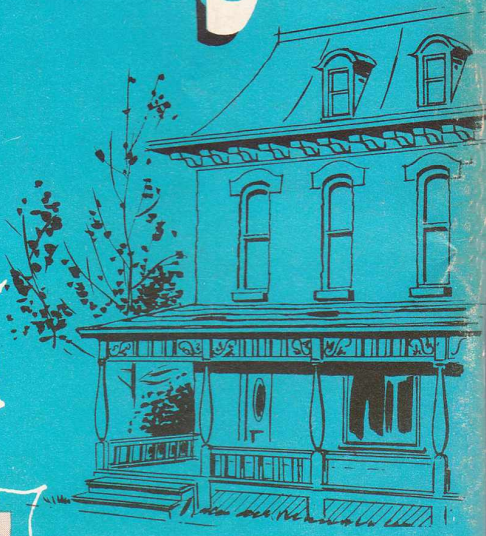
Those were the Days



WILLIAM HOFFMA

Price $3.00

Those were the Days

by William Hoffman

William Hoffman has opened a wide door to a vista of our yesteryears. He leads you gently, but with a firm hand, through an era most of us have lived through and wistfully look back upon. These are warm recollections of people and places familiar to all of us whether we live in St. Paul or any other metropolis.

If by chance you do not know these people personally, you will recognize them nevertheless as counterparts of the most fascinating individuals in your own life whose paths have crossed yours many times. They are wistful and sad, good and bad, but they are made of real flesh and blood. They come to life to stir and excite nostalgic memories so long asleep.

The era he writes of is gone forever; it has slipped away silently and without protest although we want so much to remember it. William Hoffman has helped us to remember it in a way which will give us the fullest measure of delight. As long as we read and re-read these richly endowed stories, we will not forget.

You will find no message, no trumpet or bugle call for action. Yet the drama and excitement in the once-upon-a-time lives of big and little people is no less compelling.

(Continued on back flap)

Publishers

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THOSE WERE THE DAYS

★

by William Hoffman

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T. S. DENISON & COMPANY

Minneapolis

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THOSE WERE THE DAYS

to

My Wife and my Children

My Parents

The memory of my Grandmother

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I acknowledge the help unknowingly given me by my godfather Daniel and his wife Jennie —and also to the hilarious antics of the Green boys, my childhood heroes.

Much of this material was surreptitiously noted in the head of a little boy who hid under Daniel's front porch while Philip (my father), Daniel, and the other neighbors sat in the dusk of the evening to air their views in the free air of a democratic country.

Johnson had his Boswell, my godfather Daniel, his Velvel.

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FOREWORD

William Hoffman is at his happiest best when he is relating with people. It does not matter whether this relationship is direct, as for example when he deals with human beings in the capacity of professional social worker; or whether it's remote, as when he communicates with them through the columns of the *Saint Paul Jewish News*. I believe that this humanistic bent is the alluring trait which best characterizes Bill's nature and which also accounts for his successes as social worker, author, and raconteur. Bill Hoffman loves people and people love him. This substantively is the blessed state of Bill's existence. It is as simple—and as unique—as all that.

Several years ago, my good friends, Frieda and Harry Kraines, publishers of the *Saint Paul Jewish News,* invited Bill Hoffman to write a regular column for their newspaper. This turned out to be an inspiration. Bill used his column to reminisce about life and events in the old West Side of Saint Paul where he was born and raised to young manhood, and which until very recently was a focus of Jewish community life in Saint Paul. His column was an instantaneous success. Letters came from readers near and far, from Jews and

non-Jews, from young and old. They wanted more. Today, Bill's column, which he calls "Those were the Days," is hands down the most popular and sought after feature in the *Saint Paul Jewish News*. The columns kept coming with an effortless grace in the years that followed, while the fan letters pouring into the office of the publishers assumed the proportions of a tidal wave. A swelling chorus of delighted readers wanted the happy moments of "Those Were the Days" captured in the more permanent format of a book. Here is their wish fulfilled.

Those Were the Days is a book filled with many of the columns which Bill wrote for the *Saint Paul Jewish News* during the last three years along with some others. The reader will easily recognize in the book a literary quality which smacks of excellence. The stories are chock-full of humor, pathos, and those other ingredients that make for absorbing literary interest. Bill Hoffman is after all a skilled storyteller. It will embarrass his gentle humility no end to suggest that in his account of Jewish life on the upper banks of the Mississippi River he bears a close resemblance to that immortal writer of tragicomic Yiddish tales about late nineteenth century Russian Jewry, Sholom Aleichem. But I think there is still another dimension to Bill's writing.

Most of us tend to think of America's rich immigrant lore as centered in New York City. Much that is preserved in literature about immigrant life of yesteryear is to be found in the work of such eminent writers as Jacob Riis, Louis Adamic, and Sholem Asch.

Historians and sociologists have not hesitated to draw from these writers to round out their own scholarly research.

Hoffman's literary effort generically belongs to the same class of literature. His stories are small, graceful literary sketches which depict episodes and characters from a bygone age. The recollection of them is mostly from memory. If the reader will detect in their narration the passionate partisanship of an eye-witness, let it be borne in mind that this partisanship has been tempered by a disciplined intelligence capable of separating fiction from non-fiction. Such a vignettist as William Hoffman will, therefore, continue to be a valuable source for historians.

Some readers may be surprised to discover the similarity of Jewish immigrant life in the upper mid-West with that of New York's East Side. They needn't be. The Jewish immigrant stock at the turn of the century, and of which Hoffman writes, stemmed from the same general East European sources. Whether they settled in New York City or the City of Saint Paul, their world-view was much the same. They drew spiritual and moral values from a common fountainhead. Even their historical and sociological experiences were more alike than not. It mattered little whether the shipping tag on their cultural baggage read New York City or Saint Paul, its contents reacted much the same once exposed to the environment of the New World. The Jewish immigrants who settled in Saint Paul apparently fashioned cultural patterns very similar to those of the Jewish immigrants who settled in New York City. The

first generation Americans which they sired were accordingly influenced, I suspect, by a social and cultural climate which prevailed in any American community where large numbers of these Jewish immigrants settled early in the twentieth century.

It is precisely this factor which gives *Those Were the Days* its universal interest. A pity other large Jewish communities in America have not brought forth a storyteller of Bill Hoffman's sensitivity, literary skill, and power of recollection. Were his breed commonplace, I am inclined to believe the accounts of *Those Were the Days* would be applicable to communities all over America where East European Jewry settled. The life and times about which Hoffman writes will be familiar to those anywhere who have witnessed this hardy folk striving for acculturation with the American scene. The uniqueness of *Those Were the Days* rests in its attempt to depict this process West of the Mississippi.

Hoffman's stories are very personal. If they lack the journalistic pace of a Riis or the pictorial breadth of an Asch, they are nonetheless reminiscent of such writers through the imagery they produce. Hoffman is no Yiddishist, but I feel his stories have a distinctly Yiddish flavor which Jewish readers will enjoy immensely and non-Jewish readers will savor with delight. At least that has been the experience of these stories in column form. Painstaking efforts were made to give parenthetical definitions of all non-English expressions as a means of assuring for all uninterrupted reading.

When my friend Bill Hoffman honored me with the request to prepare *Those Were the Days* for publication, it seemed to me that as editor the most faithful service I could render the material was to preserve the indigenous charm and historical integrity of the stories. The lustre of the style, the full-bodied humor, the warm and appealing humanism is all Hoffman's. Surely these masterful sketches of an age that is no more will find a comfortable niche in American social literature.

Samuel H. Popper

Saint Paul, Minnesota
March 10, 1957

INTRODUCTION

When I was a senior at Humboldt High School at the unripe old age of sixteen, I wrote a bit of a story which was published in the school paper. Its publication was guaranteed by virtue of the fact that I was the editor. Nonetheless, I recall it well for it was called "My Street," and my street of course was Texas Street. So you see, even at sixteen I was already reminiscing about the good old days.

As you might have expected, everyone in the West Side who could read, or who were learning to read in the Americanization classes at the Neighborhood House, read the story. Overnight I became a celebrity and my mother and father received "naches" from my literary efforts. One by one, however, my many fans lost interest—all with the exception of one, Helen Gransberg, better known as "Hawtkeh." Throughout the intervening years she reminded me at regular intervals to begin the great American novel about the West Side.

I had once promised her to do this in the first blush of fame after "My Street." Since Helen and her parents, brothers, and sisters also lived on Texas Street,

both her interest and persistence were understandable. Alas, however, the years moved on and my literary aspirations withered and dried on the bush of good intentions.

Often, however, I found myself walking through the streets and alleys of my beloved West Side, drawn by a compulsion I cannot completely explain. Wide-eyed and eager, like a little boy, I sought the elusive wisps of nostalgic memories which I knew for me were to be found nowhere else but here. I knew, too, that I must search as a child might and not as an adult. For who does not know that the six senses of adults lack sharpness and imagination, and are attuned best to mundane and other wordly matters?

Some evenings I returned to Neighborhood House to savor deliciously rich moments talking with our great and dearly beloved Miss Currie, and in her I found a kindred spirit. She, too, shared this deep passion for our little world and all that was bound up in it. When we had nothing to say to each other, we looked out into the night at a hundred lights and felt the pulse beat of the "flats."

Other times I have found myself trespassing the sad silence of "schuls" long since closed, and the musty rooms of the Talmud Torah almost hearing the whispering and shuffling of people who are not there. What rich seams of yesteryear's life have I uncovered hidden ever so lightly in dusty corners and quiet byways!

And here I am to share all these little tales of people and places with you, hoping you will enjoy them as I do.

Perhaps I would not have done so, hugging them close to myself as a miser might. But it was not to be so. One fine sunny morning, I crossed the path of friend Morrie Steinman. who with gentle flattery (to which I quickly succumbed, urged me to write them down on paper. For this I am grateful to him, to my kind and gentle friend, Dr. Don Singerman and also to Helen Gransberg, even though I have not fulfilled my promise to her.

To the people in this book, I am indebted, far beyond simple comprehension, for the wonderful life of which I have been so much a part. To my saintly grandmother and dearest parents I give thanks for the well seasoned flavor and heritage of a Jewish upbringing.

But when all is said nothing would have been done without the constant encouragement and material help from my dear friend Dr. Samuel Popper. It was he who labored mightily over me, a willfully stubborn taskmaster, who beat me black and blue over the back with a (kosher) "lockshen" noodle to finish these tales.

William Hoffman

IN THE BEGINNING

If I was an older man I could tell you a great deal more about the beginning. But I am a young man, as ages go these days, and therefore it will be up to you to fill in the gaps with memories and recollections of your own.

Once upon a time, most of the people who follow in the pages ahead lived on the "Flats." This was the West Side, a level expanse of land stretching from the river banks beyond Wabasha Street to the mushroom caves. On the points of the compass, it is not even the West side of St. Paul, and I know not whence comes this misnomer. Perhaps a muskrat trapper who lived on Pig's Eye Island a hundred years ago imbibed too much one day and in his confusion called it the West Side.

Whatever the reason, it has forever remained the West Side, and no one who has ever looked for it found it hard to find. If you were ever to ask for your way there you would be directed with a flick of the finger "over the Robert Street Bridge."

Most have forgotten that once this was a French settlement flavored with names like, Guions, Rivets, Normann, Fountaine, Primeau, and Godbout, tidy

people who had carefully tended gardens and beautiful flowers.

In time however, Jewish immigration crowded them out of the old neighborhood into new ones. Their places along the river were taken up by Poles who made their living catching and selling Carp and "Bawfil" fish to their Jewish neighbors further down. As everyone ought to know, the best "gefilteh fish" comes from an exact combination of Carp and "Bawfil." Even the far away metropolis of New York bought these fish from St. Paul in carload lots shipped by Aaron Margolis and Jules Warshovsky.

Many of the dwellings were below river level and over a period of years as the land was filled in with sand from the river the streets rose above the houses. Around Eva and Eaton Streets the homes were fifteen feet below the street level necessitating the building of steps down from the street to front doors.

One telephone served the whole area from Robert Street to the river. It was located in the Smith and Thomas Drugstore on Robert Street between Fairfield and Filmore and used only to call for doctors.

The first synagogue services were held in Mr. Rutchik's Hay and Feed Store on State and Alabama. Gradually splinter groups left to form their own congregations with the Litvaks and Russians worshipping in separate buildings. The congregation meeting in Rutchik's store subsequently built and occupied the beautiful B'nai Zion Synagogue. Among some of the names coming to mind as prime movers of synagogue builders were the Halpers, (Doovid) Shloymeh John-

son, Rutchik, Tennenbaum, Applebaum, Lipchultz, Brotchner, Rossman, Fine, Yaffes, Frishberg, Ward, Kaplan, and many others equally as active, but hidden for the moment beyond the periphery of my memories.

No one can forget the LaFayette school, a stone bastion within whose walls little urchins learned their three R's. At one time a Mrs. Rosen led a strike to remove the children from this fire trap, but it remained for long a fortress beleagured from within by mischievous students and from without by determined parents. There was its principal, Miss Cummings and her two long remembered disciplinarians, Miss Dawe and Miss Kelly. Miss Cummings was loathe to admit her deafness and therefore never heard even the righteous protestations of innocent lambs brought in for punishment.

The third precinct was a powerful political stronghold receiving personal attention from the political boss of the day, Dick O'Conner and his side-kick Angus Weaver who "helped mark ballots." Politicians came down often during election time with gallons of persuasive whiskey, and hacks and fancy carriages to transport voters to the polls. However to the everlasting dismay and despair of their benefactors our "landsleit" who drank only in moderation merely had their wits sharpened by the liquid generosity.

Everybody's children sold newspapers, and Mogy Bernstien was "king" of the newsboys. The produce market was on Third Street and a big husky Italian policeman kept the market off limits to prevent the newsboys from "borrowing" fruit and vegetables.

Among the fruit peddlers, there was keen competition to get to the market the earliest in order to be the first in their neighborhoods. Junk peddlers made their daily routes bringing in the waste of the city to Gottliebs, to Goldbergs, to Greenberg, to Effress and even directly to Paper-Calmenson on Seventh Street. Only much later did junk dealers become "scrap merchants."

There was a draft too, for World War I rolled around and men were needed. The draft board met at the LaFayette school and faced the same problems of later years. Strangely enough the group which claimed the fewest exemptions were the Syrians who were most anxious to fight the Turks. (Forty years later found both countries still glaring suspiciously at each other—a sad reminder that history teaches us that history does not teach us.)

Rabbi Simon was the spiritual leader of the West Side, a heavy, quiet and gentle man with great learning and many talents. Few knew of his virtuosity with the piano and his skill as a watchmaker. It was often said that the real measure of his greatness and worth was never fully understood and seldom appreciated.

Chiam der Shochet (ritual slaughter) slaughtered fowl observing the ritual and the law with an uncompromising determination. No flaw escaped his microscopic scrutiny—he was as immovable and inflexible as his wife was the opposite.

The first formal Jewish education was provided in Mr. Bromberg's "Chedar" on State and Texas Street before that institution of higher learning—the Talmud

Torah was built. Every Jewish child received a Jewish education generally in an informal way from peddlers who were peddlers out of sheer necessity but scholars at heart. When the long day of work was over, they visited their reluctant scholars to impart Torah and wisdom.

Weddings and other celebrations were held at the Royal Arcaneum Hall on the site of the present Lowry Medical Arts Building, and sponge cake was a great delicacy. However when the Talmud Torah opened, it became the social center of the Jewish community.

Few will remember too, that once the West Side enjoyed a land boom which raised the price of twenty foot lots as high as three thousand dollars. All this came about because of a bridge from State Street to Broadway which was never built. It was only recently that the rock footings at the very end of State Street were removed.

All of this was in the beginning and I cannot remember it all. Perhaps as we move along from here, it will become easier to go back along the meandering path.

COME, LET US STROLL

How does one begin to recapture the memories of youth? Memories of the old West Side that spill over with warm nostalgia. Memories of events as you and I and our parents remember them. It was a little world like none other. From it came the wonderful, and sometimes not so wonderful, people who lived there. From it came the backbone and fibre of the Saint Paul Jewish community of today; from it came the pillars of strength now supporting other communities throughout the length and breadth of our wonderful land.

Where to begin? So many places, events, and names crowd each other beckoning silently, remember — remember!

But begin we must! There is a compelling force which flexes my fingers about my pen and urges me to write and write and write. So because I cannot resist this compulsion, which is both gentle and persistent, I find myself following the meandering paths of memories so many of us have trod so often. Come along with me to share the joys and sorrows of our little world. Stop to rest when you wish, for we are in no haste; it would not look right to leave too quickly that

cup of tea and slice of lemon which someone may offer us as we move along.

Come along then with me and we shall start with names and places closest to my own recollections . . .

Do you remember the blacksmith shop on Texas Street where the mighty smithy, Mr. Reznick, labored diligently with peddlers' wagons and sturdy steeds? This was Texas Street: an impossible morass of mud after each rain. It was so bad that Chaim Greenstein (Peg Green's brother) wrote to the old *Daily News* asking for airplane service from State Street to his home at 320 Texas. There were other neighbors who felt the same way: The Senenskys, Blumstiens, Chases, Macarofskys, Hirschorns, Hoffmans, Gransbergs, Dietzes, Rosenblums, Lynches, Zuckers, Skroopkas, and others I may have forgotten for the moment. But today, most of these families have left long since and Helen Gransberg Turner ("Hawtkeh"), with her own family, reigns as queen of a shrinking dominion.

To live on State Street, which was paved and had sewers and running water, was the Mecca and dream of my mother. It was not her own comfort she was concerned about, but rather that of her daughters. How would any eligible suitor in his right mind ever get down so far as the end of Texas Street to court her daughters? "Gott zu danken" (thank heaven), however, all was not lost, for the tennis courts were across the street on the Minnetonka playground, and my mother took advantage of the terrain to bait the trap. Most of the "Castle Garden" dandies in their white slacks came down often to play tennis and my mother

made full use of her homemade root beer to lure the unsuspecting. Who could resist the cold foaming drink? Finally, it was "Shloymie" Solomon who asked my sister Annie for her hand. What a potent brew that was, full of yeast and probably the forerunner of today's atomic bomb.

The old LaFayette school was there too, a grim fortress of education. Across the way, and still standing is that institution of higher Jewish learning, the West Side Talmud Torah, to which we will probably return often. Our "chedar" (Jewish school) among other things, is no doubt best remembered because of Rabbi Edelman, whose fondest diversion was pulling the ears of his students. Even today there are a few of us who look at long ears as a hallmark of "chedar" attendance, particularly in Rabbi Edelman's classroom. How well do you remember the Jewish "Board of Education," headed by Mr. George Kaplan, coming around to classes every so often to hear how well you read "chumesh" (Pentateuch) and to see if we were wearing "tzitzehs?" (ritual garment)

Back across the street in the LaFayette school, that stern, formidable, Prussian disciplinarian, "old man Murray" reigned securely as principal. He brooked no nonsense and enforced the rules with a hardwood ruler over knuckles and open palms. The concept of permissiveness had not yet reached the LaFayette school, and if it had, Mr. Murray would have taken care of it in his own way. To offset his straight-laced discipline, we often found refuge in Miss West's room, one of the teachers, who helped us hide marbles in her

own desk drawers when tipped off that Mr. Murray was stalking through the halls. He had little use for marbles and jacks and other frivolities of childhood. It is said, perhaps apocryphally, that he was never a child himself, having been born a ready made "farbisener" (hardened) adult. There was another teacher, too, who can still be seen in your mind's eye—Miss Cramsey affectionately called, "old lady Cranberry."

Don't you remember, too, small episodes of moonshine and milk? It was Mrs. Whitefield, bless her kind soul, who helped the playground system sell half pints of milk at the Minnetonka grounds for three cents a bottle. How good it tasted sucked up slowly through the straws in the shade of the corrugated tin shack. Who doesn't remember that most common midnight avocation—moonshine brewing behind drawn shades! Can't you almost smell the mash dumped every night near the dump—and the boys who did the dumping? (no names please!)

Did you ever drop in for a wiener and bun at the Herman boys' grocery store on State Street? "Red" Herman played the violin at the New Ray theatre, while West Siders "knocked" (popped) seeds and watched the first of many Tarzans swinging through the trees. Serials came in twelve episodes, each ending in murder and mayhem at the expense of the hero who never failed to come back alive and hearty the following week. "Gemacht fin eizen" (made of iron) he must have been.

Outside of the theatre, you might have found swinging his club one of our first Jewish policemen: short,

corpulent, and always smiling, officer Silverstein. From sheer necessity, he presided over many a synagogue election where order and decorum had taken a severe licking. There was another well-remembered cop who was quick on the draw and who took no guff; we knew him only as "Hands Up," but for what reason that appelation stuck to him I do not know. He could not be moved either by flattery or tears and not even with a nickel pitcher of beer from the red brick saloon on the corner of State and Kentucky Streets.

There are other memories too: the old Neighborhood House and the Friday night dances, Primeau's store, and grab bags of candy for a penny. There were the big nut games just before Pesach, played for nickels and dimes and even more. What great quarrels and endless haggling over whether a nut on the edge of the hole was in or out. Remember, how it went? You threw an even number of nuts in a freshly scooped out shallow hole and uttered a silent prayer that an even number would remain in the hole. The best time of course to play was during the "intermissions" at synagogue services while "laning the Torah" (reading the holy scrolls).

Harriet Island known to us as "Bading House," provided good swimming in the Mississippi River and the best picnic spot. There were cages with animals, slides, and sand boxes. For a hot shower or "vaneh" (bath) we went to the Wilder Public Baths for the weekly "Shabus" (Sabbath) clean-up— towel and soap for one penny. I would have written that even today one old patriarch makes the trip over the Robert

Street bridge every Friday with a change of underwear bundled under his arm but now he is gone too.

Oh, that first delicatessen store, Levoonehs (Lebanon) on Fairfield. Do your nostrils quiver with the mixed, intriguing smells of herring, "shmookfleish," Russian candies, halvah, and pickles? Can't you see coming out from the back room, portly and genial, "Mr. Levooneh," father of the Stacker boys and proprietor of the store? He also sold us our "chedar" writing tablets, "gragers" (noise makers) for Purim, and monkey nuts. And on one side on top of the glass counter were stacks of Jewish newspapers: *Der Tag, Morgen Journal,* and the *Forvitz.*

Not too far away in the shade of the street was Mr. Tankenoff's soda and ice-cream parlor, with the wire-backed chairs and marble topped tables. "Selzer" (charged) water was a favorite and strawberry sundaes ran a close second. It was cool in there and one could linger long sipping slowly and exchanging gossip. If you felt extra rich you could ask Mr. Tankenoff to pack a pint of ice-cream to take home, and he would do so packing hard with all his might to give full measure.

All these delicious memories crowd forward to be remembered. I see that wonderful old Patriarch, Mr. Tenzer, leading a Simchas Torah (Jewish holiday) procession from the "chedar" to the "schul;" I see the children and their fathers marching proudly up the streets with heads held high; I see a multitude of people, faces, and places, and all seem to say quietly to me, remember, remember.

Take hold of my hand and walk along with me. The day is clear, the sun bright, and there is a nostalgic

zephyr which whispers softly of the promise along this winding path. This is the little world of our beloved West Side, and who can blame others who wish to claim it, too, for their own. We invite them also, and even those who are reluctant because for some reason or other, in the length and depth of their lives, have once wished to disclaim their childhood and the legacy of their parents.

MY SYNAGOGUE

Above the tall weeds, and behind the rusted gates stands the synagogue of our childhood looking down remorsefully on a neighborhood which has forgotten its former glory and grandeur. As though cringing shamefacedly, like a much sought after queen whose beauty has slipped through the sands of time, my synagogue weeps quietly. Its windows are boarded, Torahs gone, and the murmurs of worshippers stilled forever. The curtains of the Ark are begrimed with the dirt of impudent sparrows and indolent pigeons who roost in the chandeliers and in the loft of the high ceiling. Once it was not this way!

No less resplendent than Solomon's Temple stood the B'nai Zion "schul," freshly painted a dazzling white for the High Holidays. The concrete steps were swept clean and the iron gate oiled and opened wide. Shamus Whitefield and his "shabus goyim" had been busy many days. Inside, the long hard pews with little brass-numbered plates, to designate seating places, were waxed and varnished. The light bulbs were dusted to show the names of generous donors, and the snuff boxes filled. The heavy brass spitoons were polished and filled with clean white sand, and through the colored

glass windows, reaching as high as the women's balcony, an early Indian summer sun-bathed the quiet interior with a gently soft and warm light.

Overhead, the women's gallery swept in a horse-show curve against the walls. Row upon row of empty black-upholstered seats were waiting patiently for worshippers with shawls over their heads. These would be the women and their daughters whose eyes followed their husbands and sons sitting down below. These were our mothers, wives, and sisters who prayed to God for nothing else but good health and a modest living. These were our women folk who wept openly and unabashed; freed from inhibitions that forced their men to keep feelings deep in the wellsprings of their hearts.

The Torah and the Ark were decorated with freshly laundered white covers during the High Holy Day season, for white is the symbol of purity. Above the curtains of the Ark stood out in bold relief the Lion of Judah.

At the entrance to the "schul," if the weather permitted, the president and his officers sat greeting old and new members and assigning seats. The best seats were those closest to the front, and, as families grew in size, the pews became more and more crowded.

A sober air of penitence hung over the West Side, and even the children playing in the streets and in the alleys felt this air which cast its influence over both young and old. The attitudes of neighbors became more circumspect, and after the "S'lichos" (supplications) services, which began on the Sunday before Rosh Hashanah, the sadness of a year gone by, and the near-

ness of the time when the fate of man was to be judged and inscribed in heaven, became close and meaningful.

The tumult and turmoil of the annual synagogue elections were over. Now it was "Erev" Rosh Hashanah. The new president and his fellow officers wore a benign expression; giving the lie to the politicking, bickering and even open warfare of the recent election. It might be said that compared to the synagogue election of yesteryear, our own contemporary political conventions are as quiet as the unruffled surface of a placid lake in the misty hours of an early morning. Without benefit of banners, ballyhoo, radio, and television, but with pungent slogans referring to the incumbent as a "prawster yid," and other less flattering allusions, the campaigning went on loudly and furiously in the synagogue basement.

Actually, the campaigns began months earlier when the incumbent, with an eye to the future, generously dispensed "mafters" and "aleeyahs" to favorites and to those who were straddling the political fences. Even his attitude towards the overworked and underpaid Shamus (Sexton) suddenly changed from one dour and complaining to something bordering on compassion and concern. It was to be noted, too, that the usual finality and arbitrariness of the president's decisions at meetings and services were softened and moderated by a deceptive facade of philosophical indecision and humility.

Almost overnight this man who rode roughshod over his congregation and played the role of absolute monarch began to shrug his shoulders and refer to himself as a "plain and simple Jew who could hardly be

expected to know more than my fellow congregation members." And of course, if all of his efforts proved futile and he lost the election, he might secede with his little group of loyal stalwarts to establish a new "schul" —new mortgage, new building, but the same old president.

But let me return to my "schul" and a familiar row of seats where I sat with my father and brothers next to Schmeel Klein and his sons Penoonyeh and Levi. Within spit-ball range to bedevil the Shamus sat my friends Abie Radel, Henry Rosenblatt, Melvin Abromovitz, John Kotler, Dave Kuris, Baruch Lefcovitz, Yonnie Batush.

How can I forget that this was the month of visiting the cemeteries? Some stood at the headstones weeping silently, baring their hearts to those once near and dear, while others were quiet in their grief. And this, too, was the month of Tashlich, when we went down to the river to empty our pockets of money, bread crumbs (and sins) in the muddy waters of the Mississippi. This was also the time for the ceremony of Kapora, with hens or fierce red-combed roosters circled over our heads nine times: "This is instead of me—." What a noisy ceremony this was! The fowls, their legs tied, clucked and crowed unappreciative of their importance and imminent appointment with the "shochet."

Each year at this time a man I never met was driven by his chauffeur to the corner of Fairfield and State Streets in a long black limousine. He was a tall, thin, and sparse man in the sixties who had his clothes tailored at Schusler's and wore them with the casual elegance of an ambassador. He waved his driver on,

drew a deep breath as though fortifying himself for an ordeal, and walked ahead stiff and erect as a ramrod without looking to either side until he came to the synagogue.

He looked about him, taking in the strangeness of an alien atmosphere, straightened his shoulders, walked up the steps through the swinging leatherpadded doors and into the Babel of worshippers swaying to and fro. He fingered the black skull cap in his pocket, nervously crumpling it with thin, long fingers. After a moment he took it out, handling it gingerly as though it was a fragile piece of fine Spode china, and placed it on his head as he returned the curious and hostile glances which came his way because he was bareheaded in a house of worship.

He wore no Talith (Prayer Shawl) and accepted the prayer book offered him by the Shamus without recognition. He kept it closed tightly between his thumb and forefinger as though fearful, once opened, it would engulf him in the abyss of darkness he was afraid of without knowing why. He wondered to himself whether it was this fear or was it something else that brought him back year after year.

He rose from his seat when the others around him did and sat down as they did. He was aware of the whispers behind him and he was angry but gave no indication that he heard or cared. He thought of things in his life buried somewhere in the years behind him—a grandmother with a wig and a grandfather with a beard, and still later his own parents who became different both in name and in the company they sought. All these he thought of as he sat and rose as did the others

about him: a kaleidoscope of memories without color or clarity with which he could never cope except with gnawing indecisiveness and rationalizations.

On the last day—Yom Kipur—he came early and remained all through the long hours. And as the day wore on, the hard and gaunt features seemed to soften and once or twice in spite of himself a tightly closed fist found his heart during the "Al Chet" (I have sinned.)

As the shadows began to fall, there came a moment when the congregation stood quiet and the long resounding note of the Shofar sounded "T'kioh." He felt a peace of mind. After lingering until the congregation had left, he beckoned to the Shamus and pressed an envelope with money in his hand.

And every year when he did this, he saw this Shamus with the long beard looking back at him with kindness and much pity.

NOW AND THEN

Contrary to some popular impressions, Adam and Eve were not from the West Side, but many of Abraham's descendants did find their way there after a stormy trip across the ocean below deck in steerage. Your parents will assure you, if they have not already done so, that this was not their conception of a first class trip. But arrive here they finally did, even if the legendary pot at the end of the rainbow turned out to be a different kind of a pot altogether.

Surely you must know by this time that they left their little dorfs (villages), their close friends, and even some of their family, not to see the "guldeneh" (golden) land of America for themselves, but for you, their children and grandchildren. They came that you might sleep soundly through the night and walk upright during the day with the dignity of free people.

Those were the days—yes, those were the days when there was nothing to worry us except such things as making a living and saving a few dollars for some "propity." A "piece of propity" was a good investment, but there was one "meshigener" (demented)) who had such a hole in his head that he bought up acres and

acres of land in some wilderness my grandmother once referred to as Highland or Schmiland Park.

Things were different in those days. The houses on the lower flats were lucky to have foundations; some had real cellars. A cellar was a place where your mother put up pickles, ("igurkes," she called them) ; it was a place where your father stamped out the wine with his bare feet, and where everything else which was going to be carted away to the dump next year (but which never was) was kept. And always on hand was a little device with an inverted rubber suction cup at one end to clean out toilets and sinks. Today a cellar is no more—it is a recreation room. I don't say it's bad, but can you imagine your mother or mine calling out, "Velvel, go down in the recreation room and bring up a jar of pickles—and two potatoes, and a 'zibelleh' (onion)—and don't forget to 'lash' (turn off) the light when you come up!"

And this business we hear so much about today—family solidarity. Who had more solidarity than our own families? To tell the truth, it wasn't that we loved each other more that we stayed home together oftener. For one thing, there was so much stuffed kishke and knishes and everything else that we stuffed ourselves and couldn't move from the table, let alone the house. And at least once a month my mother made small biscuits smothered in crushed garlic and drenched with garlic gravy (pompishkes mit knobel). After a few of these, the family had to stay together, and indoors. But all this of course was before we grew up and learned that anything so good must be bad.

