Hebrew, many were unwilling to reward the poor *melammed* sufficiently. Of course, the *heder* was only intended for boys; the father was under no obligation to give his daughters a Hebrew education.

A basic lack of education and a complete ignorance of the essential rules of his vocation were at the root of Shlomele's uncontrollable temper. Instead of being patient and kind to his beginners, he unleashed his violent temper at the slightest provocation and applied his strap liberally to the young victims, who did not even know why they were being punished. They were afraid to ask any questions. On many occasions when he could not answer questions rationally, either because of lack of knowledge or from a shortage of the necessary Yiddish vocabulary, his only answer was to flog the inquirer unmercifully. The children looked upon the *heder* as a dungeon and upon the teacher as a jailer. We were rarely told to do anything without being threatened with the dire consequences that would overtake us if we did not at once obey. Of course most of these threats were empty enough, but we children got the impression that the world was the property of the grownups only, and that we were trespassers who were more or less tolerated by the owners.

There was an abundance of fear in our house, and I certainly had my share of it. There is always fear when people are poor, and especially when they dwell in a hostile country. There was fear of poverty itself, fear of cold in winter, fear of the landlord, fear of the tax collector, fear of the Czar's officials, fear of the employer, fear of sickness, fear of God, fear of death, and fear of the state after death. The greatest fear that I ever experienced, however, was my fear of my teacher.

There was, however, one redeeming feature about his school which kept it intact for many years, and that was his wife, Reva. In contrast to Shlomele, who was short and thin, his wife was a tall, well-proportioned woman who made him appear a dwarf by comparison. She was perhaps several years older than her husband. When she noticed that her maniacal husband was about to display his violent temper, she would cry out, "Shlomo!" The very mention of his name by his wife seemed to subdue him and he became as mild as a kitten. The boys liked her. When she noted that the boys were about to suffer punishment at the hands of her crazed husband, she would come to their rescue, and, when too late to prevent punishment, she customarily presented a *begel* to the abused boy and requested that he not divulge his punishment to his mother.

Shlomele had a scratchy, feline, whispering quality to his voice, and when his temper got the best of him while Reva was away, he would run around the room literally mewing like a cat. The smaller boys, knowing what was coming, sought refuge under the table. The larger boys, who were too big for the available space, thereupon stoically suffered the punishment.

There were several minor mutinies among the big boys against Shlomele, but Reva had counterspies among the youngsters who told her of the plots brewing against her husband, and she successfully thwarted them with suitable bribes.

The following incident happened the day after Hanukkah. During the holiday recess, the boys concocted a scheme to get even with their hated teacher. His house was on the top of a hill, below which was the synagogue and the other houses of worship. The boys were very fond of sledding. When a sled was let loose on the top of the hill it would whiz down the slope past the synagogue. Towards the evening of the appointed day, some of the pupils made ready their sled for the descent down the hill. They knew that their teacher would soon come out with his strap to order them away, and three big boys mounted the sled and impatiently awaited his appearance. To be sure, Shlomele

the Kitten soon came out. He approached the sled waving his strap, but when he was close to it, one of the boys pulled him onto the sled while another one started the sled down the hill. If the poor fellow had remained quiet, no one would have noticed him, but while on the sled, he waved his strap and shouted "*shkozim*" (rats) like a maniac. The Jews of the town, who were gathering in the synagogue for early afternoon services, were amazed to see Shlomele the teacher sledding with the boys down the hill and howling at the top of his voice.

CHAPTER III

The Story of a Name

Do not believe the man who says,
"I've toiled and nothing gained";
Nor him that says, "I have not toiled,
And yet I have obtained";
But if a man hath said, "I've won
The prize for which I've striven,"
To him, indeed, and him alone,
Your credence may be given.
—Talmud, Megillah 6b;
translated by I. Meyers

UNTIL I reached the eighth year of my life, I did not know my surname; my father was always addressed by his Hebrew name. There were no Russian schools in the small communities of Lithuania. The Czar's government did not even try to assimilate the Jews of Lithuania, being of the opinion that it would be futile to even attempt such an enterprise. There were Russian schools in the Jewish communities of the Ukraine, White Russia, and Poland, but not in Lithuania. The *heder* was the only educational institution that we had, and there the *melammed* called us by our Hebrew names. There were only a few rich or influential Jews who were known by their surnames, such as, for example, the *Isborzik* (to whom I will refer later) and the Jewish officials in the customs house.

Jews, up to the early nineteenth century, were generally known by their Hebrew names, and if there was more than one Jew with the same name, the name of the father was added. Thus, for example, Joseph the son of Simeon could be distinguished from Joseph the son of Benjamin. If by chance there were two Josephs and each had a father named Simeon, the trade of each was often used to impart the differentiation. Thus Joseph the baker was differentiated from Joseph the butcher. At times nicknames were employed to establish identity; perhaps this is the reason why a large portion of the population had nicknames. Occasionally the name of the street where a man lived, or the name of his wife or mother, was added to his name.

My father, before he adopted the profession of teacher, was known as "Bear, Sarah's," after the name of my mother, because there were a number of persons named Bear in the community. At times the ancient custom of identifying a person by his father's name became confusing; for example, one named Joseph might have to be addressed as Joseph, the son of Jacob, the son of Reuben, the son of Joseph, because children were so commonly named after their grandparents and great-grandparents.

The government found it necessary to issue an edict that every Jew adopt a family name. This course was adopted not because the Czar's government was concerned over the difficulties which the prevailing system of nomenclature produced among the Jewish population, but because of the confusion caused when Jewish youths were called for military service.

The ukase ordering the adoption of a surname in addition to the first name was not really a new one. It had been issued as far back as the beginning of the eighteenth century as will be shown later, but observation of this edict was enforced only in exceptional cases such as occurred when one had dealings with government officials.

When I reached my eighth year, my father was notified to appear with his male children before the *Isborzik*, the Jewish officer who had supervision over Jewish vital statistics, including births, marriages, divorces, and deaths, and the issuance of traveling passports and other such documents. The local *Isborzik* at that time was named Eliezer Leib Lapin. Although I never heard him speaking the Russian language I presume he had some knowledge of it. He was always well dressed; he wore a black frock coat that hung down merely to his knees in contrast to the long capotes worn generally in town; his vest was cut out at the throat, and through the opening was seen a white collar and a broad cravat that covered his chest. His beard was always neatly trimmed and parted in the middle. He seldom mixed in community affairs and attended religious services only three times a week: Mondays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. It is not clear in my mind whether he was appointed to his position because of his neat appearance or whether his tonsorial perfection followed his appointment to the job.

He lived across the street from the synagogue in a handsome house consisting of two wings: one wing was reserved for his family and the other for official business. Lapin seldom attended personally to his official duties. He left them to a clerk named Hoffman, a young man from the Ukraine.

Before we entered the office, my father took off his hat and my cap, for above the threshhold of the office hung a huge black eagle with wings spread over one-half of the veranda—the symbol of Czarist authority. Inside the office hung a large portrait of Alexander III, Czar of Russia. His very face inspired fear in the heart of a Jew. Mr. Hoffman began his interrogation in the Russian language, but noting that my father could not express himself well in Russian, he shifted to Yiddish. My father gave him my name and the date and place of my birth. Mr. Hoffman went into a back room and soon returned, saying that he could find no trace of such a name in the official records.

In order to understand why names were often not registered with the Russian officials, one has to recall that during the reign of the liberal Alexander II, a decree of universal military service was issued. This edict was promulgated with the best of intentions. It did not discriminate between rich and poor. Exemptions were given only in cases in which the parents had only one son or the family was directly dependent upon the sons for its support.

But in the execution of this royal decree, the government authorities did not carry out the expressed intent of this edict; those who could buy their release for money had no trouble evading military service. Army service for Jews was associated with great hardship and brutality. Many young Jewish men, in order to escape the miseries of military service, mutilated themselves to ensure their rejection. In my practice as a physician, I have come across Russians and Lithuanians minus fingers, minus eyes, and with other self-inflicted deformities, which afflictions, I have learned upon inquiry, were incurred intentionally in order to escape Russian military service.

My parents, like many others, tried to keep the birth of their boys secret for the reasons stated. These unregistered boys were known as *malochim* (angels). They lived, and yet for government purposes, they did not exist. The officials of the cruel Alexander III got wind of this deception and issued strict orders forcing those who had sons less than twenty-five years of age to present them at once in the registration office.

It was during this visit to the *Isborzik* that I learned that my last name was Gordon. This raised a number of questions in my mind, the answers to most of which I elicited in the years that followed.

My father was in the habit of taking me on his lap in his hours of leisure and telling me stories of his life. On one of these occasions, he narrated the history of my surname, Gordon.

Three generations previously, his great-grandfather, an innkeeper named Jacob, lived in a village known as Gordomy, about five Russian miles from Neustadt; there were in this village about ten Jewish families for whom he reserved one room in his inn for religious services. According to my father, Jacob was beloved by Jews and Gentiles for his piety and charity. All turned to him for advice and guidance.

In his later years he turned over the management of the inn to his wife, Hannah, and his daughter, Deborah, and devoted all of his time to the study of the Law and the teaching of the *Torah* to his three sons—which task was incumbent on a Jewish father. The Biblical expression, "and Jacob was a plain (perfect) man dwelling in the tents" might have well applied to this Jacob.

One Saturday morning after services, while the family sat around the dinner table enjoying the good dishes prepared on Friday and left in the hot oven for the Sabbath, and while Jacob was singing the traditional *zemirot* with his three sons, Petrus, the "Sabbath *Goi*," brought in a letter which had been left by the postman. Petrus had some knowledge of the Russian language. He was asked to open the letter and to read it. The letter contained a copy of the edict forcing all Jews to adopt family names.

In those days it was difficult for a Jew to discard the ancient custom of naming his sons after his deceased forefathers. The adoption of a family name was considered a gentile practice, but obviously nothing could be done about it (*dina dimalchuta dina*; "The law of the land is the law of the Jew"). That day Jacob and his three sons pondered over the selection of a family name that would not violate Jewish tradition.

The problem was finally solved by the youngest son, my grandfather, Moshe, who suggested the adoption of the name "Gordomy," after the name of their village. He cited precedence for such a change in the Bible: The prophet Samuel was known as the Ramashite, and the prophet Elijah was known as the Tishibite, after the names of the towns in which they lived. Thus the name "Gordomy" became the family name. How "Gordomy" evolved into Gordon will be explained later.

To the credit of the Russian authorities, it should be stated that complete liberty was given to the Jews in the selection of their family names, and thus each family selected the name it liked best. When Dr. Solomon Mandelkern visited me in Philadelphia with his Concordance, he told me that he well remembered the time when the

ukase came forcing the adoption of a surname. It arrived on a holiday, and there were *mandlen* (almonds) on the table; hence his father's choice. The names, Diamond, Gold, Silver, Stein, etc., were adopted by the Jews themselves. In Austria, however, the Jews had no right to select unapproved names. A list of names was submitted to them, including some very offensive ones, such as Eselkopf, Rundskopf, Ochsenschwanz, Lumpe, Fresser, Schnapser, Groberklotz, and Wantz.

The changing of surnames in the United States nowadays is of relatively common occurrence. All one has to do is to apply to a judge and give good reason for such a change. Many such changes in names are made by immigrants or their descendants who dislike their foreign-sounding names. But among Jews of former generations such changes were not so easy. The changes of Abram to Abraham, Sarai to Sarah and Jacob to Israel in the Book of Genesis were made for ethical reasons, and had significant meanings.

The change of Gordomy to Gordon evolved in this manner: In the latter part of the eighteenth century there lived an English nobleman in London named Lord George Gordon (1751–1792), son of the third Duke of Gordon. He accepted the Jewish faith despite much opposition from his family and contrary to the advice of the Chief Rabbi of England, David Schiff (Rabbi Tebele). He was received into the covenant of Israel by Rabbi Jacob of Birmingham.

In order to escape the public eye while learning the ins and outs of his new religion, he isolated himself for a period of a year or so in an Orthodox Jewish house at Newgate, where he learned the Jewish lore from the original texts, and lived a pious Hebrew life. When he emerged from his isolation he had a long beard and earlocks and was hardly recognizable. He steadfastly conformed to all regulations concerning kosher diet. He engaged in prayer three times a day wrapped in his *tallit* and *tephilin* and observed the Sabbath day with Pentateuchal strictness.

It was customary in those days for pious Jews to travel abroad, in order to see with their own eyes the actual living conditions of their brethren in the Diaspora, so Lord Gordon traveled to the lands where most of his new co-religionists dwelled. He visited the city of Vilna, known as the Jerusalem of Lithuania, and there he became known as the *Ger Tseddek* (the Righteous Proselyte). His name quickly became a byword in the Jewish world. Parents came to use his name when they blessed their sons, and many families adopted his name as a

surname. It was thus that my grandfather changed Gordomy to Gordon.

Of Jacob's three sons, my grandfather was by far the most gifted as a Talmudic student. By the time he had gone through the ceremony of *Bar Mitzvah* (confirmation of males at the age of thirteen) he was able to read Talmudic texts and their commentaries without assistance, and he knew several tractates of the Talmud verbatim. After this event, so important in the lives of all male Jews, my great-grandfather, who was his teacher, sent him to Neustadt, which at that period was well known for its Talmudic scholars and where the celebrated Rabbi Abraham (the Pious) a brother of the *gaon*, Elijah of Vilna, was the spiritual leader. Ambitious youths from neighboring communities were attracted by this intellectual giant, and during his five years of study in Neustadt, my grandfather attracted much attention for his learning and piety.

At the prescribed age of eighteen years, he married Sarah, the daughter of Benjamin, the *sofer* (scribe). Benjamin, whose name I have the honor to bear, was widely known for the fine quality of his penmanship. His written scrolls were famous for their artistic beauty and accuracy. Sarah, my grandmother, was thrifty and industrious—the type of woman who is so well described in the thirty-first chapter of the Book of Proverbs. Soon after her marriage, she made arrangements for her learned husband to continue his studies, and proudly and willingly undertook the manifold responsibilities of the house and family—an arrangement she carried out as long as he lived.

Sarah eked out a living by carrying on trade with the farmers across the frontier. From Monday to Thursday inclusive, she left her home early in the morning and did not return from her labors until evening. On Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, she worked like a Trojan attending to her domestic duties. Unfortunately, my grandfather died when he was only forty years of age, and although my grandmother still continued her business, his death had a terrible effect upon her morale. She lost all of her ambition and her business gradually declined.

One Thursday evening, five years after he died, she failed to return home. The next day she was found dead in the woods on the Prussian side of the frontier, robbed of her belongings. The coroner's inquest revealed that she had been murdered. A few days after her funeral, the police arrested one of her customers as a suspect, after it was reported that he had tried to sell certain articles which were identified as belonging to her. When the police searched the prisoner's

house, they discovered more incriminating evidence. My father, who was about thirteen years of age, was sent for to identify the goods. While in the prisoner's house he called the attention of the police to a package wrapped in oilcloth under a table. Sure enough, when the package was unwrapped, my grandmother's purse, containing five hundred German dollars and other personal belongings, was found. After a trial which lasted for three days, the alleged murderer was found guilty, and, according to the German law, was decapitated.

The five hundred German dollars which were accidentally found in my grandmother's purse did not last long. Relatives, after consideration, decided to distribute the younger children among themselves and to send my father to the *yeshivah* (Talmudic academy) of Taurigan, which was located seven Russian miles from Neustadt. The decision to send my father to a *yeshivah* was taken in order to rescue him from the "catchers" who were constantly searching for orphans and children of poor families for the purpose of making up the shortages in the yearly military quota caused by exempting the sons of the rich. The catchers, as a rule, hesitated to kidnap students of the *yeshivah* in order not to outrage public opinion.

The Jews themselves were not free from all blame in this dishonest drafting racket. As intimated previously, according to the official army regulations, when a family had only one son, when the family was directly dependent upon the children for support, or when the mother was a widow, the children were automatically exempted from service. Many of the Jewish officials who represented the Czar's government, however, did not adhere to these rules. Conscription was a lucrative business to them. The children of those who could pay a large enough bribe were exempted from service, and to make up the quota, the poor, the helpless, and the orphans who had no one to protect them were seized upon.

Jewish history contains many pages written with tears and blood, but none are more pathetic than those dealing with the period when children of tender years were forcibly torn away from the arms of their parents and sent off to the army. As often was the case, when the parents resisted, they were beaten and left unconscious or even dead. Jewish mothers who were robbed of their children by the Egyptian taskmasters or by the Spanish priests had at least the sad comfort of knowing that their little ones were spared long torture by quick death or baptism. But the bereaved parents of the Russian Jews did not have even this meager comfort. Their boys were spirited away to the frozen wastelands of far Siberia, or to the steppes of the Cau-

casus, where they were given over to brutal peasants or to savage Cossacks. There they were eventually trained to be soldiers. Their mothers and loved ones never saw them again. The length of military service was twenty-five years.

The captured boy, after being enslaved in the far regions of Russia, was handed over to an "elder" (*diadko*; an experienced soldier who drilled the recruits in groups of ten) when he reached the age of eighteen. The *diadko* had his pupils completely at his mercy. There was no appeal or redress. Any complaint against a superior, no matter how justified, meant twenty-five lashes at the whipping post. For the miserable recruit, the entire time of service was one long, desolate period of hunger, deprivation, and beatings.

Many of the Jewish recruits were converted to the Greek Orthodox church, and, after their period of service, remained permanently in the territory to which they had been taken and adhered to their new religion. The older boys, who would not yield to conversion, were whipped—at times to death—and not infrequently drowned.

When the Crimean War (1853–56) broke out, and Russia needed a large army to send to the front, an ukase was issued to the effect that all unmarried men must serve as soldiers. To defend their children against this edict, parents hit upon the device of marrying off their children while young. This period was known among Jews as "the Terror." Young boys of eight or ten years of age were married to girls of the same age. Consequently the communities were put on the spot, for they were not able to fill their quota of conscripts. Then came an imperial edict which permitted boys from eight to ten years old to be drafted into the army whether married or single. They were "trained" in the manner described until they reached the age of eighteen, after which they were mustered into the regular army.

The "catchers," in their long coats and skullcaps, cut short their satanic attacks during the High Holidays; but as soon as *Yom Kippur* was over they returned to their grim trade. One of them followed my father from the synagogue on the last evening of *Sukkot*. He called him by name and tried to talk to him; but my father had been forewarned. The boy rushed breathlessly to the home of his uncle, where he was secreted in the attic for three days. On the fourth day he was shipped away to the *yeshivah*.

At the *yeshivah* it was customary to assign students to various homes for the different days of the week. Every day, each student ate at a different home. Thus the term "eating days" originated. Frequently the roster of Jews who could or would take a student for a

day fell short of the needed number, and at times the housewife of a scheduled house became sick. Then the student had to go without food for that day. Adequate shelter was seldom provided for the poor students. They were usually given straw mattresses, or rather large bags filled with straw, which were placed on the floor of the *stubel* (a room annexed to the House of Study).

At the end of one year at Taurigan, when my father was fourteen years old, he made up his mind to go to Vilna, a city then famous for its Talmudic scholarship. He was anxious to enter the famous *yeshivah* known as Reb Mailes' *klaus*, which was located about sixty miles from Taurigan. Father had only one ruble (about fifty cents) to his name which he had saved from the meager spending money sent to him by his relatives in Neustadt, and enough dry food to last about a week, which was supplied in a bag by generous friends from Taurigan. It was with such equipment that, one Sunday morning after Passover, he started out on foot on the long journey to Vilna.

One can just imagine the difficulties in store for a penniless boy who was ignorant of the Russian language and who could not even follow road maps, attempting to travel such a long journey through strange villages and on roads which nowadays would hardly be called cowpaths. He wandered around for about three weeks before he reached his destination, muttering one word—"Vilna"—at every cross-road. He once described the trip to me by quoting Jacob in the Book of Genesis: (31:4) "Thus I was: in the day the drought consumed me and the frost by night."

His happiness was boundless when his long, tortuous course took him to the city of Vilna, and especially when he was admitted to the academy. He attended the academy for a period of five years, during which time, he supported himself mainly by giving Hebrew lessons to beginners for whatever remuneration the parents of his pupils cared to give.

My father never failed to tell his class the following story when he reached the first verse of the eleventh chapter of Ecclesiastes—"Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find it after many days":

One warm morning on the aforementioned journey, when he was about halfway to Vilna, he heard a faint voice mumbling across the road. He crossed over and to his surprise saw a man lying in a ditch at the roadside. The man appeared very pale and emaciated. He was too weak to speak, and could only moan softly. To my father this man appeared to be in a dying condition. He tried to talk to him but

received no answer. At long last the poor soul made motions with his hand, touching one hand to his lip and displaying three fingers.

That year a famine was raging all over the country and multitudes of people literally died of starvation. My father interpreted his motions to mean that he was hungry and had not eaten for three days. Thereupon, my father took out a bottle of water and some food which he had in his bag and gave it to the man. Jonas (this later proved to be his name) revived somewhat after he drank the water. He then swallowed a few mouthfuls of the bread. My father soon discovered that Jonas could not understand either Yiddish or German. There was no point in remaining with him any longer, so my father left him some food and went on his way, lifting his hand as a parting sign. Jonas thereupon made the sign of the cross over his chest.

Many years passed and Father forgot about this incident. He left Vilna after five years of study to accept a position as teacher in the small town of Luknik, about twenty-five miles north of Neustadt. There he married a girl named Dinah, the daughter of a shopkeeper. She was a very devoted wife, and my father was happy for the first time after years of loneliness and struggle. Unfortunately this condition was not to last long.

After seven years of married life, his wife died, leaving him a widower with three children. As long as she lived she had taken excellent care of the family and the schoolroom; the room was kept spotless, and father was able to devote all of his attention to training his students. After she died, he had to attend to the young children—clean them, dress them, and feed them. He could only devote part of his time to his classes, and the condition of the classroom itself became shoddy. This soon became known to the parents of his pupils and he lost their patronage. Then real trouble confronted him, for he had no means of providing for his three motherless children.

At that time there lived in Luknik a prominent Jew named Rabbi Elijah Mordechai Shub who occupied the position of *shohet* (slaughterer of kosher animals). He was learned in Jewish lore and acted as rabbi in the absence of Rabbi Hillel, who was frequently bedridden. This Rabbi Elijah had a daughter named Sarah Beulah, who was well known for her modesty, benevolence, and piety. She knew my father, for he was a frequent visitor to her father's house where Talmudic problems were discussed.

Rabbi Elijah and his wife, Hindel (after whom my late sister Helen was named), offered to take the children into their house until my father could reestablish himself, but my father could not bring

himself to accept this most extraordinary and benevolent offer. He decided to return to Neustadt, his native town, where he had many close relatives. He was confident that there he would be able to form a *heder*.

When my father was about to leave the town of Luknik, Rabbi Elijah proposed the marriage of his daughter, Sarah Beulah, to him. He did not require much persuasion, as he had known the girl for years. As my father was anxious to return to his native town, he married Sarah after a short courtship. The dowry which he received was just enough to pay his expenses on the trip to Neustadt; he hired a wagon and set out on his journey right after the festival of *Hanukkah*.

It usually took two days to make the trip to Neustadt, but owing to a severe frost and a nine-inch snow, numerous stops were made at roadhouses to keep the children warm and to feed the horses. As the driver claimed to know the road well, the decision was made to continue the journey through the night.

When the frostbitten group was about ten miles from its destination, the driver lost his way in the massive snow and the wagon careened into a ditch where almost the entire height of the wagon was buried in snow. There were no houses to be seen, and calling for help was as futile as "crying in the wilderness." To let his wife and children remain in the snow meant leaving them to certain destruction. My father then decided to take a chance and crawl out from the ditch and try to find a farmhouse.

With great difficulty he dragged himself out of the ditch and then, sure enough, he heard dogs barking in the distance. He followed the sound of the barking, and as he came closer, he feared that the animals might attack him. Fortunately however, the barking awakened the proprietor of the farmhouse, and father was overjoyed to see the welcome light of a lantern emerging from a door. My father then began to call for help in German. The dogs suddenly quieted down and the light came close to him. He heard the voice of a man speaking to him in the Lithuanian language. My father, speaking broken Lithuanian, told him his troubles, whereupon the farmer asked him to follow him to his house.

There he was taken into a warm room and given warm drinks. The farmer awakened his sons, who hitched the horses to a wagon and proceeded to rescue Father's wife, the children, and the driver from the ditch. When they were brought into the farmhouse they were almost frozen to death. The warm room, hot drinks, and food soon revived them. After a night of comfortable repose in warm beds and

a good breakfast, they were ready to resume their journey to Neustadt in their vehicle, which had been pulled out of the ditch. But the farmer offered my father the use of his own wagon, which noble offer was not refused.

My father was overwhelmed with the generosity of this apparent stranger. The night's events reminded him of the legend, "*ish hasid hayah*" (contained in the legendary hymn which is sung on the Sabbath night), wherein angels come during the night to a poor man's house, build a palace for him, and fill it with treasure.

While personally escorting my father to the city, the farmer told him that he was the very same Jonas whom my father had saved from death and starvation some fourteen years before. This good farmer was in the habit of going to Neustadt every *mark* day to sell his farm products. While traveling he suggesed to my father that he buy his grain and cattle at the market price and sell them to the merhcants of Prussia. When my father told him that he had no funds with which to pay for the merchandise, Jonas replied that he could pay after the merchandise was sold. This explains how my father, who was never trained in business, became a grain dealer.

My mother quickly became acclimated in Neustadt. She became known for her hospitality and benevolence. One room in our house was constantly reserved for traveling scholars. Hardly a meal passed without one or two *orhim* (visitors) at the table. Many of them did not wait for any invitation. They came to our home as to their own. Our humble abode was especially the rendezvous of the *maggidim* (preachers) and *meshulahim* (emmissaries who collected funds for Talmudic academies and Palestine charities).

I vividly recall my father sitting up with them almost until the dawn, discussing certain Talmudic and secular matters around the table while my mother served tea and *kichlech* (cookies). When I was only six or seven years of age, I used to hide myself in some corner to listen to the interesting stories of these intellectual sojourners.

I was particularly eager to hear the interesting reports of the *meshulahim* who came from *Eretz Yisrael* (Palestine), a country which, although I had never visited it, was close to my heart. I knew its history and geography better than I knew those features of nearby villages. I knew that it extended from Dan in the north to Beersheba in the south. I could describe the route by which Abraham came to the promised land from Ur of the Chaldees, and Haran, where his family dwelled.

The *Yam Haggadol* (Mediterranean Sea) was better known to me than the Baltic Sea, and the Jordan was more important to my life than the Suste. Shechem or Nablus was connected in my mind with Joseph, who was sold by his brethren to the Ishmaelites, and Bethlehem was engraved in my memory both as the place where Abraham built an altar to God and for its connection with Ephros, where poor Rachel died in giving birth to Benjamin. I recall shedding many tears when my father told me the pathetic story of Rachel.

In other words, the places and things these Palestinian emissaries talked about were very real to me. If I were asked to state what facts were responsible for my great lifetime interest in the Zionist movement, I would say without reservation that, first, the Bible was responsible, and second, the *meshulahim*. Many years later, when I journeyed to Palestine, I did not need any Baedeker; the places were as familiar to me as if I had been there before.

My mother's charitable activities were largely restricted to her own household. No one ever was turned away hungry from our door. She had three stepchildren to care for, and when I and later my brothers and sisters were born, her chores greatly increased. She never made any distinction between her stepchildren and her own; in fact, I did not know that they were only my half-brother and sisters until I was twelve years old.

We were not rich, but my father's grain business afforded us a comfortable living. When he turned to teaching as his profession, we had to move from the marketplace to a different location in order to reduce the rent. Teaching, at best, afforded only a poor livelihood, and there was no reserve at all for unforseen eventualities such as sickness.

My mother, anticipating such eventualities, decided to open a small retail business, using the *sukkah* as a store. Among the articles she sold were flour, rice, potatoes, bread which she baked herself, beans, peas, milk, butter, cheese, and herring. My father, busy the whole day with his school, assisted her only in the evenings. He kept her books and attended to some purchasing.

It was a poor neighborhood; many of the customers were the wives of country peddlers whose husbands were away the whole week and returned home only on Friday. During the week they purchased their food on credit. Even if they could not settle their accounts at the end of the week, food could not be refused them, for my mother

always said, "How can one refuse food if you know children are hungry?"

I was about eight years old when my father decided to register me in the school of Reuben Yekels, a brother of the Rabbi of the town, but very different from him in every way. Reuben Yekels was a man of average height and was well proportioned; he had a short, trimmed beard and he wore a short sack coat—in contrast to the long capotes worn by other men of the community. He was considered the foremost Hebrew scholar of the town. His Hebrew letters were the envy of all, and they were carried around by their recipients and read with great interest by all who understood Hebrew.

He was extraordinarily skillful in the art of piecing together half-verses and fragments of verses out of the Bible in such a way as to produce a complete thought of his own. I am sure that he knew the entire Old Testament by heart. Moreover, he could speak, read, and write German well. His method of speaking was slow but most careful, and he always managed to find the right word at the right time. He did not care to mix in community affairs.

The older folks accused him of being too free in his ideas. The younger ones admired him for his knowledge and character. He was considered the aristocrat of the town and was respected by all the community for his integrity and scholarship. His best friend was a German Christian named Foltmann; both owned fruit groves which they cultivated themselves. During the summer, it was their custom to discuss philosophical problems under one of the trees in their groves.

He redeemed himself from the accusation of being an Epicurean by his daily attendance at the synagogue. On *Yom Kippur*, he spent the entire day on his feet and did not rest his weary body for even a minute. He was a lover of books and had a large library. He was interested primarily in Jewish classics, such as the works of Ibn Ezra, Maimonides, and Halevi. He was perhaps the only person in town intellectually equipped to thoroughly understand these masterpieces. *Haskalah* books did not interest him very much.

As a teacher he had only one fault: he was very sensitive and had a temper which he constantly strived to control. Sometimes, however, when he lost his temper, he gave vent to sarcastic remarks. He followed Mendelsohn's translation of the Bible and the *Biurim*, using the German language as the linguistic medium of teaching. In many cases this proved a drawback, for many of his students did not know enough German to understand the text.

I was the youngest student in his class, but I understood him well because he always explained the subject in a precise and simple manner. Eventually his students became fluent in two languages: Hebrew and German.

The weekly portion of the Pentateuch was read and translated in an entirely different light by my new teacher. To take one example: In the passage in which Abraham goes from Ur of the Chaldees to Canaan, the Hebrew words, "*Ur Casdim*" were rendered by Shlomele the Kitten as "the fiery oven," thus conveying the idea that Abraham passed through a fiery oven unscathed. It was Reuben Yekels who taught me that Ur was a city and Chaldea a country, and that the city was the birthplace of Abraham, the Patriarch.

I learned the geography of the Near East and Egypt in the book of Genesis. The Biblical chronology which hitherto had consisted of a meaningless compilation of names gave me now the first clue to the origin of the races of man. I learned from my new teacher that man was divided into three races: Semitic, Hamitic, and Japhetic, and that the Hebrew people originated from the same race as the Babylonians, Syrians, and Arabs.

When I read the passage, ". . . the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives whomsoever they chose" (Genesis 6:2), I asked my teacher to explain who were the sons of God, and was it customary for angels to have wives, and if so, were there non-Adamite men. I noticed that Reuben Yekels became very thoughtful and silent for a few minutes, after which he replied, "I cannot answer this question; as you grow older, Benjamin, you will have more questions which have no answer. Perhaps some day such problems may be solved." Such a reply, which really was no answer to my question, satisfied me and served to increase the high regard I had for my teacher. I took it for granted that no one is wise enough to answer all questions.

I recalled that at one time I had asked Shlomele a question about the creation of the world. This merely served to infuriate him, and he denounced me scathingly, calling me a heretic. After this verbal barrage, he gave me a thrashing with a leather strap, letting me know all the while that this was the answer that my question warranted. The punishment I received served to bury the question deep in the recesses of my mind. If he had answered, "I don't know," I would quickly have dismissed the entire problem from my thoughts, but his

action served to arouse a critical spirit of inquiry in my mind, and led to the raising of more pertinent questions.

Many of the ancient customs referred to in the Pentateuch, and which had hitherto meant absolutely nothing to me, were explained by my new teacher in the light of modern discoveries. I looked upon Abraham the Patriarch with great admiration as the discoverer of the one invisible God, in contrast to the belief in many gods held by the surrounding nations. My teacher dealt at length with the laws of other ancient peoples, and compared these codes with the Mosaic statutes and laws, impressing me with the ethical superiority of the Hebrew laws.

My new teacher did not attempt to teach Hebrew grammar *per se,* but he explained every word of the Bible according to grammatical rules. Occasionally he assigned a page of the *Talmud Leshon Ivri* or *Maslul* to the older boys for homework.

The books of Isaiah and the twelve Minor Prophets assumed a different character. He prohibited the use of the sing-song intonation with which these books were taught by other teachers. He taught us how to recite entire chapters by heart. Most boys had learned the Book of Psalms by heart, but the traditional tunes which they employed removed all meaning from these great works of literature. I recall that whenever I chanted the *Tillim* (Psalms) the meaning of the words was drowned by the traditional melody.

Reuben Yekels revealed in the prophets a great poetical and artistic beauty. He taught these works with the true spirit manifest in the words of the prophets. I still can recite chapters of Isaiah and the Minor Prophets by heart. His method of teaching the Book of Proverbs was similar to that of a father who takes his child on his lap and quietly tells him a story. The passage, "My son; hear the instruction of thy father and forsake not the laws of thy mother," remains permanently engraved on my memory.

Under the tutelage of this master, I read the Book of Job for the first time; for some reason, this book and those of Daniel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, were not so popular in the Hebrew schools of that period. To Reuben Yekels, the first book assumed a prominent place on the school roster. He manifested a great philosophical insight into Job. He stressed the importance of Eliphaz the Tamanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Namothite, the three friends of Job who came to console him in his grief. The Book of Job, as interpreted by

Reuben Yekels, led me to ponder over the destiny of man. Particularly when I came to Chapter XIV (verse 7), ideas not usually conceived by children of my age took hold of me:

> For there is hope of a tree,
> If it be cut down, that it will sprout again,
> And that the tender branch thereof will not cease.
> Though the root thereof wax old in the earth,
> And the stock thereof die in the ground;
> Yet through the scent of water it will bud,
> And put forth boughs like a plant.
> But man dieth, and lieth low;
> Yea, man perisheth, and where is he?
> As the waters fail from the sea,
> And the river is drained dry;
> So man lieth down and riseth not;
> Till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake.

The study of the Talmud was a minor subject on his roster. In two years I only covered one tractate, "The Middle Gate"; but even with this I gained a scientific approach to the subject which has remained with me until this day. I always endeavored to understand the text *pshat* (the plain meaning), without entering into the hair-splitting discussions engendered by the commentaries.

As I approached the age of twelve, my father, whose intention it was to send me to a Talmudic academy, became alarmed that I was not learning enough of the Talmud. He therefore took me away from my beloved teacher and placed me in his own school, where most of my time was spent on the Talmud. My father's method was entirely different from that of my former teacher. He adopted the hair-splitting method so popular at that period. At first my father and I frequently engaged in disputes. But when I saw that my arguments irritated him, I quickly submitted to his methods out of respect for him.

With about one year of intensive study under my father's guidance, I covered *Baba Kama* and *Baba Batra* (the First and Middle Gates) and half of the tractate, *Kedushin*. My younger brother Gershon and I were so far ahead of the rest of the Talmudic class that father formed a special class for the two of us so as not to hold us back. Gershon was especially gifted in Talmudic studies. His perception and memory were remarkable. He often reached independently conclusions which were found in *Marshao* and *Pnei Yehoshua*, the

two greatest hair-splitting commentators. Since, however, my brother was one and one-half years younger than I, he was not removed entirely from the regular school, and he continued his studies of the Bible and other subjects.

As I was pretty well drilled in Biblical studies, my father decided that I should skip the Bible Classes, and he advised me to study by myself in the resulting spare time. The best place for study was naturally the *bet hamidrash* (House of Study). I took up seriously the study of the tractate *Sanhedrin* (Synod), and as time passed, from the remarks made by older students in the House of Study who often tested my knowledge on the subject, I knew that I was making great progress.

I pursued my studies until late at night, long after all other students had left the House of Study. This was not because I was a *matmid* (an extremely diligent student) but because I feared that I might fail the entrance examination I planned to take in the *yeshivah* (talmudic academy). Since my early childhood, I had carried responsibilities squarely on my shoulders, and when I made up my mind to attain something I exerted the utmost effort. I always liked to study at night, when everything seemed so quiet and calm, and this still remains my custom.

My mother often called for me at the House of Study when I did not return home at a reasonable hour. She frequently found me alone, standing in front of a high and narrow desk (a "stander") with a candle in my right hand and a large moth-eaten volume in front of me, absorbed in a certain topic and like as not humming some sad tune. I can well remember how the sudden appearance of my mother emerging from the shadows into the candlelight used to startle me. Frequently I felt tears running down my cheeks, but I could not explain the cause of this.

Surely my studies were usually not concerned with sad topics. Often I was engrossed in dry legal matters such as for example, *"shor shenagah et hapara"* (the laws invoked when an ox gores a cow) or *"getz sheyyatsa mithat hapatish"* (the laws invoked when a spark of a hammer sets fire to a load of hay)—subjects which were nothing to cry about. My mother often asked what ailed me, but I did not know what to answer her.

Since I could write, I always tried to put things down on paper that I could not express orally, and sometimes I tried to do this in rhyme. In answer to my mother's question I wrote a number of

rhymes in Yiddish. The first stanza of one I later translated into English as follows:

Why do I weep,
Why do I cry?
It lies so deep
I know not why.

One time a friend of my father, passing by the *bet hamidrash* at midnight, glanced through a window and saw the shadow of a figure moving within. He entered at once, and when he saw me he became alarmed and asked what I was doing, all alone so late in the *bet hamidrash*. I could not answer him. He took me home. The next day the town was full of rumors that Sarah Beulah's Benjamin was observing *hzot* (a practice followed only by very pious people—perhaps just one out of a large community—mourning over the destruction of the temple and *galut Hashehinah* (the exile of Providence). My father's friend prophesied that some day I would be among the mythical "thirty-six" upon whose merits the very existence of the world was thought to depend.

It is amazing that even to my parents the idea did not occur that the strain of long hours of study might break down my health. My mother, who tended me with the greatest vigilance, noticed that I had lost my appetite and was getting thin and pale; but this was not unusual. I never had been robust in my childhood. But my father held to the old orthodox opinion that the study of the *Torah* naturally weakens a person.

The fear of failing the examination for the *yeshivah* drained all my energy, and after a few months of strenuous work, I became sick. The staff doctor decided that I suffered from neurasthenia and anemia produced by fear and lack of nutrition—a very accurate diagnosis. He gave strict orders that I should be kept in bed, and my pleas to allow me out of bed were not heeded. In a few weeks I had gathered enough strength to be permitted out of bed, and I promptly went back to my studies at the House of Study.

About that time an epidemic of smallpox broke out in the district. The first case in our town was that of a fellow student and dear friend of mine, nicknamed "the Laukever" after the name of his home town. I knew him well, and he often helped me solve various Talmudic problems, for he was older than I—about twenty-two years of age. There was no hospital in the entire district, and no one would take the chance of admitting a smallpox case into a private house.

The poor fellow therefore remained sick in the *stuebel* (a room adjoining the *bet hamidrash)*. There was no one to attend to him, for nobody dared take the risk of contracting the dread disease.

I made up my mind to call upon my friend, and, when my mother was busy with her customers, I stealthily went to him with the food she had prepared for me. A few weeks after, when the staff doctor pronounced him out of danger, I was taken with chills and a high temperature. The doctor, after examination, diagnosed my case as smallpox. My case was not a serious one; I remember that my mother tied my hands to prevent me from scratching my face. In those days, people whose faces were pitted with smallpox scars were very common. I always bless my mother for the loving care she gave me during those three weeks that I was bedridden with this disease.

I became restored to health about two weeks before my thirteenth birthday, and the time was short to prepare myself for *Bar Mitzvah* (confirmation). I was not worried about being unable to read the *Haftorah* (the weekly portion of the prophets); for this I needed no preparation. At the age of eight, I had been called up to the altar and had acquitted myself creditably in my first venture. I was more concerned with the confirmation speech which was to be delivered at my home in the presence of Talmudic scholars.

It was customary to divide the discourse into two parts: one dealing with the significance of the *Bar Mitzvah,* and the other making a display of Talmudic knowledge. The latter part worried me most, for the best speaker was considered the one who presented the most hair-splitting arguments on a particular legal topic.

For the theme of the first part of my speech, I chose the significance of the seventeenth day of Tamuz (my birthday)—the day when the Roman general Titus besieged Jerusalem from Mt. Scopus. I described how he penetrated the walls of the holy city, put the torch to the temple, made all the Hebrews captives, and dispersed them to the far corners of the earth. When I spoke of the terrible destruction, I could not hold back my tears. I then thanked my dear parents for the training which they had given me, and acknowledged my responsibility as a citizen in the House of Israel. My mother stopped serving refreshments, came to my rescue, and wiped my tears away.

I then proceeded with the second part of my discourse, which consisted of what might be called an exercise in mental gymnastics. It was based upon a passage of the tractate *Kedushin* concerning which I had found that two great Talmudic authorities had expressed views which superficially were diametrically opposed to each other.

I proceeded to reconcile these views. It took me almost an hour to demonstrate that both opinions were right, although, on the surface, they opposed each other. After I was through, the Rabbi of the town, Eliezer Selig Shapiro, asked me some questions, and my replies were satisfactory to him.

All congratulated my father and mother for having a son who showed such promise of becoming a great light in Israel. My mother literally cried for joy when she heard all these favorable comments. The only one who was silent was my dear old teacher, Reuben Yekels. He obviously felt sorry for me. When asked for his opinion on my dissertation, he kindly remarked that he could find no fault with anything that I had said but that he did not agree with the choice of subject given to me. He said he was of the opinion that the Bible was more important than hair-splitting Talmudic discussions, and that at least a part of my speech should have been on the Bible—a subject that had been entirely ignored. Deep in my soul, I felt the validity of this comment.

After confirmation I was impressed with the feeling that I suddenly had become a man and that it was high time that I was out on my own. Here in America, a thirteen-year-old boy is a mere child with practically no responsibilities, just about to enter high school. But in Lithuania in those days boys and girls matured early. I recalled how my father had gone out into the world at the age of thirteen. Soon after my *Bar Mitzvah,* I resolved to leave home, and my mother's pleas to drop this idea fell on deaf ears.

I was eager to travel to Vilna, to which city my father had walked at the age of thirteen to enter Reb Mailes' *klaus* and get his Talmudic education. To please my mother I consented to a Talmudic academy which was not so far away.

It seemed to be the custom of Jewish mothers to send their sons to their native towns to study so that they would be better cared for by their own people. Had not Rebecca, the mother of Jacob, sent him to the home of her brother Laban in Haran, where he married his two cousins? My mother's brother, and her uncles and aunts resided in Worno, a city about fifteen Russian miles from Neustadt and about eight miles from Luknick, where a sister lived. Worno was the site of a well-known *yeshivah.*

CHAPTER IV

Worno

There are abandoned corners of our Exile,
Remote, forgotten cities of Dispersion,
Where still in secret burns our ancient light,
Where God has saved a remnant from disaster.
There, brands that glimmer in a ruin of ashes,
Pent and unhappy souls maintain the vigil—
Spirits grown old beyond the count of time,
Grown old beyond the reckoning of days.
—"Matmid," by Chaim Nachman Bialik;
translated by Maurice Samuel

TWO days after the Feast of Tabernacles I set out on my own to Worno, a town fifteen miles from Neustadt and about half as large in size and population. There were no railroads in the entire district and, of course, automobiles were not in existence yet. Even the old-fashioned horse and cart carriers were not available, for Worno was located in an outlying district which had no commercial relations with Neustadt.

I was fortunate enough to obtain transportation with a couple and their son, who was about to be married in Worno. The parting was the most difficult event connected with the journey. Relatives and friends, many with tears in their eyes, gathered in our house to bid me farewell with as much to-do as if I were being sent away to Siberia by the Russian government for a political offense. Naturally enough, my mother and I were most affected. By departure time my mother had literally run out of tears and I was too busy and thrilled to cry.

As soon as the wagon left the town, Zundel and his wife Breine, the father and mother of the prospective groom, cordially befriended me and made me feel at home. They themselves appeared to be happy with the prospects of their son. This *bahur* (a term applied to young Talmudic students) was about to marry into a rich family. To encourage me, the proud parents told me that if I would develop as well as their son had, I, too, might get a rich girl and plenty of dowry. The groom, however, did not appear to be so very happy. He spoke very little to anyone.

Zundel began to celebrate the coming wedding as soon as we left Neustadt. His face appeared flushed; perhaps he had imbibed a drop too much and was tipsy. He sang all the *Yom Kippur* melodies with great gusto, and he almost finished the lively hymns of *Simhat Torah* (the holiday celebrating the joy of the *Torah)*. By early morning I discovered why the prospective groom was not in a talkative mood, for I overheard Zundel whispering to his son that he should not go under the *huppa* (the bridal canopy) until the dowry was deposited. The young man evidently rebelled against such mercenary tactics and appeared too forelorn to heed his father's advice. I do not know whether this matter was settled according to the father's terms or not.

The wedding party arrived in Worno Friday morning and went directly to the house of the bride. The customary time for the performance of the marriage ceremony in the small towns of Lithuania was Friday afternoon at about three o'clock. The usual location was the courtyard of the synagogue where the bridal canopy was held aloft on four poles held by four unmarried men. The groom was taken to the courtyard of the synagogue first. He marched through the streets behind the *klesmarin* (town orchestra) consisting of a fiddler, cymbalist, bass violist, and a tambourine player. The groom was flanked by his parents and supported in the rear by a procession of friends. When he reached the court of the synagogue he took his place under the canopy.

This was the first wedding ceremony I had ever observed at first hand, and if I were asked to decide which half-hour is the longest in a man's life, I would answer without any hesitation that it is the time that the groom stands in his high hat under the canopy waiting for the bride to arrive. Everyone stared at the poor fellow and he had no comfortable place upon which to fix his gaze. I was sorry for him, and I promised myself to find a way to escape this embarrassment when my time should come. There is a rabbinic saying: "Matching is more difficult among the Israelites than was the splitting of the Red Sea." This perhaps refers, among other things, to the predicament of the groom as he stands under the canopy waiting for his bride.

After a half-hour, the sound of music was heard from a distance, and soon a happy crowd of galloping youngsters appeared. There was no *heder* on Friday afternoon and children eagerly awaited such a joyous occasion. The eyes of the throng quickly turned away from the groom toward the sound of the music. The oncoming procession had as its nucleus the *kallah* (bride) attired in her bridal garb and veil.

When she was about twenty feet from the canopy the beadle announced, "Blessed are those that come!" and all eyes now turned upon her. She was placed at the left side of the groom, supported in the back by her sponsors. The groom put the ring on the index finger of her left hand, and the rabbi then recited the benediction over a cup of wine and offered it to the *kallah*. She lifted up her veil and took a few sips. Then the cup was handed to the groom and he helped himself.

The marriage contract was then read, and the ceremony came to an end as the groom smashed a glass with his foot. Following completion of the ceremony under the canopy, the band played *Hatan Kallah Mazal Tov*. The couple then paraded with music through the streets, accompanied by dancing women. The crowd followed the pair to the house of the bride, and then broke up to return to their own homes in order to usher in the Sabbath.

The *kallah* was then taken to a separate room, where her mother-in-law supervised the clipping of her hair and the installation of a wig in its place. By the time the ceremony was over, the first feast of Sabbath was to be celebrated. The entire Sabbath day was devoted to religious celebration. After morning services in the synagogue, friends were invited to the house of the bride to hear the groom deliver a discourse on a Talmudic subject.

The real wedding celebration began on Saturday evening with music and dances. Interspersed with the music and dancing, the *badchan* (jester) called attention to the tribulations awaiting the virtuous wives of Israel; this produced tears in the eyes of the bride and her friends.

I was informed on reliable authority that in a small town near Worno a generation back, a wedding ceremony had been performed in which two brides were married by mistake to the wrong grooms. Both weddings had been scheduled for the same Friday afternoon. One bride was the daughter of the richest man of the community, and he had secured a fine scholar for her. Neither this girl nor her parents had seen the scholar before the wedding, the match having been arranged for by *shadchanim* (marriage brokers). The other bride was the daughter of an old tailor, and he had obtained his apprentice for her. Both weddings were scheduled in the courtyard of the synagogue at about the same time. The rabbi was to go from one canopy to the other to perform the ritual ceremony for both couples. Both grooms were brought from their respective homes and

placed under the bridal canopies. Then the *klezmarim* (the orchestra) went to fetch the brides.

The tailor's daughter was ready before the rich man's daughter, as, in her poverty, she had little to detain her. She was taken first and placed under the canopy of the scholarly groom who was waiting for his bride. She was heavily veiled, and it never entered his mind nor that of the rabbi, that she was the wrong bride. The old tailor did not accompany his daughter to the *huppah* because he was sick. Gossip later was circulated to the effect that the old tailor well knew of the mistake but was delighted to see his youngest daughter marrying a Talmudic scholar.

The rabbi, who was entirely innocent, recited the marriage ritual and the groom placed the ring on the bride's finger. The rabbi then went to perform the ceremony of the rich man's daughter under the canopy where the apprentice tailor was waiting for his bride. The orchestra then played the customary *Hatan Kallah Mazal Tov,* and both couples were escorted to their respective homes by the orchestra and the crowds.

When the veil was removed from the tailor's daughter, the terrible mistake was discovered. The scholar and his family quickly realized what had happened, and the rich man of the community soon found out that instead of his having secured a scholarly son-in-law, his daughter had married a tailor. One family was concerned with the fact that their son would not get a large dowry; the other was unhappy because their daughter had not gotten the scholar for her husband. The rich man, after consultation with the groom's family, decided upon immediate divorces for both couples, and he offered a substantial sum of money to the young tailor and the girl he was supposed to marry. But another difficult problem arose. It happened that the groom who had married the tailor's daughter was a *Cohen*—a descendant of the priestly caste, who, according to the Old Testament, is not permitted to marry a divorcee.

To violate a regulation of the Old Testament was out of the question. The groom knew the law and that it could not be circumvented. He decided to resign himself to his fate. Furthermore, he found the girl he had married more attractive and sensible than his proposed bride. After a few weeks of honeymooning, his young wife advised him to continue his studies toward a rabbinical career and proved fully able to take care of herself. In two years he was ordained a rabbi and he secured an appointment in a neighboring town. Thus, the tailor's daughter became a *rebetzin* (a rabbi's wife).

As to the young tailor, it is reported that his father-in-law took him into his business, and he became a capable and successful business man.

The attributes of the Jewish maiden of Lithuania three generations ago are worthy of mention. She was pure, innocent, and compassionate and exhibited a very natural charm. She accepted her mother's complete supervision over her entire life without question, and the maternal training was imbedded in the innermost recesses of her soul. Being removed from the outer world, she remained naive and virtuous. She was trained primarily to be an efficient manager of the house. The duties of a wife and of a mother were secondary. She could never compete with her brothers in educational achievements, for all formal learning was usually denied to her and the *heder* was only open to males.

At times, when she was ambitious to know what was going on in the world, a private tutor was hired. In this case her education came to an end as soon as she was able to read. Even her authority over the house was subject to the approval of the males. When she became of marriageable age, she was not permitted to choose her own husband; this had to be done by her parents who "knew better."

Sabbath and holidays were the only days on which unmarried Jewish girls appeared on the street. On such occasions, they walked with their friends, wearing crisp, freshly ironed dresses. From my early boyhood I admired them as I saw them walking in pairs down the *Deutsche Gass* towards the Lazaroff Mansion, quietly talking to each other. Their gait was so graceful and natural. The heart of the Jewish maiden was rich in sentiment and love. She dreamt not of a husband possessing worldly wealth but of a man of great scholarly attainments and wise as a prophet.

When she was quite grown up and ready to become a bride, the "matchmaker" would begin paying visits. At such times, her father did most of the talking, while she lowered her eyes and blushed. When she married, she became a fine housekeeper, a devoted wife, a good mother, and frequently a good business woman.

Her brother's life was more worldly, although hardly more complete. The young Talmudic student felt sure that his scholarly achievements would soon be detected and appreciated by a well-to-do father who had a marriageable daughter. That he lacked worldly means was no obstacle, for it was customary for the father of the bride to keep his son-in-law and family for at least two years after marriage. After this, he usually set his son-in-law up in a business of

his own to which his wife could attend while her husband was free to pursue his studies.

One Sunday morning on the first day of the winter semester, I went to the House of Study to be enrolled as a student in the *yeshivah.* The *yeshivah* was housed in a building which consisted of two wings: one was a single large room which was also used in the morning and evening by the community as the House of Prayer. The other wing was the residence of Rabbi Benjamin Marvah.

On the eastern side of the House of Study was the Holy Ark and the altar. In the middle was the *almemer,* and on either side were seats for the daily worshippers. Near the right side of the door was a long table where the head of the *yeshivah* and the students studied. On the left side of the door was another table for private study and for the *havarot* (societies organized for the study of rabbinic literature). The walls of the west side of the great room were lined with shelves filled with leather-bound Talmudic and other sacred books.

I found the class already in session. The *rosh yeshivah* (the head of the academy) was sitting at the head of the table, surrounded by about sixteen young men, most of them about my age. One appeared several years older. I handed him a letter from the rabbi of my town; after reading it he introduced me to his class, *"Kinder, das is der Neustadter"* (Children, this is the one from Neustadt). From this time on, no one addressed me by my proper name except when I was called up to the Torah during Sabbath services, which did not happen often. I was always "the Neustadter."

The head of the academy motioned for me to take a seat at the table, after which he continued with his *shiur* (lesson of the day). This occupied about three hours. He began with the tractate *gittin* (dealing with the laws of divorce). After the *shiur* was completed, he assigned me to study a page in the tractate *makkot* (dealing with the laws governing injuries). He then examined me on this matter, and judging from the compliments he showered on me, I knew that I had acquitted myself creditably. I thus became for the first time a true *bahur* (a Talmudic student).

I cannot say that I was very favorably impressed with either the academy or the professor. I expected to find a dignified personage resembling the pictures of the sages which decorated the walls of our home. He appeared to me more like Shlomele the Kitten, although, to be sure, more learned. After a few days at his academy I learned that he utilized his great power to oppress those whom he did not like,

or whom he suspected questioned his wisdom. Once he had a grudge against a student, he carried it throughout the year.

Physically, he was not impressive. He was a middle-aged man, short and slender. I well recall that he constantly coughed. He possessed two bulging eyes. When he became infuriated he lost control of his ocular muscles, and his eyeballs rotated in opposite directions. At such times students trembled with fear and lowered their eyes as if to hide from the oncoming outburst. He possessed a yellow pointed beard and earlocks, and his pate exhibited a large bald spot which was covered with an old velvet skull-cap. The pointed beard below and the skullcap on top made his head look like a top. I seldom saw him smile or laugh.

In time, however, I learned how to deal with him. I refrained from asking him questions that would arouse him—particularly "catch" questions, which were guaranteed to enrage him.

It was his custom, when lunchtime arrived, to dismiss us with the words, "Let us stop here; it is time now to feed the body." The implication of this remark was clear. It was a grudging way of telling us that to preserve the worthwhile soul and mind, we had to feed our worthless bodies. At other times, he substituted, "Let us feed the horses, and then we will continue on our journey to learn the *Torah*." Is it any wonder, then, that we boys placed such little value on physical fitness and so much on the acquisition of knowledge?

On a few occasions the head of the academy gave way to unbridled temper. I well recall one fateful Thursday afternoon when the class was reading the *Mesillat Yesharim*, a book on religious ethics by Luzato; our teacher was in the act of emphasizing the importance of closing one's eyes while praying, explaining that with open eyes one cannot concentrate his thoughts properly on prayer. At that moment one of the boys blurted out that he had noticed that roosters always shut their eyes when they crow. This witticism, of course, was too much for the master. He fell upon the boy with the ferocity of a tiger and beat him unmercifully, all the while denouncing him as a *treifer bein* (infidel). The boy left the school that very day.

On another occason when the oldest and largest boy of the class contradicted him, the *rosh yeshivah* got up and struck him. This boy too wanted to leave the school but somehow he was persuaded to stay. I might add that this boy, who was called the "Salanter" after the name of his home town, was the son of a rich man whose tuition was as much as that of the rest of the class combined. The wealthy father wanted his son to get a *yeshivah* education which was not available

elsewhere in the vicinity. The "Salanter," however, never forgot his ignominious punishment and he vowed to avenge this insult. He waited for his chance, and it came on the day before *Yom Kippur.* On this day long lines of Jews went to the synagogue carrying wax candles in their hands for the *Minhah* services and to prepare themselves for the Day of Atonement—a day when even "fish in water tremble."

At the *polush* (vestibule) the wardens of the synagogue sat around long, narrow tables covered with white cloths. Upon these numerous collection plates for various charitable organizations were placed in which everyone passing deposited copper or silver coins. Even the Sabbath *goy* (the gentile who lights and puts out candles on the Sabbath day) had his plate there. After the townsmen settled their debts of the year with the secretary of the congregation and placed their offerings in the plates, they went into the *shul* (synagogue) for the *Minhah* service. The older and more pious Jews passed into a small side room where Azriel the *shamash* (beadle) administered the *malkot.* In this room, repenters stretched themselves out upon their stomachs on a straw mat and recited in a whispered voice the confessions of *ashamnu, bagadnu,* etc., while Azriel the beadle administered thirty-nine mild token lashes with a strap.

Young "Salanter" knew that the *rosh yeshivah* went in for this kind of piety. He waited until he had reclined face downward on the mat and closed his eyes to say the *viduy* (confession). "Salanter" then tiptoed into the *malkot* room and whispered to Azriel the beadle that the president of the *bet hammidrash* had commanded his immediate presence. He assured him that he would conscientiously perform his duties during his absence.

Young "Salanter" was more than diligent in the performance of his duties. He delivered each of the thirty-nine traditional lashes with vigor and gusto. The *rosh yeshivah* groaned with every stroke. When the last blow was delivered, "Salanter" turned over the strap to the returning beadle and quickly left the room.

The professor could hardly get up. The beadle had to help him arise. When he finally stood up, he gave the poor fellow a menacing look with his eyes almost popping out of their sockets. The beadle, of course, could not understand his customer's conduct. In the past, the teacher had always tipped him after this traditional duty, but this time he did not even speak to him. Unable to sit, the head of the academy stood almost bent in two throughout the *Yom Kippur*

service. By the next day the story of "Salanter" had become legendary among the *bahurim.*

"Salanter," needless to say, left the *yeshivah* for good. I might add that the professor had learned not to use the strap so freely—at least upon his larger students.

I cannot say that my sojourn in Worno was a pleasant one. I was terribly homesick. Often in my dreams I had tender visions of my native town: the little streets, our home, my father with his long beard, deep blue eyes, and bent back, and my mother with her long, pale, melancholy face. I saw my brother Gershon, trying to make peace between my sister, Hinde Gittel, and my brother, Mordechai, and the younger children quarreling over some toys or cookies.

One such dream, more nightmarish than usual, left me very much disturbed. In this dream, my baby brother, Abraham Isaac, had died. The next day I could neither eat nor control my tears. I went to the rabbi's house across the way from the House of Study, and he interpreted the dream as a good omen. He stated that the dream meant that my brother would live to a ripe old age. Nonetheless I could not rest. (On this occasion, my dream proved to be all too true.)

I frequently ran to Bentch's Inn, where the carrier from Neustadt to Worno used to stop on his infrequent trips. I waited for the driver impatiently. Even if he had no letter for me, his face very often pacified me. Looking at him, I saw my town. Moshe Velve was a good Jew with a soft heart. He always meant well, but he was very busy when he came to Worno. He had many messages for shopkeepers, traders, and relations. He carried more letters than the government post. Many letters and parcels were undoubetedly lost in transit, and I always had my doubts when he said that he had nothing for me. He never tarried at one place very long. From the yard where he fed his horses, he rushed to the inn, and from there to various shops with which he had business.

Sometimes I used to stand for hours waiting for him—long after everyone else had departed. Often, by the time he arrived, I had to bite my lips to hold back the tears. It was most difficult to articulate the words: "Reb Moshe Velve, is there a letter from my father?" Most of the time, to my dismay, not having anything for me he would absentmindedly scarcely answer me—like as not he would go out into the street with somebody else and become absorbed in a conversation. Sometimes as he was leaving he would reply over his shoulder: "There is not one," and with broken spirit I would return to my lodging. I

consoled myself with the fact that I knew that my dear parents had not forgotten me. (They were often too depressed to write.)

One lucky day, Moshe Velve handed me a letter which read: "My dear boy: Be good and learn with diligence. I send you a cheese, a pound of sugar, and some cookies. We all are well. Your mother, Sarah Beulah." That day, Moshe Velve was the best man in the world. If I had not been ashamed, I would have kissed him. I went back to my lodgings happy but still wishing that I was at home.

I lived for a time with my mother's cousin, Elie, who was a Hebrew teacher of a higher class. He was a middle-aged man and had no children of his own. His wife, Chayye Leah, who was a few years younger, was very kind to me. Her face spelled goodness itself. She insisted that I stay with them for meals also. On the other hand, her husband, who was my relative, was a miserly man. It was reputed that he was rich and that he lent money on high interest, but I quickly observed that he was not inclined to contribute much to the house. His good wife had to fight with him for every kopek. Finally, she got tired of the struggle and opened a dressmaking shop where she made a comfortable living without her husband's assistance.

Next to my mother, I soon liked Chayye Leah the best. When I left in the morning for the House of Study she saw to it that I was well wrapped, and if I did not come in time for lunch she came for me herself. Her husband was always cold to me. At times he would not even talk to me. Occasionally, on Friday nights, he inquired about my studies and tested my knowledge of the Talmud. I did not feel at home with my mother's cousin.

When my other relatives found out that I was not so well pleased with him they insisted that I stop with them at least for meals. I gladly accepted their kind invitation. To spare Chayye Leah's feelings I agreed to stay with her for at least two days every week, but I always judiciously avoided her cruel husband. My mother's other cousin, Raphael Joseph, was a kindly, big-hearted man with a large family. His house was more congenial and felt more like home to me.

One day each week I was invited to stay with another relative named Shatz, who was considered one of the most prominent citizens of the town—a man of great Talmudic attainments. His son, Berl, was my age and I became very chummy with him. Despite his father's intensive efforts, he did not take to Talmudic studies. His father taught him the Bible and its grammar, but the boy rebelled against the Talmud and never became proficient in this study.

From his earliest days, Berl exhibited great interest in drawing with pencil or chalk. He skillfully copied religious pictures on the walls of his home and dexterously turned out portraits of certain rabbis. He sketched figures of animals and objects with precision. Late one night, when his parents were asleep, he drew several pictures which his parents later considered highly sacrilegious. His father got up early to go to the synagogue and saw Berl sleeping over his drawings. After taking him to bed, he noticed the pictures that he had drawn and his heart sank. Trembling, he awakened his wife and told her about it. Both decided that this act could not pass unpunished. They went to his bed, lifted up his blankets and gave him a thrashing which the boy never forgot. Soon after this incident, the boy disappeared from home, and all efforts on the part of his parents to find him were of no avail.

Fifteen years later, someone reading the Hebrew Daily, *Hamelitz*, noticed an article to the effect that a certain Boris Shatz of Lithuania had been promoted to the professorship of graphic arts at the University of Sophia, Bulgaria. Several years later he moved to Jerusalem, where he organized the Bezalel school of arts and crafts. In 1909 when I visited that school, he received me very courteously and we had a long conversation concerning that episode in Worno. I saw him in America several years later. He never spoke about his parents.

My first experiences as a *yeshivah bahur* were anything but favorable. The entire day and much of the night were devoted to study. Exercise of any kind was considered incompatible with the study of the Torah. Even such innocent exercises as skating, ball-playing, or running were considered highly improper for a *bahur*.

A boy eleven to thirteen years old was considered a man. The standard for manhood was not the age of a person but his ability to pass the examination for the *yeshivah*. The average boy who entered the *yeshivah* was poorly nourished from childhood. He came from a poor family and was not physically equipped to endure the additional hardship that awaited him from the "eating days" (a system which forced the *bahur* to receive his board from a different Jew each day of the week). Many of the benefactors who obligated themselves to feed one young Talmudic student one day each week did not have enough food for their own families. The food usually dispensed consisted of black bread, potatoes, and barley soup, with an occasional egg and piece of pickled herring. White bread, meat, and fish were served only on the Sabbath day. As if such a bill of fare was not bad enough for a half-grown youngster, some students lacked one or two "eating day" arrangements altogether, and walked around the House

of Study starved, pale, and sickly looking. They did not even complain, for the maxim: "This is the way to acquire the Torah: eat bread with salt, drink water moderately, sleep on the ground, and lead a life of privation, but toil through the study of the law" (Aboth 6:4), was deeply rooted in their souls.

I have seen boys faint during the *shiur* (lesson) to the surprise of the *rosh yeshivah*, who could not account for such an occurrence. It never entered his mind that lack of exercise, improper food, poor ventilation, and not enough sleep were the primary etiological agents behind these spells.

At least some of this gross lack of attention was corrected at the end of my first term. A student-aid society was organized into which each student contributed fifteen kopeks a week for the benefit of those who were short in "eating days" or in especially poor health. The money was deposited with the rabbi, Benjamin Marvah, who lived across from the House of Study. I was named president of this *Hevrah Tomche Yeshivah*. This was my first public office, and as I look back through the years, perhaps the most benevolent one. The weekly receipts amounted to two and a quarter roubles. There was yet another source of income which we students received. This was the small change received for praying or reciting psalms for the sick. Both of these sources of revenue brought in a total of about five roubles a week, and in those days this was considered quite a substantial sum.

Sabbath was the great day when we boys threw off all our worries and responsibilities. The celebration began Friday afternoon, when, without ceremony, we closed the ponderous volumes of the Talmud and freed ourselves from the maze of superfluous and petty restrictions which marred our daily life. Even the voice of the eternal *matmid* was silent. We went to the bathhouse and changed our clothes. Some spent the afternoon writing letters home, while others gathered in a corner of the House of Study and listened to reminiscences or news from various towns.

I recall scene after scene of the spiritual atmosphere that obtained there, and the sublime serenity with which the Sabbath was observed. The meals, which differed so markedly from those of the rest of the week, were endowed with spiritual meaning lent to them by the beautiful mystic table songs with which they were profusely interspersed. Sabbath was the only day that the student could choose his own reading matter. He usually devoted his time to the Bible, "Ethics of the Fathers" and poetry, instead of to the dry casuistry of the Talmud.

On Friday night, every Jew was a king who threw off the worries of yesterday and the prospective chagrins of tomorrow. The basic struggle for survival lost its primacy in his life. Each Jew donned his clean Sabbath garments. Every nook and cranny of his home was bright and clean. The Jewish mother, who had been working in the kitchen and attending to the needs of the house all week long, was as free as a queen on Friday night, for everything for the Sabbath was prepared during the six working days. The table was set with a snow-white cloth; Sabbath candles illuminated even the dark corners of the dining room. In addition to the *yeshivah bahur*, there was usually an out-of-town guest at the table. Sabbath without such a guest was like a wedding without a bride, and this was especially true among the wealthier classes, and particularly when the head of the house had at his table a scholarly son-in-law who was well versed in Biblical and Talmudic texts. Such a scholarly son-in-law was Rabbi Bendet, at whose house I was a guest every Sabbath.

CHAPTER V

The Dawn of a New World

"Be as careful of the books you read as of the company you keep, for your habits and character will be as much influenced by the former as by the latter."

—Baxton Hood

"KNOWLEDGE", said Macaulay, "advances by steps not by leaps." My first step towards acquiring a general knowledge was in the house of young Rabbi Bendet.

Rabbi Bendet was the first to offer me fruit from the tree of secular knowledge, as it were. He was primarily responsible for arousing in me the concept that there was another world about me of which, heretofore, I had been oblivious. I previously had known only of a Jewish civilization beginning with Abraham and ending with the last Talmudic authority. He opened up vistas before my mental vision which I had never even dreamt about. In his book collection, which he kept in a massive chest, were not only a large number of rabbinical works but quite a few *Haskalah* (enlightenment) books. The works of Rappaport, Erter, Levinsohn, the Lebensohns, M. A. Ginsburg, Luzato, Mapu, Shulman, Y. L. Gordon, and others were there.

When I had a few spare moments it was my custom to go to this hidden treasure and open the chest from atop the sofa. The nature of each book I brought down was revealed to me by a careful reading of the introduction, from which I derived much information about the book and the author's motives in writing it. Most of these volumes represented the intellectual evolution of Russian Jewry from rigid traditionalism to conscious nationalism through *Haskalah*. Reading at least the introduction of a book became second nature with me. If I cannot boast that I have read every book in my personal library I can at least say that I know something about every book in it, for, since these distant days, whenever I acquire a new book, I read the

preface and introduction at once and reserve the reading of the entire work for an opportune time.

After the first Sabbath meal with Rabbi Bendet, I spent several hours in his study, and this became a customary procedure with me. I studied the volumes in his library with painstaking zeal. After a time the contents of the pages of these books became as real to me as life itself. I learned the poems of the Lebensohns, father and son, by heart. The poem, *"Hahemlah,"* by the elder and, "The Harp of the Daughters of Zion," by the younger Lebensohn made a great impression on me. M. Z. Mannes', "Where Art Thou, O Sacred Land towards which my Soul wouldst Repair?" deeply touched me. I constantly hummed *"Masat Nafshi"* (My Ideal), the melody of which was composed by the cantor of Worno when I was absorbed in my Talmudic studies.

To this day, when I am depressed I still recite these poems or sing these songs that were so dear to my childhood. I am not always successful in bringing back the enthusiasm of the days of youth. What has passed belongs to eternity. Many years have elapsed since I have read these books. My tastes and interests have changed many times since I was a freshman in the Worno *yeshivah*, but nothing I have read since has left such an indelible impression on my mind as these comparatively few books I read in the study of Rabbi Bendet. I may assert without any hesitation that these works comprised an unbreakable link which was forged between my father's intellectual world and my own.

The comparatively small library that my father possessed became the nucleus of my own collection of Hebrew and Jewish works. I often wonder whether there will exist a similar relationship between my library and those of my sons as existed between their grandfather's and mine. Will their books form an additional link in the literary chain of my people or will the procession stop abruptly?

I ascribe my lifelong adherence to the Zionist movement first to the influence of the Bible on my early life and home and secondly to the *Haskalah* books that I read during my two years in Worno. The works of Mapu particularly cleared the mist obscuring the horizon of the *galut* (exile) and aroused in me not only a yearning for Palestine but also an intense desire to learn the Hebrew language.

It awoke within me a deep-rooted protest against the *galut*—a feeling of revolt that was engendered by the longings of a starved soul. Mapu's alluring picture of a fantastic and almost legendary world so different from the world in which we lived created for me a second

universe: a universe of green fields and tall cedars of Lebanon, decorated copiously with the roses of Sharon. The inhabitants of this new world sat at peace with each other under the grapevines and fig trees in a land that literally flowed with milk and honey. My mind's eye conceived the pleasant picture of the reapers, the vintners, the pilgrims, and the loyal ranks of the young Judean soldiers. The exhortations of Isaiah and Amos became real to me.

Abraham Mapu (1808-1867) was probably the first in Eastern Europe to attract the attention of the new *Haskalah* generation to their ancient land. His romance, *Ahavat Zion* (The Love of Zion), and his *Ashmat Shomron* (The Transgression of Samaria) made multitudes of Jewish readers enthusiastic supporters of the rebirth of the land of their ancestors. *The Love of Zion* is a historical romance, the first novel written in classic Hebrew, and with the exception of Wesseley's *Songs of Glory* and Luzzatto's dramas, it was the first modern contribution to Hebrew belles-lettres. It deals with Jewish history in the days of Hezekiah, King of Judah, and Isaiah, the son of Amoz, during the golden age of Judea. Here the prophet appeals to the various factions of Israel and admonishes the boasting King of Babylonia to forsake his evil ways. The reader is carried back to the Judea of the prophets and kings, who are vividly brought to life by the author. All the splendor of the once great Judea, her priests, Levites, etc., pass in review. One can almost hear the murmurs of the Jordan, the growling of the lions and leopards of the Hermon, and the rustling of the cedars of Lebanon. Indeed, the very air is saturated with the balmy breezes of Sharon. Mapu's remarkable command of the language of the Bible, his vigorous style, and his splendid descriptions of nature were doubly enchanting to his readers because they had no access to any other literature. It awakened a longing in the hearts of the young generation for their historic land, a longing that had remained dormant in the nation for eighteen centuries.

Some years later, when I was studying in Kovno, I was taken to see the only son of Abraham Mapu, Dr. S. Mapu, who was a colonel in the Russian army. I had just partaken of a home-made cigarette which a fellow student had rolled for me from some improperly aged tobacco leaf and a piece of thin paper. I was cured of the tobacco habit early, for, after a few puffs on this makeshift smoking contrivance, I turned green and fainted. When a bucket of water failed to adequately revive me, I was taken to Dr. Mapu, who was the district army surgeon. While examining me, he asked whether I had read his father's works. When I told him that I had read *The Love of Zion*

and *The Transgression of Samaria,* he went into another room and returned with the *Ayit Tsavua* (The Painted Vulture) and asked me to read it. In the last work, the elder Mapu painted a picture of the hypocrites who wear religious garb. The doctor remarked that his father hated religious fanatics, and he warned me to keep away from them.

When I called upon him the second time, he took me to his father's library, which consisted of a widely diversified group of books in a number of languages. It appeared to me that the doctor had no access to the rabbinical, philosophical, and cabalistic works of his great father. Incidently, the term *Ayit Tsavua* became synonymous with hypocrite among the Hebraists.

Dr. Mapu left an indelible impression upon my mind. He helped change my early ambitions. Many years later, after I had returned from a police parade in Philadelphia, dressed in my police surgeon's uniform with the insignia of the rank of captain, I chanced to look into a mirror, and my reflection immediately brought the son of Abraham Mapu to mind.

What Mapu accomplished in his novels, Micha Joseph Lebensohn (1852-1888) fortified with his poetry. This poet can be considered the first genuine Hebrew poet of modern times.

Micha Joseph Lebensohn, as he was known to Hebrew readers, brought back King Solomon and the Shulamite, and in a most eloquent manner, depicted ancient Judea in poetic fantasy. In one of his Zion songs he exclaims, "Land of the Muses, perfection of Beauty! Wherein every stone is a book, every rock a graven tablet."

Kalman Schulman, in his romance, *Harisut Betir* (The Destruction of Betir), dealing with the epoch of Bar Kochba, also had a great influence on readers in kindling and maintaining enthusiasm for their historic land. The impression left by those men was strengthened by a host of others through the columns of the Hebrew weeklies: *Hamaggid, Hameliz, Hatsefirah,* and the monthly, *Hashahar.*

After the evening meal on Friday night, we usually returned to the House of Study and spent the evening in song. I copied some of the Songs of Zion from Rabbi Bendet's books. One of the students (the "Kratinger") who was also a member of the synagogue choir, had a fine alto voice. He picked melodies to fit the songs. We formed a choir of our own and rehearsed songs such as *"Zion! Zion! Ir Elohenu"* (Zion! Zion! The city of our Lord), *"Masat Nafshi"* (My

Ideal), the inspiring poetic song by Maneh, and the Yiddish song, *"Die Sand und die Stern"* (The Sand and the Stars) by Frug.

News of the new choral group soon leaked out in the community, and we were often invited in a body to sing in private homes and at various festivals.

