

CHAPTER VI

So now I returned to Starodub. It was good to be back in the old place for a while. Uncle Gershen, Aunt Fanya, and their children, whom I used to wheel in a go-cart, now looked up to me. I had grown up; I could speak Russian well and acted mature. When they tried to persuade me to return to work for them, I insisted that my policy regarding relatives had not changed. I had no definite plans but felt too far from Ekaterinaslav. My father and mother used all kinds of pressure to make me get a job there, for they wanted to inveigle me into marrying a Starodub girl with a large dowry. But I was deaf to such proposals for two reasons. First and foremost, Ma was my girl, although they had no inkling about that. The second reason was the military service.

After several weeks at home, I heard about a job in Briansk, about one hundred miles from Starodub cross-country but one hundred and fifty by railroad. The job, which I learned about from a salesman of gold jewelry who used to stop in at Uncle Gershen's, sounded promising, especially since the employer was married to a girl from Starodub. So I went to Briansk, a city which became known during World War II because it was the arsenal center of Russia and hence a point of hot combat. Here, too, only Jews with special privileges could live. Consequently, most of them were engaged in good businesses and lived well, even the shoemakers, tailors, and capmakers. It was a highly industrialized

region, with lots of soldiers around.

If my new employer, Mr. Tzivier, had not been married to a girl from Starodub, whom I remembered from my early childhood, I would have rejected the job on the very first day. For my try-out, he presented me with a chronometer, which is the finest of watches. It was the second one I had ever seen. A part was broken, and no replacement of any kind was available....You must not forget that this was a time when young people were revolutionary minded; as soon as a new person came into the community, his acquaintance was sought for two reasons: as a potential member or so as to be checked as a spy. Among the group there were several watch-makers who wanted to know if my boss had given me this chronometer to fix; it seems that he had dismissed several men on account of it. I must say that he had assured me that I could take my time at repairing it.

In view of this, I determined then and there to fix that watch, because if I were to leave now, all Starodub would hear that Zushke had run away from a job. Had this Mr. Tzivier been a mechanic, he would have waited at least a few days before putting such a task before me. But no. He didn't even give me a chance to rest from the journey. So I set to work. I made one piece after another, breaking many in the process. Some were too long, too short, too thick, too thin. From each mistake I learned and, after three days, had the watch not only running but regulated as well. All this time, the young fellows had kept asking how soon I planned to disappear and if he had given me other work. I replied that I was going to fix the watch and that was that. When I gave him the watch, his face wore a

sheepish expression. I was proud. And yet angry, too, for I did not enjoy working with a man who was not only not a mechanic but also a fool. Therefore, I made up my mind that in two weeks I would give him notice. Then, an incident occurred that absolutely forced me to stick to this decision even if I had been tempted to change it.

I little suspected that he was extremely stingy; he gave his wife only bare living money. One day, while he was out, a customer came in to have a new crystal put in his watch. I did this and gave the wife the twenty-five or so kopeks that he paid. In a few days, the customer returned claiming that the crystal was cracked or broken the second day. This can happen, and we replaced the glass. Apparently, however, the wife had used the money for salt or onions and had not reported the transaction. So my employer began to question me: what had I done with the money? why hadn't I told him about it? He hadn't seen the twenty-five kopeks. I was bewildered and amazed and asked whether he meant to accuse me of stealing the money. During the conversation, the wife was in the living quarters back of the store. Hearing this discussion, she emerged, told him that she had received the money and that he was not to insult her Staroduber Landsman (fellow-countryman), who came from a fine family. She begged him not to make a scene but it was too late. The poor woman, with tears in her eyes, said that he counted out every penny and that now she would turn out to be, in the eyes of all Starodub, a Ganef (thief).

For me, that was the end; in a few days, I would be giving him notice. When I did, you should have seen how surprised he was; he had been so pleased with my work

that he had planned to pay me a higher wage. He urged me not to be impetuous and warned that the folks in Starodub might criticize my action. To this, I brought up the matter of the chronometer and said that as long as my work had been done, that was all that really mattered. Actually, the watch belonged to the general in charge of the government arsenal, head engineer of the whole place. You should have heard the compliments he paid me for fixing it and he gave me a five ruble gold piece as a tip. During my several weeks in Briansk, the many Jewish business people on the street had made it a point to be friendly. As I enjoyed reading Russian books, they supplied me with reading material. My boss tried to use these new acquaintances to persuade me to stay and promised that he would do everything for me. But my heart was near Ekaterinaslav and, when the two weeks were over, I did not go home but directly to see my girl.

Needless to say, I received a warm welcome from her, her family, and her friends. All my life, as far back as I can remember, I have had little desire to relax,--to play, sleep late, and do nothing. I enjoyed spending my free time after work at something interesting, perhaps reading a book or walking in the park. Often, Ma and I made dates three days in advance. If the evening was fine, I met her at a certain bench in the park. Now, after a few days of leisure with the Simkins, I found a job in Nikolayev, a city not too far away. The pay was good, but again I found myself with a fighting family. Everyone fought everyone else, even the children; the grownups fought among themselves and with their parents. This annoyed me terribly. Even the

Sabbath meal was not free of noisy accusations: The boy runs around with girls; the girl runs around with boys; the father flirts with the hired girl. The arguments went on endlessly. I soon gave up that job and took another in the same city with more pay.

This shop was run by a widow, who had a head benchman, me as second man, and an apprentice; the first fellow was the favorite. And here I must tell you an incident and then will return to where I left off. I should mention here that I had not reported my change of address to the police. This was a must, but I had delayed because I was not sure that I'd like this place. One day, the sheriff came in about something or other. In Russia this dignitary is not like General Eisenhower; he wears an extremely fancy uniform, with gold buttons and epaulettes, sabre and pistol, with a gold-braid belt and spurs. A jingle accompanies every step. When he first entered, I was busy and paid no attention, but a sharp stare from him caused by heart to drop into the heels of my shoes. Not having reported to the police, I had some quick explaining to do! Before his questions had proceeded very far, my boss brought forth from her apartment the photograph of her husband, who had drowned several years earlier. The sheriff was well aware of that accident and could certainly see that we were not one and the same man, but, with an eye to the graft he could collect, accepted the story and departed.

But I did not stay long in this place. Young as I was, I was not inclined to be suspicious of anyone, except perhaps the police. Yet, I kept both eyes open. I saw that the headman and my boss were too chummy. Worst of all, this fellow was obviously jealous of my

work and determined to keep me in the background. Here, too, I became associated with a group of young men and women. I kept writing nice letters to Ma, assuring her that I was very lonely among these strangers even though I had met people of my own age. I stressed the fact that I had met no girls at all, but this was an exaggeration; I truly hadn't met any that I cared a fig about. It was Ma who rated tops with me. Of course, I visited her often, since I was not too far away. Every time I left, I saw larger tears, although there was never a word about love or affection or plans. But I understood the tears and inwardly vowed that her tears would not be in vain. It was just that I could not plan so far ahead and would not make false promises.