Let's not forget another pressing problem with which our children confront us today—this matter of allowances. We, too, had allowances, and every single day. Yes—allowances to go out and sell papers. Lessons of thrift we learned from my mother, and you from yours. Mother always had a little money stashed away for a rainy day (and believe me, it was wet most of the time). This little treasure, of course, was a secret kept from my father who knew all the time she had it, but never could understand how she managed to save it on the amount he wasn't able to give her. Remember, it was usually tied up in a handkerchief and hidden under the mattress. I hear our wives are still doing this even today but it's not called a "knippel" anymore. But this much I'm sure of: you're fooling your husbands just like my father was fooled. Oh, those were the days alright!

IN A FLYING MACHINE

My younger brother, Moishele, now living in San Francisco, was to be married the next day. A miracle of the modern age was transporting me in air to the "simcha" thousands of miles away. And I must confess that even today I am awed by the flying machine.

Racing through the inky black of the night towards San Francisco brought back some idle thoughts of yesteryears. I remembered the breathless excitement which gripped me when I saw the first plane coming down for a bumpy landing in the pasture now known as Holman Airport. I ran home through the fields gathering stickers on my pants and for once oblivious of the "sewing needles" skimming over the grass.

"Ma, Ma," I cried out, "it's an airplane as big as a house, and it can fly 100 miles an hour." But my mother kept rolling and cutting her "lockshen" (noodles) as though an airplane landed in St. Paul everyday. "Ma, at least come out and see it," but all she did was wipe the flour from her hands on her apron, fill the "chinek" (pot) with water for tea and tell me, "Zeendelah, go tell the man in the airplane—that is as big as a house and flies 100 miles an hour—that if he finishes 'hocking my laber' (chopping my liver), I'll go see his airplane."

But the world moved on and so did my mother. Now, she, too, was flying to her son Moishele's wedding in a "luft machine." But not until she had baked some strudel and other "gebecks" to take along. And as for my father, he flew too, but with even more reluctance (and more insurance). All he had to say was "Amerika Goniff," but I knew he liked it.

Then I thought back to my old geography teacher. You remember, don't you, the big brown geography book with a picture of St. Paul: "the railroad center of the world?" What would my teacher have said had she asked, "William, point out the Rocky Mountains by longitude and latitude," and I might have answered, "Teacher, I not only know where they are, but I'm going to fly over them too." I can picture her face getting red. "William, you're just a smart alec and how would you like staying after school to write 100 times —I did not fly over the Rocky Mountains."

I remembered, too, that a few days before boarding the plane a West Side patriarch had passed away. I saw him in my mind's eye as he shuffled across the Robert street bridge every Friday noon on his way to the Wilder public baths. Now Chiam the Shochet was gone! The paper said Chiam was 98, but what does the paper know I ask you?

Does the paper know that when many of our parents came to this country the insurance man was quick to sell them a policy at so many pennies a week? It followed then, the younger you gave your age the less were the weekly premiums. There was no intent at chicanery, of course, since in the long run the policyholder always paid for a longer period of years. Who could imagine

at that time the trouble there would some day be in proving eligibility for old age assistance at 65 when the policy read 55?

I cannot say this of Chiam the Shochet, may he rest in well earned peace, because I don't know whether he carried a policy. But few will deny he was closer to 110. No matter! He is gone and Roger Ahlman the superintendent of the baths will wonder for a few weeks whence went the quiet Jew who never bothered a soul and always carried a fresh change of underwear under his arm. The street urchins on Texas, State, and Indiana streets will wonder, too, whence went the Jew whose quiet dignity stayed the rocks in their hands. Who remembers when Chiam sold little books of Bible readings which he compiled himself and peddled from door to door? Who remembers, and how many knew of, his amazing knowledge of the stars and the sky.

Most of us will recall him as the "schlachter" and "flicker" of chickens in his shed on Texas street. We remember, too, his long deceased "yiddeneh" who promised every customer at least two glasses of "schmaltz" with every "ganz" (goose). Very few will know in this day and age, when there is no more room in the house for our "bawbes" and "zades", of the devotion and tenderness of his son who watched over his father, and cared for him during the long days and nights of Chiam the Shochet's last lingering years.

And I was reminded, too, of the old lady who sold sunflower seeds out of a black cake tin: one litle cup for a penny. Her last name might very well have been "adversity," for poverty and misery were as much a part of her existence as her own name. One day, long after

she had lost all her teeth, she persuaded a kind-hearted dentist at the Wilder Dispensary to make her a set of false teeth which, of course, became her most prized (and only) possession. She was so fearful they might be taken away that she refused to return for refitting. Every night she would tuck them reverently under her pillow with a "brooche" (prayer). The little pleasure she extracted from her tedious life came from surprising her cronies who "unfortunately" had their own teeth by pushing her plates forward with her tongue and clicking them. Try as one might no one could ever convince her they were also good for eating. "Why," she remonstrated, "should I wear them out eating like I did to the ones I had before?"

A few more minutes now before San Francisco and yet it was just a few hours since I talked to my friend Charlie Hirschorn. You remember, we called him Sheeyah. He told me his sister "Roocheleh," Rose Hirschorn Moreno, was ill in the hospital. I remembered, as I'm sure many of you do, too, her husband, big Louie Moreno, who loved Rose's spaghetti "plenty hot." Big Louie wooed and wed Roocheleh in what to the best of my knowledge, was the West Side's first Abie's Irish Rose wedding. Louie tried hard to please his mother-in-law, and even opened his shirt one day to prove his good faith by showing the "tzizehs" he was wearing. He loved his children dearly. They grew up as good and honest citizens. Louie and Rose, and the rest of us, can be proud of them. How different it must be for Roocheleh to be away from the heavy aroma of spaghetti, recalling warm memories of a devoted husband.

What a long, long way from our West Side and childhood memories of a plane as big as a house that flew 100 miles an hour. What a long, long way this Saturday night is from another Saturday night many years ago, when the Meridian Club was getting ready for a pow-wow. I can still see Puggy, Sonny, Whitey, Smitty, Ben, Tubby, Davey, Lenny, and Henry wishing through the day in anticipation of the evening.

Some of us worked late in fruit stores. Because I was a clerk in the more benevolent Robert Street Market, I was able to rush out at nine to take a "vaneh" at home; but not before inwardly "shelting" (cussing) the late customers who waited deliberately to closing time. I would call my mother and ask that she "tzind un deh vasser." To translate for your children and mine, that meant: go downstairs into the cellar and light the gas coil to heat up enough water for a bath. This was automatic heat. This was also a fifty-fifty chance that the first match would sputter out, and on the second the gas flames would shoot out and singe your eyebrows.

With the bathing done, my friend Smitty would pick me up in his Ford sedan of doubtful vintage and off we rode to get the girls. Then we would find a farmer's pasture, build a blazing fire, roast wieners, and tell tall tales. Once the flames had died down, loud voices and laughter were muted and the more resolute and romantic stole silently away in the dark for more amorous pursuits.

In the fading hours of the summer night the last embers of the fire were put out by a Druid circle of standing sleepy-eyed boys and following the conventional practice of the times. Couples hand in hand

said good byes. Then there was the long ride home from Bald Eagle Lake under a star-studded sky. After came the hesitant peck for the bashful and the fierce and quick kiss for the brave at the doorway; finally, the slow shuffle of dragging feet back to the car filled with errant, but tired and sleepy, Galahads. Button your safety belts! This is San Francisco. Good night my dear wife, Susie, and Johnny.

TWO VIEWS OF MENDEL

West Side synagogues were thronged on High Holidays. Litvaks, Polishers, and Russians were represented equally and as vociferally in all the "schuls." From St. Lawrence Street came the Burtons, Prices, Rutmans, Abromovitzes, Batushes, Levcowitzes, Hartmans, Straus, Salpeter, Klayman (and my cousin Naty Hoffman), and two southern belles who had recently moved into the neighborhood, Shirley and Betty Peck.

Rosh Hashanah was over and the destiny of the people of the West Side was recorded and written down in the books of the Lord. Mendel had repented before Yom Kippur and now he was gathered with his neighbors for the Kol Nidre service. He put on his white robe ("kittel"), for he was a very pious man, and he wore his kittel as a reminder of humility to soften an arrogant heart. Over his "kittel," he put on his "tallith" (prayer shawl) and looked with pleasure to the scrolls of the Torah draped in a white mantel, and the ark adorned with white curtains. The "chazen" (cantor), imported at a price the congregation was usually split over for the rest of the year, thrice chanted the magnificent Kol Nidre and Mendel swayed to and fro in the ecstacy of the moment. Long after everyone else had

left, Mendel remained, and in the quiet of the evening walked slowly home to Fenton Street.

Tomorrow after the Shofar and Maariv services, he would eat a light meal after the long fast and write to his brother half-way across the world, whom he was destined never to see again. He would write, "My dear brother, Berel, may the Lord bless you and your family as he has done to me. This is a good land. Last week I paid the last installment to the Loan Association for my horse and wagon, and now they are all mine. It is hard work, Berel, but thanks to the Lord, I make a living and my family is well."

He would not write, because he did not think it was important, that a "landsman" had told him of an easier way to make money. It had to do with coiled copper pipes, a contraption called a "still," with kettles and sugar and malt; it had to be done in the dead of night behind drawn curtains, and he would be paid well. But Mendel had thanked his "landsman" who had long since given up his own horse and wagon, and, although the temptation was great, this was not for him, or for his family, or for a pious Jew, although he did not think ill of those who might think otherwise.

Tomorrow, on the Holy Day of Yom Kippur, his eyes would dim and then blaze with adoration for his daughter and grandchild as they came down from the women's balcony to kiss him (all who came down to visit were the bane of the "Shamus" (sexton) who hammered in vain with a carved iron hand on a leather pallet for order—Shah! Shah!) As the sun hovered over the tree tops at the end of a long fast day, as though permanently fixed in the Heaven, the

younger people waited impatiently for the Shofar. But they would be denied by the perennial and traditional arguments among the elders of the congregation who split theological hairs over whether or not it was time to blow the Shofar (ram's horn).

And once it blew, having fasted and duly repented, the young in heart and spirit burst out of the synagogues to a quick meal at home and to make telephone arrangements for a car ride and a date to the evening celebrations sponsored by Hadassah, Masada, B'nai B'rith, AZA, etc. Without a car, how could there be a date? How could you take a date to the dance on the Selby-Lake streetcar? And if she lived on the North Side, Minneapolis, (Gott Zol Oopheetin), heaven forbid, that was at the end of the world.

But Mendel, the pious Jew, stayed on after all had left. With deliberation he removed his "kittle" and "tallith" and folded them in his blue velvet bag with the Star of David embroidered upon it. He took a pinch of snuff between his thumb and forefinger, savored of its heavy aroma with a long sigh of satisfaction, and closed the door behind him. The September night was cool and the crickets chirped. Mendel, with his hands clasped behind his back, walked slowly down the street and passed out of sight around the corner. But before he leaves altogether, let us look at Mendel in another light—as a newly-made American citizen.

One day Mendel was slumped low on his wagon seat under a heavy black poncho which parried the heavy rain pelting him and his horse. But shed no tears for the horse; he was as independent and as stubborn as his master and knew that fresh oats and a warm stable

waited for him over the bridge. Of him—I refer to the horse—we shall tell more about another day. But for Mendel who had just become a citizen, this was a special day and for the first time he was going to vote.

What a "stubbornik" (stubborn) he was. Just like his father about whom a story was told. It seems that Mendel the elder had left his ship on the way to America in mid-ocean, because someone read the Maariv services the wrong way. And when he was picked up twenty years later on an absolutely barren and desolate island on which he had self-exiled himself, lo and behold, he had managed not only to live, but had also erected two beautiful synagogues; one, he explained, was to "daven" (pray) in, the other he put up to have nothing to do with.

So Mendel, the younger, after unharnessing his horse, led him into the barn and provided his friend with fresh oats, spread new hay in the stall, and went in to wash up. He put on his best holiday clothes, pinched a ready made cigarette in half, putting the butt in his vest pocket, and strode forth toward the voting booth, trying hard to make it appear as though this was an everyday occurrence. And as he walked, hands clasped behind his back, his thoughts went back to his conversation earlier in the day with the big industrialist of the railroad along whose tracks he was allowed to pick up junk. This big man often took a few minutes from his busy day to joke with Mendel, feeling a kinship he could neither understand or explain. This afternoon he had shared Mendel's pride of citizenship and had repeated to him slowly and carefully the slate he though Mendel should vote. Naturally, it was Repub-

lican, but neither the names or party designation meant much to our "landsman."

But when Mendel drew the voting booth curtain behind him, his hand became heavy and he could not write. Suddenly he said to himself, "For this I came to America with nothing but my 'talith and tvillen?' For this I struggled in night school to read this 'vermishti' (confused) English; for this I dressed up so someone else should tell Mendel how to vote? Nisht fah mir!" (not for me) Whereupon, Mendel lifted his hand, which all of a sudden was light like a spring chicken's feather, and, as we say, "aff zalooches" (just in spite) marked his X's precisely opposite to those he had been advised to check.

This, my friend, is how Mendel the "stubbornick" became a Democrat.

Did you ever hear of such a Moishe Kepor (contrariness)?

A COZY LITTLE WORLD

I must say looking for a house these days is something quite different from what it was in our parent's time. And no wonder! Today our house must have at least two bathrooms, triple sealed aluminum windows, an up and down fireplace, built in ovens, exposed beam ceilings, a study, two telephones, a double garage—and next year, "mir zahlen derleben," a swimming pool in the backyard.

Of interest, too, is the trek toward the highlands which started some years back. It began when the more affluent among us left the West Side "flats" to venture into the West Side "hills." From that point on, the moving vans and trailers began to move not only by the compass but also the altimeter. First it was the West Side Hills, then Highland, Upper St. Dennis, Friendly Hills, Mendota Heights . . . . and upward and onward. What would be more appropriate than to name the next real estate development in Saint Paul the Mt. Zion Pinnacles?

No one wants to live in the valleys anymore. Mendel's son, who is now a psychiatrist, believes this

can all be explained as an abreaction[1] to the flats we lived in as children. He surmises it may be a denial in an unconscious way of a painful past. But Mendel, who can't understand his son anymore since he gave up yiddish for psychiatry, says it's a simple case of "fency-shmency." It is either that, he insists, or probably just another "mishegas." (idiosyncrasy)

Habits and thinking of long standing die hard and we should be a bit more charitable toward Mendel's observations. Who is there to say he is not completely wrong? He has long since accepted, particularly with the onset of years, the convenience of indoor plumbing. Two bathrooms, however, is another matter. This, he claims, is only for people who suffer constantly with stomach troubles. He tells you he doesn't mean to be indelicate about the whole subject of bathroom facilities, but that, nevertheless, this is his considered opinion.

Exposed beam ceilings! When he first saw this in his son's house, he wanted to know why the plaster had fallen off. It was a "shandeh" (a shame) that someone hadn't been called to fix it. He was all set to call an old character from the West Side who could repair anything for a dollar and a drink. (Perhaps you remember him? A long thin man perpetually drunk and unhappy only when sober by dire necessity and when blood entered his alcohol stream.)

Yes, looking for a house in those days was considerably less complicated than today. What did the buyer of yesterday look for: solid foundation, hardwood floors, a good roof with new shingles, running water, sewers,

[1]Abreaction—the release of psychic tension through verbalizing or acting out an adequate resolution of a repressed traumatic experience with appropriate emotion or effect.—Webster

and lots of gas jets. Remember, you turned the little valves and, when the gas came out with a hiss, you lit it with a match and "plitzling" (suddenly) you had light. In our kitchen we had an innovation: a little white gauze mantle which fit over the gas jets and gave off a bright steady light.

The kitchen had to be a large one because the whole family congregated there before the days of central heating. The rest of the house was too cold during the late fall and winter. The big black wood and coal stove in the kitchen became an island of warmth and savory smells. After supper during the long, cold winters, we would open the large oven door, hang our socks over the edge to dry, put apples in to bake (gebrooteneh apples), and sometimes pumpkin seeds too. On a ledge over the stove stood the spice box and a little red tin tea chest with Russian lettering on it. In the back of the stove was hidden the coal bucket, a few sticks of kindling wood, and a long iron rod to poke the coals and stir the fire.

Early Friday morning, as the bread dough was rising in the towel-covered bread pans, my mother would throw some chunks of dough into the oven and, by the time we were ready for breakfast, these triangular "papawliks" (flat muffins) were ready to be split open, smeared with fresh sweet-cream butter, and eaten with a large cup of hot cocoa. But to get back to real estate.

It was of no importance, when looking for a house, to ask about the location of schools, synagogue, grocery stores, etc. Everything was near everything—including the Mikveh. This tight little universe was bound on one

side by the river and city dump, the West Side Hills across the State Street bridge on the other side, the busy artery of Robert Street on the third side, and another loop of the river on the fourth. If it were not for the Wilder Public Baths over the bridge, and the free green stamps at Bannon's department store, one would never need leave this little world except to be buried. And a cozy little world it was.

The first frost of the season would skip in during the night on light feet to tease and coax out into the open the beautiful russet and red colors from maple and oak leaves. In the morning the trees stood proud, courageously flaunting the beauty of their raiment against the somber threat of winter. In the apple trees, the little fruit, which had escaped the early mischievous marauders who came with tennis shoes and cast iron stomachs, hung high out of reach. Indoors, the children crawled out from beneath their comforters to see the icy mist on the glass panes, and with stubby little fingers, worked out letters of the alphabet and caricatures of their teachers.

On a Sunday morning soon, it would be time to bring out storm windows and to take the screens off. A cake of Bon-Ami, clean rags to wash the glass, and fresh black paint to touch up the lengths of stove pipe stored in the attic would also make an appearance.

Halvah began to appear on the grocery counters. The sides of beef hanging on the hooks in Gerr's butcher shop over sawdust covered floors would be kept longer in the brisk cold air. Coal trucks pulled up to basement windows and the rattle of coal down the long metal chute played the first discordant notes of the winter

season. Heavy clothes were aired on clothes lines. One could see sheep lined ulsters, woolen underwear to replace summer B.V.D.'s, and quilted comforters filled with old country goose-down.

One Saturday afternoon when a cold wind blew newspapers racing down the street, my father came home from "schul" bringing a stranger for Kiddish. He was a quiet man who greeted us with a "Gut Shabus" and warmed his hands by rubbing them together. He sat down at the kitchen table which had been set with a clean white table cloth to cover the red squared oil cloth with tea glass rings on it. He looked hungrily at the squares of honey cake, "lekach" "komish-broit" and slices of sponge cake piled high on a platter.

My father filled his beaker from the bottle of whiskey on the pantry shelf and, after the blessing and a warm "L'chiam," both drank quickly. The stranger smacked his lips and said "geschmak" (tasty) and commented favorably on the tasty honey cake. They drank again and my mother knowingly set an extra plate for the Sabbath stranger.

They spoke of many things and the stranger became as a friend when he left after a long leisurely meal. After he had gone, my father propped himself on his bed with two pillows under the head to read the "Bintel Brief" in his *Forvitz*. But the warm glow of the "schnapps," coupled with a full meal and the quiet of the Sabbath afternoon, gently relaxed his fingers and dropped his eyelids. He slept peacefully. His face was covered by the *Forvitz* to ward off a solitary fly that droned lazily in circles around the warmth of the room.

Then mother would give my little sister, Roochele, and myself, two nickels and two apples. Hand in hand we trooped downtown to the museum where we spent Saturday afternoons examining stuffed birds and mysterious and ancient Egyptian amulets. After that came the free museum movie which we enjoyed with a nickel's worth of fudge and a half pound of candy kisses.

Once my mother had "pawtered" us off (got rid of us), she poured herself a hot cup of "tay" and wondered to herself whether she could enjoy the indulgence of a Saturday noon nap. She sipped her "tay," sucked on a slice of lemon, and after closing the door to my father's room, she sat down in the rocking chair where she soon fell asleep enjoying, in spite of herself, a quiet "drimmel" (nap).

MY MOTHER

"Bashe," my father called out from the supper table, "the soup is too hot. Why are you so set on burning my tongue off?"

"So, if it's too hot, blow on it."

And blow he did, on each spoonful as he lifted it to his mouth, finally tipping the plate to get at the last piece of lockshen. It really made no difference whether the soup was hot or cold, because he blew to make the hot cold and blew to make the cold hot.

Then he protested in a tone of righteous resignation that she should have known he didn't like what she had made for supper. So naturally my mother set before him a heaping platter, saying, "Don't eat it, then." Well, "aff zelooches," (to spite her), he ate it all and asked for more of the same to which she replied quietly, that since she knew all along that he didn't care for this particular dish, she hadn't prepared any more. All this time, she was on her feet getting him still more of the same, which he insisted he wouldn't eat and which she said there was no more of.

Now, if you shake your head and try to make sense of this kind of behavior, I can only say, "a nachtigar toog" (impossible). But they love each other anyhow.

I can testify that my mother is a most unusual woman in many respects. As a matter of fact, too, she is never wrong. "Velvel," she used to say, "take your umbrella, it's going to rain." Mind you, this on a beautiful, cloudless day. Of course, you know what happened, because it happened to you, too. It poured and I was soaked to the skin. "Velvel," she said, "be sure and put on your overshoes because it's going to snow."

But this time, I knew better and studied the weather report. I was going to rely for once on a scientific prediction, based on an apparatus designed to measure precipitation, rise and fall of barometric pressure, wind velocity and curvature of the earth. "Ma," I said, "it says here in the paper it won't snow." But it snowed and snowed, over my high-tops and under my "langeh gatkes" (winter underwear), all because my mother's corn on her left toe called for snow.

When I asked my Pa about these prognostications of my mother, he would say, "Zeendeleh, dem weatherman kanst duh halten in bood; herr zich zie zu de mameh" (forget the weatherman, heed your mother). The only mistake she ever made, he would say rather ruefully, was in marrying him. But I know he was speaking in jest.

Once, when I came home from my freshman days in college, I wanted to impress her with a new word I had picked up. I wanted her to know I wasn't spending all my time in the Union (University of Minnesota Student Union) playing pool, so I told her all about E-N-E-U-R-I-S-I-S. Now, this a medical term refering to bed wetting and I did my best, taking great pains, to describe the etiology and visible manifestations.

Finally, with a characteristic gesture of annoyance, she threw up her hands and said, "Velvel, Velvel, why don't you just say he was a "pisher" and let it go at that." Can you blame me for cutting my psychology class the next day to play pool?

Now this reminds me too, that every Yom Kipper at 2:15 in the afternoon, my mother gets a headache and goes home from the synagogue. These headaches have become an institution and when we visit after services, we greet her with "What kind of a headache did you have today, Ma?" To be sure, this sounds like sheer nonsense, but you see, her Yom Kippur headache is to my mother on Yom Kippur what stuffing is to Kishke —one doesn't go without the other.

This also reminds me of Mendel and Yenteh, my dearest friends, who in the eventide of their life were spending a few days in their son's modern home while the children were in Florida. It was of little confort to the old folks to know the children were staying in a Kosher hotel; indeed so Kosher, that on Fast days, only dairy (milchdigeh) meals were served. What a beautiful house it was—it had everything including a built-in "pishke" (charity box). Now, Yenteh insisted on bothering Mendel who only wanted to read his *Forvitz*. She reminded him of their younger days when he used to kiss her. So Mendel kissed her. Then she spoke of the same days when he tickled her fondly under the ear. So Mendel tickled her under her ear and went back to his paper. After a few minutes, she looked at him and with a long sigh, and remembered when he used to bite her chin. Whereupon Mendel threw his paper down and made as if to leave the room. "Mendel, Mendel," she

cried, "where are you going?" "I'll tell you where I'm going, Yenteh; I've kissed you and I've tickled you and now that you want me to bite your chin, I'm going into the kitchen to get my teeth."

Then my thoughts go back to the little box of Chanukkah candles I once bought from Shamus Whitefield and a cedar shingle which my father used as a Menorah. One year the Menorah was made of potatoes cut in half. But the lights burned every bit as beautifully as they do in a silver Menorah. Anyhow, how else could you have your Menorah and eat it too?

What I remember, too, about the Chanukkah season of the year, since it usually comes around Christmas time, is my one time Manual Training (Woodworking) class at Roosevelt Junior High School. The class was under the tutelage of that thrifty Swiss, Mr. Christoffel. What a trial I was to him, and others too, like Harold Smith. We were colossal failures from the very beginning in the "do it yourself" school. I was always making a stool for a present, and Harold was striving for a towel holder. A "nechtagar toog" (impossible)! No matter how I measured or sawed, one leg or another was too short or too long. I used up enough lumber to build stools for the whole West Side, and finally my stool ended up by becoming a koshering board used by my mother to "saltz fleisch" (salt meat). Harold, after numerous wounds and bloody encounters with tools and blue-prints, which none of us could read, fashioned himself a replica of a towel holder which alas, looked more like a stool.

Poor Mr. Christoffel! He sweated, cajoled, and pleaded, but to no avail. Our "goyishe" (gentile)

friends, however, gave a "klop" here and a "klop" there (a hammer blow here and there) and lo and behold, without any effort, out came beautiful pieces of furniture. To be sure, none of them knew where Timbuctoo was on our geography book map, or a common denomiator for fractions, but in the Manual Training Shop, they became wizards of artistry. I swear that in wasted lumber alone, forgetting cuts and bruises and fractured fingers, Harold and I easily exhausted an entire school bond issue.

Christmas time also recalls for me the times my sister Roochele and I walked downtown to the department stores to get in one Santa Claus line after another. We received all kinds of little gifts and no doubt all of the Santa Clauses got "nimes" (sick and tired) of seeing our faces so often. One jolly Santa Claus did very well by us because I recognized him as a West Side character known to us as "Whiskey Nose" and I brought him a little bottle of wine from home. This he sneaked into his bag and drew forth liquid sustenance during his lunch hour in the basement (at the North Pole).

At the end of a weary day downtown, home we came, to curl up on the floor with my Nick Carter, Ace Detective, Tom Swift and His Electric Automobile, a crisp apple and a piece of my sister Annie's fudge. When my eyelids became heavy, a gentle but insistent voice pulled me back from the edge of the cliff where Nick Carter and I hung precariously over the precipice, "Gay shloofen, (Go to sleep) gay shloofen, mine kind, tomorrow is Chedar."

OLD FOLKS

They paused, hand in hand, at the wire gate and looked back at the big house on Indiana Avenue. All the children had been born and raised there. Now it was empty and dark with drawn shades and a sign "For Sale." Although empty, it was crowded with invisible memories of the life behind them: memories of pain and pleasure, life and death, the lusty cry of a new born baby, Bar Mitzvah simchehs (Festivals) and, one day, a telegram from the War Department which brought sadness.

Now they looked at each other in bewilderment; looking for all the world like the two carved wooden figures on your knick-knack shelves at home.

Almost with the swiftness of the passing of a mother's anger toward her child, they were utterly alone. The children were gone. They had their own families to worry about, their own trials and tribulations. They were good children—may the Lord bless them—, but as it is said so often: one mother can support ten children, but ten children cannot support one mother. Yes, they were good children who had brought them chickens, fruit baskets, and a little "nash" (snack) now and then. Sometimes they even found time to take

them for a drive and to push a dollar bill in their pockets. But who knew better than these aged parents how hard it was for them, with a high "mawgidge" on a new house, a big car, and growing families of their own who needed more than their parents ever had for themselves.

In the flicker of an eyelash, the beat of a heart, the twitch of rheumatism—the life behind them passed quickly in review before clouded eyes dimmed with tears which hung ready to drop.

How hard life had been. Each day had been a long struggle. It began with the harnessing of his horse in the early morning and ended when he came home weary just before sunset. He thought of the many jibes he endured from his customers, the endless haggling and the heavy lifting of junk. These were times he thought his "kishkehs" (innards) were coming out. All this to bring home a pinched handful of pennies and nickels stuffed in a "botteleh" (purse). It was a wonder his "yiddeneh" (wife) could stretch his meager earnings as she did with such preposterously high prices: ground meat at twelve cents a pound, bread, three cents a loaf, and milk selling at three cents a quart.

Yet in spite of this, there were always a few extra pennies for the blue "pishke" on the wall for the Karen Hyasod Fund. There was always a nickel or dime for each of the "meschulachim" (itinerant solicitors) who knocked at the door, armed with a little black book, asking for contributions to a thousand charities. Sometimes it seemed that every black book in the world must have had their names inscribed. Even the bums from the freight yards had marked their door steps to identify

them as ready givers to the hungry—both the genuine and the pretenders.

The children had come with mathematical regularity. It seemed to him he could not cast a smile in her direction without her becoming pregnant. And how they ate! If only they did as well at Chedar as at the table, he could have expected a family of "Reboonim" (rabbis). To be sure, the older ones helped as soon as they could find their way uptown to sell papers. Some days they earned even more than he did. He remembered that two "meshigooim" (characters) Gibbons and Dempsey—fought each other one day in Shelby, Montana and the boys had brought home five dollars, because one of the fighters was from St. Paul. He saw and heard them when he drove his horse and wagon by their corners as they shouted gibberish at the top of their lungs to sell papers. And what headlines they hollered! "Charlie Chaplin Dies (his mustache)!" "Many Soles Lost (in shoe factory fire)!"

Ai Ai—in school they needed books, they needed shoes, they needed coats, and they got them. Perhaps they weren't dressed like millionaire Rockingfeller's children, but there was no cause for shame. Even his horse fared better than most, because Mr. Katzovitz, the feed dealer, had great trust in him (he trusted everyone who wasn't already in jail) and let him have bales of hay on credit.

He saw himself for a fleeting moment coaxing moonshine out of a home-made still behind drawn curtains after midnight, but never without apprehension, fear, and shame. How easy it had been to sell to the big distributor and how handy the money. This,

however, was not for him or his children who tearfully persuaded him that the laws of the country were to be obeyed no matter what others might say or do (or drink). He remembered carefully dismantling the copper coils of the still and burying them deep near the outhouse. Even now he shook his head sadly at the thought of the money he might have made and all that it would have bought for his family. But in the deep recesses of his mind, he had never regretted his decision.

They even had saved enough to buy some "propity" during better times, and he had felt for just a short time the thrill and pride of ownership. When bad times came, he lost his "propity" like so many others. But, no matter what, they had held on to the home by the skin of their teeth. He borrowed and borrowed. He wore a path to the Morris Plan loan agency on Fifth, and in the end, this great house belonged to him. Among bankers, and other business men, his laboriously written signature always carried with it the integrity and determination of a doggedly honest Jew.

To his children who were too young to sell papers (under eight), he gave each week ten cent pieces to buy little green saving stamps at school. These were glued on a savings card and cashed in every Passover for holiday clothing.

The children grew up, one by one. The years caught up with his wife and himself. Peddling became more difficult and the automobile traffic increasingly impossible to contend with. It became too much for his horse and too much for him. He was too old and too frightened to learn to drive a truck. With a horse, one could roll a cigarette with two fingers, take a little nap, and even

read a paper; but not with a mechanical contraption which had no sense or initiative of its own. He had always been secretly envious of one friend (a Mr. Koenig) who drove a rickity truck with apparent nonchalance and who sported a long, red beard which hung over the steering wheel.

In time his neighbors had disappeared from the vicinity. It became harder and harder to get a Minyan together for prayer services. He found himself pulled from one "schul" to another, commanding for the first time in his life the respect once shown only to the "Rov" and the officials of the congregation. With a wry smile he thought of the day not so long ago, when he had even been urged to become President of one of the last "schuls" still kept open. Imagine, he thought to himself, me, a President. He, who could only afford a poor seat in the very back of the synagogue; so far back in fact he could barely make out people in the front seats without the benefit of Woolworth-bought spectacles. Now, they were asking him to be the President. Perhaps it was just as well that he had not accepted, he mused; but not before he had sat for a few minutes late one evening, on the President's chair, savoring its feel and the passing mirage of a crowded synagogue in its day of glory.

Spectacles from Woolworth's! All of a sudden eye glasses were no longer sold from the dime store counters. Some ridiculous law, he was sure. He had gone as long as he could without them, borrowing glasses from his cronies after his last pair were broken by his first grandchild. Then his children had persuaded him to go to Dr. Rothschild, the eye doctor, who put medicine in his eyes. Now you would think the very least an eye

doctor should be able to do is to make eye glasses. Ves ich vus! (Ridiculous!) Instead, Dr. Rothschild had him go to still another place to buy the glasses. Oh, to be sure, they helped, but they cost more than the dollar Woolworth's had once charged him. Because they cost him so much more, he found himself putting them away in a pocket during synagogue services, as though he was reluctant to wear them out.———

There it stood behind them—the big, empty house wherein forever would be left the best of their lives. Who could understand that it was more than rooms, fixtures, and furniture? Who could hear the sounds of growing children? Who else could see his wife lighting the Sabbath candles and the family gathering around the table? Who else could feel the pulse of life flowing through the halls, up and down stairs, and in every corner? Who else—who else—who else?