Saturday afternoon was the only time when we *bahurim* could go out for long walks without any fear of unfavorable criticism, and we never missed taking advantage of this great privilege. I personally was delighted with our walks in the open air through the countryside. If the sights we saw were not equal to the ones described by Mapu in Palestine in his *Love of Zion,* they at least approached this perfection. These walks proved more than a diversion. They helped us recover from the effects of the unventilated and stifling atmosphere of the House of Study which we breathed during the week.

By the end of the semester the boys organized a Zion society, the first one in the entire district, which was named *Pirhei Zion* (The Buds of Zion). All children below the age of fifteen were eligible for membership—even babes in the crib could join—for there was no minimum age. In some cases, married couples with no children were admitted, for sentimental reasons. The girl members did not possess the right of suffrage and could not be elected to office. The office of president was limited to those who had passed thirteen years of age *(Bar Mitzvah)*. The primary duty of the officers was to see to it that the dues (five kopeks a week) were collected every Friday afternoon. When the boys were dismissed from *heder* the officers circulated about town to collect the five kopeks. One of the officials carried a book where names of the members were recorded and he made an "x" beside the name of each member who paid. Another boy carried a red handkerchief in which he kept the coins. This money for Palestine was then taken to the local rabbi, Benjamin Marvah, who forwarded it to the proper authorities.

It may be of interest here to enlarge upon the character and duties of the small community rabbi of Lithuania. He occupied a unique position. He not only ministered to the religious needs of his town but his influence also held sway over the civil life of the community. He was the judge, the teacher, the educator, and the executor of wills. To him was entrusted public and private funds. With him was deposited all monies involved in various transactions. A town without a rabbi was like a ship without a pilot. The masses looked upon him as truly superhuman. The aristocracy (the learned) respected him for his learning and wisdom in worldly affairs.

One of the greatest disappointments that could befall the citizens of a town was for their rabbi to be called away to a larger town. It was customary for the citizens of the new community to take him away in a decorated vehicle with a double span of horses. Often some of the rougher townsmen of the village he was leaving would actually cut the harness and engage in fist fights to try to prevent the departure of their leader.

If their rabbi died, the entire community was sunk in an abyss of mourning for thirty days, during which time all pleasures were banned. After thirty days, an intensive search for a new rabbi was immediately instituted. When a suitable candidate was found the villagers rejoiced. On the day of his installation the town assumed a holiday aspect. The day of his arrival was proclaimed a general holiday. Old and young donned their Sabbath garments in his honor, the wealthier and more learned citizens followed his wagon in gaily decorated carts, and drinks and refreshments were consumed in abundance.

I recall one occasion when a rabbi disappeared on the way to the town of his new appointment. It happened in the nearby town of Luknik where the old rabbi had died and a new one had been chosen from a neighboring town. One evening during the winter season, when the snow was deep and transportation was only possible on sleds, the emissaries sent to fetch the rabbi placed him on the sled and celebrated the occasion with much drinking. When the revelers arrived home they looked for the rabbi on the sled but he was not there. One can just imagine the ensuing excitement. A fresh crew of sober, able-bodied men was dispatched at once to search for the missing clergyman. They found him in the snow about five miles away from town, almost frozen to death. The tipsy driver had knocked him off the sled while racing along.

The Lithuanian rabbi was by nature a sober man with a most logical brain. He weighed in advance the pros and cons of his acts. He preferred dealing with men of intellect. He derived far greater pleasure from the study of *Hosen Mishpat* (dealing with property rights) than from the *Yoreh Deah* and *Shulchan Aruch* (dealing with religious practices). In other words, he enjoyed more the books dealing with the laws of property than those that describe the minutiae of ritual worship. His heart was filled with joy by the many and sundry commentaries of the Talmud, for the study of which he had to summon all of his resources of wit. He needed a clear and calm mind as well as an acute intelligence to interpret these texts. His manifold

duties were rendered for the pitiful sum of about five roubles a week, in addition to a small income from various other sources.

The spells of homesickness which marked the first part of the *Zman* (semester) gradually became less frequent. As the festival of *Purim* (the Feast of Esther) approached, I became better adapted to my new environment, and the anticipation of returning home soon also had a soothing effect on me. The Feast of Esther marked the end of the winter term at the *yeshivah,* and the beginning of Passover vacation. Some weeks before *Purim* the arbitrary rulings of the *rosh yeshivah* and his supervisor declined in severity. They treated themselves to the pleasure of an occasional smile. This modification of conduct was done perhaps with the object of holding on to the students for the following term.

The Feast of Esther is a joyous occasion. There are no ritual restrictions on this day. In fact, it is not considered a holiday at all but rather a festival not burdened with religious observances. It is the only festival of its kind in the Jewish calendar.

The Biblical Book of Esther, in which is recorded the story of *Purim,* does not exhibit any trace of true heroism. Mordechai was neither a prophet nor a hero. He was certainly not a Moses, an Ezra, or a Mattathias. Esther was not a Deborah. The story itself does not present any act of wisdom or self-reliance to which future generations could point with pride, in that their ancestors, through their bravery or wisdom, had saved their brethren from annihilation. Yet there are sufficient reasons why this festival has become so deeply rooted in the hearts of the Jewish people. Everyone is happy over the defeat of Haman and earnestly hopes that the Hamans of his generation will meet the same fate.

Purim is thus hardly celebrated because of a story that has long since transpired. This holiday takes its vigor from the fact that almost in every age and in every country there are Hamans who desire to destroy the Jewish nation with their familiar complaints: "There is a certain people scattered around and dispersed among the peoples of all the provinces of the kingdom, and their laws are diverse from those of every people." On *Purim* Jews hope that a resolute Mordechai will appear to help overcome the machinations of all the treacherous Hamans who seek to wipe them out.

The reading of the Book of Esther was always a hilarious occasion. We gathered around the long table at which we studied all through the year, and every time the hateful Haman was mentioned

by the reader of the *Megillah,* we made believe that he was under the table and we trampled vigorously upon him. We considered ourselves too old to use the traditional *Haman Dreier* (a noisemaker). This is the way that Jews throughout the diaspera have become accustomed to symbolically avenge themselves on their enemies. *"Yimmach Shmo"* ("let his name be erased") is still a favorite expression directed against an Amalek, a Haman, or a Hitler.

After the reading of the *Megillah,* the students repaired to the homes of their hosts to break their fast. They first devoured the freshly baked *Haman tashen* (three-cornered cakes filled with poppy seeds and mixed with honey and nuts) and then ate the other *Purim* dishes. By the time the evening meal was over, everyone around the table was in a happy and festive mood.

After the *Purim* eve meal, the *yeshivah* students returned to the House of Study, where the real joyous celebration began. One student assumed the aspect of the *rosh yeshivah;* he put on his pointed skull cap, donned an artificial goatee, imitated his motions and manner of speech, and even mimicked his paroxysms of temper. In front of him was a ponderous volume called the "Tractate Purim"—a parody of the *Megillah* written in the Aramaic dialect, in which Vashti, Haman, and his youngest son, Vaizatha, were the objects of ridicule.

In the Purim Talmud, the names of the "rabbis" were Mordchiel from Mordechai, Harvoniel from Harvonah, etc. The arguments of these spurious "rabbis" were most amusing. One asked the question: "How do we know that Vashti had two mothers?" A humorous reply was then given, parodying Talmudic dialectic. Another asks, "Where do we learn that Vashti had an ugly growth on her forehead?" The answers came from another "rabbi" who misinterpreted, in every possible way, the passages of the Book of Esther. These discussions led to genuine merriment and laughter. The evening performance, however, was mainly aimed at the *rosh yeshivah,* his supervisor, and those who were responsible for the "eating days."

The head of the academy was "roasted" for his manners, his subconscious motions, the wild temper he had shown to students, and occasionally for his hair-splitting logic. The supervisor was raked over the coals for his spying on the students, and the housewife for not putting more barley in the soup. One student imitated a housewife serving barley soup to a *bahur.* The student put his ear to the steaming plate of soup. When the housewife asked, *"Bahur,* why do you keep your ear to the plate?" the *bahur* answered, "I hear one grain of barley asking the other, 'Where art thou?' "

The only one who escaped the satire of the students was the daughter of the *rosh yeshivah.* She got along well with the boys; evil tongues said, "much too well."

This yearly criticism by the students was considered proper. No one was supposed to be offended, and indeed the victims took their punishment admirably. In a way it proved a healthy procedure, for the head of the academy became well acquainted with his shortcomings and how the students regarded his behavior. Frequently some of the hints of the students were effective in improving conditions during the next semester.

On the day after *Purim,* there was the mad rush of packing and bidding farewell to friends and benefactors. The idea that I would soon be at home for the great Passover holidays excluded all other thoughts that usually occupied my mind.

I remained in Worno for two years. At the end of the second year, I was confident of my ability to enter a higher *yeshivah* and, although the famous *yeshivah* of Telsi was close to Worno, I preferred to go to Slabodka, which is separated by a river from Kovno, the capital of Lithuania.

My mother was partial to the *yeshivah* of Telsi because this site had fewer enticements to distract me from study. My father, on the other hand, was of the opinion that life in a large city tends to broaden one. I myself, for a period, remained undecided—my wishes swinging like a pendulum from side to side. At long last, I decided in favor of my father's opinion.

My father's determination had enabled him to overcome the greatest obstacles in the way of his education. He was a Talmudist, but he was also interested in secular knowledge. He was a great conversationalist. He had a wonderful encyclopedic memory that enabled him to store up in the cubbyholes of his mind a large number of anecdotes and stories—all filed in proper sequence. His company was never dull, but he tended to be stern and quick-tempered, although his passion was short-lived. Particularly when he was in a good mood, my brother Gershon and I sought his company, and he told us many fascinating stories and legends.

Gershon inherited father's ready wit and engaging personality. I, on the other hand, received from my father the gifts of determination, patience, and the willingness to sit down for hours to study.

To me, my mother was the personification of all that was lovable. She was warm-hearted and possessed a deep and understanding soul. Her intuition always seemed to decide problems best, and she

constantly exhibited sympathy and compassion. She loved peace and never argued with my father when he lost his temper, yet she always got what she wanted by using diplomacy. As pious as she was, she was tolerant and considerate. For my mother, I felt love and sympathy; for my father, I felt respect mingled with fear. Thus there were two opposing influences in my early life: the determined and intellectual, and the gentle and almost mystic.

CHAPTER VI

Kovno

"Emigrate to a place where the law is studied, and do not fancy that it will follow whithersoever thou goest."
—Dicta of the Fathers, 4:18

IF I were asked to relate the saddest moments of my life, I would unhesitatingly say those fateful seconds, minutes, and hours after I first entered my home upon my first return from Worno. The very appearance of my mother and father betrayed the fact that some great woe had befallen the household. Their drawn faces and red and downcast eyes revealed that something dreadful had happened while I was away. My brothers, Gershon and Mordechai, and my sister Helen rushed in to greet me, but there was no sign of the two younger children. My gaze darted forth through the open door and windows of the bedroom in a vain effort to see them. Then a sudden outburst of sobbing from my parents and the rest of the family cleared all doubts. I knew that both my youngest brother and sister were no more and that there was no use looking for them.

For some minutes I was stupefied and almost collapsed. Then tears began gushing from my eyes and I was able to cry out. For the rest of the day my mother and father were speechless; they had nothing to say and I could not gather strength enough to ascertain what had happened.

In the evening I discovered that both children had died after an illness of three days duration from a disease which was known as "black measles." This ailment was probably bronchopneumonia, which occasionally complicates measles in the absence of proper care. This terrible occurrence made a lifelong impression on my mind. Years later, after I had entered the medical profession, I always was unduly apprehensive about all cases of measles. No precautions were too much for such patients. I not only isolated them, but I saw to it that the most strict hygienic and therapeutic directions were scrupulously carried out.

As the oldest child in the house, I had practically reared my youngest brother and sister. My mother and father were both busy providing a living for the family, and whenever I was not at study, I took care of them. They were even more attached to me than to our mother. For many years after their death, I was full of remorse; I was plagued with the thought that, perhaps, if I had stayed at home instead of going away, this terrible catastrophe might not have happened.

The struggle of life is frequently the best physician; it helps one forget physical distress and mental agitation. The following day my father attended to his school and my mother went back to her grocery business. In the evening my father discussed preparations for the opening of the *matzot* (unleavened bread for Passover) bakery. The *matzot* bakery was yet another means to help the family eke out a moderate livelihood. The *matzot* baking was to continue for about two strenuous weeks, the hours of work beginning at six o'clock in the morning and lasting until ten o'clock at night. It required an organization of twenty-five persons, including fifteen girl helpers who did the rolling of the dough. In addition to the rollers, a supervisor, a kneader, a riddler, one who sliced the dough, two who carried these slices to the rollers, one who carried the rolled dough from the rollers to the riddler, and one who conveyed the riddled dough from the riddler to the bakers, were needed.

In this *matzot* manufacturing business, everyone in the family held an important position. My father was the supervisor; mother was the assistant baker; I was the riddler; Gershon sliced the dough into pieces of the proper size, and my sister Helen and brother Mordechai attended to measuring the flour and pouring the water.

After the second day I secretly envied the Jews who were merely under the bondage of Pharaoh, and I became eager for Passover to come. As the great day drew near, we were all tired and really not fit to enjoy the feast of freedom. On Passover eve, however, I put on my new suit, and my father, my brother Gershon, and I dragged our weary bodies to the synagogue.

Passover has always been considered the most important event in the history of our people. Deliverance from bondage is as great an occurrence in the life of a nation as it is in that of an individual. Pharaoh, like other tyrants who succeeded him, ceased to remember Joseph, who had saved his country from the ravages of famine. Pharaoh enslaved Joseph's descendants and forced them to build colossal monuments by dint of back-breaking wageless labor. They

had to make bricks with which to build, and they were forced to collect straw to put into the bricks. Taskmasters ever speeded their labors. It appears that the spark of freedom that lives even in the hearts of slaves was in danger of being extinguished. If Moses had not come to the rescue in the nick of time, Pharaoh would have succeeded in frustrating all aspiration for freedom. Many slave laborers, the sons of slaves and the fathers of slaves, preferred the flesh-pots, the fish, and the onions of Egypt to a priceless possession—liberty.

Passover reminds the Jews of Moses who aroused them from their lethargy of four hundred years and inspired them to revolt against the tyranny of Pharaoh and his cohorts. This holiday also serves as a constant reminder for all Hebrews to keep the torch of liberty high and never to submit to tyranny. Cultural development soon followed the liberation of the Hebrews of Egypt. Even before they entered the Promised Land, they framed laws and regulations by which to be guided.

To me the eight-day holiday provided more rest than rejoicing, for as intimated previously, I was all tired out from the labors and sadness which had preceded the holiday. I remained home most of the time. On the last two days of Passover, I discussed with my mother my return trip to Worno, a subject which she judiciously tried to avoid talking about. However, as the holiday ended, she finally realized that there was no point in influencing me to remain in Neustadt.

The day after Passover, when I was all packed for my journey, I had to cancel my trip. The Hebrew paper, *Hamelitz,* carried stories of pogroms in Jewish communities in Russia and in the Ukraine; also many towns in Lithuania were put to the torch, some painfully close to Neustadt. This paper advised Jews to organize themselves against the incendiaries and to post night guards at every house. My father consented that I remain for a while in town until conditions should improve. I was very pleased with this decision, for it saved me a great deal of anxiety about my loved ones.

I was on guard duty the first part of the night and my father during the second part. Old men with gray beards and boys of my age were drafted to patrol the town day and night.

Such anti-Semitic outbreaks frequently occurred in Russia after Passover, originating from the infamous blood accusation. This time they spread like wildfire throughout the length and breadth of the empire. The consequences would have been terrible if political influence and millions of roubles in graft collected among the poverty-

stricken Jews had not been used to suppress the campaign of terror. I recall two emissaries from Kovno coming to our town to collect contributions, and my father was taxed all he had earned from the *Mazot* bakery.

As fearful as was the plight of the Jews, there was even a humorous side to these diabolical events. Old Reb Leizer, who patrolled his neighborhood, heard some footsteps in his neighbor's stable. He gathered his courage and walked in. As he passed the threshhold of the stable, someone grabbed hold of him in the dark and pulled him to the other end of the building. The old gentleman screamed at the top of his voice. A crowd quickly gathered around the dark stable and heard him howling, "I have him! I have him!" The people outside the stable yelled for him to bring the culprit out. He responded ruefully, "I can't! He won't let me! He has tied my hands and feet!" Leibe Issers, the butcher, and Elimelech, the carrier, dashed in to the rescue, and found that the supposed incendiary was no other than Yossel, the village half-wit. He was lying on top of old Leizer, who was almost smothered.

Yossel's story was that he also had been patrolling the neighborhood. When he saw someone loitering around Zelig's stable in the dark, he watched him for a time, and when he saw him enter the stable, he was sure that he had caught the incendiary red-handed. In order to prevent any chance of escape he had tied the victim's hands and feet securely.

The two weeks after Passover that I spent watching our house made me late for the current session of the Slabodka *yeshivah* and I was compelled to return to Worno for another term. I found that the people of this town were also under considerable stress. Many students were missing from my class. Peasants kept away from town, and business was at a low ebb. I settled down to diligent study and made rapid progress. During that summer, I completed the tractates *Sabbath* and *Brachot* and felt thoroughly equipped to enter a higher academy the next term. I returned home two days before *Rosh Hashanah* (New Year's) and was received with open arms by my parents.

Father had to leave town for two weeks to officiate as a cantor during the high holidays in Katiz, a neighboring Prussian town. Before he left, he told my brothers and sister to obey me and stated that in his absence I was to supervise the house. I felt very much flattered at this promotion. Of course my brother Gershon, who was only a year and a half younger than I, did not think very much of my newly

found privileges. In *shul* (synagogue) I took my father's seat with my two brothers on either side of me. I was particularly elated when on the first day of *Rosh Hashanah,* I was called upon to blow the *shofar* (ram's horn). It happened that Leib, the watchmaker, who usually performed this function, got stuck when he reached the *tekiah gedolah.* As much as he tried he couldn't get the proper sound out of the ram's horn. The congregation became very uneasy. Some looked upon such an incident as a bad omen, for the *shofar* was believed to confuse Satan, the *Mekatreg* (accuser), and thus prevent him from drawing up an indictment.

When I noticed the great dilemma, I ran up to the *bimah* and asked for the privilege of blowing the *shofar.* I put the *tallit* over my head and blew the *tekiah gedolah* with great ease. The proper sound came out of the ram's horn loud and clear. I had previously learned this art on Reb Leib's *shofar.* His son, Isaac, was a playmate of mine, and, when his father was away, he frequently had given me the *shofar* to practice on.

This was considered a great feat among the people of the community. Everyone talked about it. The women in the balcony where my mother was sitting congratulated her upon my accomplishment. I confess that this incident, which did not require any particular wisdom but only a good pair of lungs and a little practice, swelled my pride a lot more than my whole year of study in the *yeshivah;* I had finally performed a real man's function. My rich uncle Simeon, who seldom found time to talk to me, came to our house to congratulate my mother, and his children looked upon me with great respect.

The *shofar,* while it is by no means a sweet-sounding instrument, was the most ancient bugle. It was used as a signal for starting the great trek when the Jews were in the wilderness. It was used when the fortress of Jericho was to be stormed, and it will be used when the Lord "will gather the children of Israel from the four corners of the earth and bring them back to the Promised Land."

The horn is referred to throughout the Old Testament as a symbol of power, strength, and dominion: "The Lord exalteth the horn of David, and the horn of His people." Horns are symbolically represented on the forehead of Moses to denote power; in Daniel, the term is employed in a figurative sense representing the power of Persia, Greece, Syria, and Egypt. In English, "cornucopia" carries a connotation that has a similar origin.

After *Rosh Hashanah* came the *Slihot* days when Bear, the *shul rufer,* walked about from house to house with his big stick, summon-

ing men to prayer. I vividly remember his high-pitched voice shouting *"stei auf leavodat Habbore"* ("Rise up to serve the Creator"). He started on his job at two o'clock in the morning, and as he was our neighbor, my mother asked him to reach our house last so as not to disturb me. Bear was a shoemaker, and like many occupied with this trade, he was not a total abstainer. When he had a couple of drinks, he forgot his vocation, and instead of summoning people to *Slihot* by rapping with his stick on the shutters, he stood up in the center of the city on the hill and cried out, *"Oser baachilah!"* ("It is forbidden to eat leavened bread"). This was usually announced only on the day before Passover. Sometimes after he had over-imbibed, he cried out, *"Geit zu der levayah"* ("Go to the funeral") and naturally people ran out from their homes half-dressed to see who had died. My mother always saw to it that Bear did not disturb me too early. She often promised him that she would personally awaken me in time for *Slihot* but she seldom kept this promise.

From childhood, I always dreaded the day preceding the fast day of *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement) although the meal which was served before sunset on *Yom Kippur* eve could not be excelled. It consisted of round *hallahs* (loaves of white bread, trimmed around the edges with narrow ribbon-like strips of dough), *kreplach* (small pieces of meat wrapped in dough), soup, *tsimas* (stewed vegetables), and poultry. But in spite of the fine meal, the atmosphere of the house and street was very gloomy and depressing. I would compare this dinner to the last meal given to a criminal before execution. My own heart faltered, for I could not grasp how one could get off scot-free after committing all the sins enumerated in the Prayer Book.

The table with the brass candlesticks and the burning of large wax candles added to the gloomy scene. When I took off my shoes and put on my slippers to go to the House of Prayer, the death of my brother and sister flashed again before my eyes, for to walk without shoes signifies mourning. I knew that the minds of all the family harbored the same thought. My mother's sobbing, after the meal, tore at my heart for I could not bear to see her cry. This, too, further reminded me of that sorry day when I came home from school to find both children dead. Her tears brought tears from the whole family. My brother Gershon and I fasted the entire holy day, and, as the head of the house in my father's absence, I felt it my duty to stay in the synagogue the whole day. My brother, naturally, spent several hours outside.

Towards evening, the flickering flames of the wax candles which had been burning for twenty-four hours brought to my mind the vision of a dying person fighting for life. It was certainly a relief when the hour of *Neilah* came—the time when the heavenly books are closed and everybody's fate is sealed. I then philosophically relaxed, knowing that nothing more could be done to undo the evil deeds I had committed during the previous year.

I was glad that the great trial had come to an end. The rabbi then replaced the *hazan* on the pulpit, and the ark of the *Torah* was opened. After the rabbi chanted the *Neilah* prayers for an hour, the services came to an end with the blasting of the *shofar* and with the members of the congregation exclaiming: "The coming year in Jerusalem."

On our return home, mother greeted us with kisses and best wishes for a good year. We found the table set and hot dishes waiting for us. For the moment I forgot all that had transpired during the last twenty-four hours, and I thought of the holiday of *Sukkot* (Feast of Tabernacles), which was always a joyous occasion, and of the *sukkah* which we had built in the house. The next day my brother and I went to the forest to cut pine branches with which to cover the *sukkah*. The following day was spent in decorating the *sukkah* with many kinds of fruit. In the meantime, my father had returned from his holiday position. He found everything in order and complimented me on the way I had handled affairs during his absence.

Sukkot was always a festival of gladness. It reminded the Jew of the bygone days when he tilled the soil, planted seed, and reaped the harvest. *Sukkot* also serves as a warning that the Diaspora offers only a temporary abode: One does not know when the wind and rain will penetrate inside the *sukkah,* or when a spark will ignite and destroy it.

The last thought is not merely a fanciful idea. I recall a case in point in New York which occurred soon after my arrival in this country. While the tenants of a tenement on Eldredge Street were celebrating their evening meal in the *sukkah* and chanting the customary prayers, oblivious of all evil, a neighbor's boy climbed a fence to the roof of the *sukkah* and set fire to the dry pine brances which covered it. The *sukkah* flared up like a tinder box, and the people dashed out to safety. The fire engines had to be called to extinguish the blaze.

A similar episode took place in the same neighborhood, but this event had no character of malice about it. A boy in a yard which adjoined a *sukkah,* hearing singing and chanting in the next yard,

decided that he would find out what the commotion was all about. He climbed up on the roof of the *sukkah,* not knowing that the pine branches were supported on thin planks. He promptly fell through the flimsy roof and plunged headlong onto the table, landing in the hot noodle soup, and causing great consternation. The poor fellow was badly injured, and candles were upset, setting fire to the building. Fire engines and an ambulance rushed to the scene. I understand that the fire department of New York prohibited the construction of such tabernacles for a time.

Simhat Torah is considered the most joyous day in the Hebrew calendar. It is the holiday to commemorate the occasion when the reading of the Pentateuch is finished. On the eve of this day the cantor leads the *hakafot* as it encircles around the *almemer,* and girls as well as married women are permitted to take part in some of the exercises usually reserved for men in the *bet hamidrash.* Everyone lines up to kiss the *Torah* and to participate in the singing when the *hakafot* changes hands. The services of the following morning were a repetition of those of the evening before and were characterized by singing and dancing. The *Musaf* was chanted with the music of the New Year's ritual. After the services, the *Hazan* (cantor) and Reb Itzel, the preacher, exchanged witticisms both in prose and poetry. It was almost two o'clock before the members of the congregation returned home for dinner.

The next day, I was ready for my journey to Kovno. I arranged with Moshe Velve, the carrier, to take me to Taurigan. There was no railroad and no direct coach transportation to Kovno, and I had to make several coach changes. There were eight passengers on Moshe's coach. The weather was gloomy and windy; the passengers huddled close to one another to keep warm. The road was muddy and the horses moved with difficulty. When the road showed the slightest obstruction, the driver told us to dismount and help push the cart over it.

The following morning we came to Taurigan, and I secured transportation to Yurburg, where my father's only sister resided. I stayed with her for two days and made the acquaintance of her family. My aunt provided me with a ticket on a boat sailing on the River Niemen which took me directly to Kovno.

This was my first experience on a steamship. The deck was covered with passengers. There were German merchants bound for Kovno to engage in business ventures such as the purchase of grain, lumber, flax, livestock, and various other materials. There were Lithu-

anian shopkeepers en route to buy groceries and manufactured goods, and others who sailed to the capital on legal, political, and educational missions.

Congregated on one place on the deck were a number of Jewish students dressed in *Gymnasium* uniforms who were evidently returning to school after their harvest vacation. In another place were a number of youths with pale drawn faces and hollow chests, some having earlocks and wearing long capotes, and who, like myself, were heading for the *yeshivah* at Slabodka.

As young as I was, I could not help observing the contrast between these two groups of boys. The first group consisted of lively, happy boys, shouting and singing and telling humorous anecdotes. The second group were sad-looking, reserved, and quiet. They appeared indifferent to their surroundings. They had little to say to each other or to the other passengers. I knew that I belonged to this group, but I remained aloof, not caring to add to the *galut* (Diaspora) atmosphere.

I went to the bow of the boat and watched the towns and villages that we passed. Wilkie, Wilon, and Sarednik, communities which bustled with Jewish life and produced many eminent scholars, passed in review before my gaze. On the banks of the river, women could be seen washing the family clothing and linens. Small fishing boats dotted the river. Towards evening, the boat steamed into Kovno. I looked with amazement upon the forts of the city and the high brick structures.

When the boat landed at the pier, I hesitated to mingle with the other passengers and the people on shore. I was self-conscious because I knew that I appeared so different from most of them. My shabby suitcase and my long capote marked me as unfit for associating with the merchant class, and, for some inner reason I could not explain, I was not inclined to mix with the *yeshivah* students. I traversed the dock area slowly since I did not know where I was going. No one expected me. My main immediate problem was to find lodging for the night.

I had heard of the Study House of Hirsch Naviaser's *yeshivah,* founded in 1845 by Rabbi Israel Lipkin (Salanter), and where I thought I might find lodging for at least one night. After many inquiries, I located this institution, which I knew was intended for more mature scholars. The student body of this *yeshivah* consisted largely of married men who were known as *perushim* (separated ones) be-

cause they separated themselves from their families to prepare for a rabbinical career.

It was about seven o'clock in the evening when I entered the House of Study. Only three students were present at the time. One of them, a man of middle age, evidently recognized that I was a stranger. After the usual greetings, he inquired about my mission in Kovno. I told him briefly of the purpose of my visit. I showed him my credentials from the rabbi of my town and from the *rosh yeshivah* of Worno. He read them carefully and advised me to present them to the chief rabbi, Isaac Elhanan, to whom they were addressed. He also invited me to stay with him for the night.

The next day I went to the chief rabbi. I was well informed about this great *gaon* (learned man). He was considered the greatest rabbinical authority not only of his own time but perhaps for several generations back as well. His picture adorned the walls of our house. I must confess that I went to his abode with a heavy heart. His very name inspired the kind of fear that many youths experience when they are about to meet a great man.

I found his reception room almost filled; many of the people waiting to see him carried manuscripts under their arms. Evidently their object was to get his endorsement for their unpublished works. There were many young men who were eager to be ordained as rabbis and had come to receive his endorsement. Most of them were very nervous and could not sit in one place, but kept pacing about the room. After three long and trying hours of waiting, I was called into the rabbi's office. I cannot adequately describe the feelings I had. I was dazed and confused. My tongue was bound by invisible ties, and I could not find voice to answer his questions properly. My hand trembled as I took my credentials from my pocket. He read the papers quickly, for it took no savant to recognize my emotional turmoil. He then called his secretary (I believe his name was Jacob Lipshitz), who gave me a letter addressed to the manager of the Slabodka *yeshivah*. The rabbi patted me on the back with a warm gesture of friendliness, and said something which my dazed mind did not take in.

I was more than happy to be out on the street again, and I walked as fast as I could toward Slabodka, which is a suburb of Kovno. I crossed the River Vilya by boat and was soon in the Slabodka House of Study. The manager asked one of the teachers to examine me, and I easily passed the preliminary test, which con-

sisted of a few questions pertaining to the laws of divorce. My admission to the school was then ordered.

The *yeshivah* of Slabodka was founded by Isaac Blazer, Rabbi of St. Petersburg (Leningrad), by means of the munificent gift of the banker Lachman of Berlin. Isaac Blazer, who was a disciple of Rabbi Israel Lipkin, introduced the study of *musar* (religious ethics) in his *yeshivah* in addition to Talmudic studies. The effect this innovation wrought on me will be dealt with later on in this chapter.

A few words as to the origin of the institution of the *yeshivah* in general may be of interest here. When Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai (c. 70 A.D.) asked Vespasian, the governing Roman general, to permit him to open up an academy in Yavne he demonstrated that he well knew that only through the study of the law could the Jew survive after he had lost his land. The *yeshivah* he founded is the oldest institution of Jewish learning. During the Talmudic period, the principle *yeshivot* in Palestine were Sepphoris, Tiberias, and Caesaria, while the leading *yeshivot* of Babylonia were at Nahardea, Pumbeditha, Mahoza, and Sura. Such institutions were established in most countries where Jews settled.

In the Middle Ages, the House of Study was transported to Spain, France, and Germany. With the expulsion of the Jews from these lands, eastern Europe, and particularly Poland and Lithuania, became the citadels of learning. At the end of the last century, the fugitives of Russian persecution brought along with them to America their beloved House of Study. *Yeshivot* were founded in New York, Baltimore, and other large cities. Later, as a sequel to the first World War, the old established *yeshivot* of eastern Europe, with their students and teachers, were transplanted to the larger cities of the United States. The systems and methods of teaching changed and were adapted to the new conditions. The principle change consisted in the inclusion of subjects of general education in the new curriculum. "Eating days" were dropped in the New World, but the main purpose of the *yeshivot,* as originated and promulgated by Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai, has not changed.

The methods employed in Poland and Lithuania to educate and maintain poor youths a century ago seemed entirely proper in their time and place. The Jews as a group were pitifully poor. The most a family could spare to advance the cause of education was usually a meal for one stranger on one day a week only. In the towns where there were several *yeshivot* and a large number of students, there were not enough "eating days" to provide all the students with food, so

that "eating days" were often divided into individual meals for various students. Some students had to keep a list of their twenty or twenty-one hosts, and of the time and the day they were to call each week for their meals at each place. Others had only one meal or none at all scheduled for certain days.

The student barely managed to exist, and this he did only for the sake of the *Torah*. He willingly slept on a hard bench or on a straw pallet on the floor of the Study House.

In Slabodka, where the students were numbered by the hundreds, there were not nearly enough meals to go around, and provision was made to grant stipends to worthy students. The stipend I was granted was not enough to buy the barest minimum of food, and was certainly insufficient to pay for lodgings, laundry, and other necessities. I made up this shortage by teaching Hebrew and German to the young daughter of a shopkeeper, for which service I received one and a half roubles a week. The stipend, my salary for teaching, and the small assistance I received from home, just about met my basic daily needs.

To those who are brought up in the United States, where primary and secondary schools are provided gratis in every town, and where free trade schools are established and scholarships are offered to gifted students, the system of Hebrew education of Eastern Europe will appear, to say the least, demoralizing and humiliating. However, when one takes into consideration the poverty of the Jews in those countries at that period, it will be recognized that such debasing procedures as that of the "eating days" presented the only opportunity to prevent Jewish education from stagnating and expiring altogether.

The very *maskilim* (enlightened ones) who protested loudly against the "eating days" forgot that they themselves were products of such a system. If it were not for the food which they had received in this way there would have been no opportunity for that basic education which is necessary for enlightenment. Among no other people, modern or ancient, has the study of the traditional lore been so widespread as among the Jews of Eastern Europe half a century ago. Learning was not the prerogative of the chosen few nor was it confined to a single class of society. It was the birthright of rich and poor, old and young, alike. If one was not fit for study himself, one was dutybound to assist those who were more gifted.

The Lithuanian Jews held the place of honor in Talmudic erudition; with them Jewish scholarship was synonymous with excellence and aristocracy. They believed in the Talmudic aphorism, "Who are

the kings? The scholars." In Lithuania then, Hebrew education was not the interest of a few but the business of everybody. Some belonged to the *Gemara* circle, others to the *Mishnah* group, others to *Ein Yaakov* classes, and still others to the *Hayyei Adam* society, and so on.

The *bet hamidrash* was the embodiment of Jewish love for study. It was saturated with the spirit of learning. It was never unoccupied; in the dimness of early morning and the darkness of midnight, one could almost always perceive the form of a man hovering over a large volume, one could almost always hear the voice of a student chanting a plaintive melody that touched the heart.

The academy of Slabodka differed from other schools of its kind. In addition to the Talmudic studies it also had *musar* (religious ethics) in its daily curriculum. In the twilight hour, when the shadows of night fell upon the gloomy corners of the *steubel* (the antechamber of the House of Study), students gathered, in a body or singly, to recite in a plaintive voice certain passages from the Prophets and Psalms or from the works of the moralists. The moralists dealt primarily with the vanity of human life and the prospect of reward or punishment in the hereafter. Accordingly, students reflected gravely upon death, which would bring them before the Heavenly Judge for a strict accounting of their lives. They surrendered themselves entirely to their emotions and wept profusely. *Musar* aimed at discouraging lack of control over normal impulses; it encouraged the suppression of evil inclinations (*yetser hara*) and promulgated the doctrine that one's actions must always be in accordance with good reason (*yetser tov*).

Of course, such a doctrine was commendable if not carried too far. But the question of reward and punishment in the world to come was at times overemphasized, and the minds of impressionable young students were adversely effected. Instead of studying the Talmud which sharpened their minds and reasoning faculties, they spent their time in pondering over Paradise and Purgatory. Fearing the latter, they spent more time in prayer and meditation than in the study of the Law.

The founder of the *musar steubel* taught that the first step in self-education is the development of fear of the Lord. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Proverbs 9:10). By much pondering and deep meditation over the consequences of our acts, for which we shall be held accountable by the just God, the idea of reward and punishment became vividly impressed upon the student's mind. Such

meditation by its very nature tended to stir up the emotions and depress cerebration.

The study of *musar* in the *bet hamidrash* met with opposition not only from the *maskilim* of Kovno but also from leading Talmudists; chief among this latter group was the rabbi of Kovno, Rabbi Leib Shapiro. Many students were secretly averse to the study of religious morals, but they did not speak out lest they be expelled from the *yeshivah*. I visited the *steubel* only once and had enough of it. For the following few weeks I absented myself from the *steubel* on one pretext or another. I was threatened with expulsion and deprivation of the small stipend I was receiving, but these dire punishments were never actually carried out. Many older students who had read the *haskala* books looked upon the *musarnikes* as lunatics, and regarded their arguments with disgust. One could recognize these young men by their peculiar slow gait, by their red, downcast eyes, and by their avoidance of the opposite sex.

I was one of the few younger students who had a strong aversion for these moral teachings. I disliked the very atmosphere of the *steubel* and was happy when I got the opportunity to cross the River Liviya to Kovno, which was the most modern community in Lithuania and the hotbed of *Haskala*. On such occasions, I felt as if I were moving out of darkness into bright sunlight. Kovno had many learned men and writers of note with whom I became acquainted, and I frequently visited their homes to read the Hebrew daily newspapers.

I read and re-read the novels of Mapu, Ginsburg's *Ha Dvir*, Lilienblum's *The Sin of Youth*, Shulman's *Harisuth Betier* (The Destruction of Betier), the works of the elder Lebensohn and his son, Micha Joseph, (*Kol Shirei Adam u'Mechal*), Moses Hess' *Rome and Jerusalem* (written in German) and many other works. I could not help contrasting these illuminating books with the *musar* books offered for study in the *steubel*, and particularly with the *Reshit Hochmah* (The Beginning of Wisdom), which pictures the seven flames of Gehenna and the torture that is awaiting man in the world to come.

A spirit of revolt arose in me and a desire to protest against the fanatic elements which were choking Jewish life. The *Ayit Tsabua* by Mapu fanned my aversion for this element. I looked upon the *steubel* as another *galut*. The life of the Jew was bad enough; to punish him with all the tortures of the inquisition in the future world was not only cruel but unpardonable. I made up my mind to flee from the drab atmosphere of Slabodka, from its narrow, unpaved, ill-lighted streets, from the overcrowded, suffocating huts, and from

the anemic and melancholy youths who were distracted by poverty and squalor, and who were wasting away their young lives in tears—beaten down by oppression from without and self-castigation from within.

As much as I liked the subtle, keen, and penetrating discussions of the Talmud, just so much did I hate the fantastic and unnatural teachings of the *musar*. I decided henceforth to be on my own, and at the end of the semester I bid farewell to my colleagues and friends at the *yeshivah* and settled in the small neighboring town of Tcheikeshok, where I found the environment very pleasant.

The residence of the rabbi of the town, Abraham Levinthal (father of Rabbi B. Levinthal of Philadelphia) was under the same roof as the *bet hamidrash* and was always open to students. The tea kettle was kept on the fire in readiness, and the rabbi never failed to offer his valuable assistance in solving Talmudic problems. The residents of Tcheikeshok were very kind to us, providing us with all the necessities of life and treating us with respect. Students were invited to all important public functions. The cordial atmosphere of Tcheikeshok made me soon forget my previous miserable existence in Slabodka. But alas, this peaceful and happy life was of short duration. One evening a fire broke out in town and cut short my sojourn there.

While laboring at the House of Study one night at ten o'clock, I suddenly became conscious of the loud tolling of church bells. I quickly looked out of the window and saw half-dressed women shrieking frantically and men running to and from the river with buckets. Shouts of "Fire! fire!" filled the air. I saw columns of smoke ascending from the straw roof of a house across the treet. Soon the sky was illuminated by the glare of the blazing roof. Smoke then began to puff from the adjoining house.

I knocked at the rabbi's door. There was no answer. In the street, men, women, children, and animals dashed wildly to and fro. Peasants came from all directions, running towards the church. One house after another was caught in the conflagration. I stood near the *bet hamidrash* for some time, confused and stupefied. Suddenly the idea flashed into my mind of saving the scrolls of the Law. I ran to the Holy Ark, grasped two scrolls firmly, and carried them to the bank of the river, where almost the entire Jewish population had congregated.

Soon the rabbi and the beadle came with more of the holy parchments, and as I returned for the rest of the scrolls, I found that both the *bet hamidrash* and the synagogue were on fire and that men were in the burning buildings trying to save the rest of the sacramental

paraphernalia. Some carried scrolls, others doors of the Ark; one conveyed the *parohet* (covers) of the Ark, and others the *tallitim* (sacred shawls) and *tefilin* (phylacteries).

When the women and children at the river observed that their sanctuaries were in flames, their plaintive cries reached up to heaven. Through the windows of the synagogue I could see the burning rafters falling one after another until the walls collapsed. Meantime the church bell kept tolling wildly. Peasants by the hundreds carried buckets of water to save the church. Buckets of water were passed from one to another on ladders until they reached those on the roof of the building, who dumped them on the church walls and roof to prevent this structure from catching on fire. Many of the people on the roof were badly burned, but they saved their holy edifice from destruction.

The fire lasted until ten o'clock the next morning, by which time the city looked as desolate as a cemetery, with the chimneys sticking out like tombstones over the gutted houses. When the smoldering ceased, the poor Jews went to seek out what was left after the flames had completed their grim task. Such items as a brass candlestick, a pot, a knife, a spoon, a damaged piece of furniture, or even a board were salvaged. These, and other items that had been taken from the houses before the fire had destroyed them, were taken to a refuge near the water. It seemed likely that this holocaust was started by enemies of the Jews, many of whose own properties were destroyed by the uncontrolled flames.

Towards evening, relief in the form of food and clothing came from the neighboring Jewish towns. The capital city of Kovno sent a delegation to ascertain the extent of the damage done, and within a week's time, reconstruction of the House of Study was started. This was followed by the rebuilding of the houses of a few of the more prosperous citizens.

As I had lost all of my personal apparel and my books, there was no point in my staying in the ruined city. Without even being able to bid farewell to all of my friends and colleagues, who were scattered about because of the chaotic conditions, I left town with a broken heart, and I have never been able to dismiss this incident from my mind.

I made up my mind to return to Kovno, which was about twelve miles distant. While en route, as I approached the city of Sarednik, I was stopped by an *uradnik* (a police official) who asked for my passport. When I told him that my passport as well as my other pos-

sessions had been destroyed by fire, he sneered at me. He took me to the police headquarters, and had me incarcerated in a prison cell until the officials could communicate with the authorities of my home town to identify me. In the same cell I found a number of youths of my age who had also been arrested because they did not possess any passports. I was told that on the next day I was to be taken on foot to some other prison, and thence to still another place until I reached the county jail.

The next day, however, the rabbi of the town, Berl Saredniker, came to see us. He knew me, for he was the father-in-law of the aforementioned Rabbi Abraham Levinthal, of Cheikeshok, whom he frequently visited. He asked me how I came to be there and I told him my story. His beadle, who was with him, whispered in my ear that the purpose of the arrest was merely to get graft. Almost every week, poor innocent fellows were picked up and mulcted of whatever they had. The rabbi saw to it that I was released from the prison after one night's incarceration. I then continued my journey to Kovno, for which the rabbi had arranged transportation with a Jewish carrier.

I had no luggage with me, and I decided to walk to Markel's *klaus* in Kovno, which housed a well known *yeshivah* founded by the philanthropist, Markel of Slabodka. Markel was the father-in-law of the famous rabbi, Mordechai Eliasberg of Bausk-Latvia. Ordinarily, it would have been difficult to receive a stipend in the middle of the semester but, when the manager discovered that I had come from Cheikeshok, which had been destroyed by fire, he admitted me without even a preliminary examination.

The few months that I attended Markel's *yeshivah* were very pleasant. Daylight hours I spent at the House of Study. In the evenings I visited literary circles in private houses of friends whom I had known as a student at Slabodka. At these functions I met many famous Hebrew writers, including Leon Kantor, Solomon Mandelkern, Eliezer Atlas, and Reuben Breinin.

Kovno, at that period, was only surpassed by Vilna as the greatest *Haskala* center in Lithuania. It was a place where *Torah* and *Haskala* were truly united. Zionism occupied a prominent place at all of these circles. Leading articles in *Hamelitz, Hatsfirah,* and *Hamaggid* were discussed, and, frequently, papers were presented on various literary and historical topics.

It was not so easy for me to go to these meetings, for the *Haskala* circles were frowned upon by most Orthodox Jews. To be detected meant not only to be deprived of the stipend but also to be disgrace-

fully discharged from the *yeshivah* and branded a heretic. It was in this very city that the famous Rabbi Israel Lipkin (Salanter), when he discovered that his son, Dr. Lipman Lipkin, was studying in Königsberg University, removed his shoes and mourned for seven days just as though his son were dead.

My father, when he first discovered that I was interested in the *Haskala* literature, did not go to that extreme. He first expressed profound indignation, but he soon resigned himself to the inevitable. As a matter of fact, he began to delve into these works himself. He was careful at first not to read them in my presence, but his more moderate manner toward them when I returned home proved conclusively that he had read them.

One day I actually caught him red-handed, reading these "*trief posuls*" (banned books). He never called me "*Berlinzik*" (a nickname given to *maskilim* who read the works of the Berlin Jewish writers). He later willingly discussed many features of the books with me. The one who to the last was really dismayed about my interest in *Haskala* was my mother, for she had always hoped that I would become a rabbi.

My interest in modern books did not change my attitude toward Talmudic literature. It only inspired me to read the Talmudic tracts more objectively and with a broader viewpoint.

While Talmudic literature may well go hand in hand with modern learning, it must be admitted that in many instances the *Haskala* movement turned many Talmudic students off the straight path. In their enthusiasm for secular knowledge, they were induced to believe that if Jews accepted the Russian culture they would reecive full and equal rights with other nationals. However, they were soon dismayed to discover that the small portion of liberty granted to them during the reign of Alexander II was completely removed after the ascent of Alexander III to the throne of the Russian Empire.

His coronation was followed by pogroms and other forms of persecution. Even the most enlightened Jews were forced to the conclusion that Russification was only a "quack" remedy. The wild Russian mobs did not differentiate between Orthodox and Russianized Jew. On the contrary, the Orthodox Jews of Lithuania and Poland were not molested or hated quite as much as their "enlightened" brethren.

The thoroughly assimilated Jewish children who did not know that they belonged to the Jewish race suffered first and foremost. When they were attacked without justification, they innocently asked their parents: "Why were we attacked? We are not Jews." And the parents,

often for the first time, had to admit their race and religion. Many of these elders recognized the serious error they had committed and retreated from the devious path they had trod. Others had gone too far to retreat. Departure from one's religion and nationality is difficult, but relatively easy as compared to the return to the original group; this latter course is always obstructed with the most profound difficulties.

In this connection I would like to relate two cases in point. One is that of the Hebrew poet Constantine (Asher) Shapiro, who in his youth cherished the hope of becoming a successor to the Spanish-Hebrew poet Halevi. When he was about twenty years of age, however, he was carried away by the tide of assimilation to a depth where the undertow prevented return. He married a girl of the Greek Orthodox church and accepted her religion. He soon discovered that the new society which he had entered was foreign to him and that his old Jewish friends would not associate with him anymore. The realization dawned upon him that he had paid for his so-called freedom with his peace of mind. In a Hebrew poem, he poured out his heart, lamenting the step he had taken:

> In vain have I plunged into the waters of the Jordan,
> In vain have I sought to brighten my gloom;
> No rest shall I find till I lie in my tomb.

The other case is that of a student of the Vilna Rabbinical Seminary named Sorkin, who was converted to the Greek Orthodox faith and married into his new faith. He soon began to feel unhappy. His wife threw up his race to him on every occasion. His children, as usual, sided with their mother. He regretted his misstep, but dared not show this openly, for "backsliding" of this kind was against the Russian law.

When a pogrom broke out in Kiev, his sons joined in the plundering of Jewish shops and the beating of defenseless Jews. Their mother greeted them with pride when they brought the loot home. She was pleased with their heroism. When Sorkin became aware of the misdeeds of his sons, he quickly left his home and travelled to Vilna, where he received sympathy from his old friend, Leo Levando, who had been a student with him at the rabbinical school. Although Sorkin deeply lamented his fate, his friend was at a loss as to how to help him and could not even advise him what to do in his predicament. A few days later, Sorkin locked himself in Levando's room and hanged himself.

History has repeated itself during the second World War. The spark of anti-Semitism which had lain smoldering for half a century or more in Germany flared up with great violence. It followed the goose-step of Hitler's army, resulting in complete annihilation of one-third of world Jewry. Pharaoh, Haman, Titus, Torquamada, and Alexander III were mild in their anti-Semitism when compared to Adolph Hitler.

As young as I was, I did not believe that general lay education on the part of the Jews was a panacea for all the evils perpetrated against the Jewish people. I firmly believed in the old Jewish maxim with regard to universal anti-Semitism: "The more knowledge, the more pain." Jewish professors and doctors in the learned professions have aroused more anti-Semitism than all the plain uneducated Jews combined.

I was indeed glad to find that Dr. Leon Pinsker, in his *Auto-Emancipation*, shared the same views. The more I read his brochure, the more I was convinced that the only solution of this ever-perplexing problem was to procure some kind of autonomous territory for the Jews. Pinsker did not mention Palestine in his brochure, but Palestinian colonization had already begun at that time in a small way, and I concluded that Palestine had the best historic claim for becoming a Jewish homeland. Anyway, Zionism deserved at least a trial.

I made up my mind to go to Palestine. I corresponded with the *Hovevei Zion* Committee of Odessa, and after many weeks of patient waiting I received a letter from the famous Hebrew scholar, M. L. Lilienblum, who was at that time the secretary of the committee, to the effect that I was too young to undertake pioneer work in a land that had been devastated for almost 2,000 years. This letter did not satisfy me, but I had to accept its authority, for I had no means of making this long journey at my own expense. There was only one channel by which I might be granted the opportunity to reach Palestine and this was to see Rabbi M. Eliasberg of Bausk, Latvia, whom I had met once at Markel's *klaus* in Kovno.

Rabbi Eliasberg was at that time the leading advocate among the Orthodox Jews of Russia for the colonization of Palestine. Bausk was about fifty-five miles from Kovno, so after the fall holidays, I set out on foot for this city. I feared to divulge my plans even to my parents, for I was certain that they would discourage me. (Later, when I was considering going to America, they advised me to direct my steps towards Palestine.) I took along introductory letters from a number of prominent rabbis and Zionists, and particularly from Rabbi

Rabinowitz of Aleksot, who was a co-worker and friend of Eliasberg.

I reached Bausk on a Friday afternoon after two weeks of travel, and went directly to the house of the rabbi, which was across the way from the *bet hamidrash*. He received me in a very fatherly fashion. He was surprised when I informed him of my mission, particularly when I told him that I was only sixteen years of age. He looked at me and smiled. He did not completely discourage me, but he advised me to join other Zionist circles and go to Palestine as a member of a group. He could not find much sense in this desire to go to the Holy Land on the part of a stubborn young man without any means.

He invited me to be his guest for the Sabbath, and at the table this matter was discussed again. He particularly wanted to know what I could do to help build up the land. I told him that I was aware of the fact that I could not do the job of an able-bodied man, but I maintained that if I could not be a builder I could at least carry bricks for the builders. He smiled, remarking that he wished all Jews were fired with the same enthusiasm as I was. He told me that as far as he was concerned, he thought that my attitude was not practical. He advised me to continue with my studies in Bausk and to await developments. I accepted his advice reluctantly, and I remained in Bausk for two years—always waiting for something to develop.

I betook myself earnestly to my studies under the supervision of the rabbi, and as time passed I was increasingly happy to be close to this great scholar and his family, who all treated me so cordially.

Bausk was a town of about 3,500 Jewish inhabitants. It belonged to the province of Kourland (Latvia) which was bordered by the Baltic Sea on the west, by Estonia on the north, and by the government of Kovno on the south. The official language in the cities was German; in the rural districts the Latvian tongue was spoken by the peasants. German was used in the schools and on the streets.

The Jews of Kourland spoke German interspersed with about 5 percent of Hebrew and another 5 percent of Yiddish dialect. It took me some time to learn the Kourland German. I was frequently embarrassed and often embarrassed others with my speech. I recall at least two major instances when the use of certain words caused me great anxiety. On one occasion I used the word, "*gemein*" improperly. As used in Lithuania, this word meant "poor." In Kourland, however, it assumed the German meaning of "low" or "base." If one referred to a woman as *gemein*, it signified that she was a woman of ill-repute.

One can just imagine what transpired when I referred to a woman well known in town for her exemplary character as "*gemein*." If it was not for the rabbi, who kindly explained my error, I would surely have been compelled to leave town. The other instance concerned itself with the use of the word "*patron*," which was used in my home town to signify an unpolished individual; in Bausk it assumed the English meaning of the word. For several weeks after my two blunders, I managed to keep quiet, remembering the good advice of the Scriptures: "If even a fool keeps silent, he is taken for wise."

However, I soon learned to avoid the use of words of doubtful meaning, and in time I changed my *yeshivah* garb to modern attire. I changed my long "capote" for a short sack coat, my boots for shoes, and my cap for a felt hat. I also cut off my *peot* (earlocks) which were the symbol of a *yeshivah bahur*. After these changes I actually had difficulty in recognizing myself. I could hardly believe that I had once been the *Neustadter bahur*.

At times I was plagued by a guilty conscience, as if I had wilfully attempted to hide my identity. Rabbi Eliasberg smiled when he saw me in the new attire. With a gesture of his hands he remarked, "Eh! Assimilated!" I hated the very word—"assimilation." I was so embarrassed and mortified that I could not speak. However I soon discovered that the rabbi was not averse to these changes. He merely remarked: "Be sure that these changes do not affect your thoughts."

The House of Study was a modern edifice, well ventilated and illuminated by a number of lamps of the latest design. Even the *gemarot* (Talmudic volumes) had a nicer external appearance. They were not shabby and dusty as they had always been in the *yeshivah*. They were bound in leather and kept well dusted on clean shelves. Rabbi Eliasberg had a large library containing not only rabbinical works but also ethical and philosophical books. In a special case there were many Judeo-German works, and a number of journals in Hebrew and German. These were always available to the students, and I took every opportunity, when the days' work was done, to read these volumes and journals.

I read the *Guide to the Perplexed*, the *Ikkarim*, *The Duties of the Heart*, the *Kuzeri*, and other books of this type in German and Hebrew. The rabbi's daughter, Bathsheba, was well read. She often received books from Libau and Riga which she offered to me to read and which I gladly took to my lodgings.

At the suggestion of the rabbi, I had selected the tractate *Shabbat* for that term, and I settled down to serious study. The rabbi usually

remained in the House of Study for an hour after the morning prayers to answer the questions of the students. I shall never forget the *Purim* night when the students were invited to the *seudah* (festival) at the house of the rabbi. He was somewhat tipsy and took off, as it were, the rabbinical garb and became one of the boys. He indulged in anecdotes and stories without end. I regret to this day that I did not put them down in writing.

During my stay in Bausk I met many celebrities, including Morris Rosenthal, J. Brutzkus, Lipman Friedman, rabbi of Moscow, Leon Kantor, Solomon Puchner, government rabbi at Mitau, and Eliezer Bausker, who was the rabbi in Vilna and who died in the United States at the age of ninety-one.

These men came to converse and to consult with the rabbi on rabbinical and general Jewish problems. They came largely from the Jewish communities of Kourland and Estonia, and they frequently invited me to call on them. This gave me the opportunity to visit such cities as Libau, Mitau, Riga, and many others.

Another one of this group was Bezalel Zodikoff, who married a niece of Rabbi Eliasberg. Bezalel Zodikoff was a colorful personality. He was a *hazan* (cantor) and *shohet* (slaughterer of animals according to the ritual) in Neustadt for some years. I was a frequent visitor to his home, and I learned many useful bits of information from him. Aside from his profound Talmudic knowledge, he was an accomplished musician. He had a fine baritone voice and played the violin well. He was also an inspiring orator, who could draw tears from his audience. I admired him for his erudition, for his ready wit, and for his unselfishness. In his later years he was chosen by Rabbi Isaac Reines of Lida, founder of the Mizrachi, to spread the Zionist idea among the Orthodox Jews of Poland and Lithuania. He proved the most inspiring orator of that period against such competitors as the Kaminitzer Maggid (Machbi), H. Masliansky, and Hecht. Before the first World War, he settled with his family in Palestine. His young children became tillers of the soil. One of his sons died while at the plow, at the hands of an Arab assassin.

For a long time after my departure from Bausk, I entertained many pleasant memories of the rabbi and the community at large. I was indeed much grieved, when I later came to America, to read that this great man had passed away.

CHAPTER VII

Zhagory

In the yeshivah is a holy silence
Which he, the holy youth, is first to break;
For there, in the dark corner, wait for him—
Faithful companions since the day he came—
Three friends: his stand, his candle, and his Talmud.
As if the moments could not move too swiftly
That lie between him and his trusted friends,
He hastens to his place and takes his stand,
And like a pillar stays from morn till night.
Still standing he will eat his midday crust,
Still standing he will half out-watch the night.
Granite is yielding clay compared with him—
A Jewish boy unto the Torah vowed.
—"Matmid," by Chaim Nachman Bialik;
translated by Maurice Samuel

WHEN I returned home after an absence of two years I found that many of my schoolmates and friends had left or were about to leave for South Africa. The reason for this exodus is a story in itself. About twenty years earlier, two poor boys from Neustadt emigrated to South Africa, where they became multi-millionaires; they became owners of productive diamond mines and leading bankers in Transvaal and London. They not only kept their parents in luxury, but they contributed liberally to the maintenance of the rabbi and the Jewish institutions in their home town. Thus, to put it bluntly, most Neustadt youths who emigrated to Africa did so in the hope of finding diamond mines!

Two years is a short time for one who is in one place and watches the changes that take place from day to day; but when one is away for two years everything appears changed on his return—except himself. Of course, a person is not usually cognizant of changes in himself. After a taste of Western culture, everything looked bleak and gloomy to me. Were it not for the love of my parents and my brothers and sister, I would have left home on the day of my return. The arrival home of my brother Gershon from Telsi made things more cheerful. One cannot find the degree of comradeship in parents that one finds in brothers and sisters.

Gershon was not only a brother but also a fellow student. He told me what was going on in the famous *yeshivah* that he had attended. We spoke about the students and the teachers and discussed some Talmudic problems. I told him of my plan not to return any more to a *yeshivah* or to any other House of Study, and that I was determined to leave for Africa if I could secure a steamship ticket. He could not agree with the wisdom of my idea, for his enthusiasm for study was at its height. When he apprised father of my intentions, the old man was shocked. He came to my room and told me that I was disappointing him, that my friends who had left for Africa were not cut out for study but that he had always cherished the hope that I would grow up to be a great man in Israel.

I asked whether he would rather that I undergo the ignominy of induction into the army. His half-caustic, half-sincere reply to this was that I had a few years' time yet before I was due for military service, and that the Messiah might come before I was called. He advised me to learn the profession of *shehitah* (slaughtering of cattle in accordance with the Jewish Law for the production of kosher meat). In the meantime he urged me to continue my Talmudic studies so that I could eventually be ordained a rabbi, or at least become qualified to decide what is permitted and what is prohibited according to Talmudic law (*isur v'heter*). He said that if I had made up my mind to leave the continent, I should go to America where there was already an organized Jewish life, and where it was much easier to earn a livelihood. For the present, Father advised me to go Zhagory, where my uncle Leib Hillel resided. I did not wish to argue with my father, particularly about this matter, and I cheerfully acquiesced.

Two days later, I left for Zhagory. Zhagory was a town located on the southern border of Kourland. It had a population of about 5,000, and was separated from Alt-Zhagory by a river. My mother's brother, on whom I depended for aid, was about twenty-eight years of age. He had married in Zhagory upon promise of a cash dowry and several years of *köst* (support). However, soon after his marriage, Such treachery was not an unusual way to obtain a Talmudic scholar he was forced to go out on his own, obtaining neither dowry nor *köst.* for a son-in-law.

In fact there was a parody sung to the same melody as *"Hatan Kallah Mazol Tov"* (the wedding song), which went like this: "This way, this way is deceived a *hossen* (a groom); he is promised, he is promised, and he does not get a *grossen* (a small coin)."

So my uncle was compelled soon after his marriage to go into some kind of business. He had a brother in the neighboring city of Shavali who conducted a bakery shop. The brother taught him the trade and also loaned him one hundred roubles to enable him to start the business.

It was nine A.M. when I arrived at his home, which also housed the bakery. I found my uncle and his wife busy baking and selling hot Sabbath loaves. The air in the house was saturated with the odor of fermented dough. Husband, wife, and even the small children were dusted with the white flour. I noticed that my uncle was embarrassed at being too busy to talk to me, so I told him that I would see him later in the afternoon. I felt very much relieved when I went out into the street.

I went directly to the House of Study, known as the *Bet Hamidrash Hevrah Kadisha,* torn by the impulse to find someone who had time to talk to me. When I entered the Study House, I found a Jewish peasant there, very shabbily dressed, who was inquiring about a Hebrew teacher for his children. He was willing to pay thirty roubles for the winter season plus free room and board. I recalled in a flash the pleasant farmhouses I had seen in Kourland, and I thought that any of them right now seemed better to me than my uncle's house. Furthermore, thirty roubles in those days was no mean sum of money; it was more than enough to pay for third-class transportation to America. So, without hesitation, I accepted the position of teacher on his farm. He promised to call for me on the following Sunday morning. This gave me the opportunity to see my uncle, whose guest I was to be.

When I met my uncle on Friday night in the synagogue, I hardly recognized him. He looked ten years younger in his Sabbath attire. Later, I also found a complete transformation in his house. His wife and children were all dressed up to receive the Sabbath and the house was spotless. The Sabbath candles lent a cheerful aspect to the entire room, which a few hours before had been filled with bags of flour and vats of dough. The table was set with a snow-white cloth. He sang the *Kiddush* in the traditional manner. The food my aunt had prepared in the short time that she had at her disposal was delicious. It appeared to me that the old adage to the effect that "on Sabbath the Jew receives an additional soul" had real meaning.

On Sunday morning, Yankel, the *yeshuvnik* (peasant), came to take me to his farm, which was about twelve miles from Zhagory. He had just unloaded a cord of wood and had the wagon ready for me.

On the way he told me that he wanted me to teach Hebrew to his four sons and two daughters. He also said that he had been born on this farm, that during the summer he cultivated various kinds of grain and potatoes, and that in winter he and his sons chopped wood and delivered it to customers in Zhagory to be used as fuel.

When I approached his farmhouse, my heart sank. It was the most dilapidated shack I had ever seen. I wanted to dash back to my uncle's home, or for that matter, to any place of refuge, but I did not know how to get out of my agreement. My mistake loomed up all too clear to me. The least I should have done was to see the place before I accepted the position. The only redeeming feature was the prospect of earning thirty roubles—a tidy sum of money in those days. I followed my host and employer into his house, where he introduced me to his wife and his brood (my future scholars), who presented a spectacle of crudeness that is indescribable.

I was then conducted to my room, which was also to serve as the schoolroom. The floor consisted of black soil. The walls gave evidence that they had not been whitewashed for at least ten years. The one window had broken panes of glass, the holes of which were closed with old rags to help keep out the cold air. My "bed" was a long box, supported on both ends by carpenter's horses. The box was filled with loose straw which was covered by a filthy sheet. A bench was near my bed. In the center of the room there was a large barrel turned upside down; upon this article of furniture was a lamp. This barrel was to serve as a table for my scholars.

At dinner time, the farmer's two older sons came for me to escort me to the principal meal of the day. I was terror-stricken when I beheld the six-foot tall, uncouth, savage-looking men for whom I had been hired to teach Hebrew. They could not speak enough Yiddish to be understood, and one of my tasks was to teach them to speak Yiddish also. The dinner consisted of bread baked from flour which had been prepared from a mixture of oats and barley, and *graupen* soup (made of barley and grist). The latter was seasoned with salt and onions, to which was added a few drops of oil which might have been used in the "school" lamp.

This menu was served without exception at every weekday dinner. On Saturday, one fowl was slaughtered for the entire family, from which bird I was given one bone by way of sustenance. I found out later that my employer had plenty of livestock on his farm, but that he took all the animals, fowl, eggs, milk, butter, and cheese to the city.

During the six weekdays, I worked six hours daily and talked myself hoarse, not only teaching my students Hebrew, but also to understand Yiddish. The only day that I was free was on Saturday. It was this day that enabled me to endure the six utterly miserable working days. Every Saturday morning I walked to a nearby village, a distance of about three miles, where Jewish farmers of the district gathered for a *minyan* (ten men; a basic prayer group). The proprietor of the village tavern was a kindly man, and when I told him where I was working, he was sorry for me, and he advised me to ask for part of my salary as soon as possible. He evidently understood my predicament, and asked me to stay with him every Sabbath; I was more than glad to accept his invitation.

That my boss was a God-fearing man seemed obvious enough. He prayed three times a day. The morning prayers were conducted very early, and during these services he wrapped himself in a praying shawl and put on the phylacteries. His four sons stood around him; none of them could read the prayer book, but they repeated every word which their father, the "*zaddik*" (righteous man), pronounced.

One afternoon, when I returned from the daily walk which I took to help forget the mess I was in, I found all my Sabbath wearing apparel, which I wore only on Saturdays and which was otherwise reserved for the happy day when I would be delivered from bondage, gone. I ran into the next room, where Yankel's wife and daughter were, and asked them what became of my clothes. They looked at each other and told me that they knew nothing about them. I asked them where Yankel was, and they told me that he was in the woods cutting trees. I then ran to the woods and told him of my loss. He did not look up at me but said in harsh, measured words, that he had not been employed to watch my clothes. He then softened up a little and said that he would try to find a certain Angelo, a farmer whose son was a notorious thief, and who might know about my loss.

When Yankel returned home, I asked him to pay me a part of my salary with which to buy some clothes—particularly a warm overcoat—so that the zero weather would not lay me up. He managed to find some excuse and postponed any payment from day to day. Finally he said that he would pay me my entire salary two days before Passover.

When I had lived to see that horrible six months over and done with, I gathered courage on the appointed day, and asked him for the thirty roubles he owed me. He smiled and suggested that if I stayed with him over Passover to conduct the *seder*, he would pay

me five roubles extra. I had no choice; I did not have enough kopeks in my pocket to purchase even a postcard to tell my uncle about my predicament, and I remained with Yankel another week, not because I had confidence in his promises, but because I could not help myself.

As a matter of fact, I had become most suspicious of him many weeks before Passover, when, during the blackest hours of several nights, I heard him whispering to his sons to get up. Following these nocturnal awakenings, I heard them opening the stable. On one particular night, I went to the window and saw them mounting horses and disappearing into the darkness. I could not sleep that night, and several hours later I saw them returning with a much larger number of horses than they had started out with.

When I took my daily walk the day after Passover, I stopped at the stable and saw four strange horses in addition to Yankel's own. Yankel himself was in the stable feeding them, and I thought that this would be a good time to remind him of my past-due salary. When he gave me the usual excuse that he expected money in a few days, I remarked that he evidently had enough money to buy horses. Yankel's face turned livid, and he barked: "If you know what is good for you, mind your own business and keep away from the stable. Anyway, my sons did not learn much from you. I don't owe you anything!" I countered: "I am in rags and I don't have one kopek with which to return to town! The least you can do is to give me enough money to buy some clothes and get back to town!" "You don't deserve it!" he shouted, and abruptly closed the conversation. I saw that there was no use in arguing with him any further—that my six months of abominable work was to be fruitless and that I had to get out of his place as soon as possible.

I walked over to the tavern, told David my troubles, and asked him to lend me two roubles with which to purchase a few things in order to get to town. He willingly granted my request. When I returned to the house, it was dark, and I went to bed, vowing that early in the morning I would get up and somehow get to Zhagory—even if I had to walk. Tired from the day's tribulations I fell fast asleep. Suddenly I felt a heavy hand fall upon my body, and I was shaken violently. I opened my eyes, and saw the shadows of three men in uniform standing over me. One of them held a lantern which he placed before my eyes. "What do you want?" I asked. "Nothing—get up!" he answered. "You will go with us to town; be quick!" I was wrapped in my old torn clothes, thrown unceremoniously into

a wagon, and taken to Shaveli, the county seat of the district, where I was incarcerated in a dismal prison cell.

It took me considerable time to even find out what the charges against me were. I had been implicated by Yankel in the crime of stealing and selling stolen horses; in fact he had named me as the ringleader of the horse thieves! The "God-fearing" Yankel and his sons, as the reader may have gathered by now, were most versatile gentlemen; besides being farmers and woodcutters, they were also engaged in the manly art of stealing horses. The authorities had been closing in on him for some time, and when he was trapped, I was the scapegoat. His story was to the effect that six months previously, I had rented a room from him and the stable. He swore that on many nights he heard someone bringing horses into the rented stable. However, he emphatically stated that it was none of his business to find out how the horses came to the stable.

When I told the magistrate my story, he appeared to be impressed with its veracity, but he could not do anything until I had proved my innocence. Justice was not dealt as in our beloved America, where one is presumed innocent until proven guilty. He asked me if I had a passport, and when I told him that my clothes, which contained my passport, had been stolen from my room some months before, he smiled dubiously. "Whom do you know here?" he asked. I reminded myself that an uncle named Joseph Reubin, another baker, dwelt there. The police located him and brought him to my cell, but he did not know me, for he had never met me before. He finally identified me when I told him the names of the entire family, and he engaged a lawyer to defend me. The lawyer immediately asked that Yankel's house be searched, and sure enough, among other stolen articles, my clothes were found under a stack of hay, and in my coat pocket was my passport. In the meantime, evidence piled up against Yankel and his sons. David, the proprietor of the tavern, came on his own volition to testify for me.

I was eventually discharged, and Yankel, who finally confessed his guilt, was sentenced to prison for ten years and his sons for five years each. Needless to say, I never got my thirty-five roubles. Thus, my first attempt to earn my own living was a dismal failure.

After a few days rest with my uncle in Shaveli, I proceeded to Zhagory. I appreciated fully that I had paid dearly for deviating from my father's advice, and I was determined to devote all my time to study before I was called to military service.

I returned to the *Bet Hamidrash Hevrah Kaddisha,* and with the help of Rabbi Kalman Goldstein, who resided across the way from the House of Study, I obtained three Talmudic students whom I taught in the *klaus.* All of them were quite advanced, and had previously studied the Talmud for several years in a *heder.* One of them was the son of the famous Hebrew scholar and critic, Eliezer Atlas (1852–1904), editor of *Hakerem.* When Atlas came home from Warsaw for the holidays, he examined his son, and was elated to find the great progress he had made during his brief sojourn.

Zhagory, in those days, was famous for its scholars. They became known as "*Hachmei Zhager*" (the wise men of Zhagory). The famous *gaon,* Rabbi Israel Lipkin (Salanter), was a native of Zhagory. The renowned Mandelstam family, Benjamin, Leon, and their nephew, Max (the celebrated ophthalmologist of Kiev), hailed from Zhagory, where they had received their early education.

A famous savant was Hayyim Sack, the philosophical husband of Hinde Gitel (the latter was referred to as "the thrifty woman" so well described in the thirty-first chapter of the Book of Proverbs). Hinde conducted the biggest women's apparel and drygoods shop in town. She maintained ten Talmudic scholars in her *klaus,* which was at the rear of her house.

Her learned husband was known as "the aristocrat." Everyone greeted him with the utmost respect and it was deemed a great honor when he acknowledged such greetings. Hayyim Sack, in addition to his profound knowledge of the Talmud, was well read in Jewish philosophy and had studied the works of Saadiah, Maimonides, Bahya, Ibn Ezra, Albo, Halevi, and others.

There were in Zhagory a large number of old *maskilim* to whom the works of Krochmal, Rappaport, Erter, Levinsohn, and particularly the writings of the Mendelsohn school were paramount. There were others who were enthusiastic about the works of Smolenskin, Mapu, Ginsburg, the Lebensohns, Judah Leib Gordon, Lillienblum, and a host of others. Their aim was to introduce the use of the Hebrew language in modern literature. Some of them were fanatical about what they called "modern Hebrew." Smolenskin's work, "*Hatoe Bedarchei Hahayyim*" was read with greater ardor than the Bible. The local gathering place of the *maskilim* was the teahouse of Avremel Regoler, who was completely engrossed in the Hebrew language and spoke a mixture of Talmudic and Hebrew dialects. To him there was no other language so beautiful as Hebrew—not that he knew any

other language. He merely felt that no tongue so beautiful as that one could exist.

It is related that Avremel, in his zeal, maintained the opinion that if a child be kept in isolation until the age of five, he would spontaneously speak and think only in Hebrew. In his library were found all the Hebrew works that he considered to be classics, and the leading Hebrew periodicals. Avremel was known among his friends as "*Safra Rabba*" (the great scribe), for he had a fine penmanship. His writings were of the *Melizah* style, consisting largely of verses of the Bible intermixed with Talmudic maxims.

Avremel Regoler was a middle-aged man who was most fastidious about his personal appearance. His black beard was kept trimmed to perfection. His hair was always neatly groomed. His handsomely tailored coat reached to his knees, and he customarily wore a fine felt hat. His shoes always had the appearance of having just been blackened. He was celebrated for the multitudes of quotations from the Talmud which he could render by heart on the spur of the moment. His conversation was replete with Talmudic sayings, anecdotes, and humorous stories. He had a large collection of books and newspapers, and his teahouse was the rendezvous of all the *maskilim* in town.

The Orthodox Jews disliked Avremel and his visitors, and the latter reciprocated in kind. Many of the younger generation, among whom were some young *yeshivah bahurim*, did not undersand either. The *maskilim* included many sons-in-law who had adopted the new culture and believed that all the Orthodox Jews of the older generation who spent their time in the study of the law were of little account—that the old fashioned Jewish learning had had its day and was in the process of succumbing. Such individuals did not know the aims of the first *maskilim* and could not imagine the possibility that the *Torah* and *haskalah* could prove good bedfellows. When Yehuda Leib Gordon published his poem, "O! Awake My People! How long Wilt Thou Sleep?" they interpretated him to mean that they should eradicate the old Judaism and destroy it completely.

In all cities and towns there blossomed forth a crop of brand new "prophets," sixteen to twenty years old, who regarded themselves as the great and serious contemporary philosophers and thinkers of Israel. He who could write a few lines in Hebrew, Russian, or German thought himself a literary prodigy. Each of these self-appointed geniuses believed that it was his duty to be a preacher and upbraid his people, that he was called upon by a higher Power to "cure the disease

of his people." Anyone who wants to learn about these reformers need only turn the leaves of such Hebrew newspapers as *Hamaggid, Hamelitz,* and *Hatsfirah.*

If any young student at the rabbinical seminary at Vilna desired to impress his parents with the magnitude and depth of his learning, he would publish in one of the above-named newspapers some devious article in which he poured out the rankest abuse on the *yeshivah* and its teachers and on the synagogue and its elders. These articles always began with a poetical outburst which was followed by a flood of eloquent platitudes, replete with pompous verbosity.

The fact was that the Talmudic scholar of Lithuania was by nature soberminded. Above all, he respected keen intellect and willingly gave the man of intelligence precedence over the God-fearing individual (*hacham odif minabi*; "A wise man is superior to a prophet," is a famous Talmudic expression).

The Lithuanian student was judged by the dexterity with which he disentangled Talmudic problems. Quick wit was considered a greater virtue than rote memory, as demonstarted by knowledge of the page on which a certain passage occurred.

The Lithuanian *bahur* had a natural bent for mathematical problems. Every advanced student studied the *Zophnath Paaneach,* a work which crowded much algebra and geometry into a mere thirty pages. Of course this work only covered first principles, but many scholars pursued mathematics much further by means of their own reasoning ability plus the help of their teachers. In spite of the lack of modern methods in the solving of mathematical problems, such students often attained a high degree of mathematical knowledge. Professor Herman Shapiro, H. Z. Slonimsky, and Lipman Lipkin were among the famous Lithuanian mathematicians who were educated in the *yeshivot.*

When study hours were over, the student frequently went to the home of a friend to play chess; this game afforded him great diversion. At times he remained in the House of Study and amused himself by attempting to solve various mathematical problems with his colleagues. I well remember the flash of joy in the eyes of the one who first found the solution. He also liked to discuss the mathematical articles of Hayyim Zelig Slonimsky and the physical problems presented in the works of Rabinowitz.