Another incident in Nikolayev: In Starodub, while I was still an apprentice at Uncle Gershen's, there was a boy of fourteen or fifteen, a stranger in our town, learning to be a barber in the shop nearby. Barbers in Russia were not limited to the mere shave and haircut; they really went in for the tonsorial arts, and made toupees to order as well. One day, I saw this chap standing outside and actually crying. In reply to my questions, he told me that the barber was mean, had refused to pay him, and that he had no money nor anywhere to go. In the yard where I was, there were several inhabitants, such as a tailor shop employing four or five workers, a hat man with three or four men, and so on. I went to them and told one of them about the injustice being done this destitute kid and asked whether they could do anything about getting the barber to pay what he owed. In a few minutes, out came two of the tailor's helpers. They picked up two hat men

and all four marched into the barber shop. I didn't go in but overheard their ultimatum: either the barber pay the boy his wages plus five rubles extra instead of notice or they would smash his mirrors! So the boy got his money and left town. When I met him in Nikolayev, we were both much older, but he never had forgotten what I did for him.

Alter and his fiancée kept urging me in their letters to return to Debaltsevo; they missed me. Why couldn't I settle there on my own? I was beginning to consider this when along came a man from Oriechova, some fifty miles away. The salary that he offered was good; so I decided to go there. It was a small town, where the population was largely German; in fact, there were so few Jews that there was hardly any companionship for me. This area, too, had been granted land by Katherine the Great for farming. You should have seen how three or four men would come in to buy a clock or musical instrument or to have a watch repaired. With them would invariably be a woman, perhaps a mother or wife or sister-in-law. No decision was ever made without consulting her, and what she said was law. I wonder if the women of Germany later sanctioned the evil acts of their menfolk in causing the endless misery of the First and Second World Wars and all that came in between them.

Anyway, here in Oriechova I had a good home and a good place to work; I was my own boss with no head man and no tail man. I was the man and didn't do too badly. I began to dress even better, having acquired the desire to have shirts with detachable collars and cuffs and lots of them. I now owned two good suits,

several hats and canes. I liked to wear a blue jacket with light-colored trousers. As you can imagine, I was quite the fashion-plate and didn't mind the admiring stares of others. My savings program suffered, for I had underwear and stockings made to order, as was the style in those days. Meanwhile, Alter kept up his urging me to return. He told me about a peddler who went about the coal mines picking up repair jobs. Alter, who could fix jewelry but not watches, wrote that this fellow wanted to go fifty-fifty with me and that this would add up to an interesting week's salary. Besides, he continued, if I wanted to take a week off to go see Manyetchka, I, as my own boss, could do so. This attracted me, and so, after having remained for about four months, I gave my boss due notice and stayed only until he found another man.

I spent a few days in Ekaterinaslav and then returned to Debaltsevo. It was becoming increasingly hard to see Ma's tears and I almost wished not to see her so often and get her letters. After a few days of leisure, I embarked on my new venture, a partnership with a man I knew only distantly and who every day was in a different mine. As I mentioned earlier, there were many coal mines in the vicinity, and the settlements of workers had no stores or services. A tailor or a shoemaker would spend several weeks in a shachteh (mine settlement), do all the work, and move on to another. As no machinery was used in those days, we were the roving jewelers. That partner of mine knew where to get sleeping accommodations; our food was simple, consisting mostly of eggs, milk, and sour cream. That in itself wasn't bad, but I definitely did not like their

bread. After about ten days, we returned to Debaltsevo, our home base. I was anxious to get my mail--first, letters from Ma and second, from home if any had arrived. Sure enough, there were two from Ma telling me that she had never missed me so much and that she would like to find work in Ekaterinaslav. My own arrangement was too lucrative to allow me to give it up lightly. After expenses, my partner and I each had fifty rubles, which was not hay. Fifty rubles for a six or seven day work week seemed just short of a million to me. So we continued. I do not mind admitting that when we returned to the first mine we had visited, we did not have to be afraid that any of my work was faulty. In fact, the miners welcomed us eagerly. But I gave up this way of life because of two reasons:

Primarily, I objected violently to the number and ferocity of the insects I discovered in my clothes. Second, when my partner went out after work, he always brought more watch and clock work than jewelry repairing. Unfair though this was, I did not mind too much until he began to cheat me. We'd start with a certain amount of cash and, at the end of a given period, have, let us say, ten rubles each. What was left was divided evenly. I noticed that he often had two or three five-ruble gold pieces which he claimed were his own. But I come from Starodub and so I knew better! What he did was this: Suppose a lady wanted to have a pair of earrings or a ring made to order. She would give him a gold piece, but he would give her a cheap ring or article that he had bought ready-made. So he cheated doubly. I quickly realized that I was the actual earner in the team and, anyway, wanted no part of his

dishonesty and thievery. I turned down his offer of a sixty-forty or any other kind of arrangement.

In Debaltsevo, I found a place, with a square front room and two in back. I thought of opening a business of my own, for I was much encouraged by the satisfaction shown by the railroad men whose work I regularly did. Alter, completely delighted, gave me three hundred rubles. With this and the money I had saved, I went to Ekaterinaslav to buy tools and materials, for I had none. Ma was happy that I was starting out on my own and that, furthermore, I would stay put and not have to travel around.

You will find, if you start doing anything on your own, that every bit of everything costs a great deal-- signs, leaflets, receipt books, guarantees, and material and more material. Even the tissue paper with which we held the parts when we did hand-cleaning was an expensive item. But you have to stick it out even though it means just bare subsistence. At least I didn't have to go outside to solicit business; everything came in. So life was fairly regulated. I found myself in the old triangle with Alter and his girlfriend but made a point of not being alone with her, and so there were no complications. My being here was a help to the Simkins. One day, I received a letter from Ma with the news that Tante Dvoseh's husband had left her and the two children. It was known that he was in Lugansk, about one hundred miles farther away from me, towards Rostov on the Don. Could I find out what he was doing there? Well, I had to help, and so, one day I went to Lugansk, a pleasant and not too large city. Since he was a newcomer and a men's tailor, I

decided to seek out a Jewish tailor and just ask. Sure enough, I found out not only where he worked (without ever sending a penny home) and where he was staying but also that there was a girl involved. Promptly, I visited the parents of that young woman, informed them that he was married and the father of two children, and requested that they say nothing but wait until some member of his family would come. They were friendly people and appreciated my mission, especially when I told what a fine person Tante Dvoseh was and why I was interested in the family. Then I left.