In a few minutes their son would be there to pick them up. They had said goodbye to Miss Currie at the Neighborhood House, whom they loved and trusted as much as anyone could. In the morning they had picked up a pair of shoes which Mr. Engelson had repaired for them, a pumpernickle from Kessel's bakery. Now there was nothing to do or say but only to wait.

And when they sat quietly in their son's car, they looked back once more at familiar places and remembered names and neighbors; Katz, Agernoff, Levenberg, Stackers, Orenstien, Vadnais, Hetenger, Solberg, Goldberg, Zuckert, Silberstein, Boderman, Tankenoff, Fishman, Waldman, Solomon, Zussman, Essenstein,

Ehrlich, Bick, Segal, Gilman, Halpern, Cohen, Goldenberg and one last glance as the car turned into Robert Street, at Gottlieb & Misel's junk yard and across the road, Goldberg & Efress.

He looked at his "yiddeneh" sitting quietly with a shawl around her head, her hand holding his tightly. Never had he even thought of another woman. How his children had laughed when he told them of being approached one Saturday noon, while walking on St. Peter Street, by a heavily rouged young woman who asked him if he wanted to go to a "party." How they had been convulsed when he told them he had told her that he had no time for parties with strangers, but if his wife were invited, both might come.

Ai, Ai, what a prize! Never had she reproached him even when he deserved it. Always she went about her way, cooking, scrubbing, washing, mending, pressing, and looking for baragins. When did she ever have time to rest, except in the synagogue. What soothing alcohol rubs she gave him when his back ached and who else could cut his stubborn toe nails when he could not bend that far. When was there not a clean white, starched shirt for the Sabbath and an extra plate for a synagogue crony? Who walked over the bridge to pay the bills and who thought of herself only when the others were taken care of? She was not a "kvetch" (a chronic griper) or a shrew like the others, harassing their husbands to be the first with a telephone and a gramaphone. How she "kvelled" (rejoiced) when her youngest accompanied the Rosenblatt record with his fiddle, even if only a loving mother could recognize the tune.

Now the car drew up to her son's house where they

would stay until they could enter the Old Home. He knew she was thinking it would be difficult for the grandchildren and her daughter-in-law because they were of another generation. He knew, too, she was worrying about him. How would he get used to the Old Home? He, after all, she thought, was a man like all the others who had the temerity to imagine themselves rulers of their households.

So, from the very depths of despair, he brought up a smile and tapped her lightly on the cheek with as much a gesture of endearment as he had ever permitted himself.

"Gott zu danken," she said softly to him, "iss vet zein all right—all right, unzereh kinder vellen uns nisht vergessen." (Our children will not forget us.)

MOTHER O'LEARY'S SALVE

How fabulous the dreams of little boys and little girls! They are like a magic carpet carrying them high above the city dump, over Mr. Jacob Berkus' house on 237 State Street "built to last for 100 years," across the bluffs where Indians sleep peacefully, and over the low scudding clouds toward the full moon of Rosh Chodesh (New Month).

It all began with a colorful ad in the Sunday morning funnies, "Just sell fifty boxes of Mother O'Leary's Salve and take your pick of a thousand gifts—ponies, baseball suits, telescopes, etc., etc." So I immediately sent away for the wonderful salve to which medicinal properties heretofore undiscovered by either medicine or science were attributed. "No money," it read, "we trust you." I, of course, took this as a personal message. It couldn't have been directed to anyone else.

At long last, the package came and I tore the wrappers apart under the suspicious eyes of my mother. Busy as she was with her back to me, she could, nevertheless, see what was going on in every room and even a block away. In a few minutes she would be asking "voos is doos, a nyer meshigahs?" ("some new scheme?"), and

how much would it cost this time for the family, relatives, and boarders?

There they were, just fifty little tin boxes to sell and the little world of my fantasies would be all mine. (The smell, I might add, belonged to still another world.) "Ma," I said, cutting her off in the nick of time, "just think, for fifzek cent (fifty cents), this salve cures boils, dandruff, gas pains, corns, kopfschmertzen and every 'vehtig' (pain) known to man and beast" (and according to directions—some diseases still unknown—presumably caused only by use of the salve).

But what can you expect from grown-ups who, outside of being bigger, are distinguished from children only by their skepticism. She only shook her head, wiped her hands on a towel and put a "chinek" (pot) of water on to boil. Naturally, I bought the first box. With gentle persuasion (together with threats of never taking her downtown again) I sold my protesting sister the second.

My wonderful, wonderful "Bawbeh" (grandmother) was my third victim. Like all "bawbehs," her grandchildren were her very heart and soul, and it would not have mattered to her whether it was salve or halvah that I was selling. I will always see her as she patted me on the head with a warm gentleness, which forever left the earth with her, and led me into her room. From out of the bottom drawer of a chest, she pulled a tightly knotted handkerchief—her "knippel." With her few remaining good teeth, she loosened the knots and out of her pitifully small hoard picked out seven nickels, five Indian head pennies, and one tar-

nished dime. "Nem, Nem," (take) she whispered closing the reluctant fingers of my hand in a tight fist.

Even to this day, I am not ashamed of the tears that trembled along my eyelids as I assured her with faint heart that the salve would be a wonderful preservative for her "sheytel" (wig). And if it didn't help her failing eyesight, I promised tremulously to forever thread her needle no matter what I was doing. When she suddenly reached and drew me close to her, I told her, too, that I might even get a pony if I sold enough salve and I would let her ride him too. With my head pressed against her breast, I felt the quivering of quiet laughter as she agreed that this would be a fine thing indeed. But then she wondered what my father might say. I knew that he would say, half in jest, half in earnest, "Es faylt unz a pherd?" (Haven't we enough horses already?)

The boarders came next! Since they were defenseless and at the mercy of my mother's table, six more tins of salve went to cure boils, wax mustaches, and to waterproof working shoes. But alas, no one else would buy in spite of my pleas and blandishments.

Even my Godfather, Daniel Greenstein, and my Godmother, Yenteh, who both were wont to finance most of my precarious financial ventures with more pennies than went into their pishkehs (charity boxes) were adamant. They too, "shockled" (shook) their heads and said, referring to the salve, "es taag in drerd." (It's no good.) I should tell you, though, that Daniel finally relented and bought some salve, exacting a promise that I would not tell Yenteh. I should also tell

you that Yenteh did exactly the same. I do not know what my kind Godmother did with hers, but I did see Daniel rubbing his horse's harness with it. I suggested to her that she might use the salve to grease her squeaking sewing machine, but she gave me a "platzel" (cookie) and sent me home.

And so ended my venture in the patent medicine business. I knew of no one else who could spare fifty cents in cash. Now there was naught to do but return the remaining tins and the money—which I did in due time. But not before, I confess, being deluged by dozens of letters from the salve company. They were written on very fine stationery and quite impressive. Even my mother began to think I was an important person, not merely one of nine children she was always tripping over.

It was the last letter, however, which was the shortest and the most effective. This time the company ventured to suggest I was not an honorable person. They threatened to turn the "matter" over to their international firm of lawyers with instructions to prosecute me to the fullest extent of the law. So I sent them back their old salve and money but believe me—with West Side lawyers like Stacker, Levine, Gottlieb, Serbine, Silver, and Lipschultz—who was afraid of them. Not that I meant for one single minute to keep their "farfloogeneh" (cursed) merchandise—it was simply a matter of my being preoccupied with other wonderful schemes. And if they hadn't hurt my feelings, I might have shared with them a thousand other ways of using their salve. On second thought, perhaps it is just as

well that I didn't. I might have been tempted to tell them what they really should do with it.

My next scheme to get something for nothing involved a coupon left on our doorstep promising a "valuable gift" and a "free booklet about female disorders in a plain wrapper" from the Lydia Pinkham Company. I asked my mother for more information about this "tonic for female troubles" but she said she was too busy for any kind of tonics and besides her troubles couldn't be cured by tonic. So I mailed the coupon. Three weeks later I received a little comb and mirror together with a little book, which, alas again, told me less about "female troubles" than I had already learned in the dark corridors of LaFayette school.

But 'twas the salve adventure that has bothered me evermore and oh, the dreams of ponies, baseball suits, and other fabulous treasures. Who was there to tell me that had I sold the first fifty tins, the pony would still have been as far away as the moon? I would only have qualified to enter a contest with eight and a half million other little dreamers. And for all I know, little boys and little girls, with star dust in their eyes, are still selling the same salve—and for the same pony who, by this time, is probably "an alter pherd." (an old horse).

But dream I did—of strength and riches from this potent salve; dreams of coming back twenty years later as a stranger in "schul" (synagogue) to outbid the richest member and buy a "mafter" (a coveted synagogue honor) for my father for a mere million dollars. (And if I had, thirty new schuls would have been built immediately and thirty new presidents installed);

dreams of confronting the Indiana Street Blackhand gang with a sneer on my face and one hand tied behind my back; dreams of buying an entire candy store for myself and friends; of streaking around the bases in a new baseball suit on the P.Q. grounds with my "tsitzehs" flying in the wind; and above all, for my parents and my "bawbeh" in their old age, a big house with electric lights, three maids, an indoor toilet and no more "knipples."

But out of this last dream came a voice from afar and hands tugging at me. This time it was not Rabbi Laiken yelling, "Velvel, in Chedar shlooft min nisht." (Velvel, one doesn't sleep in a classroom). Instead it was my dear children, Johnny and Susie:

" Daddy, please buy some salve so we can get a pony, won't you?"

"Daddy? Huh?"

DELIGHTFUL WORLD

The rude, callous, and insensitive guest called Winter who had long overstayed his uncertain welcome, was gone at last. Now, like the caress of a mother's hands over the brow of a sleeping child, the Spring of the year warmed the stirring bosom of the earth; coaxing the shy green tendrils of life to unfold and meet the warm zephyrs of wind skipping and dancing over the meadows and fields.

In the city market on Jackson street, under the long corrugated tin-covered sheds, sleepy eyed farmers unloaded trucks and wagons and displayed the fruit of their fields while children slept in the cab of trucks and under the seat of wagons.

The smell of the rich, black earth vied with the pungent odor of fresh cut green onions, saucy red radishes, tender leaf lettuce, spicy rhubarb, succulent sprigs of asparagus, sprouting onion sets, and baby tomato plants.

But Chatzkel's wife, who came down to the market while her family still slept, was oblivious to the beauty of the morning. She had walked the few blocks from 13th street, pulling behind her a battered coaster wagon, whose squeaking wheels threatened at any moment to depart in all directions. With the other hand, she

clutched her purse and a cloth market bag. She stopped at the first shed where haughty little spring chickens clucked nervously and pecked fiercely at the corn in their chicken coops.

She went from coop to coop scooping out a chicken here and there, holding it up with a practiced hand and blowing lightly under the tail feathers. She felt of it deftly, looked at it carefully from all sides, measuring in her mind's eye, the number it would feed. After asking the price, she immediately disavowed its very resemblance to a fowl. However, after completing her tour of the shed, and comparing prices, she would come back to her starting place to continue bargaining.

On her way home later, with the springer safely tied in the wagon along with a few bunches of onions and "ratichlech," (radishes), she would pass Simon Hertz's home on 14th street, the one with the white picket fence that was always kept painted; she would stop at Dubinsky's grocery store, where the little bell tinkled as the door opened as if to say politely, "Hurry, hurry, out of the backroom—a customer is here." From there she went to Mr. Makiesky's bakery on Broadway to pick up a fresh rye bread baked during the quiet hours of the late evening. How often this gentle and kind baker gave his bread to those he knew could not pay for it!

I reminded my friend Mendel this, too, was a part of a delighful little world in Saint Paul—the world of 13th and 14th streets. I wanted to write about it. This was Canada and Broadway: the world of the College Avenue Schul, Kessel Garten, where the "greenhorns" met, the cow that gave warm milk in Brown's back yard,

the evening games under the arc lights, Mr. and Mrs. Marshak's grocery store, Mr. Butwin, the Hebrew School "melamed," Charles Irving ("Young Dr. Malone")—Marilyn Schatzberg's brother, and of course, the Central Community House and Faye Biederman.

"You see, Mendel," I said, "in many ways this was another West Side." Mendel merely shrugged his shoulders and, with a condescending pat on my back, told me to write about these "outsiders" if I insisted, and, although he would read it, he wasn't interested in those "foreigners." The only time he insisted that he had occasion to visit that part of town was the day he was called in by the loan association committee because he was a co-signer for a friend who had defaulted on a note. Of course the friend eventually paid the loan, but "kowm mit tsooris" (with great difficulty). Mendel wasn't sure which loan association it was—the Canada Street Workers Alliance Mutual Loan Association or the Independent Workmens' Circle Loan Association at 246 14th Street.

A fine community it was too, that little city within a city on 13th and 14th Streets. Its "balabawtishe menschen" (upright citizens) made a significant contribution to the city and to the length and breadth of our land. Do you remember these people and places?

Al Gardener (Goldie's husband), a sensation as a basketball player when 6 and 7-footers were sucking at their bottles. Barney Robbins who operated an exclusive tailor shop behind the St. Paul Hotel, and little Johnny Webb who carted Mr. Robbin's lunch from home during "Chalamoid" pesach. Mr. Lisowsky's butcher

shop was a hectic place on that day of days when his son Pete won a musical scholarship and left to study in Paris for two years.

There was the old Madison school where the Public Safety building now stands and some of the teachers; Miss Hawes, Miss Lindall, "a beautiful one"—Anna Smith, Miss Prendergast, Mr. Everleigh and others. The Strauss tailor shop in the Court Block employed eight people; some still remember the consideration and kindness Mr. Strauss showed his help. Every day, at 3 o'clock, he would send out for pails of beer and the help took time out for a beer break. The Strauss' lived on John Street and attended the 14th Street Schul.

And of "schuls:" who has never heard of the College Avenue Schul? All of the "balabawtem" (eminent) were members and many stand out today in the ranks of distinguished Jews and citizens: The Coddens, Chick, Charlie and Nate, and, of course, L. D. Codden himself; Mr. Miller and his sons—Julius and Mike, Mr. Laff, with the beautiful snowy white beard coming down from the top of the hill on Cedar Street. He was a wonderful old gentleman who gave to so many causes because he believed in and loved people. There was Mr. Paper and his three sons, Joe, (Jumbo) Dave and Mike. Two were athletes of renown at Mechanic Arts High School, Dave and Mike, and Joe did well, too!

Then there was Hymie Fink who lived on Temperance Avenue, a little boy with a drum, who was later acclaimed the country's greatest drummer as a member of Al Lopez's band. The Gershons next door may have thought it was just a lot of noise, but the thousands and thousands Hymie entertained thought otherwise.

Two doctors, and a lawyer too, among many other professional people, also spent their youth there. These are three who all through the years have returned to the same barber, Johnny Webb: Dr. Dave Kaplan, Dr. Dave Kanny and lawyer Barney Garber. And fighters too, Billy Bauers (Sklar), one of the first Jewish professionals, and Jack Weitzman (brothers—Joe, Oscar and Nate).

Remember too—the Schallers, Mr. Redler who sold and still sells fuel and his son, the dentist—Jack and Si Margolis, living across from the Rosenbergs—the Winnicks on Canada—and roly poly friendly "Chappy" Devine—the Kellers (who have recently made the trek to Highland Park), Reznikof, the tinsmith and my bosom buddy, Mike Dudovitz, who one day carried eggs in his new suit which was ruined when a mischief maker deliberately squashed them. And many other names: Mrs. Axelrod at 280 14th Street, the Ravitz's at 186, the Breskys, Flashers, Nemers, Rosenblums, Ingbers, Brazens, Echiel Cohen, the drygoods man, the Wernicks, Winers, Jimmy Zacks the barber, Simon Libman, Frank Barenbaum and Albert Widowsky.

And you, Mel Meyers, one of the fine leaders at the Central Community House and the long remembered job you did with your boys' clubs, and who among you was in the silent and sober little crowd which gathered in the doorway of a little home behind Langman and Siegel's butcher shop one day many years ago when an irate husband shot and killed his wife.

Did you pay eleven cents to sit in the upper balcony of the old Orpheum across from the St. Paul Hotel,

or were you able to join the elite for 25, 55 and 85 cents (for a downstairs seat)?

What a pity, Mendel, that neither memory or space allow me to write about all of the good people who lived there. Like our own West Side neighbors they did the same things and thought the same way even though a river and several dozen streets separated them. Like so many of our "bawbes" and "zades" (grandfathers) they diagnosed their own illnesses, dividing the body (like Gaul) in three parts. From the neck up, any pain was a "kopf vetig" (headache), from the shoulders to the lower limbs, it was a "booch vetig" (bellyache) and anywhere down from there, it was plain rheumatism.

Who knew of pediatricians? (God bless this hardy lot of good men who your wife and mine will only call at three in the morning—no other time will do.) With those people, like with ours, the family doctor was both a good friend and a general practitioner. This, mind you, was in the days when G.P. might just as well have meant to the doctor, "goornisht bazuhlt" (without pay), because money was so scarce.

Now Chatzel's wife is gone. Mr. Marshak looks out of his room at the Old Home remembering the blissfully happy days with his wife. The houses you lived in are gone and strangers walk in the streets. But if there is sadness, there is happiness, too, for not too far away from you and perhaps next door, live some of the very same people from the old neighborhood. Yes, Tessler's fish store is in the limbo of the past along with Levy's store; but Pat Levy, "King of the Fans," carries on the tradition. That pretty dark haired girl who played sheet music in the Golden Rule basement, Evelyn (Wid-

owsky) Esrig, isn't there anymore, but her music continues to delight us all, including husband George and daughters, Clarice, Sissie, and Randy.

And if the old gang has broken up, the younger ones are still around. Mike Leibgott, Ben Weber and Sonny Zuckerman are married and have to steal away from their wives to play softball, but they still have their hair. The cute Boretz girls, Shirley, Helen, and Sally are a teeny weencie bit heavier, but just as cute as ever and "Chappy" Divine is still roly-poly—and everybody is working steady—so who is complaining?

ONCE UPON A YEAR

As my grandmother might have started this story, as she did so many others, "Ein mool is gevan. . . ." Once upon a year, beyond my ken, ever so long ago, lived forty-six little West Side boys and girls. These little boys and girls were in the 8th grade at LaFayette School. One fine afternoon, they gathered in the courtyard of their school to have a picture taken of themselves.

Some of the boys wore Little Lord Fauntleroy costumes—black velvet with large white lace collars, and a few others looked more comfortable. And the little girls, some of them, dear friends, your mothers (and grandmothers) wore long sleeved dresses made of dimity and lawn with high ruffled collars. A few wore dark paisley print dresses and starched, white, organdy pinafores. Hair styles included pompadours tied in back with large bows, bangs, long curls, and braids.

Sitting so primly in the front row were Rose Goldstein Glickman, Abe Birnberg, Abe Levine, a Gilbert (or Galbert) girl, a Rossman girl, and Bertha Shindler Harris. In the second row looking out at the big wide world were Gertrude Simon, Katherine Niedorf, Cora Smith, Jenny Lentz, a McDonald girl, Rose Johnson,

Edith Labovitch and Kate Blomberg. The third row held a Fine boy, Joe Krinsky, a Burgoyne girl, an Olson, Walter Weaver, Hy Katz, Walter Grimes and William Johnson, the printer. The fourth row was a determined lot to whom the ninth grade looked like Everest must seem to a mountain climber. Ben Bratter, Newell, a Millstein girl (the doctor's sister) and several unknown were there. The fifth row included Tony Smith, a stiff-collared lad, Mr. Abe Shapiro, an Applebaum boy, and a half dozen others who remain anonymous in Abe Levine's memory. How many times that afternoon did the photographer take his head out of the black hood that projected from the camera and cry out in sheer desperation, "Throw the gum away, quit squirming, don't pick your nose, please." But it was a fine day and a great adventure and the pity that some of the clean scrubbed faces are gone forever.

And the school! It stood on a slight elevation, and in the winter time its pupils slid down its embankment on their King of Hill sleds, sheets of corrugated tin, and on an assortment of pots and pans. From the outside it presented a formidable appearance; grim and determined, like a fastness and fortress designed and built by craftsmen to withstand the onslaughts of time and weather and the daily never ending, siege of incorrigible students.

The long wooden halls smelled of the cleaning mixture of sawdust and oil and to the kindergarteners seemed to be a maze never to be ventured into alone. The windows reached high up to the ceilings and only favored pupils were allowed to open them from the top with the long hook-tipped staff which rested in a

corner. Fresh air was generally at a premium because the drafts always bothered the teachers, all of whom apparently suffered from stiff necks. If you were a favorite son or daughter you could clean the erasers after school by beating them against each other, and just as often over the top of the head of your partner.

The teachers, God bless their grim and departed souls, were for the most part kind and gentle and opened each year's class with a long, monotonous saga of their summer vacation trip. There was Miss Cummings, Miss Dow, Miss Kelly, Miss Day, Miss West and Miss Asp, Miss Hawthorne, Miss Cramsie, who wore glasses on a gold chain and whose dyspeptic disposition earned her the appelation of "Miss Crabapple." More than one of these teachers shared her lunch with some little boys and girls who might otherwise have gone hungry. Who can forget the hair inspection days when Miss Peters, the nurse, and her assistants looked through your hair for you-know-what, and how industriously your mother and mine washed our hair the evening before with Kerosene.

Those were the days when the fabulous Lavansky family were the ELITE of the West Side. In addition to a telephone and piano, they owned a peacock. They drove a surrey with a fringe on top, drawn by two beautiful and proud horses who pranced up and down Indiana Avenue to the delight and envy of both children and adults. The Lavanskys lived in the only brick house on Indiana Avenue and they owned the Market place on Third Street. They belong to the era of the Kellogg sisters, who were residents of the old

Neighborhood House before Miss Constance Currie took over.

But much closer and more apropos of this time, is the picture of Mr. Mirsky, the blacksmith of Texas Street. It is a picture of a man standing hands on hips, feet braced apart, surveying the buggy perched precariously on the roof of his shop, the aftermath of a Halloween evening. Garbage cans, fence gates, and overturned outhouses littering streets and alley-ways rounded out a picture of frustration and resignation by a first generation who could not understand the "mischegas" (antics) of the second generation. That was the time when the gang would watch out on Halloween night for the old crone who lived near the playground and about whom they sang (from afar), "Old Mother Witch, fell in a ditch, picked up a penny and thought she was rich."

In this month, too, the "succo" had been taken down to be resurrected in the next year. Now Mendel had awakened earlier one Sunday morning than usual. He washed his hands and face in the cold water from the single tap as the rest of his household slept. After putting his "Tvillin" (philactories) away in a little brown bag with a draw string, he let the coffee and chicory mixture brew before sitting down to a quick breakfast. He harnessed his horse and wagon and quietly, in the early dawn, guided his horse through the meadows, where now Holman Airport lies, to a grove of green saplings shading the river bank. Mendel tethered his sleepy horse who looked at him rather suspiciously out of one eye, and walked into the grove over the soft earth that yielded resiliently to his heavy

shoes. With a practiced eye and a dull axe, which he never sharpened, he cut off the long green branches and threw them into his wagon. And when he had filled his wagon, he drove back slowly, humming a happy tune under his breath.

This was for the "succo." It was an architectural fantasy of flotsam and jetsam, old screens and storm windows held together not by the rusty nails and wire, which stuck out in all directions and in which Mendel himself put little faith, but rather by the glue and tenacity of Mendel's love for his "succo."

And in the very center of this weather beaten, lop-sided fabrication, stood a small table covered with a freshly laundered table cloth, upon which rested a dish of fresh fruit. Overhead through a canopy of sweet and fresh smelling foliage, the sun shone down gently with a soft warmth that filled the corners of the "succo" and drove away Mendel's aches.

Surely, he thought, his "succo" must indeed be a glory to God . . . and the good Lord blessed the hands of its architect and pious Jew.

"CHAD GAD YA"

The winter had been a long one. The peddlers had complained of idleness, and their horses in the barns sniffed eagerly to be back in harness. Mr. Katzovitz, the feed man, delivered his bales of hay stacked high on his wagon. But now a warm zephyr blew gently from the south and with it came Spring and Passover to the West Side.

The high waters of the Mississippi crept slowly over Plato, Chicago, Eaton, Constance, Minnetonka, Fenton, Kentucky, and Texas Streets. Tom Lashinsky's family, and the children they usually boarded, watched the river climb up their doorsteps and Tom fished for carp from his window. The Levines and Halpers loaded their belongings on a flat boat and waited out the muddy waters with their relatives. The floating sidewalks would later be grappled for kindling wood, but this year the dam would give way and there would be kindling wood for years to come. The "Rebbitzen" Simon was no longer taking orders for coal. The ice was gone and gently mild weather ushered in the Pesach.

Everyone had new clothes for the Passover. Bannon's department store was giving away jack-knives with every pair of high-top boots, and Goffstein's and

Levinsohn's were busy showing bolts of cloth. The ground was soft enough to scoop out holes to play nuts and the grocers were up to their necks in Pesach orders. The cases of lemon soda pop had been properly blessed after "Doc" Schwartz had filled them at the pop factory, and Russian jelly-filled candies were displayed in the store windows. Horseradish root was selling fast and so were beets to color the "chrain" after the horseradish was grated. The Pesach dishes came down from the attics and were scoured out with clean sand in the backyard—(remember the Gold-Dust soap powder —a yellow and black box?)—Levy, Pertzik and Kardonsky were operating milk and "kase" (cheese) dairies and the pan under your ice-box was always flowing over-(Yankel, empty the pan from the IZE-box).

We couldn't wait for the delicious "knaidlach" (dumplings) made from a recipe that would drive our precise and scientific Betty Crocker to drink—"a bissel of this and a handful of that, and pinch of this"—and every year the "knaidlach" grew larger and tastier. My mother's boarders (and who didn't have one or two), who ate the year around in preparation for a seven year drouth, now were girding their loins to eat as though they would be called on any morning to accompany Moses on a forty year tour of the wilderness. But I loved them just the same because they bought me Halvah, told wonderful stories, and let me puff their Bull Durham cigarettes. Bull Durham came in small bags with draw-strings.

And the wonderful Seder! How our parents and hungry relatives beamed at your "Ma Nishtana:" why is this night different from all nights? Remember the

long Haggadah service, opening the door for Eliyohu Hanovi (and the night the neighbor's dog walked in instead of the prophet), the tasty chicken, "kugel," and "tzimes," the bitter herbs, the "charoses," the "kiddush" cup, the "afikomen," the roasted egg, lamb bone and parsley, and salt water, and the beautiful white tablecloth? The very best. And way into the night could be heard the strains of Chad Gad Yo—"I had a kid. . . ."

It was warm enough for hop-scotch. Remember a piece of glass on the end of your shoe, hopping across the lines from square to square? Lieberman the blacksmith on Chicago Street was looking to a busy season, and his two sons—"Big Bladder" and "Little Bladder" —watched the forge. Ben Price and "Yawnee" Batush were sloshing in the mud on St. Lawrence, and Natie Lucker was Yo Yo champ. We could mention other nicknames, some printable and some not—"Nig" Bomberg, "Rushie" Nerenberg, "Fat Mamie," "Cans" Hoffman, "Baby Doll," "Pach" Nerenberg, "Fischel" Schine, "Sheeya" Hirschorn, "Beebels," etc., etc.

Some of the neighbors reminisced about the Yiddish melodramatic classics and tragedies, which had been shown at the Liberty Theatre on Eaton Street, and spoke of Jakob Gordon, David Pinsky, Lazar Rosenstein, and Maurice Schwartz. Remember the asbestos curtain at the Liberty with the picture of the "handshake" painted on? Who remembers Muni Weisenfreund, who joined with our local amateurs to entertain the enthusiastic audiences of that day. This one time itinerant actor is now known as Paul Muni.

The younger bloods were looking forward to the opening of the Wildwood park season and some families were thinking of Sophie Wirth camp. (Didn't those evening snacks of warm milk and graham crackers at camp taste good?) The *Forvitz* (the Daily Forward), Der *tag,* and Der *Morgan Journal* were circulated from Levooneh's store and were stacked high next to the schmaltz-herring barrel. Each featured tear jerking "Romans" (serials), the forerunners of today's soap operas, and then, of course, that famous column—A Bintil Brief. Mogy Bernstein, he of the white thatch of hair, reigned as King of the Newsboys, and Reuben of the old *Daily News* was turning over his job to Joe Moss (now the peanut king of America). Joe was followed by his brother Tommy, and those two erstwhile street circulation promoters, Riggie Sher and Louie Minuek at the *Dispatch* who succeeded Smith. And who remembers the 5 cent cheese on bun sandwiches at Davinis on 3rd and Robert?

And in the library of the old Neighborhood House (didn't you love those "Brownie" books), the following answered the roll call of the CMC club (Coming Men of America) : Sam Smith, William Charney, Al Miller, Bill Binder, Irv Berkus, Joe Lande, Ed Zucker, Al Goldstein, Sam Goldberg, Cecil Magid, Joe Rom, Art Kohler, Harry Kraines, Sam Barke, Harvey Payne (Hymie Ponevesky), Ruben Rosenblum, Herman Mackoff, Sam Sadowsky, Sam Shapiro, Irving Fahrst, Martin (Mawty) Tennenbaum, Sam Nemer, Leon Blehart (Leader), Morrie Atlas (Assistant Leader), Barney Horowitz, Dave Marenson, and Louis (Tubby) Smith, who now lives at 1198 Glencoe Street, Denver,

Colorado. The club was organized to promote Judean and Boy Scout work. A notice on the window instructed members to bring rope to learn how to tie knots. Later members were "Loyke" Berkus, Joe Ruchford, Joe Deitchman, Louie Merman, Bill Binder. Remember Camp Kiwanis at Little Marine on the St. Croix, and Ben Stoddard, who ran the camp, and wondered if he would live through each season?

And there was a "Bar Mitzvah" I remember which was really a glorious affair; 150 "grab bags" for the Chedar kids, three bottles of whiskey, a half-gallon of herring, three cakes, four Rabbis, parents, and relatives, all downstairs in Mr. Lechtman's room in the "Chedar." The little boy's Mafter was bad (he was no Caruso), but the candy wasn't as stale as usual and the fountain pens many. And the same day, little Hy Rosenblum fell into the sewer and was "saved" by his father who was held by his feet, head down, until he was able to reach him and pull him out of the muck and slime.

And so back to Pesach. Remember the wonderful taste of fresh pumpernickel bread after the long siege of Matzohs? Pesach wasn't too bad because it wasn't a "fast" holiday and you didn't have to stick your tongue out in the morning at "Schul" to prove that you didn't eat breakfast. But it was a wonderful first Seder, wasn't it, with all of your family at one table? Even the boarders, those poor souls, lonely to tears, whose thoughts were of families they were scrimping and saving to bring over, looked different somehow. And of course, there was always one boarder who was supposed to have left behind at least six families (his own).

And the chill of a spring evening descended gently over the homes of the good people of the West Side. My Grandmother picked me out of the chair in which I had fallen asleep and carried me to bed. I stirred restlessly as she rocked silently in the darkness until the house was quiet, dreaming her dreams of little towns and people that were no more; so far, so far away. And I thought I could still hear the Chad Gad Ya, "My father bought an only kid for two zuzim."

WEST SIDE SUMMER WEEKEND

It was hot that Thursday noon, so many years ago. But neither the heat nor the mingling odors of the dump and the stockyards kept the West Side from stirring. Eileen Grosmark was on her way to Primeau's grocery for "chazer schmaltz" (lard)—good to smear on your chest for a cold. Kleyman's was next on her list for some "condle tzicker" (rock candy) to ease that cough. Lapidus was mending a pair of shoes, and Shamus Whitefield was resting his voice in preparation for the High Holidays when his stentorian voice rang through the "Schul" and pursued us down into the basement with a "zull zein sha" (quiet).