To him study was not merely a means, but an end in itself. He enjoyed the mental exercise. He liked to reason things out for himself and took nothing for granted. He enjoyed a difficult problem

that required effort and concentration. The mere process of sharpening his mind, quite apart from the result obtained, was sufficient to reward him for all the time and effort expended.

In justice to the *maskilim* of Zhagory, it should be stated that not all who gathered at Avremel's tea house were as narrow as Avremel. There were many, especially among the Hebrew teachers, who had a knowledge of other languages, and who poked fun at him and told him that some of the writers he had mentioned as using purely Hebrew idioms, in reality employed literal translations from Yiddish. They tormented him with derogatory statements to the effect that Hebrew was not as yet a living tongue. Avremel listened to such talk with much reluctance and perhaps not a little nausea. Nevertheless, he could not well afford to contradict his customers bluntly.

The two men in Zhagory who interested me the most and whose houses I most frequently visited during my free evenings were the advocate Markus and the *feldsher* (practical physician), Goldman. Markus was a bachelor about fifty years old and was widely known for his professional benevolence. He was always ready to lend a helping hand to anyone who was in trouble, regardless of any question of financial recompense, and he was frequently taken advantage of by men who could well afford to pay for his services. He was very charitable, and there was not an institution to which he did not contribute liberally. Not only was he a friend to the poor but he always maintained a list of indigents whom he assisted. He was particularly interested in broadminded students, and there were quite a number of these in Zhagory. His house was open to them every evening, with his friendly brass samavar steaming away. He had an inexhaustable mine of stories and anecdotes but seldom touched upon religion.

He was a nonconformist, seldom attending religious services. He was often accused of heresy, and I was timorous about calling on him because if the story got about that I was his disciple this might prejudice my entering into the profession of *Shechitah* and thus prevent me from carrying out my father's wish. After I had met him on several occasions he became interested in me. He lent me books and attended to various minor legal matters for me and for my parents. Needless to say, I was deeply grieved when he contracted pneumonia and died.

Herr Markus had no close relatives in Zhagory; it fell upon a few of his friends to arrange for his funeral. I visited the local rabbi and asked him to officiate at the funeral and deliver the funeral oration, but to my surprise and chagrin, he refused. He said that since the

deceased had refused to conform to religious dogmas he certainly did not deserve any eulogy. I argued that the doctrine, "love thy neighbor as thyself" was good enough for Hillel, and that the deceased certainly deserved the appreciation of the multitudes of Jews who were the recipients of his benevolence, but this thought had no effect on the rabbi's determination. He remarked that many *goyim* (Gentiles) are also very good. I countered that Markus had been a Jew and had worked among Jews, although we would have no trouble in getting any number of Gentiles to eulogize him. When I realized that it would be futile to implore the rabbi any longer, I went to the rabbi of Alt-Zhagory (the town across the river), who had known Markus personally. I told him about my mission, and, after some discussion, he consented to officiate at his funeral. The entire community—men, women, and children—came to give Herr Markus the last honors. The *maskilim* and the *bahurim* arranged a program of their own at the cemetery. Thirty days after his death, a public meeting was arranged in his honor, with an out-of-town orator of note addressing the audience.

I mention this story to show the wide schism that existed in those days between the rabbis and their flock. The latter were wholeheartedly against their rabbi for refusing to give Herr Markus the last rites.

The other dearly beloved man in the community was Goldman the *rophe* (doctor) also referred to as Goldman the *feldsher* (practical physician). Goldman was an outspoken radical, and yet he was admired even by ultra-Orthodox Jews. No one bothered about his religious beliefs. He was considered a privileged personality because of his profession.

Goldman, in his younger days, had been a *yeshivah bahur*. He studied in the famous *yeshivah* at Volozin. From his childhood he had been interested in medicine, but his financial situation did not permit him to enter a university. When he was inducted into the army, he was assigned to the medical corps as a nurse through the influence of a Christian friend. He made the most of his opportunity by reading books on medicine, examining patients, and assisting physicians performing operations. When he was discharged from the army, he took the examination for *feldsher* and settled in Zhagory, where he practiced for several years. He developed into a good diagnostician and built up a large following; although there were two regular Jewish physicians in Zhagory, Goldman unquestionably had the biggest practice. Although his training was unconventional, he became very

learned in medicine. His deep sympathy for his patients was doubly appreciated in those difficult days.

Goldman knew several languages and had a large private library. He was in the habit of cultivating friendship with the students of the *yeshivah*, and some of these were always sitting in his library and studying at his table. When he was home, a number of students always thronged about him, and it was his custom to read a chapter from a certain book and then discuss it with them.

I met him for the first time after I had contracted a severe cold requiring medical attention. After he completed the examination, he explained to me in simple language the pathology of my condition and what he intended to accomplish with his prescription. His open manner and thorough examination could only breed confidence. The following day he visited me again without being asked. He described the anatomy of the lung to me in a very interesting manner. I knew gross animal anatomy from my Talmudic studies and could easily follow him in his descriptions. He invited me to call upon him, and I gladly accepted the invitation. I formed the habit of visiting him two evenings each week. When I had to wait for him to return home I passed the time in looking over his books. I was particularly interested in copies of Wunderbar's *Biblisch-Talmudische Medizin* and Carmoly's *History of Jewish Physicians*. I read both books from cover to cover. Both of these works were among the oldest on the history of Jewish medicine. I recognized in Goldman a friend and a guide. As we walked together it was a pleasure to discuss various topics with him. As I look back, I can say without hesitation that Dr. Goldman was highly instrumental in arousing within me a serious interest in the profession of medicine. Of course, at that time the obstacles were so unsurmountable that it seemed foolish even to think of such a possibility, but at least the thought remained hidden in some deep recess of my brain until a more opportune time presented itself for it to emerge.

My frequent visits to the abode of Goldman the *feldsher* soon became known to the elders of the House of Study. First they whispered about my association with Herr Goldman, the Sceptic. Then one of the elders felt that matters had already gone too far, and he openly called my attention to the fact that it was not seemly for a *yeshivah bahur* to association with a man who openly admitted not believing in Jewish practices and ceremonies. From then on I knew that I was under constant surveillance, but no one could find any

deviations in my religious behavior. I studied the whole day and never failed to attend all religious services.

In knowledge and refinement, the average student in the *Bet Hamidrash Hevrah Kaddisha* fell far below the caliber of the students of Kovno, Slabodka, and Bausk. I had no valid reason for being proud of my new colleagues. Some of the poor fellows had had no proper bringing up at all; they had run away from their poverty-stricken homes to escape hunger and strife with their parents. Others had been expelled from various *yeshivot* for misconduct, neglect of study, or lack of basic knowledge. Most of them had very little sense of responsibility. No examination was given in the *bet hamidrash* for an out-of-towner who applied for "eating days." Under their *gemara,* many of the students customarily concealed a storybook in Yiddish or Hebrew and spent their time reading trashy novels and stories.

There was one fellow among them known as the Birzer who unquestionably had a brilliant mind. He was called the "Birzer prodigy." Although I never once saw him studying, he had a deep Talmudic knowledge. He was only eighteen years of age. On many occasions he came out victorious when engaging in a Talmudic dispute with Rabbi Kalman Goldstein. The latter held a high opinion of him and was always ready to defend him from the accusations brought against him by the *shamash* (beadle) of the *bet hamidrash.* He was seldom seen at the morning services. The *shamash* on one occasion hid his *tephillin* for thirty days and he never even missed them.

When no strangers were present, the Birzer ridiculed religious practices and mimicked the pious Jews who frequented the house of worship. All the other *bahurim* looked to him for guidance, and he misguided them intellectually, spiritually, and morally.

On Saturday afternoons, the students customarily took long walks on the outskirts of town. I was always asked to accompany them, but I usually found some excuse to get out of it. On one particular Sabbath afternoon, the students virtually insisted that I accompany them, and I half-heartedly went along. I did not know that all of us were being watched by the *shamash.* When we were what was considered a safe distance away from the synagogue, the Birzer took out a match, lit a cigarette, and smoked it in the presence of the entire crowd. (This was strictly forbidden on the Sabbath day.) This incident became generally known in a matter of hours, and the entire community rose up in arms.

A town meeting was called that very night, and it was decided to expel all of us from the town *en masse;* some even suggested the

whipping post as representing suitable punishment. I did not mind leaving the city, but I was ashamed that my uncle, other relatives, and my parents should hear the news. If I were expelled, of course, I could never learn *shechitah* any more, for no *shochet* would be willing to accept me as an apprentice.

The *bahurim,* knowing their guilt, did not even try to defend themselves, as this smoking-on-Sabbath crime was not the only thing that they had been justly accused of. However, I insisted that I be heard, and I succeeded in proving to the elders that I never smoked—not even on weekdays—and that I attended all religious services regularly and even the *shamash* agreed that I was the only one who spent my time in studies. At the request of my cousin, R. David Isaac Estermann, one of the most prominent scholars and the wealthiest man in the town, my case was kept in abeyance for further investigation. When it was ascertained that this was the first time that I had ever gone out with that crowd on Sabbath and that my statements were correct, I was exonerated. The next day all the students were ignominiously expelled from the city amid the hisses and boos of a large crowd of angry people; that is, with the exception of the chief instigator, the Birzer, who on that very day sustained a hemorrhage of the lungs and died of the effects of advanced pulmonary tuberculosis in a few weeks.

It was late in 1889 that I made up my mind to fulfill once and for all the promise I had made to my father to learn the religious trade of *shochet.* Zhagory at that time had three *shochtim.* The youngest one was Reb Aaron Hodes, who was well known not only for his Talmudic learning but also for his secular erudition. He had a fine collection of books and subscribed to a number of journals.

One morning, after the morning services, I acquainted him with what was on my mind. He looked at me and smiled, telling me that he would be a happy man if he could but get out of his business. "It is a profession that is easy to get into, but difficult to get out of," he said. "It may be well enough for a married man to take up but not for a young man who has the intention of traveling to America." I wholeheartedly agreed with him, but I was determined to satisfy my father, so the very next day I arrived at his house prepared to receive the initial instructions for sharpening a *halif* (knife). For four days each week during a period of two months I spent two hours at his house practicing with a *halif,* and watching him slaughtering fowl in the yard.

On the third month, he took me along to the slaughterhouses to learn the technique of slaughtering big cattle. This I did not find so easy. I found it most difficult even to watch him as he put the long knife through the throat of the animal. I could not help turning my head away. Many times I found some excuse for not accompanying him. However, I soon realized that in order to receive a certificate it was requisite that I slaughter a number of cattle with proper finesse. I then literally forced myself to go with him. Years later, when I entered medical school, I had the same difficulty in facing the dissection room, but necessity overcomes all dislikes and difficulties.

This is not the place to discuss the merits or the disadvantages of the Jewish method of slaughtering animals. Dr. Isaac Dembo is probably right in his thesis that the Jewish method of killing animals is less painful than other procedures, but I had to steel myself to look at such a merciless performance. I did not mind the slaughtering of fowl nearly so much as the destruction of large animals. I never got used to the latter. All I can say is that it was a happy day when I fulfilled my necessary requirements and received the *kabbalah* (certificate of qualification).

My aversion to slaughtering large cattle was increased bv the following incident. After I had received my "diploma," I was asked by Reb Aaron to act as a substitute for him at a certain slaughterhouse. It was the first time that I had ever seen the butchers placing steer in the proper position for slaughter. First a noose was placed on the front legs and then a noose on the hind legs. The rope on the front legs was pulled taut, and then the rope on the hind legs. This, of course, caused the animal to fall. After this, the butcher climbed on top of the animal, and held its head, ready for the *shochet* to do his part.

When I was about ready to make my blood-curdling incision, the steer somehow freed itself from the ropes, and, quick as lightning, jumped up, threw the butcher into a nearby ditch, and ran after me. With the long knife in my hands I ran for my life through an open door into a nearby house. The enraged animal ran helter-skelter through the streets, overturning carts of fruit and vegetables, breaking windows, and destroying everything in its way. Pedestrians ran for safety. The butchers pursued the steer with ropes to recapture him, but as soon as they came near him, he turned on them, and the pursuit was reversed, with the butchers dashing to seek shelter. The beast finally ran into an open barroom, and the wide-eyed patrons and bartender slid under the counter for shelter. They then crawled through a back door to safety. After breaking several barrels of vodka,

the steer lay down on the floor of the saloon; the strong odor of the vodka appeared to make him drowsy. He was thereupon bound and slaughtered.

This was my last experience in handling large animals. What I lacked in knowledge of *shechita* I made up in *bedikah* (knowledge of inspection of animals). I could detect the smallest *sircha* (adhesion of the lung), and I observed all sorts of abnormalities when I examined the animal's lungs with my hands. In fact the butchers feared my keen observation because I found too many abnormalities rendering the flesh *terephah* (unfit to eat) to suit them.

As intimated previously, after serving as an apprentice for four months, I was ready for the examination. First I was examined by the three *shochtim* and then by the rabbis.

The occupation of *shochet* is entrusted only to pious persons of good character, well-versed in the Talmudic law, and skilled in their work. These qualifications seem most strange to Westerners, to whom a slaughterer's scholarship and morals seem very unimportant. The Jewish custom is to allow no one to slaughter unless he has passed a rigid examination before a competent authority (especially in the laws pertaining to the examination of the lungs), and has received a written certificate testifying to his expertness in slaughtering.

Here are the texts of some of the certificates I received as translated from Talmudic Hebrew:

CERTIFICATE OF EFFICIENCY FROM THE *SHOCHTIM* OF ZHAGORY

The bearer of this certificate, Benjamin Leib, son of Abraham Behr Gordon, of Neustadt Sugind has learned the technique and ritual of *shechita* with us and has succeeded in the highest degree. He is skillful in sharpening a knife in the shortest possible time. His knife is sharp and smooth. He is also an expert in detecting abnormalities of the lungs. He is experienced in slaughtering all kinds of cattle and fowl and he knows the rules of *shechita* by heart.

Aside from his knowledge in the above work, we hereby testify that he is a profound scholar of the Talmud and its commentaries. From his youth he has occupied himself with the study of the *Torah* and he is a man of general knowledge as well. He is well mannered and of fine character and well thought of by all who know him. He is well suited to the "rabbinic garment." All can depend upon him as upon a long-experienced *shochet* and we are confident that the community that will accept him as its *shochet* will be very pleased with him.

Dated Tuesday the 4th day of Nissan in the year 5650 (1890) at New Zhagory; (Signed) Aaron, son of Judah Hodes; Simeon Aaron, son of Baruch Rabinowitz.

DIPLOMA OF RABBI RIFF

In view of the testimony of the experienced *shochtim* from here, on whose testimony the whole house of Israel can depend; in view of my own examination of him; in view of his excellent conduct and fine manners (necessary for a *shochet*) and in view of his knowledge of the Talmud and the commentaries, I endorse the granting to him of all the rights and privileges of *shochet* in any community of Israel.

He surely will be among those who will go in the straight way and will hold fast to the laws of God. Those that will befriend him will be befriended and will be blessed with him and he with them.

(Signed) Judah Riff, Thursday, 4th day of Nissan, 5650 (1890).

TESTIMONIAL OF RABBI ESTERMAN

Although it is not customary for merchants to issue certificates, in these days, however, when knowledge of the Law is growing steadily less, it is the solemn duty of every Jew to try to lift it up, with all the strength at his command. Therefore, without solicitation, I am glad to testify that the *muflig* (distinguished scholar) the *bachur* Benjamin Leib Gordon possesses an exemplary character and has studied here in *Bet Hamidrash Hevrah Kadisha.* He is learned in Talmud and its commentaries and, aside from his scholarly attainments, I can testify to his fine traits and good character. He has conducted himself according to the *Torah* and the teaching of the rabbis.

But on account of the trying times in this land he has been compelled to divert some of his time from his studies to learn the holy profession of *shechita.* That he has succeeded to the highest degree in this profession is testified to by the local *shochtim* and also by the rabbi and by the *gaon,* Klonymus Goldstein. I also have examined him and found him to be skilled in his line. Therefore I state, happy is the city which will call upon him to serve in his profession or in any other calling.

(Signed) Tuesday the 4th day of Nissan 5650 (1890), David Yizchak, son of Isaiah, New Zhagory.

CERTIFICATE OF RABBI GOLDSTEIN

On the strength of the faithful testimony of the *shochtim* of this city, and upon my own examination of the *bachur,* Benjamin L. Gordon, I approve of granting him a certificate admitting him to the practice of *shechita* in any community of Israel.

I know the *bachur* Benjamin well. He studied in this city two years before he entered upon his vocation of *shochet* and I am pleased to

testify that he has a profound knowledge of the Talmud and commentaries; that he is respected by all that know him for his fine manners and character. He is fit to occupy the position of *shochet* in the largest Jewish community. I therefore take pleasure in recommending him to all who are in need of such a person.

(Signed) Klonymus, the son of Isaac Goldstein, on the 5th day of Nissan 5650 (1890).

Two days after I received my *kabbalot* (certificates), I bid farewell to my good uncle Leib Hillel, who, during my stay in Zhagory, was like a father to me, and to my other relatives and friends, and then set out for home. I reached Neustadt three days before the Passover holidays. My brother Gershon had returned home on the same day from the *yeshivah* in Telsi. I was most happy to find the family united around the table. This was the first time I could remember when the members of our family were at rest before Passover. Formerly, the reader will recall, the two weeks before Passover were spent in hard labor to manufacture *matzot* for the community.

The meeting with my parents this time lacked the cheer and happiness experienced in my former homecomings. My mother did not seem so well to me. She breathed heavily. I noticed that her usual good humor when the family was united was lacking. Her smile was forced and her eyes red. It was obvious that she had been weeping. I later found out that she wept frequently when she was alone and her mind not occupied with her customers. She was particularly worried over my desire to go to America.

My father, who was by nature a talkative man, remained silent after the preliminary greeting. I was glad that my brother Gershon broke the silence by telling me that he anticipated studying the next term in Zhagory, since he had no means of going to the *yeshivah* at Volozon (the most prominent *yeshivah* in Russia). He was very much impressed with my aforementioned *shechita* certificates from Zhagory.

The *sederim* (ceremonies on Passover evenings) passed in the traditional manner. My youngest brother, Mordechai, asked the four questions at the first *seder,* and my father, who sat at the head of the table, conducted the *seder* in his usual way. However, it lacked the genuinely pleasant atmosphere of former *sederim.* It seemed mechanical and stiff. Father did not have the heart to read much from the *Haggadah* but left most of it for the boys. After the *seder,* he remarked that he had a fifth question to add to the *ma nishtana* (the traditional four questions), namely: "Why are the Jewish people

different from all other peoples? The sons of others remain with their parents, but Jewish sons, as soon as they reach maturity, leave their parents for distant lands." No one attempted to answer this query.

During this brief interim in my town I stayed home all the time with my parents. Occasionally I took walks with my mother and talked to her about my future in America. One time I mentioned that as soon as I had saved enough money, I would send steamship tickets for the whole family; when she heard this I noticed that her face beamed for a moment, but then she remarked, "Lord knows if this will ever take place; you know that I am a sick woman." She had contracted a heart condition.

Great as is the tragedy for one who is uprooted from his native country, family, and environment, and forced to go away to strange and unfamiliar lands, greater still is the tragedy of those who are left behind. The wanderer may find, sooner or later, a little nook on the face of the earth, where he may acclimate himself, but those who are left behind never get over their anxiety. Parents who have raised their children—even under the most adverse conditions—can find no more peace of mind. The threads that they have woven into their garment of life are permanently torn asunder.

Over the long passage of years, many truly beautiful customs and practices associated with Jewish life in Lithuania have frequently come to my mind. Many of these customs were full of native grace and charm. They exhibited a peculiar quality of their own that has no equivalent in modern society. While justly taking pride in the democratic principles that have penetrated to the roots of life in America, one cannot help pondering over the many features of democracy in the now destroyed Jewish communities of Lithuania. The election of the *Gabbaim* (elders) was an example of democracy at work. No one even attempted to influence the vote by threats or favors; and all this took place in a land of great tyranny.

One surely cannot sneer even at the old dilapidated *heder* or the disheveled rabbi. Behind the crumbling walls of the former, the eternal torch of learning illuminated the horizon, and under the skull cap of the latter, a powerful brain and force for good were usually at work. A warm heart usually beat beneath the rabbi's ragged coat. One may poke fun at this or that phase of the old life, but, in general, there is much good to be learned from the communal life of my fathers and forefathers in the Old Country.

It is difficult to estimate how much one owes to the environment of his native town for success or failure in life. It is generally recog-

nized that the young mind is very impressionable. It is capable of storing away ideas, thoughts, and episodes for any number of years, all of which come to the surface later in life.

The experience and knowledge I took along with me from my native town were perhaps of a commonplace character, but they have grown upon me from day to day and from year to year. They certainly have made me better equipped to endure the vicissitudes of my later years.

I regret that I am only able to return the debt I owe to my town and townsmen with sighs and tears. Hitler and his German cohorts have uprooted the town to its foundation. The friends of my youth that were still alive have all been massacred. No one escaped to bemoan the lot of the God-fearing and righteous community that throbbed with life for nearly four centuries.

Two graveyards are the only monuments left in memory of the living past.

If my efforts in this present work can resurrect but a fragment of my native town I will consider myself well repaid. Adieu old Neustadt!

CHAPTER VIII

To America

O Liberty, thou goddess heavenly bright,
Profuse of bliss and pregnant with delight,
Eternal pleasures in thy presence reign,
And smiling Plenty leads thy wanton train.
Eased of her load Subjection grows more light,
And poverty looks cheerful in thy sight.
Thou makest the gloomy face of Nature gay,
Givest beauty to the sun and pleasure to the day.
—Addison

I remained home for two weeks following the Passover holidays waiting for my steamship ticket to arrive. During this time I made the necessary preparations for the long journey to America. I made arrangements with Hirsh, the son of Naphtali, to convey me secretly to Germany. Owing to the fact that I was of military age, I could not pass through the regular customs gate, and I was compelled to cross the boundary line at night in order not to be detected by the sentinels guarding the frontier against smugglers and persons who did not possess proper passports.

It was two o'clock in the morning when my guide, whose business it was to smuggle out travelers without passports to Germany, called for me. I was glad that my sisters and brothers were asleep. I had arranged for my parents to see me off by entering Germany through the regular gate on the next day. After walking silently in the dark for about an hour, we reached a forest near the frontier about three miles north of the regular gate. From behind trees we could see and hear the guards marching to and fro. In a few moments we heard the shots of revolvers from a distance; this usually meant that contraband runners were being fired upon. "Let us go now!" said my guide. "The soldiers are now busy with the contraband runner and we can safely pass the boundary line." I crossed the boundary line without the slightest mishap.

On the German side of the frontier, a carriage was waiting for me to take me over to Kolletzisken, a town about three miles inside the frontier where I was to meet my parents on the following day.

My father arrived about 10 A.M. and he told me that my mother had decided at the last minute not to come to see me off. The excuse that she gave for her action was that she was not able to leave my younger sister, Grace, who was not quite two years of age at that time. I knew of course, that the real reason she did not come was because she could not bear to face the final parting. I must confess that her decision spared me much vexation—much as I loved her—for this final parting would have been too much of an ordeal for both of us. From my earliest childhood I instinctively dreaded to see even acquaintances (let alone members of the family or close friends) going away or moving to a different place. I recall that whenever a neighbor moved away I became moody for a protracted period.

My father, then, was the only one to see me off. He was silent as I boarded the train, but I knew what was in his heart. I saw him follow the train with his eyes until it disappeared from sight. As has been previously intimated, separation from relatives and friends is always more difficult for those who are left behind than for the one who is leaving, for the mind of the departing one is occupied with seeing new places and meeting new people.

We got off the train at Königsberg where we had to wait for a train to Hamburg scheduled for the following morning. This gave me an opportunity to take a good look at this historic city. Incidentally, it was at this railroad station that I first observed the miracle of electric lights. Königsberg is celebrated as the birthplace of the great philosopher, Kant, and it was distinguished for its culture and great personalities. Among the disciples of Kant were many prominent Jews, such as David Friedlander, Isaac Eichel, Marcus Herz, and Aaron Joel. Eichel published his Hebrew journal, *Hameaseph* (The Gatherer) in Königsberg.

The Jewish population of Königsberg at that time was about 4,000, which number included many Russian and Lithuanian Jewish merchants who had previously settled there. There were also a number of Russian Jewish immigrants who had tarried there because of lack of funds to continue their journey to America. These persons were waiting for the "German Society" to assist them.

As I looked over the city, I recalled an episode which occurred there when I was five years of age: My father, on one occasion, had to go to Königsberg to consummate a business transaction, and he took me along. At that time the rabbi of the town was the famous biblical commentator, Rabbi Mayer Lebus, known as *MaLBim* (1809-1879). My father was an admirer of this great man and always used

his commentary on the Bible. Of course, when we got to Königsberg and visited this famous man, he took me along to receive his blessing. While my father was conversing with the rabbi, in his private office, a door opened slightly, and I saw a woman peep through the aperture. The rabbi, without turning his head, cried out "*Kosher*!" For many years I could not understand what the rabbi's remark meant and I thought for sure that it had some prophetic portent. It never entered my mind that the woman might have seen the rabbi previously, and that he was probably expecting her in order to give her an answer about a *kashrut* problem.

The next day I took the train to Hamburg, the port of embarkation, where we met representatives of the *Hilfverein* who took the immigrants to the Jewish immigration house. Upon our arrival there, we were all treated to rolls and coffee. The immigration house consisted of a large room with benches extending all around the four walls. At the center of the room was a desk, fenced in by railing, where a clerk registered our names and examined our steamship tickets. I was told that the *Bohemia* of the Hamburg-America Line, on which I was to travel, was under repair and would not be ready for ten days.

When I told the clerk that my funds would not permit me to stay in Hamburg that long, he suggested that I help him in the office, do odd jobs around the building, and in return he would see to it that I would get my food and lodging during that period. My main job was to assist mothers with their children and to furnish information to new immigrants. I received the necessary data from a circular printed in German. I had two hours free from my duties each day, which I utilized in taking long walks through the city. I visited the ancient Jewish synagogue and other institutions. I walked on the banks of the river Elbe, and I passed my time watching the tugs, the ferries, and the tall-gabled medieval edifices leading to the park and the public square.

I was greatly impressed with the many institutions maintained by the Western Jews for the relief of their harrassed and distressed brethren of the East. Every capital in Europe at that period had its benevolent association: The French had their *Alliance Israélite Universelle*; the English had their *Anglo-Jewish Association* and the Germans, as noted, had their *Hilfverein der deutschen Juden.* These organizations worked individually and collectively to facilitate the passage of the Jewish refugees of Eastern Europe to the various countries of refuge. They had their agents at all frontier stations, ports, and railroad

stations. The *Hilfverein* had thirty-two such bureaus in all parts of Germany. This organization obtained reduced rates from railroad and shipping lines, provided the refugees with food while passing through Germany, and, in many instances, even paid the cost of transportation.

This organization secured from national and local authorities various privileges to help facilitate the passage of their immigrant brethren to America. In other words, the *Hilfverein der deutschen Juden* took care of the immigrant from the moment he crossed the frontier until he was placed on board the boat which was to transport him to America, Africa, or Australia.

Here I will interrupt my narrative and digress momentarily to relate an incident which, when considered with other similar instances, placed a stigma on a few of the Eastern Jewish immigrants. As I walked through the Jewish quarters of Hamburg, a Jew about thirty years of age, obviously also an immigrant, approached me and stretched out his hand to greet me with,"*Sholom aleichem*!" ("Peace be with thee"). He then engaged in conversation with me and told me that he hailed from a town situated near Neustadt and that he knew many families in my town.

When I told him that my boat was undergoing repairs and that I had to wait for a considerable time before it would be ready to sail, he suggested that I exchange my ticket for that of a friend of his whose boat was scheduled to depart in two days. He stated that the accommodations on the *Bohemia* were very poor and that the other boat was newer and had better facilities. He declared that although his friend was ready to sail in two days, if I would give him five dollars in addition to my ticket, he would exchange tickets with me. When I told him that I liked the idea but did not have the necessary capital to culminate the deal, he suggested that I offer his friend three dollars. I consented to this and gave him my ticket and the three dollars. He pocketed both the ticket and money and told me where to call upon him on the following day.

The next day I went for my ticket but the man was not to be found. I was told that he had checked out that very morning. One can easily imagine the extent of my chagrin. There I was in a strange land without the ticket that meant so much to me and without any funds. If this matter were not rectified, I could not continue my journey to America and I had not even money enough to return home. I ran back to the immigration office as fast as my legs could carry me and told the manager of my predicament. He smiled; evidently

this was not the first case of this type that had come to his attention. He advised me not to talk about the matter to anyone.

He said that the town was flooded with such swindlers, and that he was very surprised that I had not read the warning against them that was posted on the wall of the immigration house. "Your ticket number," he said, reassuringly, "was registered on the day you arrived. I will notify the ticket office of the fraud, and as soon as the person who holds the ticket presents himself at the window, he will be arrested."

The next morning the immigration office was notified that the man with my ticket had been apprehended and that I should go to identify him at once. However, the man who held the ticket was not the one who had defrauded me. I was very sorry for the young fellow, for he too had been taken in by the swindler. My ticket was returned to me, and the culprit was eventually arrested and turned over to the Russian authorities, who had been seeking him in connection with other fraudulent activities.

After wandering around the streets of Hamburg for a period of ten days, I was more than glad to see an announcement in the papers that the *Bohemia*, on which I was to sail, would leave Hamburg on the next day. I was ready at the dock so early on the morning of the departure that I was the first passenger to walk up the gangplank and board the vessel. The weather was ideal; the sun was bright and the sea calm; but my heart and mind were not so peaceful.

I knew that I was going to the Land of the Free, but I also was cognizant of the fact that no one expected or awaited me there. I did not have the slightest idea as to how I was going to make a living: I had no trade and was physically unfit for hard manual labor. Then, too, the fact that I was leaving the continent where my ancestors had lived for so many centuries weighed heavily on my mind.

Of course, I was happy to go to America, but to one who has no funds, no trade, and no relations, one of the freedoms in the New World could be freedom to starve. I was rudely awakened out of my reverie by loud blasts of the boat's whistle, signalling the last call for all to get on board.

The *Bohemia* was an old Hamburg-America liner, carrying first and third-class passengers. As I watched the passengers clambering up the two gangplanks to their respective classes, it occurred to me that they belonged to two different worlds. The first class passengers were confident, well-dressed, happy, and smiling, and those of the third class were apathetic, ragged, and depressed. The third-class

passengers, who like myself were mostly refugees, were not even permitted to walk on the dignified deck of the rich.

I was happy when I turned my eyes away from the gangplanks towards the sea to perceive that at least nature made no such distinctions and that no social or economic passport was necessary in order to enjoy the air and sunshine, and to contemplate the beauties of the great sea.

My heart sank when I went down into the lower cabin in reply to the dinner bell. I could not eat. The very thought that I would have to reside in such a combination hell-hole and pigsty for three weeks perturbed me deeply. The main third-class cabin was occupied by a seething mass of humanity. There was the babble of many languages, with Yiddish predominating. Everyone seemed to shout at one time to make themselves heard, and the cries of small children added to the din. Human voices were intermixed with the sounds of musical instruments played by Hungarians and Slovaks. This was accompanied by hand-clapping and the stamping of feet, but there was no room for dancing.

The raucous turmoil was deafening and the air was stifling from the over-crowded conditions and tobacco smoke. Men and things seemed to be all mixed up. The heterogeneous conglomeration of humanity were mingled with assorted bundles, boxes, baskets, bags, and pillows.

But as bad as things were during the day, the nights were even worse. Sleeping accommodaions were not nearly adequate. Men and women were compelled to spend their nights on their luggage and on the deck. The nocturnal scene was most demoralizing, with half-dressed men and women attempting to sleep everywhere. I spent my nights resting on a chair on the outer deck.

During the voyage, when morning finally came, it was my custom to go below for tea. I could not bring myself to partake of most of the food which was served, however, so I subsisted for about three weeks on bread, butter, cheese, and tea.

After a day or two of abject loneliness on board, things began to brighten up. I met a number of men who, like myself, were looking for company to help while away the long hours on shipboard. One of these was Rabbi Phillip Jachas, of Riga, whom I had previously met in Bausk. He was coming to America on a lecture tour sponsored by the *Hovevei Zion* of Odessa. His present destination was New York, where for many years after he was active in cultural and charitable work.

With friends and lively discussions the days passed quickly. The most favored topic was the influence of Mendelsohn and his school on the *Haskalah* movement; reformed Judaism was another favorite subject.

There were about four hundred Jewish third-class passengers in the lowest cabin. Among them were a rabbi and a cantor; both had been called to America to fill positions in their respective capacities. The rabbi was called to New York, and the cantor to a city in Pennsylvania. Religious services were conducted three times a day in the dining hall of the third class cabin. Many first-class Jewish passengers attended these services, some of whom were obligated to observe *jahrzeit* (prayers in memory of dead parents); others, however, attended services because they were so accustomed to do so in their native towns since early childhood, that they could not bear to miss them.

The Saturday morning services were even attended by some Gentiles who came to hear the melodious voice of the cantor. When on Saturday afternoon the rabbi delivered the sermon, there also was quite a large attendance. It was gratifying to observe the harmony that existed among all passengers. They were truly like one big, happy family. It appeared that all that is best in human nature becomes manifest among travellers on the high seas. In fact, one could conclude that it is the dry land which breeds the many evils to which the human race is heir.

The festival of *Shavuot* (Feast of Weeks) was celebrated with impressive services in the dining hall. The *hazan* (cantor), who possessed a fine baritone voice, chanted the prayers with feeling and expression according to the traditional manner. He followed the *hassidic* ritual. The *hazan* was about thirty-five years of age. He had a long black beard and earlocks which hung far down on each side of his face. He was dressed in a long black *kaftan* which reached down to his ankles. This garment was tied around his waist with a black silk girdle. He wore white socks, which were rendered visible only when the *kaftan* was separated in front, and a pair of pantaloons. He appeared very religious and never missed religious services. I am presenting this detailed description of the cantor because of the following incident associated with this pious man, which sheds light upon the people and the times.

Soon after the voyage was begun, it became obvious that he kept constant company with a woman who appeared about five years his junior. Naturally, this aroused the curiosity of many of the passengers. Rumors and counter-rumors spread thick and fast among the Jewish

passengers. On the eve of the second day of *Shavuot*, after the services had been completed and the cantor had left the dining hall, two passengers got up before the gathering present and stated that they had been called by the rabbi to witness a *get* (a religious bill of divorcement) which this cantor was about to send his wife in Europe. Evidently, as soon as the cantor reached New York, he was going to send this document to his wife, and divorce her in order to marry this woman with two children, whom he had met on the boat. It was ascertained that the woman was en route to her husband somewhere in Maryland, but that she was planning to divorce her husband in order to marry the *hazan*.

The next day, when the cantor came to officiate at the services, he was hissed and booed and told in none-too-polite language not to dare desecrate the altar unless he explained satisfactorily this illicit connection with the woman traveller. He immediately left the dining hall and went up to the stern.

After the services were performed by another passenger, a few men held a council and decided to take the bill of divorcement away from the cantor before he reached New York. They were on the lookout for him constantly.

The *hazan* became so upset and nervous because of these events that he could not sleep. One night, while he was standing at the rail, he was approached by two men who demanded that he give up the bill of divorcement under the threat that he would be exposed in the newspapers and that his chances of obtaining a position as cantor anywhere in America would thus be nullified. He remonstrated, saying that what he had done was within the law, and he began to speak loudly to attract the attention of the boat's officers. One of the men thereupon clapped his hand over his mouth and held him while the other searched his pockets. The bill of divorcement was found and forcibly taken from the cantor.

The matter was further complicated when it became known that the woman in the case had previously been the *hazan's* wife, whom he had divorced several years previously in order to marry his current wife whom he had left in Europe. Evidently he was now anxious to divorce his present wife to go back to his former love, whom he had accidentally met on the ship and who had two children by her present husband!

The next day the *get* was proudly exhibited, like a trophy of war, to all the passengers on the deck. It was then destroyed and the pieces

unceremoniously thrown into the ocean in the presence of a number of passengers and amidst gales of laughter and merriment.

Even here the case did not rest. The rabbi who had performed the dubious service of providing the *get* was forced to give up the ten dollars he had received by way of salary, and he also was threatened with exposure if he put up any resistance or even any argument. The ten dollars were thereupon sent to the Immigrant Aid Society in New York.

Aside from this case, there were many other love matches on the *Bohemia*. One couple could not wait until they reached the shores of America to wed; they were married on the boat one day before it arrived in New York.

One day before the ship was scheduled to land, we ran into a mighty northeastern storm. The sky became black as Stygian night and the sea became more and more turbulent, dashing up fierce gray waves. The ship quivered, creaked, and wheezed, and the high waves slapped viciously against the small portholes of the cabins. It was impossible to stand or even recline without having a strong grip on some fixed object. Many people rolled on the floor amidst tables, chairs, and luggage. I became violently ill during the eight hours that the storm lasted.

CHAPTER IX

New York

Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore;
Send these the homeless, tempest-tossed to me.
I lift my lamp beside thy golden door.
—Emma Lazarus

THE next morning, when the weather cleared, I heard the cry, "Land! Land!" The sight of land braced me, and I began to regain my faculties. I actually felt as if I were coming home. The sight of the Statue of Liberty had an inspiring and cheering effect upon me.

About midday, three weeks after the start of the voyage, the *Bohemia* docked at the pier of the Hamburg-America Line at Hoboken, New Jersey. It was a great feeling to step down the gangplank on free soil. I was not detained long by the customs officials, as I had no luggage to be searched.

Within an hour after disembarking I was indeed a free but lonely man. I had the address of a townsman of mine, and I decided that I would make his house my first stop in New York. As I was leaving the dock, I saw a man who looked Jewish, and I inquired of him in Yiddish to tell me how to get to Eldridge Street. As I pronounced the letter "g" of "Eldridge" like the "g" of "big," the man, who was waiting for another passenger, could not understand me. I thereupon gave him the written address, and he smilingly said: "If you wait I will take you there. I am going in that direction myself."

While talking with him I found out that he had been in New York for ten years and that in the old country he had been a *yeshivah bahur*. When he first came to New York, he became a peddler; then he hired a stand on Canal Street, and when I met him he was the owner of a peddler's supply store. He reassured me and told me not to worry; he then gave me his business card and told me to call on him as soon as I was rested.

Abraham Hirsh Margolis, my first host in the New World, was a middle-aged man. He had been humorously nicknamed, while still

in my home town, "the *mappel*" (the fetus). When I had last seen him in the old country, he had sported a long black beard, and he never removed the skull cap from his head in the presence of visitors. Now he was happily bare-headed and his beard gone.

He had arrived in New York five years previously in search of some means of supporting his large family. At home, although obviously honest, friendly, and straightforward, he was ever in dire financial circumstances. He informed me that when he first came to America, he attempted to earn a livelihood by peddling notions: he filled up a basket with matches, straight pins, safety pins, shoe laces, shoe polish, writing paper, envelopes, pencils, etc., and sold his wares in Morrisina (now famous as the Bronx).

After struggling in this new business for a few months he finally had to give it up. The *Irishe* women, he declared, took his wares on credit and never paid him. He said that he could not argue with them because he did not understand their language. Some "customers" took almost all of his goods from the basket, allegedly for the purpose of displaying them properly on the table. However, like as not, when he put the merchandise back, most of the pieces had vanished into thin air. Whenever he attempted to talk, everyone roared at his pathetic attempts to speak English. Some satanic individuals pulled on his beard for the sheer joy of observing the sequelae to this performance. "They named me 'Bearded Bill,' " he declared. In self-defense, he thereupon shaved off his beard and changed his business to glazing.

While talking he pointed to a box of window glass in the corner of the room which he carried on his back as he travelled through the streets, crying, "Glass! Glass!" He said that he thanked the Lord that this present trade enabled him to earn a livelihood for his family. Now his name had been altered to "Big Bill."

While we were talking, his children returned from school and he introduced the boys to me as Mike and Pete, and the girls as Kate and Susie. I looked at him and his children with great astonishment. Changing names at home had been a serious matter. Names were derived from generations back and one did not change his name as he would a garment. The only voluntary name-changing I remember was the adding of a name to a person who was seriously ill as a spiritual remedy.

I myself had been given such an added name. When I was sick with smallpox my mother added the name Hayyim (life) to my name. I asked my host why it was necessary to change everyone's name in

America. He replied that changing names was the first step in Americanization. He related that on the first day the children had gone to school, the teacher placed slips in their hands with the new names on them; thus Benjamin became Mike, Bezalel became Peter, Deborah became Katie and Leah became Susie.

When I heard that the name Benjamin had been changed to Mike, I became rather uneasy; this was the good name I had inherited from my great grandfather who was a learned man, and I shuddered with horror at the thought of dropping it for a name the significance of which I did not know. After a moment of reflection it occurred to me that Benjamin was a good American name. I recalled the great American name of Benjamin Franklin and the candidate for President in those days was also a Benjamin—Benjamin Harrison II. Franklin's wife's name was Deborah and if such names were proper for such good Americans, I could not understand why Jews should change them. Furthermore, why should Bezalel be changed to Pete? My host had no answer to my logic except to say that the schoolteacher knew better.

For the rest of that day, until late in the evening, we talked about our native town. Mrs. Margolis then suggested that I go to bed. She put up a cot for me in the dining-room of her three-room apartment. This cot was evidently the customary sleeping place for two of her sons, for I observed that the two boys with pillows and coverings in their hands left the house. I felt very badly about depriving them of their sleeping quarters but as I was very tired I soon fell asleep.

In about half an hour, however, I woke up with a terrible itch all over my body. It felt as though the cot were moving from under me. I jumped out of bed as though I were in a tub of overheated water. I then quickly dressed myself, being careful not to disturb my kind hosts, for my bed had too many other denizens to suit me. I went down into the street since it was a warm night, and, finding all the steps occupied by tenants, I walked around the neighborhood until morning.

When I returned to my hosts I noticed that many people were walking down the stairway from the roof with their bedding. I learned that these persons had been sleeping on the roof. That day I was too exhausted to call on anyone, and at night I moved my sleeping quarters up to the roof. I found the entire roof crowded with men, women, and children who came in droves to escape their stuffy apartments. Here was a sight to match the nocturnal appearance of the third-class cabin of the *Bohemia* and perhaps to go it one better!

Half-dressed men, women, and children reclined on every available inch of space, packed close to each other. The clear sky and relatively fresh air, however, acted like a sedative on everyone, and I do not believe that there was one case of insomnia. I soon fell asleep and did not awaken until the rays of the morning sun lit up the sky.

That day I called upon Mr. Brodie, the peddler's supply proprietor, who had invited me to see him. I had to wait an hour before he had time to talk to me. He and his wife were busy packing merchandise into baskets for their customers, most of whom were recent arrivals from the other side. When he found time to talk to me, he remarked, "There are two ways open for you to make a living. One is to take up peddling, while the other is to teach children Hebrew." He advised me to follow the first course, and he was willing to trust me with a basket of merchandise. He said that there was no future for a young man in teaching Hebrew.

As he gave me this advice, I surveyed a number of peddlers coming and going with their baskets. The very sight of them depressed me. Without hesitation I made my decision. I thanked him for his kind advice, and I left him saying that I would think the matter over. I noticed that he was disappointed at my obvious decision. It was his custom to advise every immigrant to engage in peddling, and it was in this manner that he quickly established a big business. He furnished every immigrant with a basket and an initial supply of free paraphernalia and taught him how to sell his wares. He assigned a particular neighborhood to each peddler. Mr. Brodie's customers liked him, for he was truly their friend.

After I left him I went to see Rav Hakolel (the chief rabbi) of New York—the famous Jacob Joseph of Vilna (1848–1902). He was the son of Bear Joseph, a native of my town. I had a letter of introduction to him from the rabbi of Neustadt. This genial rabbi received me courteously. After talking to me for about half an hour, he turned me over to his brother, Reb Leibchig, whom I had known from Zhagory.

The latter was a *shochet* in New York. He advised me to adopt, as a stepping stone, the profession of teaching. With his help I got six pupils within the next few days. At the chief rabbi's house I met a young man named Burstein. (He later studied medicine in Cleveland where he practiced for several years.) Burstein was quite a Talmudic scholar, and for a considerable time was a disciple and student of the rabbi. He advised me to join the rabbi's class, which

consisted of only three young men. I gladly accepted this opportunity and I became one of the inner circle of the chief rabbi's staff.

I spent most of my leisure hours there. The office was always bustling with rabbis, authors, and various religious officials. Some visitors were anxious to be ordained as rabbis. Others were eager to receive the rabbi's *haskamah* (endorsement) for their manuscripts and perhaps for him to write an introduction to their works; still others were eager to receive *kabbalah* (a certificate that enables one to act as a *shochet*). The rabbi had a secretary named Buchhalter who attended to much of his office work, and when he was very busy, Burstein and I pitched in and helped him out.

I well remember how, soon after my arrival in New York, I incessantly walked the streets in my zeal to get acquainted with the great metropolis. On one of these days I was attracted by a huckster who was intermittently screaming in a staccato, high-pitched voice: "Tomatoes! tomatoes!" Numerous women appeared in their doorways, and others peeped out of their windows in response to his call. The sight of his wares filled me with curiosity. This was the first time I had ever seen tomatoes, and I could not resist the temptation of tasting this handsome red fruit. The huckster had little trouble in sizing me up as a new arrival and he supplied me with a more or less over-ripe selection of tomatoes, which I deposited in my pockets. When I returned to my room an hour later and started to remove the tomatoes, alas! my pockets were saturated with a syrupy mess. One tomato that had perchance remained more or less intact, I attempted to eat like an apple—with, as the reader can well imagine, a most disastrous effect. "How strange is this wonderful new land!" I marvelled to myself as I proceeded to clean the mess from my face, hands, and clothing.

My first contacts with the English language lacked formality, to say the least. I acquired my early education in printed English by studying the words on store signs and bill posters while walking along Grand and Canal Streets, then the most famous business streets in lower New York. The signs on the Canal Street stores particularly, proved to be veritable Rosetta Stones for me, with their bilingual inscriptions. What I failed to understand in English was often explained by the accompanying Yiddish. I identified many English words from their similarity to their German or Yiddish equivalents (e.g., milk, coffee, fire, water, shoes, bakery, glasses, and school). I copied all new words in a small notebook, and it was my custom, when I returned to my room, to classify them alphabetically. I had particular

difficulty with those English words which were not spelled phonetically. In the languages with which I was familiar, every consonant and vowel could only be pronounced as they were written. English was so different! Yet I soon found that even non-phonetic English words often followed a pattern; for example, when I heard the word "night," I learned that the "gh" in English is parallel to the "ch" in the German *nacht*. This gave me the key to many words such as "might," "light," and "right."

One day, while I was following my customary pursuit of reading the signs on the various stores, a storekeeper noticed that I was taking notes at his window. He reported to the Police Department that a suspicious man was "casing" his premises. I was soon picked up by a policeman as a suspicious character. I was brought before an Irish magistrate who asked me why I was loitering around the store. I tried, in my very best English, to explain what I was doing in front of the store, and to corroborate my statement I exhibited my notebook. Evidently my new method of language study did not appeal to the magistrate, for he promptly fined me $5 (all I had saved by teaching since my arrival in America). For several weeks I feared to walk on the streets, and upon passing any stores, I always lowered my eyes.

While occupying myself the best I knew how at the rabbi's office, I was advised to register at the Nationalization School which was conducted by the Jewish Alliance of New York.

The School of Americanization of the Hebrew Education Society was situated a few doors from the office of the chief rabbi. There were morning classes in elementary English conducted by a middle-aged man named Herr E. He was a Jew of German extraction and he spoke to his class in Germanized Yiddish. Herr E. evidently had a good opinion of himself and he spoke to his pupils—some of whom were elderly men and women—in a most condescending manner.

I joined his class. I knew the rudiments of English grammar from Sokolov's English-Yiddish reader which I had studied after I had made up my mind to emigrate to America, but naturally my knowledge was more theoretical than practical. One morning Herr E. tried to teach his class how to pronounce "th." In so doing he illustrated by opening his mouth and putting his tongue between his teeth. By the time the sound emerged it was definitely more like "dz" than "th." He then proudly asked me to imitate him and pronounce "th." I tried to put my tongue between my teeth and I vividly recall almost biting it off; however, the sound never came out as "dz"

but as "th." Herr E. then insisted that I pronounce the letter "w" as "ua," and when I tried to say the word "well," it sounded like "uel," which did not please me or the teacher.

The professor then loosed his wrath upon me with unbridled sarcasm and ironical gestures before all the class, which ridicule, naturally enough, made me feel most humiliated. I stood quietly by until he exhausted his English, Hebrew, and Yiddish vocabulary of invectives; I then stood up and told him, also in the presence of the class, that I was far from convinced that his pronunciations of "th" and "w" were proper. Without further ceremony I thereupon got up and left the classroom.

A few days later he saw me walking with the chief rabbi on East Broadway, and when on inquiry he learned that I was one of the rabbi's inner circle, he evinced great dismay. He immediately wrote me a letter of apology and asked me to rejoin his class, but I could not find it in me to return to it.

One night, while I was still lodging on the roof of Margolis' apartment house, a fatal accident occurred to one of the sleepers who had tried to escape the heat of his apartment; he fell from the eighth-story roof of the apartment house and was instantly killed. This accident caused much consternation in the neighborhood and roof-sleeping was immediately forbidden.

The next day I rented a small room for myself on Clinton Street for the sum of $5.00 a month. This was the first time in my life that I had the comfort of my own private room, where I was able to study without being disturbed.

The same evening I registered at the Henry Street evening school. I was not fortunate in my early schooling in America, however. I found the classroom attended by elderly men of many nationalities, most of whom chewed tobacco and spit profuse streams of repulsive brown juice into cigar boxes filled with sand. I found the atmosphere of this house of education unbearable, and I left the evening school on the same night I entered it.

Not being successful with public education, I made up my mind to educate myself. I picked up a small Webster's dictionary in a second-hand bookstore, and a work by Oliver Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield*. At first, I found this book very difficult reading. I had to consult the dictionary at every third word, and frequently I had to use my German dictionary to understand the English dictionary. As I struggled through *The Vicar of Wakefield*, I marked down the meaning of every word I did not know. It took me six weeks to com-

plete the book, and, when I was through, my *Vicar of Wakefield* looked like an interlinear translation of some old Greek text.

The worst development of this reading was that I valiantly tried to use Goldsmith's vocabulary in my daily conversations. This, coupled with my heavy accent, made my English into a new language! Some of my closest friends advised me that I should give up talking "dictionary language." The other books I read in my new home were *Robinson Crusoe* and *Tom Tracy's New Boy.*

I soon realized that there was little use in acquiring a vocabulary if I could not pronounce the words properly and if none of the people to whom I spoke understood the meanings of the words. I therefore made up my mind to enter a day school. I saw the principal of the Henry Street School, but he discouraged me from registering, saying that I would not feel at home among children of six to ten years of age and that my very attendance might even cause a disturbance in the classroom. He suggested that, since I had a fair knowledge of English, I would accomplish more by mixing with non-foreign Americans than by attending school. "It might be best," he said, "to rent a room among Americans, where no Yiddish would be spoken." I took his advice and on the next day found a room with an Irish family where only English was spoken.

True enough, within six months, my accent was greatly improved. I not only learned the ordinary vernacular but also the Irish accent and slang—perhaps I learned the latter first. I soon became so accustomed to speaking English that when I went into the chief rabbi's house, I unintentionally spoke that language. At various times I must have embarrassed the rabbi, who could not speak English, and on a couple of occasions he paternally and affectionately reproached me for so quickly casting off the language of my forefathers.

While sitting in the rabbi's office one day, I saw an announcement in a Jewish paper of a meeting of the *Hovevei Zion* (Lovers of Zion). I had known of the existence of this organization in New York, but because of my preoccupation with various personal matters, and particularly because of my inability to speak English, I had hesitated to attend any meetings. (I was not cognizant of the fact that the transactions of these meetings were all in Yiddish.) Now that I had learned English sufficiently well to make myself understood, I was anxious to find out what this organization was doing.

The first meeting I attended took place in a public hall on East Broadway. About twenty people were present and the topic of discussion was methods by which to promote a knowledge of the Hebrew

language in America. Mr. Wolf Shur, who was then editor and publisher of the Hebrew weekly, *Hapisgah*, spent most of the evening on the rostrum outlining plans for the promotion of Hebrew. After he finished, Joseph Bluestone, who later became well known in New York as a physician, read letters from colonists in Palestine which proved very interesting.

In addition to these two gentlemen I recall seeing at the meeting A. S. Bernstein, who I believe was president of the society, Alexander Harkavy, who was secretary, Dr. Hirsch Honor, Dr. Smilansky who had just returned from Palestine, a Mr. Baum, and Dr. Moses Mintz, who was one of the *Kharkov* students who founded the society B. I. L. U. (*Beth Yacob Lechu Venelchu*). There was also a young man named Bricker, whom I remember primarily because of the frequent gatherings we later had in his house.

The idea of Palestine as a homeland for the Jewish people which had lain dormant within me since childhood suddenly came to the surface. Henceforth I did not miss any of these meetings and, whatever time I could spare, was spent in the interest of the *Hovevei Zion*. Without question, in these early days, my zeal was not directed without a personal motive; I fully intended some day to settle in Palestine.

During my early months in New York a land company was organized in the headquarters of the *Hovevei Zion*, at the head of which was a young New York attorney named Adam Rosenberg. Rosenberg gave up almost all of his time to the cause and dedicated himself to the idea of the resettlement of Jews in Palestine. As the heads of a commission, he and Mayer London later went to the Holy Land to purchase land on which to settle some members of the organization. The new organization was known as *Shavei Zion* (Returners to Zion). This was the first American society organized to do practical work in the Holy Land. It was the parent organization of the *Achuzah* movement which later developed in many cities of the United States.

"Opportunity," said Stanley, "sooner or later comes to all who work and hope." One afternoon, while the rabbi and a few of his students were at the study table engaged in studying the tractate, *Hulin*, Rabbi Moshe Sivitz of Pittsburgh came in, and afforded me an opportunity for which I had deeply longed. Sivitz had come to get an endorsement from the rabbi for his book *Hakar Daat* (The Search for Knowledge). Our teacher, the chief rabbi, invited the visiting rabbi to join in our studies.

I was just discussing the eighteen different pathological conditions that render animal flesh "*terepha*" (unfit to eat). I knew the

subject well, for I had gone through the entire field when I had studied *shechita* in Zhagory. I explained the animal anatomy and pathology in a manner which pleased both rabbis. After the study session was over, Rabbi Sivitz congratulated me cordially. When I told him that I derived my livelihood by going from house to house teaching children, he remarked, "This is a waste of time; such a profession is for older persons tied down with family ties, and not for a young man like you."

He then suggested that I secure a position as a teacher with a private family to teach their children Hebrew and to assist them in their English lessons. He informed me that he had a wealthy sister in New York named Mrs. R. Isaacs, and he thought that a position with her might be ideal for me.

The next day I was called to Mrs. Isaacs' house for an interview. She had already heard of me through a mutual friend, Mrs. Herzog. After spending a half-hour with the good middle-aged lady, I was invited to live with her family and was assigned a nicely furnished room in their palatial home.

The Isaacs occupied a four-story building in a fashionable neighborhood on Sixtieth Street. Their business was the wholesale distribution of Japanese novelties. One of their two sons resided in Yokohama, Japan. Mr. Isaacs had his wholesale novelty supply house on Broadway in New York.

At first, I was bewildered by the magnificence of the house and its furnishings, by the excellent cuisine, by the elegant table manners and by the orderly behavior of the family in general.

I confess that for some time I was not at home with the Isaacs, and I wondered whether the Isaacs felt at home with me. Gradually I learned the formalities and social amenities. Whenever I was in doubt about something, I made it a rule to be silent until I learned the proper procedure, rather than project myself into a conversation. I gradually became one of the family. Mrs. Isaacs often engaged in religious conversations with me and she consulted me on all matters pertaining to Judaism.

One day, when the rabbi of her congregation, the Reverend Dr. Meizner, called upon her, she introduced me to him. After a short conversation with me, he suggested that I enter the Jewish Theological Seminary where he was a lecturer. I was averse to the ministry as a profession for myself even at that time, for to become a physician was already my deeply rooted aim. I knew and enjoyed the study of the anatomy of animals and had a fair idea of animal pathology. I never

missed an opportunity to read about those Jewish sages of antiquity who also were outstanding physicians.

Deep within me was the hope that through some miracle the opportunity to enter a medical school would be presented to me. I revealed this ambition to Dr. Meizner, but he insisted that I was better prepared for theological studies than for medicine, and he clinched this argument by saying that if after a few months I did not like theological studies and if other opportunities more to my liking presented themselves, I could then shift to medicine.

For the time I followed Dr. Meizner's suggestion, and the very next day I went to the Cooper Institute where the seminary was located, and I matriculated in the seminary. In the classroom to which I was assigned, I found seated at the head of a table the late Dr. Drachman, expounding the subject of Hebrew synonyms and antonyms to a class of nine young men. My Hebrew training heretofore had not been of a linguistic nature, but I soon became interested in the scientific study of Hebrew. I was introduced to my fellow students: among them were Joseph Herman Hertz, who later became chief rabbi of England, Henry Speaker, who was later appointed professor at the Gratz College in Philadelphia, a Mr. Abramowitz who later held the rabbinate in Montreal, Canada, and some others whose names I cannot recall.

At rabbinical school, I also met the Reverend Sabbato Morais, founder and president of the faculty, and Dr. Hanoch Judah Kohut, professor of Talmud and author of the *Aruch Hashalom.* I also met there, on a number of occasions, Dr. Marcus Jastrow, author of the *Rabbinical and Hebrew Aramaic Lexicon.*

After six months of study, whatever doubts I had were dispelled and I felt certain that I was not cut out for the ministry. I feared that if I continued studying at the seminary, I would be pulled into a profession which did not appeal to me or suit me at all. My mind was definitely set on medicine.

About that time I met, at the office of the chief rabbi, a young Palestinian of my own age. He had come to America a year prior to my arrival and in this short interval had established himself in an installment business, selling jewelry and spectacles, the proceeds of which enabled him to live comfortably and even save a few dollars. Although a capable business man, deep down in his heart he wanted to be a man of letters. When, on various occasions he met a few scholarly young men at the chief rabbi's office, he always valiantly attempted to take part in the Talmudic discussions. Soon, to his

chagrin, he discovered that business and scholarly attainments are not readily compatible. He was self-sufficient, impulsive and looking for a short cut to becoming a scholar. As a person, one could not help liking him. He was witty, and a long string of Talmudic epigrams and maxims pervaded his anecdotes which enabled him to get a scholar's reputation among the general public.

His Hebrew and English were alike in that both revealed that he was blissfully unaware of his grammatical and idiomatic errors. What he lacked in linguistic knowledge he made up in the manner of his speech. Whether by natural inclination or not, he imitated to perfection the foreign noblemen who filled New York at this period. This also enhanced his popular appeal.

I cannot say, for certain, whether it was I or the spectacle business that aroused in him a deep interest in medicine. One day he rushed into my room and excitedly informed me that he had sold his business and that he was going to Berlin to study medicine. He invited me to go with him, and generously offered to pay all my expenses. While talking to me, he opened an introductory letter from a German customer of his, to his brother, who was a professor at the University of Berlin. For a short time, the plan and its potentialities dazzled me and I thought that this was the opportunity for which I had been waiting. After due deliberation, however, I changed my mind and told him that, in my opinion, he had made a serious mistake in selling his business, and that neither he nor I were sufficiently prepared to enter the medical school in Berlin.

A short time later, I learned that my friend had given up this idea and that instead of going to the University of Berlin he had gone to Brooklyn and married a wealthy girl.

During the short interval prior to my making a decision in this matter, my friend spread the rumor among my countrymen that I was going to Berlin to study medicine. This false information soon reached the ears of my parents at home as the following letter from my father shows:

DECEMBER 10, 1891.

MY DEAR SON BENJAMIN:

We received your letter of March 14, 1891, but not the one of February 6, 1891. In the future address your letters to the post office of Kolletzischken, East Prussia. I am afraid that your letters are being opened by the post office authorities of Neustadt. You are aware that the government has put a lien on our house and furniture to the extent of 300 roubles, which was the penalty exacted of me for not producing

you to the draft board when your name was called. It seems that all letters are opened to search for money orders.

Our house and furniture will be put up for sale by the local authorities within 90 days. I do not know what I can do about it. I have engaged a lawyer and perhaps he can arrange for me to pay off the 300 roubles in installments. My brother Simeon promised to lend me 100 roubles. I trust to the Lord that He will not forsake us.

For the same reason, I cannot send any money to your brother Gershon, in Telsi, by mail, because such letters are always opened and the bills removed. Gershon is short four "eating days"; we have to wait until someone from our town travels in his vicinity to help him. Gershon is already in the highest class in the *yeshivah*. He shows promise of becoming a great scholar.

Many of our townsmen are leaving for Africa and for America. This, of course, reduces the number of pupils in my school. What the Almighty does is for the best.

Of late, your mother and I have been very much worried over you. The daughter of Moshe Weiner has written from New York to her parents here that you contemplate traveling to Berlin to study medicine. As a Talmudic student you ought to remember the saying of Rabbi Judah; "The best of physicians is destined for *Gehenna*" (Kiddushin 4:14); and you well know how the people of our town look upon a doctor! In their eyes, when one becomes a member of this profession, he is comparable to an apostate! I cannot imagine how you ever conceived the idea of studying medicine. You are no longer a child and you should possess better judgement.

Even if you were a great *maskil*, it would take you ten years to become a graduate physician and then you would be a poor sinner. You must not forget that you are poor and alone in the world. The Lord knows if we will ever have any pleasure out of you if you continue to manifest such unsettled traits.

Your mother and sisters send their regards.

Your father,

ABRAHAM BEAR GORDON.

When I received this letter, I immediately informed my father that the information he had received was not true. As I did not want him to be under the impression that I agreed with his remarks about the medical profession, I reminded him that the passage in the Talmud, "The best physician is destined for *Gehenna* (Hell)," was just an epigram. I pointed out that there were many pious rabbis who were physicians. I mentioned the names of the Babylonian scholar, Rabbi Samuel, and the Spanish philosopher, Maimonides. The latter was court physician to Saladin in Cairo. I closed my letter with the re-

mark that, if I had my choice, I would rather be in *Gehenna* with these scholars than in Paradise with those who had needlessly caused my parents anxiety with false rumors.

The next day I had occasion to see the chief rabbi. When I showed him my father's letter, he seemed to be sorry for my father. He understood my father's feelings, for he knew how the medical profession in Lithuania was opposed to religion. He lost no time in writing to my father telling him not to be disturbed about me. He told him that in America, sin is not the monopoly of the physician, and few if any Jewish doctors in New York publically desecrate the Jewish High Holidays. He informed him that, as a group, the American Jewish physicians were far more religious than many members of the working classes. (It was customary for the members of certain labor groups to show their ridicule and opposition to religion by holding *Yom Kippur* balls.)

The good rabbi pointed out that there were many Jewish physicians in New York who were strictly orthodox and strictly observed not only the high holidays but also the Sabbath day. Included in this number was Dr. Simeon Baruch, father of the eminent statesman, Bernard Baruch.

Mrs. Isaacs was very disappointed when she heard that I intended to drop out of the seminary in order to take up the study of medicine. She did not say anything, but I felt uncomfortable. Thus, after being with the Isaacs for about seven months, I accepted a similar position with a family named Cohen. The Cohens had a number of boys and were anxious to give them a Jewish education. One son had to be prepared for *Bar Mitzvah.*

My new pupils were most amenable to my teachings. I also received a larger salary at the new position, and this enabled me to send some money home to my parents and to purchase a ticket to enable my brother Gershon to come to America. During the day, when my pupils were at public school, I attended classes at the College of the City of New York, and, at night, besides teaching my pupils Hebrew, I also helped them with their lessons.

During my leisure time, I spent many pleasant hours discussing various subjects and playing chess with Speaker, Hertz, and another young man named Jaffa, at the home of the previously mentioned Mr. Bricker. Jaffa became champion chess-player of New York. He was a student at Columbia University, and later became professor of mathematics at the University of Chicago.

The ties that bound me to New York gave way entirely when my friends received their rabbinical diplomas and Mr. Jaffa left for Chicago. I was left by myself, teaching Hebrew to beginners. In the meantime, my brother Gershon had arrived from Europe and he resided with me at the kind invitation of the Cohens. Of course I knew that I was taking great advantage of my employer's generosity, so my brother and I talked things over and decided to part and leave New York. My brother decided to visit an uncle of ours in Hagerstown, Maryland, and I thought that I might find a better position as teacher in a city that was not so crowded with refugee teachers.

C H A P T E R X

My College Days in Philadelphia

The fact is that to do anything in the world worth doing, we must not stand back shivering and thinking of the cold and danger, but jump in and scramble through as well as we can.

—*Sidney Smith*

I left New York with a few small coins in my pocket; all the money I had earned I had spent to help my aged parents and to bring my brother Gershon to America. With the few dollars left from my last month's pay as teacher, I purchased tickets for my brother to go to Hagerstown, Maryland, and for myself to travel to Philadelphia.

Philadelphia was inextricably connected in my mind with a story my father never failed to tell me when we reached the weekly Bible portion of Leviticus (25:10): "Proclaim liberty through all the land and all the inhabitants thereof." My father said that these sublime words of freedom were engraved on a large bell in Philadelphia which had been used to proclaim liberty. According to my father, the bell had been tolled so violently when liberty was proclaimed that it had cracked up to the inscription of this verse of the *Torah*, but miraculously left the verse itself undamaged.

I had later read of the City of Brotherly Love in connection with the great and noble Benjamin Franklin, and I longed to see it. At last my eagerness to see Phliadelphia was fulfilled. On the second day of August, 1892, I took a Philadelphia and Reading train from Jersey City to Philadelphia, arriving at Ninth and Green Streets (the location of the main Reading Terminal before it was moved to Twelfth and Market Streets where it is now situated).

I secured a room in the neighborhood for which I paid twenty-five cents for a night's lodging. The next morning I went out in search of someone to advise me as to what to do next.

Walking eastward along Green Street, I saw at the corner of Eighth and Green Streets, a sign hanging from the second story of a building which read "YOUNG MEN'S HEBREW ASSOCIATION." I quickly walked up to the second floor and saw a notice on the door which said: "Open from 7:00 P.M. to 10:00 P.M." I made up my mind to remain in the neighborhood of this building until it opened, hoping that this might be a good place to get the information I desired.

In those days, Green Street was the "uptown" of Philadelphia, and there were few immigrant Jews residing in this area. Towards evening I retraced my steps to the YMHA building, and, as I was waiting at the door, a man of about thirty years of age came and opened it. He invited me in and I introduced myself. He told me that he was the librarian and that his name was Charles Spivak (later the founder of the Denver Tuberculosis Sanitarium). He told me that he had recently graduated from the Jefferson Medical College and that he was about to open an office in Philadelphia.

He was so friendly and sympathetic that I almost forgot I was a stranger in Philadelphia. There were few visitors in the library and we continued our conversation until the library closed. He asked me to accompany him to his lodgings on Pine Street, and there, sitting at a table on which tea was served, we continued our discussion.

I found the doctor well read in neo-Hebraic literature; he was also well versed in Talmudic studies. He had come to America in the early 1880's after the Russian pogroms in the company of a group of young men who styled themselves the "*Am Olam*" (the eternal people). The intention of this group was to establish Jewish agricultural colonies in America. It should be remembered that after the massacre and plunder of Jews in many Russian cities there were two trends among the Jewish refugees. The group known as the *Am Olam* favored emigration to America, whereas the other group, following the leadership of Leon Pinsker and the *Hovevei Zion*, advocated emigration to Palestine.

Dr. Spivak, during one of our cordial talks, described to me the struggle he endured when he first arrived in the United States. After working on a farm for about a year, he was forced to admit failure in this enterprise. He then was sent by the Jewish Immigration Society to work in a wool mill at Lisbon Falls, Maine, where he remained for almost two years. Afterwards, he came to Philadelphia, where he supported himself as a construction laborer.

When he had saved sufficient money, he entered the Jefferson Medical College. In the meantime, a vacancy for the position of librarian at the YMHA presented itself, and he had filled this position ever since.

While narrating his story he interrupted himself, saying, "By the way, Gordon, I intend to give up my position as librarian. I advise you to apply for it as soon as possible." He gave me the address of the director of the institution, a prominent lawyer named Oscar B. Teller. The next day I sent in my application, and in about a week I received notice of my appointment. The position paid $20 a month; deducting $5.00 for room rent, I had the munificent sum of $15.00 left for living expenses.

The first day of September, 1892, my work as librarian began in the new quarters of the YMHA at the southeast corner of Broad Street and Girard Avenue.

In those days this was a most fashionable location. On the opposite corner was the mansion of the streetcar magnate, Elkins (now the Majestic Hotel stands in its place). On a third corner was the residence of Widener who was Elkins' partner; the site of his palatial home is now occupied by a branch of the Philadelphia Public Library.

This was the first time in my life that I was really satisfied with the position which I held.

The YMHA was the meeting place of all social and benevolent Jewish organizations, for this was before the Mercantile Club was erected on North Broad Street. Among the officers of the YMHA were the most cultured and best-known men of Philadelphia Jewry. The president was Adolph Eichholz, David Kirshbaum and Jacob Bauer were secretaries, and the board of managers included Reverend S. Morais, the Reverend Marcus Jastrow, David W. Amram, Max Herzberg, Ephraim Lederer, Oscar B. Teller, Meyer Sulzberger, Dr. Louis W. Steinbach, Dr. Michael Ball, Benjamin Fleischer, Albert Wolfe, and others of equal prominence.

After having settled down to my position in the library for a few weeks, the novelty wore off and I began to think seriously of the future. My salary at the library was not even sufficient to pay my current expenses. I had to resort to tutoring to make ends meet. The most my position gave me was prestige, and perhaps an opportunity to meet influential people. I could hardly see my way clear to enter medical school, which was the most important reason for my coming

to Philadelphia. The Jefferson Medical College was to open on the twenty-fifth of September.

Dr. Spivak advised me to register at the Jefferson Medical College and to take an entrance examination in spite of the fact that the raising of the tuition fee of $150.00 a year (due on the twenty-fifth of September) seemed an impossible task.

I called upon Dr. Morais for a letter of introduction to Dean Holland of the Jefferson Medical College. I found him occupied in teaching the Talmud to a group of young men. His class included my old friend Isaac Husik, Gershon B. Levy, and David Liknaitz. The rabbi, who remembered me from the Jewish Theological Seminary, asked me to take a seat at the study table and wait until the study period was over. I told the rabbi my mission, and unhesitatingly, he sat down and wrote a letter of recommendation for me.

The next day I called upon Dean Holland at the Jefferson Medical College. The college, at that time, was housed in an old three-story building. The first story was occupied by a lecture room, chemical, physical, and pathological laboratories and business offices. The second story was occupied entirely by the amphitheater, and the third story housed the dissecting room, prosector's quarters, and the morgue.

When I told the dean the reason for my visit, the first question he asked me was whether I possessed enough funds for my tuition, which would be due on September 25. "It is no use," he stated, "taking five dollars from you for registration if you are not ready with your entrance fees for the year's tuition." Evidently the good doctor had had some trouble with students like myself, who registered but could not continue their studies for lack of funds.

Dr. Holland, who was also professor of chemistry, was a kindly old man. He sympathized with poor students, but of course he could not do the impossible. I was rather embarrassed but I was frank enough to tell him that I did not have the $150 at present—that all I had was vague prospects of somehow getting it. I appealed to him to let me register and permit me to take the entrance examination, so that in case my prospects materialized between that day and the twenty-fifth day of the month I would not have to lose a year. He promptly gave me an encouraging look and changed the subject.

He asked me where I got the name "Gordon." When I narrated the history of my name to him as described in the second chapter of this book, he asked me the reason why so many young Jews took to medicine. I promptly told him that the profession of medicine had been, since time immemorial, beloved by Jews, and I listed for him a

number of prominent Jewish physicians—past and present. He finally rang for his secretary, Mr. Leffman, and instructed him to register my name among the new applicants.

Leffman arranged for the examination. Two days later I was examined by Dr. Jacob, one of Dean Holland's laboratory staff. The examination covered English, American history, physics, and elementary chemistry. After I handed in my papers, Dr. Jacob asked me to stand by for the results of the examination. In about half an hour he returned, congratulated me, and told me that I had met all the requirements and that the Dean wanted to see me. To my surprise, Dr. Holland informed me that the committee on entrance had decided to reduce my tuition to $100, and that I was permitted to postpone payment of that sum until the beginning of 1893.

One day before Christmas I received the following unsolicited letter from Dr. Holland addressed to Rabbi Krauskopf, whom the dean evidently felt was most able to help me:

THE JEFFERSON MEDICAL COLLEGE
OF PHILADELPHIA

Nov. 26, 1892

RABBI KRAUSKOPF

DEAR SIR:

It gives me pleasure to testify to the fact that Mr. Benj. L. Gordon is a faithful and attentive student of medicine at this college.

His reputation is excellent in every way. His deportment is entirely correct and most exemplary. I consider him worthy to receive assistance in the effort he is making to get a medical education.

Very sincerely,
(Signed) J. W. HOLLAND
DEAN

I went to see Dr. Krauskopf. I found him writing in his study. He received me very coolly and did not even offer me a chair. Rather curtly, he asked, "What can I do for you?" I handed him the letter from Dr. Holland without uttering a syllable. If I could have gotten out of his study without showing him the letter, I would have done so. He read the letter and returned it to me saying, "I can do nothing for you. We have too many doctors as it is. If you desire a job in some other trade, I will see what I can do."

I left his study quickly and without saying a word. A few days later I saw Mr. David Amram in the YMHA library and told him of the episode. He expressed great regret that I had not consulted him before I left myself open to such a rebuff. Mr. Amram was Kraus-

kopf's severest critic and he attacked him frequently in the *Jewish Exponent.*

As to the $100 I needed to pay my tuition, Mr. Amram advised me to see Mr. Eicholz, who was president of the YMHA. I do not know for sure whether Mr. Amram spoke to him about me or not, but when I saw Mr. Eicholz, he advised me to ask the board of managers to make an advance of $100 on my future salary.

It did not occur to me at that time that I was dependent upon the salary for my basic livelihood. I asked for the advance and was granted the $100, on condition that I refund one-half of my salary every month on account of the loan.

Sometime later, Dr. Krauskopf saw me in the library of the YMHA. He was obviously surprised to see me there. He came over to my desk, and with an affected smile, said: "I did not know that you were here. You are the young man who ran out of my office in such a huff." I looked at him, let his remark go unanswered, and then sarcastically said, "I wonder whether we have too many rabbis?" This time it was the rabbi who flew out in a huff without uttering a single syllable. Throughout all the years that followed, Rabbi Krauskopf never forgave me for my remark. It was my unfortunate experience with him that made me cognizant of the fact that I should not expect favors from so-called rabbinical philanthropists.