Within a few days of notifying the Simkin family, I had as overnight guests Tante Dvoseh and Uncle Lazar (Tante Pashe's husband). Debaltsevo being a junction point, they had to stop over until the next day to make connections. They must very likely have reported that I had a fine shop and a good supply of materials. I was, in fact, better established than Chavkin, my old Debaltsevo boss. It seems that they did not stop on their way back, but they got the truant home by promising him fare to Paris. He was a good tailor, even though he didn't know how to sign his own name. He was a terribly conceited guy, liked to dress like a dude, but was stingy to his family. I imagine that they all pulled strings and sent him off. Uncle Alfred and Uncle Isaac had already been there for some years. Meanwhile, I was kept busy, working during the day, going to the club with Alter and his girl-friend. As before, Alter played cards. The war with Japan was in progress and not going in the Russians' favor. Anti-Semites were hammering their propaganda that the Jews of the world were supplying the Japanese with money; one

heard loud talk of a kind that would make one's blood curdle. Kill the Jews; destroy the anti-Christ. I had heard these words and threats, but now they sounded harsher than ever before. And ever increasingly came the thought to me, why should I serve in the Czar's army?

At about this time Uncle Louis came to be with me. He was a watchmaker already but not fully polished. I shared the work, food, and apartment with him. There were uneasy rumors going around. One fellow refused to enter the army unless the government gave him assurance that his wife and children would be taken care of. Soldiers went to his home and killed him, but not before he had succeeded in killing two of them. It was said that the government lied about the setbacks, for how could it possibly explain them when colorful, fancy posters everywhere showed how one Cossack with his belt and mittens could account for ever so many Japanese lives? The placard looked good, but the underground printers had another story; it was whispered that next year's recruits would include the category to which I belonged.

So I began thinking about Ma, the shop into which I had poured so much of my energy, and my brother Louis. On paper, when you read this, it sounds easy, but what if your life, future, and not only your own happiness but that of the sweetheart you adore, who silently waits for the day, depends on your decision? Then only can you realize how long were the days and nights; you could only hope that by some miracle the war would end and you would have some respite from all these worries.

With my brother to keep shop for me, I went to see Ma for a few days. I still traveled under whatever name appeared on the pass. Whether the conductor knew my real identity or not, I slipped him a ruble at the other end. When I reached Uncle Moteh's house, Ma was certainly glad to see me. I soon learned, however, that her family was trying to persuade her to give me up and marry the barber, Roskin. He was of mature age and earned a wage that would keep body and soul together, but little more, I thought. Besides, he acted like a prissy old maid! Incidentally, did you ever know that I had a gun? In those days, it was the fashion for young men to wear a watch fob, on the end of which they hung all sorts of charms just the way girls do now with a bracelet. Similarly, they always hunted for any tricky gadgets that they could find to add to their dangling assortment. Among my collection was a tiny pistol that really worked, although I doubt that it could have wounded a horse-fly. So, jokingly, I remarked that I had a pistol; someone sent word to Roskin to beware! As you know, I have never to this day fired any gun and had no intention of harming even him.

But Ma and I had a long talk; she told me of the pressure that she was under. Everyone was nagging at her, and she was at a complete loss. She was so sweet and gentle and wholesome that she didn't have the courage to take a stand against her parents. So we walked and talked, talked and walked, sat down and talked some more. What I did impress on her was this: Roskin has no personality. He is much older. Just a barber. Not even comfortably situated. What's the hurry? Besides, you're not dependent on your family; in fact,

you contribute to their support. As for me, my folks have wanted me to associate with Starodub girls who have good dowries, but I'm not interested, for you're in my mind all the time. But just look at our predicament; we are both young, you even younger than I. Why tie up with Roskin? If you must rush into marriage, at least choose someone more appropriate.

I do not mind telling you that it was late when we returned. But her parents were waiting for us and immediately gave me quite a tongue-lashing. A young upstart who was turning a girl's head and interfering with her union with a settled, mature person! I didn't say much except ~~that~~ I did not control Ma and that she was free to do as she pleased, but that if she at least waited until she met a younger man than Roskin and one who was not a barber, she would be happier. Even if she had to wait ten years, it would be better for her to choose a fellow to her own liking than to take what you select for her. At that, right in their presence, I kissed Ma and went directly to the depot and was on my way to Debaltsevo. Oh no! I didn't wait even until next day to write her a letter, and her reply was not long in coming. She was sad that I had left so hastily and under such circumstances and she fully agreed with me that there was no hurry. She said that my visit had given her courage to stand up for her rights. The only love words exchanged between us were "Daragaia Manietchka" and "Dopagoy Zinia," and I would sign, "Forever your Zinia" and she, "Your Manietchka" or "Your Manya."

The war went on. And the fear of being called lay on me; my heart was heavy. But I said that something

would happen and it did, unexpectedly. To this day, I am thankful. If it hadn't been brought out in the open, I shiver to think what might have happened. Perhaps you would never have been in this blessed land of America, for, within twenty-four hours of my arrival on the shores of Boston, the peace treaty between Japan and Russia was signed in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. There, my economic situation was beginning to be secure enough so that I might have bought myself out of military duty and married. In that case, I would have remained in Russia. But what did happen hastened my decision to go to America.

One evening, as on many occasions, Alter and I were on our way home from Rachil's house. We chatted idly about ordinary matters, but I noticed that Alter was rather distant. I attached little importance to this, for I thought that he might have had a bad break in cards, although he was what you would call a "poker face." After a while, I stopped talking. Then, he hemmed and hawed and finally came out with Zenia, we are friends, aren't we? You know that I'd do anything for you, don't you? -- Of course, I replied, you have shown your friendship in a hundred ways. What's this all about? Are you a Barishnia (girl) to whom one must repeat endless expressions of love which lead to nothing? He went on: If you were to ask me for anything, I would gladly give it to you. My reply assured him that he had proven himself in every way; I would never forget how he stood by me, always boosting and encouraging me. So up to this point, things are understood. Now, Zenia, said he, I will make other things clear:

My	Pocket	Your Pocket	One Pocket
My	Wife	Your Wife	NOT ONE WIFE

I couldn't understand at all; we had never talked about marriage and certainly not about the exchange of wives. I knew that Alter was a clean-living and moral fellow, completely devoted to his girl.