Chernoff the barber missed a stroke (and barely an ear) as he shaved a customer. Lipschitz the fruit peddler sang his wares—"grapes, a nickel a pound and a watermelon for a dime." He was willing and anxious to make a trade for a dozen knishes. The marble season was just about over and fancy agates were going at a penny each—ten squares away for agates, three squares an emmie. Hadji Gadji (Hy Kloner) was rounding up a bunch for a kittenball game at the P. Q. grounds and everyone wanted to pitch. The circus wasn't coming

down to the flats because the "high waters" hadn't quite left.

Rabbis Taple and Pusin were half way across the bridge wondering about the "Paaskoodnyaks" (incorrigibles) in chedar who had tormented them the day before, and Oscar Kaplan, also on his way to "chedar," was thinking of moving the clock ahead (again) when Rabbi Brazoff went out for his relief. His thoughts turned idly to Irving Waldman, who sat at his left, to the right of Harry Plotke and ahead and behind, Rebecca Bransil, Bertha Ward, Doris Rutchik, Abie Radel, Hy Simos and a few other "scholars."

Everyone with teeth and some without, were cracking "kerlich" (sunflower seeds) at a penny a cup—that was before Fisher had commercialized and salted them.

Lurie's grocery had a run on one cent ice cream cones; chocolate soldiers, and Mary Janes sold two for a penny as did wine-balls. The Widow Schwartz was yelling at someone on the corner of State and Kentucky. Mrs. Green was sweeping out her candy store next to the Lafayette School and Shaketer, the popcorn man, drove around the corner heralded by a squeaky whistling. The lumber yard across from the New Ray was deserted. Miss Robie, the penmanship teacher, was droning on about the Palmer Penmanship method "up and around—over and around," and no one really cared. The Rov Simon, that holy and wonderful soul, was expounding a "shileh" (theological problem). The Mikvah and Turkish bath on Fillmore were operating at capacity, but, of course, independently.

Tankenoff's fish store was crowded and the fish you took home wrapped in a newspaper was very much alive. Aaron Goldberg's butcher shop was filled and he called all the ladies "Dolly." You made the weekly pilgrimage to the Shochet to get the chickens "schlachted" and "flicked" (killed and plucked), and on Friday morning, your mother and mine were up early "hocking" (chopping) the gefilte fish and setting out their bread dough to rise.

223 Robertson was vacant on the first floor—three months free rent to any occupant at $20.00 for 5 rooms. Herman Glickman lived on the second floor. Looking down Fairfield, one saw Engelson, the shoemaker; Bernard Harris, Isadore Levinsohn, dry goods; Maurice Lerner, second-hand clothing; Mrs. Jennie Liebovitz, Simon Londer, the barber; Louis Boderman, the tailor; Frank Tatlebaum, Samuel Senensky, Ehrlich, the baker; the Sevaks, Kessels, Salutes, Serbines, Morris Tankenoff's soft drinks; and lo and behold, a "goy" (gentile)—Belair's grocery. And on Indiana Avenue on this hot day, Gottlieb and Misel were cooking up a junk deal, Herman Ettinger was counting barrels and Morry (Rod) Effress and Chuck Essenstein were making up their minds not to go to "chedar" on Sunday. Not far away, Mrs. Nathan Pleason was busy getting ready for Shabus (may she rest in peace after gracing the West Side with her kindness for over thirty years).

By Friday noon, the wooden floors had been scrubbed on hands and knees and covered with papers. The delightful smells of the Sabbath night supper filled the homes as the candles were lit and the bride of the Sabbath ushered in. The roast chicken, chopped

liver, "knishes," "kishke" (stuffed derma) and the thick lockshin soup (who ever bought noodles?) lay spread on the table along with the "chaleh" and the wine for "kiddish." The spirit of the good Lord and the serenity of the holy day hovered over the West Side. The "dummy," who was the "shabus goy," strode down the street with his pack of yelping dogs, fingering his newly earned coins, and the older patriarchs lingered on in the schuls for some extra moments to savor the spirit of the Sabbath.

And so the candle lights sputtered and went out in the cool of the evening, the porches filled slowly and the children went reluctantly to bed—sometimes three to four in a room. Their parents were blissfully ignorant and unmindful of Dr. Spock and the need for private bedrooms. Child psychology was the discipline of a good "potch in poonem" (slap) or some other part of the anatomy commonly called "am hinten." A generation of children with chedar-pulled ears was growing up.

And so, to Saturday and to Marcia Alpern, who lived on the corner of Indiana and Robert Street, the gateway to downtown, and who watched from her vantage point those who were going downtown. Saturday night when a manure (you pay for it now) fire burned in front of Daniel Greenstein's home on Texas Street to keep the mosquitoes away, as the philosophers from Texas and State Streets pondered on the porch over the problems of peddling and affairs of state.

After the long, peaceful, Sabbath day was over, the stores in the West Side opened in unison for business again as though a key had fit a master lock. Motel Gerr,

the butcher was spreading sawdust over the floors before grinding meat for the Bratters, who were having "cocklayten" (hamburgers) for Sunday lunch. The "cocklayt" was a round meat ball with a unique Jewish personality.

In the "Schvitz Bood" (steam bath) on Fillmore Avenue, just a few doors from Shorty's saloon, the Saturday evening revelries were underway with a slow start. The "Bood" was for those who disdained the Wilder Public Baths at three cents for soap and two for towels. First, the steam room to wash away the week's accumulation of bad business deals, "tsooris" (troubles) and sometimes the nagging of a wife who was insisting on a victrola, a telephone, and a gas stove that could be lit without matches. After that, came the ice cold plunge. Then the hard wooden benches, where everyone sat wrapped in towels, drinking a schnapsel and eating marrinated herring, thick fresh pumpernickle and wursht. All was well in the "Schvitz Bood," (steam bath) and with more schnaps and more herring, everyone's dream of becoming a millionaire came closer to fulfillment.

Sunday morning the McTices, Farleys, and Lynches were on their way to early Mass, and the rock fight was postponed until after church services. One little Lutz girl wore her best confirmation dress on her way to St. Michael's and I remember three bad little boys who helped her be late—and who grew up to be three bad big boys.

"Mooley" Chase and "Pyle" Libfield were working on their attic library of Nick Carter and Tom Swift books, and Merril McAuslind was getting ready to take

the Tiger Patrol and White Wolf Cubs on a hike to Battle Creek. Every lunch had three wursht sandwiches, one jelly, one banana, and five cents for pop.

And so to another Monday, to school, to work, to Chedar and another week in the West Side . . .

IN MEMORIAM

One Sunday afternoon, downstairs in the long room at the Talmud Torah, members of the burial society were having their monthly meeting. On the white tablecloth was a platter of sponge cake slices and a tall bottle of schnaps. Now you know that when more than two Jews settled in any community, the establishment of a synagogue, Talmud Torah, and cemetery were matters of immediate concern. The cemetery couldn't be too far away—not more than an hour or two by horse and buggy.

This afternoon, members of the society were confronted with two perplexing problems. Beryl, a community stalwart, was complaining bitterly that the burial lot he had bought and paid for "in cash," was completely unsatisfactory. During the past week he had driven with his horse and wagon down Minnehaha to Maryland, over the lonely fields way beyond the fringe of the city, to look at his little plot which he had never seen before. Beryl was a practical man. This was more than a resting place! It was also a piece of real estate. And what did he find, he cried out? This little oblong of earth was in a depression with little or no drainage. All his life, he protested, he was bothered with rheuma-

tism and, at last in rest, he insisted on a dry spot. And when one presumptuous member inquired without feeling—what difference will it make? Beryl replied, he should only have his rheumatism. A compromise was finally reached: Beryl laid down a few extra dollars, and in the end was gently put to rest under a high grassy knoll now covered by two slim poplars that bend gracefully with the gentle winds.

The other problem was much more vexing. It seems that one Lazar so and so had once purchased two adjoining plots, one for himself and other for his wife. This, of course, was not at all an uncommon practice. Unfortunately, the good Lord had taken her early and Lazar grieved for her. But his loneliness was too much to bear, and, it is not good for a man to be without a good woman (and regular meals), so Lazar took himself a pious woman (and a wonderful cook) who loved him deeply, and, therefore, exacted from him a promise to be buried with him.

Whereupon Lazar bought another double plot and shortly after (and surely not because of this) departed from our earthly realm. As you might have expected, his dear spouse had him buried alone to wait patiently (she was in no hurry) for his second wife to join him. Now Baileh, his second wife, after mourning her departed husband for a proper and decent interval of one year, met one named Yitzchok and married him. But now I leave you and the burial society to ponder for yourselves where all of this might end.

You see, Lazar's second wife, Baileh, promised Yitzchok, who in turn had assured his first wife, Soorkeh, to rest eternally with her, that she would join him.

. . . Gentle readers, draw whatever moral you wish, but as for me and the members of the burial society, I can only ask: where can something like this end?

As you ponder the end, allow me to relate a companion piece to the foregoing "manseh" (story).

Bronze plaques on the wall, lights in the chandeliers above, seats, benches, stained glass window panes, balcony posts—all were sold in memoriam to dear ones who had departed from this earth. Almost anything and everything that could be marked "in memoriam" was sold to buyers among the congregation who derived a double "mitzveh" (good deed) by perpetuating a memory and at the same time making a welcome contribution. More enterprising congregations looked harder for space to sell and people to buy—the fronts of seats, the back of seats, arm rests, prayer books—everything in fact, but spittoons, the part of the seat one sat on and, obviously, the bathroom fixtures. Now all this leads me to my little story. . . . .

This is a "manseh" about Motel, the "shamus" (sexton) and a light bulb. (But this was not the "Schul" where our Irving Gottlieb's father was president.) Upon this light bowl in blue letters, was a simple inscription: "In memory of my dear wife _____ by her devoted husband _____." This devoted husband you should know, was a big boor and a "grawber yid" (ignoramus), who had prospered, and of all the people who cordially disliked him, Motel the shamus, had the least love for him. No one knew that our boorish friend and Motel had both courted the "loving wife" once upon a time in a little "dorf" (village) a million miles away from Fairfield street.

But Motel had lost her and as destiny would have it, it was "bashert" (destined) that all three eventually found their way to St. Paul—to the same Schul (synagogue) ; but Motel, he was only the shamus.

While his Old World sweetheart lived, he imagined she looked down on him from the women's balcony with soft, kind eyes, mirroring a gentle compassion and reflecting happier moments of days long gone by. And when she died, Motel sorrowed and beat his breast all alone in the shadows of his little room. He had never married.

And because it seemed to Motel that the "grawber yid" laughed inwardly at him whenever he passed him, Motel's bitterness overcame his gentleness. He took care not to dust the "grawber's" seat, called on him last with the "succoth lulov and esrog" (ritual objects) and waiting until the last minute to deliver chanukah candles. Then one afternoon when the "Schul" was empty, he climbed a high ladder to the chandeliers and replaced the 200 watt bulb which the "grawber" had originally insisted upon with a 150 watt bulb and a few days later with a 120 watt bulb. And when, one day, the object of his gnawing bitterness ventured that the light seemed to be dimmer, Motel scoffed and insisted that it must be his eyesight which was failing. Finally the light became a 100 watt bulb, a 60 watt bulb, and one late afternoon, a 40 watt bulb. Now, out of the bright constellation of chandelier lights, this one paled on the brink of darkness. And Motel, with cunning scheming, reaped savage delight at the growing discomfiture of the "grawber," who believed that his eyes were failing.

On "Erev Pesach" (Passover eve), he passed away suddenly and Motel was aware of a great shame. On Chalamoid Pesach (Passover week), in the stillness of the empty synagogue, he climbed up the ladder again with the largest and brightest bulb he could buy at Gershon's hardware store. Lovingly and tenderly he put the bulb in, polishing only the one globe cover with the inscription and one single stem of the chandelier from which it hung. The others he left dusty.

Before the sun set, as the "shabus goy" (Gentile) turned on the lights, Motel looked up at the dazzling brightness and saw her again, dressed in a black velvet dress, beckoning towards him from her window as she did once a million miles away and a million years ago. He reached out to her, and, all the evening through, they waltzed together on the marble floor of a nobleman's castle.

"Motel, Motel," said the last member leaving the synagogue, "are you staying here all night?" But Motel seemed to look through him with a far-away smile. "Motel, Motel, you shouldn't have taken the second cup of wine."

How could anyone else hear the violins, the flutes and the crashing of cymbals? How could anyone else see the fairness and beauty of Motel's sweetheart as she held him close with her eyes?

A DAY OUT OF CHILDHOOD

Daniel Greenstein walked slowly up the aisle, "Talis" draped over his shoulders with all the dignity of a Roman Senator, fully aware of the honor he had bid for and won—to read a portion of the Holy Torah. (Ein Dollar zim ershten mool—Ein Dollar zim zweiten mool—Ein Dollar zim dritten mool.) But if Daniel's thoughts were with his God, his son Chiam's were quite remote from the synagogue, although he had sat through the morning service apparently enrapt in his Sidur, (prayer book).

And as Daniel approached the Ark, he suddenly lost his dignity and composure, yelled to the Almighty for deliverance, and pulled a squirming frog out of his pocket. Chiam, at the same time, dropped his prayer book, ran out through the leather covered swinging doors of the synagogue as though chased by the devil, who was in reality merely running alongside as company.

From sunny Los Angeles, the land of smog and fog, Chiam (Hy), Mickey and Cooney (Bill) Green, the original Peck's Bad Boys of Yesteryear's West Side, send you a hearty "grease" (greeting). It was the same Chiam, too, who told his neighbor, Mrs. Macarofsky

(her husband smoked fish), when she brought some chicken "yooch" (broth) to his ailing mother, "Gott zoll helfin und did vest zien krank vell ich dir och brengen yooch." (May the Lord help you and make you ill so I could bring you broth.) And it was Chiam again who fought that long battle with Basil Frei.

Do you remember Izzy Tanner who volunteered from the audience at the Liberty Theatre one night in 1917 to join the British Legion, and who fought far, far away from his beloved West Side, on distant desert wastes with the Palestinian Brigade, and later became the welterweight champion of Australia?

Were you there the day Tommy Lynch drowned while swimming in the Mississippi near the railroad trestle? Did you ever go fishing there for carp and watch the steamboat excursion float by with calliopes whistling a familiar tune? Did your mother take you to Dr. Leon Tiber when you were ill? How did you like the Castoria, "children cried for?"

And you, Si Ettinger, tell us about the time you fell into the Mississippi and were rescued by Joe Fendel, who was subsequently awarded a Carnegie Medal for this exploit.

Did you ever buy a tiny dish of fudge in a little tin plate with a tiny spoon for just one penny at the little grocery store across from the Neighborhood House, operated by Roy Cohen's parents? It was said that the motley crew of assorted bums who sat in front of Cliff Bernard's saloon on State Street most of the day and night were there to shift their weight on hidden buzzers to warn the proprietors of the approach of the local gendarmes.

Our people always drank moderately. A little "schnapsel" here and there, but there was one man who sat on his lawn bench near one of the "schuls," pouring himself innumerable cups of "tay" from his teapot, meanwhile smiling and nodding benignly at passers-by. Haven't you guessed? It wasn't "tay" in the teapot—it was whiskey.

And to all of you who today travel lightly and quickly to Duluth: it was not always so. Once upon a time, it was a rather uncertain road and a trip was more like a safari. The Amicus Club once embarked on an expedition to Duluth with Hy and Abe Applebaum, who drove their father's fruit truck. Among the hardier souls were Oscar Lipschultz, Izzy Peretz, Irv Levinsohn, Cooney Green and Irv Warren. When the trek ended in Duluth days later, "one registered at the hotel and 15 piled in."

Do you, Sammy (Skinny) Goldberg and Sam Lechtman, remember inviting Miss Helen Lynch to a party at the Neighborhood House?

Will you close your eyes for a moment and remember with me the frayed cloth hanging from the blackboard in Rabbi Edelman's room from which the rabbi pointed out the Aleph, the Beth, etc., the drinking fountains at the end of the hall, the two sets of stairs leading to the "boys" and "girls" rooms, after you held your hand up to "go," the penny pencils at Gehrman's store, the wooden pencil boxes, your "tzitzehs" which always worked their way out of your trousers during a ball game, and the conflict in your mind about bringing "tephillen" to camp?

And to my dearest friends in Los Angeles, Dr. Dave Kuris, Leonard Hirsch (sister Sylvia, as pretty as ever) and Abie Radell—what a wonderful time we had remembering recruiting unsuspecting candidates to play "church on fire," the long trail home from "chedar" those cold winter nights, past the Robbins home on State Street, where everyone was always eating and playing a musical instrument at the same time, free tokens at the playgrounds for the 4th of July trip to Phalen Park, penny slot machines with the glass front and rows of nails, and walking on tin cans dented to fit our shoes.

So again, as always, came the end of a too short day in our childhood and the beginning of a long night. Kinderlich, (children) eat fast and make room at the table. Bolt your kashe, swallow quickly the good rich "yooch and lockshen," (noodle soup) and run out to play King of the Hill with a piece of pumpernickle bread in your grubby hands. The lamplighter is coming by with his long pole, the gypsies down on the flats are lighting their fires (and you're deathly afraid they will kidnap you), the train over the trestle clicks on tracks, which someday will lead you to your destiny and fortune. The bats swoop down low while you instinctively clap your hands over your hair, and our mischievous Chiam Green plots some new deviltry to confront the monotony of school and "chedar." Play, play hard, "kinderlich," because tomorrow you will be a rabbi, a lawyer, a civil engineer, a businessman and even a doctor—and then you will only talk of the fun, but never again play at it.

WELCOME TO ST. PAUL

Come along with me to the old Union Depot and the long wood sidewalk that some of you, and most of your parents, trod when you first stepped off the train in St. Paul. This was not the noisy, boisterous, frightening city of New York. Your "landsleit" (countrymen) were waiting to greet you—or was it your husband—or were you alone?

Bashe was not alone, she had four children clinging to her; plus the towering support of her own mother, who had sustained them all the way across the sea with a conviction nurtured and sustained by desperation. The "bawbe mamsehs" (grandmother's tales) she told about the new land also had helped. There was no fancy luggage, only bags and trunks filled with quilts, goose down pillows, candlesticks, and dishes.

Bashe's husband was waiting for them with a rented carriage. He had eaten peanuts all week to save up enough to pay for the buggy. Three years before, he had returned to his family for a brief visit after an absence of two years, and then had returned to save ticket money for his family. The oldest girl was ten. Her proud father bought her a banana, but it didn't taste good because she ate it with the peeling on. The colored

porters were strange too, she had never seen colored people. And so they drove up Fourth Street, over the old Robert Street Bridge, past Goffstein's department store, down Indiana Avenue, by Chiam Goldberg the butcher, around the corner to State Street, one half block past Rose the Butcher, and Geer the Butcher, and Ward the Butcher, and down a few doors on Texas Street where they stopped before the home Bashe's husband had made ready for them. It was a miserably wet day just before Pesach, and Bashe's spirits sunk as low as the mud of which the lopsided house seemed a part.

But it was the best Bashe's husband had been able to get for his family. He saw the fire of hope in Bashe's eyes flicker and go out, and, although he wept bitterly and quietly as only a man does deep inside, he did not show it and escorted his brood across the planks into the house. The children were too tired to care, but Bashe's mother loved her son-in-law and understood. Bashe tried hard to understand too, but the tears welled up and could not be denied.

Some other day, but not now, Bashe's husband would tell her of the deliberate fast days, the long hard days working in the foul-stinking hide cellars of the packing plant, of lonely nights of longing, and of the tortuous slowness of endless saving.

Some other and happier day, God willing, he would have something better for his Bashe, but this was all for now. He knew it was not enough—the secondhand chairs, the chopped table, one broken window—but it was clean, wasn't it, Bashe?

"And look, Bashe, look, in this wonderful city of ours, no one need go out in the cold to draw water. See, Bashe, this is a "krank" (faucet), and this is a sink, it is only necessary to turn the "krank" so, and water comes out—enough to make tea for all of Kovna-Gebernia with Minsk thrown into the bargain." And Bashe, because she loved her husband, was ashamed for her tears. She understood and smiled at her husband's desperate pride in his krank, and she let him guide her hand to turn the wonderful faucet—no less a miracle than Moses' stick on the rock.

And this, my mother tells me, is the story of a family of greenhorns on Texas Street and perhaps a thousand other streets. "But, Velvel," she concluded, "no water came out, even the krank was broken."

And so once more I've come back to Texas Street. I haven't forgotten, Ruth (Mirsky) Perlman, the brawny arms of your father swinging his sledge over his forge, the gym classes in Miss Hopkin's room, and chasing Priscilla Halper and Harvey Rutman around the circle playing drop the handkerchief. Nor have I forgotten that "Tammany Hall" politician, Mr. Tankenoff; and not least of all, that dapper "Reverend Doctor Maggid," the mohel (circumciser) with whom most of us boys had a very close and intimate brush, albeit a very brief one. On him we blame our shortcomings! And how about that wonderful old man still in practice, Doctor Winnick, who is in part responsible for this vignette?

DISJOINTED MEMORIES

Unsung among the Jewish "heroes" of yesterday, was Oley Olson, nee Sam Wolfson, the newsboy who left his little world of 7th and Wabasha not so long ago to peddle his papers in heavenly circles. Oley was a life-long resident of the West Side, and covered Fort Snelling during World War II. He was a familiar figure in the enlisted men's barracks and in the Fort Commander's office. He knew the news before it was in the papers he sold, and he transmitted the colonel's orders even before the colonel had made up his mind. With every paper he passed out, a complimentary "in drerd mit Hitler" greeting was given. Oley was on hand to greet the Jewish boys coming in for the first time and was there to wave goodbye when they left. Unsung, but like so many other little people, he, too, had his own little place in the sun without being aware of it.

Girls, remember the Goldenrod Club at the old Neighborhood House—the two Rose Goldbergs (Marvy and Prowman now), Charlotte Liszt, Frances Jacobs, Miriam Garber, Muriel Rutchek, Ann Kaplan, Sara Tennenbaum, Miss Hurwitz, Charlotte Lubov, Sybl and Fern Rom, Mary Berman, Corrine Bashefkin,

the Hirschstein sisters, Freda Schachter, Gertrude Mackoff, my sister "Lizzie" Hoffman, and the others who didn't show up that sunny day to get in the picture, because they spent their two cent club dues foolishly and impetuously? Did you think for a moment that the middie blouses with bows, which you wore on that hike to Battle Creek, would still be in style for your children today?

And where were you when the Humboldt "H" Club celebrated its 30th year last March? Lou Gransberg was there, the first Jewish president of the club, and so was Sam Ettinger, Irving Gottlieb, Johnny Alpern, Marv Cooper, "Beebles" Abromovitz, Jerry Portnoy, Bernie Kessel and Herman Gordon. Do you remember Bill Davini who became assistant superintendent of St. Paul Schools? Bill was an athlete of sorts. On one occasion he was pressed into service as a "ringer" in an AZA basketball game. This "goyisher bucher" (Gentile lad) led his AZA "chaverim" (friends) from one victory to another. Prospects never looked better until a dirty spy from an opposing team saw Bill in the showers and the naked truth came out—and so did Bill Davini. Do you recall our local flyweights, "Moco" Kohler and "Maishke" Gransberg, and the times, the late governor, Floyd Olson, came down to the Talmud Torah to address his enthusiastic audiences at political rallies in perfect Northside Yiddish?

Then there were the Niedorf girls who taught school, one at the LaFayette School; the outdoor movies on Robertson Street, where the projector and film took turns breaking down before a notoriously long-suffering and unanimously indifferent audience.

Did you watch the old box factory burn down one night and shed crocodile tears thinking it was the chedar burning? And long before that fire, there was our own Captain Levitan, the proudest, handsomest and bravest Jewish fireman of the day. Remember Ida Chase who chose to be a schoolteacher — Texas Street was really proud of—, and Henry Rockwitz who wooed and won her, and who, by the way, won a medal one fine day at Como Park during a track meet.

And who has forgotten the great card syndicate on Dickie Whitefield's porch, playing with Wrigley's chewing gum certificates—Jack Levinson, "Nig" and "Feathers" Danovsky, Milt Rutman, Velvel, Hymie and Sam Garber—Mickey Kaminsky singing Irish ballads at the newsboy's picnics and Reverend Kreidberg's hungry choir at B'nai Zion synagogue? Goldstein (der roiter) the baker, taking out the freshly baked bread from the ovens, and the apple and cake squares in Rosenblum's window. Rutchik's feed store across from Gottlieb's junk shop . . . a runaway horse on Indiana Avenue . . . the icy cold water from the pump in front of Letourneaus on Kentucky . . . the round penny boxes of gun caps for the 4th of July . . . the all-day suckers . . . and that old victrola of yours and the player piano with "Barney Googel and his googoo googely eyes" . . . Mendel and Yente Telabande . . . Ich Bin a Boarder Bei mein Vieb . . . on the hit parade of yesteryear.

Do you sometimes relive the end of a perfect day at Harriet Island? Remember walking from the old pavilion, past the animal cages, the cast-iron goldfish fountain, the smells of "shmookfleish" (cornbeef) and

wursht sandwiches, cracker jacks and cream soda . . . the cool breeze from the river, the gentleness of your mother's guiding hand, the weariness etched on your father's face and the measured pace of the long walk home . . . the buzz of mosquitoes in the darkness of the porch, the lights going out next door . . . and your mother's voice shouting from the bedroom, "Velvel, don't forget to lash the lights."

A CHILD'S FAITH

Did you know that the West Side could claim one of the first travel agencies in Saint Paul? It was Gerschon's hardware store on the corner of Fairfield and State Streets. This was the place to go for steamship tickets, to have letters translated, and to buy "izing-glass" for the pot-bellied stove in the dining room. Gerschon (Abromovich) made arrangements to bring families over, saved steamship money for his customers, and dispensed advice with every pound of nails.

Just a few doors down the street, Bernie and Joe Kessel and their mother still hold the bagel and pumpernickle fort against the futile onslaught of today's store-bought, vitamin enriched bread, which tastes only like vitamins and nothing else. Lou and Max Ehrlich's dad also ran a bakery several buildings away, but it's gone now. Ask Lou to tell you about "pacing" a horse with his car over the Robert street bridge. Can you see Mr. Teitelbaum delivering his grocery orders with his faithful steed?

Do any of you "chedar" boys and girls remember Rabbi Brazoff? He lived in one of the apartments over Kessel's Bakery, and he taught the "last class" (graduation class). When I finally (kum mit tsooris) passed

into his class, the Board of Education added still another class and subsequently lost me.

Then there was Rabbi Laiken who enforced a heavy-handed discipline and kept in shape by chasing B.S. around the class. He never caught him, but the chase was close and exciting. Every Saturday morning, my brother John (it was Jake then), rode me across the Robert street bridge on our way to "hustle" papers. As though directed by the omnipotent Lord himself, no matter which side we took, there would be Rabbi Laiken on his way to "Schul," pointing an accusing finger at the two "Shabus Goyim." (Sabbath desecrators.)

And there was Mr. Mintz, the shoe man—running the shoe mecca of St. Paul. Here too, his son, jovial Ben, continues in the same family tradition, but in a newly remodeled store, since Gerschon's building burned to the ground several years ago. We wore shoes in those days too, although one now prominent St. Paul professional man customarily wore two lefts or two rights—and not by accident! It was cheaper that way.

You haven't forgotten Miss Baker from Neighborhood House and our dearly beloved Constance Currie, who carries on today as fresh and as full of conviction in the goodness and dignity of man as she was over thirty-five years ago. Were you in the Maypole dances at the Minnetonka Playgrounds, girls—black bloomers and white blouses?

The gang fights against the "goyishe" gangs led by Sammy Doroshow, whose courage carried him through proud exploits in World War II, still cling to the memory. Anyone know where "Nawnie" Kardonsky

is and why that nickname? Who remembers the Bluestone family (Indians) who lived down on the flats, and speaking of the flats, does the name "40 acres" bring back any memories?

How about the pleasant Saturday afternoons before we were old enough to (1) hustle sheets, (2) work in a fruit store, (3) or sell shoes? Who didn't do one or the other at one time in addition to taking violin lessons? Another word about the fruit stores. There was Leo Pritzker's Robert Street Market, and Cohen's Cut Price, which was then way up on Wabasha. Those were the days when "office hours" in the store stretched from six to ten or eleven in the evening. The only union we knew about was the "union suit" we wore.

Don't let me forget "Chiam der Shochet," still living on Texas Street—a venerable figure of over one hundred now, I'm sure. How about the Fryers, the Levines, and the Roms on Fenton Street and the Fremlands on Kentucky. The Fryer boys always had a backyard full of turtles and other "traphe" (non Kosher) animals. We went to the downtown shows, the Unique and St. Francis on lower Seventh, the Princess and Alahambra and the Regent—next to Jack Flynn's on Seventh and Wabasha. If you didn't have a nickel, you looked for an old magnesia bottle (the universal panacea) and turned it in to Smith's Drug Store on Robert Street for five cents. That magnesia was almost as good as the soda water everyone drank—always good for a therapeutic "greps" (referred to now more politely as a belch). Ah yes, those vaudeville shows at the old Orpheum on Fifth and St. Peter.

And the synagogues—one for Litvaks, one for Risheshurs (Russians), one for the Poileshers (Polish) and one each for every member who wanted to be a president (and who didn't?). Each resounded continuously with eloquent and tearful pleas for mortgage money, and the women's tears flowed from the upper balconies like Niagra at full tide. Although all but one are closed now, our new temples and synagogues carry on the same pleas for building and mortgage money.

Our own "Schul" was the Bnai Zion Synagogue on State Street. Once a really magnificent structure, but now it stands desolate and neglected, engulfed in the tide of other groups which followed ours. I remember how proud Dr. Cecil Warren's father was when his doctor son came in to "doven" (pray) on the High Holidays.

I remember, too, during the silent dark hours of the long nights, the eternal light from the Ark shining softly through a small translucent window in the rear of the synagogue. I looked to it often from my bedroom across the alley and was so proud that God had picked this Ark from all others to rest through the long night.

But the light is gone, the window is boarded up, the melancholy wind blows cold, and I miss my childish faith.

TSIMIS

Here is some "tsimis." A little of everything—like my mother's apple 'tsimis" which had everything in it but apples. Once my father asked her why she called it apple tsimis when the apples were missing? To which she replied, "Call it plum tsimis, then." "But there are no plums in it, either," he retorted rather feebly, but nothing further came of it. After all, a woman who cooks all day for a family of eight children and three boarders has her own rights.

For thirty years I have tried in every way possible —by cajolery, chicanery, flattery, and loud protestations of despair—to have my mother write out her recipe for roast chicken, but without any success—"es helpht goornisht." (nothing doing). Even on the old cast iron stove, with the nickel trimmings, without benefit of heat regulator or timer, this mother of mine made a chicken even a confirmed vegetarian could not resist. Today, in a stove with a timer, regulator, thermostat, insulated, and lit up with neon lights, she disregards everything but "tzinding oon de gas" (lighting the gas).

"Ma, Ma," I beg on bended knee, "at least let your 'schneer' (daughter-in-law) see how it's done, so

she can feed your hungry son with these 'mychels' (foods) So my mother tells her, "a bissele this, a bissele that, a lefel of saltz, a shpilke pepper, a zibeleh and there you are." So what can you do with a mother like that but bless her and pray to the good God that she go on for many, many years to confuse and delight her children.

The wonder of it too, is that although certain members of the family still surreptitiously sneak back to coax another taste or bite, there always seems to be enough. You see, the children are all gone now and my mother has no more room to feed her eight children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, and of course she would not want to single out a favorite child by issuing an invitation for supper. What happens, therefore, is that everyone tries to steal through the side door into the kitchen. Now, if by chance I accidently bump into my brother-in-law, that "langer luksh," Ace Halper, and find him munching on a gravy-steeped chicken bone, he tells me immediately he only stopped in for a minute to bring Ma some candy. "And what are you doing here," he mumbles with a mouth full of chicken, forgetting his position in the familial totem pole, and I say with an inherited talent for quick thinking, "Oh, I just dropped in to bring Pa a little bottle of schnapps." Of such stuff are liars made.

Although I can swear, too, that only one little chicken went into the pot, out came a parade of "fleegelechs, pipeks, poolkehs, helzels, etc., etc.," —the sum total of which added up to an anatomical wonder of a fowl with at least eight legs, ten kishkes, and seven pipeks.