My worries of course did not end with the receipt of the $100. The ever-perplexing problem of *ma nochal* ("What shall we eat?") confronted me now more than ever. Having to attend college the whole day and work in the library every evening until 10 o'clock with an additional hour wasted in going to and from my lodgings, there was pitifully little time left for me to teach for a living and to study college work. I managed to squeeze in two hours of teaching Hebrew to school children every afternoon after public school was over, but this netted me only $4.00 a week. The only time left for me to give additional lessons was after 11:00 P.M., but who, I asked, would wait for a teacher until close to midnight?

It occurred to me that I might be able to secure one or two pupils from the dressmaking trade who would only have time to study at that late hour. Downtown Philadelphia was chockfull of female dressmakers, for in those days ready-made clothes were not available, and all women's apparel was made to order. The dressmaking damsels were usually of mature age; to put it mildly, quite a few were "overripe." As a group, they made fairly good salaries and nothing would please them more than to get a medical student for a husband.

They shied away from law students, who were usually very clever individuals, but they were ever on the lookout for poor, timid, defenseless medical students, who were considered "easy marks." When students faced the problem of deciding between a dressmaker or a diploma, they frequently made a decision in favor of the seamstress.

The acquaintance was usually made by engaging a suitable young medical student as a tutor of English or Hebrew. The lessons were usually followed by luncheons. If no complications ensued, and the young student was of a yielding nature the damsel, like as not, suggested nightly lessons. These were followed up by day visits, walks, and theater parties. Money was never spared by the husband-seeker. The last step was the proposal of marriage. If the unsuspecting student did not respond favorably to this proposal on a voluntary basis, resort was often had to compulsion on the pretext of pregnancy.

Some of these "roped-in" students flunked out of the college because, between love and duty, there was no time left for study. In such cases the student as well as the dressmaker were both sadly disappointed. One of these damsels heard of me through my landlady and offered to become my pupil. After the second lesson she advised me to give up the lessons which I was giving to younger pupils and spend my time teaching her each night. She said that she could hardly learn much with only two lessons a week. Her demeanor and her altruistic proposition made me doubtful if her interests were purely educational. After a month of so-called study, I resigned from my job and even changed my lodgings so that I could not be located.

This woman tried to catch up with me at the college, but, luckily, after a few unsuccessful visits, admitted defeat. I made up my shortage in living expenses by keeping books, at odd hours, for a bookbinder.

Let us retrace our path to the twenty-fifth of September, 1892—a day that I shall always remember. It was on this day that the dream of my life started to mature into reality. I dressed myself in my finest. My suit was freshly pressed; my shoes were shined to perfection; I was wearing a new shirt and tie; my hair was carefully parted in the middle. It was thus that I became a medical student and went to the amphitheater of the college to listen to the introductory lecture which was delivered by Professor Hare. I took a seat in the last row and observed with great interest the decorated operating platform below.

The band began to play as the trustees and faculty members marched in in full regalia. The exercises began with the National

Anthem and an invocation by a Presbyterian minister. I was dazed and happy that I now belonged to this gathering.

The next day, equipped with the necessary books that had been recommended for freshmen, I went to the college. There was nothing on the program for that day except to copy (from billboards) pertinent information as to the time and place of various classes and laboratories. Students were requested to attend a lecture at the amphitheater of the hospital, which was back of the college building on Sansom Street. The lecture was delivered by W. W. Keen, Professor of Surgery, and his subject was "Cirrhosis of the Liver."

This lecture was a great disappointment to me. I did not understand what the professor was talking about. If this was an example of the lectures to which I would have to listen, I thought to myself, I am truly "cooked," and all the effort and energy I had exerted to enter medical school will have been to no avail. Not realizing that this lecture was intended for the graduating class and that new students were invited only to get them acquainted with the atmosphere of the school, I felt that I was surely unfit for medical school.

I returned to my room with a heavy heart, and, as if this were not enough to thoroughly depress me, I had to start in in the dissecting room on the following day.

The next morning, equipped with a black oilcloth apron and a complete dissecting case, I climbed up to the third story of the college to the dissecting laboratory. As I look back, I guess the other fellows were as frightened as I was while we waited for the door to open, but they did not show it. They exuded a false gaiety, and their shrill laughter covered up the sound of their knocking knees. I later found out that most of my fellow students had imbibed a couple of drinks before coming up to the laboratory. I was utterly unprepared for the occasion emotionally because I had been brought up in an atmosphere of fear and respect for the dead. I do not believe that I had ever looked upon a corpse before. The very sight which I was about to witness was deeply repulsive to me.

As hard as I had tried over the years to throw off all superstition, when it came to the crucial point, I had not been too successful. I fully realized that the dissecting of human bodies was not only the foundation of medicine but the means by which the future doctor loses his deeply-rooted misconceptions and old superstitions, but my emotional system was not too convinced.

I gathered all my courage and entered the large room. There were about five bodies lying on long tables. Four students were assigned to

each table. Before the dissection began, the demonstrator delivered a general talk about the technique of dissection. He mapped out each student's work, and then proceeded to start his preliminary lectures on osteology, using a human skeleton that was dangling from a hook on the wall to demonstrate his talk.

The next morning I did my best to overcome my sentimental weakness by drinking a large cup of black coffee before I went into the dissecting room. There I donned my black apron, took out my dissecting scalpel, and prepared to start the work which had been assigned to me. As I was about to pierce the skin of the cadaver for the first time preparatory to dissecting the flexor muscles of the right forearm, my hand became paralyzed and my scalpel dropped to the floor. Dr. A. Hewson (the demonstrator) noticed my predicament and told me to refrain from dissecting for a few days and merely watch the other men.

Medical school initiation and practical jokes were pretty rugged in those days. I recall one particular case of hazing performed in the dissecting room which led to the expulsion of the two initiators from the college. The victim, whose name was Rosenblatt (but better known as "Scapula" because he always seemed to be carrying the scapula bone around with him) was a timid young man. The students of his dissecting section, as is the wont of students, quickly realized that he was faint-hearted and therefore considered him an excellent subject for hazing.

One night, while he was working on the cadaver, all lights became mysteriously extinguished. One of his fellow dissectors slipped silently under the table and the other secreted himself behind the table near the head of the corpse. While Rosenblatt was waiting for the gas lights to go on, the fellow under the table lifted an arm of the corpse and patted Rosenblatt's face with its hand, while the other student mumbled, in a deep, husky whisper which sounded as though it were coming from the grave, "What have I done to you? Why do you use the knife on me?"

When the light was finally turned on, a terrified Rosenblatt found the corpse in a sitting posture, in which position it was being held by the fellow secreted behind the body. The eyelids of the corpse were held half open by clips, and the mouth was kept open by a ball placed inside. This so-called practical joke was too much for poor Rosenblatt. He collapsed and was taken to the college hospital, where he was bedridden for several weeks. The boys who had perpetrated this cruel joke were expelled from the school.

Another case of hazing which I recall concerned a Syrian named Tominossa. As he was the shyest person in his section, he was naturally picked out as a suitable victim for practical jokes. The caretaker of the morgue and dissecting room was a middle-aged man named Peter, who was affectionately known among the students as Jaborandi. Jaborandi, the drug from which pilocarpine is derived, was supposed to promote the growth of hair. Peter sported a long black mustache and sideburns from which he derived this nickname.

Peter was not a total abstainer. About one day each week, he forgot all about the denizens of the netherworld and really got drunk. He was picked up by the police on one particular occasion after he had completely passed out, and they tenderly conveyed him to his room, which was next to the morgue. It was about seven o'clock in the evening when the students went to the dissecting room, and they noticed two policemen carrying the stupified Jaborandi up to his room. This gave a couple of the boys a brilliant idea, for they observed poor Tominossa standing at a lower landing of the stairway, oblivious of what had just transpired. They quickly carried Jaborandi from his room to the anatomy laboratory, and placed him on Tominossa's dissecting table in place of the usual cadaver. They then covered him up with the usual black cover. Throughout this entire procedure Jaborandi remained blissfully unaware of any foul play. Tominossa then came up, took his place at his table, put on his black apron, took out his scalpel, forceps, and groove director from his dissecting box, and lifted up the cover. To say the least he was flabbergasted to find Jaborandi on his table.

In the meantime, Jaborandi sobered up somewhat, opened his eyes and saw the wide-mouthed Tominossa perched over him, knife in hand. The bewhiskered caretaker jumped up from the table in one leap and took hold of the shocked student, who by this time was completely unnerved. The students who watched the wrestling match between these two men, found out that it was far from a joke. Tominossa was almost choked to death, and had not the students intervened there would have been another cadaver in the dissecting room.

I never developed much love for the dissecting room, although I did not mind vivisection on anesthetized animals. On one occasion I got in wrong with the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. My roommate and myself enticed a stray dog to our room, chloroformed him, and made an incision so that we could witness the heart action at first hand. The dog was kept under anesthesia for

about half an hour. Following this, his wound was sutured, but nonetheless he died. When we observed that he was dead, we dissected a few muscles and examined his internal organs. We then placed him in a box and left him in the yard to be removed by the garbage collector.

Two days later a constable came to my room with a warrant for my arrest. At the hearing before the magistrate, I stated what our purpose was in operating on the dog and declared that the animal had experienced no pain at all, since the operation was performed under chloroform anesthesia. My statement, however, failed to satisfy the two old ladies who had sworn out the warrant for my arrest. At the request of my lawyer (furnished by the college), the case was first postponed and evidently later quashed. At any rate, I never heard anything more about it.

Now, when dissection is legalized in almost every state of the union, it is difficult for the student to picture the difficulties that teachers of anatomy had in obtaining bodies for their students in former years. As late as in 1890, many an anatomy professor was arrested and prosecuted to the full extent of the law. I recall how my teacher, Dr. W. S. Forbes of Jefferson Medical College, began his anatomy lectures with stories of the woes he himself had experienced while trying to secure bodies for students.

Another form of medical school hi-jinks was known as the "pass-up." If a freshman dared defy upper-classmen by taking a seat in the lower rows of the amphitheater, he was immediately seized and passed up row by row until he was rudely put down on the topmost bench of the amphitheater. The passing was usually performed while the class was waiting for the professor to enter the lecture room. This procedure always caused particular excitement when the freshman was an able-bodied man and in a fighting mood. In such a case it took several men to lift him up and pass him along. Frequently his first-year colleagues came to his rescue and a free-for-all ensued. Books and hats filled the air.

Such conflicts as these among the various classes might have caused serious trouble had not the professor finally arrived to deliver the lecture. His mere appearance always calmed the students, and everyone suddenly became peaceful, attentive, and quiet as if nothing had ever happened.

For some reason or other, I personally escaped all dissecting room gags. I avoided the "pass-up" by always taking a seat in the last row and by keeping away from all factional disputes.

Many students had the idea that by trying to be popular and by belonging to organizations bearing the names of members of the faculty, they could get through their examinations more easily. Some students habitually crowded around the professor after each lecture or waited for him at the door of his private office to ask some questions which they hoped would make themselves well known to the professor. From what I could observe, I have the distinct impression that their efforts more often had a negative effect, and I know of no better way to demonstrate one's ignorance than by such machinations.

I can only recall one instance in which I was charged with bad behavior at school. The incident occurred in the chemical laboratory. The instructor of my section—let us call him Dr. "X"—was a recent graduate who was short in stature but possessed a narrow Van Dyke beard. He was known among the students as "Bucky" on account of his little pointed beard. Like many young instructors, he liked to exhibit his authority and imitate the old professors. He never missed a chance to appear humorous and witty.

While demonstrating the structure of the carbon derivatives to our section, he listed the various carbon compounds containing carbon and oxygen. After mentioning carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide, he also mentioned carbon trioxide, although this last substance was unimportant to our course and not even mentioned in our textbook. I soon realized the reason for this; it took this last chemical compound to give his forced humor a chance for an airing. While giving the symbol for carbon trioxide he remarked, "The best way to remember this formula is to took at the sign above Cohen's pawnshop. The 'C' which stands for Cohen represents carbon and the three balls below represent the three 'O's' or oxygen atoms attached to the carbon."

I was a good enough sport to take jokes at my own expense good-naturedly, but this racial humiliation was too much for me to swallow. I immediately got up, took my hat and coat, and silently left the laboratory. If it were not for my action, this unjustified and entirely unnecessary affront to my people might have passed without any notice, for the Jewish boys in my chemistry section were to browbeaten to protest. The instructor did not want to let my "impudence" go unpunished, so he reported me to the dean. The following day, while I was attending a lecture, the professor was interrupted by a message, and he called out that I was wanted in the dean's office immediately.

When I saw the instructor there, my heart began to thump and the blood rushed to my face. Dr. X looked at me sarcastically and

gave me a victorious smile. Dean Holland sternly asked why I had left the chemical laboratory so abruptly. I told him what had transpired, and added that if this were a personal insult I would not have minded it at all, but that the instructor had gone out of his way to offend my people. I closed my account by saying, "Even instructors must know that they too are bound by certain limitations with regard to decorum, fairness, and decency."

The dean asked the instructor whether my story was true, and he replied that he had intended no offense and that the other Jewish students had not reacted as I had done. Dr. Holland reproved his assistant by declaring, "You must admit that you went out of your way to bring in a pawnshop in your discussion of the carbon family." Dr. X's victorious smile quickly changed into a sheepish grin, and he haltingly replied without looking at me directly: "If Gordon took it as an offense, I beg his pardon." He then offered me his hand.

The first year at college passed quickly. The exams were held late in the month of March, and, by the first of April, I began looking for some kind of work to enable me to earn the tuition for the Sophomore year.

It was the first year of Benjamin Harrison's presidency after the termination of Grover Cleveland's administration. The United States was in the midst of a severe depression and jobs were very scarce. As a last resort, I applied for the position of Hebrew teacher in the newly organized *Talmud Torah* (Hebrew School). The position paid about $12.00 a week. The hours were short, since lessons began after the close of public school, and lasted until 6:00 P.M. The salary paid would have been just sufficient to pay my tuition, but I very much disliked the idea of becoming a *Talmud Torah* teacher in the city where I anticipated practicing as a physician. I feared that the rank and file of the Jewish people would look upon me as a Hebrew teacher rather than as a doctor. Since necessity often makes one forget his dislikes, however, I decided to accept the job, feeling that I could not afford to lose any more time looking for employment.

On the very day that I was going to notify the school of my acceptance of that position, I received a letter from the Trans-Atlantic Steamship Company notifying me of my appointment as assistant apothecary on board a vessel sailing between Philadelphia and Bremen, Germany. I had applied for this position several months before, but not having heard from the company, I had given up any hope of getting it. I had been recommended to the steamship company by my next-door neighbor, Joseph Cooper, who was a supervisor of

the immigration house which was maintained by the company on Front Street, near Washington Avenue, to take care of those passengers who had to wait for the "O.K." of immigration authorities or who were sick or had not been called for by their relatives.

The job paid the grand sum of $300 for the summer. I was jubilant when I received this position, not only because of the financial recompense but because it enabled me to get a good rest and plenty of good food. It also gave me the opportunity of watching and assisting the ship's surgeon while he was examining patients. He permitted me to conduct the preliminary examination, including the taking of the temperature and the pulse, and he taught me how to use a hypodermic needle. He also allowed me to practice various minor surgical techniques such as the incision and drainage of boils and abscesses.

I was busiest during the first two or three days of each voyage, because after that period most of the patients suffering from sea-sickness acclimated themselves. Some passengers became so exhausted and demoralized by sea-sickness that they required constant attention—which the ship's doctor could not give since he did not have the time. These, of course, were mostly left to me. A few passengers (particularly elderly women) remained sick until they reached port. On the first trip from Bremen to Philadelphia, we had two deliveries on board the vessel. These births were the first I had ever witnessed.

On various occasions, I met (among the steerage passengers) some of my townsmen, who hardy recognized me without my beard and clad as I was in a well-tailored naval uniform. Often they were so sure that this man could not have been their old friend, Benjamin, that they did not even attempt to speak to me. In such cases, when I identified myself they were pleasantly surprised. Indeed, many of them wrote letters home about meeting me. This was a source of great pride to my parents. After they had heard about me, most of the immigrants from my town wanted to sail on the ship on which I was employed.

Toward the end of the summer, I met many of my townsfolk who actually brought letters of introduction to me as if they did not know me. Yes, I was indeed a big man to the home folks; if the steamship company had known that their assistant pharmacist was the cause of so much of their business, I am sure that they would have given me a larger salary.

On one occasion I met one of the *bahurim* who knew me from Cheikishock. He recognized me and was very much surprised to see

me in uniform attending to the passengers, most of whom addressed me as "Doctor." Subconsciously, I began to feel that the name fitted me.

Most of my attention was directed to the steerage passengers, who needed me most. However, I helped care for several first-class passengers. On one occasion, an American lady travelling first-class on her return from a protracted visit to Europe, handed me an envelope containing $25.00 as a tip for my professional services to her. I received several such envelopes with $10.00 enclosed in them. By the time the summer was over, I had $500 in my possession. On my last trip back to America, the ship, which was due to reach Philadelphia on the first of October, docked four days late because of rough seas.

During the entire summer, I had been kept in suspense as to the results of my final examinations. When I returned to college four days after the term had started, I was pleasantly surprised to find a notice to the effect that I had passed all subjects.

During my second year at medical school, I had much more confidence in myself. Compared to my former circumstances, I had nothing to worry about. I was even able to spare considerable money for my poor parents.

I was particularly pleased that I had passed my anatomical subjects, but the hardest part, the anatomy of the brain and the nervous system, still remained for me to conquer. I found this subject most difficult, and I often facetiously wished that man had been created without a brain so that I could have been spared this most difficult task. I was forced to agree with Shelling that "the human brain is the highest blossom of the whole organic metamorphosis of the earth"—not only in the spiritual sense but also in the physical sense.

Eventually I overcame the difficulties of neuroanatomy so well that after graduation I associated myself with the neurological clinic of Professor Dercum.

I found my second-year schoolwork much easier. Most of the subjects taught were a logical outgrowth of the first year's work. One of the new subjects was bacteriology, and this course fascinated me. The microscope opened up new vistas for me. I could hardly believe what I saw with my own eyes. The hitherto invisible world of organisms which I saw gave me food for thought. If invisible worlds like these shown by the microscope existed in nature, who can say what multitudes of things exist that have not yet been visualized by the genius of man? All that remained necessary was to discover the means

of perceiving them. The maxim "I believe only what my special senses can perceive" became sheer nonsense.

Of course, I reasoned, there are many things in nature which the special senses of the human being are not developed well enough to perceive without some extra mechanical aid. Moreover, I knew that the faculties of perception are not identical in all individuals. One person may be endowed with much greater sensitivity than another with regard to a particular sensory function.

Chills went up and down my spine as I looked through the microscope and saw the organisms that represent the etiological factors of many dread diseases. I knew that what I was seeing had not been suspected by even the greatest medical savants of a century before. I saw the tubercle bacillus that decimates our population each year. I saw the gonococcus of gonorrhea, and the Klebs-Loeffler bacillus of diphtheria which, before the development of anti-diphtheric antitoxin, carried away tens of thousands of children during their tender years. As small and apparently simple as these pathogenic organisms were, they were capable of subduing even the largest and most complex living creatures.

I was anxious to know how such a wonderful instrument as the microscope had been discovered: was it by accident or by design? Unfortunately, there was no medical college at that period that taught the history of medicine.

Another subject of great interest in my second-year course was embryology or the phenomena relating to the structural development of man. Hitherto, as far as I was concerned, this subject had always been veiled in mystery and false modesty which did not permit any discussion. I might say that the very discussion of procreation was considered sacrilegious, and imagination and fantasy played a great part in trying to solve or to understand the mechanisms of this problem.

When I saw before me through the microscope, for the first time, a spermatozoon, another revelation was disclosed to me. Here was one of the very cornerstones in the foundation and continuation of human life.

Many very curious hypotheses had hitherto been proposed to explain human conception. No less a man of science than Aristotle made an analogy in which he compared the menstrual blood to a block of marble, the seminal fluid to the sculptor, and the fetus to the finished statue. Galen, who from his dissections had some knowledge of the ovaries, held that these female organs furnished a secretion

which in the womb combined with the seminal secretion of the male to form a new being. These illustrious physicians maintained that reproduction in animals was by female elements alone (analogous to the way the hen produces her eggs) but few gave credit to the male element in the process of reproduction.

Now I had seen before my eyes the aggressive and restless male element floating in the seminal fluid. Here again I wondered why such a prominent subject in human life as the secret of procreation was not taught in a systematic manner and in full historical perspective.

Another second-year subject was entitled "urinalysis, normal and pathological." Every student was supplied with a test tube, a pipette, and an alcohol lamp. We had to learn urine chemistry and how to make and use the various reagents.

The second-year examinations were over on about the first of April. This time I did not have to look for a job. As soon as the lectures were over, I went to the office of the steamship company and was informed that my salary had been advanced to $500 for the season, and that my work, instead of being confined to the apothecary shop, would include rendering assistance to the physician on duty.

I had to wait about two weeks for my boat, and I spent most of this time in the company's Philadelphia immigration house at the pier. There were a number of sick people there who could not speak English, and I made myself useful in getting their medical history, and otherwise helping out.

I recall one case of a young woman about twenty-five years of age who was crying constantly. She had been waiting for two weeks for the man who had sent for her to take her to Baltimore, but when this period had elapsed and he failed to show up, she became hysterical. There was no response from him to various telegrams and registered letters. One evening I asked the clerk of the company whether it would not be best to call the man personally on the telephone. He agreed with me because every day the woman spent in the immigration house was an expense to the company, and, if no one called for her, they were obligated to take her back to Europe.

I called the man on the telephone and told him that the girl was waiting for him and that he should call for her as soon as possible; otherwise, I told him, we were obligated to notify the immigration authorities and she would be sent back to Europe. He acted very upset and nervously tried to explain his unwillingness to call for her by saying that she did not mean anything to him personally. After

telling him what I thought of him in no uncertain terms, I banged the receiver down abruptly. My rather crude tactics brought results. On the following morning he arrived and took the poor girl to Baltimore.

My second summer on the boat was very pleasant. I was well acquainted with the routine work and I attended to many first-class passengers, with the result that at the end of the season I had saved about $1,000. During the summer I became acquainted with a rich couple from Salem, Virginia. The husband was the inventor of a cigarette machine. They invited me to spend the next vacation with them. I managed to spend a few weeks with them during the following summer, and it was at their home that I met my second cousin, Maurice Lewis, and his good wife Pauline, who received me very cordially.

I bade farewell to the doctor and the other officers of the ship on which I had been employed for two summers, for I knew that I would not take the position again. I had made up my mind to devote all of my time to study during the summer following my junior year and thus be better prepared for the final examinations. During the final summer vacation, after completing my junior year, I attended the medical and surgical clinics of the Jefferson, Pennsylvania, and German (Lankenau) Hospitals.

It was a great privilege to attend the clinics of Professor Emeritus J. M. DaCosta. He was, in my opinion, the greatest teacher of medicine Jefferson ever had. The clinics of the famous University of Pennsylvania surgeon, John B. Deaver, at the German Hospital, were also superb.

I observed many cases of parturition at the Maternity Hospital of the Jefferson College which was situated on Washington Square. I made the most of this last summer becausse I knew that the senior college curriculum was overcrowded and that my spare time would be limited during my last year. By attending these summer clinics I learned a great deal about the three most important medical branches: medicine, surgery, and obstetrics.

I never placed too much confidence in the efficacy of didactic lectures offered to students at the medical colleges. As a rule, the average teacher merely followed a textbook. The few original ideas which he presented could easily have been conveyed to students at the clinics.

I learned more medicine and surgery from the recitations, clinics, and quizzes of S. Reckfuss, Julius Salinger, and John Chalmers Da-

Costa than from the lectures of all the professors combined. One professor spent an entire college term on typhoid fever, dwelling more on relatively unimportant and far-fetched complications than on the subject itself. Most students, in spite of themselves, were bored to the point of exhaustion, and many actually fell asleep while listening to him. I felt that if the students were assigned to read up on a certain subject and then were painstakingly questioned on it, much time would be saved and the students would not become so exhausted before the final examinations.

The only lectures I was always anxious to attend were those on obstetrics, which subject was taught by Professor Theophilus Parvin. Not only did Parvin present his subject in a fascinating way but the generally informative ideas which he presented were well worth listening to.

Parvin was always very modest and kind, and he was greatly beloved by all his students. He was considered the Cicero of the college. He was learned in the Greek and Latin classics and his lectures were interesting to educated laymen as well as to students. Accordingly, his obstetrical lectures were far from dry. Between the lines one learned not only obstetrical technique and theory but also the history and folklore of obstetrics and the obstetrical beliefs and practices of ancient and modern peoples.

His first lecture of the season was famous. On this occasion, he brought along an Egyptian pelvis which he had secured on a voyage to Egypt. The amphitheater for this lecture was filled to capacity.

Many physicians as well as laymen came to hear Parvin's introductory lecture. It was really not a lecture on obstetrics but concerned itself more with the history of medicine, with special emphasis on the history of obstetrics. He spoke of the age of Cleopatra, whose pelvis, he philosophized, his specimen might have been. Then he passed on to the great Alexandrian period of medicine and discussed Ptolemy Soter, the founder of the Alexandrian medical school, and the great Alexandrian physicians, Herophilus and Erasistratus.

Herophilus was the founder of Alexandrian anatomy and the first obstetrician on record. Professor Parvin related the story of Agnodice, a female student of obstetrics of Herophilus, who disguised herself in male attire in order to get around the law prohibiting women from practicing medicine. Because of the envy of male competitors, she was arrested in Athens, where she had returned to practice, on the charge of corrupting women. At her trial she surprised her ac-

cusers by disclosing her sex. She was finally acquitted by the intervention of her female patients.

I vividly recall his demonstrations of the mechanism of labor. He had a box-like device representing a barn with an irregular opening in one wall. He also had a model of a boy which he had named "Jack the chicken thief." When Jack was pushed into the barn through the irregular opening he had to make several maneuvers with his head and body in order to gain entrance. These maneuvers illustrated the mechanism of labor.

He also had a mannequin which he had named "Lena." I recall that Lena was very popular in the out-patient department. In the lecture room, Lena was brought in on a table by two nurses; then Dr. Parvin demonstrated the positions of the parturient woman during labor and various gynecological operations. Here is his description of puberty:

"Puberty is that epoch in human life when the individual first becomes capable of reproduction. It occurs about two years earlier in the female than in the male, and the physical and psychical changes characterizing its advent are more marked in the former than in the latter. The girl's pelvis enlarges and her breasts notably increase in size as she enters this period of life; the voice changes; the body is fuller and more gracefully rounded; sharp, irregular, and angular outlines are replaced by symmetrical curves, and new beauty of form and of general expression is manifested—it is the springtime of female life, the bud unfolding into the flower. The girl passing into womanhood puts away childish things, turning from frivolous amusements, from the toys and plays, or from the rude sports in which she has found pleasure; she enters a new life, has new thoughts, desires, and emotions. Hitherto she has been living solely in and for the present; but now the future with its lights and shadows, its hopes and fears, makes a large part of her life. She is more sensitive and reserved, and manifests a modest dignity, giving and expecting respect; her individuality becomes more manifest, her sense of duty stronger, and her ambition greater."

Here is his conception of the duties of the doctor:

"The physician, whose duty is not only to heal the sick, but also to prevent disease and to improve the race, and hence who must be a teacher of men and women, should teach sound doctrine in regard to the injurious results of precocious marriage."

DaCosta, also venerated by his students, was not the classics scholar that Parvin was. In fact, in his demeanor, he was quite the

opposite of the professor of obstetrics. He was blunt, aggressive, and occasionally offensive to some students, but perhaps he was the greatest teacher of surgery Jefferson ever had. He was loved by the students for his scholarship, quick wit, and humor.

I recall an incident during a quiz when he asked a student to explain the etiology of cancer. The student hesitated and finally answered, "I forgot." Thereupon DaCosta, sarcastically—even angrily—remarked, "Good Heavens! What a misfortune! You were the only man in the entire world who knew the answer to this question and now, alas, you have forgotten it!"

I did not attend my graduation exercises because the cap and gown and other paraphernalia required cost about $25.00 and I did not have this sum. I had the pleasure, however, of watching my classmates march in splendid formation to the Academy of Music. I also took a seat on the balcony of the Academy of Music close to the platform.

In the afternoon I received my diploma from the college clerk without any ceremony, but the diploma did not give me any legal right to open an office. For the first time in the medical history of Pennsylvania, the State required still another examination, and therefore I could not relax from my studies for another month. The examination took place in Harrisburg, the capital of Pennsylvania, and my ambition was not realized until I received notice of my licensure by the Board of Medical Examiners, dated August 4, 1896.

Thus this chapter of my life, culminating the dreams and struggles of my early youth, came to an end. I look back upon my schooldays with satisfaction and enjoyment even when I think of the vicissitudes of fate and the heartfelt struggles that transpired before I became a physician.

CHAPTER XI

Starting on a Medical Career

Every generous illusion of youth leaves a wrinkle as it departs. Experience is the successive disenchantment of the things of life. It is reason enriched with the heart's spoils.

—J. Pelot-Senn

MY college days were indeed over, but what now? With this question on my mind I walked around the streets of Philadelphia for several weeks. True, the opening of a medical office a half-century or more ago, was not as costly as it is in these days. It was before the development of such diagnostic equipment as the sphygmomanometer, fluoroscope, x-ray, basal metabolism, and electrocardiogram, and such therapeutic equipment as diathermy, sine-wave, whirlpool, ultra-violet, and infra-red apparatus. The well-equipped physician of this period needed only a thermometer, a hypodermic outfit, a monaural stethoscope, some surgical and obstetrical instruments, and a few odds and ends. Of course, the young practitioner also needed an office, some furniture, stationery, and a shingle.

I selected as the neighborhood for my office an old German district at Fourth and Noble Streets in Philadelphia. I then picked a number of houses which appealed to me as most suitable—at least from outward appearances. Of these I happened to strike one whose occupants were willing to rent the front room for a doctor's office.

The rent was $35.00 a month, which sum was to cover taking messages and generally helping out with patients. This rent, of course, was due in advance, but I did not possess nearly this much money. I told the landlady that I could not pay in advance, but that I would be willing to divide my fees equally with her until I was able to pay the rent in advance. As she was anxious to get a tenant, she accepted my proposition.

She subdivided the large front room with a heavy curtain and placed a table and a number of chairs in the room that was theoretically designated as my "private office." I put my office equipment, consisting of a hypodermic syringe, a monaural stethoscope, an alcohol burner, a couple of test tubes, a few surgical instruments, and a thermometer, on the table. I tacked up my diploma and the state board certificate on the wall, and installed a painted shingle outside below the window.

The next four days I spent sitting expectantly in my office waiting for patients; each day felt like an eternity. With every ring of the doorbell, I jumped up from my chair, straightened my necktie, smoothed my hair, and was ready to receive a patient. Four days passed and no one appeared.

On the morning of the fifth day, my landlady came into my office with a big smile and whispered in my ear, "Doctor, two patients are waiting for you in the reception room." I got up, opened the curtain and called out, "Who is first?" One of the patients remarked that they were together and both came in. I took a history card and recorded the clinical history of one of the patients.

After getting the routine information, I asked her to tell me her chief complaint. She replied, "What not! Every part of my body is in misery. I cannot sleep. I cannot eat. My nerves, my rheumatism, and my indigestion are killing me, and I am also sick. The doctor has told me that I have arthritis and that I must go to Atlantic City. I blame my husband for everything. I never was sick when I was an unmarried girl." She continued ad nauseam in this vein.

While she was still yapping, I took her pulse, listened to her heart and lungs, examined her by inspection, palpation, and percussion, but could not find anything to account for her multitudinous symptoms. I was too weak to ask her any more questions, so I gave her a so-called "tonic" prescription and a few words of encouragement. Then I went through the horrors of examining her friend.

The other woman's chief complaint was more localized. She wanted to know why she could not have any children; she was particularly bitter over the fact that her husband was continually throwing up her sterility to her; he constantly rebuked her and informed her that she was "no good" and had better see a doctor. I assumed that she was childless, and when I asked her if she had never had a child, she laughed loudly and said: "Oh, yes! I have six children—but I have had none within five years." Since both her mother and mother-in-law had borne a dozen or more children each, she was

obviously a second-rater. I prescribed for this patient, and told her to come back in a few months.

Both patients were in my office for a total of an hour and a half. When I finished with them, the first lady spoke up: "Thank you for the examinations," she said, "but we did not come to be examined this time. We came to ask you for a contribution for a poor family."

Fearing that my silent partner, the landlady, would suspect that I was not keeping my part of the bargain in turning over half of my fees to her, I ran into the dining room and told her the entire story before the two women left the office. I do not know what my landlady said to them, but the general contents may be surmised by the epithets the two "patients" delivered themselves of as they went out the door.

Some weeks after, another incident happened which also made me lose faith in the practical side of medicine. I was called at about two o'clock in the morning to see a patient on North American Street. There I found a Ukranian laborer in bed, groaning with pain over the epigastrium following a dietary debauch. As was the practice in those days, I applied warm turpentine stupes, and, when the patient was somewhat relieved of the pain, I wrote a prescription consisting of tincture of nux vomica and hydrochloric acid. The signature read: "Take five drops in a wineglass full of water three times a day." I was paid 50 cents for my services and I departed.

About an hour later, the doorbell rang violently, disturbing everyone in the house, and this was followed in a few seconds by loud knocks at the door. It appeared that the caller had pulled the bell so hard that he had broken the mechanism and pulled the handle out from the doorpost. The force of the impact threw him down the steps into the street. I ran down half-dressed and opened the door. A voice boomed out in the dark: "Doctor, you have poisoned my brother! Come quickly! He is dying!" I ran as quickly as my legs could carry me, and found my patient in the midst of a convulsive seizure.

I looked frantically for the bottle of medicine, and found it empty. I discovered that the patient's brother could not read the directions. Instead of administering five drops in a wine-glass full of water, he gave the patient a wine-glass full of medicine with five drops of water. I sent the poor fellow to the hospital, where he eventually recovered.

A few weeks later I received a letter from a lawyer, who stated that he wanted to see me. I never relished business with lawyers and I went immediately to his office. He told me that the aforementioned patient had engaged him to institute malpractice proceedings against

me, and suggested that I give him $500 at once in settlement and that he would prevail upon his client to drop the matter. It was fortunate for me that I had had the presence of mind to take the empty medicine bottle with me. I showed the lawyer the directions on the bottle and told him what had happened. I left his office and never heard from him again.

Hardly a month had passed after I became a "titled" individual when I was beset with disillusionment. I began to wonder whether my aspirations—so dear to my heart since childhood—might not have been but an empty dream. The diploma certainly did not afford that elusive something for which I had been waiting.

I had never been a robust person; I was underweight and subject to frequent and severe colds. Long years of overwork, undernourishment, improper clothing, and poor dwelling facilities had taken their toll. During my college days I had all-too-literally lived on dreams of a glorious future, and had had little time to ponder over such matters realistically. Now, having plenty of leisure, I indulged in too much meditation. One disquieting thought followed another until I became truly depressed, and physical illness was not far behind.

I contracted what I thought was "just another cold," and by the time a physician was summoned, I was semi-delirious, with a temperature of 104°. The next thing of which I was clearly cognizant was finding myself in the Jefferson Hospital. Apparently I had pneumonia and had just passed the crisis, after hovering between life and death for some days. From the visiting physician, who, by the way, had been my quiz master at school, I learned that I was "an interesting case."

Next day, the head of the medical department of the Hospital, who had been my professor of medicine, came to see me. A well-preserved gentleman of about sixty, he enjoyed a great reputation—much of it, unfortunately, undeserved. Although I had heard many flattering remarks about him while at school, I had never heard anyone say that he had been kind or compassionate. He did not take the time to sit down near my bed. While standing, he listened to a short account of my case from the resident physician. He tapped my chest a few times with his finger and listened for a few seconds with a monaural stethoscope. With no further examination, he then proceeded to state in a most condescending manner: "Young man, you have tuberculosis; there is only one place where you can live, and that is Arizona. You had better leave this climate immediately. Only if you go at once is there any chance for your recovery." He did not

bother to inquire as to how I could get there. His voice was expressionless and devoid of compassion.

At first, after listening to the verdict of the professor, I was frightened and confused, but after some reflection I began to doubt the validity of his two-minute diagnosis. After all, my main symptom was only pleurodynia (pleural pain) which was not an uncommon sequel to pneumonia. There had been no pulmonary hemorrhage and the sputum was scanty and showed no tubercle bacilli. My flat chest and poor chest expansion were no recent developments.

As soon as the fever completely subsided and I was able to stand on my feet, I was discharged from the hospital. My total funds at this time amounted to $5.00 which I had collected from my first obstetrical case before I had taken sick. In spite of my lack of faith in the wisdom of my professor's diagnosis and advice, the word "Arizona" kept ringing in my ears. I was too weak to practice medicine. Obviously the $5.00, of which I had already spent almost a dollar for food, could not pay the train fare to Arizona. I therefore decided to visit a cousin in Salem, Virginia, a town situated at the foot of the Blue Ridge Mountains. I hoped that here I might recover my health sooner than in Philadelphia. I had enough funds to travel by boat to Norfolk, Virginia, and my cousin and his good wife picked me up there and escorted me to their home in Salem. In a very few days I began to feel much stronger, and all the annoying symptoms left me except the pain in the lower right chest, concerning which I consulted the local physician. Dr. K. was an elderly and kindly gentleman who had treated patients in that town for half a century. He did not bother much about the diagnosis. If his patient were an adult who had a protracted fever, he merely decided between aconite and veratrum viridi; if a child, sweet spirits of niter was preferred. If the fever was periodic, quinine was the drug of choice. If the heart was feeble, either digitalis or strophanthus were employed.

In my case, he took out a vial from his scuffed black medical case, emptied the contents into a glass of water, and ordered me to take a teaspoonful every three hours. Noting that I was a physician, he was kind enough to tell me that the drug he had administered was potassium iodide. His intentions were of the best. These were the good old days: when the patient got well, the medicine got the credit; if he did not, the family was blamed for not calling the doctor sooner.

To this doctor I was a human being—not "an interesting case." Yet he fed me on potassium iodide until my stomach revolted, and I could retain neither the drug nor any food. My chest pain, however,

remain unaltered. After a few days, I decided to be my own doctor. I stopped all medicines and turned to the *vis medicatrix naturae* of Hippocrates. I sought relief at the mountainside and took short but frequent walks. My appetite returned. I grew much stronger but the pleurodynia did not leave me. At the suggestion of my cousin I went to consult a well-known physician of nearby Lynchburg. Dr. L. gave me a thorough examination. He admitted that he was not certain of the diagnosis but he felt sure that there was fluid in my pleural cavity and that this should be drawn off by paracentesis with a large needle. I half-heartedly agreed to this procedure. The needle with which he penetrated my chest, however, did not bring out any fluid or pus. Once again I was told that I was "an interesting case." I fancy the good doctor acted on the old axiom: "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again." Time after time his trochar was pushed between my ribs and always the same negative result. Each time he reassured me that I was "an interesting case."

I frequently have heard patients complain that their doctor has done nothing for them. I cannot say this about my doctors. They have done plenty. And yet my lingering illness taught me much. It is indeed advantageous for the one who aspires to take up the practice of medicine to have been a patient himself. I was for all time careful not to use the expression "an interesting case," and I never sentenced a patient to death without the most painstaking deliberations.

When I returned to my office in Philadelphia, I found the shingle of another doctor (a chiropractor) on my door. My limited office equipment had been hastily packed up in a box in the hall. Evidently my short tenancy had established my landlady's professional standing. I was told that the "doctor" who had rented my office paid a much higher rent in consideration of the professional goodwill he had inherited from me. I did not begrudge him either the office or the goodwill.

I rented a much nicer office several doors away under the same commission arrangement. My sickness had taught me that as long as I had my health I should be a most happy man. This time I was not upset when the day passed without seeing a patient. I had more peace of mind than I had ever had before, and I did not permit business problems to depress me. Worries of the morrow were expelled from my mind by the memories of my recent illness. I had also learned that the proper balance of physical and mental activity is one of the best safeguards for the preservation of man's equanimity under all

circumstances. Indeed, I can honestly say that my sickness had proved to be a great blessing in disguise.

After a few days of twiddling my thumbs at the office while waiting for patients, it became apparent that I must find something worthwhile to do with my extensive spare time. Financial recompense was actually a secondary matter. I knew Dr. Max Bochroch, (chief assistant to F. X. Dercum, professor of neurology at the Jefferson Medical College) and I asked him if any vacancy existed in his department. Without a moment's hesitation he accepted me into his clinic and I was assigned to write clinical histories.

If anybody was more happy than I over the turn of events, it was Dr. Joseph Bolton, an elderly gentleman who had been writing the histories for quite a few years. Taking histories is a thankless job and few assistants like this task. They look upon it as purely clerical work and prefer being occupied in the diagnostic or treatment room. I, on the other hand, always found the taking of histories to be very interesting.

I had to familiarize myself with the subject of neurology in order to elicit the most important historical points pertaining to neurological syndromes and diseases. While waiting for patients at my private office I painstakingly studied my textbook on neurology. I was occupied at the clinic three afternoons a week, taking neurological histories and observing the neurological patients. As if this were not enough to occupy my mind, I also received an appointment in the obstetrical department of the Jefferson Medical College.

I attended one obstetrical clinic a week at the Jefferson Maternity Hospital and one clinic a week at the old Polyclinic Hospital. Both clinics were under the personal supervision of Professor Edward P. Davis. My main duties at these institutions consisted of registering maternity patients, taking their pelvic measurements and giving them dietary and other instructions.

I was subsequently promoted to an instructorship, and after this appointment my chief duty was to take students to the homes of patients in labor and demonstrate obstetrical technique. Jefferson Maternity Hospital was located on Washington Square, but a branch was maintained downtown in a Negro neighborhood.

My connection with the Jefferson clinic not only made me a better obstetrician but proved advantageous to me also in a practical way. The women delivered under my jurisdiction occasionally called upon me to attend to their babies and paid me for these calls. I gradually received at my office an increasing number of obstetric cases referred

to me through the recommendations of those whom I had helped my students deliver. I was only too glad to treat those patients who were too poor to pay the full fee for reduced fees commensurate with their economic status.

I recall one of these obstetrical patients, the wife of a recent immigrant who conducted an oyster house at the back of a saloon. He was known as "The Austrian." When I was attending his wife I subconsciously noted that he never looked me straight in the eye. After delivery he paid my fee and stated that I need not come again to look after his wife. I was rather puzzled by his actions, because he seemed satisfied with my services, but I naturally acquiesced. After a week or ten days, a messenger came to tell me that his wife had developed a high fever and that I should come to visit her but not before midnight. I was exceedingly puzzled this time, for if his wife was so sick why did he want me to put off my visit until midnight?

When I called at his place, he was waiting outside in the dark for me, and he whispered to me that I should use the back door. I found that his wife was troubled with a breast abscess, and I suggested incising and draining it the next day if it did not open spontaneously. He asked me to call again after midnight the following day. I came and lanced the abscess at the appointed time.

On this last visit, I took a good look at him in the dim light, and for the first time it occurred to me that I had seen him somewhere before. After I returned to my quarters, the realization suddenly flashed through my mind that this man was none other than the one who had stolen my steamship ticket eight years earlier when I was waiting for my boat in Hamburg! This confidence man had shaved off his beard and was posing as a Christian. In fact, he took every precaution to prevent his landlord, the saloonkeeper, from finding out that he patronized a Jewish doctor.

As soon as his wife's condition improved, she visited my office, and I asked her why I had been asked to attend her only after midnight and why I had been ushered in through the back door. She hesitated for a moment, and then told me that her husband was afraid that the saloon-keeper might suspect that he was a Jew if he saw me and would make them move.

A few days later, when I passed that saloon, I noticed that the oyster house was empty, and I was told that my patients had moved out during the night.

I occupied my office for about a year. One day I received a letter from my old friend, Dr. Solomon Solis-Cohen, requesting that

I come to see him at once. When I entered his office, he seemed angry and without further to-do asked me, "Don't you know, Gordon, that it is unethical for a physician to advertise?" I was shocked and dazed for a moment, for he never had spoken to me in such a rude manner before. He then took out a clipping from a Jewish newspaper proclaiming my professional merits and showed it to me. I told him simply that this was the first I had seen or heard about this advertisement.

When I returned to my office, I showed the clipping to my landlady and asked her whether she had any idea as to who put such an ad in the paper. She turned red in the face and confessed that she had done it. She said that she did not know that doctors were not permitted to advertise. Evidently she had made this unfortunate move in order to increase her revenue. I was not angry at her, but I thought it best to move. In a few days I moved to 419 Christian Street, which was then in the heart of the neighborhood where my practice had developed.

C H A P T E R XII

The Return of Old Dreams

Is there no balm in Gilead?
Is there no physician there?
Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?

—*Jeremiah 8:22*

DURING the years that I was occupied with my college work, I had almost forgotten the world around me. I seldom read the daily press, and never attended a meeting that had no bearing on medicine. Now that I had more time for non-medical interests, I began to read newspapers, and to attend various civic functions as well as those of the County Medical Society, and other medical meetings.

One morning, while reading the *Public Ledger*, I observed a front-page article which stated that the great French novelist, Emile Zola, in an open letter addressed to the President of the French Republic, had accused enemies of the Third Republic of having trumped up charges of treason against Captain Alfred Dreyfuss, an Alsatian Jew who was attached to the French general staff. The same article told of a wave of anti-Semitism spreading through France. I also noted in this same paper that a certain Theodore Herzl (1860–1904), a Viennese journalist residing in Paris as a permanent correspondent of the *Neue Freie Presse* of Vienna, had issued a call for a congress of Jews to take place in Basle, for the purpose of discussing the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine. The idea of a Jewish state was not new to me. Several years before I had read the brochure *Auto-Emancipation* by Leon Pinsker and other similar works.

Reading these two items together made a strong impression upon me. If the French Jewish people as a whole could be blamed for the offense of one person (even when the accusation was untrue), then

certainly no Jews were safe anywhere as long as they had no country to call their own.

I became more convinced than ever that Jews would be pushed around and persecuted until they secured a home of their own. I read with great interest Dr. Herzl's *Jewish State*, which was published in 1906. My interest in the *Hovevei Zion*, which had lain dormant for six years, again came to the foreground and I looked around for the opportunity to do something about my convictions.

About this time, Stephen S. Wise, a young rabbi from New York, called a meeting in that city to organize a political Zion society of national scope in order to elect a delegate to the congress in Basle. I immediately notified Dr. Wise that Philadelphia would send a delegate to that convention.

I called a meeting at my house at 419 Christian Street on the twenty-fifth day of June, 1897, to elect a delegate to that meeting, and to organize the first Zionist Society in Philadelphia. Among those present at the meeting were: Rabbi B. L. Levinthal, Moses Klein, David Liknatz, Herman Kreuger, Joseph Magil, S. S. Rosen, Hillel Malachowsky, A. H. Frankel, H. Rosenthal, David Sachs, my brother Gershon (George) and myself. I was elected president, and David Liknaitz secretary. (The society was named "*Ohavei Zion*" (Friends of Zion).)

The members elected me delegate to the New York convention, which took place in the early part of July. At this national convention, our organization was named *The Federation of American Zionists*. There were quite a number of delegates at that convention. Professor Richard Gottheil of Columbia University was elected president in absentia and Dr. Stephen Wise was elected secretary. Dr. Gottheil, who was in Europe at that time, was notified to attend the first Zionist congress at Basle, Switzerland, as the representative of the Federation.

When I returned to Philadelphia from the New York convention, a meeting of the Friends of Zion was called at my home. It was decided to ask Rabbi S. Schaffer of Baltimore, who was going to the Zionist Congress at Basle representing the *Zioniah* of Baltimore, to also represent the Philadelphia Zionists.

The Friends of Zion of Philadelphia later invited Professor Richard Gottheil and Rabbi. S. Schaffer, who had been delegates to the Zionist Congress, to address a public meeting in Philadelphia during the

Festival of the Harvest in the Keter Israel Synagogue. At that meeting great enthusiasm prevailed among the members of the large audience as they listened to the reports of both emissaries. I recall that one man in the audience handed a note to Dr. Gottheil while he was speaking, urging him to say a few words about the Jewish Sheltering Home, which had been founded in Philadelphia during that very year. Dr. Gottheil read the note, and remarked, "Zionism has for its object the erection of a Jewish Sheltering Home in Palestine not only for a few refugees (which of course is important), but for all of Israel."

The second meeting of The Federation of American Zionists took place in Baltimore, a city which was well known for its Zionistic activities. The first Zionist Society in the United States had been founded in Baltimore and was named *Zioniah*. My good old friends, Senior Abel (who later became head of The Jewish National Fund) and Dr. M. Fox, were the pillars of Zionism in Baltimore.

At the second convention of The Federation of American Zionists, I had the honor of being elected to membership in the executive council, which post I held for many years.

The following letters will convey some idea of the nature of the Zionist activities at that period:

FEDERATION OF AMERICAN ZIONISTS

President, Prof. Richard Gottheil
Vice Presidents
Dr. B. Felsenthal, (Chicago.) Dr. I. J. Bluestone, (New York.)
Dr. M. Jastrow, (Philadelphia.) Rev. H. Masliansky, (New York.)
Dr. S. Schaffer, (Baltimore.)

Honorary Treasurer, Mr. C. D. Birkhahn.
Honorary Secretary, Rev. Stephen S. Wise.
119 East 65th Street, New York.

119 East 65th Street,
New York, Dec. 22, 1898.

Dr. Benjamin L. Gordon,
419 Christian Street,
Philadelphia, Pa.

My dear Dr. Gordon:—

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your kind note together with your check for Five Dollars which practically covers my traveling expenses and to thank you for the same. It is very kind of you to speak as you do

concerning my few remarks at your recent meeting. I am to speak in your city sometime in January for the uptown society and expect to pay my respects again to the Richmond convention (which body proclaimed that America is our Palestine and Washington our Jerusalem).

With regard to the doings of the Federation, permit me to inform you that some day next week we shall send out circular #2 which will give you some very interesting and important information concerning our workings. I do hope this however, that you will very soon be able to send us the shekel money for this year as well as a contribution of your society on the basis of twenty-five cents per annum for every member, wherewith to defray the expenses of the Bureau of the National Federation.

With cordial greetings to all my fellow Zionists and assurances of my personal esteem, believe me,

Faithfully yours,

(Signed) Stephen S. Wise

New York, March 23rd, 1899

Dr. Benj. L. Gordon,
419 Christian Street,
Philadelphia, Pa.

My dear Dr. Gordon,

I am more than glad to have had your letter of yesterday, particularly since it was the first word we have had from you in some months. Within a few days, you will receive the fullest information respecting the shares, and then I trust you will proceed to dispose of the 150 of which you speak, and possibly many more in addition. You will also receive within a very few days, the shekel blanks.

Respecting the Federation tax, permit me to say that I consider it your duty to pay the stipulated amount, of 25 cents per annum for every member. You can hardly expect that our Federation can do good work, carry on an extensive correspondence throughout the country and with every part of Europe, and be a unifying factor in Zionist affairs generally, unless we receive this very limited support. I beg that you will use your good offices to the end that the Federation tax be paid in its entirety.

Will you not make an added effort to dispose of the other 50 pamphlets sent to you? We have incurred a fairly large expense in the publication of these, and do not think it fair that we should suffer any loss in the matter. A friend of the Cause has made it possible for me to say that you may retain the other 50 pamphlets and sell them at five cents a piece. Can you therefore add $2.50 for the remaining 50 pamphlets to the check which you are about to send us? With most cordial Zion

greetings and trusting to have the pleasure of hearing from you very soon, believe me,

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Stephen S. Wise.

The following letter is from Professor Richard Gottheil:

FEDERATION OF AMERICAN ZIONISTS

President, Prof. Richard Gottheil
Columbia University, New York

Vice-Presidents:
Dr. S. Solis-Cohen, Philadelphia.
Dr. B. Felsenthal, Chicago.
Dr. A. Friedenwald, Baltimore.
Dr. M. J. Jastrow, Philadelphia.
Rev. Dr. Philip Klein, New York.
Prof. C. Levias, Cincinnati.
Rev. B. Levinthal, Philadelphia.
Rev. M. S. Margolis, Boston.
Rev. H. Masliansky, New York.
Rev. S. I Shenfeld, Louisville.

Honorary Treasurer C. D. Birkhahn, New York

Honorary Secretary I. D. Morrison, 320 Broadway, N. Y.

Delegates to the Vienna Central Committee:
The PRESIDENT, and Rev. Stephen S. Wise, New York

Executive Council:
The Officers and
David Werner Amram, Philadelphia.
Dr. B. L. Gordon, Philadelphia.
K. H. Sarasohn, New York.
Dr. S. Shaffer, Baltimore.
W. Shur, Chicago.
Miss Henrietta Szold, Baltimore.
Hon. N. Taylor Phillips, New York.
L. Zolotkoff, Chicago.

New York, January 30, 1900.

My dear Friend:—

I wish to invite you herewith to a regular meeting of the Executive Council of the Federation of American Zionists, which is to be held Sunday, February eleventh, in the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary, No. 736 Lexington Avenue, near 69th Street, New York City. There will be an afternoon and an evening session, the former beginning at 2:30 o'clock, and the latter at 8 o'clock. It is hardly necessary to add that your presence is urgently requested at this meeting, inasmuch as advisal matters of far reaching importance to our cause will come up for consideration and action.

With Zionist greetings, I am

Very sincerely yours,

(Signed) Richard Gottheil

P. S.—

Should it be absolutely impossible for you to be present in person, I hope that you will give us the benefit of your advice and suggestions in a communication, which should be addressed to the Honorary Secretary.

FEDERATION OF AMERICAN ZIONISTS

Honorary President
Dr. Harry Friedenwald, Baltimore
Chairman of the Executive Committee
Dr. Israel Friedlaender, New York

200 E. Broadway, New York
December 29, 1910.

Dr. B. L. Gordon,
1316 South 5th Street,
Philadelphia, Pa.

My dear Dr. Gordon:—

Your resignation as a member of the Advisory Council of the Federation of American Zionists was presented at a regular meeting of the Executive Committee held on Sunday, December 25. The members present heard with great regret of your inability to give sufficient time to the work which our movement is burdening you with, and not wishing to be unduly troublesome to you, the Executive Committee has accepted your resignation, and has instructed me to convey the best thanks of the Federation to you for the services you have heretofore unfailingly rendered it.

I have also been instructed to ask you if you will not be kind enough to nominate your successor in the Advisory Council, and I would ask that you kindly present his name to us before the next meeting of our Executive Committee, which will take place on January 15, 1911. We trust that although you are not officially a member of the Advisory Council, we may take advantage of your offer to serve us in whatever way may be possible for you.

With Zion's greetings, I am

Very truly yours,

(Signed) J. L. Magnes, Acting Secretary.

P. S. We are enclosing a copy of a letter received from Mr. Rosenbach, and we would ask you what you would suggest as our next step.

The next letter is from Henrietta Szold:

HADASSAH

THE WOMEN'S ZIONIST ORGANIZATION

AFFILIATED WITH THE FEDERATION OF AMERICAN ZIONISTS

Officers

Henrietta Szold, Chairman
2 Pinehurst Ave., New York
Sophia Berger, Treasurer
31 West 110th St., New York

MEDICAL ADVISORY BOARD

Harry Friedenwald, M. C., *Chairman*
1029 Madison Avenue, Baltimore
Isaac A. Abt, M. D.
Isaac Adler, M. D.
Emanuel Libman, M. D.
Milton J. Rosenau, M. D.
Miss Lillian D. Wald

AMERICAN ZIONIST MEDICAL UNIT FOR PALESTINE

New York, February 15th, 1917.

Dr. Benjamin L. Gordon,
1642 South Broad Street,
Philadelphia, Pa.

Dear. Dr. Gordon:

I tried in vain yesterday to reach you over the telephone while I was in Philadelphia. I had received no particulars from you as to where the meeting was to take place, at what time, and what I was expected to talk about. By the merest chance I had decided to return from Philadelphia yesterday after my talk at Mrs. Lowenburg's, and to go back today.

You ask me to send you the subject of my paper. As I said above, I had hoped to be able to find out from you what you desired me to talk about. I know in a general way that you wish me to give an account of the Medical Unit, but as Dr. Friedenwald is going to speak too, I should have to know what his subject is before I could formulate mine. What was it you had in mind yourself when you asked me to come and speak to a Medical Society?

There is a likelihood of my being in Philadelphia again next Wednesday to address a group of women at Mrs. Lowenburg's—only a likelihood, not a certainty. If you care to wait until then and let me speak to you I shall be very glad to do so.

With Zion's greetings, I am,

Yours very truly,

(Signed) Henrietta Szold

In Philadelphia, Zionism assumed an educational aspect. The *Ohavei Zion* purchased a building (229 Pine Street) which was named The Zion Institute (the first institution of its kind in America) where public lectures on Jewish history and literature were delivered and where classes in Hebrew were conducted. The library and the reading room were crowded every evening and on Sunday The Zion Institute was bustling with activity. The Zion Institute rapidly became the greatest Jewish cultural center in Philadelphia.

The *Ohavei Zion* was the spiritual parent of a number of youth groups. Perhaps the most productive of these was the Aids of Zion (*Ozrei Zion*) founded in 1904. The membership of this organization was comprised of highschool boys between the ages of 14 and 18, most of whom were the sons of Zionists. These boys spent their leisure hours in the small library of the Zion Institute, reading books on Jewish historical and Zionist topics and attending classes on Jewish history and Hebrew literature. It has been well stated that the quality of a seed is best shown by the fruit it produces: The Aids of Zion produced at least ten learned rabbis who spread the ideology of Zionism far and wide. Rabbis Israel Levinthal, David Matt, Louis Feinberg, Louis Haas, Samuel Rabinowitz and Victor Brav all were at one time members of this organization.

The Aids of Zion also produced a number of eminent attorneys including Abraham Vernick and Nathaniel Goldman and Judges William M. Lewis and Louis Levinthal. Educators Morris Cellis and Simon Hahn and journalists Gershon Agronsky of the Jerusalem Post, David Galter of the Philadelphia Jewish Exponent and Louis Fisher, the well-known journalist and lecturer, were all affiliated with this organization in their youth. B. Reibstein, Frank Rubinstein, Nathan Slonimsky, Joseph Cohen, William Portner and L. Light, all prominent business men, were also members of this group.

Another group reared in the Zion Institute was the Maccabean Zion Society which was organized in the year 1905. Its membership consisted of older youths, ranging in age from 18 to 22 years, most of whom were immigrants. Among the founders of this group was the tireless worker, David B. Tierkel, and the ardent Zionist, Manuel Lisan. Other members included the young artist, David Finkelgreen, the book dealer and publisher, Michael Brown, and Rabbi Oscar Levin. The main activities of the Maccabean Zion Society were centered around the Jewish National Fund. The Society published a

monthly journal in Yiddish (Der Stern) under the editorship of David B. Tierkel.

One of the most active groups that assembled in the Zion Institute was the Moses Hess Camp of the Order *Bnei Zion*. This group participated in nearly every Zionist enterprise under the guiding influence of that self-sacrificing and tireless worker, the late Joseph Josephson, and the famous Hebrew writer and ardent Zionist, Jacob Zausmer.

The Order *Bnei Zion* itself was an offshoot of the Federation of American Zionists, and was founded in New York during the days when the Jewish fraternal organizations were at their peak and when almost every immigrant belonged to one of them. The purpose of the founders of the Order *Bnei Zion* was to attract to Zionism a large number of men who would only join a fraternal organization which provided financial benefits in case of illness or death. Some of the founders of the Order *Bnei Zion* were Dr. J. Bluestein, J. L. Magnes, Joseph Barondes, Levin-Epstein, Abraham Goldberg, Dr. H. Epstein and the present writer.

While discussing the Order *Bnei Zion*, I am reminded of another fraternal order which has rendered yeoman service for Zion although not officially connected with the Zionist Movement. I refer to the Independent Order *Brith Sholom*, founded in the year 1905 by a group of well-known Jews of Philadelphia at the call of Jacob Margolies who incidentally was the father of a number of charitable institutions of Philadelphia. Among those who attended the first meeting of the Order were Gutman Klein, Samuel Englander, Morris Rosenberg (who was its first grand master), B. F. Miller, Jacob Ginsburg, Morris Haber, Herman Bendiner, Adolph Rosenblum, Nathan Grayev, Sol S. Kraus, S. Berkowitz, B. Levinson, Louis Morris, Leo Belmont, and the following physicians: Max Staller, Joseph Abramson, S. S. Selikowitz, L. S. Rubinson and myself.

The Order *Brith Sholom* from its very foundation was deeply imbued with all Jewish activities and numerous charitable and philanthropic works. It was first among the fraternal organizations to accept the "Basle Programme". It manifested its Zionism not merely by resolutions but by deeds. It purchased land in Palestine, planted forests and contributed to all Palestinian institutions. Among its early local activities was the purchase of 67 acres of land in Eaglesville, Pa., upon which a consumptive hospital was erected. The *Brith Sholom* has established scholarships for poor students and contributed freely to all benevolent undertakings.

I recall that during the great influenza epidemic of 1918, when there was a scarcity of coffins to bury the dead, the *Brith Sholom* donated 300 of them to the Philadelphia Jewish Burial Society.

One of the most active Lodges of the Order *Brith Sholom* in Philadelphia was the Behr Gordon Lodge named after my father and founded by my brother, Max. E. Gordon, who was treasurer of the Order for many years and one of the most active workers of the Executive Council.

C H A P T E R XIII

My First Opportunity

A physician in a big city seems to be a plaything of fortune; his degree of reputation is for the most part totally casual. They that employ him know none of his excellence; they that reject him know not his deficiencies.

—Samuel Johnson

I WISH here to interrupt my account of the development of American Zionism to relate the details of a personal matter which had a profound influence upon my future medical life. At one of the Sunday meetings at the Institute I met my good friend, Moses Klein, author of *Migdal Zophim* (The Watch Tower) and weekly contributor to the columns of the Jewish Exponent (under the pseudonym of *Hazophe*). Klein, who was employed by the United Hebrew Charities as an investigator, told me that a vacancy for the position of charity physician existed in the society he represented and he advised me to apply for it.

I took his advice, and in a few days I was notified of my appointment. This was the real beginning of my medical career. My office immediately became jammed to capacity with men, women, and children and, not infrequently, even the vestibule was crowded to the doorway entrance. Of course the mobs consisted of charity patients. I received a yearly salary which merely paid my rent, but I was busy medically and I was happy. In the course of time, I built up a substantial private practice. Many persons who were charity patients in the beginning, gradually improved their financial status and became loyal private patients.

The extent of my practice, however, soon became too much for one physician to attend to properly. Aside from the office work, I made an average of fifteen calls a day at patients' homes; my charity calls plus my ever-increasing practice gradually rendered it impossible for me to keep up the combined duties any longer. The officers of the Hebrew charities saw my predicament, and they appointed Dr. Edwin H. Heller to help me carry the organization's responsibilities.

I well recall that among the patients who applied for free treat-

ment were a number who could well afford to pay a private physician. In fact, the other physicians of South Philadelphia soon began to protest against dispensing free advice and medicine to people of adequate means. I began to scrutinize my patients more carefully in order to weed out those whom I thought were not deserving of free treatment.

I recall one patient in particular, who came to the office almost daily with one or more of her many children. One day she called me to her home for the first time. When I saw her house and furnishings, I was immediately convinced that this woman was taking undue advantage of the Charities.

When I had finished examining her sick child, and had prescribed for the little one, I asked for my customary house fee. She refused to pay me and made a few sarcastic and uncomplimentary remarks. I controlled my temper, and, before leaving, told her that since her child had scarlet fever, I was of course required by law to report the case. She evidently feared that the child would be taken to the Hospital for Contagious Diseases, for in a short time she came running to my office with a dollar in her hand. She had reconsidered the matter and had decided to pay my fee as hush money so that I would not report the case. She put the dollar on my desk and asked me point blank not to report it. Of course, I told her to take the dollar back, since, at her own insistence, she was a charity patient and could not afford such a fee. Needless to say, the case was reported.

I later made a personal investigation, and found that her husband was a clothing manufacturer, employing more than a hundred people in his shop. He was rated at $200,000, which was quite a sum of money in those days. I carefully went over my daybooks, and itemized the number of times I had treated members of this family gratis as charity patients, and I added to the regular cost of these services the cost of the drugs furnished by the Charities. I then sent a bill for $500. The next day the husband appeared at my office in a most perturbed state, demanding to know what the bill was all about.

When I told him the clinic I was running was only for poor immigrants and not for people of means, he appeared flabbergasted, and insisted that he had given his wife money for physicians and drugs, and that he could not account for her not paying. He became very incensed when I explained the situation to him, and left my office in a huff. I notified the Hebrew Charities of the facts of this case, and their lawyer, Max Hertzberg, collected the $500, half of which was turned over to me.

On one occasion during these days the newspapers gave me considerable unsolicited and undesired space. The large number of patients who came to me for medical advice attracted the attention of various spiritual healers. One of them was known as "Dunlap, the Cripple." This Dunlap was a religious fanatic. Rumors had it that his actions were prompted by remorse, and that he was trying to seek divine forgiveness for the evils he had perpetrated early in life. He was troubled with paraplegia, and I am convinced that if his colloidal gold curve had been taken, it would have pointed to paresis. Dunlap habitually roamed the streets in a rolling chair which was pushed by two of his disciples.

He made daily stops at Hebrew schools when they were in session and at synagogues during services. At each stop his assistants motioned to the Jewish children to come over to them and receive gifts in the form of candy and trinkets wrapped in circulars which called upon the children to sing various religious hymns. The children were asked to accompany the two men in singing, and the best singer was rewarded with a prize.

As intimated, Dunlap, hearing of the large number of immigrants calling at my office, decided to pay me daily visits during office hours. On several occasions I politely asked the self-designated prophet to keep away from my office at least during office hours, but he summarily refused each request. When summertime came, and the windows had to be kept open, I was very much disturbed by the noises his rallies gave rise to in front of my office. The moment the children in the neighborhood saw the rolling chair arrive in front of my office, there was a mad dash to receive the presents. At times, actual riots ensued.

One Friday afternoon, Dunlap stopped his chair on the sidewalk in front of my steps just as a mother and child were leaving my office. They were immediately handed a package containing candies and playthings. One of his assistants then displayed the prize which the best singer would get. The noise of the crowd engaging in the hymn singing was so deafening that there was no possibility of my doing any work. I came out of my office and told Dunlap and his stooges in no uncertain terms to get away from my steps at once. He ignored my request as usual, and he howled at the top of his voice that the voice of the Lord was more important than mine. While I would be the last to deny the truth of this last statement, I vehemently did deny that Dunlap had any monopoly on the divine voice. A patient of mine who had seen what had transpired, decided on a course of

action. He went across the street, purchased some over-ripe tomatoes from a huckster, and threw them at the man in the rolling chair and his helpers. Others, spontaneously approving of these tactics, followed suit, and for a time the fruit certainly did fly. Dunlap and his crew were spattered from their heads to their toes. A police alarm was sounded, and soon a police patrol arrived. Dunlap was taken to a neighboring hospital and his men to the police station.

In about an hour, an officer came with a warrant for my arrest. At the magistrate's hearing, Dunlap was represented by a prominent attorney known as Colonel Bauman. My friend, Mr. Adolph Eichholz, represented me. The magistrate, upon hearing my version of the case, dismissed all charges against me.

To tell the truth, I do believe that the tomato barrage had been a mortal blow to Dunlap's morale. At any rate, this episode, plus the organization of an efficient Parent-Teachers Association to keep the children away from him, caused him to forsake his crusade. In a short time he was seen no more.

The year 1898 is deeply impressed upon my memory. It was on April 11 of this year, while I was making my house calls, that I picked up a paper on a newsstand, the headlines of which proclaimed in bold letters that Congress had declared war against Spain.

The people of the United States had long watched the struggle of the Cubans against the tyranny of Spain, and looked with indignation upon the inhuman cruelties, which had been perpetrated by Spain on her colony. The tension of the situation was markedly increased by the destruction of the United States battleship *Maine*, which blew up in the harbor of Havana on the fifteenth of February, 1898.

In all large cities, military organizations were formed to avenge the *Maine* and the two hundred and sixty-six men of her crew. In Philadelphia, a military organization known as Keegan's Brigade was organized. This brigade, appropriately enough, consisted of companies of various nationalities—all loyal Americans. Included in this group was a company of young Jews, many of whom had seen military service in various European countries.

I was largely instrumental in organizing this Jewish company. We drilled three evenings each week in an armory located on Race Street near Fifth. On several occasions, regular United States Army men supervised our program. When the company was ready to be enlisted into the regular army, Mr. Keegan, the founder of the brigade that bore his name, watched our men drilling and complimented me for organizing such a fine group of able-bodied young men. Our company

was thereupon officially admitted into the brigade. Fortunately or unfortunately, the Spanish-American War ended just as we were making final preparations for overseas service.

During the years that I was associated with the Jefferson Maternity Hospital, I had the opportunity of witnessing many interesting incidents and observing at first hand many customs and superstitions—some not without humor—which were prevalent among the various races, creeds, and colors of Philadelphia. I well recall the situation which developed when two Negroes claimed paternity over a child that was yet to be born.

One cold winter night, I was called by one of my students to see a patient who had been in labor for a protracted period. The students had been watching the case for forty-eight hours, and there had been very little progress. The patient lived in a house on a small street in South Philadelphia. When I entered the house, I found two Negro men in the midst of a heated argument. Whiskey bottles—some empty and some full—were strewn around the table, attesting to the fact that a celebration was in progress in honor of the coming heir.

I then entered the back room, and found my three students standing uneasily around the bed of a young negro woman. I examined her, and decided that the baby could readily be extracted with a forceps. Exhaustion from prolonged labor had led to uterine inertia. While arranging my instruments for sterilization, I heard the two men in the front room shouting and calling each other names. This was followed by the sounds of a fist-fight, the thud of crashing furniture, and the sound of breaking glass.

I went back to the front room and found both men literally at each other's throats. Blood was pouring from their heads, and both were proclaiming with finality: "My baby!" I wanted to pacify them for two reasons: first, to prevent murder, and second, because it was difficult to deliver the infant and lecture to the students with such a turmoil going on. The first thing that came to my mind was the vision of King Solomon, before whom two women came, each claiming to be the mother of the same child. However, it was obviously dangerous and unscientific to employ Solomon's methods in the present case. I suggested that the fight be interrupted while we asked the prospective mother to name the father. The two contestants and I then went back into her room. When interrogated, she replied, "I don't know." Thereupon the two men decided to resume the conflict, and in no time they were bashing away at each other again.

The idea then flashed through my mind that I might be able to prevail upon the two would-be fathers to postpone their struggle until after the delivery, at which time we could ascertain which one the baby resembled. When I presented this plan to the two men, they seemed to be satisfied with its justice, and they immediately suspended military operations, sat down, and calmly awaited the delivery.

It was a difficult delivery, and by the time the head was out, it was entirely disfigured both from the excessive natural molding and the forceps extraction. One eye could not be seen at all, and the flat nose was almost entirely obliterated. The head was long and cone-shaped. I placed the baby on the bed and called both "contestants" in. I asked them to observe the baby carefully and then decide which of the two it resembled. The instant they saw the baby's face both became terror-stricken, and, almost in unison, cried out, "Not mine! Not mine!" With this, both ran out of the room and the house, inspired by a newly found feeling of fellowship.

The next morning, when I came to see the mother, the streets around her house were crowded with people, although no one appeared to want to venture into my patient's house. It seems that the two contestants over the paternity of the child, as they had departed post-haste on the previous night, had spread the word among the neighbors that Eliza had just given birth to a demon. When I came out after visiting the mother and baby, a next-door neighbor approached me and asked me if this was true. During the night, the infant's head had adjusted its shape markedly, so I invited the neighbor in to see the baby and put a stop to the rumor. After a great deal of persuasion, she timorously followed me—I could hear her knees quaking—into Eliza's house, and appeared very much relieved to learn that no demon dwelled next door.

I observed quite a number of curious cases during my obstetrical days. The following story may prove of interest to the reader. I was called to deliver a Negro woman in an uptown district. I found the mother of the patient sitting on the edge of the bed, and she informed me that she had come from Elkton, Maryland, to stay with her daughter until the birth of the child.

The mother, who had evidently given birth to a number of children, tried to help her daughter during her labor pains by grasping her hands and rubbing her back. Frequently the mother told the daughter how to bear down when she was taken with a pain, and gave a good demonstration of the method. When the daughter was about ready for delivery, I noticed that the elderly woman acted strangely.

She appeared herself to have bonafide labor pains. I glanced at her abdomen and noted that it was obviously very much enlarged.

I soon realized that I had two patients instead of one. As there was no one in the room to assist me, I called through an open window to a neighbor to come and help me. There was only one bed in the room, and I was compelled to put mother and daughter on the same bed. The mother delivered first, and the daughter ten minutes later. They both gave birth to girls.

After I had cut and tied the navel cords and delivered the placentas, I noticed some excessive sanguineous oozing from the daughter's uterus. I went to my obstetrical bag for a bottle of fluid extract of ergot, and while I was busy stopping the bleeding, my "assistant" removed both babies from where I had left them and put them at the foot of the bed. When I was through, I asked her which baby belonged to which mother. She hesitated for a moment and then shook her head dubiously.

Ordinarily the situation might not have caused much furor and embarrassment, as both infants were in the same family and neither mother would have been suspicious of either child she was given. However, my assistant not only exhibited profound doubt before the mother but she told a neighbor about the mixup. This story went from neighbor to neighbor until it reached the ears of the young woman's husband.

One day after his mother-in-law left for her home in Elkton with what I sincerely hoped was *her* newly-born daughter, the young woman's husband came to my office in a highly perturbed state, and insisted that I prove to his satisfaction which child was really his daughter. He remarked, "I don't want to raise a sister-in-law as my daughter." I realized that the story had gone too far for me to deny its authenticity. At first, I was in a quandary as to what course to follow. After some thought I told him that he need not worry about "raising a sister-in-law," and that I was certain that he had his own child. "You know," I said, "your mother-in-law's skin is very dark, while yours on the other hand, is much lighter. The child which you are raising is also of a lighter shade and must therefore be yours." It was most fortunate that his mother-in-law did not live in Philadelphia, for if he had been able to examine the child that we hoped was her baby, he might have questioned my explanation. As matters were, he was satisfied, and left my office contented.

A case of a different nature came to my attention when a widow and her two daughters came to the old Polyclinic Hospital for medi-

cal advice. One of the daughters was married to a young man who had recently enlisted in the Army and had been sent to the Philippines. (This occurred just after the Spanish-American War.) Upon examination, I found all three of the women to be pregnant. When I told them of my findings, all appeared very much shocked.

Several days later, the mother came to my private office to make arrangements for the deliveries. I gathered from what she told me that the three women had been impregnated by a "friendly" boarder who had lived with them for about a year and had helped defray the expenses of the house. I advised them to register in two, and if possible, in three different hospitals, so that the case would not be given any publicity. The mother and one daughter registered in the Jefferson Maternity Hospital, where I delivered them within a few days of each other. The other daughter had delivered first elsewhere. When my two patients were ready to be discharged, the older woman told me that she had decided to have her married daughter take care of her baby too. The other daughter's child was given to some institution.

I later learned that the son-in-law (in the Philippines) had been notified by his wife of the birth of twins. Thus, when the hero of the Spanish-American War was mustered out of the Army, he was "mustered in" into a little army of his own.

In my heavy obstetrical practice, I recall one interesting case of "false pregnancy." The patient was a woman who had been married fifteen years and who had never become pregnant. Her most heartfelt desire was to give birth to a child. Suddenly she was taken with morning sickness and her abdomen and breasts increased in size. She went to a midwife, who told her that she was definitely pregnant. When I first saw her, this woman had counted the nine months of pregnancy and thought that she was actually in labor. As a matter of fact, she had actual contractions of the muscles of the abdomen, and she was certain that she had felt foetal movements for some time. This so-called labor had gone on for three days in the presence of the midwife, and, as there was no evidence of any progress, I had been summoned in consultation.