He continued: You have read in books about friends exchanging or sharing wives, but reading about such affairs and engaging in them are entirely different. Is this the way you do things? -- I demanded an explanation for these mysterious remarks and, after another silence, he told me that his fiancée had reported that I had let my arms embrace her too tightly. Now this was possible, for, as you remember, I spent many an evening at her home. I used to play the guitar, and she, as well as her mother and spinster sister, joined in the singing. They were always present and certainly not in my way. Very often, we hummed a waltz and either Alter or I would dance with her. In Russia, the waltz was danced just as here, but sometimes the lady would put her right hand behind her back; the man would grasp her hand and swing her out, and then they would come into each other's arms as in the first position. One might easily have clasped a lady closely in this situation, but I certainly never did anything that could have been considered improper, incorrect, or vulgar. I was simply flabbergasted, for it was quite the style to dance to the music, making this swing and still keeping in step and time. Alter, I said, I have never had to exercise particular control in order to behave as a gentleman should toward Rachil or any other lady. And I certainly have no

designs on her. If I danced and held her close tonight or fifty nights ago, there was no meaning to it. But since some such ideas have come into your head, then I shall have to see to it that there will be no more occasion for them. We shook hands in a friendly fashion, and he assured me that he hadn't wanted to hurt my feelings and that we must continue as before.

But that night I could not sleep. What had I done? Was anything different from before? I didn't even like the girl; what reason had she to assume that I had any interest in her? Again, it became clear that she was using me as a tool to get Alter to marry her sooner. In spite of the war, he could have married, for, as an only son with an aged father, he had been exempted from service. I had never asked him why the delay, but now I began to think for myself. There was Ma, faced with the problem of Roskin and under pressure from all sides. Would she be able to withstand it? There was the war, not going favorably. Why should I go to Mukden or Port Arthur to fight? for what? for whom? for pogrom-schikes? And then, how would I return if at all? wounded? crippled? If whole, I would need a passport. Remember that for a Jew this was not easy. The Jews killed Christ; the Jews supplied money to Japan; the Elders in Zion two thousand years ago planned that the Jews should own the world. I heard all these accusations long before Henry Ford and his expert Cameron had printed them in the Dearborn Independent. I planned. I thought. I tried to figure out what was the best course of action. And I formulated a plan. No one knew about it and I told not a soul. And I shall keep it from you, too, for the time being.

My relations with Alter were not changed. When he wished, we visited his fiancée, but we danced only at her request. I certainly held her in a way that would remind you of bundling in the Puritan days! Her mother was always present, an unkempt, untidy, old woman, always laying out and reading cards like a gypsy. One evening, she demanded, Do you believe in what the cards say? I shook my head but she continued, I will read what the cards have to tell you. I paid little attention. What the queens, kings, and other cards meant and what she was supposed to turn out or in, I do not know. But she started to talk...Your Queen is in a difficult situation; You will soon take a trip to a far-off land. Your Queen will join you. Right now, you are in distress and are feeling humiliated. But everything will turn out just as you wish. At the moment, I thought that she might have run across something I had jotted down, but I had written nothing, nor could anyone have overheard me talk in my sleep. So I merely answered that I hoped her cards were telling the truth and that if I did go to the Far East to fight, I would come back and marry Manyetchka. But, she insisted, there is nothing in the cards about your being a soldier. Well, said I jokingly, for once I am glad that my face is covered with pimples; I only hope that they don't disappear, if that is the reason for my rejection.

So the cards told the story!

CHAPTER VII

I had made my plans long before: I was going to America. No one had invited me to come. But I felt that I could manage to get along somehow; I didn't need much and was not afraid of work. I definitely wanted to get away from regimentation, Gardavoy (policemen), and pogrom faces. And so I told everyone that I was taking a trip to see my folks in Starodub and my sister in Wilno. If I had to go to Manchuria, at least I would have made my rounds! Leaving the shop in my brother's care, I departed. Little did anyone realize that these were my last footsteps on the soil of Debal'tsevo. Instead, however, of going where I had announced, I first went to Ekaterinaslav to see my sweetheart. This time on the train I was very serious; I sought conversation with no one but was busy with my thoughts. What shall I tell her? my real destination? No, that will only make her cry and ask a lot of questions. I can't stand tears; there certainly is no point in making long-range promises and there would have to be the endless good-byes. When could there be a permanent hello? The best thing to do was to try to see her from afar, so that I could write later that I did see her before I left, that I meant well, and that some day we would be united forever and ever without any separations.

But how could I manage to sneak into the yard where her brother's home was and just peek into the window? Charlie Chaplin was not the first person to

attach an artificial mustache. I got one myself along with a pair of dark glasses and a fur cap, with the idea of disguising myself as best I could on such short notice. I marched into the courtyard, passed by the window and did see Manya. I would have softened if I had stayed or walked back and forth; I probably would have walked in and told her that I suspected that the military call was coming soon. Then, I would have said that I wanted to visit my folks or something. While in Debaltsevo, I didn't mind telling a commercial lie, but here I was afraid that I might break down. Then she would have been hurt and we would have parted in tears. When I saw through the window that several of the girls working there were about to leave, I increased my pace and crossed the street. I intended, after they had left, to return to the yard, see her once more, and later write her the letter.

Whoever said that this age is different from any that have gone before? Youth is youth, no different now from one hundred years ago. These two girls, instead of going their way and attending to their own business, stood around chatting and speculating as to who this young man might be. For whom was he waiting? Was he too early? Perhaps his girl had turned him down. Maybe he'll take us; we haven't any date. Why did I answer? Perhaps it is just as well that I did. I tried to disguise my voice and told them to be on their way and that my date was due in ten minutes. But soon one of them giggled and said, I think this is Gospodin Russakov. I promptly replied that that gentleman was in Debaltsevo and that if he were here, he would pick up Manya without waiting for a date. That failed to

convince them, and they talked of coming closer to see for themselves. Had I not been Russakov, I wouldn't have minded the inspection, but being I, decided that I had better leave, fast. So I found a Droshky (cab) and instructed the driver to hurry to the railway depot. There, I had to wait two hours for a train.

What had I accomplished by coming here? I had left a foot-mark, so as to prove to Manyetchka that I had seen her, that I wanted to spare her the hardship and tears and fears. In Russia, it is possible to purchase paper, envelope, and stamps from any mail car. Since this was a busy station with trains going in every direction, I was able to procure the materials I needed without any difficulty. I then wrote to one of the girls whom I had just seen. I made a date with her on the following evening, on a certain corner of the Prospekt, at a certain time. I explained that since I could not get a date with the girl I had waited for, I hoped that she would not keep me waiting. I explained that I would be wearing the same clothes that she had seen me in. Just before my train came, I mailed the note and departed. In this way I left a trail of having been in Ekaterinaslav, just when I was there, and that I had been there purposely to see my beloved one.