"Ma," I plead and flatter as though thirty years of fruitless endeavor will suddenly produce a miracle, "we could put this chicken in cans if we only had the know-how. Just think, Manischewitz started this way, Temple Wine, Mother Wise's gefulte fish, Max's Kosher pickles and now Mamelle Hoffman's Kosher Kanned Chicken." To which she smiles, kisses me on the forehead and obviously pleased if not at least moved, says, "Ich darf is hooben vih a loch in kopf."

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Then there was a neighbor of ours, whom I shall not identify, who appeared in court one Wednesday morning a long time ago. He was charged with failure to keep his sidewalks clean of snow. He insisted to the court that he had removed the snow and wasn't responsible for the ice underneath upon which his friend slipped and broke an ankle. He had spread ashes over the ice, he told the judge, but in the excitement of the court atmosphere, had difficulty with his mixture of Yiddish and English. He forgot the English word for spread and instead used the Yiddish equivalent, which also happens to be a pungent four-letter Anglo-Saxon expression meaning quite something else. Compounding his trouble was his inability to pronounce "ashes." If you can't appreciate his situation, try the mixture yourself.

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And a word about courtships. There were no cars to take your girl friend for a ride away from the smothering atmosphere of inquisitive parents. You could take her to the New Ray theatre and put your arm around

her, but when you walked her home, someone was always up. If you sat with her on the porch swing, it squeaked and woke up the neighbors; and when the lights in the house were finally "gelashed" (out) and you looked to the living room sofa for some tender moments, a new boarder was already occupying this intimate domain. And if you didn't leave soon enough, you would miss the late "owl" car. So, finally through sheer desperation and frustration, you did what comes naturally—you married the girl. Apropos, my godmother Yenteh used to say "It's time enough to fall in love after you're married like in the old country."

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I would like to tell you about the wonderful rubber tree in Miss Kubach's room at Roosevelt Junior High School. Miss Kubach was our music teacher and most of her life revolved around this tree, which she had nourished with tender loving care from a mere seedling. It flourished in the center of the room, growing out of a green, wooden-staved barrel, and almost reaching the ceiling. But one Winter night, a dastardly culprit left the window open and by morning the tree was withered and dead. From that moment, Miss Kubach's life became tired and her music flat, without any richness or feeling.

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His supper was late. When he came home tired to the bone from the day's work, his wife was in bed and Dr. Winnick had just left to look at a case of Scarlet Fever around the corner from Texas street. Channah, who was the eldest of the four children and her

"bawbeh" (grandmother) had watched the patient all day until the pains began coming regularly. Then Channah ran to Smith's Drug Store on Robert street, seven blocks away, to telephone the doctor.

When he arrived with his bulging black bag, there was plenty of hot water boiling in the oval shaped copper wash tub on the stove, and a plentiful supply of clean white rags. The corrugated wash tub rested behind the stove together with a fresh yellow bar of P&G soap.

The doctor patted her hand as she lay in bed watching and trusting. He pulled out a golden watch at the end of a solid gold chain from which also hung an elk's tooth. He watched the seconds tick by and sat down beside her on a low stool, waiting quietly and with endless patience. After the baby came, he lingered on for a cup of tea and left, confident that Channah, her "bawbeh," mother, and baby no longer needed him.

Her husband was tired and happy. He inquired solicitously after his wife and took a long soft look at his son: "A danken Goot, er is ganz" (Thank God, there are no deformities). Channah brought out a fresh pumpernickel, cut up a fat schmaltz herring with sliced onions and vinegar, some boiled potatoes and tea. Everyone sat down and ate.

MENDEL'S HORSE

My mother has a saying "Ich zoog boidem and ehr zoogt borsht." In English, if you will, it says merely, "I say attic and he says borsht," but she uses it very effectively to indicate her annoyance and frustration with anyone whose logic is confused. There is no doubt what she would say to my discourse on "greevenehs" and Mendel's horse. "Greevenehs," to those of you who have missed one of the epicurean delights of yesteryear, are tiny bits of chicken skin fried, crunchy, cracking-crisp in chicken schmaltz. A horribly odious comparison,, if you will forgive me, might be "cracklings."

"What," my mother might ask, "have greevenehs to do with Mendel's horse?" Well, this is the way it began:

Some dear friends of mine had "rachmoones" (pity) on me while I was away from home and invited me to a Friday night supper, for which I was "chalesh-ing" (yearning). This was a real Sabbath dinner that Jerry and Ruby Bubes prepared: Shabus candles, kiddush, wine, chaleh and yarmelkehs; I tell you, the chief Rabbi of Israel and Rabbi Casriel Katz would have been proud. While waiting for supper, the lady of the house gave me some "greevenehs" to munch on and

then, like a voice from the distant past, asked me if I wanted a "gorgel" in my soup.

A gorgel! (chicken neck.) So long had I thought of chickens as we see them today: stark naked, laid out in antiseptic rows, utterly devoid of personalities and character, that I had indeed forgotten that chickens have gorgels (necks). But maybe these were only the chickens we used to eat. They had not only gorgels, but pipeks, laber, helzels, kishkehs and fleegelechs. They might not have been corn fed, to be sure, but we had known them and the color of their feathers and we had often seen them pecking about in the yard a few days before—but not these cold, machine-plucked anonymities with price tags sprouting out of them.

Buying a chicken was something more than calling the butcher or picking one out of the freezer counter. For your mother and mine, it was an expedition embarked upon and planned with well-defined strategy. It was never a casual marketing trip, and never merely incidental to a shopping trip for groceries. Besides, who ever went shopping for groceries? If your mother needed a pound of sweet butter, she sent you to buy a quarter pound; no matter if she needed bread too, you would be sent again for bread and again for something else. Why buy it all at once? It seemed cheaper to buy one item at a time, especially since the store wasn't likely to move away all of a sudden. Anyway, to get back to the chicken.

The poor fowl didn't have a chance. It was pinched, tickled, smelled, pummeled, squeezed, listened to, and talked to. Indeed, it was not stretching the truth too far when Chikeh, the dressmaker, said one day that the

chicken she bought got a better physical examination than her own doctor gave her. Now I could tell you more about how my mother cooked this chicken, but the thought of rich chicken "yooch" in this hotel room so far from home distracts me from further self-torture.

Now what does all this have to do with Mendel's horse which I have written about before. Well, you see, the "greevenehs" led to a discussion of chicken and the chickens to other animals we were familiar with, like horses. The horses we knew weren't in riding stables. They were work horses, and because there were so many of them, there began a vocation of men in white suits who were kept busy following these horses, and I do not speak in racing parlance; theirs was a serious task.

Now Mendel's horse was a plug of plugs. He was a horse's horse. He pulled Mendel's junk wagon five, and sometimes six, days a week. He rested on the Sabbath and other holidays and once fasted on T'ishib'Ab. He responded to his master's commands and sometimes exhortations, in both Yiddish, "Shtop, and Giddyap," and in English, "whoa der." Between the two was an understanding beyond the knowing of most men.

Often times while driving home over the Robert Street bridge, shaded from the hot sun by a nondescript umbrella, Mendel would read his *Forvitz* and laugh out loud. There are people by nature sober and truthful (I, among them) who will swear that whenever Mendel laughed, the horse showed his teeth and neighed out loud. If the horse failed to respond because he did not appreciate the joke,or was preoccupied with visions of a young mare, Mendel would read the item louder.

This time if the horse failed to respond, he would mutter darkly under his breath, "What can you expect from a horse?"

When Mendel was tired, he often fell asleep on his wagon seat, chin slumped on his chest, and dreamt of mountains of free aluminum scrap. He knew his faithful steed would know where and when to turn and to stop. More than once, Mendel woke up in his yard to see the horse waiting quietly and patiently for his master to unharness him.

But one sad morning, the horse failed to get up from the warm hay in the cool, dark barn. Mendel grieved inwardly because it did not seem right for any man to mourn the passing of a "pherd." And as he watched his beast being drawn into the wagon from the tallow factory, he heaved a tremendous sigh and sought out Chiam the blacksmith for a new horse.

"He was really no bargain as a horse," Mendel told Chiam, taking care that no hint of grief or loss showed in his voice, "but if you can find me another one at least no more stupid, I suppose it's all one can expect from you."

But Chiam had known Mendel's horse. He had shod him often and had frequently noticed how gentle and wise this "pherd" was. He never kicked like the other horses who had lost a shoe and felt the hurt of raw hoofs on hard cement.

"A stupid horse, indeed," shouted Chiam, pumping away at the bellows of his forge. He plunged a red-hot shoe into the trough of water and picked it out with his tongs, which he waved in Mendel's face. "You know as well as I do that he would have made a better member of

your congregation than several people we know." To this Mendel had to nod his head in agreement, he could not argue against the obvious.

'What other horse could pull such loads of junk and eat so little? What other horse could mind not only his own business, but yours as well? And if not for that horse who so often took you home while you were dreaming of "knishes and kashe," you would have celebrated many a Sabbath evening in an anti-semite's barn."

So Mendel bought another horse. It was neither black nor white, old or young, and went about its work without any interest in life but oats and hay, and hay and oats. Mendel's grandchildren, Harry, Sammy, and pretty red haired Florence from Chicago, who spent the summers with him, could not ride him because he refused to pretend to be a saddle horse like his predecessor. In general, he knew from nothing and apparently cared even less. Mendel had to stay awake on his wagon seat, and one day when he forgot himself and laughed in his *Forvitz,* the silence reminded him like a sharp pain in his kidney that things were not the same. Alas, this "behemeh" (animal) was "tahkeh" (really) a horse with the I.Q. of a horse and nothing more!

"BINNENEHS"

"Binnenehs, Binnenehs, Binnenehs, today."

So went Mr. Lifshitz, the fruit peddler's refrain, and along with it the clanging of a bell to inform your mother to drop the "vesh" (wash) and run out to meet him. Mr. Lifshitz's bell and the one Rabbi Edelman rang had the same ear-splitting clang, and when both rang at the same time, I didn't know whether it was time for chedar or "binnenehs." Sometimes it was for both, so I ran in reluctant haste to "chedar" eating a "gespect" banana.

All fruits and vegetables were cheaper, of course, if "gespeckt." Mind you, there was a world of difference in "gespeckt" and "farvoylt." A "gespeckt" apple, for example, was not very fresh, its skin was wrinkled, drawn and mottled like my grandfather's face; but underneath it all, it tasted good anyhow. What did it matter? My grandmother liked to pare the peelings in a continuous spiraling strip with a long thin knife. "Farvoylt" was just plain rotten.

But in bargaining with Mr. Lifshitz, you insisted with righteous indignation that what he offered cheaper as "gespeckt" was really "farvoylt." The winner of the debate, oftentimes conducted by ten women simulta-

neously and one poor little fruit peddler, who stood his ground in a losing battle, was determined finally by supply and demand, the lateness of the day and Lifshitz's ulcer. Of course, the best fruit was never purchased for you only sampled the best. Why sample a "gespeckte" apple when you could bite into a better one which you weren't going to buy anyhow? Then there were the few items which were stocked but never sold—a "shtickele" dill and a piece of celery—just for flavoring the soup, please. One should also mention the better class of merchandise which came wrapped and the utilitarian function of the wrappers in the outhouse.

Eggs too, were cheaper if they were a "bisseleh" (somewhat) cracked. Almost a whole generation of children grew up believing in full innocence that chickens laid only cracked eggs—and if perchance you wonder if I stretch the truth, just ask your "bawbeh" —when she gets home from her sisterhood meeting.

The epitome in staleness were the ginger snaps which Mr. Primeau kept in a glass covered counter along with other "goyishe" (made with lard) cookies. My mother used these ginger snaps (five for a penny) as part of her strategy to get me to drink milk. Outside of pulverizing them on the sidewalk with a hammer they could be softened only by dipping in milk, But what a wonderful taste! And one mustn't forget the stale assortment of candy in the "grab bags." Buying one or more became a lottery because two out of every ten had a friendly little worm greeting you, but that hardly dampened the challenge of getting so much for so little.

There was some stale bread, too, but more often this was for the few very poorest and our friendly "goyishe"

neighbors. Oftentimes old man Applebaum the baker, whose twinkling eyes and clean white beard gave lie to his pretended fierceness, gave the "stale" bread away via the back door—and to his everlasting credit, the "stale" bread was more often accidentally fresh.

THE SEDER

The spirit of the Passover and spring filled the streets of the West Side. In the stores the boxes of Matzohs and Dutch Cocoa had almost disappeared, and only a few horseradish roots for "Chrain" lay withering on the oilcloth covered counters. For a whole week my mother had packed away the dishes used every day and now the Pesach dishes and utensils had taken their place. All the "chometz" (bread) was gone with the help of a feather duster, and the entire house was scrupulously clean.

In the early afternoon my father and his brood had visited the Wilder Public Baths, where the boys had taken steaming hot showers and the girls a "haseh vaneh" (hot bath). On the way home over the Robert Street bridge, he had tried in vain to keep us together, but gave up completely, trusting us to the care of the Lord who had more time and patience. It was far more fun to lean over the bridge railing and spit in the river far below—and what a warm feeling to run through the clouds of dirty smoke from the railroad engines. So, long before we arrived home, the dirt had collected again behind our ears.

And of course we all had haircuts for the Holiday. My brother Yankel and I had ours—if you will pardon

the expression—"cut" at the Barber College on West Seventh. Although having been warned by my mother to get a "high class" haircut in the ten cent chair, which was reserved for senior student barbers who stayed sober the longest, I had used up my dime to see Tom Mix at the Regent Theatre, and so I used the free chairs. What was done to my head was both a trauma and a "shandeh for the neighbors." It turned out that my "barber" was an uninspired understudy to the apprentice barber who himself had only two days of experience. I remember the shudder which shook my father when he saw me, but his deep paternal instincts reached out to take back his scalped son. Perhaps, thinking back now, this was the reason he insisted I wear an oversized "yarmelkeh" (skullcap) which fit over my ears.

Back home my mother and two oldest sisters had been busily preparing the food for the evening "Seder." The floors were scrubbed and covered with newspapers and the table set. Soon the men and children returned from the evening services and filled the room with hearty and cheerful "Gut Yom Tovs." Then my father sat down, his face flushed after a "schnapsel," with the regal air of a benevolent king surveying his kingdom. The rest followed suit after considerable pushing (and pinching) and then, almost suddenly, memories of ancient holy days filled with love and peace and humility filled the room. Thus began the "Seder."

My little brother, Moishelle, after considerable prompting started the four "kashes"—"Ma nishtano hay--lay-lo haze mikol hale los" (Why is this night different from all nights)—and although his voice was

thin and faltering, my father beamed at him and his eyes lit with pride, as though Yoselleh Rosenblatt himself was carrying the melody. And in turn, my father answered, as his father had one night in the past, "We were slaves to Pharoah in Egypt," continuing the service in the "Haggadah" with the rest of the family, and boarders accompanying and chanting with him. The "Haggadahs" were beautifully illustrated; and because they had "Levooneh" imprinted upon them, we thought for a long time that Mr. Stacker might have written part of the Passover story.

On the table in front of my father was a large platter with three matzos, each covered separately in the folds of a napkin. Next to this, another dish containing the roasted shank bone of a lamb, a roasted egg, a piece of horseradish, and a sprig of parsley: In addition the bitter herbs, charoses, parsley and watercress, salt water, a cup of wine and a large goblet of wine for the prophet Elijah.

Then, after the savory meal, the flavor of which swims everlastingly in a lake of gustatory memories, came the eating of the hidden "Afikoman," more prayers and the climactic opening of the door for Elijah. But again that year, and for some years after, only the neighbor's hungry dog walked in to the consternation of my father, who did not believe in reincarnation. So my father frightened the poor creature off with a stentorian "Gerrarer frim heer" (but not without a meaty chicken wing which I had surreptitiously slipped to him).

In the meantime, my father continued to read from the "Haggadah," his voice growing stronger and our

eyes growing heavier and heavier until we fell asleep —one by one.

And now my mother finally sat down to rest her aching feet and to take a bite herself. All night she had been running from the stove to the table, from son to daughter and from boarder to boarder, filling plates as she urged one and all to eat more; "ess, ess, noch a bissel" and to the children, admonishing them to go easy on the soda pop and heavier on the chicken, "kugel" and potatoes—and to my brother Jack, it was always "Jack, ess—Jack, ess" until she discovered why this made us hilarious.

Now she ate slowly, weary and footsore, but filled with happiness at having the whole family home. How scholarly-like her husband conducted the services—how well the children behaved and how long they had resisted the creeping paralysis of sleep. Just look at them, she "kvelled" (rejoiced), already dreaming of tomorrow's nut game, jelly candy slices, potato lotkes, and "God forbit," a slice of fresh pumpernickel bread.

Her eyes wandered to Chanah and Moonyeh and she thought perhaps next year at this time there would be a new daughter or son-in-law, and how nice it would be to put two extra boards in the table. And Roochelle, Yankelle, Leezeh, Moishe, Devorreh, and Velvel—could all of Louie Hill's railroads be worth as much as a little finger of theirs? Then there sat Eynach and Abraham, the boarders, half asleep, but still munching on a chicken bone. How gentle and good and industrious! What mattered it if they had bottomless pits for stomachs?

Dear God, she thought, continue to bless this family and table, and, when we are left alone some day when the children are gone, may the memories of this wonderful night sustain us.

FOR SALE

My pa was furious. His house had been belittled, and, of all people to do this thing to him, it was a greenhorn.

The whole business was really no fault of my father, but rather that of his children; the whole "mushpooche" (family), Channa, Moonyeh, Leezeh, Yankel, Velvel, Roochele and little Devorehle and Moishelle, who were too young to care much one way or another. You see, the exodus from the West Side had begun and over the horizon, past the city dump and the State street bridge, beckoned the promised land—the Highland Park of the "twenties:" the West Side Hills. Everyone who was somebody and many somebodies who were nobodies, had already left the West Side for the shady streets of Congress, Winifred and Robie—the Hirsches, Greens, Kivatinetzes, Simons (they really needed more room) the Goldsteins, Applebaums, Coopermans, Rosenblums and many others were there.

And as for us, away down on the flats of Texas Street, we had finally come to the inescapable conclusion that the pavement would never be extended from the Rue de la State Street, no matter if we suffered from the mud for another hundred years. Even Daniel Green,

that sage of sages, who had once spoken of a bridge across the river and up to the East Side bluffs (from Texas Street) had admitted sadly over his tea, that it would be done only "ven Mesheach vet koomin." (Upon the coming of the Messiah.)

But this "greeneh," my father muttered, only yesterday it seemed she had stepped off the boat at Ellis Island (even her "sheytel" was on backwards) and she didn't think our house was good enough to buy. She found a "chesoren" (fault) with everything. Electricity she wanted in the house, and for her, only an indoor toilet and a hard rock foundation would do. My father, who followed her around, was being eaten up by her brazen effrontery. She held her nose when she went by the fresh manure pile near the barn and walked around the house examining it more minutely than a building inspector. And my poor father, whose very life blood had gone into the building of the house, wondered out loud (but not loud enough) why the boat she came over on, hadn't foundered off the shoals of Ireland.

Finally, this gentle man, whose fierce looking mustache belied his inner softness, wrung his hands in quiet desperation and asked the "greeneh" if she didn't want a "guldeneh mezzuzeh" too, on the doorway, and off she went in a huff as my father turned his back, biting his lips as he said to himself "a glick hat mir getrophen."

Well, sell the house he did, after a few months, and we moved as far as State and Texas Street in "Rose Der Butcher's" house. If you don't remember where that was, it was located by Schmerel's house "von Hinten," (no one ever gave addresses by numbers). And after a few months here amidst the luxuries of "pulling the

chain" and linoleum on the floors, we children were clamoring for the final exodus across the State street bridge—(which hasn't been fixed to this day, Leonard).

The die was cast, my father threw caution to the winds and we moved to the Hills to join the elite, all of whom had trees and lawns in front of their homes, but still looked no different to me than the West-Siders. And probably out of sheer frustration from his recent encounter with the "greeneh," which still rankled, my father purchased a big yellow house which had belonged to Mr. Christianson, the banker. Even as a little boy whose interest in financial matters stopped with the cold, bare fact that at 12, I would have to buy an adult ticket to get into the show, I knew this much: the mortgage on the house was probably larger than the total cash assets of Mr. Christianson's bank.

But then, this was just before the WPA days when so many West Siders (and others too) found themselves tenderly fondling shovels and pick axes at the airport and other projects at $50.00 per month, groceries were bought with welfare coupons, and many went to CCC Camps to pay the rent for the family, worked on NYA sewing projects, or spent long, dreary afternoons in Bilbow's recreation parlor, and on Sunday nights, listened to Eddie Cantor and Rubinoff (St. Paul's own) who sang and played "Brother can you spare a dime." "Gott zu danken" (thank the Lord), maybe these memories make us so good to our children today. "Kinderlich," believe me, your mother and father never had it that good.

And so we went to Roosevelt Jr. High, where Mrs. Gill presided over the democratic student council with

a heavy hand—where Jack Simos was Commissioner of Sanitation (he kept an inventory of toilet paper rolls), —Joey Rutman was Commissioner of Public Safety and Irv Waldman, President of the Council; Roosevelt, where we sang "Oh Roosevelt, we sing-a-ling-a-ling;" where Norm ("Katchke") Katkov protested mightily about the decisions in the outdoor handball games, and where Melamed Singer taught chedar in the dark corridors at Beth David "Schul." This Melamed was an ardent advocate of the two "P's" pedagogical system of progressive education: a pointer and a "potch" (slap).

Then there was Leonard Hirsch, who emulated Icarus and tried to fly from second story roofs and shacks (to the utter dismay of his mother and sisters) with umbrella parachutes and more often with even less, and fleet-footed Joey Spector, who caught his own punt in a Humboldt football game and who later fought and died in the last quarter of a more serious game on the battlefields far removed from the graveled school grounds.

But of all the memories of faces, places, and names, the warmest and dearest are of two polished candlesticks. They were resplendent in quiet glory even in the china closet when the sun played on them on a bright day, or when the gas mantle threw a soft light their way in the dark of the evening.

But I loved them even more for the Sabbath they ushered in when my mother put the candles in and they stood on the table waiting with simple nobility and graciousness; waiting for my mother to put her shawl over her head, light the candles, cover her eyes with her

hands clasped and softly move her lips in prayer. I see her head silhouetted against the half-drawn shades moving to and fro almost imperceptibly and the candle flames casting a symphony of shadows on the walls.

And when she was through and my father came home from schul, he read so proudly from the last chapter of the Proverbs,

"A woman of valor, who can find. For her price is far above rubies."

A DAY IN SUMMER

A blazing sun beat down fiercely on the Minnetonka playground. Little boys sought the shade of the tall grass growing in the far corner of the field and lay on their backs chewing idly on blades of grass. Overhead some river gulls wheeled aloft to catch the occasional wisp of a cool breeze from the Mississippi. It was too hot to think, too hot to play—just too hot to move.

Under the corrugated tin shelter huts on the playground, the wooden floors were cool to the touch of bare and calloused feet long inured to and disdainful of slivers and tacks. The barrel stove which Mr. Lynch kept glowing hot during the skating season was outside gathering dust and rust, while inside, a few more little boys in a desultory fashion played card games—Lotto, Old Maid, Rook, Fight, and Dominoes. And in the adjoining shed, Mrs. Whitefield was removing chunks of ice from the half-pint milk bottles which would soon be on sale for three cents. What ambrosia to slowly sip the deliciously cool milk through the straw and blow milk bubbles in the bottle.

The metal water fountain outside stood forlorn and neglected. Its stream of water was warm. But if one really thirsted for a long, cold drink, and one wasn't too

lazy to shuffle the dusty block on Minnetonka past Krepsky's, Zucker's, Pleason's and the Dahidil's, an icy cascade flowed continuously from the pump in front of LeTourneau's house, cater corner from Fremland's grocery store. And just across the way was another little store with a rusty screen door and spirals of Tanglefoot fly paper hanging from the ceiling. There, with the uncanny wisdom of children, who had long since made this momentous discovery, it was possible to get a bigger scoop of ice cream from Mrs. Chase than from Mr. Chase. Remember, don't you, the mahogany red ice cream cabinets containing three flavors packed in coarse salt and how often a piece of salt fell in the cone?

Another block down, in the Talmud Torah, the coolest place was in the dark and dank lavatories (we called them toilets), where water dripped continuously from overhanging pipes and dubiously clean towels hung down to the floors from rollers.

Upstairs, Rabbi Kramer, sweating in the stifling heat and smells of the classroom, wondered whether or not to chase his bane of existence for the day, Moishe Rutman, and finally did so. But the pace around the room was a lazy one, more in the nature of daily routine and without the usual zest and spirit of a cooler day. And as usual, and as might be expected, the Rabbi ran a poor second; finally giving up for another day, but not without a brandishing finger, "Moishe, ich vell derzehlen der Tateh" (I'll tell Father). The fan on the wall droned on monotonously, the elm leaves outside the window rustled in the dry wind, so when the Rabbi stepped out into the hall for a drink, a quick

puff, and a too brief respite from the hot and tight little room filled with scheming scholars, out slid our "chedar bechirim" (Scholars) through the open window, down the tree to blessed freedom. Louie Vad, Dave Rom, Sammy Kaplan, and Sammy Lechtman, shame on you!

And this too happened one day in the summer. The broiling heat of the day had not bothered her. Two transfers and two tokens on the Hamline-So. Robert and Como-Harriet streetcars had taken her a vast distance from the familiar and weary paths of State and Eva streets. She sat, one among thousands of strangers who had gathered from the "ganze veldt" (whole world), so it seemed to her, in the stadium. This was commencement night.

She clutched her knitted shawl nervously and fixed her tired eyes far below on the young men and women who walked slowly across the long stage, shaking hands, and receiving a parchment. And although actually he was too far away to be picked out, her unflinching stare followed only one figure which she had fiercely determined was her boy.

How could all these strangers, or even her neighbors, know of her pains and aches, the pills and the medicines, and of the gall bladder operation. The white and green tiles of the clinic and hospital corridors were as familiar to her as her kitchen and bedroom. "Nor Gott Vehst" (only God knows) how many times she had told them at the dispensary that her husband was dead and she was alone with her boy. How many times she had repeated that she was an "ooremeh Ahlmooneh" (poor widow).

Yes, most were patient with her, some were not, some were bored and indifferent (and who could blame them with all the misery they saw and heard all day long), Her thoughts wandered to the interns and the doctors—Urology, Proctology, Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat. She smiled a thin tight smile as she thought of Obstetrics. No more visits there, after her husband had died and there was nothing to do but work and work, but not without a fierce ambition for her son—an ambition which sometimes frightened her with its intensity. Now, when the throngs milled through the gates, she waited tensely for him, and at last saw him looking about anxiously, as he did one day as a little boy when lost at the "Chedar" picnic at Harriet Island. Then their eyes met and she ran toward him with wet eyes. All aches and miseries, the ones the doctors saw and those no one could ever see, welled up and were lifted away like wild geese in a quick wind. Now they would say with respect: her son, the doctor.

She held him tightly and whispered through her tears, "Meine Kind, Meine Kind, Meine Tyereh Kind." (my child, my child, my dearest child.)

THE YEAR 5000

One day in the year 5000, shortly after "Meshiach" came, Martian archeologists digging in the area once known as the West Side, came across a thick strata of earth which defied all efforts at analysis. These eminent scientists were only too familiar with the stone ages, copper and iron ages, but this was evidence of an age and era beyond their comprehension.

Who was there left in this vast and desolate silence of mute memories to tell them that this had been the "kerlech" (seeds) age, that this thick strata was composed of "kerlech" shells, testimony to the billions and trillions of "kerlechs" "kinacked" (popped) through the days and years and generations by West Siders who kinacked while they ate, while they worked, and while they played.

These "kinackers of kerlech," oblivious to the ills of their day, happily "kinacked" away their neuroses and psychosis and slept three in a bedroom (on one bed), matching pennies to see who slept in the middle to keep warm. Who could better have told these frustrated men of science than little boys like Nate Thorman, Chick Krinsky, and Harold Siegel, who sat so often and so long in front of Silverman's store, "kinack-

ing kerlech" and letting the shells accumulate on their laps? "Kinack, kinack" went the "kinackers," stopping up the plumbing in the chedar, in the LaFayette school, and filling the aisles knee high at the New Ray and Liberty theatres, while Charles Hutchinson, Ruth Roland, Tom Mix, Hoot Gibson, and Charlie Chaplin, flickered without a sound across the screen.

But so much for this "mishegas" (foolishness) about kerlech which, in the end, covered the West Side and sent back to Mars, brooding and bewildered, archeologists to wonder and wonder during the long cosmic nights.

DEAR LADY

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," and later came the West Side flats, the Neighborhood House, and Miss Currie.

This is just a bit of a story about a magnificent lady who came to our West Side on a hot day in the summer of 1918—June 10, 1918—and who stayed on through all the long days and years to help us grow up and to laugh and cry with us.

She learned the difference between "trephe" and Kosher that first summer at White Bear Beach camp under the watchful eye of Helen Grodinsky, and in the long dreary winter that followed she ministered to the sick and cheered the despondent during the terrible influenza epidemic. She learned to know every home and every family, gaining entry originally by serving as a census taker, and stood as a guardian of the ballot box for over 25 years as an election judge along with the other neighborhood political bosses like Nate Tankenoff, Mr. Rutchik, Frank Warren, and George Chase.

As the waves of immigration lapped against the Neighborhood House walls with the same intensity as did the many real floods which engulfed the flats from time to time, she stood (as she still stands) a pillar of

strength and an oasis of comfort. To each group, white or colored, Jew, Protestant or Catholic, she has given succor, earning the devotion and gratitude of all who, in one measure or another, have lived a better life because of her.

Yes, that was a great day, June 10, 1918, when she came to the old Neighborhood House to replace Miss Gertrude Murrel, and there are more than a few who remember that day—Ida Blehart Davis, Carl Calvin, Harry Krammerman, Sam Lipschultz, I. G. Goldbarg, and Morris Rosen. Ida came because it was the only quiet place to study while the other members of the Aurora Club met there to tackle the problems of the whole world.

But to go back for just a few years—the real beginning was in 1897 when the "flats" was made up largely of Jewish immigrants who had just recently came to the United States from Lithuania, Poland, and Russia, the latter from years of constant persecution. They were good people, frugal, hard-working, with a deep, deep longing for a long breath of freedom and a fierce ambition to provide better opportunities for their children.

Neighborhood House was opened in 1897 through the efforts of Rabbi Isaac L. Rypins and Mrs. Sophie Wirth, together with others of Mt. Zion Temple. These were the same "Deutschesche Yehudim" who, we were told later in our "chedar" classes, had the effrontery to pray in their temple without wearing Yarmelkes and Tzitzehs—and even worse, the men and women sat in close proximity. (But Gott zu danken, the good God forgave them and blessed their efforts at a much later

date with a truly magnificent Temple, a God-fearing congregation and a fine Rabbi.) Six years later in 1903, in order to meet the needs of the community more effectively, Neighborhood House was reorganized on a nonsectarian basis, Catholics, Protestants, and Jews joining to serve the residents of the flats at 153 Robertson in a building rented from Simon Giss.

In 1905 the first night school was opened with Macalester College students acting as volunteer teachers. In 1907, a paid teacher opened additional classes in English and Citizenship; in 1910 the building at 157 Robertson was rented and occupied; in 1919 the Lake Rest Vacation Home Camp at White Bear (Sophie Wirth Camp) was established and the Northern Pacific Railroad provided transportation for 400 children to go to camp for a day's outing each week. In June 1919, the Minnetonka playground was opened, and in 1927 a dental clinic for children under the direction of one of Neighborhood House's own, Dr. Maurice Green, was inaugurated by the St. Paul Dental Auxiliary.

But this is not meant as a historical treatise. Perhaps one day some other scribe who can escape television, Mickey Mouse, and two healthy children long enough to do so, will write the history of Neighborhood House in a precise and formal style. As for me, I would rather come back to the names and happenstances of people and places which are much closer to us. And please remember, if you will, that through all of this runs the "tom" and flavor of that great lady. You should know that without her some would not have gone through college, many a needed operation would not have been performed, others would have gone jobless, and more

than a few would have wandered from the straight and narrow.