I took along my obstetrical bag with forceps and other instruments, ready for any eventuality. When I entered the room I found the patient in bed and groaning from apparent agony. I immediately felt her abdomen and was more than surprised to find that the uterus was not even palpable. When I told the patient of my findings she fainted, and when she came to, all signs of labor had disappeared.

I remember being called in consultation by a middle-aged woman

who introduced herself as a midwife. When I arrived at the bedside, she was holding over the patient's abdomen a brass plate on which was engraved in Latin, "I have suffered." It happened to be a shoulder presentation, and the woman had been in labor for three days. The midwife evidently hoped to dislodge the impacted shoulder by the use of the plate.

The foreign settlements of our large cities were filled with such midwives who used all kinds of strategems in difficult births. They appealed to St. Margaret, who governs childbirth, to intercede for the mother and child. If this did not succeed, they appealed to the child itself not to plague its own mother and to come out as soon as possible. The appeals were veiled in euphemistic and diplomatic language.

Indeed, on one occasion, I noticed in South Philadelphia a sign in front of a window inscribed "Mary Sorano—Diplomatic Midwife." Of course, the woman wanted to convey the idea that she was a midwife with a diploma.

There is no other branch of medicine which is surrounded by more superstition than obstetrics. Folk remedies, particularly, are widely used to facilitate labor. Oriental Jews blow a ram's horn to scare away the demon that causes difficult labor. Some people put the Bible under the mother's pillow, opened at the verse "In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children." A cross under the pillow is another means of averting difficult labor.

Next to the members of her own family, a woman likes to remember the doctor who was at her bedside during her hours of travail and at her delivery. To this day, women and girls often stop me on the streets to tell me that I was the doctor who delivered them or their mothers. Many women now well above middle age whom I delivered still feel close enough to me to object when I address them by their surnames. Women are slow to change their obstetricians; they look upon them as members of their own family. They often confide family affairs to them that they would not entrust to their own flesh and blood.

The consultation room of the old family physician who attended to the mother during confinement and the child afterwards literally vibrated with human relations problems. Some of these problems were dramatic; others were humorous and amusing. If my old roll-top desk had been equipped with a recording device, what tales of woe, happiness, sorrow, cheer, passion, fear, hope, and frustration could it tell!

It was quite impossible to sit at this desk and avoid facing human relations problems of paramount importance to family life. My office was not merely a dispensary where strangers came for treatment. My patients were my friends, and there was an intimate, neighborly relationship between the patient and me. I had known many of my patients from the day I delivered them. In my general practice days, I delivered well over 2,000 babies, and the large majority of the mothers depended upon me for all subsequent medical advice for their families.

With such a following, a physician could not abruptly start the visit by taking a medical history. Many of my patients, while complaining of this minor symptom or that, in reality had come to consult me about family matters, sex problems, conditions aroused by unrequited love or infidelity, problems arising from incompatability and neglect, and emotional upsets produced by fear of gossip, fear of parents, fear of themselves, fear of insecurity, and even fear of unborn creatures within them. The old doctor was more than a physician. Next to his patient's parents, he was the closest friend and counsellor. Indeed, the patient often trusted the doctor with information that he would not confide to his own wife or parents.

The doctor took a deep personal interest in the most wonderful adventure of a woman's life—pregnancy. From the day she first came to see him, mystified and frightened, he gave her cheer and guidance. He listened attentively as she told him of experiencing the first flutter of life, and he told her the meaning of the constant physical changes that were taking place in her body.

Money cannot pay for the anxious hours the family doctor spent at the side of the expectant mother in the lying-in room of her own home. (These were the days before it became customary for expectant mothers to register in a maternity hospital.) The doctor did not take lightly his personal responsibility for the welfare of mother and baby.

The miracle of life is never commonplace. I never delivered a baby without marvelling at the wonderful phenomena of nature that developed in sequence before my eyes. No less marvelous was it to watch the development of the baby all the way from a helpless infant to full maturity. In many instances, I had delivered the mothers of those who called upon me to deliver them.

The beautiful daughter of one of my best families, whose mother was one of the first obstetrical cases I had ever delivered, came to my office in an apparently agitated state one day. Her voice trembled

as she informed me, "Doctor, I am in trouble, please help me." I tried to calm her, and reassured her that I would do all in my power to aid her. She told me the following story: "I have been deeply in love with a school chum of mine since our school days. When my parents found out about this they placed every possible obstacle in the way of our marriage. After keeping company for several years my boyfriend insisted that we get married without the consent of my parents. When I refused to do this, he threatened to leave the city and said that I would never see him again. I really did not believe he would go, but one sad day he told me that he was about to leave for the West Coast. I saw him once before he left, and at that moment our love flared into a burning passion and we were swept off our feet. After this he left, and I have never heard from him since. Time gradually eased the ache in my heart. It is now five months since he left. The other night while I was lying in bed I experienced a peculiar flutter in my abdomen, and its meaning frightens me. Please doctor, you brought me into this world. Help me now to get out of my horrible predicament."

I took this girl into my examining room and it did not take long to discover that her fear was not groundless. Needless to say I felt very bad about my young patient's predicament. Professional ethics and personal morals would not permit me to send her to an abortionist. Yet I feared to send her home unaided, because the girl seemed desperate and I felt that she might do something to herself. I told her that I would not let her down, and I asked her to return to see me the next morning.

After she left, I decided that the best plan of action was for me to send for her father, and I took him into my confidence. The father naturally did not take the matter lightly. He became very much agitated, and almost collapsed when I told him the story of his daughter, but I succeeded in convincing him that he and his wife shared her blame. When he finally quieted down we talked the matter over.

The immediate dilemma was to find a place for the girl during the remaining months of her pregnancy. I did not worry about her delivery or the adoption of her child. I knew I could take care of these matters without difficulty. (Adoptions were not restricted by red tape in those days.) We decided to send her to some summer resort, as the early part of the summer season was at hand. Indeed, her mother, who was still ignorant of her trouble, noticed her loss of appetite and lack of ambition, and actually suggested that she be sent away for a rest. At the end of the summer, I registered her in a hos-

pital, and a week later I delivered her son. When she was about to be discharged from the hospital, her father suggested that the time was ripe to give the baby away for adoption. To his surprise (but not to mine), his young daughter began weeping piteously. She, of course, was unwilling to give the child away. She said that she would rather leave Philadelphia, go to a neighboring town, and secure employment by which she could support herself and her son. In spite of her father's opposition to this plan, I agreed with the young mother. I got in touch with a friend in a neighboring city who needed a secretary, and he asked me to send her out. She adopted the surname of her lover for herself and her son.

For three years she held on to this responsible job, by which she supported herself and her son, and during this period, I did not see her. Then, one afternoon, she walked into my office. Her bearing was composed and her face was radiant. She shook my hand warmly and without further ado, spoke to me:

"I am here again, Doctor, for advice and guidance, but of a different nature. I know you can help me."

I was glad that it was "of a different nature."

"One of the buyers in the department store where I am working is in love with me and wants to marry me. He is also willing to adopt my child. He has never asked me about the father of the child or whether I am a widow or a divorcee. Neither have I questioned him about his personal life. I am afraid he may broach the subject of my past history at any time or he may find out himself that I have an illegitimate child. In any case, I cannot go on any longer like this. I want you to tell me what to do."

I really had no idea as to how to solve the new puzzle, but I agreed with her that the man who was in love with her should know her past history, and that she should not conceal it from him any longer. I asked her to send him over to me when he next came to Philadelphia on business.

I did not get much time for deliberation. The next morning he was in my office bright and early, and introduced himself as the fiancé of my patient. He had the appearance of a prosperous merchant. He was sincere, open, and tactful. He declared, "I suppose you want to know the man whom Mrs. —— is about to wed. I am prepared for the cross-examination. To save time, you may put down my age as 40. My present marital status is 'divorced.' My occupation is buyer in a department store. I have no children."

To this I replied, "I am anxious to meet the future husband of Mrs. ——, in whom I have taken great interest since the day I delivered her. I am most anxious to see her happy, and I feel that my wish is being gratified. I have no questions to ask you, but I take it that you might want to know something about the woman you are going to marry." He answered, "I have known her for three years and have found her to be of exceptional character. I love her. What more need I know? I did not ask her about her past and she did not ask me about mine."

I interrupted him by interjecting, "There is one thing however, that Mrs. —— insists that you know, and that is that she was never legally married to the father of her son. She was in love with him from their school days. They wanted to get married, but her parents, for some reason or other, objected and she could not find it in her heart to spite them. The young man became despondent and left the city. No one knew what became of him, but later I found out that he had married and settled in California. Now that you know all about her, you are free to decide whether to marry her or not."

"Doctor," he replied, "I am very happy that she needs no divorce. It took me five years to get one. As for Mrs. ——, tell her that we both must forget our pasts, and live happily in the living present. I hope you will find it possible to be present at our wedding." I accepted the invitation.

On the humorous side, I recall the case of a nineteen-year-old girl whom I had delivered of a boy eight months previously—out of wedlock. She came nervously into my office and whispered to me that on several occasions she had felt movements in her abdomen. I took her history and examined her. I then told her, "You are quite right; you have diagnosed your case correctly. You *are* pregnant."

Having been the family physician in her home for many years, I casually remarked that she should get herself a husband before having any more children, in order to avoid embarrassing her parents and herself. She promptly replied, "I think you are right, but so far I have not found the right kind of man."

By 1901 I had built up a large obstetrical practice. I recall that on one occasion during this year I went to a convention in the Catskill Mountains. A colleague, whom I left to cover my practice during my absence, delivered fourteen cases within the three-day period that I was away. It was impossible for obstetricians in those days to have such a balanced life as is enjoyed by many present-day specialists. One had to be on immediate call twenty-four hours a day.

If an obstetrician left town for even a brief time, those delivered by a strange doctor were enraged beyond belief. No definite personal appointments could be made, for, sure enough, just at the time the appointment was scheduled for a theater party, a musical, or what have you, someone dragged the doctor off, saying that his wife was in hard labor.

At present, when women are rarely delivered at home and have become accustomed to being confined in maternity wards of hospitals, there are always physicians and nurses on hand to help them, and the obstetrician is called for delivery, as a rule, at the last moment. In my day, however, it was not considered proper for a woman to give up her home and go to a public institution to be delivered. Frequently, after a series of sleepless nights, when I finally went to bed and was in a deep, stuporous sleep, oblivious of all reality, the bell would clang loudly, and I would be rudely awakened by someone shouting, "Come, doctor, quick! My wife is about to deliver!"

I would not come to until I reached the patient's house. Then, like as not, the patient would not be ready for delivery, and I would have to sit around for hours before the second and third stages of labor were completed.

Let me add that in my day, prenatal and postnatal care were badly neglected. Often we did not even see the patient until labor had started. It is in the fields of prenatal and postnatal care rather than in actual technique that the modern obstetrician excels. It is this care that has so markedly cut down foetal and maternal mortality.

In those days I had no real home—I had an office but no home. I had to go to restaurants for my meals, and many a meal I skipped because of lack of time or plain disgust for restaurant food.

By this time, I missed my family keenly, and I decided to bring my sister Helen to this country. I did not think of marriage yet. My extensive practice and manifold interests kept me occupied and gave me little chance to stay at home.

When my sister arrived, followed shortly by my brother Mordechai (plain Max in the New World), I was very happy. I had my loved ones with me, and I had good meals at regular hours. My brother helped attend to my office and took messages for me. Gradually the meetings of the various organizations in which I was interested began to be held at my house instead of at other places. Helen was always on hand with a word of good cheer, and tea and refreshments were always ready to be served. My sister had inherited from

our mother the gift of hospitality. She loved to entertain my cultured friends.

In 1901, I was elected to the Board of Public Education in my district. This position necessitated my attending one board meeting every two weeks and visiting the school which was assigned to me once a week. When I permitted my name to appear on the ballot, I had no idea as to the amount of work and annoyance connected with this honorable position. Parents whose children were expelled from school for bad behavior came daily to ask me to intervene with the principal so that he would reinstate them. Some mothers wanted me to speak to the principal so that he would skip their "genius" youngsters to higher classes. Prospective teachers hounded me to have them appointed to my school.

During the Jewish High Holidays, I made it a practice to visit the House of Refuge for Wayward Boys (I made my original visit to this institution at the request of the Reverend Sabbato Morais). I mention this fact because of the following story:

One *Yom Kippur* morning, before I went to attend the services arranged for the Jewish boys in the chapel, Captain Niebecker, then superintendent of the institution, told me that there was a boy committed to his care who obviously did not belong in the institution. He said that for the life of him he did not know how he had ever come to be placed there. He asked me to look into the charges against him, and, if possible, to remove him from this group of juvenile delinquents.

When I returned to Philadelphia, a police official told me that there were no charges against the boy, and that he had been sent to the penal institution as a vagrant. The boy, who was about thirteen years of age, gave his name as William Blow. I tried to get the orphans' home to take him, but I was informed that they were not permitted to take children from penal institutions. I felt the boy's unjustified plight keenly, so, as a last resort, I made up my mind to take him into my home. We had an extra room and there was no trouble about meals. My sister was very happy to attend to him.

I called up the superintendent of the House of Refuge, and told him that I would vouch for the boy personally. I immediately arranged with the principal of the school that was in my charge to admit him as a student. The boy was very studious from the onset. He worked at his lessons faithfully, and in his leisure hours he helped me with the patients. For some reason or other, I could not get him to go out and play with the boys on the street. He always found an excuse for staying in the house. One time, when I pressed him to give

me his reasons for this action, I was told that he feared that he might be influenced by bad boys.

Eight months passed, and everything went well. One day, instead of coming home from school in his usual leisurely fashion, he dashed into the house and excitedly cried, "Doctor, don't let them take me away from you! I am happy here!" A few moments later the bell rang. I opened the door, and met an old, shabbily dressed woman who literally screamed at me: "Where is my boy? Give him back to me! He is my child!" I tried to pacify the poor woman by telling her that I did not want her boy. "Come in," I said, "and tell me what this is all about."

After hearing her story, I went up to the boy's room to bring him down, but he was no longer there. He had jumped from his window to the kitchen roof, and from there had clambered down into the street.

Late the following night, I heard a door open, and I quietly went down and met him as he was going up the stairway. I grasped him with a firm grip and pulled him into the office. I then insisted that he tell his side of the story. He quietly answered, "This is just why I have returned. It is true that I am her son. I was mistreated by my father. After school I was made to sell papers until late in the evening, and when I went home I was brutally punished for not making enough money. I was also beaten for not going to the synagogue. My last punishment was very severe, and I made up my mind to leave home. I didn't know where to go, so I went to a police station and told the sergeant that I had no home. They sent me to the House of Refuge. I am not going back to my cruel parents. If they are willing to let me stay with you, well and good; if not, I will go away where they will never find me."

The next day a constable and a policeman, accompanied by the father of the boy, came to my house with a search warrant and a warrant for my arrest. I told them the story exactly as the boy had told it to me, and I appealed to them not to be strict with the boy. The father took the boy home, and promised not to mistreat him. I eventually got a position for him in a wholesale liquor house, where he worked for twenty-five years. I was present at his wedding. For years he seldom failed to call on me each Saturday afternoon.

I may note here that in all my professional, political, and social connections I was treated with due respect by my associates and colleagues. As far as I was concerned, I found that the best way to be spared the crude comments of those who are snobbishly inclined is to

studiously avoid joining all groups that are openly or surreptitiously anti-Semitic. I never attempted to test my eligibility to join clubs which are labelled "strictly American," or to register at hotels listed as "restricted." There were already too many social climbers; why, I thought, should I increase the number by canvassing my friends to get me into this or that undemocratic organization? I remember once having been granted the dubious honor of being offered admission to one so-called "exclusive" club in Philadelphia, but I could not find one good reason for entering an organization which showed tolerance towards me but bigotry towards others. In this case, a former neighbor, a prosperous plumber, boasted to me of the tolerance of his club; it had already admitted two prominent Jews as members, and he offered his personal and well-intentioned help to get me into his exclusive circle. I politely turned him down, although I still considered him a good neighbor.

One day, during my early years in Philadelphia, I read a notice in the morning paper to the effect that a notorious anti-Semite was going to address a gathering in the vestry of a certain church, and that everyone was invited to attend. After my evening office hours, I hurried to the church to find the vestry crowded to its full capacity.

The speaker was introduced by one of the members of the church as a great scholar and noted author. I really think that the man who gave the introduction did not know the true mission of the lecturer. The lecture began with verbose praise for America and Americans, and then the speaker tendered his personal analyses of the various nationalities who flocked to the Land of the Free. When he came to the subject of the Jews, his face turned livid red, and he began to hurl the vilest invectives against them. He warned his listeners that unless arms were immediately taken up against the Jews, they would take over the entire country.

I could not bear to sit there and listen to his false and malicious accusations, so I got up and started to leave the room quietly. A broad-minded, elderly woman next to me, understanding my embarrassment, proceeded to call out in a loud voice, "Why don't you silence this horrible rabble-rouser instead of leaving?" I was already in the middle of the aisle on my way out, and all eyes were turned toward me. The speaker stopped short. I hesitated for a moment, and then replied to the audience: "Do not listen to this villain who masquerades as an American, but who, in every word he utters, proves that he is against every principle that is truly American and democratic." I then continued toward the exit, but one of the churchmen

insisted that I stay. It seems that my remarks caused a commotion, and in the midst of the excitement, an elderly man stood up and loudly remarked, "Who asked this speaker to come here, and set brother against brother? Have we not battled together side by side to keep America free from oppression and prejudice?" Then he cried out, "Who is this scoundrel who dares come here to create hatred between religious and racial groups?"

As the aroused listener's anger mounted, words of righteous indignation poured forth from his lips. When he sat down, the anti-Semite hastily retreated by a side exit amidst wild jeering. This, however, did not deter him from continuing his mission of vilification. On several ensuing occasions, he was met with barrages of rotten eggs and fruit.

Theodore Roosevelt, who was at that time Police Commissioner of New York City, permitted him to speak before a German audience in New York. The Germans asked the commissioner to protect their speaker, and he obliged by sending a 100 per cent Jewish police guard. The orator eventually was forced into the realization that America was not a suitable place for anti-Semitism.

CHAPTER XIV

The New Century

The old year is dead. The new year is born. Humbly, fearfully, we sink on our knees, and slowly, in answer to our prayers, comes back something of the old faith of our childhood, and we rejoice that we are granted one more New Year's Day on which to begin again—not in our childish way, with utter disregard of the past, but trustingly, patiently knowing that we must ever carry with us our past.

—Golden Rule

FOR me, the first of January, 1900, was the occasion for a triple celebration. It marked the advent of a new century, a new year and the beginning of my second decade in America. Surely I had many reasons to be thankful, notwithstanding the trials, conflicts, and tribulations I had suffered since coming to this blessed land. It cannot be denied that America had offered and was continuing to offer me opportunities which could not be equaled in any land—least of all, the land of the Czars.

The first of January, 1900, brought to my mind memories of my early life—some fond, some sad; but most of all I was cognizant of the fact that I had been fortunate enough to extricate myself from a hostile atmosphere and come to a land of freedom which offered a haven to any stranger of ambition and integrity, to toil, to study, and to succeed.

Among the manifold blessings which America bestowed upon me was the great opportunity to learn the profession which had been so dear to me since my youth. I did not think of the uphill struggle I had had to undergo in order to utilize the opportunities that this profession gave me, for the possibility of anyone succeeding in anything without a struggle never even entered my mind. The most any country can offer one is opportunity; the utilization of such opportunity is up to the individual.

On the first of January, 1900, after ten years of continuous toil, I was more than happy that I had built up an extensive medical

practice, and that I had made a large number of friends, but these things were not most important to me. Most significant of all—standing out like a solitary, tall, stately cedar above a level plain—was the consciousness that I was now a real American—a citizen of the U. S. A. I felt joyous and secure because I had come to the land of golden opportunity for all men, where equality was a fact, not a dream, and where men could aspire to the better things of life, regardless of their race, creed, or color, or of the land of their birth.

On the eve of the new century, I invited a number of personal friends to celebrate with me. Among these were a few medical colleagues, a lawyer, and a farmer from the neighborhood of Vineland, N. J. The last gentleman brought us a goodly supply of wine, which he had made on his farm from his own grapes.

My friends were all in a talkative and jovial mood. We dismissed from our minds all present burdens and thought more of the dead past and the brilliant future. The stories that most of my friends related were amazingly similar. All had begun life amid abject poverty and persecution on the other side of the Atlantic, and had strived for and attained the better life by means of the opportunities afforded them by a free America.

The story of Mr. Rice, the Vineland farmer, is of more than passing interest, and I will relate it here briefly. Mr. Rice survived two major pogroms, one in Yalta and one in Odessa. He and a number of university students in Odessa were among the founders of the Society called *Ou Olam* (The Eternal People), the aim of which was to divert the Jewish youth from Palestine (Palestine was advocated as a land of refuge by Leon Pinsker and the *Hovevei Zion* of Odessa), and to turn their attention to the possibilities of becoming farmers in the United States. This organization specified that the *emigrés* to America were not to become professional men, shopkeepers, laborers, or traders, but only farmers.

Mr. Rice and Moses Freeman, of Philadelphia, were in one group that had emigrated from Odessa; they had grown tired of living "in the air" *(luft menschen)* without solid ground under their feet. They settled in the neighborhood of Vineland, N. J., on land given to them by the Jewish Colonization Association, which had been established by the munificent gifts of the Baron de Hirsch.

Most of the would-be farmers, including Moses Freeman, after a year or so of enduring "hunger, cold and bloodthristy mosquitoes," abandoned their farms and obtained jobs in factories in New York and Philadelphia. Rice was one of the few of the original pioneers

who stuck to his farm in spite of all the physical and intellectual handicaps. From the time he became an American farmer, he paid strict attention to the cultivation of grapes. In a few years, the income from his wine was sufficient to support his family. Most of his customers lived in the Philadelphia area.

Jewish immigrant farmers in South Jersey in those days received assistance from the Jewish Colonization Association, for it was hard to eke out even a meager living from the soil. Only a few of the younger generation that sprang up on these farms remained with their parents, for it was obviously difficult to keep them in the colonies. Even after the agricultural school was opened in Woodbine, N. J., where young men could obtain a scientific knowledge of farming, the young people continued to leave the colonies to study the professions or to engage in commerce in the large cities.

I frequently had occasion to visit the colonies with my friend Moses Klein, at the request of the Philadelphia office of the Jewish Colonization Association. I made periodic visits to inspect the sanitary conditions of the schools. I conversed with many farmers, whose pet gripe was that they were not able to persuade their children to remain with them. Essentially the same disturbing factor was discussed with me by the superintendent of the Agricultural School, Professor Sabsowitz.

When they saw how the colonization of Palestine was progressing, both Mr. Rice and Mr. Freeman confessed that they had erred in diverting the refugees of the pogroms from Palestine to America. America was perhaps a better land for agriculture, but the colonists were too close to the clothing and cigar factories of Philadelphia and New York to be able to resist taking advantage of the relatively better opportunities available in the big cities.

During the course of our New Year's Eve conversation, Mr. Rice, who was very well read in the history of civilization, expressed his opinion that the two greatest inventions of the nineteenth century were the reaping machine invented by McCormick in the United States and the electric motor and dynamo devised by Faraday in England. Both were invented in the year 1832. Others present ventured the opinion that the greatest discoveries of the past century were the telegraph (invented by Morse in 1836), the telephone (invented by Alexander Graham Bell), the phonograph (devised by Edison in 1877; these last three inventors were all Americans), the photographic camera (first constructed by Daguerre in 1839) and

Sir Humphrey Davy's Safety Lamp that had saved the lives of so many miners.

I related how profoundly astonished I was when, in 1893, I saw a horseless carriage (the embryonic automobile) in New York City, and how amazed I was when I listened to the wireless telegraph invented by Marconi in 1897.

All of us that night had forgotten the epoch-making discovery of Pasteur, who isolated the pathogenic organisms of various diseases and declared unrelenting war against the forces of nature hostile to man. It took Pasteur five years to discover a remedy for rabies. Pasteur was one of the few indefatigable laborers who had absolutely no mercenary motives. He was prompted only by the desire to find remedies with which to save lives, which was not the prime motivating factor of some of the other scientists.

It is said that when Napoleon III expressed great surprise that the great investigator had not endeavored to make his discoveries and their applications a source of profit, Pasteur replied that mercenary motives would merely degrade men of science. In a conversation with Lady Priestly, Pasteur remarked, "I could never work for money. I will always work for Science." It is obvious that if Pasteur had chosen to keep his discoveries to himself, he could have become one of the wealthiest men in the world. But he freely gave his discoveries to the world and was content to end his years as a professor of chemistry, living on the modest salary paid by the government.

Other great medical inventions of the nineteenth century were the ophthalmoscope (Helmholtz, in 1851), ether anesthesia (Morton and Long, two Americans who discovered this pain-saving remedy independently), and the sphygmomanometer (instrument for measuring blood pressure devised by Von Bosch in 1887).

Just before midnight, as the new century loomed closer and closer, we decided to go to the center of Philadelphia, to watch the fireworks and the various military and civic organizations which were parading in honor of the new century and the new year. We all climbed into my buggy (these were horse and buggy days) and I directed my faithful horse, Jerry, towards Market Street. The crowds went wild with enthusiasm. People were marching and dancing everywhere on the streets, and brass bands were on every block. The raucous roar created by the fireworks, the music, and the dancers was deafening. Everyone felt that the new year and century held prosperity in store for all. It appeared that no one thought that he would have to continue working for a living. The crowd seemed to

inspire my horse, for as soon as he perceived the multitude, he became almost uncontrollable. He too began to dance in time with the music. Who knows? Perhaps his good horse sense and intuition had told him that the new century would see him and his heirs relieved of heavy burdens (which his species had borne for countless generations) by the invention of the automobile. In retrospect, I can say with certainty that Jerry had more to hope for, in the way of the better life, than that jolly crowd on Market Street.

I might add parenthetically that the displacement of my friendly horse by the automobile in my professional calls was not without its sadness. When I made calls with Jerry, I was with a friend; when I made them in an automobile, I was alone.

When I returned from the New Year's Eve celebration, I found two men walking about impatiently in my reception room. One was middle-aged, bulky, and tall. The other was in his thirties, slender, and short. The latter was the first to greet me with, "It is not a bit nice of you, Doctor, to go to new year's parties and leave sick people to themselves. My wife has been in misery for several hours. Come quickly! I am afraid that you are too late already." The heavy-set man then interrupted: "Don't listen to this shrimp. You come with me first. I made an agreement with you a few months ago to attend to my wife." From the uncomplimentary remarks voiced by the fat man relative to the short fellow, I gathered that these men had engaged in a verbal tiff between themselves before I had entered the reception room.

"Obviously," I said, "I cannot be in both places at the same time." I asked which one of the two had come for me first. The slender fellow immediately replied, "I came here as soon as you left your office." Thereupon the big fellow remarked with an air of finality, "Never mind who called first! You will go with me! Do you hear me?" I did not answer him. I went into my office and took my obstetrical bag. When I returned I was relieved to note that both of them had left the room. I thought that they had gone home to tell their wives that the doctor was on the way. But to my surprise, when I went outside, I found them both sitting in my buggy.

The heavy-set fellow sat in the driver's seat, and the persistent little man sat equally securely in the back. "Come in," shouted the fat man, "sit near me, I will drive you to my home. Don't mind this shrimp. When I get through with him, he will be sorry that he ever married. His wife will surely not recognize him. I don't believe that

his wife is pregnant at all—let alone in labor. He looks like a foetus himself."

I suggested that since it was physically impossible for one doctor to be in two places at the same time that we should pick up a neighboring doctor for one of the cases. Both shouted in unison, "No! No! Absolutely not." "If I had wanted another doctor," said my bulky driver, "I would have engaged him." While making this remark, my driver turned my horse southward towards his house. Thereupon the little fellow sitting directly in back of him took hold of his head and pulled it back with all his might. There was a mighty crack, and I was afraid that the little fellow had broken the fat man's neck. He immediately dropped the reins and I hastily picked them up. The bruiser then jumped up and turned around to face his adversary. He pulled the little fellow down to the ground, and a great fight then ensued—with no blows or holds barred—between "David" and "Goliath." The little fellow was beaten into a pulp, and I do not doubt that he would have been killed if the altercation had not attracted the attention of a policeman who broke it up with his nightstick, called a patrol wagon, and ushered off both husbands to the jail. At last I was free to go to work!

From the way the bulky husband had acted, one might have thought that during his long absence in my office, his wife would have given birth to an heir. But to my surprise, I found the expectant mother sitting comfortably in a rocking chair, and reading a paper. I told her to go to bed and to call me the next day if she experienced any labor pains.

I then drove as fast as I could to my other patient, and found her in true labor, but not ready to deliver. She asked me where her husband was, and I told her that he would soon return from the drugstore where he had gone to get some necessary medicines. I then went to the police station and secured the release of both men. I took the short fellow away before his adversary was brought out from his cell. When I returned with him, his wife was about ready to deliver. In about half an hour, she gave birth to twins.

The next day, I went to see the fat man's wife, and found her in the same rocking chair, still obviously not in active labor. Her husband was sitting dutifully at her side. The first thing he asked me was, "How's the shrimp's wife?" I told him that she had given birth to twins, and this news seemed to amuse him greatly, for he guffawed and chuckled with merriment for almost ten minutes.

I then examined the fat man's wife—a middle-aged matron who seemed to be unduly fond of sweet foods. Her table was full of all kinds of high-calory delicacies, and her size was mute evidence of her dietary habits. I had not examined her previously, as her husband had made the arrangements with me to attend to her confinement.

To my great surprise, examination revealed that her abdomen contained a large fibroid tumor of the uterus but no foetus. I hesitated to tell the pair of my findings, for the events of the night before were still fresh in my mind. I advised her to arrange with the Jefferson Maternity Hospital to call in a "professor" to examine her. I was careful to be far away from that institution at the time when this happy couple showed up for the examination. I was afterwards told that the hero, when informed of the change in his wife's diagnosis, created such a rumpus at the hospital that he had to be forcibly ejected by two policemen.

I have related this incident to show what an obstetrician was up against in those days.

Frequently, when I returned home after sleepless nights, the words of Southey echoed in my mind: "A man," he said, "may be cheerful and contented in celibacy, but I do not think he can ever be happy. It is an unnatural state and the best feelings of his nature are never called into action."

My thirtieth birthday was fast approaching, and I often thought of marriage, but how, I asked, could I enter the bond of matrimony, tied down as I was by so many duties and obligations? It is well enough, I mused, for a bachelor to stay away from home during the greater part of each twenty-four hours, while engaged in professional, civic, and political matters; but this changes when one has to think of a wife and family and give them proper attention. I knew that unless the obligations which one owes to one's wife and family are carried out, even a firmly grounded marriage cannot endure. It is a mistake to consider marriage merely as a scheme for happiness. It is also a bond of mutual services.

The advice of Sir Walter Raleigh concerning marriage often came to my mind at this period. "The best time for marriage," he said, "will be towards thirty, for as the younger times are unfit either to choose or to govern a wife and family, so if thou stay long, thou shalt hardly see the education of thy children, who, being left to strangers, are in effect lost and better were to be unborn than ill bred; for thereby thy posterity shall either perish or remain a shame to thy name."

After much mental conflict, I determined to relinquish some of my responsibilities. The first task I gave up was my position with the United Hebrew Charities. The resignation was to take effect on the first of October, 1900, the time when my contract expired. I moved my home and office to a new neighborhood, away from the Charities office, and furnished them with the best that circumstances permitted. I also decided to cut down my obstetrical practice. I limited myself to the care of the wives of old patients and friends and a few well-chosen new cases.

In other words, I made all preparations to enter into matrimony. For a number of years, marriage brokers had given me up as a hopeless proposition and regarded me as a confirmed bachelor. Now, when the news spread that I had established a new office, and that my home had been renovated and refurnished, these self-proclaimed benefactors of society readily surmised what was on my mind. Jews with long beards and skull caps, smooth-shaven men dressed in formal attire, and women busybodies who wanted to promote a deal or were merely curious to delve into my personal business, infested my office and haunted my reception room. I do not know how the news reached out-of-town communities so rapidly: Rabbis from Worcester, Massachusetts, and Wilmington, Delaware, visited me with various "wonderful" and allegedly altruistic matrimonial propositions. Pending a decision on my part, my unsolicited matchmaking visitors lectured to me endlessly on the principles and ethics of matrimony. These intruders, who came to impose happiness upon me by coercion, spoke to me in the most glowing and poetic language about various and assorted "angels."

I suppose that the *shadchanim* (Jewish marriage brokers) had referred to me as a "saint" to their female clients. Many of them, however, unquestionably became disillusioned when they visited my office under the pretext of needing a medical examination and I demanded a fee for services rendered. Such tactics are definitely not in harmony with the character of a saint.

After a short time I had no trouble at all in coping with the male brokers. When I suspected that one was on hand, I placed a sign on my desk upon which was written: "This office is for strictly professional calls only." Some enterprising matchmakers even risked paying a fee in order to talk with me. Others left the office disappointed when they saw my attitude.

I recall one venerable-looking marriage broker with whom I could not be so abrupt. My respectful silence evidently led him to the

conclusion that I had been won over by his arguments. When he finished his lengthy dissertation, he asked me to examine him. After I had completed the examination in another half-hour, he told me to deduct my fee from the brokerage fee that I owed him. Noticing the expression on my face, he hastened to add that his matchmaking activities were known all over America, and that it was customary for both sides to remunerate such an illustrious *shadchan*. I did not argue with the man; I merely showed him the door.

It was more difficult to get rid of the female busybodies, many of whom could not read my sign. I seldom gave such people a chance to talk. I adopted the following stratagem: My first question was, "Where are you suffering?" The answer, usually accompanied by a smile, was, "Where not?" Their next remark was usually, "I am a very sick woman, but this time I came for another purpose." I immediately countered with: "Let us first finish the examination before further discussion." When the examination was over, I usually put a thermometer in their mouths and told them to keep it there until I returned. I then went into the next room to treat a legitimate patient. When I returned in from fifteen to thirty minutes, I usually found the thermometer on the table and the patient gone. Those few who did not take the hint, received a prescription and were asked for the fee. Most refused to pay it, but such persons left in a huff and I was certain not to see them again.

Long after I got rid of the marriage brokers, the "angels" themselves kept popping up in the flesh. Their chief complaint was headache. Suddenly it appeared to me that there was an epidemic of headaches among the eligible females in town. I employed my entire therapeutic armamentarium on headaches, and when this was exhausted I referred them to various "professors." Some were sent to neurologists and psychiatrists. I do not know whether these "angels" followed my directions, but after such referrals they never returned to my office.

The tactics of some of these women reminded me of Swift's analysis: "The reason why so few marriages are happy is because young ladies spend their time in making nets, not in making cages."

After the headache epidemic had subsided, I announced my engagement. I had met my future wife unexpectedly while making a professional call at the house of Phillip Werner, a friend and patient, well known to Philadelphians. She was introduced to me as Miss Dorothy Cohen of New York. It did not take long for me to make up my mind. As far as I was concerned, I knew that my bachelor days

were over. Neither she nor I had any stratagems. After a few visits to her home in New York, and a month of courtship, we were happily married in New York on June 7, 1900.

We spent our honeymoon in New York because of the fact that the fourth convention of the Federation of American Zionists was in progress in that city at the Hebrew Education Society Building. If I could not take my wife to Palestine for a honeymoon, I could think of no better way of spending it than in a Zionist atmosphere.

When the convention was over, we spent a week visiting the various places of culture and amusement in New York and then returned to Philadelphia.

Our home was soon more than ever a gathering place for various cultured elements. To establish a proper home life, I gave up many of my organizational activities and even slowed down my Zionist activities.

During the remainder of 1900, we entertained a number of foreign guests, including the famous lexicographer, Solomon Mandelkern, who came to America with his famous Concordance to see Judge Sulzberger; he stopped with us for a time. The noted Hebrew writers and critics, B. Dubsewitz, and Ephraim Deinard also visited us. The last was the bibliographer who built up the famous Sulzberger library and the Hebrew section of the Library of Congress. Naphtali Herz Imber, the author of the Jewish national anthem, *Hatikvah*, was a frequent visitor. When Imber came to see his benefactor, Judge Sulzberger, he always stopped with us. He particularly liked our liquor and wine. He was always kindly and humorous and we enjoyed his company. My wife and I were terribly grieved to read in the *Jewish Exponent* of his death somewhere in the West. This paper carried an editorial eulogizing the great poet N. H. Imber.

Several weeks passed, and the subject of Imber and his reported death had disappeared from our tongues if not from our hearts. Early one evening, we were sitting at the dinner table, when who should make a grand entrance but Imber himself. His sudden appearance in the twilight made him seem an apparition from the grave. Seeing our astonishment, he broke out in gales of laughter. When I orientated myself, I told him that the *Jewish Exponent* had announced his death; and I took out the editorial in which the editor, Mr. Charles Hoffman (later Rabbi of Newark), had eulogized him.

Imber went wild with joy. For a long time, he declared, Mr. Hoffman had not been able to find a kind or encouraging word to say to him, and at times, he had made him the subject of sarcastic

remarks and jibes. "This time," said Imber, "I have made a fool of him. Even Hoffman cannot go back on his eulogy." The next day Imber accosted Hoffman and unquestionably gave him a greater shock than we had experienced the day before. Mr. Hoffman openly confessed his embarrassment because he was too perturbed to hide it. To which Mr. Imber remarked, "Now you will understand what the word 'embarrassment' means."

The most joyous affairs in our home were the meetings of the *Dorshe Daath Society,* which was organized in 1897 (and is still in existence in Philadelphia) at the home of the Reverend Sabbato Morais, who also suggested the name. His son, Henry, the late Dr. Isaac Husik, and myself, were the founders of the Society. Among the original members were Isaac Husik, Moses Klein, Gershon B. Levi, David Liknatz, Edward Rothschild, Thomas Seltzer, M. Skidelsky, Gustav Cohen, M. Jacobson, H. Grubowsky, my dear brother George (Gershon) J. Gordon, and myself.

Later members included Albert Bernheim, Aaron and Herman Brav, Arthur Dembitz, M. Eichler, S. Fine, Nathaniel Goldman, Julius Greenstone, Joseph Gross, Bernard Harris, David Hoffman, Louis Levinthal, Samuel Lowenberg, Raphael Malamed, Gabriel H. Mayer, William Morris, Edward Nathan, Marvin Nathan, Benzion Oliensis, Bernard Revel, Ben Rosen, Benjamin Singer, Henry B. Shmookler, and Henry Speaker.

Among the friends who frequently visited our house were Phineas Mordel and Elhanan Cournos, both of them excellent examples of the Old School of Jewish learning. Mr. Mordel, apart from his Talmudic scholarship, was well versed in medieval Jewish philosophy. He was particularly interested in Hebrew grammar and expressed his views in the Hebrew periodicals *Hashiloah, Haivri* and *L'shoneinu,* and in *The Jewish Quarterly Review.* He also contributed to the last named journal a lengthy essay on "The Origin of Letters and Numerals" which was published as a brochure in 1914.

The ancient Hebrew work *Sefer Yetzira* (The Book of Creation) is the cornerstone upon which he erected his grammatical theories. He held that even Pythagoras had based his doctrine of numerology on the Hebrew *Sefer Yetzira.* "Many years of study," he said, "have convinced us that the Pythagorean philosophy is identical with the philosophy of the *Sefer Yetzira* and both are Hebrew in origin. The philosophy of the *Sefer Yetzira* apparently emanated from the Hebrew prophetic guild or school. That which really was the philosophy of the *Sefer Yetzira,* the Greeks designated as 'the Pythagorean philoso-

phy.' " Although one may disagree with Mr. Mordel's view of this matter, one cannot read this brochure without admiring his scholarship.

I first met Mr. Mordel in the year 1903 in the library of the late Judge Meyer Sulzberger where he was a frequent visitor. Mr. Mordel is survived by three gifted sons. The oldest, Albert, a lawyer by profession, is the author of six literary works. Louis J. is recognized as one of the greatest mathematicians of our time and he occupies the chair of mathematics at Oxford University, England. The youngest son, Maurice, is assistant city solicitor of Philadelphia.

Elhanan Cournos, my other friend, was a walking encyclopedia. He was an inveterate reader and was constantly straining his eyes on poor print in faulty illumination. Progressive myopia was the result. He possessed a large collection of German, Hebrew, and Russian books upon a variety of subjects. He spoke English with difficulty but could read English books on the most technical subjects fluently. I never ascertained what his employment had been in his younger days, but here in America, because of his very poor sight, he was not able to work. His wife and children were the breadwinners. The latter sold newspapers in their youth and went on to engage in various phases of newspaper work.

Mr. Cournos was particularly interested in metallurgy and, like the medieval alchemists, he endeavored to transmute the baser metals into gold. He exhibited several teaspoons which closely resembled gold. He felt certain that his lack of success was entirely because of lack of capital, for it required the investment of large sums of money to manufacture his alloys. He never entrusted his "secrets" to industrialists.

Mr. Cournos also invented a separator which skimmed the cream off milk, but this invention also failed to bring him any riches. By the time he reached the evening of life he found himself penniless, but what he lacked in earthly possessions, he made up for in good measure by his scholarship. I recall with much pleasure the frequent stimulating gatherings Mordel, Cournos, and I had at our house on Saturday evenings.

Among others who visited our home were David Blaustein, of the Educational Alliance of New York; Adolph Radin, the noted scholar and eminent Zionist; Leon Zolotkoff, the well known Hebrew and Yiddish journalist; Gershon Rosenzweig, the famous epigrammatist and poet; M. Dolitzky, the Hebrew poet; Nathan Syrkin, the noted

writer and literary critic; H. Masliansky, the Yiddish orator; and Morris Rosenfeld, the Yiddish poet.

One winter evening in the year 1907 particularly impressed itself upon my mind. This occasion was a reception given in our house in honor of Dr. Shmaryahu Levin, the prominent Zionist, orator, critic, and writer who had just escaped from the Russian secret police. His anti-Czaristic activities while a member of the Russian *Duma* (parliament) had made him a marked man.

Other prominent personalities whom we entertained were the neo-Hebraist, Reubin Breinin; the theorist and one time staunch supporter of Dr. Theodore Herzl, Nathan Bierenbaum; one of the founders of Tel Aviv, Mendel Sheinkin; one of the pioneer settlers of Israel and member of the Bilu Organization, Israel Belkin; the principal of the Tel Aviv gymnasium, Ben Zion Mossenson; the eminent scholar, David Yellin of Jerusalem; and the editor and publisher of the Hebrew daily of Jerusalem, Itamar ben Avi, the gifted son of the lexicographer Eliezer ben Yehudah.

The local celebrities whom we entertained on several occasions included Dr. Harry Friedenwald, president of the Zionist Organization of America and author of *Jews in Medicine,* who, besides his professional attainments as an eminent ophthalmologist, was a great collector of books, particularly pertaining to diseases of the eye. (I made a few contributions to this collection.) He presented his precious library to the University of Jerusalem prior to his death. Another visitor was the genial professor Israel Friedlandler, of the Jewish Theological Seminary, who was murdered when he traveled to Russia on a relief mission after the first World War.

My new home and office was a substantial three-story edifice resting on a brownstone foundation. Brownstone steps led to the front door, which opened upon a long vestibule. On the left side of the vestibule, doors opened into my reception room in the front and my office in the back. All the buildings in that square were of uniform structure, and it was difficult to distinguish between them, particularly at night.

One night I nearly became mixed up in a serious incident. I heard someone trying to open my door with a key. I went down quietly, took a poker from the kitchen, placed myself in back of the door, and waited for the intruder to come into the entrance. Somehow he worked the lock open, and when I was about to strike him over the head, I heard him call out, "Jennie!" which was the name of the wife of my neighbor, who lived two doors away. When he saw

me in the dark, he evidently became panic-stricken, thinking that some robber had entered his house. He began to holler, "Help! Murder! Thief!" at the top of his voice. Neighbors from all directions rushed in to help. Fortunately the mistake was discovered before any violence had been committed.

My house was sandwiched in between a dentist's office and a bath-house, and I frequently had trouble with the dentist's patients and the patrons of the bath-house who came to my dwelling by mistake. I recall one occasion when a woman rushed into my office, and without a moment's hesitation, sat down in my gynecological chair, moaning, "I am in agony, doctor; please do something for me quickly. I haven't slept all night." I proceeded to start to take her history. I asked her name. She replied, "What has the name to do with my troubles?" When I asked her address, she merely looked at me with surprise. When I interrogated her about her age, she replied, "My grandmother was much older than I and never had such troubles. Please, doctor, don't ask any more silly questions; do something for my pain."

I sterilized my hands, took out my speculum, and proceeded to examine her. The moment I tried to introduce the speculum, she remarked in an amazed voice, "Everything in Columbus's *medinah* (the land of Columbus) is so different from things in Pinsk. In Pinsk, the dentist pulls teeth from above; here they are pulled from below."

Another patient's mother blamed America for her child's illness. The youngster had inserted a pea into its ear without anyone observing it. When the pea began to swell in the external auditory canal from the moisture, the child pointed to its ear and screamed with severe pain. The more home remedies that were poured into the ear, the larger the pea became and the more pain the child experienced. When I examined the ear, I was surprised to find many sprouts growing out of the ear canal. It took me some time to realize what had happened. When I plucked out the foreign body, told the mother the cause of her child's pain, and showed her the pea sprouts, she remarked with deep feeling, "Only in America can peas grow in the ear!" She had never heard of such a case in Europe.

The following case may prove of interest; it certainly afforded me considerable amusement at the time. A woman came to my office complaining of severe pains in the abdomen. Her history emphasized the fact—which she considered vital—that she had eaten *borsht* (beet soup) on the previous evening. She stated with finality that whenever she ate this soup, she always got cramps, but on this occasion the pain would not stop.

When I looked at her closely, I noticed that with each cramp, her abdomen bulged out prominently, and I naturally became suspicious that she was in labor. I asked her if she had not noticed that her abdomen had been getting progressively larger lately. She replied that large stomachs were a family characteristic and that her grandmother and mother had carried large stomachs also (perhaps under the same conditions). She told me that she had warned her husband not to eat the rest of the *borsht* lest he also become effected with similar cramps.

Fearing that she might present me with a baby at my office, I told her, "Madam, you had better get home quickly. You are going to have a baby." She remarked with vehemence that this was the first time she had ever heard that one could become pregnant from eating *borsht*. She left my office with a parting sally to the effect that American doctors know nothing about the effects of *borsht* on the bodily metabolism.

Another patient mistook my house for the ritual bath house that was located next door. The young woman—a recent immigrant—with a bundle under her arms, rushed through my vestibule with her eyes lowered, opened the door of the basement (the ritual bath next door was located in the basement) and proceeded to go down the stairway. While on the steps, she bumped into a Negro, whom I employed to attend to the heater. She had recently come from Roumania and had never seen a black man before. The Negro stared at her with almost equal surprise, for he never expected to see a strange woman going down the basement steps.

I was busy in my office at the time. When I heard the woman screaming, I ran downstairs, and, to my surprise, I found her lying at the foot of the steps unconscious. My employee helped me carry her to my office, where I administered drugs which revived her. When she regained consciousness, she began to scream and carry on hysterically. I gathered that she was not crying because of pain but because she was worried about her hoped-for pregnancy. According to popular belief, seeing the black man might affect the foetus and give rise to dark offspring.

The belief in maternal impression was deeply rooted among all peoples of antiquity. It is referred to in Genesis: "Jacob took him rods of green poplar and of the hazel and chestnut tree . . . and he set the rods which he had peeled before the flocks in the gutters in the watering troughs . . . that they should conceive when they came to drink. And the flocks conceived . . . and brought forth cattle, ring-

streaked, speckled, and spotted." Empedocles, and later Plato and Hippocrates, held that a severe fright or shock occurring in pregnancy might not only seriously influence the mother but also leave its imprint upon the unborn foetus. Plato, in the seventh book of Laws, after speaking of the susceptibility of the prenatal child to impressions, remarks: "Nay, more, if I were not afraid of appearing ridiculous, I would say that a woman during her year of pregnancy should of all the women be most carefully tended and kept from violent or excessive pleasures and pains; and at that time she should cultivate gentleness, benevolence, and kindness."

Up to the beginning of the nineteenth century, medical authors and practitioners were nearly unanimous in the belief that foetal deformities, marks, and lack of development were due to impressions received by the mother during pregnancy. Children have been reported to resemble animals by which the mother had been frightened while pregnant. Gravid women, having seen mutilated persons, supposedly gave birth to children with corresponding mutilations.

I soon made up the financial loss I had sustained by severing my connections with the United Hebrew Charities by the appointment I received as police surgeon in the newly erected thirty-third police station.

My duties at the district police station were to examine prisoners every morning before the magistrate passed judgement on them, to attend to sicknesses and minor injuries of the police and prisoners, and to testify before the city authorities in cases of assault and similar crimes.

My busiest mornings at the district police station were Sundays and Mondays. On these days the cells were jammed with acute and chronic alcoholics flopping around on the benches, under the benches, on the floor, and piled one on top of the other to form a most disgusting and foul-smelling spectacle. The stench from the prison cells polluted the air for a square around. A pigpen was a palace by comparison with these sickening scenes in the prison cells.

The most pitiful cases were those of the prisoners affected with delirium tremens. These cases, although seldom as boisterous as acute alcoholics, are victims of horrible hallucinations and delusions. I recall one patient who fancied that he saw a snake on a fellow alcoholic on the floor, and he cried pitifully to drive the snake from the cell. The prisoner on the floor did not relish being called a snake, and he violently attacked the delirium case. It was fortunate that the turn-

key was with me in the cell at the time. We transferred the delirious man to safer quarters.

One time I saw a tall, heavy-set man with side whiskers brought into a cell where a delirium tremens case was sitting quietly in the corner with the muscles in his hands twitching. As soon as he saw the heavy-set, bearded man, the delirious prisoner jumped up on the bench in terror and howled, "The lion! The lion! Take me out of here; he'll kill me."

These incidents call to mind the words of Sir Walter Raleigh: "It were better for a man to be subject to any vice than to drunkenness; for all other vanities are recovered: but a drunkard can never shake off the height of beastliness; for the longer it possesseth a man the more he will delight in it and the older he groweth the longer he will be subject to it; for it dulleth his spirit and destroyeth the body as ivy doth the old tree or as a worm engendereth in the kernel of a nut."

I only recall one instance in my police surgeon days in which alcoholism proved beneficial—at least to me. On this occasion, a smallpox case in the pustular stage walked into my station house. The next day all the papers carried the story. Everyone in town was advised to be vaccinated, and a minor boom took place for all physicians in town, who were kept busy performing vaccinations. I vaccinated all policemen and firemen and all prisoners. While making the rounds of the cells, I recognized one prisoner whose family I had attended for many years. He was in an alcoholic stupor. The turnkey informed me that this fellow had been picked up during the previous night while staggering along with a heavy load of silverware slung over his back. The police had not been able to identify either him or his booty. After I told the sergeant what I knew about the man, I noticed a large display of silverware on the sergeant's desk, which I remarked had a similar pattern to my own.

When I returned home and went into our dining room, I found all the drawers of the buffet open and empty, and an empty whiskey bottle on the dining room table. I quickly realized that my former patient, who knew the layout of my house so well, had robbed me, and that the bottle of whiskey which he had found in my closet had proved my salvation and his undoing. If he had not been tipsy the police would never have picked him up on the street. The thief's house was searched and much stolen goods was found. At his trial, it was revealed that this man had been preying on the neighborhood for at least five years. If he had not gotten drunk in my house, he

might have kept up his illicit work indefinitely without being apprehended. He was sentenced to fifteen years imprisonment by a jury.

"There is magic in the little word, 'home,' " said Southey. "It is a mystic circle that surrounds comfort and virtues never known beyond its hallowed limits." Our home contained food for the mind as well as food for the body. I had been fond of books since boyhood, and I had begun collecting them early in my youth. Aside from medical texts and works, I had a fine collection of books on many subjects and in a number of languages. I was especially interested in anthropology and ethnology. My study was the envy of my numerous intellectual friends, not only for the books it contained but also for its comfort and coziness. My wife had attended to its furnishings, decorations, and draperies to perfection. We relished the opportunity of relaxing in the library after the day's tasks were completed. There we found a peaceful and warm atmosphere, away from the cares of everyday life.

In 1904 my wife presented me with a daughter. I use the words "presented me" advisedly, for I did not deliver her myself. I was then and still am strongly of the opinion that one should not be a physician to his own family. I always considered myself a layman in matters concerning the health in my own home. I recall how upset I was as I paced up and down the living-room during my wife's labor. I was no different from the husbands of the hundreds of wives I had attended. According to Dr. Coles, our obstetrician, my facial expression when I looked at my child for the first time was typical of any young father. I was no more the materialistic and practical obstetrician. It was not merely a child that I saw, but an heir—my heir.

I became aware that, in moments of pressure, man can be as instinctive as the lower animals, and it is impossible, at such times, to explain his actions on a rational basis. Instinctive impulses of a psychogenic nature particularly dominate man during the period of his wife's gestation and especially at parturition.

Physicians often smile about expectant fathers, but there is nothing to laugh at. I always liked the expectant father to show emotion. I did not sneer at him when passing the reception hall. I saw him restlessly walking from place to place, filling the ashtrays with half-smoked butts. If I could not go out to reassure him myself, I sent one of the nurses to tell him that his wife was progressing favorably. At the end, when I went to congratulate him that his baby had arrived safely, I was always pleased when he inquired, "How is my wife?"

Most young fathers wait nervously, trembling with eagerness, for their wives to be wheeled out from the delivery room. They bend over them with adoration. They then visit the hospital as frequently as possible, and sit quietly and happily with them for hours.

There is a widespread belief among certain peoples that the relationship of husband and wife engenders a mutual mystic interrelationship so that the acts of each party effect the other, and that this marital force persists as long as the matrimonial bond endures.

It is related that among certain peoples, husbands show a tendency toward morning sickness during the early months of their wives' pregnancies, particularly when the wives are troubled with this ailment. This has been attributed to sympathetic bonds that exist between husband and wife. It is a well-known fact that fear, anxiety, and sorrow have an effect on the gastro-intestinal system.

Dobrizhoffer states that among the Abipones, the father takes the utmost care of himself during his wife's pregnancy because he believes that a material connection exists between himself and the newborn infant, so that excesses or abstinence may affect the child. If the child dies during the first few days, the father is blamed for his heartless frivolity.

The practice of couvade by primitive man has lately been made the subject of many jokes. According to this custom, the husband takes himself to bed soon after the child is born. Couvade has been widely practiced by a considerable number of primitive peoples, but it is not solely a primitive rite.

Strabo observed paternal lying-in among the Basques of northern Spain. Diodorus noticed the same custom among the Corsicans. Marco Polo, the great thirteenth-century traveller, relates a curious custom among the inhabitants of Yunnan (a mountainous region of China): "When one of their wives has been delivered of a child, the infant is washed and swathed, and then the woman gets up and goes about her household affairs, whilst the husband takes to bed with the child by his side and so keeps to bed for forty days; and all the kith and kin come to visit him and keep up a great festivity."

This curious custom is known to have survived among the Basques until the closing decades of the nineteenth century, and is said to be still observed among the Caribs of the West Indies, among the natives of India, Borneo, Kamchatka, Greenland, and among certain Indian tribes in California.

Sir Edward im Thurn, speaking of the natives of British Guiana, states: "Even before the child is born the father abstains for a time

from certain kinds of food and particularly that of animal diet. The woman works as usual up to a few hours before the birth of the child. At last she retires alone or accompanied by some other woman to the forest, where she ties up a hammock, and there the child is born. In a few hours, often less than a day, the woman gets up and resumes her ordinary work. No sooner is the child born than the father takes to his hammock, and, abstaining from every kind of meat, lives on weak gruel of Cassava meal, abstains from smoking, from washing himself, and above all from touching weapons of any sort, and is nursed and cared for by all the women in the place."

I came across only one case in my obstetrical practice in which I found the husband in bed with the newborn child. When I asked this "lying-in" husband where his wife was, he told me that she had gone to get groceries and that he could not keep his wife in bed. I waited until my patient arrived and I lectured her at some length about how foolish she was and the dangerous chances she was taking. She replied that her mother had never remained in bed after giving birth for more than twenty-four hours, and she knew that her husband, who was a night watchman by trade, could take good care of her baby.

It is interesting to reflect that today the last word in obstetrics is to get the mother up and around as quickly as possible.

CHAPTER XV

Toward the Land of Israel

'Tis singular! but when I am thus alone at this still hour, I ever fancy I gaze upon the Land of Promise. And often, in my dreams, some sunny spot, the bright memorial of a roving hour, will rise upon my sight, and when I wake, I feel as if I had been in Canaan. Why am I not? . . . But I rest here, my miserable life running to seed in the dull misery of this wretched city, and do nothing! We have no Esther now to share our thrones, no politic Mordecai, no purple-vested Daniel. O Jerusalem! I do believe one sight of thee would nerve me to the sticking point. . . . And yet to gaze upon thy fallen state. . . . 'Tis horrible. Is there no hope?

—*Disraeli, David Alroy*

AS the reader will recall, from my early boyhood I had cherished the hope of seeing with my own eyes the ancient Land of Israel. For one reason or another, however, the opportunity had never presented itself for me to fulfill this deeply rooted ambition. I finally set a definite date, 1908, to make this journey, but when this year approached, I found it impossible to go because my wife had recently given birth to our eldest son, Cyrus, and of course I could not leave her home alone with the infant, and neither could I take them along on such a distant journey. The following year I made up my mind to make the pilgrimage, come what may. In June 1909, my dream at last began to be fulfilled, for I found myself en route to the Promised Land.

A ten days' journey brought us into the Bay of Naples. What a vast difference in natural scenery! The city that has for its adage, "see Naples and die," leaves a lasting impression. Standing aboard the vessel, looking out through the dense early morning mist, we saw the mountains rising one on top of the other, like the rows of an amphitheater. When the mist vanished before the sun, Vesuvius and its neighbors made their appearance.

Naples is said to occupy the most beautiful site in Europe. There is no other city in the world that combines within the same space so much natural beauty, and so many objects of interest to the antiquarian, the historian, and the geologist. Indeed, it is hard to describe such wonderful scenery. "The beauties of art and nature," said Lord Byron, "are not to be placed on the same level; a picture is always less, and a landscape is always more, than one's imagination depicts."

Our party was conducted to a hotel by a girl student, of Warsaw, Russia, who was pursuing a course of study in chemistry at the University of Naples.

We hired a carriage to take us on a sight-seeing tour and took along a guide who had lived several years in New York and who, consequently, spoke English. He suggested that we first visit Vesuvius. As the crow flies, Vesuvius is only a few miles distant from the city, but with the winding roads, it took two or three hours to reach the crater.

We got up at six o'clock in the morning the next day, and as we neared the crater we were surprised to note that our driver had turned away from the main road in a westward direction. After an hour's ride, he stopped the carriage near a shack which had been constructed in a deep recess in the mountain and was almost completely concealed by trees and foliage. The driver suggested that we go in for a drink. He took us into a poorly furnished room in the center of which was a table and benches. We sat down and each of us was handed a bottle of soda water. In a few moments three evil-looking men, unclad from the waist up, came in with musical instruments and played a few airs. We began to get uneasy about the entire affair. I remarked to our Italian guide that we had better proceed to the crater.

As we were about to leave the room, a man handed me two bills, one for $30 for the soda water, and one for $60 for the musicians. I could not help smiling when I saw these bills and I handed them to our guide. He appeared to be surprised and spoke to the man in the Italian language, which we could not understand. We thought that the entire matter was a joke. As we prepared to leave the room, we found the door bolted on the outside. The man that had handed me the bills then spoke to me in broken English. He let me know in no uncertain terms that we could not leave the place until the bills were paid. The expression on our "host's" face told us that the best thing to do was to pay and depart. It was obvious that if we did not pay

voluntarily, the money would be taken by force. We paid and were released.

Leaving the house, we found that the driver and the carriage that were to take us to Vesuvius were not there. After waiting for about an hour, the driver came back with the carriage and took us back to the city. The next day we reported our case to the American consul, who, in our presence, sent a message to the city authorities informing them of the situation.

In the afternoon, we paid our respects to Pompeii and Herculaneum, and on the following day, we visited the old volcano. That afternoon we spent several pleasant hours in the National Museum. The next morning our boat left for Alexandria.

A trip on the Mediterranean is always pleasant, but it is more so for the tourist leaving Naples, who is thoroughly exhausted from the strenuous sight-seeing of Pompeii, Herculaneum, Vesuvius, and other places of interest.

As we made our way toward Egypt, it was difficult to realize that we were on the Mediterranean, the common theatre of the entire history of antiquity, the *Yam Haggadol* (Great Sea) of the Bible, whose heroes, watching from the tops of their mountains, were inspired by it with awe and admiration; the sea that was beloved by the Greeks, and was made memorable by the journeys and misfortunes of Ulysses.

A voyage of four days brought us close to the coast of Egypt. Expecting to enter the port in the morning, we were on deck early to find that we were already in sight of land; the long, low-lying line of African coast was scarcely visible rising above the sea level.

Egypt conveys a rather melancholy impression as the eye catches the first glimpse of it. No trees, no green fields, no mountain vistas; nothing to confirm the belief that Egypt is "a land of plenty," a country that enjoys nature's blessings. Indeed, the first view of *Mizraim*, the land of the Pharaohs, as seen from the ship, was that of a "house of bondage."

The first view of Alexandria as it loomed up through the mist overhanging the sea—first like a white strip upon the flat coastline, and then gradually assuming form and shape as numerous domes, minarets, spires, and lofty palm-trees made their appearance—proved most satisfying.

In traveling, one is often disappointed because reality does not tally with what the imagination had conceived; that, however, is not the case with the Orient. Indeed, the East appears more "oriental"

than one pictures; everything looks strange. Fashion, or uniformity of dress, is stricly a European product. There is independence and variety in the East. The Arab, Nubian, Bedouin, and the Dervish; the official, the merchant, the mechanic, and the professional man; the water carrier, donkey boy, and dragoman, are independent with regard to garments, and appear in their characteristic individuality; each consults his own taste, and cares little about his neighbor's style. Any piece of material, of a combination of colors and shades, such as a shawl, a shirt, or a sheet thrown around the body, serves as a garment for the Oriental.

After going through the usual formalities and scrutiny of the customs officials, we were hurried to a hotel situated in Mohammed Ali Street, a broad thoroughfare the architecture of which is not unlike that of Italian and French towns, differing only in the presence here of palm trees, deep blue skies, and a mild atmosphere.

When we reached our hotel in Alexandria, we found a letter from the American Consul at Naples to the effect that the men who had spoiled our first trip to Vesuvius had been arrested and that some of the money had been recovered. The letter informed us that the guide, the driver, and the men in the shack were all implicated in the plot.

Modern Alexandria has nothing in common with the city of the Ptolemies; it has inherited nothing but its name. It can be inspected in one day, but it offers food for thought for a much longer period, for there are few places that have played such an important part in the history of civilization, legend, and literature as Alexandria. It was here that Ptolemy Soter established the great library and the celebrated medical school. Heading the latter were Herophilus of Chalcedon and Erasistratus of Chios.

Herophilus is known as the earliest cardiologist on record. He carefully observed the pulse beat in health and disease as well as the rhythm produced in the arteries by the beating of the heart; the only mechanical device he had was a *clepsydra*, a kind of water clock consisting of a glass cistern filled with water and with an aperture that allowed the fluid to escape at a constant rate. He was a great anatomist. He described the ventricles and the so-called *torcular herophili*, and indicated the function of these tissues.

The wisdom of the other medical savant, Erasistratus, may be inferred from the following story related by Plutarch concerning Seleucus Nicator, who became master of Babylon after the untimely demise of Alexander the Great. Seleucus had a son named Antiochus by an

early marriage to the Persian princess, Apama. This prince, who was heir to the Babylonian throne, fell madly in love with his young stepmother, the beautiful Stratonice, the daughter of Demetrius, the Besieger. He knew that it was morally wrong to be in love with his father's wife and he tried to suppress this passion. He consequently became melancholy, refused food, became negligent about his person, and would not talk even to his intimate friends. The court physicians were at a loss to explain what troubled the young prince. Seleucus, seeing that his son was pining away from day to day, was so distressed that he sent for Erasistratus, the Alexandrian physician, whose reputation extended all through the Near East. For a time Erasistratus patiently observed the young prince without any clue to the cause of his condition. One day, while taking the prince's pulse, he observed that it suddenly began to beat very fast, and, looking around, he saw Stratonice entering the room. Thus having discovered Antiochus' secret, he revealed the matter to Seleucus, who immediately arranged a marriage between his son and Stratonice.

Alexandria was the Oxford of the ancient world. Even the celebrated Galen, who lived five centuries after Herophilus and Erasistratus, came to Alexandria to acquire knowledge of anatomy. "It is sufficient as a recommendation," states Ammianus Marcellinus, "for any medical man to be able to say that he was educated at Alexandria."

It was in Alexandria that the Bible was first translated into Greek by seventy interpreters (Septuagint), and it was here that Philo Judaeus attempted the blending of the Mosaic religion with Platonic philosophy, which system later became known as Neo-platonism.

From Alexandria to Cairo was fours hours' journey by train, and the trip was full of surprises and sites of interest. The train cut through the rich plain of the Delta. Strange-looking mud villages with throngs of gossiping, gesticulating, half-dressed inhabitants, and tombs of sheiks with little whitewashed domelike structures, formed interesting rather than pleasant sights. Looking constantly out of the window, time passed quickly, and we arrived in Cairo. Leaving the confusion and turmoil of the station, we soon came to the Hotel Bristol, where we secured lodgings.

Our first excursion in Cairo was to the Citadel; from there one can get a commanding view of the city and the valley of the Nile. The view makes an indelible impression upon the traveler.

On the other hand, the Museum, the collection of which was a new one at that time, had not attained its destined distinction. An-

nexed to the Khedivian library was the great collection of the Koran. Close to 300 copies written in various ages were displayed here. One copy particularly attracted my attention. The letters were in gold surrounded with a framework of most intricate coloring and design. It was exhibited in a glass case.

One of the most interesting relics in Cairo is the residence of the great philosopher and physician to the court of Saladin (1137–1193), Moses Maimonides (1135–1204). Tradition has it that he wrote, in this very place, his philosophical work, *The Guide of the Perplexed,* and many of his medical texts. The largest synagogue in Cairo, in the Oriental quarter, is named after him. An old Bible in the archives of that synagogue is said to have been written in his own handwriting.

Another Synagogue named the *Bet Haknesset Shel Ezra* is over eight hundred years old. Maimonides mentioned this house of worship, and stated that it is "a double Sabbath-journey" from central Cairo. The archives of this house of prayer include a written document wherein the Caliph of Cairo confirms the ownership of the Synagogue by the Jews. The natives of Cairo sometimes call this synagogue the *Keneset Eliyahu* because of the legend that the prophet Elijah used to pray in this very edifice. Others believe that Ezra the Scribe was its founder. In a special Ark is found a scroll of the Torah, which, according to tradition, Ezra the Scribe wrote with his own hands. The Synagogue is full of antiquities. In a hidden depository, a wonderful treasure of old manuscripts was discovered. The identification of a fragment of a Ben Sira text prompted the late Solomon Schechter to sail to Old Cairo and bring back practically the entire written contents of the *Genizah* (literary treasure) which constitutes the Taylor-Schechter Collection of the Cambridge University Library.

On the following morning, we decided to visit what was considered the first of the Seven Wonders of the World, the Pyramids of Gizeh situated ten miles from Cairo at the edge of the desert. We boarded a street car which crossed the Nile over a stone bridge. The road we passed was literally lined with extensive groves of oranges and dates interspersed with fields of wheat, clover, and all sorts of flowers. In about two hours we reached the pyramids. It is difficult to describe the emotions engendered by a view of these wonderful structures.

The largest pyramid is that of Cheops (2500 B.C.), built perhaps a thousand years before the birth of Abraham. The view from above the pyramid is truly magnificent. To the west lies the great Sahara; to the south the pyramids of Sakkareh and Dashoor; to the northeast

the eye wanders over a landscape of great richness and beauty—the delta of the Nile, with its fields of vegetation, its groves of palms, oranges, and citrons. In the distance is Grand Cairo, with its numerous mosques, minarets, and domes, and beyond is the desert.

Leaving these monuments of antiquity, we mounted our camels, and, after an exhausting journey under the hot sun of the desert, we came to Memphis, the capital of the Pharaohs. It seemed almost incredible that we were stepping upon the very ground where once flourished the most powerful, populous, and magnificent capital of twelve dynasties of Pharaohs.

We saw a colossal statue of Rameses II lying prostrate and face downward on the ground, broken off at its base, and half buried in a mud puddle. During the inundation of the Nile, this figure was partly covered with water and many Arab children bathed around it. "How the mighty have fallen!" We rested upon this image, which was the chief surviving witness of ancient Memphis. Reflecting on the demolished walls, fallen statues, and the ruined temples and their idols that we saw, one could not but be deeply impressed with the prophecy of Ezekiel: "Thus sayeth the Lord: I will destroy the idols; I will cause the images to cease out of Noph (Memphis)." Jeremiah also foresaw this destruction: "Noph shall be waste and desolate." These prophetic declarations were uttered at the time when the city sat in majesty upon the banks of the Nile, the crown of her pride unbroken, and the splendor and magnificence of her wealth unlimited.

From this historic site we went to the Azhar University of Cairo, founded in the tenth century. At the time of our visit, it was said that two thousand students from all over the Arabic world were attending the daily lectures in this house of learning. However this institution was not a university in the modern sense of the word. It was more of an ecclesiastical school, with most of the student's time spent in reading the Koran and its commentaries.

On the next afternoon, I accompanied my friend, the late Dr. Max Meyerhoff, famous ophthalmologist and authority on the history of Egyptian and Arabic medicine, to the hospital. Walking through the wards, I was surprised to see the large number of patients afflicted with trachoma. In 1890, according to Tico, about 50 percent of the Egyptian population were affected with one form or another of trachoma. There was not quite this percentage of cases during my visit in 1909.

This disease was more prevalent in the marshy districts of the Nile Valley. The infection was carried by flies from person to person. I frequently watched the distressing spectacle of seeing flies feeding on the infectious secretion covering the eyelids of affected persons. Most pathetic were the babies who had not yet achieved enough muscular coordination to brush aside the torturing insects.

Perhaps the prophet Isaiah (7:8) referred to the flies of the Nile district when he said, "And it will come to pass in that day that the Lord shall hiss for the fly that is in the uppermost part of the river of Egypt, and for the bee that is in the land of Assyria."

It was late in the afternoon of the twenty-seventh day of June, 1909, that we embarked in Port Said on the English vessel *Khedivian* for Jaffa. We found the steamer crowded to its fullest capacity; a throng of passengers of different nationalities were literally pressed close together. Every variety of Oriental costume was visible. Veiled women sat apart with children on their laps; turbaned Arabs with white and brown-striped *abbas* or mantles, sat cross-legged; an Arab in his *kefiyeh*, or head shawl, engaged my attention; patriarchal-looking Syrians and Egyptians with red fezzes and flowing robes moved from one end of the vessel to the other; Jewish merchants returning with wares from Alexandria and Cairo talked about their bargains; Christian pilgrims of many lands discussed Palestine with veneration as the home of the founder of their faith; and a number of vacationing Jewish students from Warsaw were on board, enroute to the Holy Land where they were going to travel on foot from Dan to Beersheba.

On the middle deck, the Jewish national anthem, "Hatikvah," sung by the Russian students, filled the air, while on the upper deck, the rendering of selections from famous operas by a young Greek woman held the attention of the passengers.

Half-past five, the next morning, the purple hills of Judea began to loom up. At first it was hard to distinguish them from the fleecy clouds above them, but soon it became plain that we were in sight of the historic land. Our imaginations ran wild with expectation when our eyes perceived the Holy Land for the first time. Soon we would stand upon the land of the Patriarchs, Prophets, and Kings, walk amid the ruins of the fortresses, temples, and homes of our glorious ancestors, wander through the ancient fields and cities of the Bible, gaze at the time-honored streams, and travel through the plains, mountains, and valleys that had been conquered and defended by

the heroes of our history and which were the sole surviving witnesses of Israel's national life in times gone by.

Soon the entire coast line was distinctly seen. The now white mountains of Judea came into full view, and the city of Jaffa, which appears as a cluster of flat-roofed houses, loomed up on the slopes of the Judean mountains.

About eight in the morning, the *Khedivian* anchored a mile or so from shore, for Jaffa is located near the open sea and has no real harbor. In unfavorable weather, steamboats are often obliged to by-pass Jaffa. At such times both freight and passengers are taken to Haifa or Beirut for safer landing. Poor Jonah did not choose the best of ports, for Jaffa is a most dangerous place for embarkation; yet he secured passage for Tarshish from Jaffa.

The passengers on the *Khedivian*, however, did not have to enlist the aid of a sea monster to land them; they employed the services of Arab boatmen, who were definitely more mercenary than the whale. Unlike Jonah, the disembarking passengers had to pay for their transportation to town.

The landing at Jaffa was a great experience. Scores of clumsy-looking rowboats were tossing about in the angry waves, diving up and down, but steadied somewhat by the long oars of the Arab sailors. A swarm of them surrounded the vessel. The boats rose and fell, dashing one into the other in the mad effort of each rower to get near the rope gangway first. At one moment, the boat nearest the rope ladder, raised by the billows, almost mounted into the ship, and at the next it sank below the ladder into a frightful gulf.

No better description can be given of this landing than that of the Psalmist: "For He commandeth and raiseth the stormy winds which lift up the waves thereof. They mount up unto the heavens; they go down unto the depths; they reel to and fro and again stagger like a drunken man and are at their wits' end."

The first view of Jaffa is anything but beautiful, and one is inclined to believe with Pliny that Jaffa is named after the third son of Noah, Japheth, its builder, rather than after the Hebrew word *yafe* ("beautiful"). The latter derivation hardly fitted the city, but it could be applied to one of its present environs. I refer to Tel Aviv which has become in a comparatively short time, the finest modern municipality in the Middle East. There was nothing during my trip forty-three years ago to indicate that this sandy ground would ever be the birthplace of such a wonderful city. Only a few streets were laid out when we visited this place. Two houses were in the process of erection. Lumber

and other building materials were piled up for the Gymnasium on what was going to be Rothschild Street. My friend, Mr. M. Sheinkin of Jaffa, invited us into a temporary structure where blueprints of a number of buildings were being drawn and scrutinized by architects. Ground had already been set aside for a public park and a water reservoir had been erected to supply plenty of water for the future city. The rapid growth of Tel Aviv appears miraculous to one who saw the place some forty years ago.

After obtaining a good view of the town, we started for the suburbs in a carriage pulled by two horses which was provided by Mr. Sheinkin, who was kind enough to arrange for our trip to the colonies. We drove upon the Ramleh Way along the gardens. One side of the road was shaded by a wall of cactus. In a short time we faced the most beautiful view imaginable. Before us, on the right, was the blooming vale of Sharon, and on the left, the blue hills of Judea. Scattered throughout the plain were areas of cultivated land; the rest was pasture land. These fields were carpeted with bright-colored flowers of the most brilliant hues. The magnificence of the Sharon adorned with flowers is proverbial—like the majesty of Lebanon, and the beauty of Carmel.

Our first stop was at the agricultural school. The establishment of the Agricultural School, *Mikveh Israel* ("the gathering of Israel"), was the first practical effort in modern times on the part of the Jewish people to rehabilitate their historic land.