My plans did change. I didn't go to Starodub, but directly to Wilno. There was a reason for this: Wilno was in Poland, then under Russian domination, but nearer to the Prussian border. With no legal passport for exit, I knew that I'd have to resort to smugglers, whom I could expect to find in Wilno. When I reached my sister's place, I found that she was having troubles

enough of her own. Having bought some winter things for her and the two children, I let her think that I was planning to stay a while and then go to Starodub. She believed this story. What I did was quite different, however, I walked the streets and approached a bearded Jewish elder. When I asked him if he could recommend an honest agent, he understood exactly the kind I meant and gave me an address. There, I found a kindly, white-bearded Jewish gentleman who greeted me cordially and asked what he could do for me. I told him that I wanted to go to New York and as soon as possible. In this situation I told the truth and nothing but the truth, for this reason: The price of being smuggled across the border depended on your category, the schedule being something like this: If you were about to be called into service, your price was the lowest. If you had already been called but had not taken the oath, it was somewhat higher. If you had been sworn in but hadn't yet been assigned to barracks, it was still higher. If you had already received the uniform and gun and had run away, that was the highest rate.

What was the reason for all these price gradations? You will understand better when I describe my stages of advance toward the Prussian border and what precautionary measures were taken in order to get safely out of the Russian Bears' country. In case a patrol picked up someone like me, in the category not yet called up, the only punishment would be that I would be sent back to the place where I took my original passport or where my birth certificate was issued. There I would be set free. But it was not so easy, for at

first, they put you into the nearest jail. Then, when they had accumulated a certain number of prisoners, no matter what their crime, they transported the group under convoy to the next prison, where they would wait again until they had ten, fifteen, or twenty. This would be kept up, in my case, until I reached Novozipkov. Although I might be set free, I would be under police surveillance from then on. The case of the fellow who had shed uniform and gun was far different; if he was captured, his life wasn't worth a cent, especially in time of war and under martial law.

Therefore, the agents must know each person's status, in case of a slip somewhere on the border. If a group was apprehended, the agents could carry graft to the Czar himself in order to get the men out of danger. It was known that they even attacked police convoys in order to free their men. Later, I will tell you what I saw with my own eyes and you will understand better the fears that one had in embarking on this dangerous journey. I told the agent my name, age, and where I wanted to go. I paid him the price, with no receipt involved. He asked me to bring him my Karzinkeh (small trunk) before I went to the train, and he would give me further instructions. For now, he told me to plan to be ready to leave on a certain date at a certain time and to be at his place two hours early. I thanked him; he wished me a successful trip and good luck. Thus, my passage to America was engaged.

With the few days left, I told my sister that I had better get started for Starodub and back to Debaltsevo, for I feared that my brother Lazar (Louis) might in the meantime have written to the folks that I

was en route to see them. I must tell you of an incident that occurred at my sister's house that relates to something that happened many, many years later in America. During the famous court trial which came out of the kidnapping of the Lindberg baby, Charles Lindberg testified that he recognized Hauptmann's voice from having heard him call to Dr. Condon, who was the go-between. At the time, I believed that this was perfectly possible and felt that I could prove it from my own experience.

One afternoon, several days before my departure for somewhere toward the border, two young men came in to say good-bye to my sister. Neither their names nor what possible connection they had with her made any impression. After a few minutes of the wishing of farewells and safe arrivals, they left. And I couldn't help thinking that while they were leaving with the good wishes of their friends, I was starting out with no one but the agent even knowing where.

The time has come. My sister wants to accompany me to the station but I insist that I can go to Starodub as easily as I came here. Of course, I went directly to the agent's house, where details were given me. I was to buy my ticket to a certain point about thirty or forty miles from the border. You must know that at every station in Russia there were posted one or more inspectors looking for revolutionaries and for persons whose passports indicated that they were under "Police Parole." Naturally, these officials were more numerous and more watchful at the stations close to the border. So you stay in the last car, with no baggage to impede you. As you step down, someone murmurs the password,

and you follow him into a horse-drawn sleigh. There were two other occupants besides me, and we were whisked away into the country and God knows where. At the edge of town, we were covered completely with hay. It was terribly cold, but who cared? Where were we bound for? After a while, the sleigh stopped and we were uncovered. We found ourselves in front of a house; the other two passengers kept going, but I was left. Here, I was given something to eat and was made comfortable until some time during the night, when I was invited to move on, now in a larger sleigh full of hay and with seven to ten occupants. We picked up several more and traveled again. By midnight, we were unloaded at a Polish house, where there was already quite a group gathered.

You may recall that I mentioned having a soft head. That came in handy. We all slept on one common bed, the floor. If your head felt a bit stiff, you put your hands under it. That helped. But who could sleep? Your neighbors chatted. Others mumbled drowsily. Babies cried. Mothers of babies pleaded with their offspring not to suck all the milk from their breasts but to save a little for later. How could the mothers have manufactured milk with the food that they had to subsist on?

You learn many details about life when you travel. Not only how to behave when you are traveling first-class on a luxury liner and invited to sit at the captain's table. At such a time, your problem might be what suit, tie, and socks to wear and how to choose which fork to use. On my trip, there were other modes of etiquette. How to help a mother with young children

for whom stealing the border is a trial of strength and endurance. Or how about the elderly woman, weak from travel, who needs a strong, young arm on which to lean?

Up to this point in the journey, everything had gone fine. But here I found that this group had been at a standstill for several days. What was the reason? Not a reassuring one, I must say. The Russian government had discovered that many deserters were crossing the border at nearby points and had greatly increased the patrols. Since these were particularly tough, the agents were forced to proceed much more cautiously. But when I looked around me, I realized that many of my companions were in a predicament much more serious than my own. Among them were men who, having deserted their uniforms and guns, were in a truly desperate situation.

So we were stuck. The so-called farmer was a Pole, paid by the smugglers at the rate of so much per head each day. He now had under his finger helpless, nameless people, Jews, whom he considered life-long enemies. Why not make the most of their trouble by gouging them? Sure enough, he added terror to misery by issuing an ultimatum that either we give him money or he would report us to one of the passing patrols. The older members of our group began to wail that they had practically nothing, hardly enough for food. The desperate ones decided to play for time with the pretense that they were taking up a collection. This trick enabled them to evolve a plan: A rope was obtained, and someone tied him up with the warning that he keep quiet or he might get murdered. We did manage to scrape together a little money to give his wife, as she

had tried to persuade him not to harm us.