Oscar Kessel, who baked at Goldenberg's across the street until the early hours of the morning, told Miss Currie's mother not to worry about her; he would keep an eye open the whole night long, and Max Cohen the grocer, also promised to do the same. To tell the truth, however, our lady was much more concerned about the "kerlich" (sunflower seeds) the Stacker boys and Louie Finn were spitting in the hot air registers.

Come with me. Put your worries about your mortgage aside. Throw a nickel in the "Pishkah" because the long winter is nearly over, and tread lightly back through the years with neighbors and friends and places hidden away in the cobwebs of your memories.

1920: The Intellectual Committee of the Junior Hebrew Cooperative Association was making plans for an "open" meeting on Friday night, February 23, with Jack B. Makiesky presiding. Sylvan Hess was scheduled to speak on the "Anti-Defamation League." The Herzl Club was celebrating its annual election and tenth anniversary. Officers names were: Joseph Lubov, Pres.; David W. Berkus, vice pres.; Mosha Goldberg, treas.; Maurice Waldman, sec.; Cecil Warren, sergeant-at-arms; and Harvey (fancy, Harvey from Chiam) H. Green, chairman of something or another. Aaron Lipschultz, Joseph Lubov, and Irving Brussel were chosen as delegates to the Junior Cooperative Club.

Julius Tennenbaum presented a sketch at the Fidelis Club Mardi Gras and Zelda Warshavsky, the piano teacher, presented gold stars to all of her students who

had done well. Later under the direction of Miss Baker, a program of "Little Women" and "Little Men" was presented with Rose Smith playing one of the leads, Flora Lachman as Meg March and a stellar cast including the following: Lillian Payne, Edith Smith, Caroline Whitefield, Annie Gam, Mr. Beltman, Miss Lundsten, Esther Goldberg, Annie Berman, Rose Goldberg, June Rom, Kathryn Russo, Lillian Silverstein, and Esther Bercovitz, who played the piano.

And a note about Mary Rujah Korn who played the Queen in that great production put on by the Goldenrod Club, because she had the longest hair. My sister Lizzie, Rose Goldberg (Marvy), and Sarah Whitefield, who played the lead, gave a performance never to be forgotten by the capacity crowd of mothers and fathers and reluctant relatives. Who will remember the name of that stirring heart-warming melodrama "Those Who Pass While the Lentils Boil?" Your "Zadi" and "Bawba," Joe and Gitel Skroopka were in that audience too, Mary.

Then there were many others: The Sunshine Club with Gertrude Kenig, Ray Packerman, Freda Lefcowitz, Freda Shaketer, Sarah Hershstein and Ruth Nilva. The Bluebird Club with Rebecca Bransil, Esther Bomberg, Dora Lechtman, Fern Wegofsky, Edythe Levy, Frances Shapiro, Sarah Crepsky, Gladys Bakalinsky, Bertha Chase, Sara Waldman, Miriam Pusin and Adele Chase . . . and a "Programme" with Rose Abramovitz reciting the first lessons of Mothercraft Course, Martha Mael giving another recitation, a violin selection by Edna Bercovitz, and a discourse on

the "Child's Habits and Training" by Bertha Ward, and a Lullaby by Sarah Katz.

In the meantime, the English classes overflowed from the Neighborhood House into the old LaFayette school as more and more "greeneh" (newcomers) came into the West Side to be close to their "landsleit" who had urged them to come here. Women like Alice Baer and Mrs. Leo Sander labored mightily through the long hours patiently teaching those who came to classes between diapering children and feeding a multitude of boarders. Do you remember the Yiddish hit parade of the times, "Ze Mir is Gekumin a Cousineh" (My green cousin with the rosy cheeks), and the octagon ice cards you put on the porch to show the ice-man how many pounds you wanted in your ize-box!

But to get back to the legitimate theatre once again, there was "Shaindel" Binder, who played the piano so beautifully, and there was Selma Price, St. Paul's own Fanny Brice, who delighted audiences with her Yiddish dialect readings for so many organizations. . . . Lest one forgets, the boys also stepped into the limelight from time to time; the Princeps Club presented "Station YYYY" with the following star studded cast; William Magid, Maurice Levinsohn, Samuel Galburt, Isadore Schneider, Fred Kleyman, Ben Arnovsky, Hyman Goldberg, and Irving (Red) Arenson. Not to be outdone, this was followed by "Up to Freddie," presented by the Nightingale Club and directed by Hazel Lundsten; Act Two featured the Senior Ball with everyone taking part but Sarah Bernhardt; among the shining stars in the constellation of West Side actresses were: Lillian Effress, Bertha Rad-

ell, Eileen Lucker, Tillie Herman, Violet Shadur, Bessie Klein, Dorothea Frishberg, Mollie Feldman and Edith Reiter . . . and if I have neglected to mention Sylvia Mintz, Ruth Alpern, Adele Bernstein, Freda Deitchman, Alice Laurie, Dorothy Shadur, Ann Ryan, Elizabeth Radow, Anna Ackerman and Adeline Herstein of the Auroreans, I hope you will forgive me.

Are you still listening, Miss Currie? None of these people, nor the many I have not mentioned, have forgotten your impact on their lives and the lives of their children. And of course, I have written for the most part about the Jewish neighbors because I am more familiar with them, but it is not because we are not mindful that non-Jew as well as Jews participated in every aspect of the program and that your board of directors and leaders gave and continue to give the best of themselves to all who come under the shadow of Neighborhood House.

Grand people like Frederic Crosby, Dr. Milton G. Walls, Frederick M. Eliot, E. Irving Whyatt, Mrs. Driscoll, Edwin Baer, Mrs. A. H. Heller, Jr., Mrs. David Aberle and a few more, many of us are more familiar with: Dr. Merril McCauslind, Miss Baker, LeRoy Jesme, Dorothy Rhone, Horace Gorton, Ben Stoddard, Teresa Berdsley, Verney Peters, the Smith girls and of course, some of our "shabus goyim" who were so close to us, the Farley family, Jack, Jim and Christy, and the Farley girls, Rosie, Mamie and Anna —the McTices, the Lynches, the Dahms, and Schroeders. Who remembers the day little Frank ("the Litvak") Farley was lost for 17 hours and after a frantic

search, was found hiding in Rabbi Simon's house, "covered" by "Pussy" Simon, his hero and idol?

Oh, where to begin and where to end, our dear lady —there is so much more to write and so many more we have passed over without wanting to. Shall we ask today's children to look at a picture of their mothers at 6 and 7 cutting clothes for dolls: Ada Packerman, Penninah German, Ravella Cutler, and Dolores Epstein? Can you still picture David Katz and Morris Katz showing Izzy Bercovitz their camp prizes—or Tom, Jim (Dr. Jim) and "Camel" Salmen in the Nativity play, or Beatrice (Bossie) Gleckman and Rebecca Chase in dance costumes—Dave Bach and Harvey Rutman (in knickers) weaving baskets, of all things, and my dear friend Myer (Pug) Lande reaching out to cuff Nate Lucker in the boxing ring?

Shall we tell their children about the famous All Star Kittenball game at the Palace playground where our team defeated Palace and fled for their lives (with the trophy) from irate (and much bigger) players of the opposition? What a game that was, Miss Currie, with Chaje Gadjeh Kloner, Leo Ross, and Hy Firestone belting homers far out into the fields, Abe Prohovsky doing the pitching and supported by Hy Goldberg, "Rushie" Nerenberg, Izzie Schneider, Joe and Jack Spector, Joe and Alex Rutman, Herschel Silverman and Max Lieberman. And it was Max who didn't roll the taxi window up fast enough as our team departed suddenly, and found himself on the receiving end of a "klawp in poonem." (A punch in the nose to you.) The boys were really nimble and agile coming from long hours of practice on the P.Q. pastures dodging the cow

platters left by inconsiderate cows grazing in the left field.

Where are the little boys in corduroy knickers and caps pulled down over their ears? When the last snows had melted and even before the little pools of water on the walks were dry, they poured out of homes and alleys with pockets full of marbles and emmies and in separate pockets (stashed away) the precious agates. Sometimes, too, they used ceramic tiles of all colors chipped laboriously from a nearby dump. . . . You watched and loved them as they shrieked, pushed, and pummeled each other, always forgetting their "chedar" books (Choomishim and Sidurim) on the sidewalk.

And the bright little girls who clung together giggling as they played hopskotch, growing older and wiser and prettier as they watched the disinterested boys out of the corners of mischievous eyes. The same girls in a few years were dancing in the gym, picking on the same hesitant reluctant boys with a deliberate premeditation that offered no escape. Remember those wonderful dances, girls? If you were lucky and your boy friend wasn't broke, then there were corn beef sandwiches and malted milks at Malcoff's in far away Minneapolis. Remember girls, the Chase sisters, jolly Mary Herman, Dorry, Rosie and Minnie Engelson, Pee Wee Simes, Sissy Farley, Roslyn Halpern, Frances Diamond, Toby Mintz, Miriam Skolnick, and a classically beautiful girl, who went to a pow-wow with a bashful, bashful little boy (me), Gertie Shaketer, who passed away in the full bloom of life?

Tonight, a light burns somewhere in Neighborhood House, as it has always burned, last night, the night

before, and all the nights I remember. One night it was a small beacon for a mother who lost her sons and wanted only to sit quietly and share her grief with you, another time it was for a girl with an aching heart. Then one day it was for a weary peddler who wanted a warm shower, and again, for a mother whose joy was running over at her daughter's engagement. Once the light showed the way to a family who traded the numbing cold for an unheated hovel, for the luxury of a heated corner.

No matter how late and how desperately tired, you have walked down the stairs from your own room with sleep-laden eyes to open the door to someone who came for help. Do you ever think back to the medical student who came with his anatomy book and a skull in his mother's knitted shopping bag?—He is a good physician today only because of your help. How many times have you watched over an early breakfast for the vagrants whose stomachs hurt from a gnawing emptiness and whose eyes were hungry, too, for a kind face?

You looked down during the night over the sprawling flats, sometimes quiet and sometimes boistrous, sometimes clean and oftener dirty. The dark river winds under the bluffs upon which the Indian Mounds rise gently. The hills across the State Street bridge loom up over the city dump; one by one the lights in the homes go out.

You remember that not so long ago, the Sabbath candles flickered softly from the many windows. But now these are gone, the rumble of the street cars on Robert Street is gone, and with them have departed the many people you knew. But others have come to live in

these same homes that are so familiar to you, and others will come even after these have left. And you know so well that the children of these people will cry out in the night in the same manner, no matter what their color, even if certain narrow, shallow little people say otherwise. Their fathers and mothers, too, will worry and want for their children and will laugh and play and sorrow and work hard like ours before them.

And in the early morning, dear Lady Currie, you will come down the stairs again, graciously statuesque, resolute, (and always in the black dress) full of faith and conviction and ready to face another day.

How better to tell you what you have meant to us than to remember part of a little poem we learned in the sixth grade:

". . . . . the angel wrote, and vanished. The next night it came again, with a great Wakening Light . . . and showed the names of whom love of God had blessed, And Lo! . . . . . (Miss Currie's) name led all the rest."

A LETTER FOR MISS BIEDERMAN

Dear Miss Biederman:

Once upon a past evening when I was the Boys' Worker at the Central Community House and you were the Director, we took a short walk through the neighborhood and sat down for a brief rest on a bench in front of the Siegel home. It was past nine o'clock. Fourteenth Street was alive and the pulse of the Jewish neighborhood throbbed with heady laughter, boisterous noises, and the simmer of conversation from porches. Leo was home, and so was Libby. Mr. and Mrs. Siegel came down to offer us a cold drink.

This was as though it was yesterday. But it is all gone and only the memories of faces, the muted sounds one imagines hearing in the winds, and the empty and naked homes, where unseeing windows stare out on the streets, remain. As I recently sat for a moment in the same place, nothing was left but the frail and hollow shell of a dead neighborhood.

But it is not to weep that I write you, but rather to share with you and the rest of our friends, some of the happier moments (and some not so happy) of the Fourteenth Street neighborhood—and just in passing, to throw your way, and to some of the Board people of

the old Central Community House, a verbal bouquet for enriching a neighborhood and its people with selfless devotion and dedication. Some of the board I can recollect are: Mrs. Henry Weiler, Miss Grodinsky, Ben Marx, Isaac Summerfield, James Neiger, Mr. and Mrs. Milton Firestone, David Aberle, Mrs. Epstein, Mr. Baer and others, and, not to forget at least three more wonderful people who have continued to give to the neighborhood and to the whole community of St. Paul, Mr. Benno Wolf, Mrs. Joseph Paper and that grand man of medicine, Dr. Robert Rosenthal. And, one more, a man so active in scouting, and who is today Ramsey County's Chief Probation Officer, John K. Donohue.

Do you remember Miss Biederman, watching Jessie Gantman and Solly Winer coming home from high school, hand in hand? Mr. Gottesman used to check the chedar buses to see if everyone was on his way to chedar, and if not, why not? Dr. Dave Kanny, and all the free hours of dental work he performed on the second floor of the Community House. All is still before me as if it were today.

Where is the gang that was chased by "Chatzkel" the shoemaker or the one that was chased from the "lumber yard" for hitting a ball into the Axelrod yard? Tony and "Yosel" Barenbaum, George Rosenberg, "Gyp" Gepner and Louie Wernick—what mischief they were up to that day! And how about that erstwhile horticulturist of his day, Mr. Truscon, who planted his boulevard with what he thought to be grass seed, but which turned out to be corn on the cob instead? It would be just like "Label" to have pulled that trick.

Did you watch your "boys" play handball against the Barenbaum & Widowsky store on Fourteenth and Canada, and did you watch the "white" Schul burn down, leaving the Russians no other alternative but to go to the "red" Schul. David Gantman, the butcher, was the hero of the day when he ran into the burning building and saved the "Sepher Torah" (Holy Scroll) and the Shamus, Mr. Makiesky, the venerable old patriarch, who chopped his own wood to heat the "Schul." How often did parents of "your children" drop in to see the Fourteenth Street "Rov," that indomitable and holy spirit so close to his God, "Rov" Hurwitz, for a shileh? (ritual ruling) Sometimes they came for more material and more earthly help. His "Rebbitzen" (wife) always had a warm smile for all who came in or passed by.

Did you eat jelly doughnuts in Makiesky's bakery and listen to Louie Makiesky practice his piano with much more determination than talent? Yale Libman fingered the keys on Gussie Rosenberg's piano one day and began to play for good. How about the few teachers at Mechanics so well remembered: Annie Ginsberg, Miss Tschida (Dean of Girls), Mr. Raymond, the music teacher and that tall teller of Indian tales, Mr. Dietrich Lange, the principal?

And do you recall the noisiest and happiest home on Broadway, the Rosenbergs, where the fun and music never stopped and the doors never closed? The Oglanskys, the Warrens, Reubens, Rosenblums, Daniels, Siegels, Zuckermans, Rischells, Schneiders, Gecklers, Sternovskys, Ravitzes, Langmans, Starrs, Browns, Frankels, Bachmans, Steinmans, and so many others, were among the families you should remember. Vin-

itsky's grocery store, the Star Wet Wash Laundry operated by the Millunchicks in their backyard, Bisnow's grocery store, Eisenberg's Delicatessen (remember the black olives we called "muslines") and, of course, the old Loan Association on Thirteenth between Canada and Broadway, were all a part of your and our yesterday.

Did you know the Central Park Lochinvars, heady with romance and mischief during the summer evenings? Did you ever watch them play "duck on the rock," "run sheep run," "throw the can," and soft ball at Vocational on Sunday mornings? Have you ever found out who went into the RKO Theatre every Saturday night to open the exit doors for his brethren who did not wish to pay, and who was it that peddled "moonshine" in her bloomers and who was called "Whiskey Nose," and can you ever forget that stalwart defender of the Jewish community against the L'Orient gang raids, "Murphy" Abelovitz?

Oh, that sad, sad day when a bright light in the neighborhood ceased to shine, the day "Tootsie" Seigel passed away and left an empty space of redhaired beauty and delight never again filled.

Did you catch a "Midsummer's Day" given on May 12, 1930 at the North Central Commercial Club? Jeanette Schneider, Sara Hoffman, Goldie Bernstein, Fanny Danca, Celia Rabinowicz, Freida Rosenberg, some of the girls were "Butterflies." Sylvia Brazen, Evelyn Starr, Irene Thomke and Helen Gordon were also in the cast. Rose Rothklein sang a solo and the rest of the cast were "Brownies." Sara Hoffman, Zelda Frank, Esther Tesler, Goldie Bernstein, Tina Winnick,

Libby Schner, Marian Siegel and Rose Rothklein should be able to help you remember.

Then there was that operetta, "Dream Boat" with Sherm Burton, Herman Siegel, Sylvia Dorfman, Abe Levy, Dorothy Blumberg, Freida Rosenberg and Rose Daniels, with Norman "Ace" Halper as Captain of the Pirates and Chief Big Snake, Yale Libman. And you haven't forgotten the "Chanukah Lights" of December 18, 1933, with the brighter lights played by Marjorie Barenbaum and Evelyn Widowsky?

There were many other "productions," none perhaps of academy award proportions, but all involving real talent, fierce determination, pride of accomplishment and a world of fun. How the proud mamas and papas and zades and bawbes "kvelled" and got "nachus" from the performers. And of course, one of the most successful shows, the "Night Club Frolics," written, directed, produced, staged (he also sold tickets) by George Rosenberg, assisted by Yale Libman and Jules Tennenbaum, given at Mechanic Arts on March 15, 1938; included in its stellar cast, a musical number by Geraldine Makiesky, the Clerk of the Court, Nate (Noots) Halfin and police and stool pigeons played by Mike Tilsner and Norman (Ace, my brother-in-law) Halper. Also in the cast were Eleanor Ravitz, Helen Tatarsky, Lila Warren, Bonnie Gottesman, and Tillie Steinman; and later "Chickie" Geckler, Clara Bernstein, and Evelyn Starr. Don Singerman, you will remember as the one time editor of the Central Community House "Echo" and who is now using these talents as director of the Grotto players.

So much, Miss Biederman, for the drama and comedy, over which you watched so closely. If there was only space for the many clubs and classes filling every room, the basement, and the playground. Remember the Dee-Lite Sorority officers: Sylvia Dorfman, Miriam Jacobson, Dorothy Blumberg, Gertie Nemer, Edythe Grodin, Esther Tesler, Mae Abrahamson, Lee Lisowsky? The T.N.T. Club? The Gamma Phis: "Dutch" Bergman coaching Joe Kvasnik, Chuck Lapinsky (well, Sue?), Mike Liebgott, Solly Winer, Phil "Red" Langman, Ben Weber, Leon Frankel (and that little note in the Gamma Phi News one day—"who is the Gamma Phi interested in Sherman Gordon?") Remember the wonderful Mother's Club which met every Tuesday night, full of life and full of plans, sparked many years by Mrs. Truscon and Mrs. Siegel?

Hazel Getz, Helen Rosenblum, Evelyn Melamed—these were leaders who lived and played in Community House, and who made the days of childhood full and rich with the sheer joy of living. How about that cold winter night, Miss Biederman, when someone stole a freshly baked cake from the porch and detective Bill Hoffman captured the culprit by his footprints in the snow, and which later turned out to be yours.

So, wherever you may be, share with me these memories and so many others. Some day soon, when tall, cold and solid brick buildings squat impersonally on the lots your boys and girls played in and over the homes they lived in, there will be nothing left of the things we loved. But surely, if you will walk along the streets and byways some evening, you will hear, if

you listen with eyes tighty shut, the housewives in front of the Langman and Siegel butcher shop, the shouts from the bus leaving for Sophie Wirth Camp, the softly muted conversations from a hundred porches, the crack of a bat against a ball, a skipping rope scraping the sidewalk and a father or mother calling a child in to eat. Farewell to 14th Street, to the Central Community House and to you, Miss Biederman—many years of comfort and happiness!

THE ARCHBISHOP

This a "manseh" (story) about Christmas. It took place when I was a little boy. It comes back to me each Christmas as I listen to resonant chimes pealing out over the streets of our beautiful city.

Once upon a time on Minnetonka street, there lived a gentle, Christian neighbor of ours who had a houseful of children and a husband who lived in a nearby saloon. Now, he was a fine fellow too; he loved his wife and children in his own poor fashion, but he loved John Barleycorn even more and showed remorse by going to work for a few days so that he could earn enough to drink more and become even more remorseful.

One cold, miserable day, when the wind blew from the river across the playgrounds and rattled the storm windows, our neighbor fell ill and took herself to bed. This was the week before Christmas. We children knew she was very sick because aside from sleeping and a yearly arrival of babies, our neighbor could not afford the luxury of being in bed because of sickness. She lay there quietly, her eyes shut tight with the flush of fever on her cheeks.

For my sister Roochele and myself, this was always a time of the year to help our neighbor and her children

trim their Christmas tree. But now, with our lady in bed, with a cold wind blowing under the door, with our lady's husband propped stiff against the wall of the nearest saloon, this puny little tree looked for all the world like a spindly skeleton. But undaunted, many little hands stuck it upright in a pail of sand and labored with love and ingenuity to decorate this drab orphan of the woods. It helped, too, that my mother spent a few of her own pennies to buy glass balls for the tree, although she pretended this wasn't a proper thing for her to do.

But one word of caution my mother sent along with us: "Don't eat the 'goyishe' cookies, Velvel and Roochele, there is lard in them." However, since my little sister had no thoughts of becoming a "rebbitzen," (a Rabbi's spouse) the cookies, even with lard, proved too much of a temptation.

But through all of this, our neighbor lady kept to her bed; seemingly oblivious of both our activities and our concern. From time to time, she made a feeble effort to raise herself, but fell back utterly exhausted. Even the hot chicken "yooch" (broth) which my mother sent along with me failed to get a response from her. Then my mother came in to feed the children and to induce our lady to take something, but to no avail. And although my mother called the City Doctor, she refused to leave to go to the hospital because it was Christmas.

It happened on the day before Christmas as I was downtown selling my papers on 5th and Wabasha street in front of the old Federal building. I heard the sound of a familiar horn. I ceased for a moment crying out at the top of my shrill voice outlandish tales of murder

and mayhem. I ran to the curb where a big black limousine had drawn up driven by a chauffaur who sat stiff and upright, although he never failed to wink at me.

And reclining in the back seat was my favorite and best customer, His Excellency, Archbishop Dowling. He never failed to stop at my corner. I gave him a *Dispatch* and a *Daily News* which sold for two cents each, and he in turn, gave me a nickel, always asking me to keep the extra penny: Lest you think otherwise, a penny tip was not easily come by. He was a kind man, with soft hands and a gentle voice and his greeting was warm and friendly, "How is my little Jewish boy today?"

"Father," I said to him, for this is what I understood all Catholic priests were called, "our neighbor lady is a good Catholic and she is sick and won't drink my mother's good 'yooch' which means soup. She won't even look at her Christmas tree and she can't get out of bed, and I know if she drank my mother's 'yooch' she would feel better."

He was thoughtful for a monent. Then taking my hands in his, he moved his lips as though speaking to himself and then turning to me, said, "When you bring her 'yook' (he couldn't say 'yooch') tonight, son, tell her the Archbishop has blessed your hands."

"But, Father, how will she know? Please write your name on a piece of paper so she will believe me." And the kindly man took a pen from his chauffeur and wrote his name for me.

All in all it had been a good day. Tips were good, the weather was warm; and before leaving my corner to

check in at the *Daily News* office, I had retrieved four nickels and five pennies which had been dropped accidentally through the sidewalk grates by passersby. I did this every day with a piece of gum on a rock tied to a string and lowered down through the grates. It was no gold mine, dear friends, pickings were usually slim.

Then I hitched a ride home across the Robert Street bridge, fingering my profits for the day in one hand and the Archbishop's paper in the other. Now call it coincidence or what you will. As I alighted from the car, I encountered Rabbi Simon, who stood on the corner, hands clasped behind his back, apparently lost in reverie. As I saw him, a thought struck me. It just didn't seem right to rely so much on the Archbishop—are not two holy men better than one? Whereupon I told the sad tale of our neighbor lady to the "Roov," without telling him of the Archbishop. Lo and behold, this prophet of the West Side, who no doubt sits today at the right hand of God, said, "Velvel, let me bless your hands and may the good God spare your neighbor; go, 'loif' (run) and bring her some soup. As a matter of fact," he said in afterthought, "it would do me good too."

After gulping our supper, Roochele and I took some "yooch" and boiled potatoes next door where the Christmas tree stood forlorn. The children greeted us with little enthusiasm, watching their mother with sad and tearful eyes. "Please take this soup," I begged her. "You know, it is Holy soup, for the Archbishop blessed my hands and told me to tell you so." I saw just the trace of a smile and as her eyes opened querously I brought the slip of paper close to her eyes. "I saw him

today and he wants you to get well; honest to God, he blessed my hands."

I cannot say with certainty that it was something other than the wonderful aroma of my mother's soup, but our lady raised herself and spoonful by spoonful she finished the soup. And as the color returned to her face, I said with great relief in my voice, "And Rabbi Simon also blessed my hands." Whereupon she laughed out loud, full of life and full of hope. From that moment she became well and there was a merry Christmas in our neighbor's household. Even her husband came home with an armful of presents and a Christmas basket from the Salvation Army. Though he was not completely sober, neither was he completely drunk.

This is a true Christmas story, but I cannot tell you what made our lady well. Was it the Archbishop? Was it the Rabbi? Was it my mother's "yooch?" Or was it the goodness of man that our neighbor lady suddenly perceived? Perhaps it was a combination of all.

But as for my sister Roochele, she got sick on cookies made from lard, and although she is a fine Jewish mother today, she never became a Rebitzzenn or I a Rabbi.

MORE OF THE OLD FOLKS

They looked through the picture window out on the large expanse of snow covered lawn rolling gently to the street. The view was clean and antiseptic, but quite unlike the one from their old house on Indiana. There, when they looked out, they saw clotheslines with "vesh" fluttering in the wind, piles of ashes in the alleys, garbage cans, and, above all, real people braving the damp weather to buy a "fertel phint pitter" (a quarter pound of butter from Cohen's grocery, and six "baglich" from Goldenberg's bakery. But in this house, far removed from Indiana Avenue, it was "shtill" (quiet); the grandchildren were in school, their son at his office, and their daughter-in-law at a Hadassah meeting.

How good it was to have these precious hours all to themselves. How hard it had been these last few weeks waiting to move into the Old Home. Dr. Winnick, who was an old friend of theirs, had examined them, and, outside of a few "krechtzin" (sighs) here and there, found them in reasonably good health. A man named Mr. Bernstien had visited them and had spoken gently and with understanding about the Home. Now they were as ready as they would ever be, but the days of waiting were like long, long years.

To be sure, everyone in the house wanted to be kind to them, but always there was a tight strain in the air and the constant "shushing" of grandchildren not to raise their voices and not to play too hard. It was their very presence in this house which throttled the conspiracies and boundless enthusiasms of youth. So they spoke in whispers and moved with deliberate slowness, taking great care to be inobtrusive and not to offend.

Time hung heavy over them like an oppressive cloud, and there was nothing to do with the long hours which passed slowly with dreary precision. Once, the luxury of a spare minute had been a godsend and little short of a miracle. Come to think of it, she thought, the only time of rest she ever had were the few days before and after each delivery. With a wry smile, which cracked her face for a fleeting second, she remembered there had been nine and she looked at her husband with a sigh—but she was not quite sure whether it was a sigh of regret or relief.

There had always been some mending to do, but here there was none. In vain she searched through the closets and clothes hampers as one might for hidden treasures. There was nothing to patch, nothing to sew. Her grandchildren's stockings were thrown away just as soon as they had little holes. What a great pity and waste; throwing away stockings, trousers, and aprons without mending them. A "lawteh" (patch) had always been a hallmark of thrift and respectable housekeeping. She could not imagine any of her own children wearing clothes without at least one "lawteh" except during holidays, of course. What artistry and imagination there

once had been in the selection of a patch of cloth from where it would not be missed and sewing it where it was most needed. It had always been to her a triumph of artistic and inventive virtuosity over adversity.

But now her hands were idle. Some "Amerikaner goniff" (sharpshooter) had invented patches which were bought ready-made and pasted on—and mind you, not because they were needed, but as a mark of fashion for the children. "Gott in Himmel," (Heavens) there was no end to this nonsense. Instead of buttons, there were zippers, and the laundry guaranteed to take care of the rest. So, each day she looked often and with great longing at her old sewing box which was filled with an assortment of large and small buttons of all colors. In it, too, there was a black piece of paper holding rows of Sheffield steel needles, a silver thimble, two scissors, and a roll of wool yarn. She wondered what her grown-up son would say if she asked him to hold his arms at length so she could stretch the yarn around them as once she used to do.

Finally, one day, out of sheer boredom and desperation, she took her husband's best Sabbath shirt and with trembling fingers tore off all the buttons. Then she opened her sewing box and ran her fingers through her collection of buttons as though they were golden "shekels" (coins) for her daughter's dowry. She took herself to the window, laid the shirt over her lap, and, savoring each moment fully, sewed on a new set of buttons while her husband sat by shaking his head in bewilderment. After finishing each button, she wrapped a bit of white thread under it to secure it and

bit the end off. When she was done, she felt strength and life and even fulfillment. But even this passed quickly.

She often thought back to the "pressling" (ironing) she used to do. She had a heavy "biegel izen" (iron) which had to be heated over an open flame, and always there had been a mountain of clothes to iron. No matter how late in the night she worked, by morning the pile seemed as close to the ceiling as ever. There was always wash in the oblong copper boiler on the coal stove and near it a large bar of Crystal White soap, a scrub board, and a bottle of Mrs. Stewart's bluing. As time had gone on, the pressure of children and work moved her reluctantly to send out her laundry as "vet vash," but the rest she did herself.

The first few days in the big house she made an effort to wash the few dishes she and her husband used, but was firmly told by her daughter-in-law to leave them in the dishwasher. "Gevaldt geschrigen," (mercy me) the dishwasher didn't know the difference between "milchdegeh and fleishedekeh" (dairy and meat) dishes, but who else seemed to understand?

When they ate, it was by themselves and after the others were through, although they were always invited to eat with the family. How could they eat this strange food, the fancy salads made from "grooze" (grass) and the little tidbits of this and that which were more appropriate for chickens! Her poor son, she commiserated, who loved nothing better than a piece of stuffed kishkeh —how could he subsist on this "nasherai" (tidbits)? Oh, for a few boiled potatoes, onions, a fat fresh schmaltz herring, and a slice of dark bread! Her son would have been happy, indeed, to bring her some,

but she had asked him not to, because she had seen her daughter-in-law's upper lip curl in disapproval, as though a herring was something to be ashamed of.

And if this wasn't enough, there was "chazer" (bacon) in the refrigerator and other "trephe" (non-Kosher) meats. Even though everyone was careful not to bring any of this to the table in their presence, it was still in the house, a silent reminder of much which was alien to them. So, they ate eggs in the few utensils they held on to—"aiyer" (eggs) for breakfast, "aiyer" for lunch, and "aiyer" for supper. In the late hours of the night, unable to sleep on a foam rubber mattress, they jested grimly about turning into a cackling hen and a crowing rooster should they eat more "aiyer."

The gadgets in the house frightened them both. Lamps loomed up at them from all directions, but not a single one gave enough light to read the paper. The bathroom fixtures flashed copper and silver, and doors, which should open, folded into walls. The pictures on the walls, she was told, had cost a great deal of money, but her neck hurt from bending constantly to see from what direction they made most sense. Of art she was not a "moiven" (connoisseur), but it did seem her son had done better with crayons in the kindergarten. All around them was machinery and contraptions which rang bells and flashed lights, but not one comfortable solitary corner for them. "Ver vaist" (who knows) she found herself muttering, if an ize-box could make little squares of ice, maybe machinery would yet produce little children and spare her "Yenkee" daughter-in-law that inconvenience too.

By her side sat her "mawn" (man) peering over his

spectacles at last month's issue of the *Forvitz*. He had always been several weeks behind the news, but it had never bothered him because the world always seemed to behave in repetitive patterns from which no one ever learned any lessons. From time to time, he took out a heavy gold watch from his vestpocket, which also held three toothpicks, and an unsharpened pencil stub. He flipped the lid open with his thumbnail and held it close to his better eye. It was habit, nothing more; for time had never been really important. Only Friday noons had mattered because he had to quit peddling in time to get ready for the Sabbath.