The school grounds could be recognized from a distance by long rows of eucalyptus trees—the "*Shejer el Yahud*" ("the Jewish trees")—which were so styled by the Arabs because Jews were the first to introduce them into Palestine on account of their rapid growth. These trees were very helpful in drying up disease-ridden marshlands. A number of Jewish youths working in the fields gave us the Hebrew greeting *shalom aleichem* ("peace be with thee"). To the Director, M. Samuel Laupu, I am indebted for valuable information concerning the school and general conditions of the land. He conversed with us in Hebrew.

It was due to the indefatigable efforts of Charles Netter that the school came into existence. In 1868, Netter severed his business connections, and on behalf of the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* left for Palestine to establish the school.

On a lonely spot at the extreme end of the Mikveh Israel grounds, completely concealed from the eye by evergreens, eucalyptus trees, and willows, a stone bearing the following epitaph tells the tale:

IN ETERNAL MEMORY TO JACOB NETTER
Born 14 Elul 5586
Died 19 Tishri 5643
KIND AND BENEVOLENT TO HIS FRIENDS
MIKVEH ISRAEL, THE WORK OF HIS HANDS

From Mikveh Israel we proceeded to Rishon, still continuing on the main road from Jaffa to Jerusalem. This is probably the oldest and most historic highway in the world. It was used by Solomon to transport the timber which Hiram, the King of Tyre, sent by way of Jaffa to Jerusalem, to build the Temple in Jerusalem. This is the same road by which the Israelites made their pilgrimages three times a year to Jerusalem for the high festivals. This highway was no longer crowded. Jewish pilgrims to Jerusalem were few, and the Christian pilgrims traveled by railway. The traffic on this road was confined primarily to native Bedouins, Arab *fellahin*, and a few Jewish colonists. This historic highway appeared very much forsaken and neglected. It reminded me of the plaintive words in the Book of Lamentations (1:4):

> The ways of Zion do mourn
> Because none come to the solemn feasts.
> All her gates are desolate. . . .

Yet everything here appeared most interesting and the environment most inspiring. The road, although dilapidated, was the same; the villages, with little variation, bore the same old Biblical names.

The native *fellahin* that we met here were probably the descendants of ancient Hebrews, with a sprinkling of some of the other nations of Scripture, who had accepted the Mohammedan religion. The mode of life, customs, traditions, ethnic traits, and family life in this area demonstrated a striking similarity between the modern *fellah* and the oriental Jew. Indeed, there is sufficient ground for the assertion of many observers that the modern Arab of Palestine is a descendant of the ancient Jewish peasant (*am haaretz*, man of the soil) who left his people but stuck to the land. Major Condor pointed out that as late as the days of the Crusaders, the natives spoke the Aramean language—the dialect spoken by the Judeans during the Second Commonwealth. Furthermore, the modern Arabic dialect of Palestine differs from that of the neighboring countries in its Hebrew and Aramean elements. These people looked ancient; their wearing apparel appeared historical and their customs Biblical. They still pos-

sessed the native courtesy and Semitic politeness so characteristic of ancient Israel. It matters little whether one meets a *sheikh* or an ordinary *fellah*, a Bedouin or a Dervish, a rich man or a poor man, a learned person or an illiterate one—the meeting will always be cordial. When one Moslem meets another, the greeting *salaam aleikum,* is equivalent to the Hebrew *shalom aleichem.*

This district, because of its fertility, was thickly populated in ancient times; the valleys waved with grain and the hillsides were covered with olive trees. The Palestine Exploration Fund found as many as three ancient sites of cities within two square miles. At the time I passed through this territory it was but sparsely inhabited.

Rishon is situated about five and a half miles from Jaffa and two and a half miles from the sea. The approach to the colony was made through a straight driveway, on each side of which were rows of trees. An opening through a white stone fence marked the entrance to the colony. We were met, on the way to the Hotel Belkind, by many children who greeted us with as many cordial *shaloms*, for it was noontime and the pupils were hurrying home for their midday meal.

Rishon le-Zion was to all intents and purposes one large vineyard through which ran avenues crossing each other at right angles like a checkerboard. On each side of the thoroughfares were modern stone structures surrounded by green lawns, gardens, orchards, and numerous eucalyptus trees.

The public park was the pride of the colony. It contained about six thousand tropical trees: *etrogim* (large citrons), fig, olive, and almond trees. Among the flowers which I noted were wall flowers, pansies, iris, lilies, sweet-smelling myrrh, and fleur-de-lis, beautifully arranged.

Nearby was the famous wine cellar built by Baron Edmond de Rothschild at the cost of one and a half million francs. It was fitted up with the most costly and finest machinery for the manufacture and preservation of wine.

One of the features that appealed to me most was the new Hebrew spirit that prevailed here. It was remarkable how the Hebrew language had been made flexible, productive, and adaptable to modern conditions by these young Judeans. A little tot of three made me blush with shame when our party of Americans visited her house. One of our group, being curious to hear Hebrew spoken by a child, asked a girl of seven in Hebrew, "What is your name?" In his eagerness to speak to the girl, he used the second person masculine in addressing her (*ma shimcha*, instead of *ma shemeich*). Her younger sister, the child

of three, playing in a corner of the room with a doll, overheard the question and ran over to her father, whispering in his ear, "Are these men Jews? They speak Hebrew as badly as Ibrahim (the Arab guide)." The tiny child could not see how it was possible for a Jew not to speak Hebrew! She was ignorant of the fact that she was humiliating American Zionists, presidents of synagogues, and directors of American Hebrew Schools. I might add that all of us were openly proud of the cause of our own humiliation.

At three o'clock in the afternoon, we bade farewell to Rishon le-Zion and continued our journey in a southeasterly direction to Nes Zionah (Flag of Zion). Our little party, inspired by the general atmosphere of this district, sang Hebrew airs all along the way. Even Ibrahim, the Arab coachman, appeared to be pleased, for in the highest pitch of his tremulous voice he participated in the chorus of each would almost have passed the Colony if it had not been for the puffing song. He was so much absorbed in the Jewish national songs that he of a little gasoline engine on the wayside near Nes Zionah that brought his horses to a sudden halt. In vain Ibrahim shouted, *"Yalla! Yalla!"* to his beasts to get them to move. Subconsciously, he changed his Hebrew tune to an Arabic melody, presumably thinking that the sudden change in his horses was because these Orientals were not in favor of Hebrew national airs; but even this stratagem was to no avail. They positively refused to budge until the puffing of the engine stopped.

It may be of interest to note here that the rebirth of the Jewish flag took place on this day, when we sojourned at the colony of Nes Zionah. While we were sitting at the dinner table, Michael Heilprin unfurled the white and blue Hebrew flag for the first time.

This colony was founded by Reuben Lehrer and his three sons, who were perhaps the first to reintroduce apiculture (bee culture) into the Jewish Colonies. They possessed several hundred beehives, and their products found a ready market in the larger cities of Europe.

The bee industry depends upon the quantity and quality of flowers surrounding the hives. Palestine has an abundant supply of fragrant flowers.

Standing amongst these beehives in a field of fragrant flowers of the most exquisite hue and luxurious odor, and viewing on the distant hillside the flocks of milk-producing sheep and goats, I was animated with the thought that Palestine was truly becoming again, "a land flowing with milk and honey."

We set out for the village of Rehovot late in the afternoon. Not a cloud marred the purplish-blue sky. The sun was setting upon the western hills of Judea. We crossed the plain of Sharon, approached the upper part of the Shephelah, and wended our way towards the plateau—the most fertile part of Judea. This plateau is about twelve miles wide and forty-five miles long.

Ibrahim was in good humor and intoned an Arabic melody, which sounded to the Western ear more like a plaintive declamation than a song. However, one who is familiar with the traditional music of the Jew, especially of Asia and Eastern Europe, at once recognizes a similarity with the music of the Arab.

It was twilight when we reached our destination, and the people of Rehovot were returning from their day's toil in the fields, hailing us cordially as our carriage took us to the modest little inn. On the way we passed Jewish laborers who had recently arrived from Yemen; they had just returned from work and they were congregated with their faces turned toward Jerusalem in their customary evening prayers. It was indeed an inspiring spectacle to see these poverty-stricken Yemenite Jews at prayer. Their services were impressive in their simplicity and obvious sincerity. The prayers came from the innermost soul of a people who had been persecuted for centuries in their native land. Their very countenances bore the traces of ages of oppression.

The Yemenite Jews are energetic, frugal, and extremely conscientious laborers. They have preserved in distant Yemen the old Jewish virtues of deep piety and scrupulous morality. From an economic point of view they formed a valuable asset to early Jewish colonization, constituting the best labor material for constructing Jewish settlements. Their honesty and intelligence could always be depended upon.

The Yemenites greeted us in the friendliest fashion, employing the Hebrew language. On parting we were saluted with the oriental farewell, which consists of the elevation of the right hand toward the head, eyes, and mouth, and ending with *shalom.*

In the evening we paid our respects to Herr Aaron Eisenberg, head of the *Agudat Hanotim* (Society of Planters). It was a glorious evening. The moonlight was so brilliant that it was easy to read the smallest type in the guidebook. It is difficult to picture a moonlit scene in Palestine. All the colors of the rainbow are mirrored: the blue sky, the green trees, the red tiles on the roofs, and the gray mountains in the distance. Even the stars twinkle more brightly, and on a moonless night, one can clearly read the face of one's watch by starlight. A fine,

cooling breeze was wafted over the land from the west—a Mediterranean breeze which caused a gentle rustling of the leaves over our heads. Along the streets, the language of Moses and Isaiah was audible, originating from the parties of young folks who were constantly passing us. The scene called to mind the vision of Solomon and the Shulamite on the mountain of Bether.

We rose early next morning to get a view of the colony and its surroundings before the sun was high. The damp sand along the road was delicately imprinted with the tracks of birds and the grass was decorated with glistening beads of dew.

We took time out to visit a family who were former residents of Chicago. Our host expressed great contentment over life in Palestine. His daughter, a pretty brunette of eighteen, American by birth, shared his views in all particulars.

Rehovot always attracted the intellectual Jewish element. Here is the present home and laboratory of Dr. Chaim Weizman, first president of the modern State of Israel.

With much reluctance we cut short our stay in Rehovot, for in accordance with the route adopted, we had to reach Ramleh towards evening. Ibrahim was anxious to get there in good time for two reasons: firstly, to secure lodging for the night, and secondly, because the second half of the journey traversed an area that was often infested at this season by nomadic Bedouin tribes, rendering it unsafe for the *hajjis* (pilgrims) to travel at night.

Our destination was the little colony of Katra (Gederah, Josh. 15:36) famous for its history and its distinguished founders known as the *Bilus* or *Biluzes*.

It was the harvest season—the most joyous time of the year for the poor Palestinian *fellah*. Old and young—even babies in the cradle—celebrated this happy time in the field, for "they that sow in tears shall reap in joy." The whole country roundabout was alive with merry parties of reapers and gleaners, all using the time-honored sickle, probably the identical implement employed in Biblical days. The reapers, in the old Biblical manner, gathered their grain in their left arms as they cut it with their right hands. They were followed by the binders, who formed it into sheaves, or more often into bundles.

During the harvest the people slept in the fields, under the blue sky, the brilliant moon, and the twinkling stars, inhaling the air which was richly scented by the newly-cut crops. Rain during the harvest season was very rare, and no precautions were needed except, per-

haps, to keep a wary eye on the marauding Bedouin and treacherous incendiaries.

We noticed that in Katra the animal's back was substituted for the wagon as a carrier of freight. The backs of camels and donkeys were used for hauling lumber and stone for building purposes, to convey merchandise to the market, to bring fuel, and to move furniture. The limited use of the wagon at this period might have been due to a scarcity of proper roads; roads fit for wheels were very scarce in the Judea of those days. In many places one could travel only at the rate of the animal's pace over the narrow tracks that traversed stony and precipitous hills.

The roads in the immediate vicinity of the colonies, however, were in fair condition, and, by Ibrahim's standards, were excellent. He was proud of the fact that he had brought us to Katra—a distance of six American miles—in less than one hour, and he attributed this phenomenal speed to the good road.

The way leading to the settlement was surrounded on either side by verdant fields and excellent pasture lands. Behind the houses of the colony were rows of white stone stables, the back walls of which were connected and formed an enclosure for the entire settlement. The colony in general appeared to be in a clean and sanitary condition, in contrast to the neighboring Arab villages which we had passed on the way. We stopped at the residence of one of the colonists, who had some rooms reserved for the accommodation of tourists.

Entering the house, we found a number of young Jewish laborers around the table. They were deeply tanned and they were clothed in native garments. While the laborers were engaged in conversation, our host placed a bottle of *arak* on the table and declared, "This is something that you are not familiar with in America." The liquor handed to us was a genuine Palestinian beverage. It was a very strong spirit, flavored with anise seed and sweetened with sugar.

The proprietor of the inn at which we sojourned was one of the original colonists—a member of the body of students who had organized themselves under the name of *Bilu* and come there thirty years previously to till the soil of the historic land of their ancestors. Though gray and wrinkled, his countenance yet revealed the militant spirit of the Russian Jewish student of the early eighties. Age and hardship might have modified some of his views, but they certainly had not weakened his idealism.

"This is genuine Jewish bread," he remarked when he placed the bread on the table. "What you call Jewish bread is merely Jewish-

baked bread. As to this bread, Jews were its producers from the first to the last step: Jews ploughed the soil, sowed the seed, reaped, threshed, and ground the wheat in their own mill, and baked it in their own oven."

The same formula was repeated with nearly every article served at the table, with a pride and enthusiasm seldom seen in men of such an age. The remarks of the old man called forth the facetious rejoinder of one of our party at the table: "Our host," he remarked, "would make a splendid advertising agent." "You are mistaken, sir," promptly interjected the proprietor reproachfully. "We are poor advertisers when it concerns our own people. I have not tried to give you the impression that the bread here is the best you have eaten, nor the milk the purest you have drunk. No! I am far from being so conceited. I know you Americans have better wheat and finer cattle. I spoke little of the merits of the food. I only wished to bring to your notice the fact that these articles of food were produced by Jews."

"When I was in Russia," he continued, "we were often reproached for being consumers instead of producers. Although in almost every industry our people were proportionately represented, the anti-Semites never failed to seek out our alleged weakest point when making their onslaughts on us. Failing to give us credit for our attributes and contributions to society, they assailed us for our so-called deficiencies. Their favorite subject was the vocation of agriculture. They proclaimed that we Jews failed to contribute our fair share to this most important pursuit—which in fact is the very source of life—and that we expected others to feed us. We Jews must refute this criticism by action, not words. Some of our own people are even ready to admit that we are not capable of being tillers of the soil and that we are fit for nothing but trading.

"We Palestinians have demonstrated that Jews, when given equal opportunities, and freedom to possess land and develop it, make excellent farmers, and that we even excel our neighbors in the agricultural field, just as you Americans have succeeded in various other occupations when you have been given a chance."

The early settlers of Katra were members of the *Bilu* organization, most of whom were university students. The sudden outpouring of anti-Jewish hatred in 1882 struck the cultural element of Russian Jewry like a bolt from the blue. Persons who had thought themselves thoroughly secure in Russia, and who had placed too much reliance on Russian humanitarianism, received a rude awakening. The misfortunes that befell their people suddenly aroused the Jewish con-

sciousness of many of these students, and they began to realize that in spite of their devotion to Russia they were not regarded as Russians. Once they had regained their Jewish consciousness, they determined to fight their own battles as Jews. The *Bilu* organization was formed at the University of Kharkov in 1882 by a circle of twenty-five students who were convinced that a permanent solution of the Jewish problem could only be effected by the settlement of the Jews in Palestine. These young men, therefore, took *Bilu* as the name of their organization. This name is composed of the first letters of this Hebrew motto: "House of Jacob, come ye and let us walk." Many of the cultured youth of Russian Jewry were attracted to this cause.

Ninety of these young men came to Palestine in the summer of 1882, inspired with the idea of founding a cooperative agricultural colony. These youths, in their enthusiasm, forgot, however, that Palestine had very little work to offer them, and that those who were brought up in the schools were no match for Arab labor.

In a call issued to the Jewish students of Russia the *Bilu* membership declared: "Not in civilization nor in Jewish philanthropy lies the salvation of Israel. The anti-Semites will always find their weapons, and charity at most can only do away with some physical ills. The remedy must be a different one than hitherto prescribed for Israel. . . . It must be administered by the Jews themselves. . . . The Jewish conscience must be aroused and the love for Zion dormant for nineteen centuries must be awakened. . . . Everything in *Galut* should be sacrificed in order to give Palestine the best service. . . ."

About twenty of these students toured the Russian Pale to preach the new doctrine, and many converts were made wherever they passed. Their influence was particularly marked upon students of the *yeshivot*, who joined the ranks of the *Bilu* by the hundreds. It was something new in Lithuanian cities to see clean-shaven young men, who could hardly speak Yiddish, permitted to address audiences in ultra-orthodox synagogues.

In a few months the *Bilu* enrolled 525 members in their organization. *Bilu* activities did not stop with propaganda; they were also the forerunners of political Zionism. While one group betook themselves to Palestine, another opened offices in Odessa and Constantinople, to spread the Zionist idea to other sections of Jewry.

Sir Lawrence Oliphant, who was in Constantinople at that time on a diplomatic mission, promised to use his prestige and influence with the Turkish Government to facilitate the development of Pal-

estine for the Jews, and at one time the managers of the *Bilu* were confident that they had gained a diplomatic victory.

It was late in the afternoon when we reached the city of Ekron. We left Ibrahim to feed his horses, and, escorted by a schoolteacher on whose card was engraved the name Samuel ben Shabbat, we went to see the colony.

The main street presented a rather novel appearance. Belated husbandmen were driving their sheaf-laden carts to the threshing floor. Donkeys were walking on the public highways, and were constantly being annoyed by boys and dogs, the latter apparently having a natural affinity for donkey's tails. A pair of goats were locking horns, surrounded by enthuastic partisans of the two combatants. A camel was kneeling majestically in the center of the street, disturbed by marauding hens which lodged on his back picking grains from a large sack. Hornless cows and heavy-tailed sheep were crowding the doorways undisturbed. Numerous domestic fowls were flying from roof to roof, following us as we walked down the street, presumably knowing that we were strangers.

Indeed, even the ancient God of Ekron, Baalzebub (the god of flies), graced us with his attention, for he sent regiments of peculiar-looking flies to act as our bodyguards.

While we were observing these novel sights, we noted that people suddenly began to emerge from every direction and fill the public thoroughfares; men, women, and children rushed towards the threshing floor, followed or preceded by dogs, donkeys, goats, and a menagerie of other living creatures. Our guide, inquiring as to the cause of the excitement, was informed that a serious mishap had just occurred on the threshing floor: an Arab boy had been killed by a horse.

Indeed the panic caused here among the Philistines of old by the pestilence which was visited upon them for capturing the holy ark could not have been more severe. Arabs from the neighboring villages hurried towards the scene from every direction, weeping, wailing, tearing their clothes, and otherwise manifesting grief for the loss of their kinsman. This method of displaying grief is a remarkable trait in the modern Arab and is almost identical with the method of showing grief employed by the ancient Hebrews. Traces of this custom still persist among the Jews of Eastern Europe and Asia.

Fortunately for the Ekronites, the violent death of the Arab boy occurred in the presence of many Arab eye-witnesses, and thus a real danger was avoided. We were assured, by several mountain Jews of

Caucasia who were patrolling the streets with firearms, that this mishap would cause no inter-racial trouble.

We left this scene of excitement and, guided by the teacher, went to the public garden. In the center of the garden was situated a large well that circulated water by means of clay or iron mains to every part of the grove. This garden was the common property of the colonists.

The shortest road from Ekron to the Judean Mountains and thence to Jerusalem was through the Wadi es Surar, or Vale of Sorek. This valley began four miles southeast of Ekron and terminated in a great basin at a distance of sixteen miles with the low hills of Judea.

The entire valley, as we observed it from the villages of the Judean hills, was as fertile as in the days of yore. Fields of grain and olive groves dotted the view. The broad brook of Reuben and its pebbly tributaries, screened by walls of oleanders, were seen, and beyond was the Philistine Plain with its miles of corn and pasture lands studded with multitudes of wild flowers. Along this picturesque valley of Sorek, we pursued our course to Hulda, where the Jewish National Fund had ordered the planting of a large olive grove in memory of Theodore Herzl. We emerged from the cornfields of Ekron and passed the ruins of Beitfar. The road became uneven, full of steep hills and deep ravines. Going in and out of these deep holes in a carriage, one had the sensation of sliding up and down the "Shoot the Chutes." I confess that this violent shaking up and down gave little pleasure—even to loyal Zionists. We were glad to reach the last slope, where the village of Hulda was situated.

It was late in the afternoon. The rich glow of the golden sun as it set over the Judean mountains was an inspiring sight; even the blue hills of the east and north appeared to enjoy the reflection of the setting sun.

Ibrahim, like Eliezer, stopped at the village well to give drink to his animals, and "the daughters of the men of the city came out to draw water."

Two "Rebeccas" came down the village hill, carrying large jars on their heads, and when they filled these vessels with water, others came, and still others. I watched with great interest the procession of these quiet and erect figures clothed in their faded draperies of all colors, with the large jars on their heads, walking toward the sunset. Their erect carriage and graceful gait rendered them most attractive, at least from a distance.

It was a most pleasant spectacle to watch a flock of white sheep

as they spread over the green meadows under the brilliant and clear sky of Palestine. The handsome animals ran and frolicked around the well, with the shepherd in the center of the flock playing on his flute and keeping watch over them—a picture so well painted by the Shepherd King: "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, and leadeth me beside the still waters."

We walked up the hill to the spot where the Herzl grove was going to be located. There was little to see: a building in the process of erection, and on the slope of the hill a nursery of young olive trees that were to be transplanted to the *Herzl Wald*. Herr Giller, the contractor, was kind enough to show us the plans of the National Fund structure, a beautiful two-story edifice of white limestone; the lower floor was to be used as an office and as lodgings for laborers, while the upper one was to be used as a botanical laboratory.

The laboratory was to engage in experimentation in olive culture, for, next to the vine, Palestinians at that time depended upon the products of the olive tree for their livelihood. From time immemorial, this tree had been abundantly cultivated in Palestine. In most instances the trees were not planted, but grew spontaneously among the bushes which cover extensive portions of the country. The soil and climate seem to be highly favorable for its cultivation, and its output in modern as well as in ancient times not only supplied native wants but also permitted the export of quantities of olives to other lands.

The olive tree needs little attention, aside from annual plowing of the ground on which it grows. The produce is very remunerative, for a large tree in a good season will yield as much as fifteen gallons of oil. The oil of Palestinian olives is considered to be of the finest.

In the Middle East, olive oil is an indispensable article of food and is a substitute for butter. Olives are not only cultivated for the oil, but also are used directly for food. The Palestinian peasant is in the habit of putting several olives between two slices of bread and making a meal out of this strange sandwich. Olive oil is also used in the manufacture of illuminating compounds and in the production of soap. The wood of the olive tree has always been in great demand. It is used for ornamental carved work. Various articles, made in Jerusalem of olive wood, find a market as souvenirs among tourists.

It was nine o'clock in the evening when we reached Ramleh. We arranged for quarters at the German Hotel Reinhard, the only place where one could get a clean and comfortable lodging in Ramleh, unless one were stopping at the Franciscan Convent.

The supper was purely vegetarian. Many kinds of vegetables were displayed on the table. Everything was well prepared, and the food was greatly relished by our party. This was the last time Ibrahim feasted with us, for after supper we presented him with his pay and *bakshish* (tip) and he departed from us. His farewell was accompanied at the same time by his touching his right hand lightly to his breast, and then to the lips and forehead.

The next morning we were awakened in the early dawn by the ringing of the bells of the medieval convent. I left the hotel before breakfast to get a view of the environs of the town. As the train for Jerusalem was to stop at the station at 7:45 A.M., there was not much time to spare. The plain appeared like a sea and the low hills resembled small islands. This effect was produced by the usual heavy fog that rested on the entire plain. This fog is produced by the western wind coming from the sea, the moisture of which is condensed by the cold air of the night. It is due to this moist air that all vegetables do not perish from the intense heat of the day during the summer months, from May to October, when there is no rain and the sun burns day after day and makes the soil as hard as rock. This fog spreads over miles of the plain, watering the entire surface during the night, and is responsible for the fertility of the Sharon.

When I returned to the hotel, I found my friends impatiently waiting for me, for it was time to get to the railroad station. In about half an hour we were on the train. When the train began to pull out from the modest little station, I searched my pockets and, to my chagrin, discovered that my wallet was gone. As I had no desire to be a candidate for the *Halukkah* (Charity Society) in Jerusalem, I leaped off the train before it gathered speed and hurried to the hotel. I found Azizeh, the chambermaid, in my bedroom holding my folder, containing my checks and bills. Poor Azizeh had no knowledge of the value of checks and bills, and instead of starting an argument with her which would place me at a disadvantage, I paid her two *bisliks* (22 cents in American money). She placed the folder in my hand, saying, "*Khud; kattar Illah kheirak*" ("Take; May God increase your goods"). I was afterwards informed that if Daud (David), the porter, had gone to straighten my room, it would have cost me more than two *bisliks,* for he knew more about American money.

I was obliged to wait six hours for the next train to Jerusalem, and I decided to see the historic village of Lydda, or Lud, which was

located near Ramleh. In the company of a colonist from Rehovot I reached Lydda in one hour's time.

Like many other towns in that country, Lydda had seen better days. Originally the most important city on the way to the Judean capital, it became a strategic center for all attacking armies. Lydda, therefore, had participated in all the misfortunes of the country, due to wars and invasions, that culminated in the Babylonian deportation, Macedonian attacks, and Roman cruelty.

But despite the ruin that had crept over the country, I have rarely witnessed a rural scene more pleasant than that which was presented in the fields of Lydda. The native *fellahin* have the reputation of being thrifty and industrious, and the town is surrounded by groves and orchards.

Incidentally, this is the same Lydda where the airport is located that was featured in the news so frequently during the Israeli fight for independence.

On the top of a hill, a few miles east of Lydda, were located some mud and stone houses where about one hundred and fifty Arabs resided. They called this village Midieh; the name had been passed on from father to son. In 1866 a German explorer came to this village and spent several days in surveying and studying the site. When he left he was convinced that Midieh is none other than the site of the birthplace of the Maccabean family. This place has since been authoritatively identified with Modin, the ancient home of the Asmoneans.

I was moved when looking upon this dilapidated and deserted place to reflect that here stood the cradles of fearless martyrs whose heroism became proverbial in the history of all mankind, and that here rested the remains of the Judean patriots who kindled a spirit of enthusiasm among their fellow Judeans, and set the example of a courageous resistance rather than an inactive despair.

I left the place, meditating over the proclamation of Mattathias: "Even if all the people in the Kingdom obey the order of the monarch to depart from the faith of their fathers, I and my sons will abide by the covenant of our forefathers!"

Modin developed into a Palestinian amusement place during *Hanukkah* festivals, where the heroism of the Maccabees is symbolized by the young Judeans in athletic games and other open-air amusements. Maccabean societies are organized by Jews of all lands with the object of bringing back the Maccabean spirit to modern Jewry.

Recent events in Palestine have shown that this priceless spirit does truly exist.

It was about two o'clock on a fine Friday afternoon when I reached the little platform of the railway station at Lydda and waited for the scheduled train for Jerusalem to arrive. Perfect calm reigned over the entire atmosphere. No sounds were heard, except at intervals the echo of a shepherd's voice as he called back the straying sheep, and the sounds of the bleating flock. But never did silence and calm appear so gratifying as at this moment. The intense blue of the sky, the agreeable brightness of the sunlight, the cool stillness and the freshness of the air, the enchantment of the blooming fields and charming groves, and, above all, the expectation of being, in a few hours, within the walls of old Jerusalem, walking upon familiar historical ground, gazing upon the ruins of the capital of David and Solomon, and looking upon the tombs of Prophets and Judges—all this was enough to keep one's mind deeply and happily absorbed. Indeed, I arose as from a dream when the little engine puffed into the station and when I heard the voice of my friend, Mr. I. Kahanowitz, of Greensburg, Pa., addressing me in English through an open window of the train and inviting me to occupy a vacant seat near him.

The first person I met on the train was young Ben Avi of Jerusalem, the gifted son of the famous Hebrew scholar and lexicographer, Ben Yehudah. This young journalist was talking to a group of amateur actors and actresses in a pleasant and ringing voice, and in a most charming Hebrew. Hebrew was his true native tongue, for Ben Avi had the enviable distinction of being the first modern native-born Palestinian to be rocked and nursed in a Hebrew atmosphere. It is said that his very first intelligible utterance was the Hebrew syllable *"av"* (father). At the time of his birth his father's house had been the only house in Jerusalem where Hebrew was spoken exclusively. Through verbal and written efforts, his father championed the cause of the Hebrew language for forty years. Ben Avi's father, Ben Yehudah, therefore, is considered the father of Modern Hebrew. It was my good fortune to spend many pleasant hours with Ben Yehudah when he visited America during the first World War.

It is said that one day when Itamar (Ben Avi) was two years old, the late Yehiel Michael Pines visited the Ben Yehudahs and found the infant chattering in Hebrew. He remarked to his mother, Deborah, "It is pitiful the way you cripple the poor boy by not talking to him in a living tongue; you make an idiot out of a bright child. The Hebrew language is not broad enough to adapt itself to all

modern ideas and conditions, and the poor child will find no words to express his thoughts when he grows up." The child's mother listened attentively to the criticism of Mar Pines, and when he was through, she replied, "We would rather make him a Hebrew idiot than an idiotic Hebrew."

We soon approached a more rolling country which had rather few houses, but appeared rich in cattle, sheep, goats, and camels. From the next station, Deir Aban, could be seen the ancient Zorah and Ain Shemesh (Bet Shemesh), and the modern Jewish village of Artuff.

From Deir Aban we gradually ascended the heights of Judea. The track here became very winding and rough. The scenery resembled that of the Rocky Mountains of America. We passed Timnah, where Samson set fire to the Philistines' corn. Beyond was Kiryat Yearim, where the Ark of the Lord remained for twenty years in the house of Abinadab. The mountains around here bore evidence that at one time even these bare hills were cultivated. Remnants of old terraces were still visible. The country grew wilder and more stony as we ascended, and we saw a number of caverns in the mountains. One of the clefts high up in the rocks toward the left was called Samson's Cavern.

Caves are found all over Palestine. In the neighborhood of Beersheba, I was told that natives still dwelt in various caves. As a general rule, however, native Palestinian Arabs do not live in them, and are even afraid to enter a cave lest they meet wild animals, particularly the *debe* (hyena).

The Palestinian talks with fear about this beast, and much gruesome gossip and superstition have been circulated about it. The natives believe that a hyena will follow a lone pedestrian, cast a spell over him, and rub against him until he is dazed, and that the pedestrian will then follow the animal to its cave. Our coachman, Ephraim, of Petah Tikvah, told a story of a colonist of Zichron Yaakov, who, one Friday afternoon, did not return home on time. His friends, growing uneasy, went to look for him. They found him in a hypnotic trance near a cave, following a *debe* to its lair. Ephraim informed us that it took quite a while to revive the hapless victim.

We came to the station at Bittir (Khirbet el Yehud: The Jewish Ruin) said to be the Bether that played such an important role in the insurrection of Bar Kochba against the Romans. One can readily find the strategic reason for his selecting this high and almost unconquerable position to stop the advance of Severus. It was only after a

siege of three and a half years, and with a much superior force, that the Roman general succeeded in capturing this splendid position which commands the entrance to the Judean capital.

We had already mounted over two thousand feet, and were seven miles from Jerusalem. I did not follow the railroad stations any longer; I was too absorbed for that. At each ascent the heart beat high with the prospect of seeing the Holy City *(El Kuds)*. About six o'clock we began to see signs of the environs of Jerusalem. We finally reached the highest summit, and looking far ahead in the distance, the mountains of Moab rose first upon our view, and then the deep valley of the Jordan and the Dead Sea. A little nearer, Mount Olivet, the tower of David, the Dome of the Rock, and minarets, spires, and domes made their appearance.

How deep was our emotion! Three thousand years of history seemed to be condensed within the narrow space of one's field of vision. We were in Jerusalem—a name so impressive to the mind of Jew and Christian from early childhood. Here lay the poor historic city so full of romantic and tragic interest, and here were Mount Zion and Mount Moriah, surrounded by the quaint walls which baffled the efforts of the invading Crusaders. These were moments of deep silence and indescribable feeling, a mixture of admiration and pathos which is often inspired by the sight of that which one loves and has not previously seen.

CHAPTER XVI

Jerusalem

Lo, toward Jerusalem salutes the eye,
A thousand pointing fingers tell the tale;
"Jerusalem" a thousand voices cry,
"All hail Jerusalem!" Hill, down, and dale,
Catch the glad sounds and shout "Jerusalem all hail."
—Tasso, Jerusalem Delivered

WE arrived at the Jerusalem Terminal just in time to receive the Sabbath, and were met at the station by my friend, Professor Boris Schatz, of the Bezalel School of Arts and Crafts, who kindly conducted us through the Jaffa Gate to the Center Hotel, where our fellow tourists were waiting for us.

Of all the grace and charm that surrounded ancient Jerusalem, to which testimony is given by Biblical and rabbinic writings, only such as could not be destroyed by vandalism was left as an inheritance to the modern city. Only the beautiful and lofty situation, the stately mountains around it, the picturesque valleys that separate Jerusalem from these mountains, and the balmy atmosphere have survived the whips and scorns of time. Very little is left of the Jerusalem of antiquity. It is through sheer chance that modern Jerusalem still retains its historical name, for Hadrian, in his hatred for the Judeans, grudged the city its Hebrew name and commanded that it be known as Aelia Capitolina.

Fire, sword, plunder, and time had removed the landmarks of the great historic deeds of yore. At the time of my visit the modern city stood on the ruins of the old Judean capital like a weather-beaten tombstone on the grave of a departed hero.

The first place we went to see was the Wailing Wall. This wall has been the gathering place of Jews for many centuries, and the first place a Jewish pilgrim would visit on entering the Holy City. True to tradition, we soon made our way to the quaint western wall. We walked along King David Street, past the citadel of David and the bazaars.

The sun was setting down the valley of Rephaim. Everything

looked ghastly gray. There was no cheer even in the west, which was still being bathed by the setting sun; the mass of old houses with domed roofs conveyed a dismal impression to the mind.

The narrow court in front of the ancient wall, however, was clothed in holiday attire. Large wax tapers, tallow candles, and oil lamps illuminated this so-called wailing place and endowed it with cheerfulness in contrast to the dark and wretched hovels of the Maghrebin quarters that surrounded it.

There was no wailing, for it was Sabbath eve, and the poorest in Israel must keep this day free from care and sad reflections. Men, women, and children crowded this beloved open-air sanctuary to "receive the Sabbath" *(kabbalat hashabbat)*. For centuries this was the nearest they dared to approach the "Holy of Holies," and the only place where the exiled Jew found relief from persecution and suffering. At this wall and under the blue sky, the two surviving witnesses of Israel's lost national glory, Jews from all lands assembled, forgot their differences and became a united brotherhood.

These worshippers were dressed in their Sabbath garments: *caftans* made of gaudy colors—yellow, red, green, and white—and of satin or plush materials, adorned their bodies, and fur-lined caps, which appeared much out of place in semi-tropical Jerusalem and not in harmony with the tropical garments that covered the other parts of their bodies, covered their heads. They did not seem to be annoyed by their warm headgear, which their fathers had brought nearly a century before from the frigid climate of the Russian steppes, and which was still used by the Russian *moujik*.

To Western eyes, the boys especially presented a comical appearance with their long coats of bright colors tied around the waist with white silk belts, and circular *birettas* of black velvet or velveteen trimmed all around with fur. Beneath each *biretta* a white knitted skull cap could be seen to provide for the eventuality of the hat's being removed so that the head should not be bare. At each side of this extraordinary head-covering, a long and shaggy earlock hung down.

One soon loses all conventional perspective on seeing patriarchal-looking men pressing their foreheads on the cold stones for hours in silent devotion. I was deeply impressed by the scene witnessed here. Its effect upon me can never be effaced. I agreed wholeheartedly with Professor Schatz, who remarked to me in a whispered voice: "Here, above all places in the world, there are no dividing lines among our people. At this wall, orthodox, reformed, Zionist, non-Zionist, rich

and poor—all step on common ground and feel that all Israel are brethren. Indeed, these very stones have a unifying tendency."

The scenes at the wall during weekdays were heart-rending; such manifestations of grief as sad and aged men and women sitting on the ground and weeping bitterly are difficult to picture and harder yet to describe. Some men, wearing the *tallit,* prayed silently with their bodies bent toward the wall; others kissed the cold gray stones fervently; some rocked their half-starved bodies to and fro in unison with their prayers and poured forth their tears upon the pavement. Some parts of the wall seemed to have literally been worn smooth by the lips of mourners who came here week after week and year after year for countless generations.

We left the wall, passing behind the Maghrebin quarters, and walked toward the chief Ashkenazic synagogue, called the *Churvah,* or "Ruin," because of its situation on the original ruins of the synagogue of Rabbi Yehudah, the Pious. This synagogue, which unfortunately has recently been destroyed by the Arabs, was crowded with worshippers. Whatever might have been the reputed poverty of those attending the services, they did not show it. They were well dressed, and the interior of the synagogue presented a very pleasant and dignified appearance. It was well illuminated with artistic lamps presented by a Mr. Lichenstein, of Philadelphia, who also presented a large case of Talmudic literature to this congregation.

We reached the hotel to find everything in readiness for our first Sabbath meal in Jerusalem. A large number of pilgrims representing many lands, a real *kibbutz galuyot,* were sitting around a long table, at the head of which was Professor Schatz. The table was well lighted with Sabbath candles and laden with wine, honey, and fruit from the colonies. There were no menu cards, but the names of different dishes were easy to pronounce, and the cooking was of a character creditable to the women of Jerusalem. It was a genuine Sabbath affair, where songs of the "Sabbath bride" echoed in the large room, and Hebrew refrains issued from every mouth.

My first night in Jerusalem was a sleepless one; thoughts, memories, fancies, and all sorts of reflections came crowding upon me as I sought my first rest in the ancient Jewish capital.

For the first time I found myself in what to me was the greatest center of ancient historic events. My mind wandered over the striking and wonderful occurrences that had transpired here since Abraham's faith was tested. Just across the way the Tower of Hippicus still stood—the citadel built by David and fortified by Herod to guard

against encroachment upon the city by hostile peoples. A little further toward the south, Mount Zion, where Solomon in all his glory erected the beautiful palaces for the royal house of David, still remained. Farther on, toward the southeastern part of the city, the same venerable Mount Moriah still rose. In former years this mountain housed the historic walls wherein the Temple was located to form the center of Jewish national and religious life in days gone by. Here was the scene of the terrible struggle when the unfortunate Judeans, besieged and pressed by Titus, fled to their Sanctuary as their last stronghold. Here again, later, occurred the scene of terrible carnage when Tancred, at the head of his army, attacked the followers of the Prophet, and in the name of religion massacred ten thousand Mohammedans.

What tales of suffering are written on these quaint walls! If we could but decipher the invisible handwriting, what mysteries would be disclosed! In time of siege, this was the retreat of the Jew—the refuge for helpless women and children, the infirm and the aged—and the deathbed of heroes. Such and other disturbing thoughts were enough to keep one awake.

I went to an open window of my room and looked out upon the city. The streets were dark. Here and there a feeble and faintly visible light could be seen glimmering from a few upper windows, and yonder the shadow of a man could be discerned as he moved about in the street with a lantern in his hand. Profound silence, infrequently broken by the wail of a dog at some distance, reigned everywhere. Nature itself appeared to have swooned around the eternal city.

I was glad indeed to see the dawn of day, and I shall always remember the sunrise of my first morning in Jerusalem. It began at first with a flush—a faint but beautiful light that sparkled like a halo over the Mount of Olives, gradually turning into a glow that illumined the Olivet, cast faint reflections over the greenish dome of the Mosque of Omar, and shed a dim light over the numerous pale, white, tomb-like domes that characterize the Jerusalem roofs and lend a melancholy complexion to the old city. Soon afterward the sun poured out floods of light over all the hills of Judea.

With the dawn the birds began singing and the church bells ringing. The voices of the *muezzins*, as they stood on the minarets calling men to prayer, vibrated through the air, and the trumpets of the Turkish soldiers from the quaint tower of David added to the din. Soon Jerusalem was wide awake. Lines of donkeys and camels, loaded with grain, fruit, and vegetables, passing in front of their masters,

were coming in by the Damascus and Jaffa gates to be unloaded at the market place beyond the Citadel.

The noise in the market place of Jerusalem was more raucous than in a barnyard. The camels whined and growled as they knelt and the donkeys brayed. The donkey of Jerusalem appears to be a direct descendant of that of Balaam; it will not go without coaxing, and keeps braying in a voice stronger than that which spoke unto Balaam. The Jerusalem roosters are noisy creatures, perhaps the lineal descendants of the cock that crowed thrice for St. Peter. We saw them by the hundreds, lying tied by the legs on the stones. Every family in Jerusalem kept its own roosters. There were so many that the city resounded with their noise.

There is one place in Jerusalem which is sacred to all creeds. What Jew who has received a biblical education does not yearn for an opportunity to see Mount Moriah—the place where the Temple stood? And yet he is not permitted to step on this holy ground; one may venture up to the gate but no further for, since the days of Maimonides, there has been a ban placed on the entrance of Jews into this spot.

It was Sabbath afternoon when we decided to visit Mount Moriah. We selected that day, firstly, because we wanted to make this Sabbath a memorable day, and secondly, because on that day we hoped to evade the suspicions of the pious Jerusalemites who frowned upon Jews who visited this Mohammedan shrine. We entered the *Haram* through the cotton gate and soon were within the walls of the Temple area. It is hard to conceive a more striking situation for a Sanctuary than this space that lies in the southeastern part of the city, overlooking the Valley of Jehosaphat. Even if there were no authentic evidence, one could be quite certain that this must have been the site selected for the ancient Temple, for in any panorama of Jerusalem, this large, level, and open space is the most prominent.

For over six hundred years this place was closely guarded by the Moslems, and no Jew or Christian could enter this *Haram*. The sentinel that was stationed here by order of the Sublime Porte was ordered to shoot on sight any unbeliever who dared to enter. It is only since 1856 that this intolerant position was somewhat relaxed.

By far the most interesting object in the Mosque was the rock *Sakhra* (in Hebrew: *Eben Shetiyah*; the foundation stone), which measured about fifty to sixty feet in diameter and was raised about six feet above the marble floor. It was enclosed by a heavy gilt iron fence, and above it stretched a rich canopy of crimson silk. There was

nothing remarkable about the appearance of the rock; its fame rested on the fact that it was a remnant of the highest point of the original ridge of Mount Moriah. This costly edifice was constructed primarily to house this rock, and in honor of it a most beautiful dome was placed above it. What the object could have been in preserving this stone intact is problematical. One thing, however, can be stated with certainty; we were looking with our own eyes upon a spot which for long centuries of promise and prophecy Israel had kept most holy. According to Jewish tradition, this is the rock upon which Malchizedek offered sacrifice, upon which Abraham was ready to sacrifice his son, and which Jacob used as a pillow.

From there we passed the Golden Gate (Bab-el-Rahma: The Gate of Mercy). According to Arab tradition, the Messiah is to make his victorious entry into Jerusalem through this gate and take possession of the city for Israel. Out of fear of this tradition, the Mohammedans kept this portal walled up.

The next day we paid our respects to the holy places venerated by the Christian world. We left Jerusalem on the backs of sure-footed donkeys at the Jaffa Gate, went down the steep valley of the Son of Henom and came to the Bethlehem road. On the way we stopped at the traditional tomb of Rachel and the place where she gave birth to her youngest son, Benjamin, and died.

Moses Montefiore erected a chapel at the site of her tomb. We found a venerable old man at the chapel who introduced himself as the beadle. There were no worshippers there at the time, but we were told that on certain weekdays Jews of Jerusalem came here to pray. We left a contribution towards the maintenance of the domed chapel and continued on our journey toward Bethlehem.

Turning somewhat from the main road, we climbed up the slope of that ancient city. Soon we reached a cluster of buildings at the center of which was the Church of the Nativity. We found it partly occupied by kneeling worshippers. Below the church was the grotto where, according to tradition, the birthplace of Jesus is situated.

The air was heavily incensed. The walls of the cave were covered with rich ornamental draperies. There was the incongruity of a Turkish soldier standing at attention with a loaded rifle and fixed bayonet; such a scene was entirely out of harmony with the peaceful atmosphere of the grotto. The grotto is twelve feet deep, forty feet wide and about ten feet high.

The inhabitants of Bethlehem appeared to be more prosperous

than the people of the other cities of Palestine. This was the center where most of the religious souvenirs were manufactured.

As far as the apparel of the natives is concerned, what impressed me most was the quaint custom of the women of Bethlehem of wearing long, white, nun-like headdress which hung over the shoulders down to the feet.

In the afternoon we went back to the city of Jerusalem to visit the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. We were taken in by an Armenian monk. The Church was illuminated with bronze lamps. A Greek monk stood at the head of the Holy Sepulchre, reading in an inaudible voice. The dimensions of the Sepulchre itself are about six feet square. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which, of course, is highly revered by all Christian denominations, was not infrequently the cause of conflicts between Greek and Armenian priests. Each group sought to obtain the supreme control of the holy place.

Except for St. Peter's Church in Rome, there is no Christian edifice more revered than the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Additional buildings adjacent to the shrine itself have been erected from time to time to accommodate the numerous pilgrims from various countries.

The next day we visited the garden of Gethsemane. Descending the hill by the path which leads from St. Stephen's gate to the valley of Kidron, we ascended the Mount of Olives. The garden is a beautiful spot, and fatigued from the uphill journey, we rested under the olive trees, still plentiful to the present day.

It was late in the afternoon when we left the Mount of Olives. We passed Zion Gate and visited the "Tombs of the Kings of the House of David" on Mount Zion, where the royal palaces were formerly situated. No historical monument in Jerusalem is better authenticated than these tombs.

There are all sorts of stories told about the splendor of these tombs, which could only be seen by privileged visitors. The upper hall, which contained a sarcophagus, was said to be embellished with rich draperies containing gold embroidery. Candles were always kept burning there.

In 1839, Sir Moses and Lady Montefiore were permitted to look through the lattice of a trellised door to behold the tombs of the kings. Jews always regarded with affection this sepulchre of the kings. Nehemiah gave Artaxerxes as the reason for his sadness "that the place of my father's tomb lieth waste and the gates thereof are consumed with fire." When Nehemiah completed the wall of the city

begun by Shallum, he extended the wall "unto the place over against the Sepulchre of David."

Returning, we passed around the quaint old wall looking down on the Valley of Jehosaphat. Every foot of this territory is historical. Down below is the path through which David fled from the conspiracy of Absalom, and above is the Mount of Olives, with its large number of chapels, thousands of tombstones and scattered trees. Here is Mount Scopus, where the Assyrians were encamped against the Judeans, where the Romans and Persians massed their armies against Jerusalem, and where the Saracens and Crusaders pitched their tents to attack the Holy City. How often was the air here darkened with missiles directed against this shining prize, and how many armies have closed in upon this spot!

At no place on the globe is death so visible as in the Valley of Jehosaphat. Nature appears tired and worn out. This valley lies between Mount Moriah and the Mount of Olives. At the foot of the Mount of Olives rise several monuments, to one of which tradition attaches the name of Absalom; stones are thrown as a sign of disapproval by natives at the tomb of the one who desired to commit patricide. There was formerly the shape of a hand on the monument, and the story goes that Napoleon ordered his bodyguards to strike down the hand of the man who rose against his own father.

Nearby is the tomb of Jehosaphat, and the monolith of Zechariah, the entire mausoleum being hewn out of one rock. Behind them stretch a long line of tombstones more modern than the others, and a large number of other tombstones recline on the ground.

From time immemorial the Jew has preferred this valley to any other spot for his last resting place. A pious Jew has always been eager to be entombed under the shade of the rocks of Moriah and the walls of the Temple, since here, according to tradition, the act of resurrection will be instituted. Thus one who is entombed here will be saved a long journey through the body of the earth at the end of days. Here the dead will rise out of their graves and appear before the Lord's judgment seat to receive the reward of their earthly deeds. "The day will come when the Eternal will judge the nations assembled in the Valley of Jehosaphat." (Joel 4:3)

The reader will recall that from my boyhood days I had exhibited much interest in reading inscriptions on tombstones. My interest in this pastime grew by leaps and bounds when I came to the land of Israel. When I passed through a town or colony, after examining the abodes and ways of the living, I made it my practice to visit the

necropolis and read about those that had long since passed away. I often got more reliable information from the cold stones than I received from the accounts of the living, for the stones never lied but the tales and legends told by the living were frequently biased and colored. In each colony, a visit to the local cemetery conveyed such data as the average age of death, the health and sanitary conditions of each period, the frequency of deaths, and the relative number of accidental and natural deaths.

Late one afternoon I went to visit the Jewish Cemetery on the slope of Mount Olivet. The rays of the sun had scarcely left the summit of the mountain when I reached the Old Necropolis. The graves are marked with heavy slabs of native stone hewn smooth on one side and rough on the other. Each tombstone has a Hebrew inscription with a simple story engraved on it. The ancient Jews preferred not to place the slab in an upright position. The eastern side of the valley is filled with the most ancient graves, where, for thousands of years, the Children of Israel have been entombed in that last and most peaceful sleep.

While taking notes from one of the slabs bearing an inscription of a martyr, I heard a plaintive voice in the distance. I left the stone and walked towards the sound. I was very much startled when I saw, in an empty, shallow grave, an old man with a long gray beard reaching down over the greater part of his chest. He wore a wide skull cap on his head and was dressed in shrouds. He kept chanting from a book containing the Psalms of David. When this stranger saw me, he also appeared somewhat startled. In a moment, however, he regained his poise, offered me his hand, and in a deep and aged voice, whispered "*shalom.*" I confess that for a moment I was not too eager to take his hand, but after some hesitation I shook it gently and answered him with the customary, "*shalom aleichem.*" From the way he had pronounced his Hebrew greeting I gathered that he was not a native Palestinian. I sat down on the slab of a grave near him, and asked him how he happened to be sitting in such a strange place. He then related the following story to me:

"I was born in the year 1820, in the city of Vilna. When I was twenty years of age I married a girl of the same town—a girl of exemplary qualities from a very fine family. My wife presented me with seven children: three boys and four girls. In 1871 cholera broke out in Vilna and wrought havoc in my family. Six children and three granchildren died the week before *Tisha b' Ab.* Smitten with despair, we left Vilna the next day. We hoped to save our last child, but when

we came near the city of Lida, the last child also succumbed to cholera. In a few months, my wife, broken down physically and mentally from all these misfortunes, was taken with a lung disease and died. I was left alone. Life was unbearable and meaningless to me, and I decided to go to the Land of Israel to die. But I was poor; the little money I had saved had been spent for doctors and medicines. I decided to travel from town to town until I reached the port of Odessa. When I was in Vilna I was employed as a preacher in a synagogue, and I decided to become a traveling preacher. I spent a year in traveling until I reached Odessa, whence I boarded a vessel for Jaffa.

"I do not know whether it was the atmosphere of the land that made me forget all my troubles or if it was time that erased all sad memories of the past. Instead of dying with sad memories, I married a young woman in Jerusalem with whom I lived happily for thirty-five years. We had three children and seven grandchildren. I was again unfortunate with my children. They all died in the prime of life. My wife died a few years ago after our last son passed away. Since her death, I cannot find rest for myself. I dug my grave near hers as soon as she died, and day after day I come here to pray that the good God may take me to her, where all mankind rests in peace."

On the slab of the next grave, I read in Hebrew, the following epitaph: "Here rests Esther, daughter of Judah, a loving woman. Woe to the loss. Three children she buried in her life, and childless she descended to them."

When I returned to the old city, it was dark and cheerless—a mass of ancient, cold, sombre houses, presenting blank walls to the street, many of them in ruins.

The view lacked all solemnity and threw a gloom over my imaginative expectations. Perhaps I should have waited until I had become more accustomed to the holy places before I ventured a visit to the Wailing Wall. It is not surprising, therefore, that many sympathetic pilgrims of the West, who came and viewed this dismal scene, departed for home with a change of heart towards the Holy City.

Old Jerusalem definitely does not come up to the Western standard of the "city beautiful." No one could have been inspired by its artistic beauty. There are no public parks, no charming boulevards, no colossal statues, and no triumphal arches.

In fact, Old Jerusalem never did rival the imperial pomp of Rome, or the artistic achievements of Athens. Its only notable artistic remains are portions of the foundation of Solomon's Temple, on

which site now stands the Mosque of Omar. This at least compares in elegance with the Roman temples of Palmyra and Baalbec.

Jerusalem within the walls represents one large museum of antiquity, and its streets and structures are part of the exhibit. What buildings there are have a religious association; well-preserved ruins were few and now are fewer yet since the recent Israeli-Arab War.

Jerusalem, Athens, and Rome gave rise to a sequence of ethical, intellectual, and physical forces. There can be no doubt as to which force has been most enduring. It is true that the intellect of Greece has never been excelled and that the empire of Rome was probably the greatest in history. But Jerusalem inspired a spirit which is even more profound than that which motivated Greek art and letters and more lasting than that which inspired the artistic beauty of Rome. The moral and ethical teachings that were contributed by Jerusalem still hold sway over the peoples of the entire civilized world. Jerusalem stands for the purification of the spirit rather than the adoration of the body. It laid the foundation of modern religion, morality, and ethics.

The sublimest strains of literature are the inspired writings of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Amos, and the ethical ideas of the Biblical Psalms and Proverbs. In this atomic age, society needs more than anything else to plant within itself the enduring truths taught in Old Jerusalem.

The Arch of Titus, which was erected in Rome over eighteen centuries ago by Domitian in commemoration of his brother's conquest of Jerusalem, has left mere faded reliefs of the Judean captives led into exile, while the Western Wall of the Temple has in front of it living descendants of those victims of Titus who have returned to rehabilitate the desolated land.

At the time of my pilgrimage, there was one modern institution worthy of mention in Jerusalem. This was the School of Arts and Crafts that was founded by a special committee in Berlin, in January 1906, through the efforts of my late friend, Professor Boris Schatz, and was taken over by the Bezalel Society the following October.

Two museums, one containing archeological and Jewish art collections and the other a collection of natural history, including the flora and fauna of Palestine, were opened in the school. In these museums the Bezalel pupils are instructed to employ as motifs various Palestinian animals, birds, and insects, as well as antiquities preserved in the museum. In a special course the students are taught to combine Hebrew letters to form artistic ornamentation—many in

modern forms. Such fancy lettering is handed over to the carpet weaving department, and the borders or center pieces are modeled after the Hebrew alphabet.

None of the Jewish institutions could point to such a rapid development as this school. In the first year, a carpeting atelier with a workroom for spinning and dyeing was already in operation. In the following year, departments for woodcarving, filagree work, stonecutting, Damascus metal work, basket-making, and lithography were introduced; later, metal chasing, batik work, and ivory carving were added.

The next morning I again visited the Jewish Necropolis on the slope of the Mount of Olives, and while walking between the graves, my attention was drawn to the following epitaph: "Here is buried Michael C. Boaz Israel, the *Geir Zeddek* (Righteous Proselyte) born July 17, 1798, and died November 1860." I was curious to learn more about this proselyte, and when I returned to the city I went directly to my friend, the late David Yellin, and asked him whether he could give me any further information about him. The only data Yellin had was that he had been American Consul at Jerusalem, and that his real name was Warder Cresson. He suggested that I see the American Consul, but the Consular Office merely knew that Warder Cresson was a Philadelphian and that he had been the first American Consul to be stationed at Jerusalem.

When I returned to Philadelphia, I called upon Judge Meyer Sulzberger. I felt certain that this learned jurist would either have the information I wanted himself or else be able to put his hands on the proper sources. On my arrival, Sulzberger took out several bound volumes of *The Occident*, which was edited by Isaac Lesser, then Rabbi of the Mikveh Israel Synagogue, and it was from these that I learned the following story of Warder Cresson which I am presenting in detail because of its relation to the history of the Zionist movement.

Warder Cresson was the son of John and Mary (Warder) Cresson. His family were Quakers and he was reared in that faith. As a young man he was given to speculating on religious and sociological questions, and he joined successively various sects as each appeared to him to represent the true religion. In about 1840 he made the acquaintance of Isaac Lesser, Rabbi of the Portuguese Congregation, Mikveh Israel. He frequently listened to his sermons, which impressed him very much. He tended to discard all other forms of religious belief and concentrated on the study of Judaism. On May 17, 1844, Warder Cresson

was commissioned by the United States Government as Consul at Jerusalem. Before his departure for this post, he had been successfully engaged in farming at Gwynedd, a suburb of Philadelphia. He speaks of his departure for Jerusalem as follows:

"In the spring of 1844 I left everything near and dear to me on earth. I left the wife of my youth and six lovely children (dearer to me than my natural life), and an excellent farm with everything comfortable around me. I left all these in the pursuit of the Truth, and for the sake of the Truth alone."

He was much affected by the surroundings of the Holy City, and became more and more inclined toward Judaism. In 1848, he determined to become a Jew, and in March of that year, after much opposition from the *Beth Din* and the chief rabbi, Abraham Hai Gagin, he was circumcised and received into Judaism. He assumed the name Michael C. Boaz Israel. During his early years (1844–48) in the Holy Land, Cresson was a frequent contributor to Isaac Lesser's magazine, *The Occident*. In this Journal, he wrote at length, criticizing the methods of the London Society for the Conversion of the Jews. While in Jerusalem he identified himself with the Sephardic Community, and was on terms of intimacy with Hakam Jehiel Cohen and the Chief Rabbi, Elyashar. He returned to Philadelphia in September 1848, to arrange his affairs in order that he might pass the remainder of his days in the Holy City.

When his wife and family learned of his determination, they interposed every possible obstacle to the execution of his plans. They regarded his actions as indicative of insanity, and in May of 1849, his wife (Elizabeth Townsend) and his son Jacob applied to the court and had him declared insane and legally incompetent. He appealed this decision. The trial of the appeal, which extended over six days in May 1851, was one of the famous cases of the time. Eminent counsel was retained on both sides, and nearly one hundred witnesses were called. The decision of the lower court was reversed, and Cresson was discharged. The argument of his counsel was published in *The Occident* in 1863, with interesting comments from the pen of Isaac Lesser.

During the period of his stay in Philadelphia he regularly attended the Mikveh Israel Synagogue, took part in the Jewish communal life, and rigorously observed the ceremonial laws. During this period he was again a frequent contributor to *The Occident*.

Soon after the trial, he returned to Jerusalem and actively supported the efforts then being made for Jewish agricultural regeneration

in Palestine. In the fall of 1852, when Sir Moses Montefiore and Judah Touro were working along the same lines, he announced his intention of establishing an agricultural colony in the valley of Rephaim. In March 1853, *The Occident* contained a facsimile of his circular, sent from Jerusalem, inviting attention to, and assistance for, his project. The circular is one that only a practical farmer and a thinker upon educational subjects could have produced. The prevailing distress of the Jews was to be relieved by the establishment of agricultural colonies, and the oppressed of Israel in all parts of the world were to be enabled to return to Zion. The pecuniary means for this excellent project were not forthcoming and Cresson's plans were doomed to failure. Yet he never seems to have given up hope, and during the years 1853–56, the columns of *The Occident* contained many communications from him on this subject.

He married a Sephardic woman shortly after his return to Jerusalem. He lived the life of a pious Oriental Jew, dressed as a native Sephardi, and became a prominent leader of the community. At his death he was buried on the Mount of Olives, with such honors as are paid only to prominent rabbis.

The time had come for us to depart from Jerusalem. According to the route marked out for us, we were scheduled to return to Jaffa, and thence by way of Haifa to Northern Palestine, including lower and upper Galilee.

We arose early to attend to some shopping in the bazaars and souvenir stores. I mounted an upper balcony at the hotel to get my last glimpse of Jerusalem. To the east, directly before me, was Mount Olivet, its summit bathing in the golden light of the rising sun, and its body covered with a green blanket of grass. Towards the southwest was the quaint tower of David, harboring a wealth of recollections that surrounded the Davidic dynasty, and towards the north was the place where Titus had prosecuted the siege that resulted in such a terrible massacre and two thousand years of exile. But nothing was so cheering to the eyes as when they wandered beyond the city walls in a northwestern direction to secure a view of the New Jerusalem. There the descendants of those whom Titus thought he had exterminated had returned to rebuild the ruins of Zion and re-inhabit the city of David. It was a view that cannot be effaced from my memory.

The train left the Jerusalem station at 10 A.M. and we soon were passing diversified country roads, lofty hills, and deep ravines. A landscape devoid of grandeur and beauty was ever in view. Count-

less rocks lay scattered among the mountain slopes—the last vestiges of ancient terraces and old city walls; yet to the close observer it was evident that this desolation of the soil was not due to natural defects, but to mismanagement and misgovernment, and that under the stimulus of proper management and government, it could be transformed into what it was thousands of years ago: "a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olives and honey."

The train soon ran into the richer regions of the Shephelah and Sharon, passing the dark-green olive forests of Ramleh and the beautiful village of Lydda. In two hours we came to the suburban clay villages near Jaffa, with their beautiful orange groves, fig trees, grapevines, and numerous singing birds. The scene was refreshing; everything was bright and cheerful. We sang with Solomon as we reached the gates of Jaffa: "The flowers appear on the earth, the time of singing of birds is coming, the voice of the turtle dove is heard in our land, the fig tree putteth forth her green figs and vines, the tender grapes, with their good smell." We reached Jaffa about two o'clock, and that very day we boarded a diligence for what was then the largest and most populated colony in Judea, Petah Tikvah.

We passed through what was to become the future main street of Tel Aviv; the road led to the German colony of Sarona, which had been founded by the Templar Society of Wurtemberg. The members of this society came here in the early sixties to await the arrival of the Messiah. We passed through a wide thoroughfare, shaded by rows of eucalyptus trees on both sides of the street. We admired the neatness of the little houses, the forest-like surroundings, the beautiful vineyards, and the vast meadows.

While driving along the banks of the little river called the Yarkon, we met a caravan of bedouins sitting, with their legs folded, close to their loaded camels, which were kneeling under the old willow trees on the banks of the stream. We stopped at the river momentarily to watch the fair water carriers, who greeted us in their graceful native fashion.

It was twilight when we reached our destination. We stopped at the Hotel Petah Tikvah where we were hospitably received by the proprietor, who conducted us to our quarters while a Yemenite porter followed us with our baggage. The evening meal was of the quick snack variety. As we were not expected guests, we had to be content with whatever could be found in the pantry.

My first impression of Petah Tikvah was a very favorable one. Long rows of eucalyptus, pine, and acacia trees, hedges of prickly

pear, oleanders, and other shrubbery such as the mimosa (which bears lovely golden balls of tiny flowers and is used to enclose orchards and groves) could be seen almost everywhere in the colony.

The next morning the writer paid his respects to Dr. Bernstein Kahan, physician to the colony. We found the good doctor in his "ambulatory" (dispensary), busily treating patients. I watched the doctor perform minor operations, treat wounds, examine eyes, do gastric analyses, and examine blood and sputum under the microscope. In every case the most scrupulous care was taken by the physician to do things in the most scientific manner.

The records of the dispensary demonstrated that the largest proportion of patients suffered from the various forms of malaria. Next to malaria the most prevailing diseases were dysentery and diarrhea in children. Eruptive diseases, such as measles, in children, were of frequent occurrence. Smallpox, typhoid fever, typhus, diphtheria, and scarlet fever were rather rare.

Diseases of the eyes—lids, conjunctiva, and ocular media—were very prevalent. The most prevalent ocular disease was that form of conjunctivitis known as "granular lids" or "trachoma." Tuberculosis, pneumonia, and other affections of the lungs were infrequent. Of course, many of the diseases prevailing in the colony were either preventable or curable when strict attention was paid to hygienic regulations and when a physician was consulted early in the case.

Diseases associated with exposure to inclement weather such as coryza, bronchitis, and virus and lobar pneumonia, and diseases of the sinus, nose, and throat, were relatively infrequent in the colony. The warmer climate permits the populace to stay out-of-doors during the greater part of the year, and such life is conducive to good health. Malaria and trachoma, the two endemic diseases of the colony, were being successfully controlled at the time of my visit, thanks to the heroic efforts of Dr. Kahan.

I bade farewell to Dr. Kahan and resumed my tour of the colony. We visited the communal orange grove presented to the city by the Jewish Colonization Association. There we met an old agriculturist who related many episodes connected with the early history of the colony, one of which impressed itself on my memory.

"This incident took place a short time after we came to occupy this land. I was watching a field of wheat, and the green crop had just made its appearance. One day, while patrolling the wheat field, I noticed that the Arab Sheikh of the neighboring village, El Yehud, had turned his horse into our wheat. I chased the horse away, went

over to the intruder, and warned him not to repeat this outrage again; I told him that we would hold him personally responsible for all damages. The Sheikh glanced at me scornfully and turned away. A few weeks passed and the wheat in the field was proudly waving in the air.

"Early one morning I saw the Sheikh at a distance wrapped in a black *abba* with a large *kephiyeh* on his head. He was coming toward the colony. I gave a prearranged signal to my comrades, and in a few minutes all of us were secreted behind a cactus hedge and discussing what steps to take with the treacherous intruder. After some discussion it was decided that we must once and for all show all marauding neighbors that we do not fear them and that we were ready to repell and punish all attacks made on this colony. As we reached this decision we noticed that the Sheikh was leaving the highway; in an instant he had again turned his horse into the wheat.

"A few of us immediately mounted our horses and chased after the intruder. He began to run, and we followed him until we brought him to a stop. We took the vandal and his horse into custody and brought them back to the village. The Sheikh was given a sound thrashing in public, and we sent him home with a warning that one more offense would get him a much more severe punishment. He glared at us with the fire of vengeance in his eyes: then he mounted his horse and dashed away into the hills.

"About a month passed, and nothing more was heard of the Sheikh. One morning we learned from one of our loyal Arab laborers that we were to be attacked on a certain night of that week by the tribesmen of the Sheikh. Not knowing how many invaders were coming, we dispatched one of our men to the neighboring colonies for assistance.

"We did not notify the authorities in Jaffa of the coming event because we thought it would be more effective and would make a better impression on the Arabs if we convinced them once and for all that we could use firearms better than they. Pretending that it was a holiday, we dismissed all the Arab laborers for a few days, so as to be sure that our enemies would not be informed of our defensive plans, for it was obvious that some of our help were spying on us. On the afternoon preceding the night of the expected attack, a score of men and women from Rishon l'Zion, Ekron, and Katra, mounted on fine horses, armed with glistening rifles slung across their backs, with revolvers in holsters attached to their belts, and with cartridge bands around their waists, galloped into our village like a company

of trained cavalry ready to close in on the enemy. They dismounted from their horses and sat down to consult with us about our plan of warfare.

"Towards evening, each man was assigned to a strategic position. We knew that our enemies were coming down the main road and that they intended to use our field of wheat as the fighting ground. Many of us concealed ourselves near the entrance of the village, behind piles of stones, in ditches, and behind hills, while still others were encamped behind the village houses that were in the process of erection, and on the roof of the hut we were occupying.

"The expected hour came. Our vanguard, patrolling the fields, having heard from a distance the trotting of horses and the wierd shrieks of the oncoming foe, signalled to us, 'They are coming! Be ready for action!' As soon as the enemy entered the grounds of the village, two shots were heard. We knew it was the signal for action. A volley of fire from our comrades at the lower side of the colony broke out. The marauders were quickly encircled by our men and surrendered before a single shot was fired at them. They were taken completely by surprise. We imprisoned twenty Arab ringleaders, including the Sheikh, bound their hands and feet and took them the next day to Jaffa, where we handed them over to the authorities. The others did not need further warning. They were glad to be allowed to get away.

"Since that incident," continued my new friend, "we gained the respect of our neighbors, and have had no organized attacks against us. Of course, now and then there are individual robberies such as may happen anywhere.

"I shall never forget," he went on, "the wonderful sight of mounted women galloping into our colony to defend the life and property of their Jewish brethren. In the lands of the Diaspora, we are in the habit of looking upon women as weak creatures, helpless, unable to take care of themselves—much less, offering protection to others. Palestine has demonstrated that Jewish women may become heroines under the proper influences. Here the women are brought up in the same environment, attend the same schools, belong to the same gymnasiums, and work side by side in the fields with the men. They ride horses and handle weapons, when necessary, as well as men do."

It was this kind of spirit that stood the Israelis in such good stead when they were attacked by the Arab world, outfitted by the British Empire.

Leaving Petah Tikvah, we continued our trip through the fertile plain of Sharon, which extends the entire way from Jaffa to Carmel. We passed large tracts of fine land, many historic cities, and villages surrounded by vineyards and primitive-looking beehives. *Fellahin* were busy in their luxurious grainfields, and native shepherds watched over their large flocks, consisting mostly of sheep.

Our attention was directed to the ruins of Ras-el-Ain (the ancient Antipatris)—a city built by Herod in honor of his father, Antipater. The mound where the ruins were seen was covered with heaps of stones, broken columns, and chiseled blocks of rock, half buried in the soil, flowers, and weeds. A medieval castle, the Mirabel, erected by the Crusaders, stood on a great mound nearby, and its outer walls appeared to be in almost perfect condition.

In about two hours we reached the ruins of Arsuf (the ancient Apollonia). The modern name has some connection with the god Resheph, who has been identified with Apollo. The ruins of Arsuf date back to the days of the Crusaders. The place is famous for the battles fought in 1191 between Richard Coeur de Lion and Saladin.

We next arrived in Tul Kerem. As we were told that foreigners were not welcomed here, we passed on to the next village, Kakun. Traveling from here for about an hour in a northwesterly direction, we reached Nahr el-Falik. The road from this village turned sharply and ended in an uphill elevation of land where the horses stumbled over a mass of loose round stones at almost every step. We walked up part of the hill and tried to help the horses climb over the mass of stones which marked the entrance to Zichron Yaakov.

When we reached the top of the hill we sighed with great relief. We took off our helmets to allow the breeze to blow through our matted hair, and gulped in deep breaths of clear and refreshing mountain air. The sun was setting between the sea and the sky by the time we reached Zichron Yaakov. Upon the terraced slopes, grapevines were prospering, and from amidst the green vineyards the silver-leaved olive tree, a symbol of peace and prosperity, beckoned to us. The eucalyptus tree stood haughty and whispering in the breeze—a harbinger of the new Jewish civilization. The Jew had returned to a land of desolation and brought along with him from far Australia this tree to purify the marshy areas. Indeed, the view which I saw from the environs of Zichron Yaakov was truly fascinating.

The colonists in their peasant garb were hurrying to receive the Sabbath. As they passed us they greeted us with a quick *shalom,* conveying the impression that they were late. We stopped at the modest

little guest-house named Graff, after its owner, where we quickly changed our clothes and made our way towards the picturesque little synagogue. An air of holiness reigned over the village. The streets were clean and the men, clad in their Sabbath garments, were walking toward the synagogue. The women were sitting on their verandas or in front of their cottages, in holiday attire, enjoying the day of rest, and the children, dressed in their best, were hastening to the synagogue.

We found the little synagogue crowded with worshippers. The *hazan,* Mr. Shub, whom we had met in the States two years previously, chanted the *"Lecha Dodi"* hymn in an impressive and euphonious manner, and the congregation repeated the verses of the ritual very decorously. When the services were over, Mr. Shub introduced us to many of the congregation, by whom we were greeted with *"Shabbat Shalom"* (a peaceful Sabbath). We then retired to the hotel to partake of the Sabbath meal. After supper, Mr. Shub and others took us for a stroll through the village.

The air was balmy; a cool breeze blew from the sea. The branches of the full-grown trees on either side of the avenue gracefully approached each other. The songs of Sabbath eve came ringing through the open windows of numerous cottages. Sweet and strange was the music in the pensive silence of Old Palestine, and our hearts beat fast with high spirit as we took part in the chorus of *"Yoh Ribbone Olam"* (one of the *zemirot,* or songs for the Sabbath eve).

We came to the village garden *(pardes hamoshavah),* planted with great care in accordance with the directions of the Baron de Rothschild. A large variety of flowers and tropical plants were in bloom, and we paused at the fountain to listen to the interesting stories told by one of the pioneer colonists.

We returned to the inn to take a much-needed rest. But rest I did not get, for on our arrival at the hotel, I found a colonist of Hederah waiting to take me to see a patient there. Dr. H. Jaffa, the physician who customarily administered medical aid to the colonists of Hederah, was away in Switzerland in search of health for himself. He had left the colony in charge of another physician, and it was this latter gentleman who wanted me to see the patient with him.

In an open carriage, drawn by two horses, we left Zichron Yaakov at ten o'clock in the evening. The path in front of our vehicle was kept clear by colonists on horseback who galloped along the winding road, which even in daylight is very confusing because of its tortuosity. Our guides kept a lookout against marauding natives, who fre-

quently secreted themselves along the roadside to pounce upon unsuspecting travelers. Many tourists had been robbed in this neighborhood. After three hours of traveling we heard two shots fired in the air close by, and in a few seconds the echo of three shots reached us from a distance. Our driver explained that this gunfire represented an exchange of signals between our guide and the *shomer* (watchman) and that we were within a short distance of the colony.

We passed through an outer eucalyptus forest, and then went into and emerged from a second forest that surrounded the city. We halted at about one o'clock in the morning at a one-story stone house on the edge of the forest, concealed and darkened by many trees. With the aid of a lantern, we entered a large, poorly furnished room, dimly lighted by an oil lamp. At one side of the room was a large bed, screened off with mosquito netting; in it a six-year-old girl was stretched out, apparently very ill. Around the bed were some women who were watching over the patient and whose eyes were inflamed from continuous weeping. The little girl was lying on her back with both eyes open. Her face was flushed and her mind was wandering in delirium. She spoke incoherently, presenting a visual hallucination of a fiery castle which her mind's eye visualized through the window. She asked in Hebrew that she be taken to the *migdal eish* (fiery castle).

I was pained to see the emotional state of the distracted mother. I learned that she had lost another child in a similar manner, and that she was watching over the second child in deep despair. I felt especially touched when I heard the poor child, in her delirium, muttering incessantly in the language of Moses and Isaiah, and I subconsciously uttered: *"od lo avdah tikvatenu"* (our hope is not lost).

> While within a Jewish breast beats a Jewish heart,
> And Jewish glances turning east to Zion fondly dart,
> Oh, then our hope is not lost.

I was so impressed with my patient's native Hebrew that I momentarily forgot my mission. I turned to the mother and declared: "If our language that has been dead so long can be brought to life by the lips of your dear child, then your daughter must recover."

I did what I could and remained at the bedside of little Yardenah until the first rays of the sun penetrated through the forest into the sick-room window. When I left, the fever had receded and the patient was sleeping quietly.

The most interesting place in an agricultural colony during harvest time is the threshing floor, and my friend conducted me there.

Numerous stacks of reaped wheat, barley, oats, durah, sesame, and turmar were in evidence everywhere, resembling pyramids. The *goren* (threshing place) was quiet that day, as it was Sabbath, the day of rest in the colonies. Only two Jewish *shomerim* (watchmen) were there lounging and reading on a pile of straw. I was curious to find out what kind of literature Jewish watchmen would be interested in, and to my surprise, I found that one was absorbed in a philosophical essay by Ahad Haam, *Al Parashat Drachim* (*At the Parting of Ways*), and the other was reading Smolenskin's *Am Olam* (*The Eternal People*).