Three days and two nights we remained there. The stories one heard would fill many books. Some people had not only been captured and recaptured but actually snatched away from a police convoy. One evening, after dark, we were ordered to march put in twos. And march we did, with not a word from a soul, everyone thinking his own thoughts. I resolved that if ever I reached the border, I would write to everyone I had left behind telling them where I was and where I was going. In my mind I had Debaltsevo, Starodub, Wilno, and, above all, Ekaterinaslav. How long did we march? I don't know. But, alas, we were marched into a piggery. Even though it was pitch dark, we knew because the pigs had a way of informing us that we were disturbing to their peace. And our noses, those wonderful organs, should be equipped with passages such as first-class, second-class, third-class, or steerage, so that we might open up the passage that we want at a particular time. At least, it was warmer here, but the odor was dreadful, and some people added to it by discharging their human waste in the dark. You heard, but you didn't see. So what; it was modest.

You are a fellow-traveler. Even in a first-class hotel, when there is an elevator strike and your room is on the sixteenth floor, you can only thank goodness that it isn't in the pent-house. Your feet start willingly enough but after a while refuse to keep going up and up and up. So you stoop down and help a bit with your hands. It is easier that way. In fact, the more civilized you are, the more likely you are to be able to read; so you may have learned that some

doctors have a theory that many stomach disorders would be eliminated if only we navigated on all fours, like monkeys. This makes sense, for Darwin has shown that we are descendants of these creatures. At this hostility, we communicated by whispers in the dark. And whose voices do you think I recognized? You are right; here were the two fellows I had met at my sister's. My watchmaker's ear had come in handy! I asked them if they had been at Madame Polley's house in Wilno. Of course, they were surprised that I hadn't mentioned my plans during that encounter, but I explained that I wanted to wait to notify my folks after we were safely over the border. So, you see, I had reason to believe Lindberg's statement that he remembered a crucial voice!

How long we were at the Piggery I do not know. Who cared for time, anyway? When we were told to march on, we did. I don't know who the leader was; I simply followed the man ahead of me. We walked and walked. It seemed far, but perhaps it was only a city block. Sometimes you held a sleeping baby in your arms; sometimes you took hold of an elderly lady and sort of dragged her a little. You may have been in a greater hurry than she but here you were all in the same boat. You certainly all had the same prayer, that nothing would go wrong and that you would cross the border safely. What does the border look like? Who divided the land? Why wasn't it nearer to Starodub, Debaltsevo, or even Wilno? Someone must have made an error with the pencil or pen when he drew the line so very far away! We were a motley, miserable group, put to new trials at every turn. Finally, we stopped near a

cluster of trees. This spot, I imagine, was chosen because it offered shelter from the wind and some protection if anyone had been lurking behind. It was a deadly serious game of hide-and-peek. We did not stand still. Who would want to, early in a bitterly cold morning, with no fur coat, heavy underwear, or overshoes? You had a choice, either to push back and forth against the other fellow or freeze stiff. If you take the latter, your troubles are over, no fear of patrols, jails, or hunger, but also no thought of new adventures, lands, and opportunities. In fact, with the first choice, there is no difficulty even as to your final resting-place; it will be on the hill, on the gallows, or just left exposed for the wind and weather. But people are fighters; they want to live on and to make it easier for others to live. It is a hard struggle, but you choose not to quit. You keep on pushing and even get a little bit of heat circulating.

But what is going on now? What is everyone waiting for? And why so long? or is it long? Anyway, you were not alone. How you pitied the women and children in the group. We tried to help them in every way, even though we ourselves were in a predicament. Don't think that courtesy to women and children originated when the captain of the ill-fated ocean liner, the Titanic, put them into life-boats ahead of all others. We may have been ignorant, but we did assume responsibility for the weaker among us. From somewhere ahead came the whispered order to form a line of two abreast. The word reached us at the tail end and we started forward. My partner was a mother with her baby. I helped carry the baby and was so concerned with not

falling or dropping the child because we were on the up-grade in rough country that I did not observe the actual border nor the soldiers who stood nearby. After a while, the group collected about the guide, who announced that we were over the line! You should have seen the excitement! Several people fainted dead away; others kissed each other; others prayed their grateful thanks. So we were in Prussia, away from dear old Mother Russia and czars and from relatives and loved ones.

A short time later, when the crowd had gathered their wits, the guide directed us to push on. It was not very far to the place where he stopped. In answer to his far from gentle banging on a window, doors opened and lights went on. Obviously, it was no novelty for the occupants to be awakened this way; blinking and yawning sleepily and drawing on garments as they moved, they were soon behind counters where you could obtain food, drinks, postage, and telegraph services. First, you send a wire to the agent in the code previously established--that the merchandise has arrived safely, and you sign your name. This gives him the go-ahead for sending the Karzinkeh, your tickets, and whatever papers you left with him. This done, you now have some tea and pastry and rest. Others drink beer or harder liquor. Everyone tries to buy a drink for the guide, but he refuses. According to his schedule, he must return before the change of guards at the border. Just a few nights earlier, a guide nibbled a bite too much and overstayed his time. Meanwhile, the guard had changed, and the new patrols didn't know about his earlier crossing. The way they all played the game was

that he was supposed to carry in his shoulder-bag some contraband tobacco, which he dropped as he passed. This was to indicate to the higher officials that the guards were on the job and capturing smuggled goods. But the guide who was tardy now guides sinners into heaven! So, for our leader, we made a collection of money, wished him well, and he departed whistling.

So here we were at the Prussian inn, called Proskin. We didn't stay long. During the next morning, we were escorted to the railroad station, put in cars, and sent to a point not too far off, called a fumigating, or de-lousing, station. Here, men and women were sent to separate sections and ordered to undress. Your clothes were tied into a bundle and left here. You enter another door and are examined by a doctor, or at least by someone who looks like one. Your heart and pulse are listened to, and there is an examination for venereal disease. Then you go on, this time to a Russian bath, well steamed up. You welcome a thorough washing, to get rid of the sweat and of the pesky insects that apparently find you a source of food even when you can't obtain enough to eat! Outside this room is the dressing-room, where you find many tied-up bundles, among which are your possessions. The bundle is still warm. It is a good thing that you are not concerned with the creases in your trousers nor the starch in your shirt, for the fumigating has done away with all such niceties. Now you are all dressed, with nowhere in particular to go. You look around for someone familiar. I knew only the two fellows from Wilno and parked myself near them. There were already a good many people here before our group arrived; I

soon learned what they were waiting for. At a certain time each morning, names were called out; that meant that the agent had sent along the money due the person who makes out the ticket to the destination agreed on previously. By afternoon, those who had been called were saying good-bye to Proskin and boarding the train.