She read his thoughts, like any good wife can (as we have all learned, to our dismay) and rebuked him gently, reminding him that it was still three days before Friday. But it mattered not, for he continued to look to his watch as though it was the very repository of the remaining seconds, minutes, and years of their lives.

The grandchildren liked to see and hold the watch too. It was as fascinating to them as their names were to him. Where did one get a name like Herbert, which twisted his tongue, because it should have been Chaim? Was this a way to remember the departed? Israel had become Elwyn, and where it should have been Mawtel, it was "plitzling" (suddenly) something or another "jr."—as though one was too stupid to know a child from a man. What a "farmishte veldt" (confused world). But no matter how his daughter-in-law winced, he continued to call his son, Yitzchak; "Lawz zein" (let it be) Edwin for the goyim.

So he looked again at his watch and said to his

Yiddeneh (wife), that according to his "zager" (watch), it must be time to be hungry.

In a few days it would be "Pesach" all over again and, God willing, they would be in the Old Home in time for the first Seder. She could not help but remember back to the many "Sedurim" they had enjoyed under their own roof. In the early years there were just a few children and the round dining room table had been enough. Then more children came, and later, grandchildren and with them, extra boards in the table and several high chairs. One year they bought a second hand card table to take care of the overflow. Then the years went by, marked first by the disappearance of the card table, then the extra boards and finally, the big dining room table had fallen apart from weariness. And last year, for the first time, they sat alone at the very same card table, spotted by old pop stains. This time there was no "tom" (flavor) and there was no one to complain about the pepper in the gefilteh fish.

In the midst of their thoughts, they saw their son as he drove up in his car. They smiled and waved at him. He left the car and stopped on the walk before the house, seeing them framed in the picture window as though he was looking at them for the first time. His head began to throb and his palms became moist with sweat in the same way it had happened before his "Bar Mitzvah," his first date, and examinations at college. He remembered when he was a little boy with measles, and later, in sequence, with diptheria, whooping cough, and scarlet fever, how he had clung to them often with his little hands around their necks. All the times he

had done this, they had felt his love, but hardly ever since.

Now they were about to leave his home where he knew they had been unhappy. How could he let them go without letting them know he loved them more than ever. If he did not do so, there would be a time soon when he would regret it forever.

He hurried up the long walk and into the house where they were waiting for him. For once, they forgot to tell him to "vish oop deh feece hotside" (wipe your feet off, outside) as he threw his arms about them, unashamed and unafraid, just as he had done the same so many times so long ago.

Now they knew and were ready to leave.

MY SON, THE DOCTOR

He looked out from his open window in the Lowry Medical Arts Building, across the street to the Court House. Over and beyond to his left the river bent and curved hugging the flats and Pigs Eye Island to its swampy bosom. He had chosen this office facing Fourth Street deliberately, so he could cast his eyes, whenever the mood struck him over the familiar landmarks of his childhood.

Looking down the street below, he saw Judge Gingold coming through the revolving doors of City Hall, blinking in the bright sunlight and waving a friendly greeting towards a passing bus. Whenever he saw the judge he thought of a Yiddish adjective, which described him so well, "a chaynevdiker" (a smile, friendly and warm). There was Tom Flaherty of the Coroner's office rushing out toward his car—a fine "Shagitz" (gentile) who was as gentle to the dead even as to the living, and a few seconds later lost in thought, an old friend, John Donohue in a hurry to come late for a meeting. There were others too, that he knew, but for some reason his eyes picked out these from the rest.

When he lifted his eyes across the river and over towards the American Hoist and Derrick Company he

saw Shorty's Tavern and the building next to it where once automatic pencils had been manufactured. He remembered picking in the slag heap behind the building for pencil parts, erasers, and rubber binders. He saw the "bood" and Mikveh, Whitefield and Halper's houses on Fillmore, the Talmud Torah, LaFayette school, Goldberg's Junk shop. Far to the right, now a part of the Peter's Sausage Company, he picked out the old Edison School, once better known as the "nut college" from whence in deliberate disregard and defiance of scientific prognostications, low I.Q.'s and the other squally valid predictions, had graduated several students, one of whom he was sure could buy the Lowry building, lock, stock, barrel and "mezzuzehs." A few others (also from Edison), who had found fractions and common denominators impossible were physically worn out counting their cash assets.

Every morning for some time now it was his habit after coming into his office, to open his window wide. Even in the piercing cold of the winter, an inner compulsion pulled him to the window. As a devout Jew faces Jerusalem and others toward Mecca, so he surveyed the West Side and the places he had known so well. This had become as much a part of him as his morning ablutions.

On this morning he could not help but reflect on how much better life was for him now. He no longer dusted his desk or emptied his ash trays, little things so trivial, and yet so meaningful to him. Now a brisk and efficient nurse whose preciseness sometimes frightened him, took care of these and other chores. He no longer answered the phone if he could possibly help it.

His mother had once admonished him shortly after his graduation, "es pawst nisht"—(it is not quite proper) for an up and coming doctor like my son to answer the phone when it rings—people will think you have no patients to be busy with. (How painfully true that was for so long a time.)

She had insisted too, that he move out of her house into a fancier apartment of his own just as soon as his office equipment bills were paid, because she said it would be good for him. It was futile to resist even though he knew what a personal sacrifice this had been for her. Often when eating there, he saw her face light with pride when she answered a call for him, "Hallo, this is the Doctor's mother."

A silly thought crossed his mind as he stood there—whoever heard a Yiddish Mameh who would say hello with the "e" rather than hallo with the "a." He wondered too if other mothers had also hovered and fretted over their children at breakfast to eat "hootmeal" and "cream frim wheat." And when protesting little stomachs rebelled at more, would be shamed into submission with "you want I should throw it out?"

He had a fine practice, he reflected. People seemed to like him and even paid their bills even though television and car repairs came first. All this was not so the first few years; there was a time when his few patients came only because other doctors were too busy, because they were friends of his mothers who gently but with grim determination had pushed them in his direction, or simply because they hoped and expected a new young doctor would charge "a little nothing." The first came with boils, carbuncles, warts, bunions, with

dirt in the eye, ingrown toenails, sneezes, sore throats, and a multitude of "kvetching and krechtzing" (complaints) of no account. Often he had wondered during those trying days whether barbering and blood-letting were really 400 years away from his kind of modern medicine.

But he persevered with patience and fortitude and the unwavering, unyielding granite support of his mother's assurances. Soon came the appendectomies, tonsils, gall bladders, and the more pretentious, if no less formidable psychosomatic complaints. People came with confidence and trust all of which he richly earned by the virtuosity of his knowledge and the deep sympathy and understanding of all people (even those who could not pay their bills). Everyone who crossed the threshold of his office felt this at once.

He laughed out loud suddenly as he slipped his arm into the sleeve of his white jacket. His mother had told him the other day of visiting a sick friend at a hospital. Although not a patient of her sons, his mother nevertheless forgave her friend's obvious lack of intelligence and solicitously suggested she would ask her son the Doctor to step in for a friendly (gruss) greeting on his rounds—just for old time's sake.

But with surprising vigor her friend had resisted this friendly proffering "ahz dein zeen koomt arine fahr ein hallo, veht es mir kosten finf dollar." (If your son comes in to say "hello" it will probably cost me five dollars.) "If he is in a very friendly mood he might say, hello, what are you doing here—that will cost fifteen dollars, and if he isn't too busy and asks me how I am feeling (and I forget not to answer) it will cost

twenty-five dollars." Please, "zi mihr gezundt, tell him to besser shich mir a cartel." (Have him send me a greeting card instead, if you will) . . .

He shook with laughter. He hadn't made the call for fear of his own efficient nurse who would send a bill in spite of himself. Come to think of it, he thought there was an uncomfortable kernel of truth in his mother's friend's protestation.

He heard the door close quietly and without turning around knew it was his mother who had come into the office. He steeled himself to face her and his knuckles were white where he gripped the edge of his desk.

"Nu, mein zeen," she said, "the specialist told me now to go back to you." He had already received the report which had only confirmed what he had already known; he felt helpless and limp.

"Nu, mein zeen," she said again very softly as she placed her purse on a chair while looking directly at him. (How weary and tired and old she looked.) "Duh hast moireh" (you are afraid), she added, "I see it in your eyes." He had never been able to hide anything from her, anymore than you or I can from our mothers. "Duh darfst mir nisht derzehlen" (you don't have to tell me).

Dear God, he thought, if it had been another patient his professional demeanor would have taken over in high gear, but this was not a patient—this was his mother. He tried to say something but the words stuck dry in his throat like pebbles in the mouth of a man who is desperate for water.

"I have had much naches from you, mein zeen. I pray it will not be long and that you will not suffer

because of me." Then patting his forearm gently she said with just a faint trace of a tremor, "Vain a bissel mit mir (cry a little with me). We are not heroes, but there has been much to be thankful for."

"Ma, Ma," he wanted to say more, but she put up a finger to quiet him with a reminder that his patients were waiting.

"Don't forget to come to supper tonight," she reminded him. Any other time he would have accepted by asking in the same old way, "What's for supper?" and she would have answered, "What's for supper? When you sit down to eat, whatever is in the tepel (pot) will be for supper."

But this time as she was about to open the door, she turned to him as though this was to be her last will and testament. "Nawr ein zach (just one thing), mein zeen, please don't add any more waiting rooms to your office. Don't you know this is my son the doctor's office and not the clinic in the city hospital where we waited so long and so often." And with a wry smile she closed the door behind her.

When she left, he dug his finger nails into the palms of his hands and clenched his fists, shaking them in desperate fury and frustration at an enemy he could see but could not conquer. Then he sat down at his desk and let his head rest on his forearm and bitter tears gathered and dropped one by one on the green desk blotter.

MAWTEL DER BAWM

Like a row of stuffed geese the little grandchildren slumped in their seats, eyes half glazed, and tiny heads sagging with the burden of slumber. While "Zadeh" (grandfather) chanted from the Haggadah and others around the table joined him in chorus, impertinent little belches rose from little stomachs filled with lemon pop, to punctuate the story of the Exodus.

Proud parents looked to their own offspring with mildly disapproving glances, gathering second wind and sustenance to begin again later with perennial recitals of their little prodigies' accomplishments, all of which taken together or separately paled the miracle of the Red Sea into relative obscurity. One less prejudiced, however, and less charitable might have discerned among the assortment of geniuses a few little "snots" too.

Zadeh, however, sat on a chair bedecked with cushions as though he were an oriental potentate, continuing to read and sing at the top of his voice. As he did every year, he let himself be carried away to the absolute heights of musical oratory while festive joy shone in the eyes of his wife. All year his "davening" (prayer chant) sounded more like the croaking of a

symphony of frogs, but tonight it was almost dulcet in its sweetness.

Around him, his sons and daughters and their wives and husbands, who had accompanied him in the beginning with considerable enthusiasm were wavering and dropped out, but "Zadeh" went on and on. Each year he seemed to take longer and longer, finding new meaning and new feeling between the familiar lines.

Soon "Bawbeh" (grandmother) would begin to clear the table even before she had swallowed her last bite. From the table there would rise a half-hearted chorus of offers to help, but she would exhort them to sit still—sit still. In no time at all the sink was stacked high with dishes and silverware almost as though a magician had whisked them away from under their very noses. Some year, perhaps one of the daughters or daughter-in-law might get away from the table to help, but the time had not yet come, So Bawbeh did it herself.

Now came the pouring of a cup of wine for Elijah after which the kitchen door was opened to allow him to come in. Always there was a light-hearted jest about this ceremony—always an under-the-breath snort of disbelief from the cynic, but underneath it all an uneasiness coupled with a wistful wish. Even the children who were asleep in their chairs by this time instinctively opened their eyes and blinked towards the darkness outside. But the little daughter of the cynic might just as well have looked for Santa Claus.

"Bawbeh" looked too, but it was not Elijah she was seeking. She did not believe in miracles, convinced that these belonged to the past. Miracles were for the devout,

for those who spent long hours at the synagogue, but not for ordinary housewives. But she looked hard, straining to pierce the darkness.

If there was anyone else in the household even thinking of Max, there was no way to guess it. . . . Mawtel, Mawtel who had hated Chedar, hated his friends, hated the West Side and hated Jews. He was a mocker and disbeliever and she forever wondered bitterly how such a son could come out from a family of "bawlibawtishe" (respectable) Yidden like theirs was. He had belittled all that was dear to them and sought almost obsequiously the company of "shkootzim" (Gentile boys) who tolerated him.

He had refused to learn his mafter, had openly defied his parents and rabbi and disappeared on the day of his Bar Mitzvah. When he returned a week later he was sullen and defiant. To the neighbors he was a big "bawm" (bum) shiftless and arrogant with talents confined to the snooker and pool tables. He had phenomenal luck with baseball tickets, and the rolling bones (dice) did great favors for him. All day he slept and at night pursued a variety of nocturnal interests.

To her, he had never been really mean. He did not raise his voice at her, and paid for his room and board every Sunday. Sometimes he would drive her to the butcher shop when she asked him to, and do other little favors too, but it was impossible to reach him. She knew only that he had a great hate.

One day he packed his bags, turned up his mattress and left. She knew better than to plead or remonstrate, but held on to his shoulder for a moment. She never heard directly from him although envelopes came occa-

sionally with five and ten dollar bills. The postmarks were from all over the vast country but never a single word, although it seemed that he sensed when she had needed the money the most.

Now the money was no longer the most important; it meant only that he was alive and for that she was thankful. To the bums from the nearby railroad yards she was especially kind, giving them an extra nickel and dime and a tasty buttered "bilkeh" (biscuit) with coffee. In each as they stood on her threshold telling fabulous tales of lost wealth, she saw her son Mawtel and prayed others would be kind to him too.

What great "naches" (pleasure) she had from the rest of the family. David was a nose specialist who was doing so well changing long noses into short ones. (To tell the truth, she would have been even happier if he kept away from noses and treated people with plain sicknesses instead. She heard some envious "Yachnes" (gossips) say he would soon be restricting his practice to one nostril—and the left side only.) Yitzchok was a fine lawyer who would defend a West Sider at the drop of a "Yarmelkeh" (prayer cap) and it made no difference whether his client was Jewish or not—everyone loved him. Even as a little boy, Yitzchok had a big mouth.

Abe was a bookkeeper whose boss even let him keep the key to the shop—so much was he trusted. Better, she told him often, let them have the key and pay you more. And there was Dorah, who was a school teacher and took off for all the Jewish Holidays. She was going steady with a fine young man who managed a shoe store and who said Kaddish every morning for his

father. When they were married, her daughter told her there would be shoes at wholesale but she would still drop in to see Mr. Mintz at his shop.

The youngest, Chatzkel, was in his last year at the University. He wasn't sure yet what he was going to be but for him no one had to worry. He had his sharp eyes on the rich daughter of a South Dakota scrap dealer. He knew what he wanted and what harm was there in falling in love with a wealthy girl. Of course with Chatzkel this had been no accident for he was inclined to be "foil" (lazy) and had an inspired aversion to work. The girl herself was "zaftig" and bosomy like the old country girls and looked like the kind who would have a big family.

Thank God, too, her husband had always made a good living at the store. He began with second hand furniture and one day had come upon the key to a Pandora's box of good fortune; it was the word "antique." He purposely let dust gather on his goods, never swept the floors, let the windows gather grime and pretended not to know Early American from "borsht." All of a sudden, ladies in fancy dresses began to buy his "schmates" (rags) and "chazerai" (junk) as though their lives depended on his good bounty. They would come tripping over each other in their frenzy, pretending to be unconcerned and uninterested and offering high prices. Since nobody was fooling nobody, everyone was happy. Big cars drove up to his shop and their chauffeurs waited while his customers were "shlepping" (dragging) out broken down furniture which his wife wouldn't allow in his own home. "What a labidickehvelt."

. . . All of this she had accounted for quickly in the cash register of her mind . . . the naches and profit of her family on one side of the ledger and in the debit column in red letters, "Mawtel the 'baum.' " All this, while she looked long and hard at the open door. She knew she had no right to expect miracles for she did not believe in them, but "just once, just once" her lips formed the words.

Suddenly a figure took shape on the threshold of the door. For a moment her heart skipped a beat and the palm of her hand smothered her grasp.

But it was not Mawtel as she and you and I would have wished. Nor was it Elijah to give the lie to the cynic, for no miracles can occur to those who do not believe in them. It was only a gentile neighbor with an extended wish for a "happy Pesach," shifting from one foot to another until he was offered a drink he had really come for.

How I wish I could have written of a miracle instead, but alas, I cannot. Zadeh went back to his Hagadeh (Passover Story) and without interrupting the melody sang out, "Velvel, vermach deh teer." And Bawbeh, fingering a dish towel in her hands, looked out through the window for someone she could not see.

THAT OLD GANG OF MINE

Last month coming home from Chicago on the Zephyr with my little son Jonny, I remembered another trip to Chicago many years ago under less favorable circumstances. This trip with Jonny was to fulfill a promise to him to show him the dinosaurs at the Field Museum. I had made the pledge in a moment when I was really not listening, but since he had already made a public proclamation of it to his teachers and classmates there was naught to do but go. This business of listening with one ear runs in our family; one day I looked up from my Amazing Stories Magazine to tell my mother of a group of scientists who were planning an expedition to the moon. To this she replied, "So remind me to make you a lunch when you go."

The train went clickety-clack over the rails and when I looked at my little son cuddled asleep in the cradle of my arms dreaming of prehistoric monsters, my eyes grew heavy too and my thoughts slipped through the sieve of years.

It all began with Charlie Neren who with his brother Sam operates the Exchange Cigar Store in South St. Paul. Now all the Nerens and their wives are grand people and the local citizenry of South St.

Paul will tell you that Charlie and Sam dispense as much good will as merchandise. One fine day a long time ago Charlie suggested I could get a free round trip to Chicago if I so desired. "It won't cost you a single penny." The fact was I needed a trip to Chicago like "shpilkehs in kopf" (nails in my head). However, always it has been and shall be, that the word "free" rings bells and a row of three cherries in my head. All I had to do was to get into a caboose in the stockyards at the end of a long train of cattle, and sit there all the way to Chicago.

Charlie gave me his word that the cattle would not have to be fed or watered. I needed this assurance, picturing myself being trampled by a stampede of thirsty cattle; for no matter how many Tom Mix and Hoot Gibson Westerns I had seen at the New Ray, the role of "Velvel," the Jewish Cowboy, was an alien one I did not intend to play.

Because Charlie was too busy to come along, I persuaded my friend Nate (Sunny) Kivatinitz (Kivens) to accompany me, but not before I helped him finish his paper route. The lure of a free trip to Chicago when neither of us could afford a round trip to Minneapolis was too much to ignore. In our pellmell rush to the "private train" waiting in the yards, we bought what looked like salami to sustain us; but hours later we learned to the sorrow of our hungry stomachs that the salami was a chili-con-carne loaf—and no water to drink.

Finally, considerably shaken up, dusty, hungry and thirsty, we arrived in Chicago many hours later by way of (so it seemed) Texas. Forsooth, Charlie, the cattle

enjoyed a better ride. From the yards we found our way to Maxwell Street where we bought a genuine honest-to-God salami, a dark bread, six oranges and two pungent sour pickles. All this we ate on the way back first class—to the obvious discomfort of the more cosmopolitan travellers. We left with 90 cents and returned with thirty—a record for penuriousness and thrift unmatched in the annals of travelogues....

So much for this saga of the iron rails. Move along with Sunny and myself and my other dear friends to a poker game which began over twenty years ago and I pray will continue for another twenty. For more than several score years we have come together pretending to play cards, but in truth providing a continuous demonstration of the world's worst poker playing—an insult and "shandeh" to the great "koorten shpielers" (card players) the West Side has produced. And although it is some time now since we graduated from ten matches for a penny and have grown up to be adults (?) we have learned no more about this game. But we do make a great tumult, consume vast quantities of vursht and pickles and remain forever an enigma to our growing children who wonder, as they try to sleep, at the zany nonsense of their usually normal fathers.

All these many delightful years we have spun tall tales of fabulous deals wherein fortunes have been made. Vast acres of property have been purchased with considerable acumen, increasing a thousand fold in value overnight; gilt-edged stocks bought for a "a little nothing" have soared in prices in a way which make Minnesota Mining certificates look like City Service in the 1929 crash. Millions and millions we have made,

these "kaptzoonim" and myself, but alas, only on paper.

Now to those of you who will shake your heads (and properly so) at gambling, let me hasten to add, that as we play this game it is neither chance nor skill and any man bereft of vision could do just as well. We play only amongst ourselves for no others in their right senses would tolerate this idiocy with cards. The tables at Las Vegas will never be threatened by the likes of us.

Take "Yawsel" (George) Katz, master of the Yiddish invective, choir singer, and one-time champion softball (kittenball) pitcher. It seems only yesterday that his grandmother was chasing us with a broom because we were playing knife on their wooden steps. In the middle of a deal he recalls a Yiddish joke which he has told us a hundred times before, while in the meantime Puggy (Meyer) Lande is squirming with aces back to back.

Puggy, who all of you may know better as the purveyor of used vehicles—the mad car dealer of University Avenue who will sell a car for as little as one dollar down, the balance to be paid for by future generations long after the original merchandise has become a museum piece. He always comes late, waiting, as the used car lot lights on the avenue go out, for a last minute customer who invariably falls prey to his earnest persuasiveness. But around the card table with a half pound salami sandwich in one hand, he is a complete flop as a bluffer.

And there is Smitty (Milton) Smith, of Smith Brothers Pharmacy who raises the bid "without looking" and seems to have as much luck as he has pink pills in stock. Smitty was the first to own a car—a 1926 two-door Ford sedan which he lovingly took apart, nut by

nut and piston by piston when the first frost threatened. Then he jacked it up and left it to rest until the last snow had melted. It was a sturdy contraption which wheezed and coughed like an "alter kvetch," (feeble old man) but it never failed us at seven gallons for a dollar, and thirty miles per gallon. Even in those days the looks of this automobile was such that a girl entered either out of love or sheer desperation.

And Max, dear Max Miller, who has lost many a penny to me in wagers over his smoking and who has finally cut down from one pack to two packs per day. —Do you remember, Max, letting me drive that sporty Chrysler convertible back home from the pow-wow while you explained the mystery of the stars in the rumble seat to—I forget her name. Now you speak of Preston, your boy, who was Bar Mitzvah in September while Fay's eyes light up with pride. Of you, Max, it may truly be said as of the others that the shirt on your back is ours for the asking.

There is a quiet one, too, Hy Simos, who seldom raises his voice and views the game with a philosophical calm. Nothing moves him and his ponderously slow movements belie the hidden agility of a slumbering athlete. It is this "Chaim" of ours who even as a little boy set his own pace, delivering Sunday papers no earlier than Monday.

You will recognize, too, that one-time raconteur of tall tales, Ben "Banish" Rutman. What a wonderful treat so long ago when Ben visited me in Buffalo, New York, while honeymooning with his pert and cute, bright-eyed Leah. Of course, I took them to Niagara Falls, and before I knew it they were gone and I was

alone again. It was Ben, this confirmed bachelor, who was the first to make the marital plunge. There's Nathan "Tubby" Waldman, X-ray technician, who used to spend most of his hard-earned nickels for pie and cheese on rye sandwiches at Davini's: and once again, my companion in the caboose to Chicago, Nate "Sunny" Kivens (Internal Revenue) who is a great candy "nasher" (glutton) and a fisherman of little note. Of our own adventures together there is much to be written and much to be said, but 'tis only for ourselves.

Just two are missing from our midst, but they have left reluctantly and for parts distant from our fair city. Leonard Hirsch is now a junior furniture manufacturing tycoon in Los Angeles who continues to look longingly to the East for his poker companions. This was the little boy who jumped from cliffs and roof tops with broken umbrellas and who gave promise of becoming a great mischief maker. Then there was another little boy who graduated from mud pies to chief chef at a Cleveland hotel—Davy Robbins whose heart is bigger than the griddle of his old army stove at Camp Chaffee.

. . . . . So to their children: to Marilyn and Terry Smith, to Donna Joy and Pamy Lande, to Lynne and Steven Katz to Preston and Alan Miller, to Jeffry and Larry Kivens, and to Helen Rutman:

I say that these are your fathers and my friends whom I love so very much. Their company has given me endless pleasure and delight and I am deeply in debt to them for this—just as all the rest are in debt to each other for the very same reasons. True, you will not find a millionaire among them, although I suspect several have good-sized "knipplech" stashed away.

True, too, that some no longer wear their "tzitzehs" although "Yawsel" Katz sings well and loud enough in the choir to send us all to Heaven. But in the vernacular of today, neither will you find a single deadbeat among them.

If they keep you up once a month, learn to be indulgent and patient with them for they truly love you and would die for you. If they despair out loud at your ways and remind you constantly of the "good old days" when they suffered and sacrificed, be kind and shake your heads in sympathy.

Oh, I know them well, this little band of men who once a month return to the pixy land of childhood. I played with them when we were little and worried for them when we were older and far away from home. I was miserable when I knew they lay in the mud at Bougainville, in Leyte, and in the rain forests of New Guinea, while I defended the outposts of Fort Snelling.

I remember bidding farewell to Puggy from my sentry post as I saw him (and Chappy Devine, too) leave Ft. Snelling one wet, miserable night, hunched in despair, half-hidden by a an oversized army raincoat and crowned with a helmet which hung low to his chin. Who could not laugh just a bit at this incongruous soldier, but not for long could eyes remain dry as he sloshed out of sight. And one evening we saw a picture of Leonard Hirsch in our local paper "somewhere in the Pacific" sitting around a camp fire looking thin and sad; so my mother cried for him because his mother was gone, and others like Sylvia and Rae and Bernice waited dry-eyed with prayers.

But in the end, they all came back, and no one spoke of soldiers and heroes, only of poker games at ten matches for a penny.... To Faye, Margie, Helen, Ruth, Ann, Leah, Rae Laine, Rose, Edith, Bernice: girls, cut the salami thick, get the pickles and mustard out, chill the pop, slice the breads, cut the cake and leave us be. This night is ours, and one-eyed Jacks are wild!

THE FABULOUS BRIDGE

It all began with a bag of manure. I hope you will forgive my indelicacy in starting this way. For those of you who may have forgotten, manure did not always come packed in a fancy bag at a fancy price. Once you couldn't give it away—as a matter of fact, I remember my pa paying out of his hard-earned twelve dollars a week to have it hauled away.

So can you blame him when I stopped in front of the Feed and Fertilizer store to buy some top dressing for my lawn. "Vie gehst duh, Velvel?" he asked, "Pa," I said apologetically, "I'm going to buy some manure for my grass." He looked at me in disbelief and shook his head sadly, "Mischeegah darf min zein, avec zu farfen gelt far manure." (One must be crazy to throw money away for manure.) Only my Pa used a much stronger Yiddish expression for manure which I cannot repeat even though it is far more pungent and descriptive. "Next thing you know," he said lapsing back into English after the first shock wave had passed on, "you'll be buying dandelion seeds for your grass."

All of this took me back again to Texas street over in the lower West Side flats. No one had lawns to worry about and grass was something to sit on in Phalen

Park or Harriet Island during a picnic. But everyone had a tree or two planted somewhere around the house. Now to get these young saplings, you rode a wagon to the river bank, selected a young tree and yanked it out with a vigorous heave. After you brought it home, no matter where you planted it, no matter how you ignored it, it grew and grew and grew. Who knew from root systems, pruning, fertilizer, insecticides and "der reech vaist voos." (The devil knows what.) Without benefit of all this, these spindly saplings flourished and bloomed and grew even better in the middle of streets to resist man's puny efforts to dislodge them for super highways.

To get back to the manure; there was a narrow hump running the entire length of Texas street bulging out a foot above the ground level in the very center of the street. This marked the sewer trenches which had just been filled in. Since there was little or no traffic on this street, the city did not deem it necessary to level it; the city fathers left Texas street to the passing of time and the vagaries of weather. I sometimes wonder today if the tax assessor has ever found it.

What a magical word—sewer! It meant that finally the outdoor shacks, the cold boards, and orange wrappers would give way to real flush toilets and running water. No more china pots under the bed, no more stumbling half-frozen in the frigid night air, no more indecision, hesitation, and accidents during the long dark nights. We may sigh rather wistfully for the passing of the little red school house, but surely we do not mourn the demise of the outhouse and the flapping doors with the half moon.

Now every evening as dusk fell and gasoline wick

lanterns were lit indoors, little barefoot boys built a bonfire on this hump running past Daniel Greenstien's front porch. This fire was fed with wood scraps, green branches and chunks of dried manure. It served a dual purpose of keeping the mosquitos away from our wise elders gathered on the porch and as a beacon point for "run sheep run" games. When we were tired, we sat around the smelly embers, letting our imaginations carry us off to the Dakota prairies, surrounded by coyotes, wolves and a murdering band of Sioux Indians bent on scalping us. Little wonder as the night deepened that we clung instinctively with one hand to the top of our "yarmelkahs." (prayer caps.)

This fire burning became an evening ritual and in the course of time there were developed a breed of mosquitoes which seemingly thrived on manure smoke But no matter, it was great fun even though we went to bed every night itching and scratching a thousand bites and smelling like you know what.

There was one night I remember when my Pa, Daniel, "Schmeel" Klein, and a few others spoke of a rumor which even we had heard about—a proposal to build a fabulous bridge from State or Robert street across the flats to Dayton's Bluff and Indian Mounds. It was to be a tremendous bridge made of iron and steel, towering high into the sky.

Even my bawbeh had heard of the bridge and linked it with old country superstition to the story of the bridge across which the Meshiach (the Messiah) would someday lead all faithful Jews, living and dead, to a land of eternal peace and happiness. I remember her telling me, as I sat on her lap, that "Meshiach's" bridge had invis-

ible cracks, through which the non-faithful and "goyim" (non-Jews) would fall to their eternal doom. But my grandmother in all of her pervasive goodness had petitioned God to give everyone a second chance—both Jew and Gentile, and allow them across too. I was comforted with the knowledge that her own faith and love for people would surely persuade the good God to grant her petition.

To this little group sitting on the porch and to many others in the West Side, the building of the bridge promised fabulous real estate and property profits. Each in his own mind saw dreams coming true—some would quit peddling forever, some were going to visit Eretz Yisroael (the holy land), and one was going to spend the rest of his life in the Turkish bath on Fillmore avenue.

With the passing of each day the bridge grew longer and higher and speculation ran wild as to where it would begin and where it would end—whose houses would be torn down, and whose houses would be left standing. West Siders whose houses needed repairing waited and vacillated and one whose shingles had been blown away by a heavy wind used pots and pans to catch the leaking rainwater. He was waiting for final details about the bridge before reshingling.

No one knew and seemingly cared even less about where the plans originated. So and so, a "mahitin" (relative by marriage) of Yankels, whose second cousin's widow was going steady with someone who had business in the courthouse who had seen the plans—and so it went. There were a few who scoffed at the whole business, but no one paid them any attention.

They were the "farbiseneh" (hard bitten) pessimists who found fault with everything and everyone, who wouldn't admit that day followed night, who weighed their meat at homes three times after asking the butcher to do the same, and who insisted always that the fattest schmaltz herrings were always at the bottom of the barrel.

But when the Autumn leaves began to fall and it was too chilly to gather on the porch, there was little talk about the great bridge. We still built our bonfires, but the mosquitoes were gone. Soon the first snow would compel us to leave the Dakota prairies, the buffalos, and the Indians who had pursued us relentlessly the whole summer through. The bridge, however, never left my thoughts and I was determined with the impelling curiosity of most little boys to hear more about it. And who could tell me more about it than Daniel himself; so I went to see him.

Daniel looked over at me through his glasses which were always at the very tip of his nose. He put a cube of domino sugar under his tongue, stirred the jelly in the bottom of his "glessel tay" (glass of tea), for he was inordinately fond of sweets, and scratched the top of his head. Then he watched the particles of jelly circling the miniature maelstrom his spoon had stirred up and at long last with careful deliberation he lifted the glass with both hands and sipped. He smacked his lips together and muttered softly, "Ah, geschmack, geschmack." (delicious)

"Velvel," he said, patting me gently on my head, "have faith in the bridge; if it's not built this year, the next year or the year after will do. Be a good boy, save

your money, stay away from "shiksehs" (non-Jewish girls) behave in Chedar, wear your Tzitzehs, and 'Zeih a mensch.' (Be a man) If you do all this you'll become president of the U.S.A., or even president of a schul. (What I really wanted to be was Sitting Bull, but I wouldn't hurt his feelings by telling him so.) Now, here's four pennies and go to Levoonehs to get me a Forvitz." (Jewish Newspaper)

Well, good readers of mine, the years have gone by and I am neither president of the U.S.A., president of a schul—or even a trustee; maybe it's because I didn't wear my "tzitzehs." But something else happened which I must share with you.