"If these are examples of Israel's guardians," I thought to myself, "the future of Israel is well guarded."

From the threshing floor, my friend conducted me to the Gan Shmuel—an *etrog* (citron) garden founded through the efforts of the *Hovevei Zion* of Russia in memory of Rabbi Samuel Mohilever, of Bialestock; though it had been neglected for some years, at the time of my visit it was receiving good care. It was managed by A. Feinberg, a prominent leader in Hederah. About 35,000 *etrog* trees were planted there.

The famous agricultural expert, Aaron Aaronson, had established a branch of his experimental station in Hederah.

The history of the colony is thrilling and resembles the stirring story of the Puritans who came to America in the Mayflower. In 1891 the Russian Zionist Colonization Societies of Riga, Vilna, and Kovno secured a large tract of arable land from a Christian Arab, named Salim Hari, through the efforts of Joshuah Hankin. This territory was situated midway between Jaffa and Haifa, near the sea, and south of ancient Caesarea (once an important harbor and capital of Palestine).

The land was badly chosen for a settlement. The disease-breeding marshes of the creek, Nahr Mefdshir, in the Wadi-el-Khudera, that runs from the north, rendered the entire neighborhood dangerous to health. The inexperienced settlers, as soon as they secured title to their lands, gathered in the old native *Khan*, in the center of the settlement, and organized themselves. Then they immediately began to clear away stones and lay out plots for dwellings. Soon the poor colonists ran short of funds and materials and were obliged to live in half-finished cottages or on the bare ground. In the meantime, they kept themselves busy ploughing the dry ground and sowing it with wheat and vegetables.

In consequence of the exposure to the mosquito-infested marshes

of the west, malaria broke out in a violent form. In a short time this disease carried away half the total number of colonists. During the summer of 1893, only six or seven of the ill-fated group had strength enough to nurse the dying and bury the dead. Sick and virtually without provisions or medicines, the afflicted settlers lay crowded in the unsanitary *Khan* or in half-built cabins.

In the village graveyard, where my friend and townsman, Jacob Shapiro, the son of the rabbi of my town, requested that I accompany him, were lines of tombstones of entire families. At one place, he halted, choking with emotion; his face flushed and tears began to run down his cheeks. He exclaimed, "Friend! These are the sacrifices I brought for our land and for the future of my people." Overcome with grief, he mumbled, "Three! three! three!" and could not speak any more, for he was at the site of the graves of his wife and two children who had died during the summer of 1893. He fell prostrate upon the ground for a few minutes, and when he got up, he continued: "And while I was taking my last look at my wife, yonder by the sycamore tree a grave was being dug and mourners were preparing for the interment of the body of my brother-in-law."

Yet among those whose lives were spared, courage and trust in the Lord were never lacking. They carried off their dead and then hastened back from the burial place to wait on the sick. When the sick became convalescent, they took the places of those whose strength had been exhausted or who had come down with illness. The living had neither the time nor the inclination to become despondent. As idealists, they always bore in mind that all great things are attended with great difficulties and must be overcome with courage and fortitude.

The survivors felt that the best way to honor their departed dear ones was to be true to their ideals and to their cause. To work in harmony for the building up of this monument to the memory of the dead became the driving ambition of these devoted pioneers.

In a time of great crisis, the Baron de Rothschild came to the rescue of Hederah. Profiting by the sad experience of Petah Tikvah, he ordered the planting of 500,000 eucalyptus trees around the colony in the area where one of the worst marshes was located; the other swamp was eliminated by draining it through clay tubes into the sea. With the marshes dried, the mosquitoes lost their breeding ground. In two years the disease-stricken village developed into a healthful colony. Even the formerly unhealthy swamps turned into fertile grain fields.

I bade my friend farewell and went to see little Yardenah. I found her much improved. Her countenance had cleared and she greeted us with a smiling "*shalom.*" I could not stay with her any longer, as the physician who had asked me to see the case was needed in Zichron Yaakov to look after several patients. I parted from our little patient well-pleased with her condition.

In about two hours I was back in Zichron Yaakov. We stopped at the hospital, where Dr. M. Ginsburg, a sister of Ahad Haam, was the resident physician. The doctor was kind enough to take us through the little medical institution. There were only five patients: two from Hederah, one from Zichron, and two from other colonies. Three were sick with malaria, one with dysentery, and one with severe trachoma. The ward was scrupulously clean and well ventilated. The clinical charts and the history sheets were all in the Hebrew language, and judging from the graphs and words recorded on these, the patients were receiving good and careful treatment.

In passing, I might add that the method of child education in Hederah was, with some few variations, similar to that of other colonies. It should be remembered that with the increase of Jewish immigration to Palestine the education of children became a great problem. Jews of the various countries were eager to teach their children different languages as a medium of expression. The child's brain was taxed to the utmost in his effort to learn two or perhaps more languages, so that he was hardly capable of applying himself to the various subjects of instruction. Change of schools like as not meant the studying of a new language in order to understand the teacher and fellow-pupils. The *Alliance* insisted upon the French language as a medium of instruction; the Anglo-Jewish Association, with its loyalty to the English language, insisted on this tongue; and the *Hilfsverein*, with its preference for the vernacular of the Fatherland, all combined to make young Israel a polyglot country.

All colonists agreed on the importance of Hebrew as the native tongue. They had been attracted to Palestine by the ideal of the rejuvenation of the Jewish People on their historic soil. The Hebrew language was an essential part of their program. For a half-century Hebrew had been a literary language among the learned Jews of Russia. The writings of Luzatto, Levinson, Krochmal, Erter, Rappaport, Letteris, Mapu, M. A. Ginsburg, Smolenskin, Lilienblum, and David Gordon, and the poetical works of Wessly, the Lebensohns, Yehudah Leib Gordon, Manne, and a host of others were fresh in the memories of the Palestinian settlers.

These lovers of the Hebrew tongue would not think of adopting any other language. The *Hovevei Zion*, represented by the Odessa Committee, also exerted pressure upon the colonists to adopt Hebrew as the medium of instruction in the schools. The example of the village schools was soon followed by the schools in Jaffa and in other cities that were subsidized by the Odessa Committee. The schools of the *Hilfsverein* then followed suit as did the Anglo-Jewish Association. Finally, the elementary schools of the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* adopted the Hebrew language.

But while external factors certainly contributed to the renaissance of the Hebrew language, great credit should be given to local agencies in Palestine, and particularly to Eliezer Ben Yehuda who was the dynamo of this movement.

It was late when we returned to the hotel. The *Maariv* prayer was being chanted by Cantor Shub at the hotel in the presence of a *minyan* of visitors. The lamps of the hotel had been lit after the completion of the services. This was followed by *Havdalah* and the drinking of a cup of the best local wine. The singing of "*Hamavdil*" was most popular that evening. This song could be heard from almost every house to the accompaniment of various musical instruments. Ritual music and national songs were features of the Sabbath.

Almost every house was well illuminated, and everything assumed the air of a general holiday. The holiday spirit was not confined to the houses. The young Judeans manifested their national freedom on the public highways. The youth of the colony marched over the long street, singing in chorus such Jewish national airs as *"Hatikvah," "Bimkom Shom Arozim,"* and other songs.

One song particularly impressed me, because it showed the spirit of New Judea. I shall render it here in English:

In this, the land of opportunity,
The resting place for pilgrims' weary feet,
We too enjoy the law's equality
And share in Heaven's gift of freedom sweet,
The seeds of the Torah in this fertile soil
Will yield a thousand measures for our toil.
Moistened with liberty's pearly dew,
The buds had come and gone.
And then the fragrant blossoms grew,
Warmed by the radiant sun.
So let us work with song, and pray
That we may eat the fruits some day.

In concluding the chapters on Palestine, I desire to express my regret for cutting short or eliminating altogether my observations on many places, including interesting sites in and around Jerusalem, Jericho, Hebron, and particularly the Cave of Machpelah. My meeting with the high priest of the Samaritans in Nabulus and my visits to the colonies of Galilee, Safed and Tiberias were skipped also because I am obliged to keep in mind that this is an autobiography—not a book on Palestine. The complete log of my journey to the Holy Land may be found in my book, *New Judea*. I will, therefore, abruptly terminate our visit to the Holy Land and continue with my return journey to the good old United States—for while Palestine was the land of my distant forefathers, the United States is my own and that of my children.

CHAPTER XVII

A Visit to My Native Town

This fond attachment to the well known place
When first we started onto life's long trail
Maintains its hold with such unfailing sway
We feel it even in age and at our latest day.
—Cowper

IT is not often that a general practitioner can grant himself the privilege of leaving his practice and making an extensive journey. I resolved, therefore, to utilize this opportunity to extend my field of vision over as large a territory as circumstances permitted.

Instead of taking the short route home via the Mediterranean to Italy and thence to New York, I went by way of Constantinople, which enabled me to see most of the European capitals.

I had been a great admirer of the ancient Greeks, and next to Jerusalem I was eager to see the city of Athens, the birthplace of philosophy and science. I certainly was elated when I found myself on a boat bound for Piraeus, the port of Athens.

There is probably no other country that can boast of producing so many intellectual giants within a period of three hundred years as Greece. Beginning with the philosopher Thales of Miletus (sixth century B.C.), the head of the school of Ionia, there were the philosophers Anaximander, Heraclitus, Anaxagoras, Alcmaeon, Empedocles, Pythagoras, and Diogenes. There was the medical genius, Hippocrates (the father of medicine), and his school, and there were the two greatest historians of all times, Herodotus and Thucydides. There were the greatest writers of tragedy, Sophocles, Aeschylus, and Euripides; the great Greek sculptors Phidias and Miron; the great Hellenic poets, Pindar and Simonides; the greatest philosophers—perhaps of all times—Socrates and Plato, and the first biologist in history, Aristotle.

After I had had a bird's eye view of the modern city of Athens, my guide took me to the city of the *Golden Era*, which is located

west of the present city. He took me to the rocky heights so well known as the Acropolis, which towers about five hundred feet above the Attic plain. West of the Acropolis is the Hill of Mars or the Areopagus, upon which was the seat of the famous Athenian Council. Further west is the Hill of the Nymphs (on which now stands an observatory); the Hill of Pynx (which was the meeting place of the Athenian Democracy); and the Hill of the Muses (Museum), upon which is seen the remains of the monument of Philappapus.

The area west of the observatory hill is generally taken to be the Barathron or place of execution, and after viewing this, I visited the prison of Socrates: a grotto consisting of three chambers hewn out of the solid rock; this was the place where Socrates spent the last days of his life before he drank the lethal cup of hemlock.

Another famous ruin is the Parthenon (maiden chamber). This was the temple of Athena, the most perfect example of Greek architecture. It is at present considered the most beautiful ruin in the world. This edifice was erected by Pericles to add splendor to the Acropolis. Many other ruins of temples built in honor of the various gods and goddesses adorn the ancient city, most of which hark back to the days of Pericles—the most glorious period of ancient Greece.

Leaving the Acropolis, my guide pointed out the Lyceum, where Aristotle spent twelve years of his life teaching biology to advanced classes in the morning and conducting discourses for the general public in the afternoon. From his habit of walking to and fro while he delivered his discourses his disciples were known as Peripatetics.

I still regret that time did not permit me to prolong my pilgrimage to the city of Socrates and Plato any longer. I was compelled to crowd in all that it was possible to see in one day, for the boat that brought me to Piraeus was scheduled to leave for Constantinople the next morning.

It is indeed difficult to find any parallel between Jerusalem and Athens. Each city represents a different world. The chief relic of Jerusalem is but one wall of one temple to one God. The relics of Athens are the ruins of many temples to many gods. The ancient Hebrew inhabitants of Jerusalem believed that the one God is the ruler of all things, that He is invisible, and that His abode is in the heavens. Accordingly, he is not anthropomorphic and therefore cannot be represented in sculpture or painting. The Athenians, on the other hand, believed that their gods lived among them, and that each deity ruled over a particular natural phenomenon. Hence they endeavored to picture their gods in accordance with their ideas of the

various natural phenomena and in accordance with their conception of the parts the gods played in the workings of the cosmos. Thus they developed skill in the arts of sculpture, painting, and carving. Their gods had to be housed in proper edifices befitting their power and wisdom. Hence the Greeks developed the art of architecture.

There is nothing in Jerusalem to appeal to the sensuous imagination or to compare with the elegance of the arts of Athens, for it is axiomatic that an abstractly conceived deity cannot be a resident of a limited area on the surface of the earth or possess an anthropomorphic form. Consequently the ancient Hebrews did not attempt to personify their God in any shape or form; therefore they neglected the arts. They also disregarded the sciences, because they firmly believed that their God is the cause of all causes and that it was futile to search for the material causes of natural phenomena. In other words, the differences in culture between Jerusalem and Athens were essentially resultants of the differences between monotheism and polytheism.

Both philosophies, in their ulitmate development, have greatly benefited mankind. Jerusalem stood for religion, ethics, law, and justice; Athens for philosophy, art, and science. Both heritages proved vital to civilization, for without law and justice, art and science are meaningless.

The Greeks later abandoned the idea of polytheism when it became evident that it was not in harmony with the general order of the cosmos, and explained that the universe is ruled by natural laws, which excluded the intervention of the gods in the affairs of nature.

The next morning, I left Athens for Constantinople. It was during the rebellion of the Young Turks against the Sultan, Abdul Hamid. The capital of the Turks was infested with the followers of Shevket Pasha, who commanded the revolutionary forces. Many houses on the way to the Hotel Bristol had been wrecked or damaged by the Young Turks.

At the hotel I was informed that Herr David Wolffsohn, who had succeeded Herzl as leader of the International Zionist Organization, was stopping at the Hotel. He had come on a political mission and obtained an audience with the Grand Vizier, Hilmi Pasha. He was accompanied by S. S. Usiskin, Rosof, and a staff of secretaries.

It was the ninth day of the Hebrew month of Ab. The Zionist leaders were attending services in the large synagogue of Constantinople. In the evening, there was a meeting of the delegation which I was invited to attend. The report was not encouraging. Wolffsohn

reported that he had come up against a stone wall. He accordingly discouraged the undertaking of practical work in Palestine. He expressed himself in favor of political action as a prerequisite for successful colonization. This view was supported by Nordau and Marmorek, the associates of Herzl.

Usiskin, on the other hand, disagreed with Wolffsohn's views. He was supported by the Russian and many of the German Zionists.

Wolffsohn was a practical business man. He did not favor large investments if a clear title to the property could not be secured. Usiskin and his followers, on the other hand, argued that Jews for almost two thousand years had made investments without any guarantee of title. This polemic was forced to the front at the next Zionist Congress, when the practical Zionists gained the upper hand. Wolffsohn stepped down as head of the Zionist executive committee to make way for Otto Warburg, who was elected president of the Zionist Organization.

The practical party, which advocated immediate work in Palestine, steadily grew stronger. The Turkish Revolution of 1908 inflicted a severe blow to the advocates of a charter. Under the new regime all the inhabitants of Turkey, regardless of race or creed, were to be treated impartially. The new constitution expressly forbade special privileges or exceptional treatment for any province or any class of the population. Under these circumstances, it was obvious that special political concessions for the Jews were out of the question, and the only policy that remained was the development of Palestine by Jews under the protection of the Turkish government. One could at least hope that, when the majority of the inhabitants of Palestine were Jews, and the greater part of industry, commerce, and agriculture was in their hands, and when the predominant culture was Jewish, the problem of Zionism would be solved, for Palestine would then be a Jewish land.

Mr. Usiskin impressed me as being a man with fixed ideas. When I asked him why he did not visit America to raise funds for the *Keren Kayyemet*, he replied, "If I cannot raise one million dollars in America, I would rather visit the *kabtsanim* (poor people) of the small towns of Poland, Lithuania, and the Ukraine."

The next day I went sight-seeing in the old city of Istanbul. Crossing the Galata Bridge, I was shocked to see two bodies wrapped in white sheets hanging high on scaffolds, and a crowd of people gazing at the executed men. I was told that these men were political offenders who had met their fate by execution in the presence of a

large crowd on this thoroughfare where multitudes of people pass day and night. I did not know whether such ghoulish tactics stopped the Young Turks from rebelling against the Sultan, but I do know that a terrible impression was made on me.

One of the most abominable spectacles in Constantinople was the large number of filthy dogs running wild on the streets. I counted over fifty in one block. They were lethargic, half-starved beasts, some lying pitifully on the ground and others running around rabid on the streets. Apparently no one fed them, and they lived as they could, even devouring each other. Many carcasses were visible on the streets. Throngs of men, women, and children watched with great interest as one beast killed the other in the struggle for survival.

The imperial palace of the Sultan, in the old city, was not impressive. It lacked the architectural beauty of most European royal palaces. I was not able to see the ladies of the harem. The walls of the harem had no windows on the street side. The doors and windows opened into a court from which the wives of the Sultan received light and air. I was informed that eunuchs were still attending and guarding the wives of the Sultan. The word "eunuch" in Greek signified "guard" or "bed-keeper." The eunuchs frequently attained high positions of state under the Sublime Porte. The Sultan had implicit confidence in them and trusted his wives to them in spite of the fact that not all eunuchs were to be depended upon and that, occasionally, surgery failed to deprive them of their virility. The operation at times stopped the growth of hair and caused a change of voice, but did not effect a complete loss of virility in the sexual and even procreative sense. It may be of interest to mention here the story told by Bisson, who on one occasion saw the chief eunuch of the Grand Sherif of Mecca, a large, finely proportioned, powerful, black man, on his way to Istanbul to face trial and sentence:

"He was heavily chained and well guarded. It appears that this eunuch had only been partly castrated, and that the operation had been performed during infancy, before his testicles were fully descended, so that in the operation the sac was simply obliterated, which gave him the appearance of a eunuch. In this condition he seemed to have kept perfect control of himself and his passions until made chief eunuch of the Sherif, who possessed a well-assorted harem of choice Circassian, Georgian, and European beauties. The negligee worn at the harem bath and the seductive influence of the terrestrial Koranic seventh heaven was too much for the warm Sudanese blood of the chief; his forays were not suspected until a blonde Circassian

houri presented her lord and master, the Sherif, with a suspiciously mulatto-looking son and heir. A consultation of the Koran failed to explain this discrepancy, and suspicion pointed to the chief eunuch, who was accordingly watched; it was found that he had not only corrupted the fair Circassian but every other inmate of the harem as well. The inmates of the harem were promptly drowned, and the false eunuch shipped to the Sultan for sentence, the Sherif having the right to sentence and drown the harem, but having no such rights over such a high personage as the chief eunuch."

Mondat observed among the castrated eunuchs, persons who were able to acquit themselves of sexual functions and yet were not capable of reproduction. While in Turkey, he also observed that the eunuchs given to venereal practices were frequently troubled with "marasmus ending in galloping consumption."

Constantinople possessed a modern university where the departments of law and medicine predominated. Most of the Palestinian lawyers had been graduated from this University. The medical school was closed for the season at the time of my visit. It had quite a number of modern structures. I visited the Hamdiah Hospital for Children. The wards and the dispensary appeared modern in every respect.

The Imperial Museum of Antiquities situated within the grounds of the Seraglio was a storehouse of relics. Its chief attraction was the collection of a number of sarcophagi discovered at Sidon.

The city built by Constantine had a great influence over the course of human affairs. It was the only rival of Jerusalem, Athens, and Rome. Constantinople was to the East what Rome was to the West. The chief patriarch of the Greek Church still signs himself Archbishop of Constantinople—New Rome.

After sojourning some weeks among the ruins of antiquity, it was pleasant to return to the living present, and no other city in Europe at that period was so much alive as Vienna. The Viennese were a gay, pleasure-loving, and genial people.

I registered at the Hotel Europa. There I met a number of young American physicians who were taking courses at the University of Vienna. Among them was an acquaintance of mine, Dr. S. Eber, who had been there for some months, taking a post-graduate course in ophthalmology with Professor Ernest Fuchs. He was also doing practical work in the Allgemein Krankenhaus (General Hospital).

I had comtemplated for some time giving up general practice and obstetrics in favor of some specialty. I therefore eagerly listened to

the advice of my friend and decided to take a course on the eye. I registered with Dr. Saltzmann, with whom I took a short but intensive course in ophthalmology. Dr. Saltzmann was a splendid teacher, and offered the additional advantage of possessing a good knowledge of the English language. My subjects of instruction included ocular anatomy, physiology of the eye, ophthalmoscopy, and refraction. I also attended the clinics of Dr. Fuchs in the Allgemein Krankenhaus.

Vienna was, at that time, a world medical center. Besides the undergraduate medical students there were many post-graduate physicians from all over the world. American physicians particularly preferred Vienna to any other medical center in the world. They had an organization in Vienna named the American Medical Society. Among the celebrated physicians of Vienna connected with the University and the General Hospital were Professors Ernst Fuchs, von Noordon (the successor of Nothnagel), Hans Oppinger, Trendellenburg, Politzr, Chiari, Hajek, and many others of international eminence.

There was little time left for recreation, but my friend and I managed to take occasional walks in the evenings through the Ring Strasse—a thoroughfare which in architectural beauty ranked as one of the most imposing achievements of Europe.

There was the Hofburg (The Emperor's Palace) which contained a library of about 800,000 volumes, the Hofgarten, the Volksgarten, the Rathaus, the monument of Maria Theresa, the Imperial Museum of Art and Natural History, the Palace of Justice, the Court Theatre, the Opera House, and the Parliament House.

Sundays, we usually walked to the Prater, the vast park on the east side of the city that stretched along between the Danube and the Danube Canal. It is one of the largest parks in Europe.

The University, where all arts and sciences were taught, had a large array of architecturally fine structures and a spacious campus. This institution at the time of my visit housed 7,000 incunabula and 2,400 original manuscripts.

Living in Vienna was a privilege. No one appeared to be in a hurry. Everyone had time for everything. The tables in front of the cafés were always occupied to their full capacity with intelligent, soft-spoken men and women.

Viennese restaurants were famous for their good food and for their music. The citizens did not have to go to music houses to be entertained. They sat in the restaurants for hours after eating and listened with evident pleasure to the fine music. Light opera was

favored by the Viennese masses; and the price of admission to the theatres which presented such entertainment was extremely low and performance to a packed house was virtually certain.

Before leaving Vienna, I paid my respects to the memory of Theodore Herzl, who had died in 1904 and was buried in a suburb of Vienna.

It was on a Sunday that I made my pilgrimage to the grave of this great man. I found quite a number of people there, paying homage to the creator of Jewish nationalism.

Standing at his grave, I vividly recalled the great message of hope and inspiration he had brought to the Jewish people. His vision lifted the abysmal gloom and replenished the oil in the eternal lamp that seemed about to be extinguished by wave after wave of oppression and persecution. When Herzl performed his divinely guided task, the accumulated extinguishing force of 2,000 years of persecution and oppression had almost blown out the last glimmer of light created by the prophets of Israel and kept burning by the poets and sages of successive generations. Herzl gave a real meaning to the customary prayer, "Next year in Jerusalem." He re-created Zionistic Jewish consciousness and made every Jew feel his kinship with his fellow Jews.

From every corner of the earth, Jews of every variety of belief, and many who did not believe, gathered around him. In the course of eight years, Herzl created a Jewish nation and secured at least some status for it from the rulers of some of the great powers in Europe.

This dynamic man died at the age of forty-four, sacrificing his life, as he had already sacrificed his fortune, for the Jewish people. Alas! He, like the great liberator, Moses, was not permitted to see Israel liberated. Herzl's burial place in Vienna was intended to be only a temporary one. There was no suitable monument over his remains, only a plain marker where his name and the dates of his birth and death were inscribed.

Like Joseph of old, he expressed the hope before he died in the year 1904 that his bones would be taken to the land of Israel ("Ye shall carry up my bones hence." Gen. 50:25). Forty-five years after his demise, his dream was realized. On August 16, 1949, his bones were flown by a four-motored plane named *Herzl*, with an escort of four air force fighter planes, to Israel. His body was brought to Tel Aviv in state and placed on a temporary platform in front of the *Knesset* (the Parliament building) while a military guard, consisting of the Israeli army, navy, air force, and police stood at attention. The

members of the *Knesset*, the cabinet, and foreign dignitaries, with heads lowered in silent respect, received the remains in the name of Israel.

The next day the coffin was taken to Mount Herzl, in *Bayit Vagan* a suburb of Jerusalem, where it was reinterred.

The President of the Israeli Republic, Chaim Weizmann, who was in Switzerland for reasons of health, sent the following message:

> The soil of the fatherland is receiving unto its bosom the man who conceived the vision of the state that has become a reality. Herzl led us along the path of fulfillment of the cravings of generations. He and he alone was destined to and worthy of leading us to statehood.
>
> It is our great privilege to be transferring the remains of the visionary to the liberated land of Israel, interring him in our eternal capital.

The Prime Minister of Israel, Ben-Gurion, declared:

> Side by side with the tombs of kings and prophets, a stone monument will be erected over Herzl, the mortal. But the monument to Herzl the immortal is the state of Israel, which will be built up and will grow and become beautiful in love of her sons and builders.

Thus the hopes and aspirations of the first true Jewish statesman of modern times ("If thou willest it is not a dream") were fulfilled.

Herzl's grave brought to my mind another grave in Europe which was most dear to me and which I felt bound to visit before I returned to my family in America. It was the resting place of my dear mother, of blessed memory, who died at the close of 1908, or a year before my visit to her grave.

The next day I took the train in Vienna bound for East Prussia. It was a twenty-four hour journey, passing through a number of countries. At each frontier, I was asked to present my passport and to exhibit my baggage. The cry of "Passport!" by the officials of the various countries still occasionally rings in my ears when my sleep is disturbed by dreams of bygone days. I was, however, happy to know that each station and each customs inspection brought me nearer to America and my home.

I finally arrived in Tilsit, a city famous for the Napoleonic Battle of Tilsit. Tilsit was about eight miles from my old native town of Neustadt which I had left nineteen years earlier. But while it was close to my old home, I found it difficult to get close enough to see it. My American passport was good as long as my identity remained secret, but if it were disclosed, my chances to return to my family in Philadelphia were slim indeed. In the eyes of Czarist Russia, "Once

a Russian, always a Russian." I knew that every town had its professional informers, and I did not dare, therefore, to pass the frontier through the regular channels, by presenting my passport.

My predicament was further aggravated because I could not trust anyone to take me over the border by an illegal route; I was told that these very men might betray me. Such illicit guides who well knew that they could receive liberal rewards from agents of the Russian Government were the very people who would be most likely to give me away. If I were content to see my father and my sister alone, there would have been no problem, for they could easily come over to Tilsit, crossing the border in the regular way. But visiting my mother's grave presented a perplexing problem.

At last I determined, come what may, to run the risk, cross the boundary, and visit my mother's last resting place, which was about half a mile from the ditch that separated Germany from Russia. I hired a carriage in Tilsit and drove to Kolletzischken, a town near the border, arriving there before dawn on a Friday. I stopped my horse and carriage at a farmhouse and proceeded on foot towards the boundary ditch. For some minutes I hid myself behind a clump of trees, watching the booth of the Russian sentinel. Seeing no one, I crossed the frontier. When I was quite a distance away on the Russian side, I saw a few cavalry soldiers pursuing a smuggler; I was more than glad that they did not see me.

Walking for about fifteen minutes, I came to the little cemetery, where my mother was entombed. As the reader will recall, I always looked upon a graveyard, not as a mere field in which the dead are stowed away, but as a place which has by its very nature great significance for the living. The cemetery ever so silently tells the stories of those who have passed on to the great beyond. It records the pertinent data of the individual lives of men, women, and children. Tombstones afford permanent archives of information about almost everyone, information which cannot be duplicated by any other source. That which is pathetic is presented side by side with that which is impressive. One can see the neglected graves of the poor, the unfortunate, and the childless, the graves of infants and children, the well-kept burial places of the rich and those who have left behind loved ones, and the isolated graves of the lonely and despised.

So in the dusk of the early morning, in the sacred stillness, I walked slowly among the graves of my home town's cemetery in search of the one whom I had so much loved. I passed the graves of many people who had been well known to me from early boyhood.

Some graves were those of men and women who had been my close friends and who had died in their prime of life, of natural or accidental causes.

I finally came to a wooden marker which I recognized as my mother's. It seems that the earth cannot cover our loved ones. I saw her as when she was alive. I felt as if I were in her company. I saw more in this pile of dust than I did when looking upon the highest mountains and upon the greatest wonders during my travels. I sat down on my mother's grave and meditated on bygone times. I was lost in deep thought for a protracted period—I know not how long. Suddenly I was aroused from my reveries by the sound of plaintive voices coming closer to the cemetery. When I looked in the direction of the sounds, I saw a funeral procession approaching. I quickly but unwillingly departed from the sacred grave of my mother with the words of Psalm XC on my lips:

> For a thousand years in Thy sight
> Are but as yesterday when it is past,
> And as a watch in the night.
> Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep;
> In the morning they are like grass which groweth up.
> In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up;
> In the evening it is cut down, and withereth.
>
> For all our days are passed away in Thy wrath!
> We bring our years to an end as a sigh.
> The days of our years are threescore years and ten,
> Or even by reason of strength fourscore years;
> Yet is their pride but labor and sorrow;
> For it is soon gone, and we fly away.

My quick departure was caused by my unwillingness to be found in the cemetery by my townsmen.

I left by a back road, and soon was in the mountains, from which I gazed down upon the quiet little town from a distance, and the poem of Longfellow flashed into my mind.

> I see the lights of the village
> Gleam through the rain and the mist,
> And a feeling of sadness comes over me
> That my soul cannot resist,
> A feeling of sadness and longing
> That is not akin to pain
> And resembles sorrow only
> As the mist resembles the rain.

The environment of my town was very familiar to me. I recognized the old landmarks where I played with my boyhood friends when we were out of school. I rested upon a stone on which I had so often rested as a boy when climbing up the mountains.

Looking at the old town and its environs from the top of the hill, I could not bear to leave for home in Philadelphia without first visiting the village where I had spent the early days of my life. I decided, come what may, to visit the place of my birth. I walked down the hill and came to the stream, the Suste, in which I had bathed so frequently. I recognized the trees I used to climb and the hiding places where I played hide and seek. I observed the many changes that had taken place during these two decades. Many houses had been demolished; others were empty and abandoned. I did not wish to walk on the banks of the Suste in bright daylight, for fear of detection, so when I came close to where the river passed the synagogue, I crossed it and went into the old familiar building. It was three o'clock in the afternoon by the old wall clock when I entered. I found two young men there quietly absorbed over large volumes of the Talmud. The atmosphere of the House of Study and Prayer was as cheerless as that of the cemetery.

I looked at my old favorite corner where I used to study with so much enthusiasm. There was no one there. These two *bahurim* appeared to me like mere shades of those who had occupied their places two decades previously. They looked forlorn, devoid of all hope and ambition, without any energy even to shed tears. The reader may recall that, in my younger days, on numerous occasions I was driven to tears in this very place, but mine had been tears of hope, not of despair. These poor lads did not even have the courage to come over and greet me as was customary when a stranger walked into the synagogue.

Finding no consolation in the old House of Study, I thought that I might seek solace in the books on the shelves. Perhaps, I mused, these inanimate occupants of the House of Study could restore my peace of mind. Alas! I found them in almost as bad a condition as the students. The pages were decrepit and the bindings ripped. I recognized some of the books that I had studied in my youth. I scanned my own personal marginal notes which I had been in the habit of putting down, and felt relieved to find that they were not erased. My mind was too preoccupied to look over the texts upon which the notes were made.

A sudden urge prompted me to leave the House of Study. I was

indeed glad to be back in the fresh air on the outside of the synagogue. I was thankful that the air at least had not changed. I made up my mind to remain in my native town at least overnight, incognito, and to attend the Sabbath eve services in the synagogue. I returned to the creek and walked cautiously to the guest house of Hirsch Colonist, where I met his daughter, Esther. I recognized her, although she was very different from the young matron I had remembered. She had become grey and wrinkled. Her father, who had been the richest man and the leader of the town, was no more among the living.

Her inn looked dilapidated. There were two or three old peasants sitting in the barroom dozing. I asked her if she could accommodate me in one of her "numbers" (sleeping rooms of her inn); she appeared very happy to secure a tenant. I was tired and glad to lock myself in the room and retire.

I fell asleep in an instant, and did not awaken until it was time to go to the Sabbath eve services. Accordingly, I left through a back door of the hospice, crossed again the little creek, and found myself in the synagogue, which was about half full of worshippers. I took a seat back of the *almemer* (reader's desk) and followed the cantor as he chanted *"lecha dodi."*

My mind, however, was not centered on prayer. I glanced at the congregation. It consisted primarily of old men and children. Evidently, almost all the younger and middle-aged people had left for foreign lands. I looked here and there to see if I could recognize some of my old friends. I saw the rabbi whose long, yellow, flowing beard had been transformed into light grey. With trembling heart, I looked upon my father. He was aged and bent, and appeared half as tall as when I had left him nineteen years earlier. I recognized two of my boyhood chums, who also looked at me with curiosity. I noticed that one of them made a motion toward me, and I quickly turned my face away to discourage him.

The singing of the Sabbath eve prayers was in harmony with the general sordid aspect of the worshippers. It was saddening and discouraging. There was no vestige left of the service's pristine beauty and pleasantness.

I was afraid to wait until the very end of the service, for it was customary for the worshippers, when a stranger came to town, to greet him personally. This I thought might enable at least one of the congregation to reveal my identity. Furthermore, when my father, who always was the first to greet a stranger, would come to greet me, I would not have the heart to conceal my identity from him. I there-

fore left the synagogue before the services were at an end, and returned to the guest house.

I did not dare call on my father, for such a visit might become known to the neighbors, and my presence might reach the ears of the police.

When Esther saw me, she asked me if she could serve me with the evening meal. I gladly gave my assent, for I had not eaten during the entire day. She brought the traditional Friday evening meal to my room. It was very tasty and I relished it.

When she returned for the dishes, she asked me if I knew anyone in town. I told her that many years ago, I had met in Zhagory a young man named Gordon. She told me all about the Gordon family; that two of the Gordons had become physicians in America and that the old man, Bear Gordon, and his youngest daughter, were still living in Neustadt. She said that the mother of the Gordon boys, who was a very pious woman, and dearly beloved and respected in the community, had passed away the previous year, and that everyone in town was at her funeral, at which ceremony she had been eulogized by the rabbi of the town.

As she was speaking, Esther began to look at me curiously, as though she were trying to guess my identity. I quickly changed the subject. I asked her about the fire that had destroyed the town some years before. She replied that almost the entire town, including the two rows of stores in the market place had gone up in flames. Following this, I politely told her that I was tired and would like to go to bed. I was relieved when Esther left me. I was sure at the end of our conversation that she knew who I was.

I tried to sleep, but countless memories, fancies, thoughts, and reveries came crowding upon my mind. The words of the poet came back to me:

> How dear to this heart are the scenes of my childhood,
> When fond recollections present them to view;
> The orchard, the meadow, the deep tangled wildwood,
> And every loved spot which my infancy knew.

I was uncertain as to what course to follow. To leave without even seeing my old home, without speaking to my father, sister, teachers, relatives, and friends was unthinkable. I got up from my bed a few times with the intention of walking through the little streets to get a last look at my old home, but such ideas were aborted by the thought

that a gross injustice might thereby be wrought on my family back in Philadelphia.

I finally made up my mind to return to Tilsit in the early dawn. I left a note in my room addressed to my father, requesting that he and my sister come to Tilsit to see me as soon as possible. I penned another note to Esther, my hostess, enclosing several dollars for the room and for the fine meal she had prepared for me, and apologizing for checking out at such an early hour.

With the first rays of the dawn, I quietly left the hotel, and following the bank of the Suste, went up in a roundabout way to the hill which took me to the boundary line. I crossed the ditch that separated Lithuania from Prussia without any untoward incidents. Then I walked to the farmhouse where I had left the horse and buggy which I had hired. By that time the sun was shining and the morning was bright. I then drove to my hotel in Tilsit. When I arrived there about ten o'clock in the morning, I emitted a deep sigh of relief, for I felt as if a heavy load had been removed from my chest.

The next morning I had two welcome visitors: my father and sister, who came at top speed to see me. The meeting with my father did not shock me, because I had seen him on Friday night at the synagogue and I had been thinking of him ever since then. My sister, however, proved quite a surprise to me, for she had been only two years old when I last saw her.

After I had embraced my father and sister, they disclosed that they had been greatly perturbed the night before, when an old friend of mine had told them that he had seen me attending services in the synagogue. He came over to our house, expecting to find me there, and when my father told him that my presence was only a figment of his imagination, he looked in the corners of the house, not believing them. My father was greatly surprised the next morning, when Esther delivered my letter to him. He was happy that I had left town during the night, for my presence, he thought, undoubtedly would have attracted the attention of the police.

In the afternoon, relatives and former friends arrived. I was elated to see them and to reminisce over old times.

I remained with my father and sister at the hotel for five days. During this time, I was informed of the outstanding incidents that had transpired in my native town during the nineteen years since my departure. I learned that my impression of the condition of the town was not exaggerated, even allowing for the changes that had taken place within me during that period.

I would have liked to take my youngest sister along with me to America, but looking at my aged father, I thought it would be cruel to take her away from him. (My sister, Grace, came to Philadelphia one year later, when a married stepsister came to reside in Neustadt.) As to my father, he would not consider America at all. He wanted to die and rest in the same cemetery where my mother was buried.

I bade my father the last farewell, for I knew that I would never see him again. Towards evening I boarded a train that took me to Berlin.

The first thing that attracted my attention on my way to the German Capital was the large number of uniformed men that were in evidence all along the way. They filled the coaches and the station platforms. Along the roadsides and at every hamlet and town, goose-stepping soldiers could be seen. I wondered what this was all about, and I was puzzled about who was left to cultivate the fields and work in the factories. This puzzle was solved several years later when the first World War broke out. I for one never accepted the notion that the Germans were not the instigators of that war.

My train reached Berlin early in the morning. I was scheduled to remain in the capital for only two days, so I felt I had no time to lose. I therefore decided to take a Cook's sight-seeing tour of the city. I was taken first to the Royal Palace—an edifice said to contain some seven hundred apartments. The few rooms I saw conveyed to me the impression that I was visiting a large museum filled with precious furniture, gold embroidered hangings, and many portraits of the royal family—not a living-place. The appearance of the structure did not compare in architectural splendor with the Imperial Palace in Vienna. Its outside appearance was like that of an ancient castle. I certainly would not have traded my modest home in Philadelphia for that palace.

The most important and most interesting place in Berlin, I thought, was the Royal Library, which contained 750,000 volumes and 25,000 manuscripts. Another building of great interest was the one housing the collection of fine arts.

Of particular interest was the University of Berlin. At that time, it was the foremost in Germany. It had hundreds of professors, many of whom had an international reputation. I also visited the Academy of Science, which was one of the most learned institutions in Germany.

In the evening, I sat on a bench on the Unter den Linden boulevard, and watched the crowds passing. Almost half of the people that passed were uniformed men. I observed that this same condition

prevailed along the banks of the river Spree. While outwardly things appeared quiet, I was not free from a sort of fear of the brass-helmeted police who frequently approached strangers and asked them for their passports.

The next day I traveled to Paris to keep an appointment with Dr. Max Nordau, the great Jewish philosopher and critic, and the author of *The Convential Lies of Civilization.* I found him busy working on the manuscript of his new book: *Morals and the Evolution of Man.* It was after his office hours. (He specialized in neurology.) Dr. Nordau was greatly interested in what I had to say about the colonies in Palestine.

I told him that I contemplated writing a book on my experiences in the Colonies and on Jewish life in Palestine in general. He asked me to send him a copy of that work when it appeared. He also requested that I convey his personal regards to Professor Richard Gottheil and Dr. Stephen S. Wise.

After conversing with this great thinker for about an hour, I bade him farewell. Several years later, when my book, *New Judea,* was published, I sent him a copy. Here is his reply, written on receipt of my book:

28 Castle Hill Avenue, Falkstone
(Permanent Address) 14 Rue Hanner
Paris 9e) September 20, 1920

DEAR DR. GORDON:

I thank you cordially for your "New Judea" which I have read with great delight. In spite of defending yourself with exaggerated modesty against any suggestion of literary ambition, your book is (besides its moral and informative value) a delightful piece of literature. It will leave in every reader a deep and lasting impression of the beauty of "Eretz Israel," of the valor of the Jewish Pioneers there and in the Diaspora, and not the least of your own idealism and enthusiasm.

Believe me,

Very truly yours,
DR. M. NORDAU.

From the office of Dr. Nordau, I went to the medical laboratory of Alexander Marmorek, the author of *Versuch einer Theorie der septischen Krankheiten.* His thesis, read before the French Academy of Medicine in 1903, in which he claimed to have found an antitoxin to counteract the tubercle bacillus, had created quite a sensation in

Europe and America. Favorable reports on his preparation were issued from the clinics of Duyen of Paris and Von Mikulice of Breslau.

While studying in Vienna, Marmorek was a member of the Kadimah, a student organization founded by Dr. N. Bierenbaum. Marmorek was among the first supporters of Theodore Herzl. He was elected to the World Zionists' Action Committee at the first Zionist Congress. He was the head of the first French Zionist Federation and the founder of the *Echo Zioniste,* a Zionist monthly published in Paris. To my disappointment, Marmorek was out of town.

During the two days I spent in Paris, I visited the institutions connected with the University of France. I visited the Sorbonne. I saw its lecture rooms, its classrooms, its large library, the College of France, the Observatory, and the Botanical Gardens. The National Library was reputed to have the largest collection of printed books in the world. I visited the art galleries, the historical collections of the Louvre and the Palace of Fine Arts.

After three wonderful days in Paris, I left for London. There I met my Uncle, Lieb Hillel, from Zhagory. He had been in London for some time looking for employment. After the Russo-Japanese War, he had lost his business and his property. He was anxious to get to the United States, but its doors were not open and he had spent all his funds while in London awaiting an opportunity to come to America. Unfortunately, he never reached American soil, for the poor fellow passed away in London a short time later.

About ten years later, during the First World War, I was informed that his family had taken refuge in Siberia. A close relative of my aunt, then living in Brooklyn, came to Philadelphia to raise funds for bringing them to America. Funds were sent away to them, but we have never heard of them since.

In London, I had an appointment with Israel Zangwill, the author of *Children of the Ghetto*, whom I had met on several occasions at the house of Judge Meyer Sulzberger of Philadelphia. In those days he was a Zionist. In fact, he introduced Herzl to the members of the Maccabean Club, a society composed of Anglo-Jewish professional men, after Herzl published the *Jewish State* in 1896. At the Sixth Zionist Congress (in 1903), however, when Uganda was offered as a substitute for Palestine, he was among the first to accept this offer. At the Seventh Congress (in 1905), when the commission of nine who had been appointed to investigate the East African Territory, gave an unfavorable report, so that the Congress voted down the offer, Zangwill seceded from the Zionist Organization. He founded

the I. T. O. (Jewish Territorial Organization), the purpose of which was to establish Jews on any territory that could be obtained. For a time, the results of this division proved disastrous to the Zionist movement. Many Zionists left Herzl to join the I. T. O. Among them was Dr. Max Mandelstam of Kiev. The large majority of Zionists, however, adhered at all times to the principle of the founding of a Jewish state in Palestine.

The I. T. O. did not last long, but it was instrumental in drawing away many Zionists from the cause of Palestine. Zangwill himself never returned to the movement. When I last saw him, he spoke to me with bitterness about its leaders.

After taking a brief view of London and its environs, I boarded a train to Southampton, from which port I embarked on the *Teutonic* to return to the United States.

My return trip was rather unpleasant. The ocean was rough. It was impossible to stand up or even lie down comfortably. Liquid foods could not be served. There were a large number of accidents on board the vessel, and several people sustained severe injuries. One of them fell from an upper berth and fractured his skull.

When the *Teutonic* was approaching the Azores, I was awakened by the ringing of bells. I quickly dressed myself and went on deck to find out what the commotion was all about. I was informed by one of the officers that an SOS call had been received from a transatlantic liner close to the Azores. I noticed that all lifeboats had been made ready for lowering.

It was about three o'clock in the morning when our vessel reached the distressed ship. Two other vessels nearby were already doing rescue work. By the time the *Teutonic* arrived on the scene, the foundering boat had almost sunk out of sight. Our lifeboats brought up as many as three hundred frightened and weatherbeaten men, women, and children. Before our vessel turned back on its route to the United States, the sinking vessel had been entirely swallowed up by the sea.

How good it was at last to be in actual sight of American soil! The Statue of Liberty rose up before me, dazzling in the sun. It was all that I could do to keep myself from kneeling before the Goddess of Liberty—for I still had to respect the injunction of the fifth commandment, which strictly forbids bowing down before any graven image!

C H A P T E R XVIII

Back Home

I fancy the proper means of increasing the love we bear our native country is to reside some time in a foreign land.

—Shenstone

FOR some weeks after returning home, I found it difficult to adjust myself. This was not only because I had become disaccustomed to my daily routine, but also because of the fact that some of my old patients had chosen other physicians during my absence; others did not know of my return to Philadelphia. Consequently my former practice was cut in half.

Parenthetically, I might add that with most families the confidence placed in a family physician is rather of a psychological nature. As long as the physician is about, the confidence may be maintained for any length of time, but as soon as he is not available, it is easily transferred to some other physician. Particularly is this true of one who has a large pediatric practice, where the need for medical attention is often sudden and frequent.

To make financial matters worse, I soon gave up my obstetrical practice, which, prior to my trip, had accounted for more than half my total income. While I had contemplated relieving myself of the severe strain of obstetrics for some time, I had not intended doing this so abruptly. Circumstances, however, brought the matter to a sudden termination. The sudden death of the wife of a close friend of mine whom I delivered soon after my return (which, by the way was my first post-partum death after an apparently normal delivery) greatly perturbed me, and, not thinking of the consequences of such a decision, I notified all my obstetrical patients to engage other physicians.

The day after the funeral of my friend's wife, I joined the ophthalmological staff of the Jefferson Hospital, and the following day I became associated with Dr. Oliver at the Wills Eye Hospital.

I anticipated holding on to my general practice at least for a time, but my plans in this direction did not materialize. As soon as it be-

came generally known that I was devoting my time to diseases of the eye, my general practice decreased more rapidly than my ophthalmological practice increased. My old patients were quick to learn that I was no longer interested in internal medicine, and some of my medical colleagues lost no time in spreading the news that I had given up my general and obstetrical practice. They literally proclaimed me a full-time ophthalmologist long before I considered myself qualified to be one. It is curious that in the eyes of laymen the practice of ophthalmology is not compatible with any other branch of medicine. The public does not mind consulting an obstetrician, a neurologist, or a surgeon for general complaints, but it will not tolerate an ophthalmologist digressing one iota from his chosen field.

There was also the converse problem of getting the public to realize that the general practitioner had undergone a metamorphosis into an eye doctor. Even several years after I had become a competent ophthalmologist, people still remarked that they could not see how I had become an eye physician since they had known me previously as a general practitioner.

I vividly recall the case of one old patient who came for eye treatment in those jumbled days before I was a full-time specialist. He was very much surprised to find me dressing a wound on another patient's forearm. When I asked him to come into the office, he remarked sarcastically, "I am not sick; I thought you were an eye doctor." I tried to explain to him that an eye doctor is not born but (at least it was true in those days before formal post-graduate training) receives his knowledge through long study and practical training. The man was not satisfied with my explanation.

I recall another case which also proved embarrassing to me. A woman entered my office, gave my office and myself a quick "once over," and remarked that she had made a mistake—that she wanted an eye doctor. It happened that I had just recently shaved off my van Dyke beard, which most young physicians cultivated in those days. She thought that I had shaved off my tonsorial splendor for purposes of disguise, so that no one would recognize me in my new specialty. When I told her that I was truly an eye doctor, she smiled knowingly and remarked, "You are Dr. Gordon; I recognize you even without your beard." She then left my office with the expression of one who has exposed a criminal.

For two years I was in the position of the man who was wedded to two wives, as mentioned in the Talmud. According to the story, one wife was young and the other old. The young wife wished him to

look young and pulled the grey hairs from his head. The old one wanted him to look old and pulled the black hairs from his head. As a result, the husband was quickly rendered bald. During this transition period, my earnings from both my general and ocular practice diminished to a dangerously low mark.

One day an old patient of mine—a real estate broker by profession—came to consult me. Finding only a few patients in the office, he remarked, "Doctor, why don't you invest some of your savings in property that will bring you big financial returns without any special effort on your part?" The idea appealed to me at that time for obvious reasons. I thought that such a course might enable me to give up my general practice entirely in a reasonably short time, and allow me to devote all my time to the eye. The real estate man suggested that I buy a particular parcel of property. After some consideration I acceded to his suggestion. In a few days the bill of sale was drawn up and executed. I was not disappointed in the results; the profit which I soon derived exceeded my fondest expectations. Had I stopped there, and not invested in other bargains, I would have had nothing to regret, but human nature being what it is, this bonanza influenced me to go deeper into the real estate business.

If I had had no other aim in life but greed for money, I surely would have been contented with my first real estate transactions, for no medical specialty could fetch such good financial returns with so little work. However, it eventually became apparent that I was not cut out for business, and that my success in real estate had occurred in spite of my business ability, not because of it. My early speculations took place when the real estate cycle was definitely favorable. But financial returns from business did not give me peace of mind or contentment. They pulled me further from my practice and my beloved books. However, in the midst of my successful real estate deals, I lifted my intellectual self up by the bootstraps, and devoted considerable time to describing my experiences abroad. I became a regular contributor to the *Maccabean Magazine,* the monthly publication of the Federation of American Zionists, in which periodical I attempted to record my impressions of my travels through Egypt and Palestine.

When the first World War broke out, I was appointed to the local Medical Advisory Board. The main Board office for South Philadelphia was at the St. Agnes Hospital, and my duties were to examine draftees who claimed exemption before the draft boards on account of eye defects. For several years I had been a member of the staff of

this hospital in the capacity of assistant ophthalmological surgeon. By virtue of the fact that my office was located directly across the street from that institution, I was constantly called on to attend to all ocular emergency cases and to the eye conditions of most of the hospitalized patients.

The work of the Medical Advisory Board consumed the larger part of each morning. There were quite a number of malingerers among the draftees, and they were not always easy to detect. On the other hand there were a number of men who should not have been drafted by the local boards. I recall the case of a certain Negro who was sent to Philadelphia to join a Negro regiment. While doing target practice, the sergeant noticed that he always shot wide of the mark. On one occasion he almost killed a passer-by who was quite a distance from the target. I found that this man, passed by the local board as eminently suitable for military service, had cataracts in both eyes; one was ripe for removal. This poor "soldier" was short and slender, apparently in his early forties, but really sixty-two years of age. He had come from Mississippi, was a laborer by occupation, and the father of two sons (both in the army). His sight had been exceedingly bad for several years.

I was eager to know how he had ever come to be drafted, and he told me the following story: "When I received a notice to appear before the draft board, I thought it was a mistake and I was greatly surprised when the white man on the board told me that no mistake had been made. He told me that I looked young, would make a good soldier, and that I was needed to make up the quota. I told him that I could not see. He replied, 'We are up to your tricks.' He then grasped me by the collar and turned me over to the sergeant, who transferred me, with a number of young men, to Philadelphia."

Another case referred to me was one of a man who complained of double vision. I had my doubts about his veracity, and the examination proved that he was malingering. When I told him so, he remonstrated and became quite boisterous. After he left my office I noticed an envelope on my desk containing $50.00 in cash. When I realized what this malingerer was up to, I went after him, but he was already out of the building. I told the officer who was stationed in the corridor to chase after him and bring him back. When he returned to my office, I asked him why he had left the money on my desk. He denied the charge, but he was nonetheless arrested.

The most interesting case was that of a draftee who simulated divergent squint so well that it was impossible to detect whether it

was bona fide or not. Both pupils were constantly at the external angles of the eyes at all times. I worked upon him for about an hour, but made no progress. I then asked him to retire into the adjoining room. A half-hour later, I peeped through the keyhole, and, to my surprise, saw that all evidence of cross-eyes had disappeared, and that his eyes were entirely straight. I then entered the room—at which instant the squint returned—and told him to return two days later. In the meantime, I sent one of the investigators to ascertain the usual appearance of his eyes from the neighbors. The report came back that this young man's eyes were always normal except when he entertained the children of the neighborhood by turning both eyes out.

Some of the malingerers used atropine in their eyes to paralyze their accommodation. When they were asked whether their pupils were always so large, they usually replied that they did not know. In some cases it took several days to find out the truth.

I was delighted when Armistice Day came and I was relieved of my Advisory Board duties. My war service made many enemies for me among former friends and old patients. Many a mother whom I had attended during confinement came to me with her son, hoping that I would exempt him from the army because of some eye defect. Some showed me scars on the forehead or cheeks of the prospective draftees, and informed me that these injuries had been sustained during forceps delivery. Since I had delivered them, the mothers felt that I should free them from military service. Others had the scars of accidental injuries about the eyes which also had little to do with sight. Others traced near-sightedness, astigmatism, or blepharospasm to instrumental delivery by me, and implied that I should make the wounds inflicted by me good by rejecting the patients from the draft. I was certainly glad to be relieved of the great responsibility of determining who was fit for army service and who was not.

By the close of the war, my manifold tasks had become so heavy that I decided to relieve myself of some of my more onorous jobs. I accordingly resigned from the St. Agnes Hospital—an institution the work of which took much of my time.

I still held on to my appointments at the Wills Eye Hospital and the Lebanon Hospital. The latter was an institution which I had helped to found.

In 1919, I spent considerable time preparing an account in book form of my travels to Egypt, Palestine, and Transjordania. Much of the material which I embodied in my book *(New Judea)* had been

previously published in magazines. This work was favorably received by the press and pulpit.

As is usual after wars, there was a scarcity of houses when the boys came back from the front. This gave me the opportunity of selling almost all of my real estate at lucrative prices. Like a gambler who is encouraged by a winning streak in cards or horse racing or a favorable spree on the stock exchange, I kept my agents busy securing other and more extensive properties for me. I kept no capital of any account, but pyramided my profits by purchasing realty in all sections of Philadelphia. I now had blocks of houses all over the city, purchased on the existing high market.

Like many other physicians I also became an easy mark for high pressure stock and bond agents. In those days (as to a lesser extent today), physicians were the target for all sorts of brokers who were apparently well versed in P. T. Barnum's famous maxim, "A sucker is born every minute." A dear friend and colleague of mine once opened his safe for me, and proudly exhibited large sheafs of stocks in which he had invested almost all his savings. As things developed, I am certain that they were eventually not worth the paper on which they were written.

Particularly humorous were my dealings in telephone stocks. I knew that the phones were here to stay, but I had a hard time deciding whether to purchase Keystone or Bell Telephone stocks. Needless to say, I bought the Keystone shares, which never paid a cent in dividends. In addition to numerous stocks and bonds, I purchased 1,000 shares in building and loan associations in which I had a personal investment of $1,000 per month. I might add in passing that I was a director of many of the associations. As a director, it was my duty to attend the monthly meetings of the associations and to investigate the safety of every application before a loan was granted, and not leave the matter entirely to the conveyancer, who had a personal interest in granting such loans. However, I shirked this responsibility, and never bothered to find out what the manipulators were doing with the association's money. In the end, not only did I lose all that I had paid in, but, in some cases, I actually had to sink in further sums to make up for various losses to others, for which, as a director, I was held personally accountable.

Here I will interrupt my story and refer to a subject which has always been close to my heart. When the victory of the Allies over the central powers became manifest, it was clear that the time was opportune to organize the Jewish people for a strong appeal to the

nations of the world at the coming peace conference, to grant Palestine to the Jewish people as their national home. The Wilsonian idea that the purpose of the war was "to make the world safe for democracy" and his fourteen points, by which the world was to be governed, appeared as a new Magna Carta for all oppressed peoples. These concepts, coupled with the expressed opinion of President Wilson in favor of the return of Palestine to the Jews, gave great hope that at the close of the war a new Jewish policy would be founded on the old soil of Palestine—a Jewish Republic where our people might find an organic center where the outraged Jew (as the outraged Englishman or American) would be defended. In other words, we piously hoped that Palestine would be a place where our despised brethren in all the corners of the earth could come and share the dignity of a national life and have a voice among the nations of the world. I had lost faith in written declarations of justice and equality; without a national center such documents had proven futile. The Dreyfus affair in France was an outstanding example of what might happen in any civilized country under evil influence. To my mind it was then or perhaps never. If the opportunity were neglected, it might never return, and the prayers and dreams of the long centuries might come to nought.

I called together a few friends of similar mind at my home, where it was decided to call upon all fraternal organizations, synagogues, unions, and other groups to attend a public meeting for the purpose of arousing the interest of Jews and non-Jews in a Jewish Palestine. At that meeting a temporary organization was established of which I was chosen secretary. From this time on, for a period of three years, not a day passed in which I failed to take an active part in what later became known as the Jewish Congress. What was done in Philadelphia was duplicated in other large cities. Public meetings were called for the same purpose in New York, Baltimore, Boston, Pittsburgh, Chicago, and other cities.

On December 15, 1918, a meeting was convened at the Metropolitan Opera House in Philadelphia, where all shades of Jewish opinion from all over the country were represented. It was unanimously resolved to elect a delegation of seven men to go to Europe to meet Jewish delegations of other lands, to demand equality for Jewish minorities wherever they resided and to appeal for a legally secured home in Palestine. Among the American delegates selected were Judge Julian Mack, who was elected President of the Congress, Stephen S. Wise, Louis Marshall, Colonel Cutler, Jacob DeHaas,

Rabbi B. Levinthal, Joseph Barondes, and B. Richards, secretary of the Congress. With the aid of President Wilson, Lloyd George, and the tireless work of Chaim Weizman, Louis D. Brandeis, and Louis Marshall, on November 2, 1917, the document known as the Balfour Declaration was sent to Lord Rothschild:

His majesty's government views with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people and will use its best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing will be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of non-Jewish communities in Palestine or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.

Despite the unfriendly maneuvers of the British Colonial Office, the Balfour Declaration remained the basis of discussion even when the partition of Palestine was decided upon by the United Nations after the second World War.

Owing to the enthusiasm created by the Congress in Philadelphia, Philadelphia was chosen by the Zionist Executive Committee for the next Zionist convention. It was a great gathering. The rank and file of the Zionists were sure that the hopes engendered by the Balfour Declaration would soon be realized and that the English government meant what the document declared. We were certain that our American government heartily endorsed this resolution, for both Republicans and Democrats supported it strongly. This letter written by President Harding shows that he manifested great interest in the Zionist movement:

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON
JUNE 20, 1922

MY DEAR DR. GORDON:

With much regret, I am compelled, in thanking you for the invitation to address the Zionist Organization of America, to say that my engagements are such that acceptance is impossible. A long-time interest, both sentimental and practical, in the Zionist movement, causes me to wish that I might meet the members of the Organization and express the concern which I feel in behalf of their great movement.

Very truly yours,
WARREN G. HARDING

This convention in Philadelphia happened to take place during the year and the month in which the British Mandate over Palestine was considered and approved by the Council of the League of Nations.

On the last day of the convention, arrangements were made for the delegates to visit Independence Hall in a group. A large crowd gathered in Independence Square to pay their respects to the Zionist visitors. Addresses were delivered by Zionist leaders and by local and national notables.

The flags of all nations were displayed, including the white and blue Zionist flag with a star in the center. The municipal band played the American National Anthem, which was followed by the Zionist "Hatikvah."

Among those who saluted the Zionist banner were the noted scholar and great democratic Czechoslovakian patriot, Massaryk, the famous Hebrew journalist, Itamar ben Avi (son of Eliezer ben Yehudah), and J. Hampton Moore, mayor of Philadelphia. The last wrote me the following letter when I invited him to the exercises:

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

J. HAMPTON MOORE
Mayor

Philadelphia
August 29th, 1922.

Dr. B. L. Gordon,
1115 Spruce Street,
Philadelphia, Pa.

Dear Doctor:

I have your letter of August 18th, which awaited me on my return to the office, and advise you that I hope to join you in the Zionist exercises on the Plaza to-morrow at 3 o'clock. I do not know exactly what your program is but presume I will be advised in due course.

Thank you for sending me a copy of your book "New Judea." I am gratified to know that you have taken up authorship and shall have pleasure in reading of your experiences in Palestine and your conclusions with regard to the Zionistic movement.

Very truly yours,
(Signed) J. H. Moore

I may add parenthetically that the subject of Zionism was by no means foreign to Mayor Moore who had previously served in the Congress when the subject was being hotly discussed by statesmen

and in the press. His attitude on the question of Zionism can readily be inferred from the fact that at the great reception given to Chaim Weizman in Independence Square in Philadelphia in 1921, he invited the Jewish leader to sit on George Washington's chair—an honor reserved for heads of states only.

The parting delegates left the cradle of American Independence confident that the Jewish National aspiration had been gratified and that their demand had received honest satisfaction in the pledges given by the British government, first in the Balfour Declaration which was issued on November 2, 1917, and second, in the declaration at San Remo, which was endorsed by all the Allied powers, and which was incorporated in the treaty of peace with Turkey.

We Zionists, however, were soon disillusioned. The British Colonial Office was determined not to carry out the Mandatory obligation with regard to the Jewish people. The latter had to wait for another war to bring the matter of Palestine again before the United Nations. Things were much more difficult the second time. England, instead of carrying out its Mandate, openly sided with the Arabs for obviously selfish motives. The new Labor Government, headed by Atlee and Bevin, flagrantly violated the solemn obligations of the Balfour Declaration and the San Remo decision. The Jews of Palestine, who in the meantime had formed a large minority in the land and had developed it agriculturally and industrially, realized that the British were working with the Arabs and were attempting to nullify all Mandatory obligations to the Jews. They lost faith in the promises given to them, which were persistently, openly, and flagrantly violated, and prepared to resist British rule physically. They first resorted to underground tactics and then came into the open to oppose the British military.

After two years of continued struggle and bloodshed on both sides, the English renounced their Mandate in Palestine, handing it over, on May 15, 1948, to the United Nations. On the same day, the Jews proclaimed the portion of Palestine allotted to them by the United Nation's Commission to be their country, naming it Israel.

The flagrant violation of the Mandate on the part of England was foretold by the English soldier and statesman, Herbert Sidebotham, as early as the year 1923. Among other things he said: "For the last fifty years, the Irish, owing to our failures, have been the worst enemies of England all over the world. But the Jew, too, is ubiquitous. If we wish, having removed the enmity of Ireland, to make a new enemy, the way is clear. We need only repudiate our promises to the

Zionists. It would have been easy for us to make no promises; we should not have acquired Jewish support in America and elsewhere, which was exceedingly valuable to us in the war, but we should have raised no hopes. But having raised those hopes, we must fulfill them to the best of our ability. The position of being the protector of the Jewish national home is one that many nations would eat out their hearts to hold; it gives us a garrison in every country of the world as disposed to friendship to this country as the Irish were disposed to enmity, a sure assistance to our diplomacy, a vast store of pro-British propaganda placed gratuitously at our service. On the other hand, if we go back on our promises, the penalty would be correspondingly great. Inevitably we should make enemies of those who would have been friends, enemies embittered by the granting and then the mocking of their age-long prayers, and all leagued together to say the same thing—that the British word is not to be trusted, and her service to the ideal of Jewish nationhood, thwarted and wronged for nearly two thousand years, only a cruel jest."

The prosperity and "boom" which followed the first World War were succeeded as usual by a great depression and panic which seriously effected the farmer, laborer, small merchant, teacher, and professional man. Factories shut down; banks failed and closed their doors; building and loan associations went into the hands of receivers. Holders of second and third mortgages on properties were wiped out. Even first mortgagees lost much of their investments. By the time foreclosures passed through the sheriff's office, there was little or nothing left of the original investments. Those who suffered most of all were the speculators on the stock market who had purchased their bonds and stocks on margin, and real estate brokers who had purchased highly mortgaged properties. The real estate speculator, hoping for a quick turnover, was left with many vacant properties. Tenants could not pay the high rents which were required by the fabulously high market conditions because they were not employed. To evict non-paying tenants proved no salvation to the landlord, for empty houses were a greater liability to the owners than rented houses without revenue; thieves soon ransacked empty houses and removed everything of value, leaving nothing behind but the bare walls.

Bank failures which froze all accounts made it utterly impossible for the harassed real estate speculator to pay the interest and taxes on his properties. The result was that they were taken over by the first mortgagee at a price even below the low current value.

This was the position I was in: The ready cash I possessed after the banks closed enabled me to pay encumbrances upon my properties although the properties were vacant, and to hold on to my investments until the year 1929. In 1929, however, my resources were entirely exhausted, and I found it impossible to keep the properties. I made up my mind to turn the properties voluntarily over to the mortgagees in order to save them foreclosure expenses. I deeded my property holdings to the mortgagees and declined offers for the extension of mortgages even when freezing of interest on the mortgages was offered me. I knew that I had reached the end of the line, for I could not see my way clear to maintain the properties themselves—let alone my family—on the income which I would have derived from these properties. I was finally left with only my own home. Even this dwelling was encumbered with a first mortgage.

Thus being relieved of great and regrettable business worries, I was able to think more clearly of my future and that of my family. During the days of so-called prosperity, I had neglected my profession. Now I found myself with a practice not nearly sufficient to take care of my family's basic needs. I felt that I did not have the energy to start again as I had started thirty-four years before, when I graduated from Jefferson Medical College. I was in doubt as to whether such a step would have been possible, for age can seldom compete with youth.

One of the disadvantages from which the physician suffers is that his work must be continuous or he is "finished" as a practitioner. During depression periods, the engineer, the architect, or the lawyer may discontinue practice for a year or two and engage in other more remunerative efforts. Then when the financial crisis is over they may return to their old occupations. This is not so easy for the physician. Not only will his skill suffer during such an absence from his practice, but his patients will become accustomed to other physicians while he is away.

There is another difference between the medical profession and other professions. The physician is restricted by a strict code of ethics which prevents him from expanding his clientele by aggressive promotional methods, and he is rigidly restrained from advertising.

While pondering over my problem during one of my many sleepless nights, I came to the conclusion that it might be best for me to leave Philadelphia altogether. I decided to move to Atlantic City, a place I had spent many happy summers with my family, and where

I was well known to many people both as a physician and a public spirited individual.

My fondness for Atlantic City dates back to my early professional years when I had occupied the position of physician to The Jewish Seaside Home for Underprivileged Women and Children.

CHAPTER XIX

Atlantic City

Such are the vicissitudes of the world through all its parts, that day and night, labor and rest, hurry and retirement, endear each other. Such are the changes that keep the mind in action; we desire, we pursue, we obtain, we are satiated; we desire something else and begin a new pursuit.

—Johnson

I came to Atlantic City during the summer of 1930, carrying my last few hundred dollars, which I hoped would tide me over until I started to make a living, and possibly help see my youngest son through the University of Pennsylvania. I deposited this money in a local bank. As fate decreed, the bank closed its doors shortly thereafter. For some days I was dazed, for it appeared that an evil fate had pursued me even to this charming city. But I soon overcame this new shock. One learns to get used to misfortunes. Fortunately, my wife, who has always been far-sighted and prudent, had maintained enough savings in a reliable bank to defray my son's tuition.

In Atlantic City, I felt freed from all the fetters with which my thirty-four years of toil in Philadelphia had bound me. Being actually penniless, I knew that I just had to carry on for some years to fulfill my responsibilities to my family. In order to relieve myself and my family of the immediate worries of daily life, I made loans on my insurance policies.

I found many friends in Atlantic City. Included among these were two Hebrew teachers, Isaac Kopstein and Shalom Mizrachi, who had taught several years previously in a Philadelphia Hebrew school, which I had helped to found and where I had served for a time as chairman of the educational committee. My friends arranged a public reception for me and a large gathering responded to the following letter.

June 18, 1930

Dear Sir:

Atlantic City Jewry is giving a hearty welcome to a distinguished Jew upon his fixing his home in our midst.

Dr. Benjamin L. Gordon, who has come to reside in this city, has the distinction of being a well reputed physician and a Jewish scholar. Dr. Gordon, endowed with a colorful personality, has contributed largely to the social and cultural progress of American Jewry. One of the founders of the Zionist Organization of America, he has been to this day an ardent veteran of the Zionist movement and cultural Hebrew Renaissance in this country for more than three decades. Dr. Gordon is also the author of a book entitled "New Judea," comprising his reminiscences of Jewish life in Egypt and Palestine.

Atlantic City Jewry feels complimented in receiving Dr. Gordon to its habitat. In order to give expression to this hospitable sentiment, the committee has arranged a banquet on Wednesday, June 25, 1930, at 8:00 P. M., at Stein's Royal Palms Hotel, 142 S. Maryland Avenue.

Among the out-of-town guests and speakers who will come to pay tribute to Dr. Gordon will be Rabbi B. L. Levinthal, Louis Levinthal, Esq., Judge William Lewis and Martin O. Levy. The local speakers will be Rabbi Moshe Shapiro and Rabbi R. B. Weilerstein.

Trusting that we shall have the pleasure to meet you at Dr. Gordon's banquet next Wednesday, we are,

Yours Sincerely,

COMMITTEE:

Wm. B. Leaf,	D. R. Sandler,
M. Palley,	Rabbi M. Shapiro,
Hon. Jos. B. Perskie,	Dr. S. Stalberg,
Dr. Jos. Roschovsky,	Rabbi R. B. Weilerstein
Jos. W. Salus,	L. C. Whartman

I will always remember the kind reception given me by those Atlantic City friends. It inspired me with confidence and hope at a time when I was badly in need of such encouragement. The actions of this group, which welcomed me with open arms to the Shore, reminded me of Socrates' words: "All people have their different objects of ambition: horses, dogs, money, honor, as the case may be; but for my own part I would rather have a good friend than all these put together." Hope is at the root of life and must be reflected in the hearts of men. Where there is no hope, there is no life. The history of humanity is the history of indomitable hope; otherwise

humanity would have perished long ago. In spite of all obstacles, man must press forward under his burdens, guide his course through blackest night, escape his despair when things are darkest, and resort to hope when all else fails. A transfusion of hope was afforded me by the cordial welcome of my Atlantic City friends.

Of particular help to me was my son-in-law, Edward I. Baker, an Atlantic City counselor at law, who was married to my daughter, Judith, and who rendered every possible physical and moral aid to me during my early days at the Shore.

To one like myself who had spent the greater part of his life in Philadelphia, I found Atlantic City an ideal place in many ways. I was not entirely cut off from my former activities, for Atlantic City, by virtue of its close proximity, is practically a suburb of Philadelphia. Quite a number of former Philadelphians make their home in the resort, and many more spend their weekends, holidays, and vacations there.

Atlantic City is a clean, healthful city with no real slums. Poverty, while it undoubtedly exists there as elsewhere, is neither so profound nor so conspicuous as in the larger cities. I also found a fine communal spirit at the Shore. The various religious and racial groups live side by side without any marked rivalry or hatreds. They get along well socially, culturally, and politically. Particularly is this true among the members of the medical profession. The Atlantic County Medical Society forms a strong bond of union among physicians, a condition which, I am sorry to say, does not obtain in some of the larger cities.

One does not need to hide his identity at the Shore in order to rise politically or socially. To be sure, there are some snobs who maintain a pseudo-social register, but such individuals are hopelessly in the minority and are not the leaders of the community.

During my early years at the Shore, I helped organize the *Hug Ivri*, a Hebrew literary organization which afforded me much pleasure.

Atlantic City, apart from being a summer resort, is perhaps the greatest convention city in the world. People from all over the country gather here to discuss various educational, scientific, social, economic, industrial, labor, fraternal, and political subjects. A physician residing here need not go away elsewhere to keep up with modern medical advance. The medical conventions offer excellent opportunities to the progressive physician to keep acquainted with medical progress.

When I came to Atlantic City, I found that this resort was in the midst of a post-war depression. Atlantic City, which, more than most cities, is largely dependent upon the outside world for its existence,

was badly hit. Visitors during these days were comparatively few. The savings of the community were lost or frozen in the banks. Even the city government was in a bad way. It paid its employees with "scrip" printed like paper in private printing shops. Few were able to afford the luxury of consulting an eye physician. Inflammatory diseases of the eye were treated by the family physician, and jewelers, opticians, and a few optometrists were consulted for glasses. Many people picked up glasses on the counters of five and ten cent stores.

Days passed without my seeing a patient, and those who came to consult me did anything but inspire me with hope. For example, on the third day after I had opened my office, an elderly woman, well-dressed and bedecked with precious stones, walked into my reception room. When I came out to greet her, I found her looking around my little waiting room with an air of superiority. The size of my room and its furnishings did not appear to measure up to her expectations. I asked her to follow me into the office, where I proceeded to take her clinical history. Before she answered my questions, she asked, "Doctor, where is your secretary?" I told her that I had none and proceeded with the clinical history. She give me her name and address and told me that when she came to Atlantic City she stopped at a certain expensive beachfront hotel. She interrupted my questions by volunteering the information that her father was an oculist, that her grandson was a very successful physician in New York who employed two secretaries and one nurse, and that she was a widow. She hesitated giving me her age, remarking that age has nothing to do with the eyes.

Her chief complaint was dimness of vision. After a preliminary examination, I instilled a mydriatic in her eyes in order to dilate her pupils. When I told her that she was troubled with incipient cataracts in both eyes, she did not appear surprised. Evidently she had been told of this condition by other physicians. After a prolonged examination that took more than an hour and during which time she tried to impress me with the honor she had bestowed upon me by permitting me to examine her, she took her handbag and prepared to leave my office without even as much as a "good day."

Seeing what she was up to, I said, "Madam, the fee is five dollars." She fell upon me with the proverbial wrath of a woman scorned and angrily informed me: "I thought you understood me when I told you that my father was an oculist and my grandson a physician." She then proceeded to lecture to me on medical ethics. Between her eruptions, I explained to her that she did not come under the category

of those entitled to reciprocity, and that only doctors, their wives, and minor children were entitled to free services. She then rendered a scathing denunciation of me to the effect that I had sinfully misconstrued the basic meaning of the word "reciprocity." She then abruptly left my office.

Naturally I felt embarrassed. I did not mind the loss of the fee (although I surely could have used it) nearly as much as the vile attitude of the woman. I called up the president of the County Medical Society and told him of my experience. He gave me the name of a certain magistrate whom he advised me to consult with regard to the collection of my bill. He added that this particular magistrate was well versed in the methods of handling such a case.

On the next day the magistrate 'phoned me that the woman was in his office and kicking up a terrible rumpus about the bill. He told me that he was going to send his constable to her hotel to put a levy on her belongings. A half-hour later I received a message from the magistrate that the bill had been paid before she left his office.

There are any number of such "reciprocity" cases visiting physicians' offices in Atlantic City during the summer months. I recall the case of a "rabbi" with a long beard flowing over his chest. This allegedly pious gentleman was about forty-five years old and he did not wait for his turn to be admitted. He merely opened the door of my private office, which communicated with the waiting room, while I was treating another patient, and barged in and presented a card bearing a Jerusalem address. The reader may recall that, in the second chapter of this book, I mentioned that I always looked upon visitors from Jerusalem with great respect. I would have quickly dismissed his impudence in forcing his way into my office without any notice, had I not immediately recognized that he was not of the type that I had used to meet in my native town.

He complained of poor vision, particularly for close work. I examined him and prescribed a pair of presbyopic glasses. My visitor then opened up his portfolio, took out a book and asked me to read the endorsements he had from various prominent rabbis of Jerusalem. Among his list of endorsers was Rabbi Samuel Salanter who had died twenty-five years previously. I asked him whether he knew that man personally and he said "Yes, very well; I saw him five years ago." Of course, I immediately knew that he was a fraud.