For some reason, my name was called together with my two acquaintances. Our itinerary was to Bremen by train, then to England by ship, from London by train to Liverpool, and then by ship to America. Before I left Proskin, however, I wrote a detailed letter to Ma. I told her how much I had wanted to see and talk with her, but how I had dreaded the tears and hardship that I would have caused her. I explained that it had been I who had made a date with the girls. I much preferred to say hello than good-bye and that as soon as I reached my destination, I would write often. I hoped that she would understand that this was the best way, but that if I had made a mistake, I was sorry and would make it up to her later. I also wrote to Alter telling him that since he had made that remark, my life in Debaltsevo had been unbearable. It was best for all of us this way, particularly since it would hasten his decision now that he no longer had someone on whom to park his girl-friend. I told him that I was grateful for all he had done for me and that some day I would repay in kind. That day did come. But I will tell about it later.

So, with my two companions, I went on my way. The trip to London was uneventful. I had paid my passage all the way to America, but they were supposed to

pick up their tickets at a certain address in London. When we found the place, they discovered that only one ticket was waiting. This was serious. After some discussion, I suggested that we go to a ticket office and find out how much the passage from London to New York would cost. Perhaps, by pooling our resources, we could scrape up enough for another ticket. Alas, we were five dollars short. When the agent grasped that we really were honest and not trying to trick him, he let us have the ticket and made it out in the name of the fellow who lacked passage. The same midnight, we were en route to Liverpool by train.

Little did I know what was in store for me when I reached Liverpool. But in order to find some excuse for what happened, I must retrace my steps and inform you that I had never been on the ocean nor on a big boat. Although the boat I was to take was not extraordinary, it was most luxurious compared to the Gomel-Ekaterinaslav boat on the Dnieper. On that, you could see the shore at all times, but here you were a mere speck tossing on a mass of water, with one huge wave trying to annihilate another. With little sleep and less food on the trip I had just taken, I developed a sort of infection in my right eye, but attached no importance to it. By daybreak, our boat train arrived on the wharf-end in Liverpool. Everyone made a dash for the ferry that carried passengers to the Baltic, which at that time was queen of the ocean-going vessels. She was too big to enter the harbor, and so we went to her as the mountain to Mohammed. As we climbed the ladder, I realized that a line was forming on deck. What was taking place I learned later. While we were waiting,

one of my friends gave me his New York address and said that if anything happened to one of us, we could communicate with each other. It was a thoughtful gesture, but I didn't give it a second thought. Slowly, the line moved around the curve of the big vessel, and, as I put my nose out, I saw that we were approaching a doctor. To this day, I am not sure why they made a cross on my back, and two sailors marched me down and down and into a cell-like room, and locked it from the outside. And here I was. But why? why me? what next?

Here again, misery loves company. So I listened to the voices I heard in different languages. From some German words, I made out that we were rejected and could not enter America. My case was trachoma. I had never even heard the word. All these years I had used my eyes for the most minute of tasks and never felt any pain or discomfort. Why should I be locked up? Even in Russia, I had never had anything like this happen to me! After a while, the door was opened and a plate of food shoved in. But who cared for food? Actually, I should have been ravenously hungry, for we had been so busy in London, dashing everywhere in the Whitechapel District to get the ticket that we had given no thought to food. Then on the train we had traveled cooped up in a compartment. It was not like in this country, where you can pick up a sandwich and drink whenever you wish. Nor had I eaten on the ferry, before I had reached the boat and been incarcerated. But under these circumstances, I for one left my plate untouched. Overhearing the conversations of others in the same predicament and their gloomy predictions was no music to my ears!

At last, I heard the sound of footsteps. My prison door was unlocked. Together with a group of other emigrants and under the guard of several sailors, we were escorted to a place of exit, placed on the ferry, and the gate was closed behind us. The Baltic gave a majestic whistle, signalling the start of her transatlantic voyage, while we were unceremoniously dumped on the wharf where only this morning we had stood in such happy anticipation. Now, here I was, heart-broken in the misty cool of late afternoon, my Karzinkeh with me.

I don't think that many young folks have been in such a tough situation as I was in at that time. Picture it for yourself: There I was in a strange land, without a single coin or paper of any value, unable to speak a word of English, hungry, tired, with an infected eye, left standing on an almost isolated wharf. The ocean was so big. It could swallow you in a jiffy, and no one would notice if you decided to end it all. But the desire to exist and to fight for life is strong; I picked up the Karzinkeh containing all my worldly possessions and started trudging. Where to? what was the difference? There was only left or right, so I chose the right. In my mind was the thought that after all Liverpool is a city and must have watchmakers. I would find one who would let me work in exchange for a night's lodging or, perhaps, accept my Karzinkeh as security for a small loan. Tomorrow is another day: I'll cash in my ticket, find a job, and consult a doctor to find out how bad my eyes really are. I had many thoughts. Perhaps, after all, I had better return to Russia. I hadn't burned any bridges behind me; no one in the Kremlin had missed me.

How long I walked I just do not know. But I began to see saloons, restaurants, and small stores. I felt quite desperate, unable to ask a question of anyone. How could I tell whether they could talk German, Russian, or Polish? I didn't see a Jewish face. It was lucky that the Karzinkeh was not heavy. How could it be with its contents--my Tefillin, a few shirts, some underwear, and a half dozen handkerchiefs. It was fortunate that I liked to travel light. Finally, I reached the business district. The fog was heavy, but I could make out the different stores and trades and came upon a watchmaker's sign. What a relief! How I wished that I could sit at the bench in a place warm enough so that I could take off my overcoat and work and earn and be settled. How could anyone have gotten into such a mess? What kind of fool was I to shell out my last cent to help buy a ticket for that fellow? All right, perhaps he would send the money when I write to the address he gave me. Not for one second did I think that he and his friend were fakers. After all, we had been in the piggery together, and I had willingly given him my last penny, my very last. But how could they possibly give a thought to me right now and in the position I was in? They were on that big Baltic, sailing for the land which was the culmination of all my ambitions. Well, such was Fate, and I simply had to face it. I hesitated for a while in front of a small establishment, trying to decide what language I should use when I entered. It was hard to say what I had to say. But delay wouldn't help matters. I would go in eventually, so why not now? (I adopted that slogan in Liverpool long before Pillsbury or Gold Medal hit upon

it for advertising their product. But human reasoning is the same, whether in English or some other language!) So in I went.