Daniel left this good earth many years ago, but I'm sure he was back last week for a brief visit. It was at a meeting, this time not on the porch at 320 Texas street, but in a beautiful mahogany panelled room with a gold-plated spittoon in the center. I was sitting with men who were gathered to discuss plans for the redevelopment of the West Side area and as usual sleeping with one eye open. "Plitzling" (all of a sudden) a gentleman behind a desk pointed to a map on the wall and spoke about the "possibility of constructing a bridge from here to there" and what do you think—the "here" was Robert Street, the "there" was Dayton's Bluff and in "zu vishen" (in between) was Texas Street.

You may be sure that I opened my other eye at this point. Now it is not likely that this bridge will ever be built and more likely that men will continue to talk and to plan and to dream. But I could pay no more

attention to their talk, for I felt the back of my neck tingle and maybe a gentle tap on my head. Did I hear, too, the tinkle of a spoon in a "glessel tay" and a familiar gentle voice whispering beside me, "geschmack, geschmack"—if it's not built this year, the next year or the year after will do just as well.

THE GREAT FOOTBALL GAME

This is a story of a football game which has become a legend.

It was played one Sunday afternoon over twenty-five years ago on the turf of the Minnetonka playgrounds before a crowd of thousands. Also present both by accident and by design, were two whistling popcorn wagons, two rabbis drawn to the occasion by the noise which shook the Talmud Torah building, and three bootleggers.

It is a story about "Jiggs" Kirschner, Sammy Doroshow and others who will follow later, but it is these two "boochers" (young men) who are responsible for resurrecting this day and who remain forevermore at loggerheads in a friendly way about the outcome. But such a legend has this game become, that babes in arms at that time, now grown to be big, brawny men, insist they too played in the game—with diapers for uniforms one might add. There is good reason to believe too that as time rolls on even our own children some day will claim to have performed valiant feats in that game of long ago. As matters stand now, everyone but the two rabbis and popcorn men make the same claim.

Therefore, dear friends, once and for all, let me

recount the tale and put to rest all the other "mancis." (tales) If you wish to dispute these facts and figures (and who won't?) I beg you to buttonhole either "Jiggs" or Sammy. If you will not find them home they are probably where I left them last month—Kleason's bar—still arguing about the final score. So why should I "dray mein kopf" (worry my head) call them yourself and join the party. . . .

It all began one afternoon in "Goggle" Green's Airport Recreation Parlor ("Takeh" a parlor!) on Fairfield Avenue. It seems that "Jiggs" and a few other Minneapolis boys had been wont to leave the North Side reservation to congregate in St. Paul. You know how it was—the Minneapolis boys came to St. Paul to look for girls, and the St. Paul Lochinvars went to Minneapolis for the same purpose. There was Jiggs courting his Ann (Berman), Mike Handler his Clara (Reuben), Frankie Cohen his Edith (Goldberg), "Moose" Atkins his Winnick girl and Ben Smith his Rose (Reuben).

Now Jiggs, who was captain of the Minneapolis Mogen David team, the undisputed Minneapolis champs from 1925 to 1929, was not a bit averse to proclaiming the invincibility of his team. And why should he have been? This was an eleven, well organized, disciplined and experienced, coached by men like Louis Gross, who had once stopped Red Grange; Zollie Levine, one-time great quarterback at Carleton College, and Leo Levitt. And our own boys—a scrub outfit put together with guts and "schmatehs." (rags)

As you might have guessed sooner or later someone said, "Put your mouth where the pocketbook is" and the bets were made. Jiggs, ever the affluent and opulent

operator, suggested a twenty-five dollar per man bet. Do I have to tell you that in the West Side money didn't grow on trees like in Minneapolis; nevertheless, Bill Binder, Sammy, Goggles, Moe Arnovsky and a few non-landsleit: Goulette, Monsour, etc., together with other St. Paul players, finally scraped up twenty-five dollars to cover the whole team and this young fortune was turned over to the safekeeping of Ben Stoddard (Neighborhood House). Who knew he was going to play in the game too?

So came the great day and with it two giants of the Twin Cities facing each other under sunny skies. And since you can't tell a cow from a horse without a lineup (as Ben Ukis used to say) here they are: For the Minneapolis Mogan Davids there were: Kirschner, Handler, Hillman, Shapiro, W. Smith, B. Smith, Atkins, Leo Kirschner, Rosenfield, Hymanson, Piller, Tilsner, "Lampy" Ostrin, Joe Nudel, Griller and Mickey Levine. Here was a real club, resplendent in blue and white uniforms, fiercely determined to stamp out these West Side upstarts.

Lined up on the other side, the collective pride and joy of the Minnetonka playground were: "Maishke" Straus, Sam Levey, Joe Kessel, Sam Doroshow, Nate Levinsohn, Jack Gilman, Lloyd "Bull" Berkus, Bill Binder, Joe Ruchverg, Johnny Gara, Ben Stoddard, Joe Deutchman, Al Warren and Chubby Smith. Among all these stalwarts, there was one single facsimile of a uniform which was divided into eleven unequal parts and therefore unrecognizable. Pillows, towels and sofa-cushions served as padding, for it is in the West Side that necessity first became the mother of invention.

There were others who played too. Throwing "ringers" in to stave off threats of scoring was not an uncommon practice and one, Louie Finn, was unceremoniously hauled out of his drug store and thrown into the line. Whether the following played or were part of the crowd we are not quite certain since more than a few enthusiastic onlookers were overcome with excitement and rushed in from time to time to lend a helping hand and foot (and knock in kopf) : (hit in the head) Morrie Levinsohn, "Nig" Bomberg, Ben Arnovsky, Irv Schneider, Leo Ross, Max "Bladder" Lieberman, Jack Katz, Herschil Silverman, "Rushie" Nerenberg, Hy Firestone and Sam Gam (Dr. Gam).

It is no small wonder that it was difficult at times to separate the crowd from the players. More than 3000 loyal Minneapolis camp followers came along in Wold Transfer company trucks and well-heeled (as the saying goes) with plenty of money to make side bets. (In Minneapolis money grew on trees but in our West Side we were blessed only with leaves.) This is not to say of course that we too did not have our thousands of wildly cheering fans, in addition to a few who knew from nothing about football. These latter were the same ones who were attracted to any crowd of more than one, who came uninvited to eat free herring at Bar Mitzvahs, and who ate the free cheese lunches in the saloon on Kentucky & State Street.

Incidentally, it might be added (although some twenty-five years too late for some small fry gamblers to profit from) that this was the first time the West Siders had ever played together; it was also the last. I do not say this, however, to detract one whit from the

titanic struggles which ensued. Referees came and went, some disappeared forever in the colliding masses of human muscle brawn and fat. There were more referees than substitutions—brave but foolhardy young men. Apparently one of these braver arbiters who refereed the last half of the game following Slim Paborski who gave up in despair, decided on the spot that the practice of law was a far safer pursuit—Irv Gottlieb.

What a crowd—the McDonoughs, Mc Tices, Farleys, Mutt, Jack and Maggie Lynch, the Auges, Red Fry, Chadge Gadje (the homerun clouter), papas, mamas, "Zedehs," girl friends, and the three bootleggers. Sammy's father who came to watch muttered out loud that this was a dangerous game "meh konn derhargerdt vehren." (one could get killed) The pool halls were empty, the saloons deserted, traffic in the streets stilled—the whole world, it seemed, looked only to the tumult at the Minnetonka playground. Even in Mr. Cohen's store on Robertson and Indiana, no children came in for striped paper candy bags and chocolate caramels. Instead this little friendly man, who spoke English beautifully, toyed with his neat merchandise displays and looked at the empty streets, and to this day my mother complains that the noise caused two cakes in the oven to settle!

Jiggs says he caught two touchdown passes, and Sammy insists that he scored first with a pass and long run. They do agree, however, that it was not the West Siders who won the game, although there appears to be a slight crack of difference which widens from year to year about the actual score.

Each play was followed by friendly (?) scuffling

both on the part of players and spectators, and since there were neither yardlines nor goal posts, the issues were never quite clearly resolved. At any rate the bloody struggle wore on into the late afternoon although, sad to say, the West Siders who began the fray "looking like a million" began to fall apart at the seams in the last two quarters. They gave their best but it was simply not enough. So when the sun hung low over the horizon, they left battered, bruised and bloody for their homes, for they were in no mood to tarry and there was no other place to peel off the layers of "lengeh gatkehs," (long underwear) pillow padding and Wilder Bath towels. And the twenty-five dollars—farfahlen! (lost)

There would be many things to remember someday: The impossible passes snared by Jiggs and Sammy, the stubborn courage of Bill Binder and the enduring spotlight of fame on our Joe Kessel—the baker who now wraps his bread in cellophane. It was Joe who was taken out of the game with a seriously fractured leg and rushed to Riverview hospital in great pain,, but much more concerned about the hospital menus than his leg. And even though it was Jiggs together with Sammy who sold tickets for a benefit dance for Joe at the Neighborhood House, Joe is still looking for Jiggs with a wild gleam in his eye.

Sammy is still smarting, too, not so much from having lost the game but much more so because his orchestra wasn't hired to play at the dance—as if all this was Jiggs' fault. Remember, Sammy and his violin, with Louie Shaeffer at the piano, Hy Paine (Panevetsky), the sax, Milt Bernier, drums, and Cecil Magid,

trumpet. No one can ever say of them that they didn't play loud. . . .

Well, there it is, and you may fill in the rest. I cannot help, however, wonder as I write this, what Sammy Doroshow's thoughts might have been when he received a battlefield commission in France from old "Blood and Guts" General Patton himself. Did he think back to the green grass of the playgrounds and was he tempted to say to the General with delightful whimsy, "You think this was a battle—you should have seen the other one!"

And our erstwhile entrepreneur of today—Jiggs—do his thoughts wander back to 1924 when he was crowned the first winner of the Pushmobile scooter contest sponsored by General Motors? Does he step on the throttle of his '57 chromium model and wish he was back in his homemade scooter careening down the hill at five miles an hour?

And some of the rest—does Ben Arnovsky dwell yet on his sweet victory over Hy Zussman in The Daily News marble championship? Do Bill Binder, Joe Ruchverg, Joe Deitchman and Lloyd Berkus think back to Camp Kiwanis and the beautiful St. Croix?

But to make a "langeh manceh kurtz," (to make a long story short) all in all it was a great game—a game "marred by incidents," as Sammy Doroshow describes it with delightful drollness. What a charitable way to refer to murder and mayhem.

A COTTAGE BY THE (LAKE)

My brother Yankel, the real estate man, has a little cottage for the summer by the lake.

"Velvel," he said to me one day not so long ago, "why don't you take the family and spend the day with us at the lake?"

"What have I got to lose," I said, accepting the invitation with alacrity. After all with nine in the family, you don't get to see much of each other except at "simchas." Even my mother couldn't keep track of all of us. Once when I came home from camp after two weeks away, she asked me where I was for supper the night before—and wasn't listening when I told her.

How was I to know when I told Yankel we would come, that this was not an exclusive invitation. He might just as well have sent out invitations, or advertised it in the Jewish News. I learned later that he invited everyone in the Commerce Building and all pedestrians he encountered on Fourth Street—just like he was having a Bar Mitzvah.

You know, once upon a time, who didn't have a little cottage on Bald Eagle or White Bear Lake—seventy-five dollars for the season and furnished too. As was to be expected of course the furnishings were

rustic; rusty bed springs, rusty beds, rusty screens, rusty sink and tired old mattresses soaked by generations of children—bless those little ones.

There was always a screened porch which the mosquitoes took as a big joke; it was littered with newspapers, musty books, and a picture calendar late by twenty years featuring the Pluto Water Girl. In the back (von hinten) stretched the inevitable clothes line which never missed your adam's apple in the dark, and from which hung soggy two-piece bathing suits and damp towels which never dried. Off to a side and much too close was a little ivy covered outhouse hidden discreetly behind a wooden mesh screen.

Not too far distant was Wildwood Amusement Park featuring Clyde McCoy and his Sugar Blues. Here there gathered the sweating dandies of the day—hair plastered down and parted neatly, white gabardine graduation slacks and white shoes. A poorer bunch of wolves and predators was no where else to be found. There was hardly a "groshen" (penny) among them. Each tried to borrow from the other "until payday" (who was working?); the same dime often ran through the whole gamut of these big spenders. But nerve, audacity, and guts "doos hawt zai nisht gefahlt." (This, they had plenty of).

To get back to my brother, Yankel. With his invitation came both an admonishment and a pitiful plea, "if you don't mind, please bring food—at least for yourselves." This kind of request you would think was hardly necessary especially from a brother whose bed you once shared with three others. So my dear wife roasted a chicken, "poolkeh" and all, made some potato

salad, baked a cake and borrowed a few knishes from my mother who was also going along and who roasted a chicken, made potato salad, baked a cake and borrowed some pickles from my sister Dorothy who was also invited and who roasted a chicken, made potato salad, baked a cake—"Gevaldt geschrigen," (you translate) where does this all end. In vain did I remonstrate with my "vaab" (wife) that this was only a day at the beach and not an expedition to Israel, but who listens.

"Kom, Kom" we were finally ready, everyone packed in like people, but it was not yet to be. This isn't the first time I've gone on a picnic. I turned around, told Jonnie to go to the toilet and Suzie to get a "handkichif," to get mother's purse which she doesn't know yet she forgot, close the "Vindehs" if it rains, and be sure to "lash" the light in the basement. So finally we're ready to go—everyone is sitting on "shpilkehs" and "mitzkeh derinim" (suddenly), the car keys are missing—I left them in the good pants I wear to work.

It seemed strange to me as we drove along the road to see how many familiar faces passed us. Nothing but cars filled with children, food, rubber boats, fishing tackle and sweating adults. They waved to us and we to them in the camaraderie of the open road. I tell you there's nothing like leaving a cool house and green grass to get asphyxiated by the buses and cars ahead of you, to be bumped by cars behind you, and to get "klopped im kopf" by playful little monsters in the back seat. If that wasn't enough, healthy little bladders prompted frequent stops behind billboards and bushes. None of this however bothers my wife who with imper-

turbable calm reminds me philosophically to thank God we're healthy—if not wealthy.

Now Yankel, knowing of my predilection for getting lost anywhere but on State Street, drew up a map for my guidance, but alas, he's no artist and I'm no map reader. I must confess that in the army map training sessions, I always found myself alone behind enemy lines—but not deliberately. This, I must have inherited from my mother who guides me often to her club meetings using the color of the house or the pitch of the roof for her destination. "What's the difference what street it's on—drive around that way (she points in a sweeping direction), and when you find a house with a blue 'dach' (roof), that's the house."

In the end, as is to be expected, but with no help from the map, we turned in behind one billboard and then another, and lo and behold, we came upon a vast encampment of familiar faces. For a moment I thought I was "fahrblondzevit" (lost), and that I had taken a round about road to the Mizrachi picnic at Highland Park—or was it a Jewish War Veteran's conclave—or a Talmud Torah outing. However, it could be none of these, for no one rushed up to me with a book of raffle tickets.

Naturally we stopped to exchange the usual social amenities, being careful not to step on platters of roasted chicken, potato salad, and chocolate cake. Suddenly it dawned upon me; here in the midst of this turbulent sea of human beings, like a beleaguered fortress overwhelmed by the sheer weight of numbers, is Yankel's cottage. Here it was, a neat, white frame building from whence moved like lines of army ants, people

coming in and out. This is Yankel's cottage I asked myself—this Coney Island by the shores of Turtle Lake—this Harris beach—this is Yankel's cottage? Now I knew where everyone on the road was going to. And for those few faces I could not place, most likely they had followed the civil defense "Evacuation Route" signs into Yankel's place.

I looked in vain for Yankel and Nettie to thank them for this personal invitation, but they were nowhere to be found. I heard a rumor that they had retreated to the sanctuary of their back yard on Hague Avenue. As far as I could ascertain nobody missed them and nobody cared that I was his brother. I could have been a member of the Ku Klux Klan for the attention I got.

"Well," says my wife, (she's a Duluth girl otherwise she would have said, "Nu"), "where's the water at least?"

"To drink or swim?" I asked.

"Does it make a difference?" she said.

Yankel, you see, in the first blush of enthusiasm over his cottage, had insisted the water was practically at his door step. We were able to see the water from the vantage point of a steep hill, but only because it was a clear day. I pointed in the direction of the water to my family huddled below, but though they could not hear me because of the noise of chicken eaters, they guessed by my facial grimaces that water for swimming was in the next county; it was easier to see Catalina Island. So when I came down to be confronted with a steeley-eyed glance from my wife, I shrugged it off

sheepishly by muttering, "Thank God we're healthy if not wealthy."

We finally ate our roasted chicken, ants and all; the potato salad was sour, the nectar warm, and the cake was squashed as flat as a "pletzel." All in all we had reason to be thankful for a place at least to sit down. My mother found a friendly little card game, the children threw rocks at other children who had the audacity to throw them back and who had no manners whatsoever; my wife knitted, and I stewed.

Soon came the mosquitos who earlier in the day had been frightened away by this multitude; now they had regrouped and rejoined forces and under more inspired and determined leadership dove into this encampment to win back lost ground. With them came the gathering dark clouds and droplets of rain.

The mad rush to cars and the retreat to the city began in earnest. Back on the plantation grounds the leavings of a well fed army littered the field. If it is true that an army marches on its stomach, these legions would go far indeed.

So as we too turned the bend, misty eyes turned back once more for this last glimpse of pastoral beauty. A last lingering look at the ivy covered cottage, the limpid waters of the lake (6 blocks away) and the elm leaves dancing to the whispering winds. Farewell the evening call of the Loon, and the Katie bird in the marsh.

Now nothing is left, but the garbage in the sink, broken glass on the grass, potato salad and chicken bones. To our genial hosts, Yankel and Nettie, we give thanks for this beautiful summer day and the lingering

deliciousness of lazy indolence. And to the children on the long safari home, who cry out, "Daddy, I've got to go to the toilet" and to my dear wife, I say again, "Thank God, we're healthy, but if this keeps up, how much longer will we stay in that condition." . . .

My brother Yankel, the real estate man has a cottage for the summer by the lake. "Velvel," he said to me one day, "why don't you bring the family. . . . Velvel, where are you? I could have sworn he was here a minute ago."

MY FRIEND, MENDEL

Take this fellow, Mendel, who I tell you about from time to time. He is a very real person indeed and not a character made up from the "luft" (air). He is the sum total of the best in all the older people you know, your own "zedeh," perhaps and some of his cronies.

We might all learn a lesson from him in his way of adaptation to the contrariness we see about us. He has long since made up his mind never to let very much bother him, although I do not mean that he ignores the world and its happenings. He has found a way to extract and distill all the goodness in life; what is left over which is not good, he has left to dry up and evaporate with the help of time and a healthy philosophy.

When you see him, you will not notice that his upper and lower plates are loose, that his steel-rimed spectacles are taped over the bridge, and that he wears slippers instead of shoes. You will only see a clean white beard, sparkling eyes, and a wrinkled face; you will see a man who twinkles and smiles all over. I have often thought what a fine Santa Claus he would make, but of course I would not suggest this to him. Come to think of it, I do believe he would like the idea if it would make the children happy. What the elders at the

Synagogue might think about this, is something else of course.

Now this Mendel of ours is a very wise man who has looked at people from all sides and knows them from all dimensions. He has an intuitive way of recognizing the "naar" (fool), the phony, those who have stature and those who pretend they have. He knows those who give for honor to themselves and those who give only with honor. Above all, though, Mendel believes firmly that even among the worst,there is a great deal of good. Sometimes, he will admit, this goodness is rather difficult to find, but it is there for those who wish to look for it.

He points to funeral services to prove his point, reminding you of various individuals who have since departed from our midst. A few of these we were certain were as devoid of goodness as a miser's "pishke" (charity box) of money. Yet the Rabbi with infinite understanding and patience always found so much goodness and charity that one felt positively indecent about having felt any other way towards the departed soul.

"Zum beishpiel" (for example) here was a man who never observed "Kashruth" (dietary laws), went to the Synagogue only twice a year, failed to pay his dues, thought donations an abomination, and went his own niggardly way amassing a fortune from widows and other unfortunates. Suddenly, at the funeral which you went to because there was nothing else to fill out the day, you hear this from the Rabbi. This was a man who unbeknownst to us has supported five orphanages, six "Yeshivehs" (schools of learning) in the Holy

Land, and donated his land to the community for a Jewish Center. "So you see," Mendel says as he shakes his finger at you, "don't judge a man too quickly, call him what you will in the privacy of your mind, but don't castigate him before others no matter for what reason until you know him as one should."

Mind you, I do not share this philosophy of Mendel's. There is such a thing as being too good and too willing to overlook the faults of others. If one draws a window shade on the darkness, it does not hide the color of the night.

One day I could not help but let Mendel know how I felt about this whole business of his. I reminded him of a scoundrel well-known throughout the community. Everyone knew he was a low-life, a hypocrite, non-observer, a cheat, a miser, and a miserable individual in general. As a matter of fact Mendel knew him well and shook his head thoughtfully as I pressed home my point. Did you ever hear one solitary good word said of this man," I asked. "Even if you, Mendel were asked to deliver the eulogy over his casket, could you by stretching charity and compassion to the utmost, find something, even a drop of goodness from this heap of miserableness?

To tell the truth, I was sorry I had thrown this into Mendel's face. It was unfair, and he was visibly bothered and perplexed. He rubbed his beard, clicked his tongue, shook his head, and walked away lost in deep thought with his hands clasped behind his back.

I ran after him and protested loudly, "so what, Mendel, there can't be another like this man. After all he is only one out of 12,000. Even the devil was an angel

once. Mendel, Mendel, "nehm es nisht zum hartz" (don't take it to heart). Perhaps you're right after all about everyone else."

But to no avail. He kept on walking and thinking. "Smart alec," I reproached myself, "doing this to a saint like Mendel. Now go home and put lye in your mother's boarder's soup, put ants in the flour bin, and break up the children's toys. Du migst zich shemen. (You should be ashamed of yourself.)"

Well, sir, it bothered me for a while as it should have.

A few days later I met Mendel in front of Levooneh's store.

"What have you got there, Mendel, under your arm?"

"What do you think I've got." he repeated politely, "a herring, a pumpernickle bread, and the Morgan Journal."

"Ai, I almost forgot to tell you," he continued, "I bumped into that no-goodnick we talked about the other day. It's odd, you know (he continued to stroke his beard), in addition to all of his faults, he must be a liar too—after all, he hardly knows you and already had something to say about you."

"See, Mendel," I retorted, "he hardly knows me from borsht and he's already talking behind my back. See, what I mean—did I ever cheat anyone, Mendel—when did I miss Synagogue services—did I ever turn the poor away from my door—who loves his wife and children more? Ai, Mendel, what possible reason does he have to say all these unkind things about me. I swear,

he hardly knows me at all. As a matter of fact, I haven't even seen this blackguard for years."

"Es kawn zein" (it could be), said Mendel thoughtfully, "that he is indeed the greatest liar of them all; however, he said nothing of the sort. As you say, he doesn't even know you, but he did tell me that you were the very soul of honesty and integrity—a finer Jew never lived—all his grandchildren should only have one-tenth of your virtues. Es kawn takeh zein, (It could really be), he is a liar of the worst sort."

"Mendel, Mendel," I protested, "even a liar must tell the truth sometimes. Must you be such a disbeliever and cynic. Perhaps he knows me better than we both thought."

"What a Mendel," I muttered angrily to myself as I walked away, sorely disappointed in his lack of faith in man.

And to top it off, I can swear he was laughing to himself—the old reprobate!

WINTER SCENE AND THE SHADCHEN (MARRIAGE BROKER)

Mendel's "langeh gatkes" (underwear) frozen stiff in a caricature of their owner, flapped and gesticulated wildly on the clothes line in the biting cold and wind.

For two days and nights the snows had come down lightly and quietly, tucking in the West Side under a dazzling white blanket supported like a circus tent by the gaunt telephone poles reaching towards the leaden skies. The sharp icy little fingers of the piercing winds played on the frosted door sills and storm windows, pinched the knees and cheeks and chilled the marrow.

The sauerkraut in the barrel under the rain spout was a solid cake of ice, sealing the spicy fragrance that blossomed so odoriferously when thawed out for supper. On the door stoops the frozen milk pushed out the bottle tops, and in the comic pages waiting for the children who were reluctant to leave their warm beds, Rudolph Rassendale, Hairbreath Harry and Belinda Blinks shivered quietly.

Mendel was up early because his "Yiddeneh" had urged him out of bed to get the house warm. With eyes half shut he lifted the trap door in the kitchen and felt his way down the steps into the cellar.

Every inch of the way he protested at the stupidity which had settled him on this iceberg instead of "Calif-awnya." He shook a tight fist at the squat furnace which looked for all the world like an ugly monster with pipes and arms and legs. He shook the grates, adjusted the damper and with a 'kvetch' for each shovel of coal, filled the fiery maw of the stove which was a miser with heat but richly bountiful with ashes. And after breakfast, like the dove sent from the Ark, his wife would send him forth to see how high the snows were, but Mendel would find his way into the syna-gogue basement instead, to tarry with his cronies around the isinglass stove.

Others were stirring, too, this cold Sunday morning. Pincus Naiditch, Maurice Gilman the shoemaker idly chewing on shoe tacks, and Fischel Fishman the butcher cutting a piece of "chawlk" for an early customer. Sam Ward was grinding "gemooleneh fleish" at 146 State Street. Carl Burnstien at 156 State was on his way downstairs to crack the ice in the water trough for his horse and his downstairs neighbor called out a good morning, "Mr. Upstasiker" (Mr. Upstairs, because he always preferred to live on the second floor). Mrs. Green at 215 State Street opened a fresh box of penny licorice pipes and set several long square cans of kero-sene out side for lamp sales, Selma Galburt, the nurse, a few doors away, was fighting snow drifts to get to the Hamline-So. Robert streetcar line. Primau the grocer was pouring coffee beans into a red grinder turned by a red wheel which creaked as the aroma of coffee hung over the white-frosted cinnamon biscuits. Israel Hershstein the carpenter at 187 State looked out at the

snow hoping for an early spring to start building again. Mrs. Fanny Krinsky at 181 State was buttering a bagel toasted on a little tinplate with holes which was placed over the gas jets and Max Simon the kosher grocer was thumbing through the Friday "Forvets."

It was no day to bother looking at the brand new Plymouth which was half-buried in the snow—$655.00, F.O.B. It was no day to go downtown to the show with a nickel's worth of fudge and an orange—not even with the "100% all talking and singing" pictures which were playing: Christiana was at the Capitol featuring Janet Gaynor (a Vitaphone picture), Richard Dix and the Vanishing American at the Astor, Mother's Boy with Morton Downey at the Orpheum, and John Barrymore in Eternal Love and Close Harmony with Nancy Carrol and Buddy Rogers—but the coldest of all were the scantily clad girls at the Star where burlesque was losing a battle to the "talkies."

* * *

And down near the end of State Street, my dear friends, a Yiddishe drama was being enacted, but alas for good reason, I cannot speak of names . . . Beryl the shadchen, really thought he had made a good match. He was leaving the house in high spirits after extolling at some length the virtues and accomplishments of the prospective bride—with considerably more fervor and imagination than veracity—and if the truth had been stretched taut, so what mattered.

All of her teeth she had, and two had gold crowns; her appendix was out, she was in excellent health, was gainfully employed as a bookkeeper, and came from a family of "reboonim" (Rabbis)—what matter if the

last of the reboonim were for some score years now with their Maker. She was not a flapper or card player and a wonderful housekeeper—a real "beriyah." A beauty in truth she wasn't, and when the boy and his parents had wavered, he threw in the punch line—The "Noden" (dowry) was a substantial one and her father, "may he live long" had a good business. And if one were sensitive enough it was almost as though the "may he live long" was more of a question than a simple wish. . . . But this was a marriage that never saw the roof of the "Choopeh" or heard the blessing of a rabbi, for it never took place. You see, the bridegroom had an uncle who knew the girl and loved his sister's son, and could not bear to see him live unhappily ever afterwards. So he took the boy aside and pondered out loud with him in sing-song fashion thusly: You are now nineteen and by the Grace of God will live to seventy. Therefore, 51 years of fifty-two weeks, each with seven days, each day with twenty-four hours—all in all, six hundred and eleven thousand plus five hundred and twenty hours. And of course, one knows that one-third of a man's life is spent in bed which in this case would be two hundred and three thousand and eight hundred and forty hours (in bed) . . . and at the rate of this dowry you would earn eleven and-half cents per hour, my dear nephew. . . . So my dear reader, this is a true story and there was no marriage, but our maid and her "noden" did attract another and the nephew married well, too. The maid had a lovely daughter and our lad, a fine boy—and they married each other and had a son who went to the Yeshiveh. . . .

* * *

It was on another cold day like this that their mother had written her daughters to tell them what to do some day when she was gone. "I, your mother, want you to take care of these things after my death. I want you to go to the synagogue four times during the year on the following days: on the last day of the Passover, on Shavuoth (during the month of May or June), on the last day of Yom Kipper, and on the day before the last day of Succoth. You, my daughters, keep these days faithfully.

"When you come to the synagogue on all four holidays you should say the Hallelujah first, then say Yizkor. Make inquiry about the correct time. On Yahr-Zeit, then you, my daughters, should light a candle at home, then go to the synagogue and see the shamus. Have a prayer said and have the light lit. The prayer is the Kadish.

"On the advent of my death, daughters, go to Rabbi Cohn and ask him about the instructions for my burial. At time of death, after burial, burn a candle for one week, and sit for three days on a low place (a box) without shoes. Cover the mirrors, put a little earth in both shoes for the rest of the week if you are working. Otherwise, sit up in honor of me for one week. Mourning period of six weeks you should not play radio, go to a dance or any other amusements. Please do not cry too long for me."—Then one day she was gone.

In the waning hours of the long afternoon, the funeral cortege wound its way slowly through the deep snow—stopping before the oblong grave dug out fiercely after the unyielding earth had been warmed previously by a slow burning fire . . . for a last few

fleeting seconds the covering was lifted from her still face and the tiny bags of earth from the Holy land placed over her eyes; from this moment and forever, only the memory of her kind eyes would bring comfort . . . while the prayers were recited quietly the casket was lowered into the cold bosom of the land, and the first clods of frozen earth rolled down . . . the tears froze on her daughters' faces and the crying wind swept across the lonely barren acres . . . Then the procession moved on again with wan faces pressed against the cold glass in a sad farewell . . . Oh warm winds of spring, come soon and make this earth warm and green.

EPILOGUE

It is written in the daily papers of our city that one day men will come to the West Side with mighty machines and great ambitions to tear down all that remains. In the interval after all has been reduced to rubble and the time when there will be life and building again, the unbroken flatness of the land between the River and Wabasha Street will be silent again.

No more the shrill cry of Widow Schwartz on Kentucky and State, no more the tumult of children in the streets, or the sounds of horseshoes on the pavement, no more the familiar places of our lives.

But neither the might and strength of men and bulldozers, nor the great plans of builders, will ever level the fountainhouse of memories of people, of places, and of happenings. Whether it be our own West Side or yours somewhere else in the length and breadth of the land, we cannot forget where proud Jews and their equally proud Gentile neighbors lived and died.

All that was good will never be gone, for out of this way of life has come a wonderful heritage, and beautiful temples and synagogues where families pray in peace and gratitude. All that was good is seen today and tomorrow in the strivings of those we know, towards dignity, compassion, and respect for their fellow man and his community.

WILLIAM HOFFMAN

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Mr. Hoffman's experience as a professional social worker has covered a variety of settings. He has worked with children and adolescents, with displaced persons, and as a case consultant for the Ramsey County Probation Department.

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In his spare time, Mr. Hoffman teaches Sunday school, an adult education class, writes as a part time avocation and is an active leader in Jewish and other communal organizations.