While conversing with him, I drifted into a Talmudic subject, and discovered that he was entirely ignorant of even the most basic knowledge. I had my doubts as to whether he had even been in Jeru-

salem, for, when I spoke to him in Hebrew, he did not seem to understand what I was talking about. He finally asked me for a donation for the institution in Jerusalem which he claimed to represent. I told him that I would have to make up my mind about the matter and that I would let him know my decision on the following day. When I escorted him to the door preparatory to calling in another patient, he stopped and asked me, "Doctor, where are my glasses?" I thought he had left his old glasses on my desk and when I could not locate them, I told him, "You are evidently mistaken. You have not left your glasses here." Thereupon he said, "Didn't you prescribe glasses for me?" Evidently he thought that he was entitled not only to medical care but also to the glasses themselves! The visitor must have noticed my suspicions, for I never saw him again. A few days later I saw a warning in a Jewish paper to the effect that this man was an imposter and requesting information leading to his apprehension.

An interesting case of another character was that of a middle-aged man who represented himself as a truck farmer. When he entered my office, he excused himself for coming in his working clothes. He wanted a pair of reading glasses, and accordingly I examined him and prescribed a pair for him. When I presented him with my bill for ten dollars, he took out a thirty-dollar check, which he said a customer had given him for merchandise drawn on a Bridgeton Bank. Excusing himself for having no cash, he asked me to take my fee out of the check and give him the balance in cash. After some hesitation, I gave him my personal check for twenty dollars. When he left my office, I thought the matter over and decided to call up the Bridgeton Bank before he cashed my check. When the bank informed me that they had no such depositor as the signature on the check, I quickly called up my bank to stop payment on my check. To my dismay, I found that the check had just been cashed. I was not the only one in Atlantic City to be victimized by this swindle. The police department informed me that this man was being sought in many cities.

Atlantic City, during the summer months, is filled with people from all sections of the country. Needless to say, the cases to which I have referred are the exceptions—not the rule. I recall the case of a Texan who brought his young wife in for an eye examination. When I called him into my private office, he left his wife in the reception room, came in himself, and told me that he was the owner of a ranch not far from Houston, Texas. He stated that he had married this woman three years previously and that they had lived happily until three months prior to his visit to me, at which time she was taken

very ill. The local doctor diagnosed her case as meningitis and she was confined to a Houston Hospital for about six weeks.

When she was discharged, the family physician advised her to go to Atlantic City to recuperate. In Atlantic City, they stopped at a beachfront hotel. About two weeks prior to consulting me, he noticed something strange about his wife's conduct. When they were at the dinner table together with another young couple, he saw that his wife always seemed to stare at the husband of the other woman even when speaking to others at the table. After dinner, he remonstrated with her about this, and she burst into tears and insisted that she had not even looked at the other man at the table for a moment.

I called in the young woman and preliminary examination quickly revealed the reason for this marital trouble. It appeared that the meningitis had weakened the poor girl's ocular muscles and that she had developed divergent strabismus with monocular vision. I quickly explained the conditon to her husband. In spite of his dismay that his wife had become cross-eyed, he was most happy indeed to find out that he had not lost her love.

Atlantic City during the summer season is not merely a haven for those who seek to escape the heat of the large cities; it is not merely a rendezvous for pleasure seekers. It is also a place where convalescents who are recovering from prolonged illnesses come to woo Hygeia, the goddess of health. This resort also furnishes suitable asylum for neurotic and other nervous patients. Physicians, during these summer months, are very busy, and undoubtedly see a large number of abnormal and eccentric cases, but they have little time, or, for that matter, inclination, to record their stories. Such patients seldom come to the attention of the oculist.

But, I recall one case in particular that attracted my attention. It was that of a woman who was troubled with chronic blepharitis. The margins of her eyelids were very red and covered with a crust. She had lost all of her eyelashes. She had come to Atlantic City, not so much to receive medical attention, as for the purpose of escaping from her native city of Brooklyn. But while here, she thought that she might as well consult an eye physician and she was recommended to me for treatment.

She told me that she was the mother of two children and had been divorced from her husband "on account of illness" a few years previously. Her family medical history was essentially negative and she appeared to have come from refined and well-to-do people. A few years after her marriage, she continued, she contracted an eye affec-

tion, which the doctors called conjunctivitis. The doctor ordered her to be isolated (perhaps the ophthalmia was of a gonorrheal nature for her eyes exuded large amounts of pus). She had been ill at that time for about six weeks. When the copious discharge from her eyes subsided, she was left with permanently red and inflamed lids. Some time later, a child next door took sick with a similar condition. The family physician, who attended the child, asked its parents whether they knew of anyone in the family who had suffered from similar troubles. He was promptly told that the next-door neighbor had been affiicted with severe eye trouble. The doctor suggested that the child might have contracted the condition from the neighbor. Since that time the neighbors began to avoid this woman.

Whenever she left her apartment, everybody closed the doors in front of her so that she could not look at their children. When she approached anyone on the street, mothers snatched their little ones from out of her path. As time passed, this woman, like Jonah, was blamed for every mishap in the neighborhood. If she looked at a child, people were sure that it would contract some disease, such as sore eyes, croup, or St. Vitus Dance. Pregnant women feared that her glance might cause them to miscarry or to give birth to a monstrosity.

She was never asked to visit any of her old friends, lest their house collapse or their food be poisoned. If she greeted anyone on the street, that person would turn away so as not to meet her gaze. Even her family—children, parents, sisters, and brothers—were ostracized by the neighbors. She tried to cover her eyes with dark glasses, but this, instead of hiding her handicap, seemed to magnify her troubles. The moment she was seen on the street, children frantically called out, "Here come the dark glasses!" In time, the poor woman came to believe herself that she possessed a pernicious personality. She came to my office to consult me, not so much for her eyes, because she had been to the best eye physicians in New York, but to find out whether she really possessed such a cursed personality.

I was acquainted with the old belief in the "evil eye" which was prevalent in many European countries and in foreign settlements of American cities, but this was the first time I had come across a case like this. I told this despondent woman that the "evil eye" superstition was a relic of deep antiquity, and I assured her that there was surely nothing wrong with her in that respect, and that her eye trouble might be cured by various therapeutic measures. I advised her not to return home, but to remain here in Atlantic City or in some other city, and live among people who did not believe in such nonsense.

I saw my patient several months later, and she appeared to be in a much better frame of mind and in a happier mood. She had advised her parents to move to Atlantic City and had arranged quarters for them.

This case led me to delve deeply into the "evil eye" superstition, and led to the production of my article, "Evil Eye" (Archives of Ophthalmology, February, 1937).

During even my first summer seasons at the shore, my time was pretty well occupied, but after Labor Day, Atlantic City presented a deserted appearance. The sidewalks which had been crowded with pedestrians but a day before were relatively empty, and the traffic on the streets had come to a sudden standstill. The transient patients who had visited my office during the months of July and August suddenly disappeared. I was left with too little work. I feared that idleness might lead me to despair and loss of hope. I believe that it was Luther who said, "The human heart is like a millstone in a mill; when you put wheat under it, it turns and grinds and bruises the wheat to flour; if you put no wheat under it, it still grinds on—and grinds itself away." I had to find some work to stop me from brooding over real or imaginary troubles.

I tried to utilize my leisure time in studying the latest findings in ophthalmology and engaging in other intellectual pursuits but time still dragged on my hands. One day, while going to the medical library, which is located in the local hospital building, I passed through the hospital dispensary and noticed that the room was jammed with patients, sitting and standing. When I returned from the library two hours later, the room was still filled to its full capacity. The same condition prevailed every time I visited the library. I discovered that the local hospital was trying valiantly but was not coping too successfully with the many poor patients who were in need of medical attention.

I decided to call a meeting of physicians and laymen at my office in order to discuss this problem. After one or two such meetings, it was decided to open a dispensary for the treatment of ambulatory patients. We received permission from the city authorities to use one of the stores in the Convention Hall for this purpose, and, after some few weeks of preparation, the "General Dispensary" was opened to the public from 12 noon to 4 P.M. daily. The specialties treated by the various physicians who had volunteered their services included medicine, surgery, otolaryngology, ophthalmology, gynecology, neurology, dermatology, and dentistry. A nurse was employed to take records and to assist the physicians. Medicine was furnished free to all pa-

tients unable to pay. As Medical Director, I had to devote much of my time to the dispensary between office hours. This institution was in existence for a period of eight years, until business conditions in the city had improved to a point where the clinic was no longer needed.

About two years after the General Dispensary had opened its doors, I was appointed Ophthalmologist to the newly organized hospital at Somers Point (then the Atlantic Shores Hospital; now the Shore Memorial Hospital). I was the very first physician to join the staff of this hospital after its re-organization. I conducted eye clinics at this institution three times a week for a time. In 1935, I was appointed examining physician for the United States Civil Aeronautics Administration. This latter position proved over the years to be of great interest to me as well as a source of considerable revenue.

Some five years later, I was appointed to the Atlantic County Hospital for Tuberculosis and two years after that to the Atlantic County Hospital for Mental Diseases. Both appointments, of course, were in the capacity of Ophthalmologist. All the while my private ophthalmological practice gradually increased to very satisfactory proportions.

On the Golden Jubilee of my medical career, The Alumni Association of the Jefferson Medical College presented me with a golden pin and the following certificate:

THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
OF
THE JEFFERSON MEDICAL COLLEGE
OF PHILADELPHIA

BENJAMIN L. GORDON M.D. CLASS OF '96

IN RECOGNITION OF FIFTY YEARS OF FAITHFUL MEDICAL SERVICE IN THE TRADITIONAL IDEALS OF THE MEDICAL PROFESSION.

DATED AT PHILADELPHIA THIS TWENTY-SIXTH DAY OF MARCH 1946

(Signed) *William Harvey Perkins*
PRESIDENT

On April 13, 1951, the Atlantic County Medical Society also awarded me a certificate commemorating my fifty-five years of active medical practice.

Happily the hopes and aspirations of my early days have all been realized. I have already informed the reader that as far back as I can recall two major ambitions had been deeply rooted in the recesses of my mind. One was to become a physician: Since childhood I had yearned to become a medical doctor. The local *rophe* of my town, by his good deeds and kind manners, made me wish to emulate him. Then too, the respect shown to him by our townsmen had made a great impression on me, which became more marked as the years passed on.

The other basic ambition that remained permanently engraved on my mind was to live to see Palestine, now known as Israel, become a Jewish state. My interest in the Holy Land was aroused when I first read the book of Genesis, and grew stronger when I witnessed the mass persecution of the Jews during the terrible years of the reign of Alexander III of Russia at the close of the nineteenth century. The cruel whips of anti-Semitism convinced me of the necessity of a homeland as the only solution for the great and unending problems of the Jews.

I was admitted to the medical profession at a crucial period—the greatest period of advance in medical history. More life-saving remedies have been discovered in the last half-century than in the preceding fifty centuries.

One of the most outstanding scientific advances made during my medical career was the discovery of insulin by Banting and Best. I recall so many cases of diabetes that terminated fatally after months or years on a starvation diet, which was then the only known treatment for this condition. Both the doctor and the patient soon came to realize that they were battling a lost cause. Now adult diabetics have a normal life expectancy.

A disease which carried away a large number of children each year during the early days of my practice was diphtheria. There were no antitoxin or toxoid preventatives for this scourge. Before Roman of France discovered how to combat the deadly microorganism of diphtheria, this disease was considered the cause of death in about one-half of all fatalities among children of pre-school age. In the city of Philadelphia, where I first began to practice my profession over a half-century ago, as many as one thousand deaths from diphtheria were reported in one season. Now the disease is seldom even encountered.

In the year 1900, tuberculosis and pneumonia produced the greatest adult mortality in the larger communities. Now the sulfa

drugs, penicillin, aureomycin, terramycin, chloromycetin, and streptomycin (the last discovered by Dr. Selman Waksman of Rutgers University) have cut down the death rate from these scourges by over 50 percent. Because of streptomycin and its derivatives, the number of T. B. cases which have to undergo pneumo-thorax and other extensive surgical procedures, with long periods of convalescence, have been greatly reduced.

Fifty years ago, malaria decimated entire communities. Now the story is far different, with D. D. T. to control the female anophales mosquitoes, and atabrine (as well as the older quinine) to treat patients already afflicted with this disease.

Sanitation, the production of safe potable water and the pasteurization of milk have minimized the occurrance and death rate from typhoid fever and intestinal diseases characterized by diarrhea. Such enteric diseases were reported to have killed 80,000 Americans each year at the beginning of the present century. Chloromycetin apparently affords an effective therapeutic agent for the few remaining cases of typhoid fever. A 76 percent drop in the death rate of meningitis has been reported as a result of the use of sulfadiazine alone.

The incidence of syphilis, the dread scourge of the ages, because of the toll it took on the body and the shame connected with it, was markedly reduced by the judicious use of Ehrlich's "606" and its derivatives, and still further cut down by the administration of penicillin in adequate dosage. Most cases of gonorrhea, which a few short years ago required endless treatment, now can be cured with a single shot of penicillin or a relatively few sulfa tablets.

Pernicious anemia proved fatal in 100 percent of the cases fifty years ago when I started to practice. Now, thanks to Dr. Murphy and Dr. Minot, and the use of liver extracts, there is no excuse for a person dying of this disease. Recently the development of folic acid and vitamin B-12 have made the lot of the pernicious anemia cases even easier.

Rickets, a disease of childhood which was frequently encountered in my early practice, has ceased to be a menace to children, thanks to the discovery of vitamin D by Dr. Harry Steenbock of Wisconsin.

At present, according to the figures of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, the greatest danger to the life of children of preschool age is no longer disease but accidents.

Our great medical progress cannot be ascribed entirely to scientific chemical discoveries and antibiotic remedies. The invention of numerous precision diagnostic and therapeutic instruments, and the better

training of physicians have been important factors in the conquest of disease.

Similar progress has been made in surgery. Even the brain and the heart, which in my early days were forbidden ground for the surgeon, are now successfully operated upon with life-saving exactitude.

As has been intimated, the other subject that was constantly on my mind, particularly after my personal ambition of becoming a physician was achieved, was the liberation of my people from the cruel Diaspora. The plight of my people weighed heavily upon me from my early school days and I never really dismissed this thought from my mind. The stories of the book of Genesis gave me the first impulse that terminated in my lifelong yearning for the establishment of *Eretz Yisrael* (The Land of Israel) as a Jewish homeland. Love of Zion became almost an obsession with me as I continued to study the Prophets, the Psalms, and later Hebrew literature.

The ideology of Zionism, which first rested on a positive and constructive but theoretical foundation, was later strengthened by the outburst of anti-Semitism in Russia. I felt prodded at every step by a hostile outside world. As I review the events of past years, I am convinced that even the most confirmed and enthusiastic Zionists, who have grown up in Zionist homes, have been "helped along" in their adherence to Zionism by anti-Semitism. Such unsolicited "help" might be in the form of an uncomplimentary remark at school, a refusal of membership by a fraternal organization, hearing a joke at the expense of one's people, being barred by a "restricted" summer resort, or sometimes, more seriously, being refused a job or having a scientific career cut short. Such pinpricks, which are a far cry from Hitlerian slaughter in gas chambers, do nevertheless take a toll, and annoyances of this kind have done more to swell the ranks of the Zionist Organization than all the membership campaigns put together.

Perhaps I was even more sensitive than the average person. I could treat personal affronts placidly, but the least offense or discriminatory act pointed against my people irritated me exceedingly. Many times, after hearing or reading unjustified attacks against my people, my entire soul would burn with such righteous indignation that I would temporarily lose all ability to concentrate.

I came to consider the *galut* atmosphere as suffocating, and many times I was tempted to settle in some isolated country place. In fact, on one occasion I actually negotiated for the purchase of a farm in the vicinity of Philadelphia, where I thought I could bring up my family without suffering any humiliation on racial grounds. I well

realize now that my attitude towards anti-Semitism in this country was uncalled for, for there was never any urgent fear of physical violence in this great land where everyone is free to practice his religion and express his opinion, but old memories, such as the sudden unwarranted outbreaks of hostility against the Jews of France during the Dreyfus Affair, still lingered in my mind. I remember the infamous anti-Semitic attacks of Stoeker and Alwardt in Germany in the nineties of the last century, of Rohling in Austria, of Purishkewich and the "Black Hundred" in Russia, of Cuzy and the "Iron Guards" in Rumania, of Grabski and the Endiks in Poland, and—most recent and most rabid of them all—of Hitler and his storm troopers.

I confess that the barb of anti-Semitism drove me (as it did thousands of other sensitive Jews) towards Palestine. The dread of anti-Semitism increased the volume and tempo of Jewish emigration to Palestine. The professional anti-Semites, it appears, did not stop to realize that they were rendering a signal service to the aspirations of their sworn enemies. They did not know that their inhuman acts drove even those Jews who were inclined towards assimilation and who would have preferred to escape from their Jewish handicaps, towards Palestine.

Drumond and his cohorts, who conspired and instigated the Dreyfus Affair in France, never thought that the episode would bring Theodore Herzl back to his people and thus unite all thinking Jews under the banner of Zion, and bring together the remnants of Judaism, spread over the four corners of the earth, to the Jewish Congress at Basle to lay the cornerstone of a new Jewish state.

All through the Diaspora, the Jew has been an easy scapegoat for the anti-Semites. In pouring their venom on the unprotected Jew, they ran no risk of incurring physical retribution, for, in most instances, the Jewish communities were not strong enough to defend themselves. All the Jews could do was to protest against such atrocious attacks. The anti-Semites felt completely safe when they published the fraudulent "Protocols of the Elders of Zion" or when they spread the infamous "blood accusation" against the Jews. They knew that no serious international repercussions would be forthcoming, and that there would be no intervention by any mother country.

It was thus easy to waylay and brutally attack the Jew, for the most illiterate peasant knew that the Jew had no one to take his part. When South Africa recently discriminated against the Hindus, the newly emancipated India came to their defense. Heretofore, there has

been no state on the globe from which diplomatic defense of Jewish minorities could rightfully be expected.

I am happy that I have lived to see Israel redeemed. The emergence of Israel as a nation will make it much more difficult and costly for the Arabs of the Middle East to massacre the local Jewish communities or for the Jew-haters of Rumania to persecute their prey. The Israeli representatives in the United Nations will be certain to make every effort toward the enforcement by the international body of whatever sanctions exist to suppress aggression and discrimination against their people throughout the world.

Whatever prestige and influence Israel will possess will be available for the defense of Jewish rights. Israel's existence in its own legally secured home is bound to discourage the anti-Semites, who will be more mindful of the possible international complications caused by their acts. The Jewish state will greatly encourage Jews to remain within the fold. A Jew of Baltimore, or of Buenos Aires, will be proud to read of the transactions of the *Knesset* of Israel even as an American of Irish descent can be proud of the actions of his native country. The American of Jewish extraction will feel gratified when he reads in the press that the Israeli President has met the President of the United States, that the Israeli ambassador has held a conference with the Secretary of State in Washington, or that an Israeli representative has intervened on behalf of his oppressed people at the United Nations.

Every new idea in science, art, literature, or music, coming out of Israel, will be to the credit of Jews everywhere. As it was, the Jews never got credit for the actions of their gifted sons; yet they were blamed for the wayward acts of their black sheep.

Whatever our occupation or position in life may be, it is most desirable to provide ourselves with some other special interest. In the choice of such a subject everyone should consult his own instincts and tastes. Whatever the subject of our choice, we shall find in it enough pleasure to repay the devotion of a lifetime. Since life is not always attended with happiness and contentment, and all of us must always expect periods of anxiety, suffering, and sorrow, at such times it is a great comfort to have some deep interest which will, to some extent at least, enable us to escape from ourselves.

In the midst of my trials I found solace in reading and writing. It is one thing to own a library; it is, however, another to use it wisely. "If," said Sir John Herschel, "I were to pray for a taste which should stand in good stead under every variety of circumstances and be a

source of happiness and cheerfulness to me through life, and a shield against its ills, however things might go amiss and the world frown upon me, it would be a taste of reading. I speak of it only as a worldly advantage . . . as a taste, an instrument, and a mode of pleasureable gratification. Give a man this taste and the means of gratifying it and you can hardly fail of making a happy man. Unless indeed, you put into his hand a most perverse selection of books."

My literary career began with the publication of *Zion's Friend*, a small annual paper published by the Ohavei Zion. It was issued before the annual meeting of the society. It dealt with the history and the ideology of the Zionist movement, and presented biographies of its prominent leaders. I was the editor of the English department, and my friend, Herman Kruger, supervised the Yiddish section.

My next literary effort was made in the columns of the *Jewish Exponent*, where I engaged in a polemic with a certain anti-Zionist Rabbi Foster, of Newark, N. J. Afterwards I published an article in the same paper entitled, "The Oral Law before the Talmud" (1901). From then on, for many years, my articles on Zionism appeared from time to time in *The Jewish Exponent* and *The Maccabean*. The latter was published by The Federation of American Zionists. Herewith is appended a list of my publications pertaining to Israel and Zionism.

1. *Eastward*
2. *The Capital of the Ptolemies*
3. *Cairo*
4. *Jews in Cairo*
5. *Ancient Jaffa*
6. *New Jaffa*
7. *Mikveh Israel*
8. *Rishon L' Zion* (Ajun Kara)
9. *The Twin Colony*
10. *Rehovot* (Shaarayim)
11. *The "Bilu" Settlement*
12. *Ekron: The Land of the Philistines*
13. *The Land of Olives*
14. *The Home of the Hasmoneans*
15. *On the Heights of Judea*
16. *Jerusalem*
17. *Mount Moriah and Mount Zion*
18. *New Jerusalem*
19. *Departure from Jerusalem*
20. *Petah Tikvah*
21. *Zichron Yaakov*
22. *Hederah*
23. *Israel's Claim on Palestine*
24. *Possibilities of Palestine*
25. *For the Sake of Zion I Will Not Keep Silent* (FOLKS' ADVOCAT, New York, 1892)
26. *The Oral Law Before the Talmud* (JEWISH EXPONENT, January 15, 1900)

27. *Zionism and Reform Judaism*
(A reply to Rabbi Foster, JEWISH EXPONENT, July 10, 1908)

28. *Studies in Ethnology*
(A JEWISH ENCYCLOPEDIA edited by Jacob De Haas, 1925)

29. *Zionism—Dream and Reality*
(PHILADELPHIA RECORD, November 9, 1932)

30. *Can There Be a Complete National Fusion Without a Religious Fusion?*
(Read before the Hug Ivri, 1934)

31. *Imitation and Assimilation*
(Read before the Hug Ivri, 1935)

32. *The British Palestine Policy*
(ATLANTIC CITY PRESS, May 10, 1946)

33. *Factors That Brought About the Third Jewish Commonwealth*
(Read before the Dorshe Daath Society, 1948)

34. *Reminiscences of the Early Days of the Dorshe Daath*
(Read before the Dorshe Daath Society, 1951)

(Numbers 1 to 24 were published in *The Maccabean* and *The Jewish Exponent* during the years 1910–1912.)

When I came to Atlantic City, my writings, which heretofore had only occasionally been connected with my professional work, became more strictly confined to medicine, with particular emphasis on diseases of the eye and on medical history.

My first article following this pattern, entitled "Ophthalmology in the Bible and in the Talmud" (*Archives of Ophthalmology,* May 1933) was favorably received by my professional colleagues and by Semitic scholars. This encouraged me to continue writing a series of articles in various medical journals, a list of which is here appended:

1. *Ophthalmology in the Bible and in the Talmud*
(ARCHIVES OF OPHTHALMOLOGY, vol. 9, pp. 751-788, May, 1933)

2. *Importance of Cephalalgia in Ocular Diagnosis*
(ARCHIVES OF OPHTHALMOLOGY, vol. 11, pp. 769-796, May 1934)

3. *The Problem of the Crystalline Lens* (part one)
(ARCHIVES OF OPHTHALMOLOGY, vol. 14, pp. 774-788, November 1935)

4. *The Problem of the Crystalline Lens* (part two)
(ARCHIVES OF OPHTHALMOLOGY, vol. 15, pp. 859-889, May 1936)

5. *Oculus Fascinus* (Fascination, Evil Eye)
   (ARCHIVES OF OPHTHALMOLOGY, vol. 17, pp. 290-319, February 1937)
6. *The Problem of Glaucoma*
   (ARCHIVES OF OPHTHALMOLOGY, vol. 19, pp. 515-547, April 1938)
7. *Iritic Glaucoma—Prophylaxis and Medical Treatment*
   (THE EYE, EAR, NOSE AND THROAT MONTHLY, June 1938)
8. *Failure of Vision and Its Causes*
   (Sponsored by Atlantic County Medical Society; published in the ATLANTIC CITY SUNDAY PRESS; July 1938)
9. *The Eye as a Barometer of the State of Bodily Health*
   (Read before the staff of the Shore Memorial Hospital, 1938)
10. *Endogenous Eye Disease of Dental Origin*
    (THE EYE, EAR, NOSE AND THROAT MONTHLY, June 1939)
11. *Oculists and Occultists*—Demonology
    (ARCHIVES OF OPHTHALMOLOGY, vol. 22, pp. 25-65, July 1939)
12. *The Evolution of Biologic Pathology From Ancient Animistic Beliefs*
    (AMERICAN JOURNAL OF CLINICAL PATHOLOGY, vol. 10, No. 11, November 1940)
13. *Oculists and Occultists*—Astrology
    (ARCHIVES OF OPHTHALMOLOGY, vol. 25, pp. 36-61, January 1941)
14. *Medicine Among the Ancient Hebrews*
    (ANNALS OF MEDICAL HISTORY, vol. 4, No. 3, pp. 219-235, 1942)
15. *Ancient Medical Jurisprudence*
    (ARCHIVES OF OPHTHALMOLOGY, vol. 28, pp. 860-881, November 1942)
16. *A Historical Sketch of Tuberculosis*
    (THE JOURNAL OF THE MEDICAL SOCIETY OF NEW JERSEY, vol. 41, p. 17, January 1943)
17. *Ocular Tuberculosis*
    (ARCHIVES OF OPHTHALMOLOGY, vol. 31, pp. 541-556, June 1944)
18. *Common Diseases of the Eye*
    (THE MEDICAL WAY, pp. 3-4, December 1944)
19. *Curiosities of Jewish Medicine*
    (BULLETIN OF THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE, vol. 20, No. 2, July 1946)
20. *A Survey of Talmudic Medicine*
    (Read before the American Academy for Jewish Research, New York, 1947)

21. *Endogenous Ocular Infection From Dental Sepsis*
(Read before The Peter Ophthalmological Staff of the Graduate Hospital of The University of Pennsylvania, 1947)

22. *Effects of Diabetes on Cataract and on Vision*
(ARCHIVES OF OPHTHALMOLOGY, vol. 41, pp. 462-472, April 1949)

23. *A Prelude to Modern Science* (a book review)
(JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW, 1949)

24. *A Short History of Spectacles*
(JOURNAL OF THE MEDICAL SOCIETY OF NEW JERSEY, vol. 48, pp. 3-8, January 1951)

MEDICAL ARTICLES IN HEBREW

25. *Hatalmud Vehohmat Harefuah*
(HAROFE HAIVRI, vol. 1, pp. 141-152, 1937)

26. *Torat Hoayyin Beyomim Hakadmonim*
(HAROFE HAIVRI, vol. 2, pp. 77-91, 1937)

27. *Torat Hoayyin Beyomim Hakadmonim*
(HAROFE HAIVRI, vol. 2, pp. 57-72, 1938)

28. *Ruah Horiyah*
(RAMMA, pp. 462-465, January-March 1939)

29. *Harefuah Aitzel Haivrim Hakadmonim*
(SEFER HASHANAH, vols. 8-9, pp. 240-248, 1947)

30. *Harefuah Bekitvei Hakodesh*
(SEFER HASHANAH, in process of publication)

31. *Torat Hamishpat Haivrim Haatic*
(An unpublished manuscript)

32. *Histalshlot Hatahluot Habiolugia Min Haamonot Haatikot*
(An unpublished manuscript)

The favorable comments in the medical and lay press on my scattered articles inspired me to undertake a literary work of larger scope. Thus, I began to collect material for my book *The Romance of Medicine*, which deals with the evolution of medicine from occult practices and primitive times, embracing folklore, customs, manners, traditions, and historical facts. This work appeared in 1944 and was reprinted in 1945. A second edition appeared in 1949, and a Spanish translation is pending.

Here again the very favorable reception given my work in the medical and lay press influenced me to write my most important and

lengthy work, *Medicine Throughout Antiquity* (1949). This book received such cordial reviews that I am now working on a companion volume tentatively entitled, *Medicine Throughout the Middle Ages and Renaissance.*

I take the occasion here to tender my medical publishers, F. A. Davis Co., of Philadelphia, my heartfelt thanks for the splendid way they have produced my works.

A few lines about my children: My daughter, Judith, afforded me a second "home" during my early years at the Shore before I was able to bring my family to the Resort. My oldest son, Cyrus, now Professor of Assyriology and Egyptology at Dropsie College, has become a world-renowned Orientalist. My middle son, Norman, a merchant by profession, constantly gives evidences of his broad intellectual horizons. My youngest son, Maurice, practices medicine with me and cooperates with me in my writings.

The present work is largely a result of requests by my family to record my memoirs. Thus, I have collected various odds and ends which have been stored away in my mind these many years and which I hope may prove of interest to the reader. It is a sort of spiritual legacy to my dear ones to take the place of any large material inheritance.

CHAPTER XX

In Retrospect

In younger years one sees but half, and very naturally is not able to judge as one looks on a total scene; now one thinks rather in terms of totality.

—Browning

IF a true picture of life is like an artist's canvas, true perspective, and an accurate rendering even of blemishes and defects, can best be had from a distance. To see one's life history in perspective so as to determine mistakes and misjudgments, one must wait until he reaches an advanced age. My early life, although far from being perfect with regard to bodily comfort, education, and training, followed in the well-trodden path traced by my ancestors for many generations. The path, to be sure, was tortuous and strewn with stumbling blocks, but at least, it led to some final destination.

The pursuit of knowledge had been the cardinal goal of Jewish youth for countless generations. The sole object of my early education was to produce a learned and religious Jew. It was designed to impart an intimate and comprehensive knowledge of religious lore, and it consisted largely of instruction in the Torah, the Talmud, and their manifold commentaries, in accordance with the precepts of the Book of Joshua (1:8): "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate thereon day and night." This religious system of education was extensive enough to occupy one's mind from infancy to manhood.

The ambition of the student, in my young days, was to become a scholar, if not a rabbi. There was no opportunity or desire for secular knowledge in my native town. There were no secular schools.

The first time that it occurred to me that there was a greater world beyond my native town and there were other books worth studying was when I accidentally happened to look into a modern Hebrew work. It was then that I recognized that there were broader horizons worthy of investigation. Once I had tasted from the tree of knowledge,

my eyes were opened and I could not close them. At first I was eager to supplement my religious education with secular knowledge, and later I gradually began to depart from the traditional path of my ancestors. I developed a different conception of the nature and purpose of education and culture. Still later on, I read the works of the *maskilim* (Apostles of enlightenment) in the Hebrew language. Mendelsohn's translations of the Pentateuch provided me with the key to the German language, and enabled me to read the works of Lessing, Heine, Börne, and Moses Hess.

The old antagonism to secular learning on the part of religious parents, lest such investigations might estrange their sons from the faith of their forefathers (a fear that has unfortunately been proven in great measure to be justified), was perhaps one of the reasons which influenced me to leave my native land at a later date.

Arriving in New York, the zeal that had formerly inspired me with devotion to study religious lore was rapidly transferred to secular learning. The mental acumen that had been sharpened by the Talmudic dialectics then asserted itself in the acquisition of modern Western culture. To be sure, this transition was difficult, but my former zeal for study, plus my dogged perseverence and patience, enabled me to overcome all obstacles that stood in the path of my pursuit of knowledge.

I had been brought up with the idea that knowledge, for its own sake, was the end—not merely the means. The saying of Rabbi Zadok, "Employ not [thy learning] as a crown for self aggrandizement, nor as a pickaxe with which to dig" (*Ethics of the Fathers*, 4:1) was confirmed when I read the words of Bacon, "It should be neither a couch on which to rest, nor a cloister in which to remain alone, nor as a tower from which to look down upon others: nor as a fortress whence we may resist, nor as a workshop for gain, but as a rich armory and treasury for the glory of the Creator and the ennoblement of life."

The seeking of a career seldom entered the mind of a Talmudic student. I was not promised rewards for being diligent in my studies. I was rather stimulated to study with the idea of becoming a scholar. To be a learned man was the highest aspiration and the final answer to the prayers and hopes of fond parents. This doctrine was instilled in every Jewish family. I recall that the pictures of Elijah of Vilna, the great Talmudic prodigy, and Rabbi Isaac Elhanan of Kovno, which graced the walls of our main room, served as models which I

desired to emulate. Materialistic rewards, for a long period, never entered my mind.

This unselfish ambition followed me to America. To be sure, the models I desired to emulate were of a different type. I remember that I became a great admirer of Bacon, Byron, Longfellow, and George Elliot, but I never had any ambition to follow in the footsteps of the big-money men. The love of books was also inherent in me. From infancy I was taught to respect authors and to look upon books with great reverence. In my youth, I never threw away a torn leaf from a book, or for that matter, even a torn page from a Hebrew newspaper. Such torn leaves I fondly took to the anteroom of the synagogue and placed them in the large boxes which were kept there. Such fragments of knowledge were finally interred with appropriate ceremony in the cemetery.

I remember how I first became acquainted with my father's limited store of Hebrew literature. The collection was a miscellany of Talmudic and Rabbinic works with a few books of more modern origin—all in Hebrew. I became so attached to these books that to this very day their image stands out clearly before my mind's eye. The long interval that now separates me from that bygone period has not succeeded in obliterating the picture of this collection from my memory.

Many years have passed since my first reading of these books. The world about me has greatly changed. Undreamt vistas have opened up before my mental horizons. My tastes and interests have changed many times since I first commenced reading from my father's library, but nothing I have read thus far has left so indelible an impression on my mind as this first reading of my youth. I can say without hesitation that my father's library has formed an iron-bound link between his intellectual world and my own. It also has formed the nucleus of the large collection which I have since acquired, although his small library is almost lost in my collection of books upon many subjects and in many languages. Like my father, I was never a hunter of rarities. I cared nothing for first editions. My eyes always glowed with excitement as I glanced over chapter headings of a new book and anticipated the treat which awaited me. I have seldom acquired sets of books, but only those of a set that interested me. I have always found refuge and repose behind the closed doors of my library.

When I look back at my college days, I am astounded to recall that having breakfasted on dry bread, and with another slice of bread wrapped up in my pocket to serve as lunch, I was able to perform

my work at school or sit at the long table in the large reading room of the Mercantile Library of Philadelphia deeply engrossed in Gray's *Anatomy* and Dalton's *Physiology*, which I had purchased at Leary's second-hand bookstore in Philadelphia. My hunger was entirely forgotten. The garret to which I was to return to pass the night never perturbed me. On the whole, it seemed to me to be something to be proud of. Scholarship, in the highest sense, had been denied me in my younger days, and it particularly pleased me that I was able to read, understand, and retain the contents of books on embryology, histology, bacteriology, and organic chemistry, without preliminary school preparation.

I had in me the makings of a scholar. With leisure and peace of mind I would have amassed much learning if I had continued to work within the walls of the college. As I can plainly see now, I have always lived more in the past than in the present. Having such a disposition, material success did not bring me great contentment. I recall that one of the greatest disappointments of my life was that I was unable to permanently retain all knowledge I had gained by reading.

At present, forgetfulness does not trouble me any more. I have lost my ambition for, but not my respect for, great scholarship. I am happy with the fact that I can still read, and thus still add to my intellectual store.

When I entered medical school, and during my college years, my aim was to become a learned physician. I took as my models some members of the faculty whom I admired for their wisdom. It seldom if ever occurred to me that the medical profession was a means of acquiring wealth. The study of medicine for its own sake was my sole ambition.

Graduation from medical school rudely jarred this ambition from its very foundation. Suddenly I was confronted with the grim realities of life. I was brought to the realization that my student days were over, and that I henceforth had to utilize the knowledge I had gathered as a means of raising funds in order to keep solvent. The mundane tribulations of keeping square with the installment houses for my office furniture and equipment, of paying rent, of buying clothes, and of earning a livelihood in general, were constantly with me. Such responsibilities I had never experienced in my student days, where the standards of food, clothing, and shelter never even interested me. I was particularly grieved when I could not concentrate effectively on my books, which pursuit I had found so easy to carry on in school.

My mind was now absorbed with the problems of meeting necessary obligations.

I exhibited interest in public affairs by joining various fraternal organizations and *Landsmannschaften,* and in the course of my labors with these societies, I delivered many public addresses. While careful not to inject personal matters into these talks, I felt that they would serve to make me better known as a physician among the people of my district. Now, as I look back, I question whether these public activities were wise or even practical. The worldly benefits I derived from emerging as a public man were not worth the valuable time I put into these organizations. Some of my friends and classmates built up large practices without such stratagems. Fraternal life of this type surely did not make me happy. There was always the feeling of regret that I was wasting my time on matters which gave me neither pleasure nor knowledge.

"One transgression leads to another," said ben Azai (*Ethics of the Fathers,* 4:7). The greatest mistake of my life was when I yielded to the temptation, after the First World War, to invest in real estate—a business that never made me happy, even when my investments brought me big profits. Real estate is a business for the shrewdest of business men. I could never get used to the dubious methods employed in various real estate transactions. In fact, I detested such transactions, and if I accumulated some money through engaging in that business, this was not because of my cleverness in trading, but rather because one did not need business acumen to make substantial profits during the boom days.

When the depression came, I lost practically all my worldly possessions, including the practice that had taken me so many years to build up. I felt like one who is rudely awakened from a bad dream. I did not grieve about my losses, for these brought me back to myself; indeed, while my economic collapse led to the loss of all financial security, it also led to the salvation of my soul. A feeling of remorse pervaded the innermost recesses of my heart, that I had wandered away from the old path, and that I had encumbered my journey through life with the dead weight of unnecessary and even pestilential baggage. After my financial downfall, for a short interval, I trembled at the thought that I was no longer a young man and that it was difficult to make a new start in life. Both of these fears turned out to be groundless. I did make a comeback, but this time I followed the "old path," and eventually achieved rewards of which no depression can rob me.

From time immemorial, the idea has prevailed that aged persons are endowed with superior wisdom. In Biblical times, the aged were the judges, the lawmakers, and the counsellors. The term "alderman," applying to a member of the legislature, is probably derived from such a conception. The old patriarch, Jacob, when he took sick, gathered his sons to his bedside to tell them that "which shall befall you in the end of the days." I avidly disclaim any superior wisdom accompanying my age. I agree with Bryant, who said, "Old age is wise, I grant, for itself, but not for the community. It is wise in declining responsibilities, for it has not the power nor the time to execute them. It is wise in shrinking from difficulties, for it has not the strength to overcome them. It is wise in avoiding danger, for it lacks the faculty of ready and swift action by which a danger is parried and converted into an advantage. But this wisdom is not for mankind at large, by whom new enterprise must be undertaken, danger met, and difficulties surmounted."

Accordingly, I have nothing to offer to younger men by way of advice. I earnestly hope that by acquainting the reader with my years as a boy, as a student, and as a physician—a story which tells of resolution, perseverance, suffering, heartache, disappointment, scenes of humor and pathos, of success and failure—I may be able to help him to avoid the pitfalls I have fallen into, and thus to lead a better life. Failing in this, I trust, at least, that I have imparted to him with this narrative of my life some of the zest for living that fate has given me.

While old age is not always synonymous with wisdom, it has a rich store of memories, some good, some bad. As Montague has well expressed it, the imprint of age forms more wrinkles in the mind than it does on the face.

Cicero listed four reasons why old age tends to be wretched: (1) Retirement from public and private affairs. (2) The tendency to enfeeblement of the body. (3) The tendency toward deprivation of all pleasures. (4) The proximity of death. When speaking of old age, one customarily refers to the Psalmist: "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; or even by reason of strength fourscore years; yet is their pride but labor and sorrow; for it is soon gone, and we fly away" (Psalm 90:10). The conclusions of this psalm have been proven throughout the ages to be wonderfully true. In most cases, man's useful life usually ends with his seventieth year, after which he begins to view life in a melancholy perspective. When the zest for life has been lost, it means that enthusiasm has been

whittled away by the edge of years, as was so well described by the singer of Israel and repeated ages later by the Roman poet.

But while these causes of unhappiness in old age might have been especially true in ancient times, and assuredly often exist today, it has been my experience that old age may bring peace, happiness, equanimity, and joy—if one is ready to overcome his selfishness and share the happiness of his children and friends, and is willing to enter into their lives not as a dictator but as a man of benevolent understanding. While, unfortunately, a man has to learn to be alone when he is growing older, he must endeavor to feel united in spirit with everyone whom he loves. He must find never-failing pleasure in recalling the happy days that are gone, for although they are gone, they are not lost, but even assume greater vividness in later years. Even in old age, one must look to the future with hope rather than fear.

The first three reasons given by Cicero as contributing to the unhappiness of old age are less applicable in modern times. In this scientific age, even though a man is retired from active work, he may easily occupy his mind with such pastimes as going to the moving pictures, watching television, listening to the radio, reading, playing various games, and many other diversions.

Weakness in old age is, as a rule, due to disease, and is not merely a by-product of advanced age *per se*. It is true that there are special diseases which afflict the aged, such as, arteriosclerosis, arthritis, bronchitis, bronchial pneumonia, cancer, cerebral diseases, cataract, prostatic diseases, and various diseases of the special senses, but there are also many diseases that prevail among children and adults which do not customarily affect people of advanced age.

Cicero's third reason is the lack of enjoyment and pleasures usually experienced by elderly people. This concept fails to take into account the kind of pleasures enjoyed by various age groups. Pleasure changes with age. The pleasures a child or a young man enjoys, do not appeal, as a rule, to older persons. Old people frequently derive pleasure from reading their daily papers, listening to the radio, and conversing with friends. Some are good story tellers. One may observe them in the parks listening to each other with great interest, and relating their own experiences. Often they watch young people passing by with critical although usually benevolent eyes. The aged also derive pleasure from their children and grandchildren.

The expectation of death is perhaps the most important cause that makes the life of aged persons unhappy. A normal person, in

perfect health, has undoubtedly, to some degree, a salutary fear of death. Yet the fear of death is not "normal," from a biological point of view; it is a mental attribute which has been developed in the process of evolution for the protection of the species. It is not a natural instinct. Animals—especially the lower forms—do not possess it. Metchnikoff describes this fear as one of the disharmonies of life. As we rise in the animal kingdom, the aversion to and the fear of death increases. Lower down in the scale are animals which can witness the death of their fellow beings without the slightest evidence of comprehending that a like fate awaits them some day. But, while higher up among the mammals there are others that manifest acute fear when confronted with the dead bodies of their own kind, we may doubt whether any animal, however highly developed (excluding man), is possessed of the knowledge that death is inevitable. That knowledge is one of the penalties which man must pay for his higher development. Thus, man is the only animal that has the conception that he is a mortal creature. It seems that nature, as a compensation, permitted man to live the entire course of life, because in his case only can old age be useful to the race. Lower animals have no more conception of death than a tree has. In consequence they live with full enjoyment of the present as if every agreeable sensation were eternal. Man, however, must always bear in mind that life cannot go on forever—that old age cannot be eluded, whether it comes slowly or suddenly, early or late.

There are two main reasons why the expectation of death mars the life of the aged: (1) fear of pain, and (2) fear of the "future." With regard to the first, in natural decay, there is reason to believe that death is attended with very little suffering. One suddenly feels that he cannot walk or jump as he used to do and that his mind does not function with its old agility. The organs are gradually worn out by age, and at the end the person sinks into gradual insensibility, unconscious that dissolution awaits him. Death always takes the individual by surprise, whether it comes in the form of violence or by the slow decay of age, and it really operates as a transference of existence from one generation to another without consciousness of the loss in the one who dies. Instant death is not attended by pain of any perceptible duration, and it is only when lingering death occurs in youth and middle age that the suffering is severe.

The testimony of philosophers and poets shows that there is no pain in natural death. Plato is said to have died while writing; Goethe died in a similar manner. The great anatomist and surgeon, William

Hunter, in his dying breath, whispered to a friend, "If I had strength enough to hold a pen, I would write down how easy and pleasant a thing it is to die." Tolstoy, in his later years, stated, "No one is afraid of falling asleep, and yet the phenomena of sleep are like those of death; there is the same loss of consciousness. Man does not fear sleep, although the arrest of consciousness is as complete as in death."

Sir William Osler stated, "I have carefully noted about five hundred death beds, studied particularly with reference to the modes of death and the sensations of the dying. Ninety suffered pain or distress of one sort or another; eleven showed mental apprehension, two positive terror; and one expressed spiritual exultation, one a little remorse. The great majority gave no sign one way or the other; like their birth, their death was a sleep and a forgetting."

The fear that accompanies old age is probably heightened and increased by the funereal gloom which surrounds death. I distinctly recall a case in point: When I was a lad of about six, an old neighbor died. He had been a kind old man. I can still picture him as he used to pass our house, in his long caftan and his velvet cap, with his long beard flowing over his chest. On such occasions, he never missed greeting me, and frequently he stopped to talk to me. Occasionally he took some goody out of his coat pocket and handed it to me. He died suddenly. I had the faith of a child that all good people go to heaven, and that surely our kind neighbor would not be denied an honorable place in that happy land. I do not recall ever having witnessed a funeral before his, for my mother had always been careful to keep me away from funeral processions. This time I could not resist watching it through my window the next morning. I saw the black coffin covered with the black crêpe, and I heard the wailing of his family and friends. The very sight of the gathering around the black coffin somehow froze my heart. I felt for the first time as if a black cloud hovered before my eyes. This was my first vision of the gloom of death. I began to cry. I could no longer think of my happy old friend in heaven.

Death does not now inspire me with any fear. There was a time when I dreaded it; but then merely because it meant deprivation and suffering to my dear ones, who depended upon me for their existence. The thought of cessation of being *per se* has never had the power to afflict me. It is indeed a sorry thing that the man who has faced destiny calmly throughout a life of stress and of striving, may, when he nears the end, be dishonored by unfitting weakness. Happily I am not troubled by such dark anticipations.

Cicero mentioned the approach of death as the fourth cause that mars happiness in old age. Evidently he had reference to the concept of "survival," a subject which, since the days of Plato, has been the rallying point of religion and philosophy. The arguments on the subject of immortality, pro and con, are incalculable in number. It certainly is not the province of a physician to enter into a controversial subject of this kind, nor is this a suitable place to do so. I will only refer to one form of survival which is generally agreed upon: namely, the survival of the qualities and traits inherent in parents, in their children.

The laws of evolution and succession provide for a continuation in the child of the qualities most active in the parents. Blessed are the parents whose children carry a more favorable combination of genes! As long as our better qualities are transmitted to the offspring, it is selfish to dwell too much on our own personal share in the future. For even if we admit that the soul is immortal, what happiness could there be in the future state of existence, if there is a break in the continuity of memory? In existence as we know it, the body is just as essential a part of our self as is the soul.

In all ages man has been eager to find a means of escaping death. He has searched all four corners of the earth and defied all kinds of perils to find the means of restoring youth. When he failed in his effort to obtain physical survival, he set out on a long and winding journey to acquire spiritual immortality. If abstract truths could be determined in the same fashion as national policy issues—by a vote, a showing of hands or a counting of heads—then the doctrine of human immortality would deserve to rank among the most firmly established of truths. In other words, if the question of the existence of life after death were put to the ballot in a free election before the whole of mankind, there can be no doubt that the ayes would outnumber the nays by an overwhelming majority. The few dissenters would be hopelessly outvoted, and their feeble voices would be drowned out in the general affirmative roar. However, as we well know, abstract thoughts cannot be confirmed or denied by even a completely unanimous vote of erring humanity.

It is as hard to picture immortality of the soul without the body as to think of the life of the body without the soul. Energy cannot be separated from matter. No spirit can enjoy the pleasures of life without the organs of the special senses; indeed it is more reasonable to believe in the resurrection of both body and soul than in the survival of the soul only.

Growth and maturity must be followed by decay and death in old age, as morning and afternoon are succeeded by evening and night, or spring and summer imply autumn and winter. Organic beings are so constituted that some must die in order that others may live.

It is certainly not my purpose to discourage lofty speculations or dissuade the reader from brooding over the problem of the unknowable—the vast abyss between science and religious philosophy. However, one should bear in mind that such speculations, aside from their psychological value, have thus far brought no concrete, intrinsic gains to humanity. Spending our time on such unanswerable problems causes us to spend much of our journey through life considering what we cannot answer on a rational basis. This is one of the problems which the sage, the thinker, and the ignorant man alike are unable to elucidate on a rational basis.

Perhaps some day the intellectual centers of the brain, which are now obscure will be better understood. Until then the mental phenomena of human life will remain a mystery. The destiny of man's mind or soul must be assigned to the domain of religion. To those who are not inclined to indulge in mysteries, the advice of Confucius may serve us well. When a disciple asked him to define death, he replied: "You don't know life yet; how can you know death?" To others, the advice of Socrates may serve as a guide: "First he should persevere until he has attained one of two things: either he should discover or learn the truth, or if this be impossible, I would have him take the best and most irrefragable of human notions, and let this be the raft upon which he sails through life—not without risks, as I admit, if he cannot find some work of God which will move and safely carry him."

I have more than rounded out my threescore years and ten prescribed by the psalmist. When, after a long period of labor on a book, my arduous task has at long last been brought to a conclusion, I have laid down my pen with a sigh of thankfulness, knowing that, although my work had many faults, it had been wrought sincerely. In my last hour, may I look back upon life as a long volume duly completed—a biography, faulty to be sure, but as good as circumstances and opportunity permitted.

Index

AARONSOHN, AARON, 279
Ab, the ninth day of, 14
Abba, 13
Abel, Senior, 186
Abraham the patriarch, 56, 57
Abraham the pious, 15
Abramowitz, 149
Abramson, 192
acropolis, 285
Aesculapius, 284
Agronsky, Gershon; editor of the Jerusalem Post, 191
Aids of Zion, 191
Albo, 116
Alcmaeon, 284
Alexander II, 44, 103, 234
Alexander III, Czar of Russia, 21, 44, 103
Allgemein Krankenhaus, 289, 290
Alliance Israelite Universelle, 132, 282
Almemer, 296
Alwardt, 329
America, 110, 130
Am Olam, 213
Amram, David Werner, 156, 158
Anaxagoras, 284
Anaximander, 284
Anglo-Jewish Association, 132, 282
Antiochus, 235
Antipatris, Arsof, 276
apothecary shop, 20
appointments: associate apothecary on board ship, 166; medical advisory board at the St. Agnes Hospital, 305
Areopagus, 285
Aristotle, 169, 284, 285
Atlantic City, 314-335
Atlantic County Hospital for Mental Diseases, 325
Atlantic County Hospital for Tuberculosis, 325
Atlantic Shores Hospital, 325
Atlas, Eliezer; editor of *Hakerem,* 102, 116
Attlee, Prime Minister, 312
Azhar, University of Cairo, 238
BAAL-NES, RABBI MEIR, 12
Bacon, 337, 338
Bahya, 116
Baker, Edward I., 318
Baker, Judith, 318
Balfour Declaration, 310
Ball, Dr. Michael, 156
Banting and Best, Drs., 326
Barathone, 285
Bar Kochba, 79, 256
Bar Mitzvah, 35, 37, 47, 61
Barondes, Joseph, 192, 310
bathhouse, 13
Bauer, Jacob, 156
Bauman, Colonel, 197
Bausk, a town of 3,500: 106
Bausker, Eliezer, 108
Bear Gordon Lodge, 193
Bear, the *shul rufer,* 90, 91
Belkin, Israel, 224
Bell, Alexander Graham, inventor of telephone, 214
Bellman, Louis, 192
Bendet, Rabbi, 75, 77, 79
Bendiner, Herman, 192
Berkovitz, S., 192
Berl Seredniker, Rabbi, 102
Berlin, 299
Bernheim, Dr. Albert, 222
Bet Haknesset Shel Ezra, 237
bet hamidrash, 13, 98, 111
Beulah, Sarah, 51
Bevin, Foreign Minister, 312
Bezalel Society, 268
Biblisch-Talmudische Medizin, 121
Bierenbaum, Nathan, 224, 301
billy-goat, Peiye Beile's, 25
Bilu organization, 249
Birzer prodigy, 122
black measles, 86
Blaustein, David, 223
Blazer, Isaac, Rabbi of St. Petersburg, 96
blood accusation, Passover, 88
blue hills of Judea, 241
Bluestein, Dr. J., 192

Bluestone, Dr. Joseph, 147
Board of Education, appointment to, 208
Boaz, 269
Bochroch, Dr. Max, 181
Bolton, Dr. Joseph, 181
boundaries of *Eretz Israel,* 54
Brainin, Reuben, 102, 224
Brandeis, Louis D., 318
Brav, Aaron, 222
Brav, Herman, 222
Brav, Victor, 191
Brith Sholom, 192
Brodie, Mr., 142
brook of Reuben, 251
Brown, Michael, 191
Brutzkus, J., 108
Bryant, William Cullen, 340
Buchhalter, 143
Burnstein, A. S., 147
Burstein, M., 142
Byron, 338

CAESARIA, 96
Cairo, 237
Cantor, 17, 18, 34
Carmoly's "History of Jewish Physicians," 121
"catchers," the, 49
Cellis, Morris, 191
cemetery, old, 14
certificate honoring half century of medical practice, 325
certificates of efficiency in *shechita,* 125
Chayye Leah, 72
Chiari, 290
Church of the Holy Sepulchre, 264
Church of the Nativity, 263
Cicero, Marcus Tullius (106–43 B. C.), 341-345
Cleveland, Grover, 166
Cohen, 25
Cohen, Dorothy, 220
Cohen, Gustav, 222
Cohen, Joseph, 191
Cohen, Dr. Solomon Solis, 182
Coles, Dr. Stricker, 229
college days in Philadelphia, 154
Colonist, Hirsh, 17, 296
Condor, Major, 242
Cooper, Joseph, 166
Cournos, Elhanan, 222, 223
Court of Saladin, 237
Cresson, John, 269; Mary, 269; Warder, 269
Crimean War, 49
Cutler, Colonel, 309
Cuzy, 329

DA COSTA., DR. J. M., 171
Da Costa, Dr. John Chalmers, 171, 173, 174
Daguerre, inventor of the photographic camera, 214
Dalton's "Physiology," 339
David, the proprietor of the tavern, 115
Davis, Professor Edward P., 181
Davy, Sir Humphrey (1778–1829), inventor of the miner's safety lamp, 215
Deaver, Dr. John, 171
Deborah, wife of Eliezer ben Yehudah, 255
Declaration of San Remo, 312
DeHaas, Jacob, 309
Deinard, Ephraim, 221
Dembitz, Arthur, 222
Dembo, Dr. Isaac, 124
Dercum, Professor F. X., 168, 181
destiny of man, the, 58
Deutsche Gass, 18
Din Torah, 33
Diodorus, 230
Diogenes, 284
diploma, medical, 174
dispensary, 324
dissecting room, 161
Dobrizhoffer, 230
Dolitzky, Mendel, 223
Dorshe Daath Society, 221
Drachman, Dr. B., 149
Dreyfus Affair, 184, 309, 329
Drumond, 329
Dubsewitz, B., 221
Dunlap, the cripple, 196

"EATING DAYS," THE, 49, 73
Eber, Dr. S., 289
Edison, Thomas, inventor of phonograph, 214
Egypt, 234
Ehrlich, Paul, 327
Eichel, Isaac, 131
Eichholz, Adolf, 156, 159, 197
Eichler, M., 222
Eisenberg, Aaron, 245
Ekron, 250
Eliasberg, Rabbi Mordechai, of Bausk-Latvia, 102, 105, 107
Eliezer ben Yehudah, 224, 255, 282

Elijah, the cup of, 24
Elijah of Vilna, 12, 337
Eliot, George, 339
Empedocles, 284, 227
Englander, Samuel, 192
Epidemic of smallpox, 60
Epstein, H., 192
Erasistratus, as a clinician, 235
Erter, J., 76, 281
Esterman, Rabbi David Isaac, 123
Esther, daughter of Hirsh Colonist, 17, 296, 297
Euripides, 284
excommunication (*heirem*), 34
exodus to South Africa, the, 109

FAMILY NAMES, 43
Faraday, inventor of electric motor and dynamo, 214
farmhouse, 112
fear, of the dissecting room, 161; in our house, 40
Feast of Esther, 82
Feinberg, Louis, 191
Feinsinger, David, 34
Festival of *Shavuot*, 136
Fine, S., 222
Finkelgreen, David, 191
fire, 16
Fisher, Louis, 191
Fleisher, Benjamin, 156
Foltmann, 55
Forbes, Professor W. S., 164
Foster, Rabbi, 330
Fox, M., 186
Frankel, A. H., 185
Franklin, Benjamin, 141, 154
Franklin, Deborah, 141
Freeman, Moses, 213, 214
Friedenwald, Harry, 224
Friedlander, David, 131
Friedlander, Israel, 224
Friedman, Rabbi Lipman, 108
Frug, Simon, 80
Fuchs, Professor E., 289, 290

GAGIN, RABBI ABRAHAM HAI, 270
Galen, Claudius, 169, 236
Galter, David, editor of the Philadelphia Jewish Exponent, 191
Gan Shmuel, 279
General Dispensary, 324
Genizah, 237
George, Lloyd, 310
Gilgul, 26
Giller, Herr, 252
Ginsberg, Jacob, 192
Ginsburg, M., sister of Achad Haam, 281
Ginsburg, M. A., 76, 99, 281
Gitel, Hinde, 116
Goethe, Johann Wolfgang, 343
Goldberg, Abraham, 192
Goldman, the *feldsher*, 119, 121
Goldman, Nathaniel, 191, 222
Goldsmith, Oliver, 145
Goldstein, Rabbi Kalman, 116, 122
Gordomy evolves into Gordon, 45
Gordon, Bear, 297
Gordon, Benjamin Lee, 192
Gordon, Professor Cyrus H., 335
Gordon, David, 281
Gordon, Dr. George, 58, 86, 87, 109, 110, 127, 185, 222
Gordon, Lord George, 46
Gordon, Grace, 299
Gordon, Helen, 86, 87, 207
Gordon, Dr. Maurice, 335
Gordon, Max E., 86, 87, 127, 193, 300
Gordon, Norman, 335
Gordon, Yehuda Leib, 76, 117, 176, 281
Gottheil, Professor Richard, 185, 186, 188, 300
Grabski, 329
Gray's "Anatomy," 339
Grayev, Nathan, 192
Greenstone, Julius, 222
Gross, Joseph, 222
Grubowsky, H., 222
Guide of the Perplexed, The, 107
Gurion, Ben, 292

HABER, MORRIS, 192
Haftorah, 61
Hajek, 290
Hakolel, Rav (chief rabbi of New York), 142
Halevi, Yehuda, 55
Hamantashen, 37
Hamid, Abdul, 286
Hamdiah Hospital for Children, 289
Hanefesh, 26
Hankin, Joshua, 279
Hanoch, Dr. Joseph Kohut, 149
Hanukkah, 14, 40, 52, 254
Hapisgah, a Hebrew weekly, 147
Harding, President Warren G., 310
Hare, Professor Hobart Emory, 160
harem, 201

Harkavy, Alexander, 147
Harris, Bernard, 222
Harrison, President Benjamin, 141, 166
haskalah, 55, 76, 117
Hatikvah, 239
hazan (cantor), 17, 18, 34
Hebrew, modern, 116
Hebrew teacher, 28
heder (Hebrew school), 21, 38, 108
Heilprin, Michael, 244
Heine, Heinrich, 337
Hekdesh, 13
Helmholz, inventor of the ophthalmoscope, 215
Henry Street Evening School, 145
Heraclitus, 284
Herophilus, 235
Herschel, John, 330
Hertz, Rabbi, 150
Herz, Joseph Herman, 149
Herz, Marcus, 131
Herzberg, Max, 156, 195
Herzl, Nathan, 301
Herzl, Theodore, 184, 185, 251, 287, 291, 329
Herzog, Mrs. R., 148
Hess, Moses, 99, 192, 337
Hewson, Dr. A., 162
Hilfverein der deutschen Juden, 132, 282
Hill of Mars, 285
Hill of the Muses, 285
Hill of the Nymphs, 285
Hill of the Pynx, 285
Hillel, Leib, 110, 127
Hillel, Rabbi, 51
Hilmi, Pasha, 286
Hippocrates, 227, 284
Hirsch, Baron De, 213
Hodes, Aaron, 123, 124
Hoffman, Charles, 221
Hoffman, David, 222
Holland, Dean J. W., of the Jefferson Medical College, 157
Honor, Dr. Hirsh, 81
Hotel Petach Tikvah, 272
Hotel Reinhard, 252
House of Refuge, 208
Hovevei Zion, 135, 146
Hug Ivri, 318
Hulda, 251
Hunter, William, 344
Husik, Dr. Isaac, 157, 222
I. T. O., 302
Ikkarim, 107
Imber, Naphtali Herz, 221
Imperial Museum of Antiquities, 289
Independence Hall, Philadelphia, 311
Isaacs, Mrs. R., 148, 150
Isborzik, 41, 43
isur v'heter, 110
Itamar ben Avi, 224, 255, 311
Ivri, Hug, 318

Jachas, Rabbi Philip, of Riga, 135
Jacob, an innkeeper of Gordomy, 45
Jacobs, Dr., 158
Jacobson, M., 222
Jaffa, Dr. H., 277
Jaffa, M., 150
Jastrow, Dr. Marcus, 149, 156
Jefferson Hospital, 178
Jerusalem, 92, 258
Jewish Colonization Association, 214
Jewish maiden of Lithuania, the typical, 67
Jewish Territorial Organization (I. T. O.), 302
Jews of Caucasia, 251
Job, 57
Joel, Aaron, 131
Jonah, the *feldsher,* 18
Jonas, 53
Joseph, Jacob, of Vilna, 142

Kahan, Dr. Bernstein, 273
Kahanowitz, I., of Greensburg, Pa., 255
Kant, Immanuel (1724–1804), 131
Kantor, Leon, 102, 108
Katra, 246
Keen, Professor W. W., 161
Kirshbaum, David, 156
Klaus, 13
Klaus, Markel's, 102
Klebs-Loeffler bacillus, 169
Klein, Gutman, 192
Klein, Moses, 185, 194, 214, 222
Königsberg, 131
Kopstein, Jacob, 315
Kovno, 93
Kraus, Sol S., 192
Krauskopf, Rabbi Joseph, 158
Krochmal, Nachman, 281
Kruger, Herman, 185, 330
Kuzari, the, 107, 116

LACHMANN, BANKER, OF BERLIN, 96
Lapin, Eliezer Leib, 43
Laupu, M. Samuel, 241
Leaf, William B., 317
Lebanon Hospital, 307
Lebensohns, the, 76
Lebensohn, Micha Joseph, 79, 99, 281
Lebus, Rabbi Mayer, 131
Lederer, Ephraim, 156
Leffman, Mr., 158
Lehrer, Reuben, 244
Lesser, Rabbi Isaac, 269
Lessing, Gotthold Ephraim, 337
Letter from father, 150
Levando, Leo, 103
Levi, Rabbi Gershon B., 157, 222
Levin, Epstein, 192
Levin, Rabbi Oscar, 191
Levin, Dr. Shmaryahu, 224
Levinsohn, B., 192
Levinsohn, Isaac Bear, 76, 281
Levinthal, Rabbi Abraham, 100, 102
Levinthal, Rabbi B., 100, 185, 310, 317
Levinthal, Israel, 191
Levinthal, Louis, 191, 222, 317
Levy, Martin, 317
Lewis, Maurice, 171
Lewis, Judge William M., 191, 317
Library of Rabbi M. Eliasberg, 107
Light, L., 191
Liknatz, David, 185, 222
Lilienblum, M. L., 99, 105, 281
Lipkin, Rabbi Israel, 94, 96, 116
Lipkin, Lipman, 103, 118
Lipshitz, Jacob, 95
Lisan, Manuel, 191
Lithuanian democracy, 128
Lithuanian rabbis, the, 80
London, Mayer, 147
Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth, 338
Lowenberg, Dr. Samuel, 222
Luzatto, M. H., 69, 76, 281
Lyceum, 285
Lydda, 255

MACCABEAN ZION ASSOCIATION, 191
Maccabee, 34
Machbi, 108
Mack, Judge Julian, 309
Magil, Joseph, 185
Magnes, J. L., 189, 192
Mahoza, 96
Maimonides, 55, 107, 116, 237
Main Street, 15
Malachowsky, Hillel, 185
malaria, 280
MaLBim (Rabbi Mayer Lebus), 131
malkot, 70
Mandelkern, Dr. Solomon, 45, 102, 221
Mandelstam, Benjamin, 116
Mandelstam, Leon, 116
Mandelstam, Dr. Max, 116, 302
Manne, M. Z., 77, 79, 281
Mapu, Abraham, 76, 78, 80, 99, 281
Mapu, S., 78
Marcellinus, Ammianus, 236
Marco Polo, 230
Marconi, inventor of wireless telegraphy, 215
Margolis, Abraham H., 139
Margolis, Jacob, 192
Markus, the advocate, 119
Marmorek, Alexander, 287, 300, 301
marriage brokers, 219
Mars, Hill of, 285
Marshall, Louis, 309, 310
Marvah, Rabbi Benjamin, 74, 80
Maskilim, 99
Masliansky, Hirsh, 108, 224
Massaryk, 311
match-makers, the, 67
maternal impression, doctrine of, 226
Matt, David C., 191
Matzot bakery, 87
May Laws, 33
Mayer, Gabriel H., 222
McCormick, inventor of reaper, 214
Media, village of, 254
Mediterranean Sea, 234
Megillah, the, 37
Meizner, Reverend Dr., 148
Melamed, Raphael, 222
melammed, the, 39
Memphis, the capital of the Pharaohs, 238
Mendelsohn, Moses, 55
Mendelsohn School, the, 116
Mendelsohn's translation of the Pentateuch, 337
Menorat Hamoar, 16
Meyerhoff, Max, 236, 238
Mezuzot, 18
Mikveh Israel, 13, 241, 242
Mikveh Israel Synagogue, 269
Miller, B. F., 192
Minot, Dr., co-discoverer of method for controlling pernicious anemia, 327
Mintz, Dr. Moses, 147

Mizrachi, 108
Mizrachi, Shalom, 316
Mohilever, Rabbi Samuel, 279
Mondat, 289
Montefiore, Sir Moses, 12, 263, 264, 271
Moore, Mayor J. Hampton, 311
Morais, Henry, 222
Morais, Reverend Sabbato, 149, 156, 157, 222
Mordel, Albert, 223
Mordel, Louis J., 223
Mordel, Maurice, 223
Mordel, Phineas, 222, 223
Morris, Louis, 192
Morris, William, 222
Morse, inventor of the telegraph, 214
Mossenson, Ben Zion, 224
Mount Herzl, 292
Mount Moriah, 262
Mount of Olives, 264
Mourning over the destruction of the Temple, 60
Murphy, Dr., co-discoverer of method for controlling pernicious anemia, 327
Mutilation to avoid military service, 44
Muses, Hill of the, 285

NAHARDEA, 96
names, adoption of family, 43
Nathan, Edward, 222
Nathan, Marvin, 222
Native Arabs, 242
Naviaser, Hirsch, 94
Nes Zionah, 244
Netter, Charles, 241
Neustadt, 11, 280
New Judea, 307
New York, 139
Niebecker, Captain, 208
Noordon, von, 290
Nordau, Max, 287
notion peddler, 39
Nothnagel, Professor, 290
Nymphs, Hill of the, 285

OCCIDENT, THE, 269
Ohavei Zion, 191
Oliensis, Benzion, 222
Oliphant, Sir Lawrence, 249
Oliver, Dr. Charles, 303
Oppinger, Dr. Hans, 290
Osler, Sir William, 344

PALLEY, M., 317
Parthenon, 285
Parvin, Professor Theophilus, 172, 173
Passover, 23, 87, 88
Pasteur, Louis (1822–1895), 215
Pericles, 285
Persky, Judge Joseph B., 317
Phidias, famous Greek sculptor (500?–432 B. C.), 284
Philappapus, 285
Pindar, 284
Pines, Yehiel Michael, 255, 256
Pinsker, Dr. Leon, 105, 155
Pirhei Zion, 80
Plato, 227, 285, 343
Platz, Mark, 15
Pliny, 240
Pneumonia, 178
Police surgeon, 227
political economy, 33
Politzr, Professor, 290
Portner, William, 191
pregnancy, false, 201
professional ethics, 204
Puchner, Rabbi Solomon, 108
Pumbeditha, 96
Purim minstrels, 35
Purim mockery of *yeshivah* teachers, 83
Purim, story of, 36
Purim, Tractate of, 83
Purishkewich, 329
Pynx, Hill of the, 285
Pythagoras, 284

RABBI, CHIEF, 150
Rabinowitz, Rabbi Samuel (of Aleksot), 106, 118, 191
Rachel, 263
Radin, Adolph, 223
Rameses II, 238
Ramleh, 252, 272
Raphael, Joseph, 72
Rappaport, S. J., 76, 281
Reckfuss, Dr. S., 171
Regoler, Avremel, 116
Rehovot, 245
Reibstein, B., 191
Reines, Rabbi Isaac, of Lida (founder of Mizrachi), 108
rescue, 23
Reubin, Joseph, 115
Revel, Bernard, 222
Rice, Mr., 213, 214
Richard Coeur de Lion, 276

Richards, Bernard, 310
Rishon Le-Zion, 243
Rohling, 329
Roschovsky, Dr. Joseph, 317
Rosen, Ben, 222
Rosen, S. S., 185
Rosenberg, Adam, 147
Rosenberg, Morris, 192
Rosenblatt, 162
Rosenblum, Adolph, 192
Rosenfeld, Morris, 224
Rosenthal, H., 185
Rosenthal, Morris, 108
Rosenzweig, Gershon, 223
rosh yeshivah, 68, 95
Rosof, 286
Rothschild, Baron De, 277, 280
Rothschild, Edward, 222
Rothschild, Lord, 310
Rotkish, 23
Rubinson, L. S., 192
Rubinstein, Frank, 191

SAADIA, 116
Sabbath Day, the, 31
Sachs, David, 185
Sack, Hayim, 116
Saladin, 237
Salanter, Rabbi Samuel, 320
Salem, Virginia, 179
Salinger, Dr. Julius, 171
Salus, Joseph W., 317
Salzmann, Dr., 290
Sandler, D. R., 317
San Remo, Declaration of, 312
Sarah, wife of Moshe, 47
School of Arts and Crafts, The Bezalel, 268
Seder, 24
Seleucus Nicator, 235
Selig, Rabbi Eliezer, 17
Seltzer, Thomas, 222
Sepporis, 96
Shaffer, Rabbi S., 185
Shapiro, Constantine, 103
Shapiro, Rabbi Eliezer Selig, 62
Shapiro, Professor Herman, 118
Shapiro, Jacob, son of the rabbi of Neustadt, 280
Shapiro, Rabbi Leib, 99
Shapiro, Rabbi Moshe, 317
Shatz, Berl, 72
Shatz, Professor Boris, 73, 258, 259, 268
Shavuot, Festival of, 136
Shechter-Taylor Collection of Cambridge University Library, 237
shehita, 110
Sheinkin, Mendel, 224, 241
Shevket Pasha, 286
Shlomele, the kitten, 30, 37, 38, 40, 57
Shmookler, Dr. Henry B., 222
Shub, Rabbi Elijah Mordechai, 51
Shub, Leib Hillel, 301
Shub, the Hazan, 277
Shulman, Kalman, 76, 79, 99
Sidebotham, Herbert, 312
Simeon, Uncle, 21
Singer, Benjamin, 222
Sivitz, Rabbi Moshe, of Pittsburgh, 147, 148
Skidelsky, M., 222
Slabodka, 83, 84, 95, 96
Slonimsky, H. Z., 118
Slonimsky, Nathan, 191
smallpox, 60
Smilansky, Dr., 147
Smolenskin, Perez, 116, 281
Socrates, 284, 285
Sokolov's English-Yiddish Reader, 144
Sons of God, the, 57
Sophocles, 284
Sorano, Mary, the "diplomatic midwife," 202
Sorkin, 103
South Hampton, 302
Spanish American War, 197
Speaker, Henry, 149, 222
Spector, Rabbi Isaac Elhanan, 12, 95, 337
Spermatozoon, 169
Spivack, Charles, 155, 157
Stalberg, Dr. S., 317
Staller, Max, 192
Standard for manhood, the, 73
Stanovoi, 22
Steenbock, Dr. Harry, 327
Steinbach, Dr. Louis W., 156
Stoeker, 329
Strabo, 230
Strack, Professor H. L., 23
Student Society, 74
Study circles, 35
Sukkah, 28
Sulzberger, Judge Meyer, 156, 221, 269, 301
Sura, 96
Surnames of immigrants in the United States, 46

Suste, a stream, 12
Synagogue, 13
Syrkin, Nathan, 223
Szold, Henrietta, 190

TALMUD, 110, 295
Talmudic medical practice, 20
Taurigan, 50
Tcheikeshok, 100
Teller, Oscar B., 156
Telsi, 127
Thales of Miletus, 254
Thucydides, 284
Tiberias, 96
Tierkel, David B., 191, 192
Tilsit, 292
Tomb of Rachel, 263
Tombs of the kings of the house of David, 264
Tominossa, Peter, 163
Torah, 117
Touro, Judah, 271
Tractate Purim, the, 83
Trendellenburg, Friedrich, 290
Tuberculosis, 178
Tul Kerem, 276
Tutonic, 302

UGANDA, 301
Ukranian laborer, 177
University of Vienna, 289
Ur Casdim, 56
Usiskin, M., 286, 287

VALE OF SOREK, 251
Vernick, Abraham, 191
Vienna, University of, 289
Vilna, 51, 52, 142
vis medicatrix naturae, 180
Volozin, 120
Von Bosch, discoverer of sphygmomanometer, 215

WADI ES SURAR, 251
Wailing Wall, the, 258
Waksman, Selman, 327
Warburg, Otto, 287
Wedding ceremonies, 64
Wednesday *mark* (fair), 27
Weilerstein, Rabbi R. B., 317
Weitzman, Chaim, 246, 292, 310, 312
Werner, Philip, 220
Wessly, 281
Whartman, L. C., 317
Wills Eye Hospital, 307
Wilson, President, 310
Wilsonian idea "to make the world safe for democracy," 309
wireless, 215
Wise, Rabbi Stephen, S., 185, 187, 300, 309
Wolf, Shur, editor of the Hebrew weekly, *Hapisgah,* 147
Wolfe, Albert, 156
Wolffsohn, David, 286, 287
Worno, 63
Wunderbar's *"Biblisch-Talmudische Medizin,"* 121

Yam Haggadol (THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA), 234
Yankel, the roofer, 16
Yankel, the *yeshuvnik,* 111
Yardenah, 281
Yehudah, Eliezer ben, 224, 255, 282
Yekels, Reuben, 55, 62
Yellin, David, 224, 269
Yemenite Jews, 245
yeshivah, rosh, 68, 95
Yisrael, Rab (a goldsmith), 17
Yohanan ben Zakkai, Rabbi, 96
Yom Kippur, 70
Young Men's Hebrew Association, 155

ZADOK, RABBI, 337
Zakkai, Rabbi Yohanan ben, 96
Zangwill, Israel, 301, 302
Zhagory, 109, 116, 120
Zichron Yaakov, 276
Zion's friend, 330
Zodikoff, Bezalel, 108
Zola, Emile, 184
Zolotkoff, Leon, 223