I had to say something. So I asked in Russian if he understood Russian. No. Sprechen Sie Deutsch? Ja, ja. Sind Sie ein Jüd? Ja. Mit was kann ich Ihnen behilft sein?--I felt that I was reaping a bountiful harvest from the short time I had worked among the German colonists at Oriechova. I told him my predicament. He was a sympathetic man and gave me directions to the Jewish section, where I could receive help from a place called Rothschild Hall. I thanked him and set forth. Whatever happened, I would be among my own, where people would understand me. Of charity I wanted none. My ticket represented a certain amount of money. If my brother Samuel could live in Ekaterinaslav on bread and watermelon for the five kopeks I gave him, I could add a little tea and be happy. I would find a job. Why not in England? Others went to Africa, Argentina; this might be as good a place as any. As far as I could see, there was freedom here. No one molested me when I debarked in London; I was allowed to travel to Liverpool without special permission. The place wasn't swarming with police. I began to feel pretty good about the whole thing.

When I entered the Rothschild Shelter, I found that I was not alone. Here were gathered Jews from many lands, stranded en route to different parts of the world. And I was one of them. God bless the Rothschilds, who for all their wealth, haven't forgotten the poor and the destitute! It was a warm place, with benches all around. I overheard conversations in all languages and

dialects. A group of Polish Jews, with their peculiar accent, were discussing their hardships. Some were almost reconciled to their situation; others grumbled. How ungrateful some folks can be! Although each individual was given a package of food and a ticket which represented a certain amount of cash for lodging, all provided by the Rothschilds, some of these immigrants complained about the menu. Did they expect the Rothschilds to receive them with open arms and welcome them to their palaces? Well, why not, these grumblers evidently figured; weren't they the "chosen people" and aren't the Rothschilds wealthy enough? According to their interpretation, God helped the Rothschilds so that they could help others, and they wanted to reap a full measure. I saw no reason to this argument and was content to rest my feet and just to relax. There were benches and floors here and my soft bones did not object to bedding down on them.

Evening prayers began. I will admit that I hadn't visited many synagogues since leaving Starodub. But I did join in this evening, and as I started to recite the prayers, everything in me dissolved in tears, bitter tears shed over everything I had lived through. Doubts assailed me. Why was I here? Hadn't I done the right thing? What wrong had I done to deserve so much punishment, to find myself penniless, destitute, stranded among strangers who, although Jews, were Schnorrers (professional beggars) who demanded to be helped just because they happened to be Jewish. A soft pat on my shoulder quieted me somewhat and brought me back to reality. I must not be a sissy. After we sat down, this oldish man tried to comfort me by assuring

me that I was among my own, not alone, that I would be taken care of, and that I shouldn't lose courage. I thanked him for bolstering me up. He asked me where I came from. Russia, I replied. What part? Chernigov Gubernia. What town? Starodub. But who are you from Starodub? And so I told him that I am Zushe Belodubrovsky's grandson. When he asked about my grandfather, I told him that I was his first namesake. Are you a watchmaker, too? When I told him that I was, he assured me that my troubles were over. He had been in Starodub many years ago and he knew my family. It was his sister who supplied the government with the horses for carrying the post. His two sons were in the jewelry business, one in Manchester and the younger one just starting here. He took me to his own home then and there, and I was made to repeat my long tale of woe.

Next morning found me working at the bench in his son's shop. How much salary I was to receive bothered me not at all. Perhaps there would be none. I did soon learn that I was a better mechanic than my boss. They tried to persuade me to cash in my ticket and remain in Liverpool; their daughter, a school teacher, offered to teach me English. But I was determined to stick to my original plan. I would first find a doctor who could cure my eye. Just now, I did not want to write a letter to anyone, for I had no idea of what was in store for me. Even the Russo-Japanese War didn't interest me. I rested; that is, I worked a week. They paid me--I didn't care how much, nor did I care to learn what the shillings, half-pennies, and other coins were worth.

The doctor I visited took my money, turned up my

eyelids, and smeared the whole area with a crayon-like stick; later I learned that it was Parmentus. Hell with all its punishment for the most horrible sins would have been a picnic compared to the burning pain in my eyes at that moment. I pray that no one of you or your loved ones will ever experience such searing agony. This done, the doctor led me outside. Blinded, I sat down on the steps; I couldn't open either eye for even a split second. Sitting there in utter misery, I determined that I would go to Africa or Hell or remain in England rather than subject myself to another treatment. Several hours passed before I could see sufficiently well to grope my way back to my place of employment. I must have suffered, for my face was swollen with tears, my eyes aflame, and all of me shattered to pieces. I did not work for the rest of that day, but just flung myself down and slept. By next morning I was myself again and ready to face the decision that if I could not qualify for passage to America, I would cash in my ticket and stay in England. My boss was pleased, for I was already a big help to him. But I did not cash in my ticket just yet!

The White Star Steamship Line had a doctor of their own in Liverpool, I discovered. When I went to him for an examination, he said that my eyes were tired. He told me to rest them and not to read and to come again next Tuesday. You can bet that I was there on Tuesday! He pronounced that he could see no reason why I shouldn't sail with the Cymbric, leaving for Boston on Wednesday of the following week. Was I happy? Words cannot express my delight! The only persons disappointed with these developments were the

Bolotins. I thanked them for all their kindnesses to me and left. But before I sailed, I wrote to Ma telling her that up to this time I had had some difficulties but was now on my way to America and that she would hear from me as soon as I got there and had an address.

So goodbye, England. And since England is what she is now, I am mighty glad that I am not one of her adopted sons!

CHAPTER VIII

So about forty-four years ago, as this is being written on December 31, 1948, I was actually crossing the big ocean on a large ship, not as large as the Baltic but spacious enough so that one felt awfully small. Third class, while far from luxurious, provided decent accommodations. We had our own bunks and ate at tables, covered with a cloth. The food was served neatly and was plentiful, although not fancy. We did not get celery, tomatoes, or finger-bowls, but there was tasty vegetable soup and enough herring and potatoes. The men sat on one side and the women on the other. Sleeping quarters were arranged in the same way. On the next morning, we discovered how many among us were good sailors. I don't know how many were seasick, but I was up and about, feeding lemons to some and helping others get from their bunks up to the deck. And so I became the favorite young co-sailor, bringing one person a glass of water, fetching smelling-salts for another. Some of my companions soon found their sea-legs; other poor creatures suffered all the way.

Among those whom I helped was a young girl named Sonya, an orphan from Russia, who was on her way to live with a married sister in Brooklyn. She was later to cause some uneasiness between Ma and me when Ma came to this country. But that is getting ahead of my story. Before long, we found ourselves in groups based on our country of origin, Austria, Poland, Gallicia, Russia. In the latter group, there were some Russian